

The decline of the west

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



These changes could happen from one day to another. How do you tell your family that their economic situation, all of a sudden, has changed because of your new status as unemployed? Especially when family the family is accustomed to the idea of living the sweet life. "The Decline of the West" from 2010 is about a man who experiences the difficult problems of the economic decline. In the short story "The Decline of the West", the narrator Mike lives with his family in the outskirts of London. He just got fired and is now on his way home to pass the news of his recent dismissal.

Mike used to work 12 hours a day, but despite the fact that Mike now is unemployed, he looks forward to spent time with his family. He has a rough time trying to tell the truth, and so he ends up arguing with his wife and sons instead. The main character of the short story is Mike. He is a 45-year; old man, father of two, and has until now been working in corporate finance. Mike is a hardworking man, who has provided his family with a lovely house in safe surroundings, plenty of material benefits, and an AU pair, who can take care of the house when he is not there.

Mike barely sees his family, and admits lankly that the AU pair sees more to his family than he does himself. "The AU pair saw more of his house and family than he did -" 1 . The sweet welcoming Mike imagined was far from reality. When Mike arrives home, his wife, Imagine, does not even take the time to say hallo to her husband, but simply just passes him by with a gin and tonic mentioning going up stairs to take a shower. "Imagine passed him in the hall carrying a gin and tonic, saying she was going upstairs to have a bath" 2 This indicates that the marriage might not be as warm and loving as one may think.

Mike's marriage does not seem to go well. Imagine is not acknowledging Mike, nor is she interested in him. " Is it attention you're after? " 3 Mike sees himself as a man that gives all he can ever Offer to his family, but they are never satisfied. " I paid for this with my time, intelligence, and the education the state provided me with" 4. Mike's view on him self stands in sharp contrast to the adverse image we get of him from the dialogues. The contrast especially becomes clear in the argument between Mike and his older son, Tom. " Are you joking? You've done nothing for me" . As the argument is developing it proves out that the children, and the mother or that matter, is very unrealistic when it comes to economy and money. No matter how much they get, it is never enough. Mike has always given his children exactly what they wanted, despite the fact that their joy never lasted long. " The kids had stopped using it before he'd hardly begun paying for it" 6. The narrator in the short story is a first person narrator with a limited point of view to the father. By this we get an insight in the fathers thoughts and speculations. He believed he was good at giving things up" 7. We see everything from his point of view, so we have therefore have a colored view n the story. The story is written with the use of Pats. We, as a reader, feel sympathy for Mike. Imagine and the children seem greedy and ungrateful. They are products of the capitalistic consumer society. They are all against Mike and he himself takes position as the victim. He appears to be alone with the knowledge of his famish future situation; however, he does not have the courage to face the consequences.

Instead he tries to avoid them. Mike does become wiser on his family unrealistic luxurious lifestyle throughout the story. That happens when he

notices Queen Elizabeth's crooked smile on a tote. " How had he never noticed what a sardonic little Mona Lisa smile the blinded-up monarch wore, mocking even, as if she pitied the vanity and greed the note inspired" 8. In the world at large, money is what we worship. We are willingly sacrificing the bond with our family to pursue wealth. Mike has never needed anything in his life.

As his father said " Mike you've been stalked by good fortune your whole life" 9. Now that he is unemployed, he suddenly seems to have lost control of his emotions and life. For a moment he even considers to leave this world and all the financial troubles behind. " How easy it was to fall, and how tempting it was -? suddenly would be best - to die! " 10 First of all " The Decline of the West' refers to the Collapse of Wall Street in 2008, which had a huge impact on the life of millions of people in the West.

The western countries are currently in a critic financial situation. Our society, build upon capitalism and materialism demolished when the nation began to spend more than they could afford. This theme is evident throughout the story. Mike reflects on the lifestyle he, and many others had led in the past couple of years. He considers whether the financial crisis is a penalty for this. [...] Nonetheless, like many people, Mike had also worried whether the present catastrophe was punishment for years of extravagance and self-indulgence; [... " 11 The title could also be interpreted as a reference to a moral decline of the modern family. The values of love, and closeness are being replaced by the desire to possess and own everything you could ever dream of. The love for material has taken over the love for our fellow men.

We forget about all that really matters and we are only focusing on buying the latest gadgets and promoting our economical status. The grotesque overcorrection and insatiable love for material goods might have caused severe damage to our traditional social values.

Mike and his family is an example of this propensity, so the title might as well refer to the social regression in our culture. The financial crisis has resulted in lots of critical problems, but maybe a financial crisis was exactly what we needed? This could be a break from our unrealistic expenditure. Money can buy you many things, but the happiness from it is limited. Money can buy you lots and lots of material goods, still eventually you will no longer feel the same excitement about your purchase.

Just like the kids in the short story, you will sooner or later cast-off your bought stuff and set your goals up for a new investment. Money can offer things to make people happy, but it does not mean that money can buy you true happiness. Poor people on the street huddling together to stay warm, that is care, which brings out true happiness. Their situation would improve with a little money, however, in the short story where a wealthy family that cannot live together, where is their happiness? Where is the love? Money cannot buy happiness, nor love.