

Analysis on Real Love in the Rocking-Horse Winner from the Image of Hester and Paul

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Abstract: The Rocking-Horse Winner is a short story by D·H·Lawrence. The short story narrates a tragedy of an ordinary family, and reveals the deserved result of indulgence in materialism and hedonism is self-destruction. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the image of Hester and Paul, and to show that love is shining in dilemma. It is hoped that the research results of this thesis can help readers to further understand The Rocking-Horse Winner.

1. Introduction

The Rocking-horse Winner is one of Lawrence's famous short stories in his later years. In the story, Paul is eager to get his mother's love, but his mother is unable to love her family and children because her life is filled with extreme greed for money and material enjoyment. In order to meet his mother's greed, Paul begins to look for "luck" on his rocking-horse. He can predict the winner name before a horse race in the course of shaking his rocking-horse wildly. He gets a lot of money by betting on horses, but his mother's greed for money is still on the rise. Hence, Paul does not hesitate to gamble his life for money, which pays a heavy price.

2. Background Information of the Rocking-Horse Winner

The industrial revolution modified the whole structure of Britain society. The development of modern industry had greatly improved people's material living standards, but people were more and more addicted to material enjoyment and ignored to feed their souls. People lived like machines, and the spiritual world was desolate. Money first, becoming a kind of social ideology, was deeply rooted in the people's mind. With Paul's tragedy, Lawrence attacks the disaster brought by industrial civilization and bourgeois material civilization, expresses his concern for life, society, human destiny and deep sympathy for the victims.

3. Analysis on Real Love in the Rocking-Horse Winner from the Image of Hester and Paul

3.1 Character Analysis of Hester

Driven by the capitalist view of money, characters in the short story have become clowns who pursue fame and wealth, turning themselves into tools to make money and slaves to money¹. These characters are inextricably linked to money, which is like a spider's web, and they are the prey of it.

On the surface, Hester seems responsible for the whole family life and her children's future. In fact, she is a greedy, money-oriented, indifference and cold-hearted. As a mother, she cannot love her children because she believes that they are "imposed on her life". Only she herself knows that at the center of her heart is a hard little place that cannot feel love, no, not for anybody². The mother is absorbed in her vanity and luxury life, and her swelling desire is beyond her maternal instinct. Especially when she receives the 5000 pounds as her birthday gift from her son, her first reaction is not to know about the origin of the money, but to ask the lawyer to withdraw all the money at one time, then 5000 pounds is squandered in a short time. However, Hester still feels unhappy because of lack of money. After spending a lot of money, her desire is growing stronger, which makes her feeling emptier inside. Moreover, the whispering in the house becomes crazily "There must be more money!" While it distorts the relationship with her son, money is still almost omnipotent in her eyes. In the end, Hester gets the 80000 pounds that Paul won on gambling, but the cost is little Paul's life.

3.2 Character Analysis of Paul

Paul is a child who is eager for love, but his mother focuses all her attention on the pursuit of money. For this reason, Paul wants to help his mother to earn money so as to gain attention and love from his mother, then he chooses the worst way, horse gambling. He rides the rocking-horse that his mother sends to him, and he believes that it may take him to a lucky place, because his mother said that luck can bring money. He wants to be the fortunate person! He rides on the rocking-horse crazily, he is staring the rocking-horse when he gets off the rocking-horse, hoping that the fake horse can send him to a lucky place³. Although Paul has won a lot of money on gambling, he has begun to be afraid that he may lose the method of earning money because his prediction becomes less effective. After his final prediction, he falls off from the rocking-horse and died.

Paul attempts to please his mother with money, and then his family might be happy. He seems to be loved by his mother. The kid's room is full of expensive and delicate toys. Paul's mother is to twist the love for family into money and material enjoyment. While satisfying his mother's desire for money, Paul is falling into the trap of his unique abilities, hoping that it would bring him to the lucky place. But the journey is so hard that the process of searching makes him irrational. In the end, Paul gets to the lucky place and wins amount of money, 80000 pounds. However, it also can be considered that he is not getting to the lucky place because he is not a lucky one in Hester's eyes, and he has not been reward what he wants, his mother's love. Paul's pursuit is love, but he mistakenly equates money to love. In constantly satisfying his mother's desire for money, Paul is more and more far away from his original intention, and finally becomes the victim of capitalist hedonism and money worship.

3.3 Love in the Rocking-Horse Winner

Mother's love can be seen as the most selfless love in the world. It is an instinctive and natural emotion of human beings. However, when maternal love is attached to too many utilitarian factors, the glory of motherhood will be eclipsed. Mother does no longer bring happiness to kids, but misfortune or even disaster⁴. Hester, as a person, she is empty inside; as a mother, she is dereliction of duty. Moreover, Hester's desire sows the seed of Paul's tragic life. A naive child finally becomes a gambler.

Paul's personality of self-sacrifice and generosity are in pursuit of his mother's affection and concern. He sees himself as the savior of his mother. Everything Paul does is out of love for his mother, but Hester does not realize that she is a lucky person to have Paul who loves her very much. Paul is constantly disappointed in the pursuit of unreachable maternal love, then he follows more

extreme behavior, and the reward is greater disappointment. In this vicious circle, he finally suffer a nervous breakdown and died in a young age.

4. Conclusion

The theme of this paper and its critical significance are all aimed at to find the beauty of human nature in that materialistic society, as well as to reflect human struggle against the cruel reality, for changing their own destiny. Paul's small body erupts a powerful spirit of love, even shouldered the burden of supporting his family which beyonds his age and ability. He is trying to pay the bill of his mother's greed, but also for his emotional needs. Paul's death shows that the deserved result of indulgence in materialism and hedonism is self-destruction. But for Paul's final intention of gambling, people can find that the real love is shinning at Paul's act. Although Paul makes efforts in the wrong direction and pay a heavy price, his tenacious willpower can not be simply ignored. It is important for people to consider deeply about the influence of family environment on the view of life, values and world outlook of the new generation. People should not only pay attention to the healthy development of the new generation from the material, but also from the emotion and spirit. Only through it can our society more peace and harmony.

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