



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalcra.com>

International Journal of Current Research
Vol. 10, Issue, 11, pp.75287-75289, November, 2018

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.33027.11.2018>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

LOVE AND MATERIALISM THROUGH DEATH ON THE NILE BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

***Dr. Alidou Razakou Ibourahima Boro**

Senior CAMES Assistant Professor, English literature and civilization specialist - Interpret or and translator, General Secretary of Languages Department at University of Parakou

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10th August, 2018
Received in revised form
08th September, 2018
Accepted 18th October, 2018
Published online 29th November, 2018

Key Words:

love, Materialism,
Dangerousness,
Agatha Christie,
Death on the Nile.

ABSTRACT

In his book entitled *Towards a global civilization of Love and Tolerance* M. Fethullah Gülen defines love as the strongest relationship among individuals that forms family, society and nation. I would personally say talking about love between two people, that love is the fact of being present for your partner, being ready to defend the interest of the later wherever and whenever need may be. Unfortunately it happens that one of the partners ignores this principle of love. Sometimes people prefer their own interest than the interest of the group. *Death on the Nile*, one of Agatha Mary Christie's detective fictions is a good illustration of the topic of my paper. Themes such as murder, love, materialistic love, marriage, investigation, jealousy, etc. have been developed in the novel. The main purpose of this article is to highlight the dangerousness and consequences of materialistic love in love affairs.

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Citation: Dr. Alidou Razakou Ibourahima Boro. 2018. "Love and materialism through death on the Nile by Agatha Christie", *International Journal of Current Research*, 10, (11), 75287-75289.

INTRODUCTION

A close reading of *Death on the Nile* by Agatha Christie emphasizes the commonly accepted belief that sometimes people get involved in love affairs not because they really love their partner but because they are in quest of his or her wealth. The main objective is not to love the latter as people said "for good and for worse" but for just "goods and wealth". Many people view materialism as nothing more than the love of money and the things that money can buy. Therefore, one natural place to start investigation materialism is to look more closely at people's love of products and consumption activities. For the purpose of this study I decided to investigate and find out the message the author would like to share with us about love and materialism. I illustrate some of my comments on the behaviour the main characters of the novel and I got some additional information from field investigation. The main purpose of the study is to point out the negative impacts of materialistic love in a relationship and propose some ways and means to construct a trustworthy, mutual and lasting love between two lovers.

*Corresponding author: Dr. Alidou Razakou Ibourahima Boro, Senior CAMES Assistant Professor, English literature and civilization specialist - Interpret or and translator, General Secretary of Languages Department at University of Parakou.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this research work, I have passed through documentary research, and then I went through books and plays pointing up the issue love and materialism. I find it necessary to get students point of view on such a topic. To reach my goal, I have elaborated a series of questionnaires I have addressed to people of my area. About 200 adults selected randomly at in Parakou. The above method has been used taking into account my understanding of the book under study.

RESULTS

Love has become materialistic nowadays. Material and wealth are given priority in relationships while true love and feelings are left behind. I agree that all relationships are economic because all relationships are about the exchange of what we value: our material, emotional and genetic goods. But very often little emphasis is put on the root facts of love which mutual support and mutual help. People get involved in love affairs because they want to get rich; they want to quickly inherit from their partner. Love Relationships have become vague, love is put under conditions. I stay with you as long as I am in a comfortable zone and I am giving and getting everything I need. The stress is put on object rather on than people. Relationships hardly have anything to do with love.

Love and materialism and materialism in literature: On the preface of the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald one can read the following poem:

“Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her; If you can bounce high, bounce for her too, Till she cry ‘‘Lover, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover, I must have you!’’”

In the most basic sense, this short but brief poem is a piece of advice. The first words, “then wear,” make it sound like we are hearing the middle of a conversation. Someone has been complaining about his romantic problems with a specific “she,” and the poem’s speaker is answering with some tips on what to do. The advice the poem is according to me: go out of your way to impress her with your wealth and status (“gold hat”), and with your derring-do (“bounce high”). Whatever you can possibly do to attract her attention is worth it if she ends up won over, because then she will be insatiable (“I must have you”). Of course, this image of a ‘gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover’ is clownish at best and completely absurd at worst. In *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe, money is the driving force Moll Flanders, both the book and the character. It’s way more important than class love, or anything else. Money is what pushes Moll to make all of decision good or bad. Whether it’s jet embarking on another marriage, sending her kids away, or turning to petty crime for a source of income, it’s always the dough she’s after.

The major recurrent theme in the novel is that of greed and materialism — a greed which leads Moll to prostitution, thievery, and moral disintegration. Moll sees people as commodities — her relationships with them as business transactions. Although she is in love with the eldest brother, she has few qualms about taking money from him. She then accepts a bribe from him to marry his brother Robin. She easily consigns her children to the care of their grandparents and considers herself lucky. “My two children were, indeed, taken happily off of my hands by my husband’s father and mother . . .” She chooses husbands on the basis of their affluence or social class. When the first one dies she muses, “I had preserved the elder brother’s bonds to me to pay me £500, which he offered me for my consent to marry his brother; and this, with what I saved of the money he formerly gave me and about as much more by my husband, left me a widow with about £1200 in my pocket.” She takes money for prostitution. She steals from children and from people in distress. And only when she is too old to do otherwise does she repent.

In our *Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens examples of people obsession for material and wealth are well illustrated. The upper class is obsessed with wealth and status. For example, the Podsnaps and Veneerings are very fond of their impressive furniture: every time somebody from the ‘society’ organises a party, the furniture is mentioned. This group of people is very much involved with their outer appearance: everything has to be brand-new and expensive. Furthermore, a more detailed example of this is the Lammles marriage: the Lammles have married because they both believed that their future spouse was a wealthy person. It is interesting to see this heated discussion in book 1, chapter 10 between the two when both find out they have been married “on false pretences”. The chapter following this interesting display introduces Mr. Podsnap. The chapter opens: “Mr Podsnap was well to do, and stood very high in Mr Podsnap’s opinion. Beginning with a good inheritance, he had married a good inheritance, and had

thriven exceedingly in the Marine Insurance way, and was quite satisfied” In a few sentences the narrator shows the reader a quite selfish man, who cares much about money. Much of this display is written with an ironic tone. An interesting example of the irony is the following extract: “The Lammles began to think it would be necessary to build a palatial residence. And hereby they made another shining reputation; many persons of their acquaintance becoming by anticipation dissatisfied with their own houses, and envious of the non-existent Lammle structure”. The reader knows, contrary to the society, that the Lammles do not have much money, yet the mere boasting of building their own palatial residence makes the fellow members of society envious. This rather ironically described need to display wealth, combined with the absurdness of Mr. Venus’s shop, conveys to the reader the materialistic needs of society, thereby proving the importance of waste. One might derive from this that the display of wealth is a waste of money; this would emphasise the presence of Mr. Venus’s shop, and, by inserting that shop in the story, create a very strong metaphor to indicate the duality between waste and money. At the same Dickens show the readers how the love for money and material can change people. The case of Bella Willfer in the novel is of good illustration. Mercenary in her ways, Bella believes she is eligible for a finer man than Rokesmith because of her new found position with the wealthy Boffins. She changes her views, however, once she sees how wealth corrupts. Mr Boffin from an old friend to an avaricious miser. It is Mr. Boffin’s transformation which causes Bella to realize that money changes people for the worse; therefore, she decides that she would rather live without the comforts and luxuries that wealth brings. As a result, she returns to live in her father’s frugal home. She decides, too, that she can only marry a man whom she loves, rather than a man who could provide her with a fortune; consequently, she marries Rokesmith. They live happily married, in modest comfort.

Love and materialism and materialism in Death on the Nile by Agatha Christie: “Death on the Nile,” a 1937 mystery by English author Agatha Christie, is one of the most popular works by this very popular author. The plot involves a murder on a luxury cruise in Egypt; almost everyone on board had reasons to want the victim dead. The heiress Linnet Ridgeway Doyle boards the cruise steamer Karnak with her new husband Simon. They are honeymooning in Egypt, but they realize they are being stalked by Linnet’s friend Jacqueline, an old rival for Simon’s affections. Several other people on the Karnak also have grudges against Linnet. After the failure of an initial attempt on her life during a day tour, Linnet is found dead in her stateroom. The murder weapon resembles a gun Jacqueline used to attack Simon the night before. In *Death on the Nile* the character of Simon is portrayed as dreadfully lover money and material. His main aim is to get everything; horses, yachts, sport-nice things, all for him alone.

These obsessions of materials push him to marry Linnet Ridgeway a young lady from a rich family. In fact, Linnet is the daughter of Melhuish Ridgeway who married Anna Hartz. She inherits from her grandfather, Leopold Hartz, an immense fortune. Linnet was the sensation of the moment in the city. Her new social and financial status is the main reason why Simon seduces her in order to fulfill his dream of becoming rich. He then plans to assassinate Linnet after their marriage to be the only heir. Romantic love is exalted throughout literature. It’s a virtue in and of itself.

This makes Hercule Poirot's statement when he sees Simon and Jacqueline out before Simon goes over to Linnet and he observed that she cared too much for Simon and that it was "not safe." At first, this comes out in what appears to be her obsessive following of Simon and Linnet around during their honeymoon, but at the end of the story it's revealed that when Linnet became interested in him, while Simon was irritated by her efforts, he thought of the idea of marrying Linnet, murdering her within the year, and then marrying Jacqueline and living off her money. Jacqueline goes along with the scheme because she knows Simon will get caught if he tries to attempt the murder on his own because he doesn't have the brains for it. This shows Jacqueline cared more for Simon than he did for her because he came up with and was prepared to pursue such an unnatural scheme. It also shows Simon wasn't worth that level of devotion. I'm not sure whether Christie was going for this, but Simon becomes the male answer to the Femme Fatale: a good-looking guy who attracts the ladies and leads them to ruin. It also shows the dangers of love when it overrides everything. When it's freed from ethics, morals, and even self-respect, romantic love can become poisonous. In Jacqueline's case, she killed three people (including Simon to save him from facing prosecution in a third world country) before killing herself. Christie tries to balance the scales in a very unusual way on the whole issue of love. The most bizarre part of *Death on the Nile* is that two couples get together and get engaged. The *Karnak*, a ship that has three murders occur on board, becomes a love boat.

The romances, while not particularly realistic, serve as a counterbalance to the unhealthy main relationships as they have a redemptive quality to them. Tim Allerton forsakes his thieving ways to marry Rosalie, whose alcoholic mother was the victim of one of the murders. The other romance is surprising. Ferguson has been trying to court Cornelia Robson, an honest and straightforward woman, in the most obnoxious way possible. He's a self-styled communist and social radical, whom her wealthy cousin whom she's travelling with would not approve of. Poirot, discovers that Ferguson is actually a wealthy aristocrat whom her cousin would approve of. With Ferguson's true identity revealed, Cornelia agrees to marry Dr. Besner instead because she likes him and finds his profession interesting. It's such a wonderful twist that Cornelia remains true to her character as an honest and forthright person who pursues what she wants rather than falling for the wealthy guy who she thought was a low-born vulgar man just because he turned out to be a wealthy vulgar man. Overall, *Death on the Nile* is a special novel full on good instructions and moral lessons worth to be known by generations. Despite the number of years after its publication, the developed events are still update.

Conclusion

On the whole, love is selfless and unconditional, therefore love is divine. It could promote truth and peace, in it is pure and it is an exchange between two hearts. Once selfishness enters in the game, love is corrupted and becomes a play. People believe money can buy social standing, power, and luxurious experiences, and that these are the key to happiness. But most of time you don't really profit from it. The desperate life of Moll in *Moll Flanders* by Daniel Defoe is a good illustration. Even if money is often important a useful for the equilibrium of a couple, young men should think about the natural aspect of love. One cannot buy love at any market or supermarket and desire has no end. Keep getting in love naturally without interest this could be useful for a happiness and lasting peace in the couple.

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