



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
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MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign
Languages English
Language
Literature and Civilization

***Between Utopia and Dystopia: An Analysis between Ursula
Le Guin's The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas and N. K.
Jemisin's The Ones Who Stay and Fight.***

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN
LITERATURE AND CIVILIZATION.**

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June: 2022

Dedication

Every challenging work needs efforts as well as guidance. I dedicate my humble effort to my beloved mother and my sweet family whose affection, love and support make me always able to get such success and honor. I hope this achievement will fulfill the dream they envisioned for me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my profound thanks first to Allah, the Almighty, for showers of blessings and ability to fulfill this work. All lauds to God for his graciousness and countless blessings that have surrounded me in every phase of my path.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and render my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Mr. Harhoura Kamel, who made this work possible. His expertise and guidance have been invaluable throughout all the stages of the work, also his valuable suggestions that have contributed greatly to the improvement of the thesis.

My thanks are extended to the juries: Dr. Sekhri Hadjira, Ms Taalla Asma & Mr Sedrati Yasser.

Abstract

Individuals' endless desire to create their own personal utopias highly reflects humanity's discontent with the imperfect as well as the historical obsession with all that is perfect. However, humanity's utopian desire has ironically turned into a dystopian reality. This study attempts to analyze Ursula Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and N.K Jemisin's direct reply to it *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*. This research mainly examines both short stories themes, which are happiness, suffering, scapegoating and choice, and the factors that made the cities Omelas and Um-Helat became dystopian after they were once Utopian ones. Through adopting the post modernism theory as well as the historicism approach, the researcher aims at refuting the totalitarian implications in both short stories, as well as describing and analyzing the shift between Utopia and Dystopia and the reasons behind it. The research reveals that *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*, and *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*, as science-fiction short stories, depict our world; how we as humans tend to live happily while others are suffering somewhere else. Through ought both short stories, the researcher to conclude that all utopias are actually dystopias.

Key Words: Utopia, Dystopia, Scapegoating, Totalitarianism, Ursula Le Guin, N.K Jemisin.

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General Introduction

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas is a fascinating short story written from a first point of view, the story is five (5) pages long; its post-modernist themes made it open for different literary interpretations. The story is one of Ursula Le Guin's earliest works and it was published in a science fiction anthology *New Dimensions*, volume by Robert Silverberg, with a groundbreaking plot twist.

The story is about a utopian city called 'Omelas' whose prosperity, happiness and wealth depends on the suffering of a little child, who has been sacrificed for the greater good of the greatest number of Omelas. From the other hand, we have N.K. Jemisin's direct reply to Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* which is a short fiction story also published in *How Long Till Black Future Month*, This short story is actually the opening story in the collection. Both stories jump from utopian to dystopian ones through justifying the means of people who do evil in order for them to be able to live happily while others are marginalized, sacrificed and deceived trying to put a roof over their heads.

Utopian and Dystopian literature has been highly present in so many literary work. The works that are analyzed in this study highly depict our reality as human beings, communities living in one world some of them happen to be lucky while others are just unlucky and unable of demanding the bare minimum rights.

Therefore, the research problem that underlies this study is the portrayal of happiness and suffering in both short stories, as well as the factors that lead a utopia to become a dystopia. Put differently, this study shall attempt to argue that all utopias are actually dystopias. Therefore, the main question to be investigated is as follows: 'Is scapegoating the only possible solution for a society to find and secure its happiness?'

In order to answer the main question of this study, the researcher intends to divide it in four sub-questions and attempts to answer them in the two practical chapters: They are as follows:

1. How is Utopia and Dystopia depicted in both short stories?
2. How do Omelas and Um-Helat citizens represent the unjustifiable sacrifices?
3. Is the impetus for those who walk away from anger or outrage?
4. How are both stories seen as an example of resistance?
5. What is the morally right action to take, stay and fight or leave?

Therefore, the study aims at describing and analyzing the short stories' depictions of our reality through Utopia and Dystopia, themes of happiness, scapegoating and suffering. This study can be a learning lesson through which we learn how a utopia can become a dystopia. Moreover, it teaches us how can we stand and fight against any type of oppression.

This research analyzes Ursula Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and N.K. Jemisin's *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*. The type of the study employs descriptive and analytical research paradigm. Through a bibliographical approach, data shall be collected from primary and secondary sources. The former consists of Ursula Le Guin and Jemisin's short stories, while the latter includes a number of books, dissertations and scholarly articles. Data is going to be used according to its relevance to the research questions and the possible answers it offers. The data analysis aims to be descriptive by implementing the post modernism theory when dealing with totalitarian implications in both short stories, as well as the historicism theory when dealing with the events behind which both writers wrote their stories.

The first chapter provides the literature review and the theoretical background upon which Ursula Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and Jemisin's direct reply *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* shall be analyzed. It consists of two main

Sections: Theoretical framework, which reviews the groundwork of both Utopian and Dystopian literature, their characteristics as two literary genres as well as the way they are built. The first section also provides a literature background, which discusses science fiction short stories in utopian and dystopian literature. The second section presents synopsis of both Ursula and Jemisin's short stories as well as the biographies of both writers. Moreover, it introduces the two theories that shall be used in the analytical chapters, which are the post modernism theory and the New Criticism theory, with their prominent figures, concepts, and principles

The second chapter attempts to analyze themes that are highlighted in the Short story *The Ones who walk away from Omelas* as well as *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*. How Omelas and Um-Helat cities were once utopian places then turned into dystopian ones; from Happiness to suffering and from perfection to imperfection. The chapter is divided into three sections: Omelas and Um-Helat as two utopian cities, then scapegoating and the attractiveness of what is forbidden in the cities, and finally discussing choices that people made as a reaction to living in dystopian cities. The significance of this chapter is to reveal themes of both short stories and to prove that the readers' own interpretations alongside with the writers' intentions are always of a high value.

The third chapter is concerned with the historical background of both short stories; events that pushed both writers to write such incredible depicting stories. Adopting the post modernism theory and the New Criticism theory, the study attempts to investigate the totalitarian implications of both short stories.

Moreover, the researcher intends to describe the writers' call to action and analyse the importance of choice in Utopian and Dystopian worlds like Omelas and Um-Helat. The purpose of investigating post modernism aspects and totalitarian implications is to have a

deep understanding of the works, as well as to reinforce Ursula Le Guin's and N.K Jemisin's calls to always opt for a change no matter will be the consequences.

Chapter One

“The Reality of Utopian and Dystopian Fiction”

Introduction

Literature is everything that can be portrayed by the author; it is the creative work that pictures the world in forms of different literary works such as drama, poetry, short stories and novels (Pradopo, 26). Through literature, authors introduce their creative works in order to take readers to a new world of experience that can be related to whether politics, society, culture issues, crimes or comedy (Morris, 81)

Broadly speaking, literature, according to Terry Eagerton, is not leaning towards fiction or fact. However, it changes ordinary language into well-chosen poetic words; make them more appealing than just statements (Eagerlton, 1-2).

Over the ages, literature has been influenced by the psychologies of people living in changing times. Among the various literature works, Utopia and Dystopia are two types of fiction (opposite to each other) of literature that explore social and political structures. Both of them are found in speculative short fiction stories; many writers tend to combine both, usually as a metaphor for the different situations that humans may experience.

Utopian and Dystopian literature are two sides of a coin. By definition, Utopian literature is generally a depiction of an imaginary society that experiences the ideal in all aspects and has the perfect life possible. From the other hand, dystopian literature is the complete opposite. It is a description of an extremely unpleasant place; usually it depicts governmental systems.

This chapter is divided into two parts, the first part deals with the notions of utopian and dystopian literature from the definition of both terms as literary genres, their origins, until their characteristics and elements as two kinds of literature.

1 Definition of Utopia

Living in a utopian world have always been a human desire. Utopianism, according to Ernst Bloch, is «fundamental to human consciousness because humans are always striving forward, anticipating, desiring» (Bloch, 12). The search for something unknown but supposedly good, then, is a constant characteristic of human beings; Adam and Eve felt they needed to search for something, which could be found in the fruit of the tree of knowledge. This quest has remained as an inherent human characteristic and represents the endless human hope for utopia, which, in its turn, has been developed in literature.

People have always considered utopia as a piece of literature that can reflect what is in their minds and thoughts. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the name utopia originated from the Greek *ou* (not) + *topos* (place) and originally means nowhere or no place.

1.1 Utopian Literature

In fact, Plato's *Republic* was one of the first literary productions considered Utopian (Plato, 380 B.C.). However, Sir Thomas More coined the term itself in his 1516 book called *Utopia* in which he depicted a society characterized by religious tolerance and absence of poverty. The people of this society live in communal properties and have no necessity of gold to become rich. At the end of the book, a character named More, concludes that those utopian features are impossible to achieve and are absurd although some of them could be not just hoped but also wished for:

“In the meantime, as I cannot agree and consent to all things that be said, being else without doubt a man singularly well learned and also in all worldly matters exactly and profoundly experienced, so must I needs confess and grant that

Many things be in the Utopian weal public, which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope” (MORE, 146).

The utopian characteristics that Sir Thomas More presented could not by any means be achieved; he only wishes to make them real. Clearly, the previous passage, demonstrates a desire Thomas More has, it is not a planned objective that he made. However, a question should be raised, why does he only wish but does not expect any of those improvements to happen in Britain? He would just like them to become real, but knows it is not going to happen; that is why the book and the island in it are called *Utopia*.

The concept of utopia can be found in numerous works such as Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), the author sends the readers to a mythical island known as 'Bensalem.' Scientists control the island, which is similar to More's but more technologically advanced. Because the author's perfection is based on technology, he constructs a flawless society that is free of poverty. In addition, H. G. Wells' work *A Modern Utopia*, published in 1905, is a utopian novel that depicts a presumably ideal society in which everyone is happy and safe because of technological advancements.

According to Pasold, historians, literary scholars, philosophers, sociologists, and others might approach Utopia by highlighting specific characteristics connected to their main focuses. This could explain why defining utopia is so difficult. Although utopia is a philosophical concept about humanity, its linked difficulties have generated a plethora of interpretations from other fields. To write her book, Pasold came up with her own definition: Utopia is defined as a literary work that presents a perfectly organized and pleasant world from the author's point of view, in a fictional place and/or time. (PASOLD, 18)

1.2 Characteristics of Utopian Literature

As an important literary tool of human thought, which writers have been, using it to express their desires, there are a few crucial characteristics that utopian literature exhibits

1.2.1 The Setting in a Utopian story

The depiction of a utopian society is settled in an isolated far place and an unknown time, usually the future. Unlike the past and the present, writers have more chances to imagine things the way they desire in the future, simply because the events or the experiences that we went through in the past can never be changed as Atwood asserts: “the future is an unknown: from the moment now, an infinite number of roads lead away to <<the future>>, each heading in a different direction” (Atwood OW 14). If a writer sets his time in the future, he will be able to predict the future or even able to change it. The future is “half prediction and half satire” (Atwood OW 14).

In addition, the notion of nowhere is an opportunity for writers to create an imaginary world through their literary works where they have the chance to adjust the nature of how things work and to accomplish their endless desires in achieving perfection that the real world did not allow it an would never does:

We were free to have our untrammelled desire I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect-wave our hands to a splendid anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none pleased to do evil, in a world as good as its essential nature, as ripe and sunny as the world before the fall. (Wells 43)

As this passage shows, one should start by changing humans’ mindset and by doing so the nature of all humankind will be very different from how it was before. No one is

Pleased to do evil or cruel things to other people in order for him to be happy, however, the human discontent with what he has always leads him to do what is not allowed and sometimes even, what will make others unhappy.

1.2.2 The Plot of a Utopian Story

By its nature, the narrative of utopian literature often sheds the light on giving a detailed description of a community, its laws, and culture, its successful political and economic systems that made it prosperous rather than an action-driven plot with actual characters and a dialogue.

Put simply, a Utopian short story is often plotless. In fact, the latter does not mean that utopian works are free from conflict; sometimes the perfect place for one is not the ideal one for everyone surrounding him, which is why the writers of utopian literature are often caught in a pickle. For some, it would be a world based on equality of all cultures; races, creeds and genders. However, for others, it would be a world built on peace with no wars or violence. If a utopia were perfect for all, there would be no conflict, no shift in events and could make a pretty boring story.

1.2.3 Ideal Nature of Utopian Communities

In a utopian society, citizens are truly free to think independently and have no fear of the real outside world, which is according to them a dystopian world full of pain and misery. In a Utopia, most importantly, citizens get to embrace moral and social ideals; they do not usually steal, lie, or envy, instead they are kind and not violent. Additionally, all members of the society and not only their parents generally raise children who live in a Utopia.

For instance, in *Herland*, like many other utopian works, the conception of the happy family is similar to the one often seen in tribal ethnic groups where kids are raised by the whole society rather than their biological parents.

The way in which events and details are presented in a Utopian story, makes the reader question many things until he discovers that a Utopia is actually always a dystopia no matter how the writer tries to beautify it with literary techniques while describing it. In looking to many Utopias works, we find that the narrative voice offers the readers of the story a chance of contributing in the making of an ideal place.

Those who believe that Utopias do not exist in the actual real world will keep using their vast imagination to create an ideal world that they have always been dreaming of. Their vision of a perfect place continues to manifest itself through the stories they create in their heads while following the narrator's voice request in creating an ideal community.

1.2.4 The Protagonist of a Utopian Story

In such an imagined utopian universe, the utopian hero might be a person who works to promote the ideals of the society or simply an outsider who must have heard about this new society and got excited to discover it. Through questioning the existing social and political systems, the character helps the audience recognize the positive aspects of a utopian world with an aim to bring a positive effective change. Usually, in such Utopian stories, the protagonist is either a victimized person who was sacrificed for the greater good of the greatest number, or a person with deep intellectual insight who saves the society from turning into a dystopia by guaranteeing social justice for everyone.

The protagonist in a utopian society is usually uncomfortable with how people are separated and divided into blacks and whites, superior and inferior, rich and poor. He rejects

The wrong social attitudes and tries to make a positive change by questioning the existing laws.

1.3 Utopia Gone Wrong

Utopia must accomplish two goals in order to succeed gain complete control over the people while also keeping them complacent and involved in the community by offering them what they desire more. The former is performed by gaining control over mortality, while the latter is accomplished by modifying the population's cultural, religious, or social beliefs to prioritize the interests and desires of the majority over the needs of few individuals.

As a reaction to utopian ideology, a modern method of looking at literary utopias has developed the concept of dystopia as a reaction to western society's exciting events and conflicts of social change, notably throughout the twentieth century.

1.4 Definition of Dystopia

The general definition of dystopia from the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible.” Lyman Sargent defined it as “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerable worse than the society in which that reader lived.”

1.4.1 Dystopian Literature

Dystopian literature rises from the utopian to present a more pessimistic and more critical view. M. K. Booker defines the literary dystopia as:

Specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism. At the same time, dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which those conditions and systems are based or through the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and contradictions. (03).

As a result of Britain is turbulent historical and technological transformations, several dystopian literary works were produced, such as *1984* (ORWELL, 1949), *Animal Farm* (ORWELL, 1945), *Brave New World* (HUXLEY, 1932), *A Clockwork Orange* (BURGESS, 1962) and *Lord of the Flies* (GOLDING, 1954). According to Michael Alexander (2000)

“The old world of social rank, of (unequal) prosperity, and of horses and railways, had a liberal hope: the way of life of Britain, of Europe and America, and of the Empire, would gradually improve - materially, politically, and morally. The world would grow more civilized. It did not.” (ALEXANDER, 311)

As the quote shows, people were thrilled about the massive change and the technological developments that the world saw after the Industrial Revolution, they had utopian thoughts about their future.

That is when dystopian literature started to appear; authors tried to warn people, that the country would not become a utopia where everything is perfect, but it would be just the start of a dystopia depending on the way and what these technologies would be used for.

In his novel *1984*, Orwell demonstrates how we can be (and probably are) manipulated by the simple idea of achieving our deepest hopes and dreams of security, love, stability, health and happiness. Seen in this light, according to Bernadotte Pasold, there are several ways of critically thinking about literary utopias, one of them would be dystopian literature. In her research about utopia and satire, Pasold states:

“There are other ways of criticizing or questioning Utopia than the critical essay, and the most efficient and creative of these is probably the —negative utopial, or —utopian satire, or —satirical utopial, or —dystopia, or —anti-utopial. These terms do not designate the same kind of fiction necessarily, but they all seem to question the utopian idea as presented in utopian literature, through different means and in differing degrees of attack.” (PASOLD, 47)

This quote explains that there exists different ways to question a Utopian imagination, one of which should be creating a dystopian world through a different fictional story.

1.4.2 Characteristics of Dystopian Literature

1.4.2.1 The Plot and the Protagonist of a Dystopian Story

Unlike utopian stories, dystopian ones are centered in the conflict, to provide their message; the agony provides the vehicle for the narrator to make his or her case against the society by showing how hero she functions within it.

Dystopian literary works generally end in one of two ways. The protagonist will sometimes escape from the society, to find a new home or to help topple the government. Other times, the dystopia succeeds in defeating the protagonist, through either death or assimilation into society and collective thought.

Regardless of the conclusion, both paths show the one theme included in every dystopian work which is hope, the dystopian story gives the protagonist a reason to chase the unimaginable 'better.' ,hope, for example. However, the elimination of hope is every dystopia's principle goal, as the crushing of hope prevents advancements; it is always pure emotions and feelings that result in the downfall of a dystopia.

1.4.2.2 Totalitarianism in a Dystopian World

Most researches on dystopia agree that dystopian stories are usually carried out by the technological advances being used as a way of manipulating people and resulting in a totalitarian government that only seeks for control and power.

In fact, Dystopias are about featuring a powerful government that consists of some sort of dictatorship, totalitarianism, or other kind of complete supervision over the population. Sometimes, dystopias hide behind the guise of a utopia, blurring the lines between the two.

1.5 The short Fiction Story

Literary works overthrow readers' expectations immensely through different narrative patterns. Seen in this light, the short fiction story has been considered as a legitimate genre and a unique narrative pattern that can stand alone, i.e. not dependent on the novel.

The short fiction story can be mythic, unusual, fragmentary and mysterious as it artistically thrills readers, throws them into doubtful ideas and DE familiarizes their assumptions. However, Russell argues that the short fiction story can be all of the mentioned above but can also be none of it as it resists definition (March-Russell, ix). Working in depth, the short fiction story is memorable; it continues to live in every reader's mind and reappears often in his/her mind even after finishing it.

The limited length of the short fiction story excites the reader's imagination making him bridge the intentional gaps in the story made by the author and discover a completely new one. Thus, learning how to manage fragmentariness that appears usually in the short story.

Stylistically, through its artistic techniques and devices, the short fiction story communicates a fundamental fragment of life, capturing a specific single moment of the human experience that is 'the ultimate reality' (Gordimer, 264).

1.5.1 Ursula Le Guin as a Writer

Among many writers, Ursula Le Guin (1929-2018) was an American novelist who worked mainly on the genres of fantasy, science fiction, children's books, and short fiction stories. Through her works, the author depicted imaginary alternative worlds in politics, the natural environment, religion, sexuality and others fields.

As Le Guin continually challenged all critics of her choosing what included complexities of characters and plots in her short stories, she won many awards such as the Hugo Award, Nebula Award, Locus Award and World Fantasy Award. (Mid- American Library Alliance, 2010).

1.5.2 Synopsis of 'The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas'

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is a well-known post-modernist American short story by Ursula K. Le Guin herself. It is one of her earliest works and it was firstly published in a science-fiction anthology *New Dimensions*, volume by Robert Silverberg. With its groundbreaking plot twist, *"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"* is a fascinating short story written from a first point of view. The story is five (5) pages long, its post- modernist themes made it open for different literary interpretations.

The short story revolves around a utopian city named ‘Omelas’ whose prosperity, happiness and wealth depends on the perpetual misery of a child who is locked in a basement somewhere in the city. The child must be sacrificed to let happiness into the city; the people who live in Omelas know that the child is suffering in order for them to be happy but most of them do not have the feeling of guilt simply because they are unaware of the injustice or they cannot sacrifice their happiness for the wellbeing of the child. However, some of Omelas citizens cannot live knowing there is a child suffering, so they decide to leave their city. These people are the ones who walk away from Omelas.

1.6 N. K. Jemisin as a Writer

From the other hand, we have N. K. Jemisin who is a New York Times-bestselling author of speculative fiction short stories and novels. For her *Broken Earth Trilogy*, Jemisin is the first author in the genre’s history to win three consecutive Best Novel Hugo Awards. Because of her creative imagination, she has also won two Locus Awards, and a number of other honors. Her interest in systems of subjugations and totalitarianism made her include more wide range themes such as cultural confliction and social oppression in her fiction works.

1.6.1 Synopsis of ‘The Ones Who Stay and Fight’

“*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*” is a short fiction story written by N. K. Jemisin originally published in *How Long Til Black Future Month*. It is the opening story in the author’s short stories collection. “*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*” is in conversation and a response to Ursula Le Guin’s short story: “*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*”.

In a similar way to Le Guin's story, N. K. Jemisin's short fiction uses the notions of utopia and dystopia. While Le Guin's short story was told from a distinctly American perspective, Jemisin added an African futurism twist. Her story is set in the city of Um-Helat, which

portrays a utopian society in which everyone and everything is perfect. The people of Um-Helat are joyful, flying around on their wings, and each one is equally respected and accepted wherever he is.

A minority group of Um-Helat citizens has discovered that there is a possibility of a near dystopia in which societies are built on greed and others fully exploit their superiority over others. In "*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*," one of the Um-Helat residents is killed for spreading such an ideology. His daughter was taken away and taught fairness values, not to hate, and not to follow her father's example, as she grows older.

In both short stories, "*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*" by Ursula Le Guin, «*The Ones Who Stay, and Fight*" by N. K. Jemisin, themes of empathy, unjustifiable sacrifices, happiness, and resisting oppression are highlighted under utopia and dystopia. The moral quandary plays an important role in both stories.

As both stories highlight themes of oppression, scapegoating and totalitarianism, the postmodernism theory will reveal and open up a variety of factors as well as solutions even though it is nowadays replaced by globalization and contemporaneity.

Conclusion

Literary works of science fiction that are focused on the futuristic visions of ideal societies are common and widespread in our modern world. These different visions of futuristic worlds brought many famous literary works, short stories among them, of our time. Numerous writers imagined a utopian world where totalitarian rulers governed different societies and controlled the life of ordinary citizens by imposing restricted rules that demand a certain social order. These works, '*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*' and '*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*' among them, covered many themes of utopian and dystopian societies – repressive social control systems, impact of technology on humans, freedom of thought and individuality.

Literary response is to write something in the response of any piece of work. In other words, literary response is a critique, a re-imagination and of the previous work. What Jemisin did with *The Ones Who stay and Fight* was amazing she amazingly replied directly to Ursula Le Guin's work; she wrote a near-utopian story that includes her point of view *on The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, along with a detail explanation of what an afro-future should be like.

Could a Utopian society ever exist in our contemporary world without turning into a Utopia? *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* speculations may seem far off from our world, but the societies, which are depicted in both stories, are much closer to our reality than they appear.

While there is a clear distinction between a literary utopian or dystopian society in their imagination or even and the realization of one, literature since its inception has always reflected our life with its ups and downs, good and evil , offering potential solutions and paths to follow —could the utopian and dystopian science fiction stories be a model to follow?

Chapter Two

“Utopia Justifies the Means”

Introduction

Humans have always tried to understand what a perfect society is and most essentially how one can achieve it. Plato's *The Republic* (c. 380BC) may be the most important model of an ideal world. Moreover,, the Italian Dominican philosopher Thomas Campanella who imagined a utopia in which religion and reason work in total harmony which totally uncommon in most real cases, in *The City of the Sun* (1602). Another well-known example, which is worth to mention, is Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1624), in which prosperity, happiness, and development of the community are actually achieved through education justice.

In Le Guin's and Jemisin's works, utopias and dystopias worlds are featured each in her unique way, but both works share a common objective: sending a moral life lesson to the unjust systems and totalitarian governments.

This chapter deals with themes of Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* as well as Jemisin's *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*. Both of the works are between Utopia and Dystopia tackling huge themes such as happiness, suffering and the power of choice. Moreover, the two short stories are considered science-fiction works since they typically deal with aesthetically imaginative and futuristic concepts.

Le Guin's work is a literary depiction of our world in which she aims to draw attention to scapegoating in societies through the locked child in the city of Omelas. As the title implies, Jemisin's short story *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* revolves around a Utopian city and similar to Le Guin's. However, it takes a different ending; while Le Guin's short story ends with a few people leaving Omelas, Jemisin's ends with people who chose to stay and fight.

In order to reveal a deeper meaning of the two short stories '*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*' and '*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*' and to conduct a thorough analysis which results in identification of themes- surface details, subjective information, objective data and inferences must all be integrated.

These two short stories have in fact similar themes even though the details of both of them are expressed differently, either scenario could express themes of idealism, happiness, suffering and choice –yet, each in a unique way.

2 Happiness as the General Theme of the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas

'The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas' is a story that shows a society living in a total pursuit of happiness and prosperity in a city called "Omelas". In a postscript of the work, the author Le Guin says I sat down and started a story, just because I felt like it, with nothing but the word 'Omela' in mind. The word Omelas which represents the city in her short story came from a road sign that Le Guin once saw in her rearview mirror: Salem (Oregon) backwards." Taking her description of the happy peaceful community, "Omelas" also means "O-peace as well as Salem, Orgon spelled backward.

This charmed town is literally a utopian space that has no need of "kings or slaves," "Nor the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police and the bomb". Old people in long stiff robes suggesting gravity and wealth of experience that surrounds a society inhabit Omelas. It is filled with philosophical artists and workmen; which suggests the rich lushness of life that its people are living in "without the pall of poverty, racism, religious dogma, or draconian governmental structure" (Senior 186).

2.1 The Festival of Summer as a Symbol for Happiness

The short story of Omelas opens in, as David Brooks said in *New York Times* in 2015, “an idyllic, magical place”. In a grand celebratory mood filled with music and a “cheerful faint sweetness of the air”, the story opens with The Festival of Summer a merry procession ending with a horse race. The town decorated with “sparkled” flags, “painted walls”, and lined up with “avenues of trees”, “great parks and public buildings.

The narratorial voice introduced Omelas’ inhabitants dancing on the streets, children, and adults alike” “boys and girls, in the bright air with mud stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms” engaged themselves to rest before The Festival procession or horse race began”. This initial descriptive section representing The Festival of Summer in Omelas suggests a bright atmosphere while informing the celebratory rapturous setting of this merry, happy town.

2.2 Fake Happiness

Moving forward the narrator starts describing a young flute player, a child of about nine to ten years, playing exquisite music, which is according to the narrator, is the prelude to the horse race. Here the narrator poses a question- do we now believe in this picture. This confusing question leads us to the plot twist of the story, which is mostly negative. Implicitly, the narrator stated that the happiness of Omelas citizens is not exactly what it seems to be.

"Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizen of Omelas?

They were not simple folk you see, though they were happy. However, we do not say the words of cheer much anymore. All smiles have become archaic."

(Le Guin 1)

In this passage, the narrator is clearly questioning the readers' judgment with this line "Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? Although Omelas citizens looked extremely joyous, they are not ignorant and thoughtless. In addition, in the line "All smiles have become archaic" the narrator is trying to say that the smiles of these people are simply not real but artificial for some reason.

Later on, the narrator reinforces the implication that their happy attitude and their perfect life is not exactly like what it seems to be:

"Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, and bland utopians. They were not less complex than us." (Le Guin 2)

The quotation above is all about the narrator's way of insisting that the citizens of Omelas are not bland utopians and persuading the readers to not just assume that Omelas is an ordinary utopian society but that it is quite similar to ours. Through this passage, the narrator leave us with a dystopian mirror inescapably hopeless.

When looking to reality, we see that power, force and violence are playing a predominant part in human society. In contrast to an imagined Utopian life, we find people at risk of being tortured or simply losing life or even at risk of receiving cruel and unusual treatment. People killing each other, some of them living their best life while others are suffering. Despite the progress that humans made in technological development and other aspects of life, everything seems to get worse every day, isn't this terrifying?

Sadly, great suffering and injustice are all over our world. As for this, recent cases in Australia and England shed a light upon socio-political injustices for women and many more other cases. However, if we take a closer look at current world events, we find numerous people across the world calling for peace, love and harmony. In an age where information is everywhere, we have never been able to source the truth and the main reasons behind this

Paradox. Moreover, it seems that we are inching closer and closer to Dystopia each time we try to achieve Utopia. Hence, the question, are we already living in a dystopian world?

2.3 Suffering, Deceived and Victimized Child

In the basement of this beautiful city specifically in a locked room, probably a broom cupboard where “mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads, stand near a rusty bucket” and “[t]he floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch”, a child who “could be a boy or a girl” and who “looks about six, but actually is nearly ten” is imprisoned. The necessary and continuous existence of this miserable tormented child is literally the cost of the happiness and harmony that pervades the lives of the inhabitants.

“...there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window....the floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting...” (Le Guin 3)

This passage shows that the world, which the child lives in, is filled with fear, incomprehension and abject neglect. He is dimwitted, malnourished and sadly neglected by everyone living in Omelas. The fact that there is a child hidden beneath the surface of the city of Omelas is a sickening horrible truth. In addition, the appalling living condition he is living in stunted his growth. “It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. «A routine necessary not for its survival but for the corresponding scenes of lightness and wisdom to endure for eternity.

Almost every inhabitant of Omelas, adults and even children when they reach the age of twelve, they would occasionally visit this poor child mostly to be aware that the beauty of this city depends on the suffering of him. The worst part is that none of these people treats him

With respect, instead: “One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes.”

Even though happiness can be achieved in many humane ways, the citizens and everyone in Omelas chose to sacrifice the child’s life in order for them to live happily. This sudden plot twist with such a horrifying scale made Le Guin’s work a masterpiece. However, the fact that the inhabitants are made aware that no change in this social contract can lead to the transformation of the terrible sense of despair that surrounds this child makes it a horrifying truth, a stoic acceptance even. This tells us that each inhabitant in Omelas is “not free”.

2.4 The Ones Who Chose to Leave Omelas

Citizens of Omelas, mostly young people are actually on their way to escape from this dark city after witnessing the child’s misery. These few people obviously could not bear the burden of living happily knowing that there is a single child suffering; the decision that these few people have taken is their way of rebelling against the city and indirectly supporting the child’s freedom.

“These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back.” (Le Guin 5)

According to the story, these people walk straight away from Omelas and never be seen again without revealing what kind of place they are going to nor if this place actually

Exists. This shows that the people who decided to leave this city, no longer want to live in a world in which they are happy while a child is locked.

2.5 The Ones Who Stay and Fight as a Direct Reply to Le Guin's Short Story

The Ones Who Stay and Fight is the opening story in N.K Jemisin's *How Long Till Black Future Month* collection of 22 science fiction and fantasy short stories which was published in 2018. *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* is actually a near African futurism utopia that N.K Jemisin is describing. It was written in conversation with *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* as a direct reply to Le Guin's; at the same time, it pays homage to it:

“This is not Omelas, a tick of a city, fat and happy with its head buried in a tortured child. My accounting of Um-Helat is an homage, true, but there's nothing for you to fear, friend.” (Jemisin 5)

In an interview with NK Jemisin, she says:

“With Le Guin's story, at the end of it, she's suggesting that the only way to create a society that is a better place is to walk away from this one or to go off the grid. That is not really, what she is saying, specifically, but that is what many people have concluded. However, no, you do have to fix it, especially when there is nowhere to walk away to. You go anywhere else in our current world and you're either being completely exploited by capitalism or somewhat exploited by capitalism”

The other thing, which Jemisin was trying to figure out, is what a society might be as if it was genuinely a good perfect place, she also argues that Science-Fiction writers should

And are supposed to imagine futures, futures of different racial, cultural and social backgrounds.

2.5.1 The Festival

The Ones Who Stay and Fight starts by a festival day in the city of Um-Helat, “the Day of Good Birds, a day of sunshine and beauty”. In fact, it is the same way Le Guin opens her story with a similar description of the Festival of Summer in which people were extremely happy in it:

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. (Le Guin 1975)

Um-Helat is a city that consists of many ethnic groups who speak different languages, where everyone is treated equally and its society is perfect in all aspects: housing is for everyone, equality of opportunities and even adaptive equipment for anyone with physical disabilities Um-Helat’s citizens get to live as far as choice, fate and medicine will allow them.

Similar to Omelas, Um-Helat is not a bland utopia, later on, the city of Um-Helat appears to be a world as close to utopia as humans can achieve which means that the system of Um-Helat provides safety, healthcare and food for its citizens but it does not generate money for them. And the intentional efforts of all in the city to equally integrate people of all races into all professions,

“Because the people of Um-Helat are not believers in good intentions as the solution to all ills. No, there are no worshipers of mere tolerance here, nor desperate grovelers for that pittance of respect, which is *diversity*. Um-Helatians are learned enough to understand what must be done to make the world better, and pragmatic enough to actually enact it.” (Jemisin 8)

The author makes the point to say that Um-Helat is not “barbaric America” nor Le Guin's Omelas, which she described as “a tick of a city, fat and happy with its head buried in a tortured child.”

2.5.2 The Attractiveness of What is forbidden in Um-Helat

In Um-Helat, some curious residents could not resist the urge to eavesdrop on a world, which is very different from theirs, in particular, our world. These inhabitants seem to have the ability of looking into our world and get to see us living in different places starving in comparison to the perfection they are having in Um-Helat. “We are remarkably primitive, compared to Um-Helat”. As Um-Helat citizens thrive in prosperity and happiness, they look at what is wrong with Earth, our world, particularly how we as people tend to fail in helping that in need as we focus on building a better future for ourselves.

After Um-Helat people have pioneered technology that allows them to see our world, they have to glean information about our lives; they tap into our social media, watch our TV and even listen to our radio. In fact, this info gleaning is forbidden in Um-Helat, but why is that everything forbidden is what is desired the most? What is prohibited is always more attractive; In Mark Twain's words, “There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspeakably desirable.” In an attempt to feel more empowered, we tend to break the rules and crave the dangerous. Certainly, desires are endless and they do not always lead to permanent peace.

“Even here, where only things that cause harm to others are called evil. The information-gleaners know that what they do is wrong. They know this is what destroyed the old cities. And indeed, they are horrified at what they hear through the speakers, see on the screens” (Mark 45)

Thoughts and curiosity glid those few citizens to obtain information from Earth which is a not an allowed act in their system. The narrator states, “The forbidden is so seductive, is it not?” Apparently, the harmful ideas of our world infect them and corrupt their minds like a virus eventually they turn away from their happy state and become greedy, corrupt and selfish through time.

2.5.3 The Death of the Man Who Spread Information

Utopia seeks to discourage crime by “giving honors and rewards that can incite citizens to do good deeds” (More, 94-95), or as the marginal note comments, “Citizens to be animated by rewards for good conduct.” Um-Helat’s social workers believed that a man from their place has accessed our knowledge of how we usually do things. This man has actually succeeded in spreading hateful ideas in Um-Helat’s community; these ideas involve the denial of equal respect, the advocacy of social hierarchy. What the man has done is not a good conduct the system, therefore, has decided to harshly punish him for breaking the law. The man was tracked and killed for breaching the boundaries of the universe:

“So the social workers of Um-Helat stand, talking now, over the body of a man. He is dead—early, unwilling, with a beautifully crafted pike jammed through his spine and heart. (The spine to make it painless. The heart to make it quick.) This is only one of the weapons carried by the social workers, and they prefer it because the pike is silent.” (Jemisin 9)

This passage suggests that a pike was used to kill the man. In the middle Ages, a pike was a weapon, which was extensively used by soldiers in several battles during the Wars of Scottish Independence where victory was owed to the use of the pike. The social workers chose this silent weapon to make it painless for the man, but at the end, he was killed, wasn’t he?

This man was killed just for spreading information in his city. Um-Helat's principle that a severe crime like info gleaning warrants a severe punishment, which is death, makes it jump from a Utopian society into a dystopian one. If death punishment drives to any moral lesson in Um-Helat, it will be Um-Helations' lives are not sacred and may be at risk whenever the system with its sufficient power with no compelling pragmatic reason chooses to do so. According to the social workers of Um-helat, death punishment prevents the other inhabitants from committing the same act again.

Clearly, it seems wiser to admit that no one can achieve utopia even in the city of Um-Helat whose inhabitants, simply, care for one another. Instead of finding rationale solutions to concrete issues that the city faced, Um-Helations chose to eliminate evil acts by violence. However, how would that actually be achieved without violence?

In his book *Utopia and Violence* philosopher Sir Karl Raimund thinks that discussion, argument, or debate is the only way possible to avoid violence especially in disagreements. In fact, it is undoubtedly true that utopias are different from a place to another and from a person to another too. That is why it is much easier to agree on what is wrong and what is right simply because agreements prevent violence.

2.5.4 A Daughter Being Left Out Alone

Similar to Le Guin's Short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, 'What is shocking in Jemisin's story is that the daughter of this dead man has watched her father die at the hands of the city's caretakers. Painfully seeing her father's lifeless body knowing it would be the last time she would ever see the face she had looked at her entire life.

The social workers decided to kill the man in front of his daughter so that she never thinks to do what her father has committed:

“Beside the man’s body crouches a little girl. She is curly-haired, plump, blind, brown, and tall for her age. Normally a boisterous child, she weeps now over her father’s death, and her tears run hot with the injustice of it all” (Jemisin 2018: 10)

Studies have shown that losing a father is among the most emotionally difficult of children’s experiences. In more concrete terms, the unavoidable intense grief can spiral into depression, helplessness, fear and most importantly rage. This is especially true when the father is murdered in front of his child; the cause of death, and one’s preparation for it, makes a huge difference. A sudden, violent death, for example, can be doubly painful.

Short books for young children such as *I Heard Your Daddy Died* (Scrivani, 1996) and *Sam’s Dad Died* (Holmes, 1999) address issues associated with parental death. These short books introduce empathic approaches to children who lost their fathers. In each case, children’s emotions and needs are fully recognized. After the loss of a father, in most cases, the child’s world is altered; nothing is ever the same for him/her.

Losing a parent is a wholly transformative event in children’s lives; the sudden death is thought provoking and disturbing at the same time. Conflicting with current life-cycle expectations, the loss is incredibly painful and it can make a person question his/her place in the world. However, grief is supposed to be understood and taken as a normal part of the healing process in order to emerge from the experience changed but not broken.

2.5.5 Keeping The Girl Entrenched in the Community

After killing the child’s father, Um-Helelions made sure that the harmed little girl who lost her father by the hands of social workers remains entrenched in her community and that is by giving her agency to address whatever ruined her life through fighting its root cause.

‘Nearly. But then our social worker, the tall brown one who got a hundred strangers to smile at a handmade ladybug, crouches and offers a hand to the child.’

In order to protect the daughter who is also infected with the Earthly ideas her father pursued and shared secretly with her as well as future Um-Helat from anti-utopian changes and the creeping ideologies of injustice that might appear, the girl was educated and initiated into becoming an integral part of Um-Helat’s protection wings: “fighting it. Tooth and nail, spear and claw, up close and brutal; no quarter can be given, no parole, no debate. The child must grow, and learn, and become another social worker fighting an endless war against an idea . . . but she will live, help others, and find meaning in that. If she takes the woman’s hand.” (Jemisin 12)

Both Le Guin’s and Jemisin’s stories contain harm to a child but in different ways. In Jemisin’s story, the little girl is harmed through murdering her father for spreading information from our world which a prohibited act as mentioned before. The city then, decides to take care of the girl and provide her with education in order to preserve utopia in Um-Helat. However, will this take her pain away?

Killing the man who obtained our world’s knowledge in front of his child portrayed how Um-Helations’ rights were not granted to those who broke the law. Nonetheless, despite the prosperity and the security being a crucial aspect in the city of Um-Helat, the inhabitants were still denied the right of freedom to access information of our world.

2.5.6 The Ones Who Chose Staying

In counterpoint to Omelas, we have Jemisin’s Um-Helat; the author mentions “*The Ones Who Stay and Fight*,” the first story in her collection, “is a pastiche of and reaction to [Ursula] Le Guin’s *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*.” Jemisin’s story begins much

the same way as Le Guin's with an incredible description of the Utopian city Um-Helat and its happy citizens of all races and with equal opportunities whether in terms of living conditions or in professions.

The story *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* departs from Le Guin's in their Utopian cities. The inhabitants of Um-Helat have pioneered technology that allows them to spy on our world and get information to spread it into their city. As mentioned before, info gleaned from other worlds is prohibited in Um-Helat because the brutal ideas of our world will corrupt their innocent minds. So the people there are presented with the choice of death or obedience as the only way to stop them from doing so is painless death.

The frustrating part in this story is when Um-Helat's social workers decided to kill the man who spread the hateful ideas in the city in front of his child. This scene served as an evidence that Um-Helat is not a perfect Utopia; instead it is similar to Omelas with its injustice and cruelty towards the little abandoned child.

In reality, people should not strive for a Utopian society and this is because the human endless quest for perfection will only yield dystopian results (Ashcroft 8). At the end, Jemisin's story adds yet another whole different take to Le Guin's by coming with a solution that there is no walking away but rather staying and fighting for change. The narrator of the story asked us as readers to stay and fight for the child and for whatever is unjust:

“So don't walk away. The child needs you, too, don't you see? You also have to fight for her, now that you know she exists, or walking away is meaningless. Here, here is my hand. Take it. Please.

Good. Good.

Now. Let's get to work.”(Jemisin 15)

With *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, at the end of it, Le Guin is suggesting to walk away from the city off to somewhere better, but what if there is nowhere to go to. Well, Jemisin suggests to stay and fix what is wrong instead of just leaving; trying to figure out what are the root causes of the city's issues and finally come up with futures truly good for all people.

Taking a path towards fundamentally addressing issues in order to achieve justice in the city of Um-Helat. In addition, creating a Utopian society where nobody has to suffer while others are literally willing to commit anything for the sake of preserving their happiness. Because everyone deserves joy, safety and freedom, Um-Helat's citizens chose to stay and fight instead of crying behind closed doors.

Conclusion

In the two beautifully written short stories *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and *The Ones Who stay and Fight*, we find Omelas and Um-Helat; two cities that are similar in their Utopia but different in their dystopia. In addition, both cities are carefully constructed in terms of utopian and dystopian features.

In Le Guin's story, the world of Omelas is full of beauty and happiness. However, as we are enjoying the perfection of the city and its inhabitants with their rich lifestyle, we encounter a malnourished child, somewhere in that city, in a windowless room locked away in the darkness. The child's sadness and his abominable misery is the cost for the happiness that surrounds the city of Omelas. Facing this sorrowful reality, Omelas' citizens are presented with only two choices either to stay or to leave; the former justifies the suffering of the child while the latter explains that torturing the child is a cruel act and a very wrong one. Indeed, few of the citizens decided to leave the city entirely rather than live in such a system.

In *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*, while Um-Helat's people are living their full and happy lives, few citizens start consuming information of our world; hateful ideas such as of racism, sexism and capitalism. Fearing the spread of these ideas in the city, the social workers of Um-Helat decided to punish whoever spreads this information by death.

Unfortunately, a little girl who witnessed the murder of her father, who was responsible for bringing such information into Um-Helat, is also considered infected thus, she is presented with only one choice that is accepting her father's death uncritically. It is not until the last paragraph that we meet the people of the title; the ones who chose to stay and fight for the girl and the whole system.

Whether in Omelas or Um-Helat, both inhabitants of the two cities are faced with the same question "what to do when figuring out that peace and prosperity of someone are built on an intense suffering of someone else?"

Both Le Guin's *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and Jemisin's *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* address thorny moral quandaries raised in Um-Helat and Omelas cities. In fact, these short stories depict what suffering does to individuals specifically and communities in general. It is worth noting, as well, that both stories pointed out the wrong acts in Utopian societies and the dark spots where totalitarian leaders ruled the ordinary life of citizens.

Chapter Three

“Totalitarianism and Utopia”

Introduction

Although the readers' interpretations of Le Guin's *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and Jemisin's *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* matters a lot, the authors' intent is pretty much interesting and should be taken into consideration. How *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* was beautifully written and how Jemisin wrote a reactionary one that can stand alongside with Le Guin's, shows how both writers try to depict our world through drawing utopian and dystopian worlds. Therefore, the third chapter is dedicated to the totalitarian implications of both short stories. The focus shall be put on the events behind which both stories were written as well as scapegoating affects a community and turns it from a utopian into a dystopian one.

There is no utopian city without dystopia; this chapter discusses the shift between utopia and dystopia through introducing how one would achieve utopia. In fact, some science fiction literary works pointed out how humans are a real obstacle and a gap between utopia and dystopia, some of them even mentioned the idea of eliminating humans in order to reach perfection. However, would this ever happen?

3 The Historical Background of the Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas and *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* have often been read as metaphors for our existence as well as depictions of the limits and contradictions of Utopian and Dystopian genres. Moreover, the connections between Utopian and Dystopian literature in science fiction are also highlighted in both stories through covering how these energies work together and highly affect each other.

Jemisin and Le Guin's short stories are considered as two political allegories, which are usually used in literature to convey a message or even teach a lesson. The victims who

Have been abused and sacrificed for the good of their communities in both stories, highly represent the lower classes in capitalistic western societies as well as countries of the Third World. In developed countries, the wealth and privilege of the upper classes is usually premised on the denial, exploitation and manipulation of the lower classes.

3.1 Events of the late 1960s and Early 1970s

The events of the late 1960s and early 1970s in America remarkably influenced Le Guin's writing of her story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*. During this period, the United States witnessed a massive political, social and cultural upheaval; events such as Americas' involvement in the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1973 which caused domestic unrest, particularly during the protestations.

Believing that it is possible to build a society based on freedom, peace and love after the war, some youngsters who named themselves flower children started the counterculture movement in America. This movement was called the 'Hippie Movement' and it-rejected America's involvement in Vietnam under the popular slogan "Make love, not war. «Additionally, it protested against materialism and traditional middle-class values.

As an art, Rock 'n' roll took a crucial role of the counterculture movement, and in 1967, the first massive rock gathering was held in Monterey, California. Two years later, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, an event attended by 300,000 people, was held on a dairy farm in upstate New York.

3.1.1 The Civil Rights Movement

Actually, this period in U.S history is well known for the civil rights influential movement. In March of 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.from, led a march

Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, demanding federal protection of blacks' voting rights; in 1965, Thurgood Marshall became the first African American to be elected to the U.S. Supreme Court. A couple of years later, in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was unfortunately assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

3.1.2 The Feminist Movement

Another fruitful and purposeful movement that is worth to mention during this period is the feminist movement that took part in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is usually recognized as the second wave of feminism as it called for equal rights and opportunities and sought for greater personal freedom for women.

In her best bestseller *The Feminine Mystique*, which is a core document for the Second Wave of Feminism, Betty Friedan gave women a new vision of life; she starts out by discussing a quote "the problem that has no name" which is the widespread unhappiness among women during that period. *The Feminine Mystique* also criticizes the functionalism theory, which argues that women were confined to their traditional roles because that is how any society would function the best.

3.1.3 Technological Development in the U.S

From 1965 to 1975, America enjoyed technological development, particularly in space exploration, as well as advances in wages improving living standards across most of the population. In fact, many economists dubbed this period as the "golden age" of American economic performance. As America focused mainly on encouraging innovative activities, new discoveries and industrial products were invented and developed.

The United States embarked on a prolonged shift from resource-led to knowledge-led economic growth. Americans developed the ability to create, distribute and exploit knowledge; these changes implied that technological development and innovation were a key to improve Americans social well-being. However, Americans' response to this incredible rapid economic growth was different from one place to another and from one person to another. During the economic growth, some people became productive and took part to change their world while others did not like development that much.

3.2 *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* as a Depiction of the American Dilemma

In her introduction to "*The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*" Le Guin states that her story is a fictive allegory of the scapegoat as the "dilemma of the American conscience". Le Guin, as a fiction writer, depicts and illustrates but never states the problem explicitly. At least that is what Ms. Le Guin tells us in the introduction she added when the story was collected in *The Wind's Twelve Quarters* (1975). First, she quotes the passage from James's "*The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life*" to which the subtitle refers:

"Fourier's and Bellamy's and Morris's Utopias should all be outdone, and millions kept permanently happy on the one simple condition that a certain lost soul on the far-off edge of things should lead a life of lonely torment.....how hideous a thing would be its enjoyment when deliberately accepted as the fruit of such a bargain?" (William 125)

This passage really exemplifies how Utopias are generally built. Throughout history, humans have been in search of the ideal world; a perfect place built with harmony, peace and prosperity. However, since dreaming of this is not a new phenomenon, one should look back

to the attempts and cruel acts that people have already made in order to achieve their Utopia. Building a Utopia could thus include many sacrifices and take souls and innocent lives.

Through her story, Le Guin offered an argument, a straightforward question rather: Would you walk away from Omelas? As Le Guin may have been painfully aware of the multiple issues surrounding her, she may have related her unique raised question to the particular predicament of the American society during that period. (add the period) plus source.

3.2.1 Discrimination of the African Americans in the U.S

Furthermore, while America became a Utopian place for many rich whites who were living their extreme best life after the changing movements and events that took place between the 1960s and 1970s, it has been a dystopian world full of pain for many African Americans who have been discriminated, excluded from middle-class America or even murdered and lynched.

Through *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, Le Guin might have argued the racial discrimination of African Americans who attended poorer schools, and died earlier than the upper class Americans because of the extreme bad conditions they were living in. African Americans have always been considered an inferior race; back to 1619, European traders on slave ships sold Africans as merchandise across the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies.

At first, they were dropped in the English colony of Virginia where they were forced to work in the farmlands. Later on, most of them were documented into slavery in all the English colonies by 1750. Unfortunately, due to shock, disease and suicide, at least one of them died a day.

During the period of the 17th and 18th centuries, Africans and African Americans were forced to work as slaves on tobacco, rice and different plantations of the southern coast. For

many centuries, African Americans remained subjects to restrictions imposed on them until The Civil Rights Movement came as a dramatic political breakthrough and deliberated a huge step for them securing the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Ursula Le Guin's short story is clearly a critique of the American moral life during that period as well as the relations between the economically advanced West and the "backward" countries of the Third World. In addition, it can be considered as an allegory of the relations between the privileged and unprivileged classes within the West. With its moralistic instructive intentions, Le Guin's short story depicts the American socio-economic system, which unfairly favors the whites over the African Americans.

3.3 The Historical Background of the Ones Who Stay and Fight

As a direct reply to Ursula Le Guin's , *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* being a story of nowadays, conceptualizes the systemic violence, climate change, droughts, violent extremism in our own times and implicitly brings justice and hope. Through her story, Jemisin pays homage to, replies to, and reimagines Le Guin's 1973 story in the twenty-first century by rejecting violence against innocents in general and presenting a model to address issues of any form.

As a matter of fact, Twenty-first century development and advances in America and even worldwide have generated a range of issues and consequences from extreme good to the extreme bad or evil. Put differently, the human endless desire to live perfectly and strive towards Utopia ended in bringing dystopia to the world.

3.3.1 The Ones Who Stay and Fight as a Revolution of Value

The Ones Who Stay and Fight is a Utopia that embodies a revolution of value as well as the intersectional Black feminist praxis at the foundation of contemporary activist groups such as Black Lives Matter, which is a decentralized political and social movement that seeks to highlight racism, discrimination, and inequality experienced by black people. In addition, a movement is meant to bring justice, healing and freedom to Black people across the globe.

It all began in 2012 when George Zimmerman fatally shot a black teenager called “Trayvon Martin”. Activists, then, had to organize an effective lasting movement against racist brutality and navigate the media portrayal of the internet hashtag ‘Black Lives Matter’. The hashtag was made and sparked to end systemic racism.

Although the social media can be a lens through which social movements can be distorted or even silenced, it marked a profound shift and has made the experience of black people more visible. According to Pew Research Center, 17 of Americans self-reported that social media platforms changed their political and social opinions. In fact, spreading Black Lives Matter hashtag on the internet, strengthened empathy and solidarity in the movement.

3.3.1.1 N.K. Jemisin and Black Lives Matter Movement

Nevertheless, Jemisin’s collection title *How Long Till Black Future Month* is from an essay that she once wrote in 2013. Although the essay is not included in her new collection but it was inspired by her childhood trauma being excluded from a genre she loved, and by Janelle Monae “Tightrope” song. As an adult, Jemisin started noticing that the famous

Cartoon the *Jetsons* does not include any black or brown-skinned people at all but only whites. Jemisin quotes:

“How hard it’s been for me to love science fiction and fantasy as a black woman. How much I have had to fight my own internalized racism in addition to that radiating from the fiction and the business. How terrifying it has been to realize *no one thinks my people have a future*. And how gratifying to finally accept myself and begin spinning the futures I want to see.”(Jemisin)

Disheartened by the whitewashed future depicted in “*The Jetsons*”, Jemisin grew up to become a novelist who is changing it with her boundlessly diverse imaginations. In contrast to how other writers depict the future, Jemisin created a marvelous future with black characters in it, even black women:

“On rereading my fiction to select pieces for this collection, I’ve been struck by how hesitant I once was to mention characters’ races. I notice that many of my stories are about accepting differences and change ...and very few are about fighting threats from elsewhere. I’m surprised to realize how often I’d write stories that are talking back at classics of the genre.”~~ N. K. Jemisin, *Introduction*

Through this passage, Jemisin explains how she was hesitant to mention characters’ races in her works. She also mentions that, through her stories, she tries to transmit messages for her readers about accepting differences and change.

3.3.1.1.1 How Jemisin fought for Afrofuturism

How Long Till’ Black Future Month collection of short stories is a love letter from Jemisin to culture and diversity, it includes stories that are somewhere on spectrum of sci-fi

And fantasy. The name of the collection deeply address the different diversities and race politics as we can find characters of different genders as well as people of different cultural backgrounds within the black community. The collection is advancing an inclusive conversation that includes all black voices, and the justice that the readers get at the end is meaningful and real for everyone in the community and this gives hope of how black-skinned people can move forward.

The short stories of this collection highly reflect the everyday challenge of being black in America particularly and worldwide in general. In order to force change and make the black voices heard, Jemisin, through her short stories, chose to show how balancing optimism with despair would actually enable black people to celebrate their progress.

In fact, people often over focus on the struggle and what they overcome as black people in America. However, Jemisin comes with her short stories collection *How Long Til Black Future Month* in order to remind us that the issues which black people encountered, slavery among them, only interrupted and does not even equal the black history.

It is just as important to celebrate the Black future, as it is to honor its past. Jemisin invites us to start visioning for the future and what blacks need to do in order to thrive. Through her collection, and how the different stories in it intersect and connect in addition to how they are similar and dissimilar, Jemisin shows us how to earn and celebrate the Black History by continuing to pull on threads and deepen the knowledge about the Black heritage.

3.4 Totalitarian Governments

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill brought the classical conception of totalitarianism into the public sphere around the turn of the 19th century. Banthem argued that the moral quality of any action should be determined instrumentally as opposed to

Intrinsically. In his view, good consequences equal good actions; this means that we, as humans, should focus on the results of any action, or its consequences, at the same time intentions should be treated as irrelevant.

As opposed to egoism, Utilitarianism is other-regarding; it says that we should pursue pleasure or happiness- not just for ourselves, but also for as many sentient beings as possible. To put it formally, the greatest good should be for the greatest number. In doing so, however, we find that we have chosen to do some actions that would bring the most overall happiness for the community, even though it produced less happiness or even pain for others.

Should Batman kill the Joker? For Batman, killing is a red line that should never be crossed. No matter what Joker does, Batman punishes him only by throwing him back to Arkham. Nevertheless, Joker always finds a way to get out and kill again. In addition, when he does won't that be Batman's fault? Since Batman has been in so many positions to kill Joker and stop him permanently from his cruel acts and save everyone's life, is he morally pure because he did not kill? Alternatively, is he morally dirty because he did not serve his people by stopping the bad person? By not killing Joker, Batman is sticking to the moral rulebook, which there are never exceptions, reasons and excuses for violating the already established moral rules. No matter what happens Batman tries his best to stick to his code "no killing".

20th century British Philosopher Bernard Williams offered a thought experiment named 'Thought Bubble'. In a botanical expedition in South America, Jim meets a group of indigenous people who are about to be executed by soldiers for protesting their oppressive regime. Since he is a guest in their land, soldiers decided to offer Jim the chance to shoot one of those people; the leader tells Jim that if he shoots one of them, he will simply let go of the others. If he refuses to do so, all of them will be shot.

As a critique for utilitarianism, Williams presents Jim's case in order to prove that utilitarianism is a demanding moral theory. According to the story, Jim is demanded to shoot one so that the others will be saved. Arguably, Williams thinks that no moral theory ought to demand the taking of an innocent life.

3.4.1 Totalitarian Implications in Le Guin's *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and Jemisin's *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* Short Stories

3.4.1.1 Scapegoating

In their simplicity, Le Guin's and Jemisin's stories introduce the base of the cultural, political and social structure of our societies as being based on the suffering of the weak, the disliked and the monstrous other. Rebecca Adams suggests "that the mythological order of any society is based on the scapegoat mechanism" she, then, identifies the story of Omelas as containing a violent dark underside to it (36), that the child is Omelas' scapegoat, forced to live alone in fear and misery so that others can live happily in a dark filthy basement:

"They all know that it is there t hey all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weather of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery" (Adams)

The notion of the "permanently happy condition", as James postulated, at the expense of "a certain lost soul" leading "a life of lonely torture" is a "hideous bargain" is evocatively described in this story. However, Shoshana Knapp points out, that more than James' passage the story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* was heavily influenced and shaped by

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), Knapp explains that instead of the abstract idea presented in James' formulation, the child's abject condition, "malnutrition, mental torment and filth" recalls Ivan talking to his brother Alysha about whether or not it was acceptable to terrorize an individual at the cost of someone else's happiness.

For Knapp, this story in its recall of Dostoevsky's Ivan and Alysha's refusal of such happiness; provides a broader picture than James free-floating hypothesis of bargain. Knapp states that in this the inhabitants of Omelas are "on trial as moral agents" and that Le Guin's real "subject is the proper morality of art itself" with narrator as deceiver, and being the creator of Omelas is actually an "indictment of God" (75-78).

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas is a fabricated reality with many already established rules that we would consider an ordinary reality. The exchange of the locked child for the slender and well-being of the whole city's inhabitant's falls under the construction of the world Omelas since no explanation about the reasons behind this cruel act is given. This will lead the readers to re-think about what could be considered right and wrong as well as to challenge their own preconceived notions of morality.

For instance, there are millions of people worldwide with different cultural, social and racial backgrounds starving everyday working so hard to be able to put a roof over their heads, and yet the majority of upper class and even middle class people do not think about them at all. One should rise the question why is it this way? Why do some people suffer while others live happily? Or to put it simply is it just that some of us happen to be lucky enough to have access to anything they could possibly desire while are others are unlucky and struggle, this is quite similar to the case of the child, isn't it?

3.4.1.2 The Importance of Choice

3.4.1.2.1 The Ones who Chose to Leave

By focusing on those few people who visited the child and saw the bad conditions he was living in while they were enjoying their best time then decided to leave Omelas, Le Guin was trying to get us to question the notion of utilitarianism as a guiding principle in our ethical conflicts.

Adams reads the journey of those inhabitants of Omelas who choose to walk away as a journey into the unknown, as rejecting patriarchal oppressing regime. And the narrator's inability to fully describe the place "feminine position" to embody a cultural order that is non-cruel and that which transcends the scapegoat mechanism as illustrated in the patriarchal structures, institutions and practices of religion, family, law and aesthetic works (36).

Those who walk away from Omelas are "incredible," as the narrator points out because they refuse the imposed restrictions of a Utopia. All of this entails a moral choice and a responsibility to balance the individual desires with those of the interests of the rest of the society.

3.4.1.2.2 The Ones Who Chose to Stay and Fight

In order to keep a utopian society free and equitable, Um-Helat calls to kill everyone who tries to spread any ideas of hate, violence or sadness in the city. Near the end of the story, we discover that Um-Helat is not just another universe that is far away from ours, but it is our future, which is built on our societies after centuries of technological development and its effects, pandemics, wars and natural disasters.

The Ones Who Stay and Fight presents the idea that in order to live in happiness and goodness, one must stay in the city and fight for his future:

“So don’t walk away. The child needs you, too, don’t you see? You also have to fight for her, now that you know she exists, or walking away is meaningless.” (Jemisin, 14)

Moreover, if we dig deeply, we find that Jemisin, through her story, is trying to convey a real message to the world, that it is high time we changed and enacted justice. The story ends with a call and perhaps a call to action in order to change any society that oppresses few people for the benefit of others.

3.5 Between Utopia and Dystopia

In reality, there is no perfect Utopia, total peace and harmony or even possible limitless freedom where there are no rules to limit people’s acts, what could be the reasons for this inability to create a perfect human Utopia then? In fact, humans are regarded as a force who does harm more than good, which usually results in a shift from Utopia to Dystopia. This shift seems to point to an uncertainty on what a good society is and whether is it possible to create a perfect one or not.

Works like Alan Weisman’s book *The World Without Us* (2007), together with films including *The Future is Wild* (2002), *Aftermath: Population Zero* (2008) and *Life after People* (2008, 2010), invite us to imagine the planet without humans as an idyllic place where non-human beings thrive once again. Following this perspective, then, humankind has taken over a role in divinity and became destroyers of nature.

In the book *The Host*, souls have taken control of humans, planet Earth had finally reached a supposedly utopian situation:

“Hostilities with the few remaining pockets of humans were all but over. The planet called Earth was as peaceful and serene as it looked from space, invitingly green and blue, wreathed in its harmless white vapors. As the way of the soul, harmony was universal now.” (MEYER,. 20)

The goal of the souls ‘invasion of planet Earth was supposedly achieved: they had made the planet a better place. Their motive to invade the planet and take over humans ‘lives is that human beings did not take good care of their planet and were living in chaos, in a world filled with violence and pollution. The souls ‘intention was to deal with the problem – get rid of the humans – and save the planet.

Moylan, from the other hand, discusses the difference between anti-utopians, who still believe in humankind’s ability to survive the worst distortions of progress (MOYLAN, 2000, p. 124). From being regarded as a curse, people can be peace loving, simple-minded and egalitarian.

In a Utopia, people are supposed to live together in peace where there is a stable economy through which everyone has a fulfilling job and an access to both health care and education. Addionnally, a Utopian environment is clean and nature is everywhere, beauty surrounds you and most importantly there is freedom of thought, action, equality and tolerance between races and genders.

Working hard to achieve this Utopia, thinking that with each step humans are making a progress towards a better tomorrow but at its core there is corruption, crime-thoughts, stress, hurt and pain, Fernando Birr, an argentine film-maker, says: «Utopia lies at the horizon , when I draw nearer by two steps, it retreats two steps. If I proceed ten steps forward. It swiftly slips ten steps ahead. No matter how far I go, I can never reach it. What, then, is the purpose of utopia? It’s for this: so I cannot stop walking.”

As this quote tells, if humans keep striving for the horizon, they may never actually reach it. However, as the quote says, we certainly can work to get close as we can; one should believe that things could be better and keep fighting for it. According to Rebecca Adams, Le Guin's story is «recognition of the impossibility of an alternative vision of culture» (35-36) as if utopia in our world is always another instance of dystopian imagination; when utopian visions are taken to the extreme the world will surely get affected negatively and the sweet dreams will eventually turn into nightmares.

For Lee Cullen Khanna, in its representation of the failures of utopian imagination, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* can be read as being “prominently inflected by gender.” Khanna points out the first images of the city Omelas as warm and inviting, the narrator's enthusiastic voice in its description entails gendered conceptualizations and “may contribute to the perpetuation of other gender stereotypes.”

An example to mention: “Omelas includes “grave master workmen and quiet merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked.” (Guin “Omelas”) Later “an old woman, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket,” as “tall young men wear her flowers in their shining hair” (ibid.).

The gender of the artist is, notably, a “he” while the victimized child in the story is, perhaps significantly, not gender specific” (48). Rebecca Adams suggests the victimization; the scapegoat mechanism operating in the city of Omelas is an instance of patriarchal violence that is present in our society.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter attempts to investigate post-modernist aspects as well as totalitarian implications that are made in both short stories. The social fabric of both short stories came up to be weakened; a minority of the community was suppressed and discouraged by the majority of them.

Although both works are considered disturbing and sometimes thought provoking as they include a huge shift from Utopia to Dystopia, which makes readers lose hope at some point, both short stories gave interesting insights about life in general. Both stories get readers to good thinking about both the present and the future.

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas and *The Ones Who Stay and Fight* are two beautifully constructed short stories. Both stories present only two choices leave and change nothing or stay and fight everything no matter what the consequences would be. While reading both stories, we find ourselves experiencing them, this encourage us, as readers, to consider the writers' experiences and even reveal our own interpretations.

General Conclusion

The ones who put their happiness over everything even the lives of innocent people in fact succeeded in destroying Omelas and Um-Helat utopian vibes. As a matter of fact, sadly, our reality is similar to what both of the cities became; humans are weird, sometimes they are selfish, other times they are kindred souls who act friendly, and never stop believing. Being scared and confused makes people think how to get rid of all the negative energies surrounding them. Thus, they start acting cruelly, striving to reach Utopia without considering the effects of it.

To sum up, the first chapter offered a theoretical framework and a literature review of this study. The researcher explained the post modernism theory as well as the Historicism theory along with their principles and concepts. After that, the researcher presented readers with a literature review of Utopian and Dystopian literature as literary genres in short fiction stories. Finally, the chapter introduced Ursula Le Guin and N.K. Jemisin as writers of science fiction stories as well as synopsis of the two *short stories* *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*.

In the second chapter, the study concluded that Utopia justifies the means. Put simply, in order to reach Utopia, which is the most desired concept in our world, one must justify his means, meaning that he/she would find excuses for whatever evil they did. Creating a utopia simply means to do evil and not think about it, the most important thing is one's happiness and not that of others, which is rather considered selfish.

Finally, the third chapter, attempted to investigate the totalitarian implications in the two analyzed short stories. Certainly, if a utopia is going to be created, sacrifices must take place, consequently, totalitarianism is going to take part in the place's construction, which obviously leads us to dystopianism. Additionally, from the above explanation and analysis we

Are able to understand that all Utopias will eventually turn into dystopias if we keep going on the same path.

Overall, the results of this study might aid in rediscovering and understanding how utopias can be built without actually going through a dystopia, as well as supporting future researchers investigating other short stories that are related to utopias and science fiction. However, this research focused mainly on totalitarianism, yet the area of research could be analyzed from various perspectives.

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Résumé

Le désir interminable des humains à vouloir créer leurs espace personnel utopique reflète énormément le mécontentement de ces humains de l'imparfait ainsi de l'obsession historique avec tous ce qui est considéré parfait. Cependant, le désir lié à l'utopique est ironiquement devenu une réalité dystopique. Cette étude tend à analyser l'histoire courte de Ursula Le Guin's intitulé *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* et la réponse directe de N.K Jemisin intitulé *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*.

Cette recherche examine les thématiques des deux histoires courtes qui sont, le bonheur, la souffrance, le bouc émissaire, le choix et les facteurs qui ont été en cause que les villes Omelas et Um-Halet devenir dystopique après avoir été utopique. En s'adaptant la théorie du postmodernisme ainsi que la nouvelle théorie de la critique, le chercheur met en œuvre le refus des implications totalitaire dans les deux courtes histoires, ainsi que la description et l'analyse du décalage entre Utopie et Dystopie et les raisons derrière cela. Cette recherche montre que *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*, et *The Ones Who Stay and Fight*, comme de courtes histoires de science-fiction font une représentation du monde comment nous, les humains, avons tendance à vivre heureux alors que d'autres souffrent ailleurs. Tout au long des deux nouvelles, la recherche conclut que toutes les utopies sont en fait des dystopies.

Mots Clefs : utopie, dystopie, le bouc émissaire, totalitarisme, Ursula Le Guin, N.K Jemisin.