

## MORALITY CHECK ESSAY 3

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## **My Judgment about the Life in Omelas**

### **Answer #A:**

Omelas is a happy, utopian society with a problem: its happiness is predicted on the misery of a child who lives inside a closet under the city. From his deprivation, they understand how important happiness is and how cruel justice can be. People who live there should feel exist with constant happiness without any feeling of guilt. Most of them are also not afflicted with worry and distress which are said to be common in the real world. Furthermore, the child is dehumanized throughout the story. The child is living a miserable life against his will. The child is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy the people delude themselves into believing that the child is deserving of whatever pain and suffering befall on them. This is the ultimate moral dilemma in Omelas, to choose between the happiness of the whole or the happiness of one, and the guilt of having to live with both decisions.

### **Answer #B:**

This has definitely given me a sad feeling after reading the story. Imagine a society where you can see a helpless child and clearly wants to get out of the situation. However, no one in the city wants to help the child. Some were affected at first, but they did nothing or just chose to walk away from the city. This is because the perfection of the city rests on the suffering of the child. It actually hit me that even though you walk away from the city, the child will still be in that same situation unless everyone leaves the city. Thus, I could never feel any joy upon knowing this kind of utopian society. Based on my reaction, I would say that I take utilitarianism as the kind of moral attitude that I have. Utilitarian, like the Australian philosopher Peter Singer, take this idea of treating everyone equally very seriously (Hampton, 2021). I believe that I have the same obligation to help needy strangers in far-off places as we have to help those closest to

us. Thus, I would feel the guilt if ever I would see someone who was abused and deprived. I would plan to take a step on how I can help that someone so that I could save him from pain and suffering. On top of that, I feel sad with Utopian experience. Utopians are idealized visions of a perfect society. The belief that humans are perfectible leads, inevitably, to mistakes when “a perfect society” is designed for an imperfect species like human beings (Brooks, 2015). I believe that there is no best way to live because there is so much variation in how people want to live. Utopians have something to do with failure and tell us more about our own limits and weaknesses than they do about perfect societies. In this kind of society, they need to maintain a perfectly equal and errorless environment which leads to violations of some of our basic human rights. Thus, I totally feel sad about this kind of society. It takes away our freedom to be human beings. I believe that this is only a secret strategy for selfish leaders to manipulate the minds and behavior of the people who live in a Utopian society (Hampton, 2021).

**Answer #C:**

If given a chance to change the whole situation, I would change the condition that the happiness of the people of Omelas depends on the suffering of a child who is locked up in a closet. I would have the people of Omelas believe that happiness comes from within a person from the actions they partake in but not from the suffering of a small child. This would make the child to be set free and to be shown love and everyone would be happy in that scenario. Subsequently, happiness would come from the activities such as picnics, social gatherings, having accomplished something, and reaping the fruits and as a result, the town of Omelas would continue to strive and grow. For me, I would leave Omelas. This is because the moral stance I would be using would be the utilitarianism approach which states that actions are morally right if they are useful or are beneficial to the majority. Leaving Omelas would mean that people of

Omela would be happy because they still have the child and the majority who are the citizens of Omela are happy. Moreover, my decision to leave is because the guilt of knowing that my happiness came at the cost of a small child's suffering would be unbearable (Brooks, 2015). I would not be able to be happy knowing very well there is a small child locked up in a closet who is suffering and on top of that the citizens of Omela would be acting as if there is no child who is suffering. Their smiles and happiness would disgust me even more as deep down within I would be knowing their happiness is from the suffering of a small child (Brooks, 2015).

However, before leaving Omela, I would do something for the child. Before leaving the town, I would bring some food to the child and I would make arrangements for the child to be receiving food even when I am away. Also, I would organize for the child to be allowed to have some fresh air that is, take a walk under the care of the trusted person who would be bringing food to the child. This would be done in secret as I am sure the people of Omela would not allow this. While taking the walk, the child would be disguised and to me, I believe these actions would also mean the child would not be going hungry and the child would not be malnutrition. This means I would not affect the happiness of the people of Omela.

**Answer #D:**

In terms of consequentialist theories, moral worth is conferred to an act if it bears good consequences and not by judging the act itself, proponents of these theories argue that the end justifies the means. This entails that a seemingly evil act can be ethical if it has good results, the good outweighs the bad. In this case, the act of depriving the child is seemingly evil but the result it has is good such that it can justify the evil (Hampton, 2021). My ethical morals being based on the utilitarianism approach would mean that the act of keeping the child in the closet deprived of everything for the sake of the happiness of the Omela people is justifiable. This is

because the majority who are the citizens of Omelas are happy even if it means under a cost. To me, this is morally right because the majority are happy. Also, the consequences of keeping the child locked up would mean a better Omelas in that the people are happy is a fact that the consequences are bearing sweet fruits that is happiness. If the child was to be rescued this would mean that all the people of Omelas would be unhappy. This would mean the suffering of the whole town and since being a utilitarianist, I would suggest that this would not be right that the whole town of Omelas suffers (Hampton, 2021).

## References

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<https://www.utilitarianism.net/utilitarian-thinker/peter-singer>.

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