

Mothers, Morality and Materialism in D.H.Lawrence's "The Rocking-Horse Winner"(1926) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Cell One"(2009).

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Abstract

Misdirected family love can be destructive. This is evident in D. H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner" (1926) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Cell One"(2009).The stories illustrate how two boys are pushed too hard to their end as a result of lack of parental responsibility. On the one hand, the father in "The Rocking Horse Winner" is always absent from the house and rarely mentioned, the mother is preoccupied with material objects. Her lust for stylish living and money, together with her dissatisfaction with her marriage and children, make her unable to love her children. To gain his mother's love and attention, Paul wants to win money. He rides his rocking horse which enables him to pick the winners of the horse races accurately. The more money he gets, the greedier his mother becomes. Paul dies in a final self-sacrificing ride unable to please his mother or gain her love. On the other hand, both mother's care and money, aided by the negative role of the father destroy Nnamabia in "Cell One". In this story, the mother has been making excuses for the misbehavior of her son since he was eleven, from lost library books to exams stolen from his father and the loss of her gold necklaces. Being his mother's blue eyed boy, Nnamabia is used to steal things from the house and leaves unpunished. Such wrong parental strategy leads to Nnamabia's misbehavior outside the home. Consequently, he is arrested for being a member of a cult. The two stories, thus, end tragically as a result of either lack of love or too much of it. Besides the theme, comparisons and contrasts will be drawn between the two writers regarding point of view, Oedipus complex, language, satire, corrupted societies, among many others.

Keywords: mothers, morality, materialism