An Analysis of Lexical Opposition: Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas"

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Summary

The creation of contrasting worlds within a given text is a common literary technique in fictional prose. While such contrasts are invoked by some sort of "textual" parallelism, the term "parallelism" in literary stylistics is usually reserved for the specific study of text units, namely sentences in prose and lines in poetry. Furthermore, studies in fictional prose have approached textual parallelism with focus on narrative style or organisation of text, and not the stylistic effects at the lexical level. To examine such parallelism in terms of lexis, one needs to visit semantic theories, where the terminology to describe lexical opposites exists; it does so, however, apart from literary studies, and subsequently, requires expansion. Thus, this paper examines lexical opposition in fictional prose by offering a taxonomy based primarily on D.A. Cruse (1988) and applying it to the parallelism found in Ursula Le Guin's short story "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas". Specifically, following a discussion of the general features of language found in the Le Guin text, this study focuses on the use of adjectives as lexemes of semantic opposition.

Opsomming

Die skepping van kontrasterende wêrelde binne 'n gegewe teks is 'n algemene literêre tegniek in fiksionele prosa. Hoewel sulke kontraste deur een of ander soort "tekstuele" parallelisme opgeroep word, word die term "parallelisme" gewoonlik in literêre stilistiek gereserveer vir die spesifieke studie van tekseenhede, naamlik sinne in prosa en versreëls in poësie. Daarbenewens het studies in fiksionele prosa tekstuele parallelisme benader vanuit 'n fokus op narratiewe styl of teksorganisasie en nie vanuit die stilistieke effekte op die leksikale vlak nie. Om sulke parallelisme op grond van leksis te ondersoek, is dit nodig om semantiese teorieë in aanmerking te neem, waar die terminologie bestaan om leksikale opposisie te beskryf; hierdie beskrywing sluit egter literêre studies uit en gevolglik benodig dit uitbreiding. Hierdie artikel ondersoek dus leksikale opposisie in fiksionele prosa deur 'n taksonomie aan te bied wat hoofsaaklik gebaseer is op D.A. Cruse (1988) en dit toe te pas op die parallelisme in Ursla Le Guin se kortverhaal "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas". Na 'n bespreking van die algemene kenmerke van die taal in die Le Guin-teks, fokus hierdie studie spesifiek op die gebruik van adjektiewe as lekseme van semantiese opposisie.

Keywords: lexical semantics; literary stylistics; opposition; parallelism; adjectives; D.A. Cruse; U. Le Guin.

1 Introduction

The use of contrasting textual worlds is a common literary technique of fictional prose: Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1996) makes its points about class and society by showing a contrast between the world of Mansfield Park and that of Portsmouth; in modern Native American fiction, such as in Leslie Silko's *Ceremony* (1988) and N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1998), the Indian versus non-Indian worlds are opposed to relay themes about white influence and the loss of native traditions; and another example can be found in John Updike's *Memories of the Ford Administration* (1992), which portrays the conflicts of its main character by contrasting the free love of the 1970s (when Gerald Ford was President of the United States of America) to the social restrictions of the 1850s (when John Buchanan was President).

For literary stylisticians, descriptions of opposition in prose texts have been somewhat limited to studies of narrative style with emphasis on the text level, with little said of the lexical opposition. One notable exception to this, however, is Lodge's analysis of vocabulary in *Mansfield Park* (1966: 94-113), which focuses on the terms of human behaviour in the text and culminates with the theme of "secularization of spirituality". Though rigorous and insightful in classifying relevant words according to domains of "social or secular" and "moral or spiritual" values (pp. 99-103), Lodge's analysis is exclusive of semantic theories and their contributions to lexical opposition (in part, it must be said, because some of the major works in semantics came out after Lodge's book).[1]

More recently, in Short (1996: 67), the occurrence of opposition in literary texts has been described as part of what he terms the "parallelism rule": "When readers come across parallel structures they try to find an appropriate semantic relationship between the parallel parts. This is often a relationship of quasi-synonymy or quasi-antonymy ...." While this mention of antonymy, in terms of "quasi-antonymy", lends itself to a general understanding of the type of opposition employed in fictional prose, to find a more detailed account of such semantic opposition, one needs to go to semantic theories, where terminology in this area has been developed, albeit exclusive of literary studies.

The purpose of this paper is to bring some of the insights on lexical opposition from the field of semantics into literary analysis to facilitate a description of textual opposition. Specifically, I will offer a taxonomy of lexical opposition based primarily on D.A. Cruse (1988) and apply it to the parallelism

found in Ursula Le Guin's short story "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" (1973). Given that an analysis in this vein presupposes that linguistic patterns, such as repeated lexical opposition, have a function, or render "stylistic effects", I shall first consider the issue of stylistic effects as it pertains to this analysis. This will be followed by another introductory section, which addresses the general features of language used in the Le Guin text in order to provide linguistic context needed to examine lexical opposition and to explain the choice of narrowing the linguistic focus of this study to the use of adjectives.

1.1 Stylistic Effects and the Case of "Omelas"

Taylor and Toolan argue that functionalist theories which try to identify stylistic effects are flawed due to the questionable presence of critical perspective:

> When we recall that it is from the critical perspective of function that the functionalist stylistician is obliged to identify features and patterns of stylistic form, it may be seen that the problem of first identifying functions is a crucial one .... Indeed, the notion of producing such criteria becomes even more implausible when we ask ourselves whether one and the same passage (or utterance) can justifiably be assumed to have the same function (effect, significance, value, etc.) for each of its readers or whether function is not, to some degree, imposed upon the passage by those who read it.
>
> (Taylor & Toolan: 1996: 89)

These criticisms of functionalist stylistics are worth noting inasmuch as any interpretation of the function of a passage is exposed to variables ranging from the reader's unique perspective to sociohistorical features of context. Moreover, Taylor and Toolan have rightly pointed out the need for criteria of functionality.

In recognition of these issues, the Le Guin text was chosen for analysis. "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" is a story that alternates between a third-person narration, which describes the fictitious town of Omelas, whose inhabitants are quite happy, but live with the knowledge that their happiness depends on the suffering of one child,[2] and a first-person commentary, which discusses this paradox and questions the existence of such a place. The latter, "the essay-within-the-story", in turn provides some critical perspective and confirms that the contrastive worlds of "utopian" Omelas and that of the suffering child function to make a point. This story, therefore, provides a rare opportunity to bypass a criterion of functionality and, finding that stylistic effect does indeed operate in the text, to analyse that effect with respect to linguistic patterning, in this case, that of lexical opposition.

1.2 The Language of "Omelas"

While the entire text of "Omelas" could be analysed as an essay within a story, and indeed the two points of view created by the narrator reflect two styles of prose (as summarised in Appendix A), in order to examine the creation of two opposing worlds in terms of lexical opposition, the focus of this analysis is more appropriately placed on lexemes in the text. The two distinctive texts within the text will serve later, however, in allowing this study to extract the descriptive third-person narration as the relevant portion of text wherein are created the contrasting worlds within Omelas. In the chart below the lexemes for the entire text are summarised according to major grammatical categories. For the purpose of comparison, I have followed Leech and Short (1981) and Short (1996) by including the Ellegård norm.[3]

Characteristics	Le Guin Text	Ellegård Norm
Number of orthographic words	2797	
Nouns - number	813	
- Percent of whole	29,1	27,2
Main Verbs - number	405	
- Percent of whole	14,5	12,1
Adjectives - number	358	
- Percent of whole	12,8	7,4
Adverbs - number	78	
- Percent of whole	2,7	5,3

In addition to providing a broad overview of the grammatical characteristics of the language of the text, these numbers assist in accounting for lexemes relevant to the textual creation of the two opposing worlds of Omelas. For instance, the occurrence of adverbs is relatively low and upon closer examination do not lend themselves to the descriptive power of the text; these adverbs are typically those expressing frequency, such as "continually", "occasionally", and "often", and

doubt, such as "perhaps" and "possibly", and not ones which express condition or manner, such as "happily" or "disgustedly" (for which the adjective forms do appear in the text).

The use of nouns, which is slightly above the Ellegård norm, does contribute more to the creation of opposing worlds, especially those which occur in the descriptive narration, as summarised in the chart below. However, while they depict two *different* worlds and reveal differences in frequencies of abstract and concrete nouns, these lexemes are not, strictly speaking, *opposites*.

Summary of Nouns in Descriptive Narration (N = 635)

Characteristic	Utopian Omelas	Suffering-Child Scene
Human	104 (16.4%)	94 (14.8)*
Concrete	277 (43.6%)	106 (16.7%)
	Selected examples:	
	avenues	belly
	babies	bowl
	banners	bucket
	bells	buttocks
	boats	child/children
	child/children	corner
	crowd	door
	flags	excrement
	flowers	eyes
	gardens	grease
	meadows	mops

Characteristic	Utopian Omelas	Suffering-Child Scene
	parades	room
	parks	sores
	rituals	spectators
	streamers	streets
	streets	tears
	tambourines	walls
	trumpet	window
Abstract	18 (2.8%)	36 (5.6%)
	Selected examples:	
	brilliance	anger
	courage	helplessness
	langour	impotence
	lightness	malnutrition
	rapture	misery
	sweetness	neglect
	triumph	outrage

* "It" is used to refer to the suffering child and is treated here as a "human" noun as are other personal pronouns.

The main verbs used in the descriptive narrative also have a limited role in showing the contrastive worlds of Omelas. This is principally because of a frequent use of the copula, which accounts for 29.6% of the verbs used in the descriptive narration.[4] Nevertheless, some general observations on verb usage are worth noting. Verbs of movement as well as the copula dominate the description of utopian Omelas; the passage which opens the story demonstrates

this (the main verbs have been underlined):

> With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in the harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-germ gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked in. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance.
>
> (Le Guin 1973: 253)

The main verbs in the passages describing the suffering child and the reaction of those who see the child include mainly psychological verbs (showing feeling and thought) and sensory verbs (having to do with perception) as well as the copula. This is illustrated in the passages below:

> In a basement under one of the public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, second-hand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads, stand near a rusty bucket.
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> ... 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. The food bowl and water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks.
>
> (Le Guin 1973: 255-256)

The strong reliance on the copula in addition to the fact that adjectives occur with such frequency (12.8% of all words, compared with the Ellegård norm of 7.5%) makes adjectives the best choice for a focused analysis of lexical opposition in the case of the "Omelas" text. Relevant adjectives in the order in which they appear in the text are listed below and are analysed in Section 3, following an overview of the classification of opposites in Section 2.[5]

Adjectives in the Descriptive Narration (N=235)	
Utopian Omelas	**Suffering-Child Scene**
decorous	cobwebbed
excited	stiff
cheerful	foul-smelling
happy	rusty
splendid	feeble-minded
handsomest	defective
magnificent	imbecile
beautiful	horrible
dreamy	frightened
wonderful	disgusted
boundless	thin
generous	abominable
marvelous	shocked
amiable	sickened
rich	vile
fat	degraded
shining	uncouth
sweet	bitter
mature	vapid
intelligent	
passionate	

2 A Taxonomy for Lexical Opposition

Lexical opposites have received considerable treatment by semantic theorists, and D. A. Cruse (1986: 197-262), basing much of his terminology on Lyons (1977), offers a rigorous analysis of the basic types of opposites. Here, I use Cruse's general categorisation of opposites as antonyms, complementaries and directional opposites. For literary texts, often employing a richer lexis of implied and multiple meanings, however, Cruse's typology needs to be extended.

Following Cruse (pp. 204-220), I use the term "antonym" in the restricted sense, as found in pairs like "good"/ "bad" and "hot"/ "cold" and to describe certain properties, such as length and speed. Thus, antonyms are fully gradable, and are therefore, nearly always adjectives. Cruse delineates antonyms by three basic types: polar, overlapping and equipollent antonyms (1986: 208-209). Polar antonyms are "typically evaluatively neutral and objectively descriptive", as in "long"/ "short". In overlapping antonyms, which are also evaluative, one term is commendatory and the other is deprecatory, as in "good"/ "bad" and "polite"/ "crude". Equipollent antonyms refer to "distinctly subjective sensations or emotions, or evaluations based on subjective reactions, rather than 'objective' standards"; this describes pairs like "happy"/ "sad" and "nice"/ "nasty". As will be shown in the analysis of the Le Guin text, the overlapping and equipollent antonyms occur frequently.

Cruse defines "complementaries" as opposition between two terms, usually verbs or adjectives, for which there is "no possible third term lying between them" (p. 199). He gives the example of the pair "dead"/ "alive". In such cases, the negation of one term implies the assertion of the other; not X implies Y (Jackson 1988: 75). Complementaries are also defined by the fact that they are normally not gradable (Cruse 1988: 202). In literary analysis, this term could apply to a lexical description of Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice": in its literal sense, something which is on fire cannot at the same time be covered in ice; in one of its metaphorical senses, a world at war cannot be a world at peace.

The third major classification accounts for opposites which, if viewed linearly, suggest movement going in opposite directions. Cruse notes that "many opposites clearly owe their oppositeness to the fact that they encapsulate the basic directional opposition, or represent a conceptual transformation or metaphorical extension of it" (p. 223). While Cruse classifies this further into many types, here I focus on those useful to the description of Le Guin's and potentially other literary texts.[6] For instance, one type of directional opposite is the antipodal opposite, "in which one term represents an extreme in one direction along some salient axis, while the other term denotes the corresponding extreme in the other direction" (pp. 224-225); examples in this category range greatly

given metaphorical extensions, and thus, would include "start"/ "finish", "cellar"/ "attic" and "maximum"/ "minimum" for which numerous terms could fit in between.

Cruse's final category of directional opposites, and that which is overall the most relevant category to this study, is the "pseudo-opposite" (pp. 241-243), which seems akin to Short's quasi-antonyms. Lexemes which are pseudo-opposites are often context-dependent and/or have an opposition which lacks symmetry. Cruse cites the following example: "In the game of chess between Arthur and Miriam, it was not a white piece that was accidently knocked off the table". Here, "black" is the understood complementary in this context. The fact that black is not mentioned, makes this opposition a "pseudo-complementary". Cruse also gives the example of "patient"/ "doctor", whereby part of the definition of patient is "a patient of X" where X is a medical practitioner, i.e. the "doctor".

This category is serviceable in allowing for the contextualisation of lexemes required of literary studies, yet it needs to be expanded to account for a greater range of opposition. In Cruse's example involving a chess game, once the context, i.e. a schema about chess games, is added, the pair "black"/ "white" makes for a polar antonym when kept in its literal sense, and an overlapping antonym in one of its metaphorical senses (whereby one term is given a deprecatory meaning and the other a commendatory meaning). Such multiplicity of meaning is not covered by Cruse's definition of "pseudo-opposites".

Furthermore, even with the addition of context, there are other occurrences of opposites for which these categories do not so neatly apply. In his analysis of *Mansfield Park,* Lodge points out a word group suggesting the moral/spiritual order of the story: "conscience, duty, evil, good, principle, right, wrong, vice". While some of these terms make antonym pairs such as "evil"/ "good" and "right"/ "wrong", others make for less exact pairs, such as "conscience"/ "duty", "principle"/ "vice", "good"/ "vice", and "good"/ "wrong". In these cases, Short's quasi-antonym can be considered, along with Cruse's antonym, complementary or directional opposites to account for the "almost" (or "quasi") sense of the opposition created in the novel.

Like this example developed from Lodge's study of *Mansfield Park*, the analysis below of some of the lexemes in Le Guin's "Omelas" employs a broader, contextualised, category of opposites from Cruse's pseudo-opposites combined with Short's quasi-antonyms to account for all the terms in one way or another. Moreover, Cruse's other categories of antonyms, complementaries and directional opposites are included for more accurate descriptions.

3 Analysis of the Le Guin Text

As stated above, the objects of this analysis are the adjectives employed in the descriptive narration of the story. These adjectives appear in attributive, predicative and postpositive positions. As an initial approach, these lexemes can be treated as the two word groupings shown in 1.2. of utopian Omelas on the one hand and the suffering-child scene on the other hand, in which these groups generally exhibit a directional opposition. Each group represents an extreme on a salient axis, where the centre is a normal, or neutral, state of existence, and each group of lexemes is moving away from that axis in the opposing directions depicting utopian Omelas and the suffering child.

To further this analysis, these two general groups can be broken down into semantic domains of synonyms and hyponyms. Because many of the words within each of the above groups share various connotative meanings to illustrate opposing domains, some words need to be repeated. Thus, opposing groups as defined by the two polarised scenes described in the narrative are as follows:

Group	Utopian Omelas	Suffering-Child Scene
A	shining	cobwebbed rusty
B	sweet	foul-smelling bitter
C	handsomest beautiful dreamy decorous	defective
D	excited	vapid stiff
E	dreamy splendid magnificent wonderful rich boundless generous	horrible abominable vile vapid

Group	Utopian Omelas	Suffering-Child Scene
F	amiable passionate	frightened disgusted uncouth
G	happy cheerful	shocked sickened frightened
H	rich fat	thin sickened
I	intelligent	feeble-minded

For the purpose of analysis, the groups have been arranged according to physical descriptions; the first three groups and abstract descriptions, the remaining groups (a distinction used in Leech & Short 1981: 180-185).

3.1 Types of Lexical Opposition in "Omelas"

In this section, I begin with Cruse's category of pseudo-opposites, with the expansion described above using Short's quasi-antonyms, as an umbrella term for the type of opposition found in the Le Guin text. Such a general category could apply to all of these opposition pairs since these lexical items have needed to be contextualised to some extent, to recognise the particular type of opposition. For example, in some cases these words have multiple meanings and require even the limited context of "Utopian Omelas" versus the "Suffering-Child Scene" for the appropriate meaning to be reached and the opposition to be described. For instance, "rich" in the context of Utopian Omelas implies fullness, and not monetary wealth; thus, "rich" can be held in opposition to "vapid", "thin" and "sickened". Even in the cases of polar antonymy, contextualisation is needed to retain the meaning of these contrastive worlds; for instance, in the pair "fat"/ "thin", which is easily recognisable as an opposition, the connotation in the context of this story is that "fat" is positive (as a result of wealth and indulgence) and "thin" is negative (as a result of malnutrition). In other contexts, especially in Western culture, "fat" implies the negative connotations of sloppy, lazy and gluttonous, and "thin" the positive connotations of stylish, active and healthy.

Pseudo-opposition also categorises the lack of symmetry in many of the opposites which will be described below as also belonging to other categories. For instance "amiable"/ "uncouth" lacks symmetry to the extent that more symmetrical pairs can be made, including "amiable"/ "unamiable" and "polite"/ "uncouth". Similarly, "cheerful"/ "sickened" makes a somewhat asymmetrical pair since not being cheerful does not necessarily mean being sickened, yet being sickened usually implies not being cheerful.

Including Cruse's other categories of opposition, the physical descriptions in A and B are most apparent in their complementariness in the sense that there are no terms that lie in between. For example, in Group A, the pair "shining"/ "rusty" does not have terms that lie in between (except perhaps "clean", but it often implies shining). In Group B, there is a complementariness with "sweet"/ "bitter" whereby there is not a particular adjective to describe something that is "normal" to the senses. (In the story, "sweet" modifies "the ... magic of the tune" and "bitter" figuratively modifies "injustice".).

In the case of Group C, however, while "beautiful"/ "defective" clearly represent extremes, the subjectivity inherent in such terms takes away the evaluative objectivity of overlapping and polar antonyms and the gradability usually attributed to complementaries. Equipollent antonymy can be given consideration since it can include subjective qualities. Thus, like Cruse's examples of "nice"/ "nasty", equipollent antonomy accounts for "beautiful"/ "defective", "handsom(est)"/ "defective", and "dreamy"/ "defective", with "dreamy" taking on its positive metaphorical use.

The category of equipollent antonyms also serves in characterising the abstract adjectives of more subjective natures, as in groups E and I. These groups include pairs like "splendid"/ "horrible" and "intelligent"/ "feeble-minded", though in the case of the latter, there are perhaps clinical uses. Furthermore, equipollent antonyms are by far the most frequently occurring of all the adjectives used in the story, representing almost half of the relevant adjective use (including repetition of some of the same adjectives).

However, these two groups, along with D, F, G and H can also be treated as antipodal types of directional opposites; that is, the oppositions expressed by these groups suggest extremes going in opposite directions. The pair "magnificent"/"vile", for example, represent extremes on a salient axis, whereby terms closer to the centre might include "pleasant", "normal" and "unlikable". Similarly, "rich"/"vapid" might be seen as extremes on an axis which includes "plentiful", "adequate" and "lacking".

Lastly, there are only two pairs of polar antonyms: "fat/thin" and "sweet/ "bitter". (A third pair could be made if "sweet" were modified to mean "sweet-smelling".) Opposites in this category require neutrality and objectivity, which

would not suit the tone and nature of this story's contrastive worlds; one of happiness (in utopian Omelas) and the other of suffering (of the scapegoat child).

Now that a potential use for these categories has been outlined, this analysis can move further to show how a description of lexical opposites bears upon the meaning of opposing worlds in a given text. In the case of "Omelas", the frequency of equipollent antonyms and infrequency of polar antonyms facilitates the subjective tone of the first-person narrator. With a highly subjective account of the tragic town, the narrator often addresses the reader in the second person and thus, "involves and implicates the reader in the telling" (Knapp 1985: 75). For instance, many of the descriptions of both the town and the child are presented as optional. The reader is invited to assist in the creation of the town with comments such as, "if an orgy would help, don't hesitate [to add one]", and the child is described as "it could be a boy or a girl" (also pointed out by Knapp). It could be argued that the subjectivity of the opposing adjectives personalises the reader as well as the narrator.

The lack of polar antonyms, which are more suitable to describing physical qualities also highlights the fact that this story is not only an opposition of physical things in two distinct environments, but also one of the attitudes and emotions of the observers of these scenes, including the characters who do and do not "walk away from Omelas", the narrator and the reader.

Finally, the frequency of antipodal directional opposites may be interpreted as an indication of the extremes between the two worlds. For example, the pair "rich"/ "vapid" seems stronger in opposition than the possible pair of "adequate"/ "lacking" on the same salient axis. In addition, the sense that the terms have moved away from a conceptual centre could suggest in the context of this story that these contrastive worlds are moving further away from a neutral centre; that is, the indulgences in utopian Omelas and the suffering of the scapegoat child continue to grow in their extremity.

4 Conclusions

By applying terms of lexical opposition to the Le Guin story, a taxonomy of lexical opposition has been useful in describing the contrastive worlds created in the text and in revealing the stylistic effects of lexical choices. Further, two more general points emerge: 1) pseudo-opposition, with quasi-antonymy, applies well throughout as this study focuses on a literary text and not the context-dependent word stock of most semantic theories; and 2) Cruse's other categories of opposition can also be applied to those same terms, in turn contributing to a

stylistic analysis of the contrasting textual worlds.

In a broader sense, for the field of literary stylistics, this analysis contributes to a more detailed understanding of parallelism found in prose texts where lexical opposition is employed. While terms like "pseudo-opposition" and "quasi-antonymy" might generally apply to the likely types of opposition found in a literary text, a taxonomy of opposites borrowed from lexical semantics may allow for more precise and insightful accounts. In turn, the relationship between lexemes in contrastive worlds of a text can be better explained with respect to other factors, such as narrative perspective and tone and the author's lexical choice.

Notes

1. Although current semantic theory has much to say of the nature and classification of lexical opposites for which the contrasts are generally definitive and indisputable, such as "hot"/ "cold", "father"/ "son" etc., little has been said in such theories, however, of the inexact lexical opposites that occur in literary texts. This is, in part, due to the loss of context when speaking of "lexical items", i.e. words according to their dictionary definitions (Leech 1974: 229).

2. In a brief preface to this short story, Le Guin explains that the central theme comes from William James's "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life", in which James says that one could not accept the happiness of millions if it depended on the suffering of one lonely soul.

3. The Ellegård norm provides averages of linguistic features found in a corpus of modern English writing and was first developed in 1978.

4. While a norm for the use of the copula is not available, it should be noted that in analyses in Leech and Short (1981) a passage from Conrad contained 8% copular verbs, a Lawrence passage 4%, and a James passage 18.5%.

5. Not all of the adjectives used in the story are listed here, though roughly 90 per cent are. Some were excluded from this analysis because they were unique uses or syntactically deviant; for instance, the suffering child is described as "imbecile", with this noun employed as an adjective. Other adjectives were excluded as heads of NP's, e.g., "The finest and the fairest in the souls of all men".

6. Some of Cruse's other subcategories include "counterparts", such as "ridge"/ "groove" and "hill"/"valley"; and "reversives", such as "rise"/ "fall" and "advance"/ "retreat" (pp. 225-231).

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APPENDIX A : COMPARISON BETWEEN DESCRIPTIVE NARRATION AND COMMENTARY PROSE IN "OMELAS"

CHARACTERISTICS	LE GUIN TEXT WHOLE TEXT	DESC.	ELLEGåORD NORM	COM.
Number of orthographic words	2797	2221	576	
Nouns - number	813	635	178	
- Percent of whole	29,1	28,6	30,9	27,2
Main verbs - number	405	307	98	
- Percent of whole	14,5	13,8	17,1	12,1
Adjectives - number	358	285	73	
- Percent of whole	12,8	12,8	12,7	7,4
Adverbs - number	78	43	35	
- Percent of whole	2,7	1,9	6,1	5,3