
Comparison Of Lolita And The Loved One

Throughout history, literature has often exposed the quintessential conflicts of humanity. That is, the tendency to fall victim to a consumerist society. Vladimir Nabokov in his novel, "Lolita", and Evelyn Waugh in his novel, "The Loved One", expose the damaging effects brought about by a commercialist society. Lolita, the protagonist in "Lolita", and Aimee, the protagonist from "The Loved One", are both perfect victims to consumerism and therefore exhibit its damaging effects through the permanent loss of their character.

Within "Lolita", Lolita is often objectified, leading to her absolute destruction. Humbert, who becomes her guardian, often calls her "dolly", symbolic of a doll. Dolls are toys, objects to be played with, showing Lolita's role as a consumer in a consumerist society. Just as dolls can be shaped, Lolita is being shaped into the perfect consumer. Humbert is not the only person to objectify Lolita in such a way. Mona, Lolita's friend, refers to Lolita as a "doll (page 126)". Even Lolita's friends objectify her showing the inescapable presence consumerism has created in Lolita's life.

Throughout "The Loved One", Aimee's repetitive dehumanization demonstrates the falsity created by commercialism and its damaging effects. In the novel, Aimee puts "Jungle Venom" in her hair, which "comes to you with the remorseless stealth of the hunting cannibal(page 98). Following the conventions of commercialist society, Aimee is stripped of her uniqueness, and ultimately humanity. Just as the advertisement has a dangerous nature, commercialism is dangerous to Aimee's purity and character. Commercialism preys on society and Aimee is one of its victims. Also, Aimee, stripped of her identity and voice, is described as "wagging her tail". Her dehumanization represents the loss of her voice in a commercialised society. Aimee has lost her humanity as she is now a pet to consumerism, and thus, is controlled by it.

Lolita's relationship with Humbert represents corrupted love bred by commercialistic society. Humbert's love for Lolita strips her of her purity as it is tainted. Lolita's full name is Dolores Haze. Her last name shows significance as she is unable to see things for what they truly are in a consumerist society. She is incapable of seeing past the corruption. Upon consuming an apple, Humbert sexually takes advantage of Lolita for the first time. This is her ultimate loss of innocence. The apple is symbolic of Adam and Eve. Both ate the apple and were no longer pure. Her consummation of the apple mimics Adam and Eve losing their purity upon eating the apple. Just as Adam and Eve are stained with sin, Lolita is now stained with corruption that she will never be able to escape.

Humbert, aware of Lolita's purity beginning to vanish, states "I knew I had fallen in love with Lolita forever, but I also knew she would not forever be Lolita(page 43)". Humbert says he will fall in love with Lolita forever, but when she is completely stripped of her youthful innocence he will not love what he made her into, what a commercial society made her into. She is no longer pure and therefore no longer has the youthful innocence she once had. Humbert also refers to himself in the third person just as a child would do. Humbert wants to hold onto his innocence, the innocence only children have. This encourages Humbert to turn to Lolita as he feeds on her innocence since he can not have his own, leading to Lolita's inevitable, the ultimate loss of character

Within "The Loved One", Aimee is embodied by lies in corruption as she finds herself s

tuck in a love triangle. Dennis Barlow, who develops a crush on Aimee, creates faulty love letters for her as he inserts poems he stole from famous poets in them. Aimee, unable to see past their falsity, finds them romantic. The letters take her identity and voice away because she fully listens to him. Her blindness towards the obvious faultiness the letters holds parallels her idealistic qualities as a consumer. One of the quotes he steals is from Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' which reads, "half in love with an easeful death(page 84)". Aimee is drawn to the quote and thus to the faultiness commercialism creates. Commercialism tries to disguise reality and take the horror out of death just as Aimee, who wants death to be "easeful". She no longer is able to view death as it truly is and is no longer pure.

Within "Lolita", Lolita is unable to regain her youthful innocence, showing her complete destruction of character. Lolita's youth is destroyed by the demands of a consumerist society. Within the novel, Lolita attempts to run away from Humbert in hopes to regain her youthful innocence. Eventually, Humbert finds his way back to her. She cannot run from the corruption that encompasses her by a commercialistic society. Lolita is forever stained with corruption and will never regain her purity. Also, after Humbert impregnates Lolita, her baby dies in wedlock. They suggest the morbid ending of such consumerism. Nothing good can come from Lolita because she cannot breed innocence. Hoped to gain innocence back through a child but nothing of innocence/purity can be produced from such corruption.

In the "Loved One", Aimee loses her youthful innocence upon her arrival at Whispering Glades as a result of her exposure to consumerism. When Aimee arrived she was described as, "The girl who now entered was unique. Not indefinitely; the appropriate distinguishing epithet leapt to Dennis mind the moment her saw her: sole Eve in a bustling hygienic Eden, this girl was a decadent(page 48)". The word "unique" is specifically used to exhibit how upon arrival, she was not completely taken by commercialism and contained some individuality. The quote also points out Eden as the clean place it was before the loss of innocence, choosing to ignore the tragic part of the story. Lastly, the quote points out Eden as the clean place it was before the loss of innocence, choosing to ignore the tragic part of the story. Upon entering the corruption Whispering Glades holds, Aimee is told "And the place where we work [Aimee and Joyboy] is meant to be Happy that is one of the first rules(page 114)". Here, Joyboy is trying to sell happiness to Aimee; however, being genuinely happy all the time is unrealistic. Being happy as a rule is outlandish and shows the falsity of Whispering Glades. Aimee wants to be truly happy and thus craves to regain her youthful innocence.

In a consumerist society, character is bound to be lost as never regained. This idea is supported through Lolita in Vladimir Nabokov's novel "Lolita", and Aimee in Evelyn Waugh's novel "The Loved One". Both characters are young females who are exposed to the corruption planted in a consumerist society. As a result, they experience an inevitable decline in character. They begin to lack individuality as they cannot escape the corruption commercialism gave rise to.