

RAISING AND FALLING BY THE POWER OF MONEY IN MARTIN AMIS' *MONEY*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to deal with the power of the money and the effect of that in the behavior and manner in our life. That is why I have selected the famous novel "Money" which is written by Martin Louis Amis the contemporary British novelist. It is not deniable the significant role of money in our life. In this paper I will argue how much the power of money can be influential in our life. And also how the power of money gives rise and fall in the life of John Self, the protagonist. The world of John is the world of money, which is immersed by smoking, drinking, junk food, and nude magazines. How, on one hand, the power of the money directed John's life towards immoralities and nonsense and how, on the other hand, the power of money can give meaning to his life. Furthermore, the influence of the power of money in the relation of other characters in novel will be scrutinized. Martin Amis in his novel describes how money resulted in addiction, overdrinking, and pornography in resent England society. Despite the metaphorical suicide of the John Self, he finds his true meaning of life as well as love at the end of novel. The power of the money is depicted as a predominant structure of power's homogenization of the individual. Whether this power reduced our freedom or make progress will be discuses. Finally, John's humiliation due to his falling from his previous situation helps him and leads him to victory will be the main issue of this paper.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Power, Money, and Immorality, Martin Amis

INTRODUCTION

These days the role of property in the life of people in the world has been influential. No one can deny that how much money can be effective in our life and to what extend can give harmony to our life. But, comparing to the past the importance of property and wealth for people has become more serious. The seriousness of gathering money has put one step beyond that people are ready to do anything for that. Or they are ready to get money at any price. If we have a look at all aspects of the life of people, we would be immersed by the way people are increasingly gathering money and expanding their property. Perhaps, one of the important reasons of the loss of life values and moralities among people lies in the significance of gathering money. Accordingly, we find ourselves trapped in a web of property without knowing how we are threatening with.

Martin Amis the contemporary British writer in his novel *Money*, drawn the crisis of morality in a life of the protagonist John Self. Amis attacks the capitalist society in the last two decade of Britain, in which represented how people's life has writhed together. Furthermore, he depicted how people are determined in situations that rooted in a magic of money. Moral deviation in the life of the protagonist and other characters, which is based upon the centrality of the money in their life are all conceptualized and characterized by Amis.

The Picture of the Protagonist (Self)

Amis pictures the life of protagonist, John Self, to show how his life get formed and deformed by the power of money. The importance of money and the counterintuitive internal relationship of it in John's life cause the debasement of values. The embodiment of the John Self, who is proud of him for being a commercial TV, has been under investigation of some critics. For John Self, who has experienced hard times in his childhood and especially in his teenage as an orphan, money has very substantial role in the life.

In his teenage, he had to work in a striptease pub due to the lack of money and for survival in his life. Such an experience is one of the reasons why John Self in his adulthood tries to get money at any price. The greed of getting money in the mind of the protagonist was the only way to get out of his misty and sad life. His background taught him money could simultaneously bring power and success. In this way, John's life little by little surrounded by alcohol, pornography and other types of addictions are common in twentieth-century.

The greed of getting power through money leads to the fragmentation in the life of protagonist. He trusted his friend without the knowledge of the conspiracy that had been arranged for him. The result of his ignorance made him to escape to London and he decided to commit suicide but he survived, then despite his was moneyless he decided to start his new life. The draw of John's life by Amis represents the situation of material and financial concern among people in recent term. Perhaps, the self-abandonment of the protagonist in his unrestrained narcissistic life by the power of the money directs him into deterioration and destruction.

Money and Human Values

Today, one of the important factors affecting in moral adversity is the power of money. Some people immersed in their personal vanity and individual narcissism because of having lots of money, while others use their money peacefully. Some people acquiesce to do anything to get money, regardless of human values. The young female character, Felix, in the novel *Money* is a good example of the debasement of the human identity. As the narrator of the story John says: "Felix was getting money for this" (13). Or when John himself immersed in pornography, gambling and drinking, despite the fact that he loves his girl friend, Selina Street, the thought of raping her passed his mind. He addicted to sexual immorality because of having too much money. When he was sharing his problem with his friend, Fielding Goodney, he confirmed "You're one sick fuck. It's not your fault. It's your chemical' fault. It's money's fault" (16).

The conversation between John and his friend, Fielding, about the women body, for their commercial explicitly shows that they don't consider the human values and rights. He claimed to John he utilized money in any way but ugliness because of versatility of that. He said: "Money is very versatile. You really have to give money credit for that" (20).

The Jeopardous consequences of money in moral aspects have been mentioned, but using money in a wrong way is also able to penetrate the families and cause the instability of that. The mistress, who is working and living with members of family, secretly has illegal sexual relationship with the father and even the son. The narrator, John, justifies the motivation of her unlawful deed, by uttering: "The mistress. What's her motivation? Uh? Why is she sleeping with these two guys? Father gives her money"(22). The back drop of social chaos, moral promiscuity and prostitution according to Martin Amis in western cities, especially in England, lies at the root of being moneyless, he says in his novel from John:

"The whole of England has been scalded by tumult and mutiny, by social crack-up in the torched slums.

Unemployment, I learned, was had got everyone so mad. I know how you feel, I said to myself. I haven't got that much to do all day myself. I sit here defenselessly, my mind full of earache and riot. Why? Tell. Inner-cities crackle with the money chaos- but I've got money, plenty of it" (23).

The life of Selina Street, the protagonist's girl friend, is similar to Felix as it was revealed. Selina is the young girl who is living without any financial support. She is regardless about what people think about her, she obsessed by money and attempt to get it at any price. Selina Street also puts pressure on her boyfriend John to give her money because money is the only life's guard for her. She is also ready to do nasty work to gain money, and does not give importance to people's sayings and calling her a prostitute. As if she is frustrated about the world that she is living in. She has always said: men manipulate money to dominate over women. John says: "Selina Street has no money, no money at all. Imagine. Many times in her life she has lacked the price of bus fare, a teabag. She has stolen. She has pawned clothes. She has fucked for money. No money hurts, it stings" (31).

Not only, Selina suffers from the lack of money, but she is always abused and exploited by other people, who are measuring everything by money.

John' Redemption

As I said, the world of John is the world of money and pornography, which encompass his life. Perhaps, the unrestrained self and narcissism in the life of John Self contributed to the transitoriness of his life. The dominance of materialist world in people' life which is created by them is inexcusable. As we observe John was seduced by the allegorical power of money for being the only salvation. Perhaps, Martin Amis in his novel attempts to verify the great shift, which is occurring, or it has already occurred. Amis depicts the world where the transcendental entities are changed; the power of wealth is the power of God. Benyei in her article attacks the materialistic world, she considers: "To insure himself with the wealth... money material salvation is the only salvation, what is salvation is God. Hence money is God" (Benyei NP).

The greed of progress and growth by money, regardless the ethics and moralities, is the most important reason of John's fall from his situation. Possibly, the author advertently creates such stupid, mutilated, poor and narrow-mind character to represent the delusional modern life under the reign of money. Martin Amis, by creating such character, makes an effort to confirm the delusional life of people in postmodern era, which leads to corruption. Eli A. Edmondson believes: "In *Money: A suicide note*, he (Amis) explores the miasma of post modern reality by investigating the strange life and fast uniquely fragmented character, the narrator, John Self" (Edmondson NP).

Undoubtedly, 'the suicide note' in a title of the novel represents a kind of intellectual suicide. This intellectual suicide happens twice in the novel, once, when John realizes that he fails in his life and also when he finds that his real father is a very poor man. John lost his dreams in different realm financially, physically, and especially emotionally with Selina. He found out the true character of Selina when he told her he falls in love with her and proposed her for marriage, but she answered: "I'm not capable of true love. It isn't true. I truly love money. Truly I do. Oh, money, I love you. You're so democratic: you've got no favourites. You even things out for me and my kind" (80).

John's New Life

John' immersion in the world of money placed his life in unstable position. He is unconscious about the

conspiracy has been arranged to him. Not only, he is not in his process of self-development, but also he is in his process of self-degradation and destruction under the control of money. It was very late when he became conscious about his inadequacy and incapability of his work. The only way to get out of his imaginary world is to redeem him of that. By the power of money, which portrays in his mind, not only he doesn't capture any power but, he ends up with moral transgressions. He concludes his project without any redemption.

The result of self-appraisal of the protagonist against standing his moral transgression in his imaginary world made him to come out from such viciousness world and start new sense of pleasure in the real world. Carlos Silva Companon approves the idea, with his statement: "Aesthetic and moral delights are the spontaneous outcomes of such intellectual exchange" (Companion 95). He encounters a chance of a new life without the greed of money. The excessive desire of money not only gives him failure and frustration but also gives him new conception. Again the dirty nature of money reveals to John when he finds that most of their friends get away from him because they were under debts. He had a lot of experience and get different idea about the power of money.

He whispered: "Maybe money is the great conspiracy, the great fiction. The great addiction too: we're all addicted and we can't break the habit now ... you just can't kick it, that junk, even if you want to. You can't get the money monkey off your back'" (127). The true meaning of love appeared when he gets familiar with his new girlfriend Georgina. She loves him not because of money like Selina, his previous girl friend. The passion of new life for him emerged with her and he decides to forget his rogue memories, especially when he realizes that still he can enjoy his life without greed of money. He expresses: "I want money again but I feel better now that I haven't got any. There are these little pluses. You, they can't do much to you when you haven't got any money" (130).

Probably, the author challenges to give his message to reader by the John' life. With a deep look, we can acknowledge the moral philosophy of the fiction. One of the moral messages of the novel is he reached the true meaning of redemption, by getting away from the world of money.

CONCLUSIONS

Today the world we are living is the materialist world. We are living in the world where everything is under the influence of money. Despite, the novel *Money* only represents the writer's ideology, it is undeniable that most of our lives, like the life of the protagonist of the story, encompass by money. The materialist world has been influenced too much in our life and distorts human values. It's not deniable; we all need money for our tranquility and calmness in our life but in its own right. We observed the dual role of money in the life of the main character. The point is no one should abuse the strength of money. The lack of money deteriorated him, on the other side, having a lot of money corrupted his life. Therefore, he conceives the real meaning of life when he reached the balance of using the money not the power of money.

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