

Modernity, Mass Culture, and Self-Delusion in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Martin Amis' *Money*

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ABSTRACT

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955) and Martin Amis' *Money* (1984) discuss the disadvantages of mass media. Amis uses John Self to reflect the disintegration of the self in the modern, Capitalist society of England in 1980s. Self represents the failure of the postmodern world by portraying a dystopian society. Amis and Nabokov tackle subjects pertaining to money, incest, delusion, and disappointment. Lights are shed on the moral aspect of the characters. The modernity of Amis' fiction lies in its double deception of its characters; there is the American motif and a character who is not able to resist the magic of such motif. It is about consumerism or how aspects of post modernity and the consumer culture are portrayed. This paper aims to show the impact of mass media on the characters who are self-deluded and indulged in loving money, advertisements, and sex. It also aims at showing duality and corruption in both texts, John Self is bankrupt and wants to commit suicide. Humbert cheats many and is imprisoned and *Lolita* dies. *Lolita* becomes the victim of incest. It is an attempt to urge human beings to refuse cultural divisions and encourage human spirituality instead of Materialistic point of view.

KEY WORDS: Amis, Mass Media, Money, Nabokov, Self-Delusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Martin Amis has written various novels such as *The Rachel papers* (1973), *Dead Babies* (1975), *Money* (1984), *London Fields* (1989), *Night Train* (1997), and *Success* which was published in 1978. The themes that Amis tackles in his novels are: Power, politics, and mass media, specifically in *Money*. The negative impact of mass culture, mass media on the individual is exemplified by John Self whose life has been corrupted due to the impact of mass media and materialism. He was cheated by everybody around, became bankrupt, and was about to commit suicide, but Amis uses an

open-ended structure with an optimistic end, pushing John Self to start life again.

According to Albert and Field (2019), Vladimir Nabokov was born in Russia in 1899, and died in Switzerland in 1977. He wrote in both Russian and English and his best works, including *Lolita* (1955), feature stylish, intricate literary effects. The Russian born Vladimir Nabokov was one of the most ingenious authors of the twentieth century known for their originality and accomplishment as writers. As an experimental novelist, Nabokov often played with various forms of novel composition (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

According to Berthold Schoene (2000), "Under patriarchy a man's reticence and silence constitute insidious imperatives that safeguard and control his masculine authenticity. For a man to speak about his gender in a critical self-conscious manner already indicates that he has failed to live up to the patriarchal ideal and that, consequently, his masculinity is 'in trouble'" (viii). In both *Money* (1984) and *London Fields* (1989), Martin Amis intensifies the satirical and comic mode found in his previous work, and centres his texts on the exaggerated vulgarities, the demotic impulses,

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and the literal and verbal frenzy of patriarchal masculinity. (Qtd in Keulks, 2006, p.71)

The contemporary society that Self represents is materialistic. Self is, by his own assessment, "addicted to the twentieth century" (*Money*, p. 91), he adds that "Selina says I am not capable of true love. It isn't true. I truly love money. Truly I do. Oh, Money, I love you" (*Money*, p. 238). Through such direct conversation, the authentic part of individuals is revealed. The modern man is no longer able to be sincere, neither with himself nor with others around. Self, hurts himself and others. There is a confession of absence of true love or faithfulness. As his multiple forms of consumption begin to catch up with him, the novel concludes with a Self who has lost his career and his money, and attempted suicide, but somehow survived.

Joanna Stolarek (2011, p.150) claims that "Martin Amis ironically delineates his protagonists in his novels and specially John Self as naïve victim of the manipulative mechanism of the epoch he lives in, not solely the impact of late modern capitalism but of other facets of all the twentieth century as well". Stolarek adds in the same page that among all the main characters and narrators of Amis's novels, the writer has singled out John Self as the most conspicuous victim of miscellaneous aspects of cultural and social oppression; most notably capitalist exploration and communist totalitarianism. Mass Culture (Oxford,2020) refers to cultural products that are both mass-produced and for mass audiences, examples include Mass-Media, entertainments-films, television programmes. MacDonald (1953) claims that for about a century, Western culture has really been two cultures: the traditional kind—let us call it "High Culture"—that is chronicled in the textbooks, and a "Mass Culture" manufactured wholesale for the market.... Mass Culture has also developed new media of its own, into which the serious artist rarely ventures: radio, the movies, comic books, detective stories, science fiction, television. (p.12). MacDonald believes that the historical reasons for the growth of Mass Culture since the early 1800's are well known. Political democracy and popular education broke down the old upper-class monopoly of culture.

Business enterprise found a profitable market in the cultural demands of the newly awakened masses, and the advance of technology made possible the cheap production of books, periodicals, pictures, music, and furniture, in sufficient quantities to satisfy this market. Modern technology also created new media such as the movies and television which are specially well adapted to mass manufacture and distribution. In MacDonald's view (1953, p.13), the phenomenon is thus peculiar to modern times and differs radically from what was hitherto known as art or culture.

Since the World War II, the USA has developed and the American society was full of large quantities of

goods and commodities produced by the government. Progress in technology and the development of mass media created a change in the society. In the novel, the relation between Lolita and Humbert was a relation of give and take, a commodity. Humbert started to spend money; buying clothes, snacks, movie tickets, and magazines. When Humbert came to New England countryside and saw Mrs Haze's house, he decided to leave immediately; he didn't like the design of the house and its old decoration. He says "Let's get out of here at once", While leaving, he saw his nymphet, his light of soul- Lolita and was inspired by her beauty. He looked at Lolita's body" her shoulders, back, hair, breasts, abdomen, hips, then he changes his plan and decides to settle down here" (*Lolita*, p. 40). The reason that made him change his mind is Lolita. After a while, he plans to marry Lolita's mother, Charlotte, but as time passes, Charlotte discovers her husband's tendency towards her daughter through confessional letters, she runs mad, having a car accident and dies. Then Humbert takes Dolores away for two years without informing her of her mother's death. Being a paedophile rapes her, using drugs, money, and all other means to attract her attention. Humbert remained in hotels then someone called Quilty wanted to exploit Lolita in a pornographic film. Humbert kills Quilty, who was Humbert's brother; Lolita escaped, got married, and finally died while giving birth to her child; and Humbert was finally imprisoned. As for Amis's *Money*, John Self tries to commit suicide but fails, then tries to start from the beginning and is saved from such corrupted world. Both novels tackle the human being's attraction to Mass Media and money in the twentieth century. It is a direct warning for all human beings because the consequences of such attraction sometimes cause death.

2. THE IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON CHARACTERS IN *LOLITA* AND *MONEY*

The negative impact of mass media leads people to have inaccurate portrayal of reality. Some people are addicted to drinking alcohol; others become slaves of goods and clothes which have bad influence on them. In these two novels, their authors show the dilemma of modern people in every field of life. For example, John Self becomes a slave of his erotic desires and his money spoils him. And Humbert again does everything to be with Lolita.

The story of Nabokov's *Lolita*, is attractive for it relates to Russian culture and Humbert's direct tendency towards kidnapping Dolores (Lolita), and through advertisements and role of mass media, Humbert cheats Dolores, and Dolores accepts money from him.

The text focuses on the failures of Lolita and Humbert to make contact with people. Humbert is indulged in people lower than himself. Humbert is revealed as an

educated person paying attention to this aspect but his sexual desire betrays his intellectual ability and weakens him to the degree that he finds himself driven to dangerous result leading nowhere but disastrous end which is death. He tries to refashion Lolita's identity through buying her many clothes, and he himself works in the field of mass media. Being disappointed shortly after such experiences, they try to leave the new role they played, but because they did not succeed, their moral and physical aspects have declined. According to Jones (2012, p. 84), media manipulation begins with Dolores's mother, Charlotte. Humbert portrays her negatively, primarily for her reliance on advertisements and popular culture. Everything about her, from her shrill voice to her reliance on homemaking manuals and advertisements, annoys him.

As for Martin Amis's *Money*, Stolarek (2011, p.150) states that John Self, a naïve, semi-illiterate and unreliable narrator, falls prey to his insatiable erotic desires and the overwhelming power of money which is comically exposed as the spoiler of quality human life. Due to his British-American origin, John embodies a transatlantic culture, an everyman of materialism in the decade of Thatcher's and Raegan's governments.

Kaur (2017, p. 89), states that Amis's narratives, oscillating between realism and postmodernism, present the bitter truths of modern capitalist society. British government under the rule of Margaret Thatcher shifted its interest from the progress of the welfare state to privatization of business, marketing and consumerism which gave a rapid increase to commercialization.

Kaur continues in the same page, his analysis of Martin Amis's writing in *Money*, maintaining that the novel was based on his experience with Hollywood when he was hired for scriptwriting, it reflects satirically the political affairs of his time as well as the effects of cultural values of American society on British people.

Finney (2008, 17) believes that In *Money*, while borrowing the techniques from the American novelists he most admired, he was able to locate the effects of American culture in his uneducated English protagonist, John Self. Self has been raised on a steady diet of popular entertainments, commercials, and porn through his absorption of American values that permeated the British media. From *Money* onwards, all Amis's novels will either contain a scene located in America or bring American characters to England, or both.

So, In Kaur's view, *Money* is one of the best examples presenting such devastating and self-deceiving impact of modern celebrity culture on human beings. Image of conscious people, in order to attain affluence, high status and fame which are only appearance not actual success, depend on the conspicuous consumption of materialistic signifiers. The concepts of material consumption, the false appearance and money are interrelated.

Such view of Kaur, reveals the high degree of affection on behalf of the postmodern man. Money becomes a conspiracy that nobody can escape from. So, Self is hopeless, he says: "Jesus, it's an outrage. It's a scandal... You just cannot beat the money conspiracy. You can only join it" (*Money*, p.221). Self also describes pornography which consists of sex and money. He has a girl friend named Selina, he says "While making love, we often talk about money. I like it. I like that dirty talk" (*Money*, p.143).

Actually, *Lolita* is also a voice of culture, modernity, mass media, and American industry. It is a direct criticism of modern life and consumer culture. This novel just like Amis's, has great influence on popular culture in America. Nan (2014, p. 181) justifies why Humbert is attracted to Lolita. Years ago, Humbert had a young lover named Annabel who was dead. He identified Lolita to Annabel. This is another way of self-delusion. Humbert knows well that Annabel is gone and dead but he convinces himself of finding her in Lolita. Humbert is deeply indulged in love and sex whereas Lolita is steeped and melt in the commodities provided by Humbert. The twelve-year-old Lolita grew up in this American consumer society, and enjoyed indulging in the commodities world. When Humbert kidnaped Lolita, she frequently asked to live in a luxurious hotel or have meals in recommended restaurants. When Humbert took her to a modest humble place, she would lose her temper. Lolita wants highly decorated places, costly models, these only convince her inclination to stay with a stepfather older than her of many years. In Amis's novel, Kaur (2017, p. 90-91) believes that also John Self is changed and he doesn't comprehend but the language of money, sex and drinking: "John Self, whose life moves around his pornographic hobbies, shows the instinct of "an animal-eating and drinking, dumping, sleeping, fucking and fighting- and that's it (*Money*, p. 277). Self says:

I think I might have what it takes to be a dog, I am a dog. I am a dog at the seaside tethered to a fence while my master and mistress romp on the sands. I am bouncing, twisting, weeping, consuming myself. (Money, p. 193)

According to Nan (2014, p. 181), the only way to convince Lolita is to feed her desire by buying her clothes, magazines, movie tickets, etc. and giving her money continuously. The relationship between Humbert and Lolita became one of consuming, in which Humbert spent money to buy Lolita's caresses and satisfy his physical lust. She earned to buy snacks, toys, and movie tickets which could satisfy her desire and illusion. However, identities are uncertain and fluid in the late capitalist culture, and Lolita's identity decorated by commodities is illusory and temporary. After Lolita fled away from him, his love and lust to her were all in vain,

and those clothes and shoes he bought her became finally worthless.

Consider the following example which indicates the decline of the moral values of a step-father towards his stepdaughter. Nabokov writes:

Under my glancing finger tips I felt the minute hairs bristle ever so slightly along her shins. I lost myself in the pungent but healthy heat which like summer haze hung about little Haze. Let her stay, let her stay...As she strained to chuck the core of her abolished apple into the fender, her young weight, her shameless innocent shanks and round bottom, shifted in my tense, tortured, surreptitiously labouring lap; and all of a sudden a mysterious change came over my senses. I entered a plane of being where nothing mattered, save the infusion of joy brewed within my body (Lolita, pp. 59-60).

He fell in love with his daughter-in-law, and tried to kill his wife but he could not, Humbert feels tortured when he realises his own disappointment being Charlotte's husband and hating her to death:

She swam beside me, a trustful and clumsy seal, and all the logic of passion screamed in my ear: Now is the time! And, folks, I just couldn't! In silence I turned shoreward and gravely, dutifully, she also turned, and still hell screamed its counsel, and still I could not make myself drown the poor, slippery, big-bodied creature. The scream grew more and more remote as I realized the melancholy fact that neither tomorrow, nor Friday, nor any other day or night, could I make myself put her to death (Lolita, p. 87).

The dangerous and immoral act Humbert involved in is his decision to use sleeping drugs to get rid of Charlotte:

I had in fact begun my campaign earlier, before Charlotte made the cruel decision of hers. I had to be sure when my lovely child arrived, that very night, and then night after night, until St. Algebra took her away from me, I would possess the means of putting two creatures to sleep so thoroughly that neither sound nor touch should rouse them. Throughout most of July I had been experimenting with various sleeping powders, trying them out on Charlotte, a great taker of pills. The last dose I have given her had knocked her out for four solid hours (Lolita, p. 94).

The disgusting, nasty nature of Humbert is revealed. He believes that if he continues in this way, he will succeed winning Lolita, imagining her as nymphet. But reality is harder, for the three roams in a deluded, cheating circle without achieving authentic experience. It is no more than mirage. And the three are going to be punished severely. First Charlotte will have a terrible car accident, Lolita will confess her experiences with other girls in the camp, and all Humbert's dreams will vaporize in the air. When used negatively, money becomes the means for achieving all such unauthentic experiences. Authenticity is not achieved neither in

Money nor in Lolita, because the characters have gone through process of self-delusion believing that they achieve success and true experience. But reality is just the opposite, for issues of being rich for Self is temporary and soon he is going to be shocked by being bankrupt. As for Humbert, he takes Lolita from the camp away from home and rapes her. Later, he is going to get disappointed for doing so.

Lolita stretched out her hand, nodding vigorously. I had hoped the drug would work fast. It certainly did. She had had a long day, she had gone rowing in the morning with Barbara whose sister was Waterfront Director, as the adorable accessible nymphet now star how ted to tell me in between suppressed palate -humping yawns, growing in volume-oh, how fast the magic portion worked! (Lolita, p. 122).

There is an outstanding fact about the impact of mass media on abusing Lolita and her mother Charlotte. Humbert cheats them by buying them clothes, taking them to expensive restaurants, or bringing them presents. They teach her not only to consume products, but also to see the world in a consumerist way and to identify what is handsome, desirable, and lovable. Even Lolita cheats both her mother and Humbert when she confesses her lesbian desire when she was with her friend in the camp.

3. DUALITY, CORRUPTION IN MONEY AND LOLITA

Among the techniques that Martin Amis manipulates is Duality. The patterns are static. Critics reveal the symbolic denotation of America, which is "escape" and the "danger" of a new life. The individuals try to escape the abused life of the twentieth century because of being exploited by others. The problems arise when the protagonist John Self travels to America and the miseries of life are focused on through Self's comment on people he sees or communicates with.

Victoria Alexander (1994, p. 78) takes the stance that Martin Amis' writing has been defined as "a queer hybrid of a Nabokovian and Bellovian world-views". By this, the critic means that it is a fiction supported and enhanced by the tension between the formal and moral aspects of his prose. Through the recurrent presence of a fixed repertoire of motifs and thematic lines, we can simultaneously observe the workings of the aesthete in search of the perfect pattern and design, and hear the musings of the social commentator and satirist.

Campanon (2004, p. 88) has suggested that to Amis these two sides of the task of a writer, the formal and the moral concerns, are necessary dimensions for artistic creation, and are central elements of his understanding of the novel as a literary genre. These conflicting drives

at the core of Amis' fiction are a primal example of an essentially dualist imagination, of "Amis' persistent double perspective" (Reynolds & Noakes, 2003, p. 6). Martin Amis's role is advent through his use of language by mentioning for instances comparable concepts. The double portrayal of concepts reveals conflicts of the characters and the plots that John Self suffers from. Such comparisons refer to the character's anxieties in the modern world. At the same time, they refer to the psychological conflicts and irritations that Self and other characters suffer from. Kaur (2017, p. 90-91) writes about this point and especially about John Self that "His duplicity and artificiality lies in the fact that he relies on materialistic signifiers to satisfy his carnal desires while making himself an unnatural product who has no self-respect, dignity, self-control and independent thinking. He has human body but does not have human spirit". Self says:

My clothes are made of monosodium glutamate and hexachlorophene.

My food is made polyester, rayon and lurex...My brain is gimmicked

by a microprocessor the size of a quark and lasting ten pee and running

the whole deal. I am made of junk _junk, I'm just junk (Money, 1984, p. 265)

Concerning "the double", in postmodern fiction, Gordon Slethaug(1993), states, "The double in postmodern fiction explores a divided Self in a fragmented universe. Its mission is to decentre the concept of the self, to view human reality as a construct and to explore the inevitable drift of signifiers away from their referents" (1993, p.3).

Nabokov conveys few messages, one of which is criticising the American culture. He criticises the private places in American hotels, for such places are masks for wrong doings like Humbert's taking a little girl of twelfth years, and hiding himself from the eyes of the public to enjoy his 'nymph', i.e. Lolita. Nabokov believes that home is the best protected place for children. Moyer (2018, p.9) maintains that it is impossible to read Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* without considering the moral problem of Humbert's paedophilic relationships with Lolita.

The legal implications of Humbert's paedophilia and murder of Clare Quilty, is perhaps because of Humbert's obvious guilt, in fact, the entire narrative is written as a confession. Humbert is so aware of his guilt that he wastes no time trying to claim that he did not have sex with Lolita or he did not kill Quilty. Instead, he makes the nuanced argument that he was seduced by Lolita, and great memories of his past allowed him to follow through on her advances. These are not hoping for sympathy and understanding as he makes his plea. He

makes the argument that his killing of Quilty was a crime of passion but this necessitates a defence of his paedophilia in some manner.

Yalcin (2014, p.3) maintains that Amis in his novels creates a special world where everything has double meaning. Dualities in novels such as behaviours of characters, grotesque body and language, both highlight the trauma's destructing power on one's self and perceptions of the world and time. He indicated that instead of reflecting conflicting features in a character, he prefers to split his characters one of which is monstrous and the other innocent. Thus, he shows the duality of life in the consciousness of his characters.

The protagonist John Self, was traumatized by the oppressive material forces of the Modern world, finds himself in the middle of identity crisis from which he endeavours to save himself through the false reality of alcohol, pornography and money (Yalcin, 2014, p. 4).

The plot of the novel, as put by Diedrick (1995, p. 71), is "deceptively simple". John Self, the director of "controversial TV advertisements for smoking, drinking, junk food and nude magazines" (*money*, p. 78) travels back and forth between London and New York for over six months. He does so in order to make the necessary arrangements to boost his project of shooting an autobiographical film alternatively called, through the different phases of the project, *Bad Money and Good Money*. Self attends meetings and makes arrangements with Fielding Goodney, his American producer, and through him, with the starring actors involved in the project. His main role will be heeding the actors' and actresses' paranoid requests and trying to smooth things over among them. Self will do this despite his inability to focus on things, and his inaccurate and fragmentary perception of reality.

Through his love to money, Self becomes materialistic and void of spirit. He was betrayed by his film producer Fielding Goodney and his beloved Selina Street. What is humorous and Ironic is that the film project was only a means for cheating Self who was ignorant of all these incidents.

The following lines clarify the artificial way of the behaving on the part of Selina Street, who is in love with John Self:

In my experience you can tell pretty well all you need to know about a woman by the amount of time, thought and money she puts into her pants. Take Selina. And these pants spelt true sack knowhow. She danced like a wet dream, vicious and inane. Her tooth-crammed smile went everywhere and nowhere. The face, the body, the movement, all quite secure in their performance, their art, their pornography. 'You want to buy Dawn a drink?' (Money, 1984, p.4).

Here John Self describes the situation in the club, women are exploited and doing everything for money, a

worst description for a dismal situation of materialistic world. Lolita is not different from Selina because though she is twelve years old, she is conscious of her contemptuous deeds. In both Amis' (1984) *Money* and Nabokov's (1955) *Lolita*, mass Media is exploiting both women. They adore money without feeling that this deletes their identity and causes them shame; there will not be a difference between whores and them. Despite the critics' views against both writers' female or male characters, there is a direct message delivered on behalf of women. In fact, both little boys and girls are abused by people who have no morality at all.

In relation to duality in Nabokov's *Lolita*, Connolly (2005, p.187) claims that Careful attention to the text reveals the ways in which it is designed to reveal what the narrator attempts to conceal, or blindly ignores. Readers inattentive to the dual, and duplicitous, nature of the narrator's language in Nabokov's fiction. Nabokov manipulates duplication or duality in the novel. Connolly (2005, p.188) adds that Humbert's narration is particularly duplicitous because he is the first among those he would deceive. Only gradually, and with great difficulty, does he face up to the burden of guilt that he bears, when at last he does, he levels the verdict against himself in harsh and spare language bearing little resemblance to the "fancy prose style" in which most of his narrative is cast. Focusing for once, on the "North American girl-child" rather than the fantasized nymphet, he baldly admits "Dolore Haze had been deprived of her childhood by a maniac" (*Lolita*, 1955, p.283).

Through flattery and presenting gifts, Lolita was abused by Humbert, and Self was cheated by men and women alike. After seeing Lolita and marrying her mother, he was able to cheat her by bringing her many gifts, Album of pictures, and clothes. When Lolita's mother dies, he takes her. As an immigrant from Russia, he remembers his father who was owner of more than one hotel and narrates his beloved then, Annabel, whom he had left her before coming to America. Moyer (2018, p. 11), believes that due to Humbert, Lolita is not innocent like his previous beloved Annabel; here it is clear that such a tension in this story is related to those people who are sick and specifically after war and political anxieties. Humbert is the paedophile who engages in illicit sexual acts with Lolita in private spaces; and Nabokov brings these actions to the public sphere making others aware of these threats to "democratic freedom". The home, which Whiting (1998, p. 834) calls the "very embodiment of privacy", is seen at this time as the ultimate private space, where children are protected from the outside world.

Being a pornographic person, Self sees things in terms of price and value. He is unable to form relationships that are not based on economic exchange. Self says:

So now I must go uptown to meet with Fielding Goodney at the Carraway Hotel – Fielding, my moneyman, my contact and my pal. He's the reason I'm here, I'm the reason he's here too. We're going to make lots of money together. Making lots of money – it's not that hard, you know. It's overestimated. Making lots of money is a breeze. You watch. (Money, 1984, p. 7)

Here Self ironically tells us that he is going to be rich and Fielding also is going to be richer. So, money becomes the hero and the only subject everywhere in the city; at home, and on the table discussions. Corruption is everywhere. In spite of all the circumstances John Self undergoes, his self-delusion is finished, and he only retains his self-consciousness when he is bankrupt. As Cohn (2004, p.141) claims, it is no accident that John Self becomes aware of his identity as fictional consciousness—the great metafictional conspiracy—when he is bankrupt and cast out by a portion of society he habitually kept. It would seem that by the end of the novel the system finishes with John, regarding him all but used up. Yet it is in the final pages of *Money*, where Self undergoes a figurative and literary withdrawal, that we are able to ascertain and affirm the warning that John Self embodies. Self says:

Maybe money is the great conspiracy, the great fiction. The great addiction, we're all addicted and we can't break the habit now. There's not even anything very twentieth century about it, except the disposition. (Money, 1984, p. 354)

On page thirty-one of *Lolita*, the reader realizes that somebody threatens Humbert's secrecy when in the hotel, named as The Enchanted Hunter Hotel, which refers to something bad and negative. Danger approaches Humbert when a man called Clare Quilt asks him:

*"Where the devil did you get her?"
"I beg your pardon?"
"I said: the weather is getting better."
"Seems so"
"Who's the lassie?"
"My daughter"
"You lie-she's not." (Lolita, 1955 p. 127)*

In this way, Moyer (2018, p. 39) claims that the privacy of Humbert is spoiled, and Quilty seduces Lolita step by step by convincing her as a pornographer. Nabokov criticizes such terrible illegal atmosphere inside these hotels. Humbert and Lolita continue to travel, staying in a wide array of accommodations, ranging from upscale hotels to motels to road-side cabins. In one of these hotels, Humbert attempts to recreate his childhood memories of the Mirana Hotel by teaching Lolita to play tennis.

Humbert confesses (in *Lolita*, 1955 p. 125) that he pocketed the key and walked downstairs, with Lolita safely in the hotel room where they will soon have sex. He has complete control over her, and the key in his pocket represents his control of the scenario. He later states that she was his as the key was in his pocket. Humbert feels terrible when he finds Lolita runaway, married and pregnant, Bertram and Leving (2014, p.11) believe that “Lolita is about obsession and narcissistic appetite, misogyny and contemptuous rejection, not only of women, but of humanity itself. And yet. It is also about love; if it were not, the book would not be so heart-stoppingly beautiful.

Later on, Humbert senses the impact of Quilty on Lolita to opportune her by using her in a pornographic film. He just promises Lolita to give her extra money to remain with him, but soon Humbert kills Quilty. So, everybody is deceitful. Trilling (1987, p. 5) wrote that Nabokov sought to shock us and that he had to stage-manage something uniquely different in order to do so. The impact of mass media and money have only temporary effect; very soon the characters realize their delusional state. John Self gives up everything when he detects the wrong path he paves in America. Lolita soon awakes from her horrible way of living with a stepfather. And Humbert is disappointed with Lolita’s delusional way of remaining faithful.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Both texts portray challenging images about the nature of people who are indulged in cheating themselves and pretending false identity. John Self, Humbert, and Lolita all ironically feel that they have authentic identities, depending on mass media, consumerism, and fashioning. Soon, they are disappointed when they discover the opposite and regret their fake culture and identity. Educated European cultural aspect is compared to the vulgar, American one. The impact of *Money* on abusing different sexes in Amis’ novel and the trivial American individuals represented by *Lolita* are all critical points through mass media.

Humbert’s hatred to mass media and advertisements are clear indications of irony and dualism, for the moment he shows his disdain and hatred to these advertisements, he contradicts himself, as he himself is an advertiser. These situations are revealed through language. Language mocks at Humbert’s duality.

Nabokov criticises the American culture and portrays it sarcastically through Lolita and her mother. They both represent the triviality of the modern world through their unbelievable love for money and advertisements, fashions, and clothes.

These two texts are calls for avoiding false consumerism, the negative impact of media,

advertisements, and cheated fashions. They are an invitation towards ensuring our safety away from self-delusion. Money is dangerous when it is used for immoral aspects, like John Self and Humbert did when he used it for attracting women and a girl of 12 years. Cheating oneself through money is the utmost decline in morality. At the same time, absence of money had brought peace of mind, honesty, and morality in John Self’s case in Amis’ *Money*.

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