Name of the Writer

Name of the Instructor

Course Number

Date

Prosperity and suffering go hand in hand

**Introduction**

The short story written by Ursula K. Le Guin," The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas", is one of the most classic pieces of literature in the genre of fiction. The story's premise is based on the question regarding morality and quandary related to morals presented by William James. He imagined the hideousness of happiness if it were gained through the suffering of a child (Le Guin). This in some way, is a representation of how wealthier countries are happier as compared to less wealthy countries. These countries exploit the less fortunate ones to promote their happiness. This essay focuses on the relationship between this story and the level of exploitation less wealthy nations feel at the hands of wealthier nations to keep themselves happy.

**Discussion**

The story of “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”, in its essence is a story of exploitation of the weak for the happiness of the powerful. Where the suffering of a child has no value in front of the happiness of the citizens of Omelas (Le Guin). Their happiness makes them selfish and delusional regarding the implications of their actions. This society is filled with shimmering seas and exuberant festivals in the summer and overall thought to be a perfect society. However, the truth is that none of it is of any worth when it is all predicated on the basis of the suffering of a child.

The suffering of the child within this short story can also be considered as a political allegory. The beautiful and flourishing city made on the foundation of the misery of a child can be related to the progress of wealthier nations which is based on the suffering and exploitation of less wealthy countries (Le Guin). For the wealthier nations to stay happy and prosperous, they need the suffering and exploitation of the less wealthy nations. This exploitation can be in many forms either of their resources, their labor or their technology. All of this is transferred from the less wealthy nations to wealthier nations.

Furthermore, as the reader goes further into reading the story, there is an emergence of ethical confusion. This ethical confusion stays the same while reading the story and while the reader attempts to correlate the story with what’s currently happening in the world (Le Guin). Most of the writers have considered this story as a form of an allegory of the capitalist nature of the wealthier nations. How these nations have progressed so much in their time on the back of nations that were not even given a chance to understand how they are being used in the façade of being assisted by these wealthier nations.

Furthermore, there is increased use of symbolism within this short story. Symbolism refers to the use of a person, action, object and a place in such a way that other than its literal meaning, it suggests a plethora of different meanings (Le Guin). The fact about symbolism is that the interpretation of the person, action, object, and a place is dependent on the reader itself. This means that every person has a way of relating things they read with what is happening around in the world. So in essence, their understanding of the lesson of the story would also be different.

In the case of this short story, at first glance, the festival in the sun is not such a big thing. Moreover, most readers would overlook it and its importance to the whole story. Most readers would consider it as an overall representation of how happy the whole town is and the overall level of happiness within this town (Le Guin). Furthermore, most readers would consider it as the vibe of the town and how happy and vivacious the town is. On the other hand, that same festival symbolizes something else if a closer look is taken. It symbolizes the security and prosperity wealthier nations have because of the exploitation of poorer nations. The child in the basement are the less wealthy nations on whose back the wealthier countries have access to this increased security and prosperity. These less developed and less wealthy nations are the foundations for the prosperity and security that the wealthier nations have witnessed for decades

The second form of symbolism used in this short story is the people's eyes or more precisely, how they view and judge each other. In the story, the people in the Omelas are not supposed to judge each other. Furthermore, they cannot have any involvement in anything in their lives that could be considered morally wrong. On the hand, someone's eyes are always watching every reaction occurring within the town. Furthermore, each individual in the town is constantly judging every other person and keeping a keen eye on how people are living their lives. These actions of the town’s people are the representation of the judgmental side of the wealthier nations (Le Guin). In the perfect society, they emphasize that they are accepting of every race, color and religion but when it comes to it, they cannot even accept people born of their land with features different from their own. Furthermore, they judge how the less wealthy nations are operating their economies, livelihoods, and cultures when in truth, most of the problems that have been caused in their lives are due to the uncalled intervention of wealthier nations. They have always tried to promote that acceptance is an integral part of their society but in truth, it is seen nowhere in their economic, political and social aspects of their lives. This shows that even in the perfect society they might have created for themselves, there is still the aspect of judging others that they have not worked on.

Furthermore, the suffering child in the basement, the most important aspect of the book is another important form of symbolism that connects this story with how the wealthier nations exploit the less wealthy nations. The city’s beauty, the level of tenderness they feel for their friends, the children’s health, the height of wisdom their scholars have achieved, the innovation in their skills, the increased profits that they are blessed with and the good weather they witness, all of it is based on the misery of a child (Le Guin). Even while reading the above statement one understands that this story symbolizes the state of the wealthier nations in comparison to the exploitation of less wealthy nations and what they have to deal with every day. The child represents the level of injustice and inhumanity that is predominant in the relationship between wealthier nations and less wealthy nations. How one is prospering to new heights of success, while on the other hand, the other is going into the deepest depths of poverty and lawlessness. People in wealthier countries can live with the fact that the people in less wealthy countries are suffering, unlucky to have their peace and security as they are not directly affected by their suffering. People in wealthier countries are content with living in peace and harmony even if they know that people around them are suffering.

**Conclusion**

Taking all the above-mentioned details into consideration, it could be said that weak ones have always been oppressed by those who are in power. It is heartbreaking to see people in the world are taking advantage of other's suffering as they are concerned with their benefits only. As the oppressed child becomes the source of happiness of the Omelas’s people, likewise, countries that are lagging in economic growth are squeezed by the leading powers of the world. So as a whole, it could be promulgated that morality is being overlooked by the elites as they are just concerned with their materialistic growth for which they are plundering natural and human resources of the weak ones without any regret.

Works Cited

Le Guin, Ursula. "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas." *Miafarrow.org*. N.p., 2019. Web. 20 Sept. 2019.