

**THE PORTRAYAL OF COMMODIFICATION BEHAVIOR IN  
VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S NOVEL ENTITLED *LOLITA***

**THESIS**

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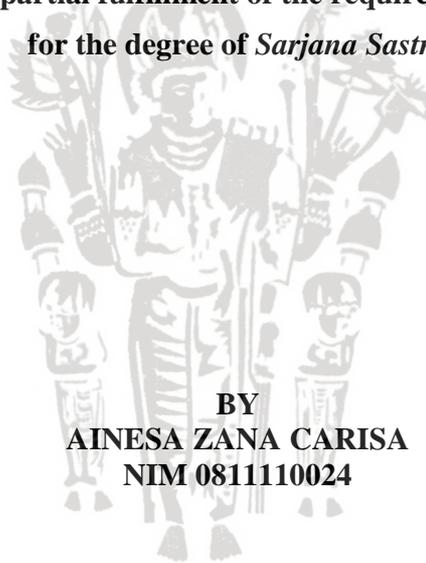
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NABOKOV'S NOVEL ENTITLED *LOLITA***

**THESIS**

**Presented to  
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**in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra***



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## ABSTRACT

Carisa, Ainesa Zana. 2013. **The Portrayal of Commodification Behavior in Vladimir Nabokov's Novel Entitled *Lolita***. Study Program of English, Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya. Supervisor: Andhy Nurmansyah; Co-supervisor: Arcci Tusita

Keywords: Marxism, Commodification, Exchange Value, Sign-exchange Value, Human Relationship

Material-based of thinking is based solely on Marx's premises. This point of view affect the human's way in communicating, viewing and treating each other. They no longer see each other as social being but more into an object, thus lead to objectification and evolve into commodification. The writer conducts a study about commodification in 'Lolita' novel which shows the portrayal of human's relationship and involved values such as exchange and sign-exchange values and focused on the major character, Humbert Humbert. There is one problem to be solved in the study, that is: How does commodification behavior portrayed in relationships of Humbert Humbert as the main character and Dolores Haze (Lolita), as well as his relationship with other minor characters in the novel?

The analysis of Humbert's portrayal of commodification using Marx's commodification theory, focused on the depiction of sign-exchange value and exchange value that reflected in each character's relation with Humbert in three steps, namely: (1) collecting any data related to the characteristic of Humbert; (2) collecting and selecting data related to the interaction(s) of Humbert; and (3) categorizing the data and analyzing them under the concept of Commodification (Exchange and Sign-exchange value).

This study reveals that most of Humbert's relationship is connected with Lolita, in which it involves both sign and exchange value. Humbert's relationship with other minor characters like Monique and Valeria is related with his objectification then with 'nymphet' label. McCoo and Charlotte's relation with Humbert functioned as a 'tool' that qualified with exchange value. With Quilty, it is treated as reversed one, where Quilty is the one tried to commodified Humbert.

The writer suggests English Department students to analyze *Lolita* using Michael Focault's New Historicism to give clear description about America's economy situation in year 1950 as depicted in the novel.

## ABSTRAK

Carisa, Ainesa Zana. 2013. **Penggambaran Perilaku Komodifikasi dalam Novel Vladimir Nabokov Berjudul *Lolita***. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Departemen Bahasa dan Sastra, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya. Pembimbing: (I) Andhy Nurmansyah; (II) Arci Tusita

Kata Kunci: Marxisme, Komodifikasi, Nilai Tukar, Nilai Penanda-tukar, Hubungan Manusia

Pemikiran berbasis materi berdasar pada premis Marxisme. Sudut pandang ini mempengaruhi cara manusia dalam berkomunikasi, memandang dan memperlakukan satu sama lain. Mereka tak lagi memandang satu sama lain sebagai makhluk sosial namun lebih sebagai objek, sehingga mengarah pada objektifikasi dan berkembang menjadi komodifikasi. Penulis melakukan studi mengenai komodifikasi dalam novel 'Lolita' yang menunjukkan penggambaran hubungan manusia. Ada satu permasalahan yang akan diselesaikan dalam studi ini, bagaimana perilaku komodifikasi tergambar dalam hubungan Humbert Humbert selaku karakter utama dan Dolores Haze (Lolita), juga hubungannya dengan karakter lain di dalam novel?

Dalam skripsi ini, penulis menganalisa penggambaran komodifikasi Humbert menggunakan teori komodifikasi Marx, berfokus pada penggambaran nilai penanda-tukar dan nilai tukar yang muncul dalam setiap hubungannya dengan karakter lain dalam tiga langkah: (1) mengumpulkan data yang terkait dengan karakterisasi Humbert; (2) mengumpulkan dan menyeleksi data terkait dengan interaksi Humbert; dan (3) mengkategorisasi data dan menganalisanya dengan konsep Komodifikasi (Nilai Tukar dan Nilai Penanda-tukar).

Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa hubungan Humbert terkait dengan Lolita, yang melibatkan baik nilai tukar maupun nilai penanda-tukar. Hubungan Humbert dengan karakter lain seperti Monique dan Valeria terkait dengan objektifikasi mereka dengan label '*nymphet*'. Hubungan McCoo dan Charlotte dengan Humbert berfungsi sebagai 'alat' yang terhubung dengan nilai tukar. Dengan Quilty, hubungan yang terjadi yaitu Quilty mencoba mengobjektifikasi Humbert dengan nilai tukar.

Penulis menyarankan mahasiswa jurusan sastra untuk menelaah Lolita menggunakan New Historicism oleh Michael Foucault untuk menjelaskan deskripsi nyata mengenai situasi ekonomi Amerika pada tahun 1950 seperti tergambar dalam novel.

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Malang, April 2013

Writer

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study on Marxism, focuses on commodification issue in Vladimir Nabokov's novel entitled *Lolita*. Chapter one of the thesis consists of three parts. The first is background of the study which explains about the reasons and the significance of doing observation on *Lolita* novel. The second part is problem of the study which consists of a case for further observation, and the last is objective of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

If we observe people's orientation closely nowadays, we will realize that economy aspect becomes important and influential toward their life. Not only fulfilling the basic needs of life, such as food, house and clothing, modern society tends to seek for larger and bigger financial support in order to get any possibility related to their material fulfillment. Nowadays, related to the given image above, many people activities are driven by money. Unfortunately, the influence of money seems to be seen as natural and it works beyond people's awareness, creating material-based way of thinking. Many of them are competing to be 'the boss', which is often stereotyped as the capital owner who lives to rule others. Considering that point of view, seeing everything from material perspective,

gradually but sure people tend to value others materially. A person is not seen properly as a human being, but more as an object that has a certain material value.

Along with the development of social stratifications which is based on material belongings within people's life, the familial condition is also influenced by such material-based way of thinking: that the world is material, being exist apart from and independently of human consciousness. The world is primary and the source of sensations, while consciousness is secondary and derivative as explained by House (1982). Material-based point of view has crawled into personal relationship with deeper connection such as love and marriage. The simplest example is, once we are married, our wife or husband is not merely a lifetime partner. The role of the wife can also become mutable: as a housemaid who is responsible to clean the entire house, the lover who satisfy the husband's biological needs, or the baby sitter who is in charge of taking care of the children.

Similar thing also occurs in husband's role: he is the one who becomes the wage earner by working, or being the craftsman who is doing rough house jobs such as fixing plumber, electricity, and so on. The matters above actually lead to husband and wife's traditional roles, as stated by Hamby (2005, p. 270):

Though men and women had been forced into new employment patterns during World War II, once the war was over, traditional roles were reaffirmed. Men expected to be the breadwinners in each family; women, even when they worked, assumed their proper place was at home naturally

However, if such condition is under the cooptation of material-based of thinking, marital or other kinds of human relationship might lead to commodification behavior among those people caught in certain interaction. It is possible to happen if the roles above related to the idea of Household Emotional

Labour. Delphy and Leonard define it as domestic works which is based on affection, provides moral support and requires effort and skill (1992, p. 1). The clear example is also provided by Beasley, the works included are housework, sex, child care and etc (1992, p.2). Therefore, it shows that human labor is also part of objectification of human being, and according to Marx, cited by Felluga (2002), such thinking is called Labor Power, “the abstraction of human labor into something that can be exchanged for money. The relation of labor-power to the actual labor of a private individual is analogous the relation of exchange-value to use-value”.

On top of that, humans have tendency to choose something beneficial. In social relationship, naturally we will choose a partner or friend who is skillful and certifiable. Therefore, those kinds of quality or value that is owned by our partner or friend allowed us to treat them in commodification manner. Whether we are aware or not, this is a common phenomenon which often happens currently; therefore, it needs to be seriously observed so that we can understand the real reason behind people’s acts and motives toward others related to commodification.

In the novel *Lolita* (1958), written by Vladimir Nabokov, the image of human relationship which seems likely driven by material value is visible. In brief, *Lolita* is a literature from Russian author which talks much about the relationship of a man from a rich family background with psychological problem (*pedophilia*) named Humbert Humbert and Dolores Haze (also called as Lolita), an *ingénue*, a plain girl who came from low estate. This novel is set in America at 50’s era,

when “United States experienced phenomenal economic growth and consolidated its position as the world’s richest country”, according to Hamby (2005, p. 267), and some parts of the novel described such condition.

In details, the story is written with memoir style from a defendant, which rotates on Humbert Humbert as the central character. He works as a lecturer and researcher, and has deep interest for adolescent girls who are called as ‘*nymphets*’ by him. His encounter with Dolores Haze, the Lolita, turns into an obsession and it is getting complex when Charlotte Haze, a widow who is also Lolita’s mother, is in love with him. After decided to marry Charlotte, he tried all possible ways to be closer to Lolita. One day, Charlotte accidentally revealed the fact about Humbert’s real intention after read his diary. She tried to separate from him but unfortunately on the same day she died of car accident. After his wife’s death, Humbert brought his daughter in a road trip around South America, revealed his true nature and intention toward her by abusing her sexually. When Lolita was 14, they settled in a town where she is able to attend school. Humbert acted possessively to her and became strict. Lolita tried to run away twice, the first attempt was failed. However then, the second attempt succeeded when a man named Clare Quilty had a hand in it. Lolita managed to escape when she was 16 years old. Clare Quilty himself had already followed Humbert and Lolita during their road trip due to his interest to that girl. Later, Lolita asked for money from Humbert after her escape and revealed the truth about Quilty. That man had an illegal business of porn production and he pushed Lolita to do it, but she managed to run away again and currently she’s already married to a man named Schiller.

After recognized the truth, Humbert decided to find Quilty and made revenge by killing him. The story ends with Humbert's confession of his love for Lolita and how it never changes. Both characters died, Humbert died due to lung cancer in jail while Lolita died when she gave birth to her daughter. Followed Humbert's request, his memoir was published only if both of them died already.

Instead of digging out further about psychological tension within the novel, it seems interesting also to see further about the symptoms of people's commodification within their relationship (Humbert and Lolita). Nabokov's *Lolita* tells much about the construction of commodification of life due to materialistic mainframe, such as the way Humbert Humbert appreciating women in general. In Humbert's treatment towards women, use value is involved since he sees them as an object of lust, due to the influence from his father who is also behaving that way towards Humbert's aunt and other women. Other values like exchange and sign-exchange value are also able to be observed in Humbert's relationship and interaction with other characters in the novel. Thus, it is chosen as the material for further study in commodification related to the revealed incident above.

Therefore, by observing the phenomenon related to Marxism ideology in this novel, the expectancy is that the researcher and also the readers will be more sensitive regarding social issues which happens around them and became critical toward the problem or even potential problem due to the existing condition.

As the conclusion, since modern people's relationships today commonly involves economy motives (a boss and his workers, a businessman and his business partner, etc.), it is likely that those kinds of relationship have become

part of the social life and considered as natural. The point is, as social beings that evolve dynamically, we have to explore our thinking into ratiocination (logical thinking), causative thinking (why the phenomenon exists) and re-assumption (confirmation of phenomenon's existence and other related events). The research of Marxism ideology in *Lolita* novel may become useful object to help readers, as well as other researchers, to evolve their critical thinking to be sensitive of a certain interesting phenomenon that has probably surrounded them unavoidably.

Overall, by observing this selected literature work; we will be able to comprehend more about economic situation (materialistic circumstances) which became the basis for most people's mindset, how it works within human's culture related also to its effect to the life of the people.

### **1.1 Problem of the Study**

How does commodification portrayed in relationships of Humbert Humbert as the main character and Dolores Haze (Lolita), as well as his relationship with other minor characters in the novel?

### **1.2 Objective of the Study**

In line with the problem stated above, the objective is to understand the portrayal of relationship between Humbert Humbert as the main character and Dolores Haze (Lolita), as well as his relationship with other characters in the novel within the context of commodification.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

Theories which are related to the study are described in this chapter. Related to the subject of the analysis, *Lolita* novel, Marxism theory is used to provide more information about the content of the story. Furthermore, some concepts of Marx such as capitalism, social class, class conflict, also commodification are elaborated below to give further mainframe to be applied in the analysis of the novel.

#### 2.1 Marxism

Based on the definition from Marx (1867, cited in Henderson & Brown 1997, para. 1) Marxist is “The set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and Ideas that constitutes the consciousness of this class forms an ideological superstructure, and this ideological superstructure is shaped and determined by the material or infrastructure or economic base”. In addition to that, according to Tyson, it is believed that Marxist *praxis*, (methodology) clarifies that all ideas which tends to be theoretical like ideology is valuable if it is applicable manifestly in the real world, (2006, p. 54).

Marxist premises believe in economics as the foundation that lies underneath the events related to ideology or social and political condition, as stated by Tyson (2006, p. 54). All human events and activities have *historical situation* (atmosphere related to ideology, social and political condition that descended from materialistic condition), or *material circumstances* (economic condition which is underlying the society) that focus on the socioeconomic class, the *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat* which will be explained more lately in the review below. The principles of Marxism were originally set in a book entitled *Das Kapital* (1867) by Karl Marx, who is known as German philosopher and economist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In relation to literature, Marxism concepts are applicable for literary research, although basically the principles were not meant to be used that way. The proof is, Dobbie (2002, p. 80) says that "In Russia, where literature was sometimes accepted as a means of productive critical dialogue and at other times viewed as a threat if it did not promote party ideology, literature was linked to the philosophical principles set down by Marx and Engels."

The usage of Marxism ideology in literary works, however, didn't happen in Russia, but in Hungaria, founded by Hungarian critic George Lukacs. He called it as *reflectionism*. As explained by Dobbie (2002, p. 80) *reflectionism* is: named for the assumption that a text will reflect the society that has produced it, the theory is based on the kind of close reading advocated by formalists but now practiced for the purpose of discovering how characters and their relationships typify and reveal class conflict, the socioeconomic system, or the politics of the time and place. Such examination goes the assumption, will in the end

lead to an understanding of that system and the worldview, the *weltanschauung*, or the author.

In general, based on the paragraph above, social condition related to material and historical circumstances are able to be understood deeper if there is a tendency of different classes in it, or in Marxism, it is called as *Classism*. Tyson (2006) states *Classism*, derived from Marxism ideology as: "An ideology that equates one's value as a human being with the social class to which one belongs: the higher one's social class, the better one is assumed to be because quality is "in the blood," that is, inborn." The question is, "Why it has to be different classes, or as known as socioeconomic class that is used as the object of explanation of ideological, social and political concept?" it is simply because *classism* is reliable. It gives evident and significant delineation of how economy and materialistic condition really works among society, depicted by *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat*, better than other indicators such as religion, gender, or ethnicity. These divisions occur due to the existence of *Capitalism*, by the definition from Felluga (2002) is "A socio-economic system based especially on private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of the labor force". The success of capitalism ideology is because it is not recognized as one, but tend to happen naturally by the people who believe in them, as said by Dobbie (2002, p. 82). The two classes divided in Capitalism are known as *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat*. *Bourgeoisie* is those who own property and dominate useful human resources, while *proletariat* is those who are controlled by them and work as a labor.

Technically, the *bourgeoisie* have chance to keep their powerful position stay in place. Therefore, Dobbie (2002, p. 82) claims that it is possible for them to deceive the *proletariat* by manipulate their beliefs in matters like government, politic, education, and so on for the sake of their personal interest. Class difference like this one can cause wide gap because the high one (*bourgeoisie*) oppress the low one (*proletariat*), but such condition seems acceptable for the low class who lived in imbalance circumstance under the high class who keep their top position. This idea is not absolute, as inferred from the paragraph below:

Few Marxists today believe, as Marx (1867, cited in Tyson 2006, p. 54) did, that the proletariats will one day spontaneously develop the class consciousness needed to rise up in violent revolution against their oppressors and create a classless society. However, were the proletariat of any given country to act as a group, regardless of their differences (for example, were they all to vote for the same political candidates, boycott the same companies, and go on strike until their needs were met), the current power structure would be radically altered.

The point is, Capitalism is used as the distinct sign, the core of Marxism concept's appearance in the application of literary works, clearly distinguished from its two classes: *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat*. In the hierarchy, *bourgeoisie* act as the controller of minor things (something which is non-economy related) which is followed by the lower class, the *proletariat*.

However, Capitalism have its own bad effects from the psychological side, the stress result from the oppression due to its imbalance economic system (the rich stay rich and even become richer while the poor one remaining poor). The other effect is in people's relationship with commodity, known as *commodification*, which is

explained by Dobbie (2002, p. 83) “an attitude of valuing things not for their utility (use value) but for their power to impress others (sign value) or for their resale possibilities (exchange value).” The term commodification derived from the word commodity, as explained by Marx (1867, para. 1): “A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another.” Furthermore, the main point of commodification itself by Felluga (2002, para. 3) is:

The subordination of both private and public realms to the logic of capitalism. In this logic, such things as friendship, knowledge, women, etc. are understood only in terms of their monetary value. In this way, they are no longer treated as things with intrinsic worth but as commodities. (They are valued, that is, only extrinsically in terms of money.) By this logic, a factory worker can be reconceptualized not as a human being with specific needs that, as humans, we are obliged to provide but as a mere wage debit in a businessman's ledger.

Even, as quoted from Dobbie (2002, p. 83): “When the acquisition of things that possess sign value and/or exchange value becomes extreme, an individual can be said to practicing conspicuous consumption”. Uniquely, this phenomenon can occur to any classes, as long as they have materialistic point of view in seeing and treating other people:

There are three kinds of values in commodification: use value, exchange value and sign-exchange value. Each of them is connected to each other, and has distinguished significant outcome. First, the use value, can be measured from the usefulness of a commodity as stated by Marx (1867, para. 2), who also added that the

value is inseparable from the commodity, and has realistic nature after it is consumed or used.

The second, exchange value, also mentioned as intrinsic value by Marx (1867, para. 3) due to its relation to use value as the material depositories in order to make it applies to be exchanged to other commodity which also has use value. “The valid exchange values of a given commodity express something equal; secondly, exchange value, generally, is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it” as stated by Marx (1867).

Sign-exchange value, the third value, “lies in the social status it confers on its owner” as explained by Tyson (2006, p. 62). The sample to clarify the explanation on sign-exchange value can be seen from Aristoteles (cited in Marx, 1867, para. 2):

“For two-fold is the use of every object.... The one is peculiar to the object as such, the other is not, as a sandal which may be worn, and is also exchangeable. Both are uses of the sandal, for even he who exchanges the sandal for the money or food he is in want of, makes use of the sandal as a sandal. But not in its natural way. For it has not been made for the sake of being exchanged.”

It can be inferred from the passage above that a pair of sandals can be exchanged for other goods such as food, but on the wearer, it has certain sign-exchange value.

Here, from the Marxist premises, Commodification and its values- Use, Exchange and Sign-Exchange Value – will be the means to distinguish human’s social relationship and separate them into each values appropriately.

## 2.2 Previous Studies

There were no previous studies that investigate on Lolita as the object material which use Marxist Criticism as the critical theory. Most of the thesis and the studies are focus on the language usage, as the formal object, sensed from Aesthetic point of view, Defamiliarization, and theories related to Narrative techniques.

In Jennifer Elizabeth Green's study entitled *Aesthetic Excuses and Moral Crimes: The Convergence of Morality and Aesthetics in Nabokov's Lolita* which is conducted in 2006, the result of the study shows that the manipulation of language in Humbert Humbert's dialogue through aesthetic way, for example the metaphorical usage, is actually intended to convey particular moral purpose and reality in the novel.

The next study in Defamiliarization, '*The Pure Products of America Go Crazy*' *Defamiliarizing American Language and Culture in Lolita and The Crying of Lot 49* by Melissa Karmen Lam, proved the similarities on both novels written by two different authors, Vladimir Nabokov and Thomas Pynchon, of telling two main characters who came from foreign country and viewing America differently through defamiliarization technique, especially in 1950's era, giving such conclusion, as stated by Lam (2006, p. 117) "Uncanny situations are not created in both novels but transcribed from the normal into the strange".

Other study in Lolita by John Wasmuth entitled *Unreliable Narration in Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita*, which is conducted in 2009, shows such conclusion, as cited from Wasmuth (2009, p. 15) "The high number of textual signals of unreliability detected in the discourse provides ample evidence for Humbert's unreliability. To sum up, eight different textual signals were identified when putting all the aspects of Humbert's narration together." In short, the point is, as the Narrator, who is constructed by implied author, Humbert tends to demonstrate distinction in morals of himself and the reader.

Overall, the study of Marxism on Lolita is rare and this research on connecting with commodification issue is the first one. Therefore, it is expected to bring beneficial result which can be a complementary and reference for other studies on the same object material.

### 2.3 Research Method

Finally, to give clear practical description on how to apply those mentioned-above concepts, here are the steps of using them:

1. The researcher reads the novel and then selects and collects any data related to the Characteristic of Humbert. This activity is done first to find out about the background of Humbert's life which caused him to have such behavior which is related to commodification value.

2. The next step, the researcher conducts the process of collecting and selecting data related to the interaction(s) of Humbert with Lolita and some minor characters (Monique, Valeria, Charlotte, McCoo, Clare Quilty). It is aimed to distinguish the commodification relationship clearly between Humbert, Lolita, and other minor characters. Related interactions and its description are arranged based on the sequence that is used in the novel.

3. The researcher conducts the last step by categorizing and reducing the data and analyzing them under the concept of Commodification (Exchange and Sign-exchange value). In this phase the first and the second phase will be synthesized into brief analysis about each characters and their detail of commodification-relationship with Humbert.

To do those activities, the chapter of analysis will be constructed into three sub-chapters: those are Humbert's Background, Commodification in Humbert's Relationship with Dolores Haze (Lolita), and Commodification in Humbert's Relationship with other minor characters.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Relies on the problem of study that has been stated above, the focus of the writer's analysis in this chapter is to find commodification (exchange and sign-exchange value) manifested through Humbert Humbert's interaction alongside his relationship with other minor characters. The novel's summary has been inserted in the first chapter, so that the outset of this chapter will tell about Humbert Humbert's characteristic as depicted in the novel before continuing to other section about commodification relationship of this research.

#### **3.1 Humbert Humbert's Characteristic**

It is important to know what kind of person Humbert Humbert is before the analysis on commodification starts, and it includes his background which has already depicted by Nabokov in his novel. By investigating his life's aspects, useful information can be acquired and become a basis to understand his acts which lead to commodification issue. As explained in the previous chapter, commodifications tend to emerge if commodity becomes an obsession. Such obsession commonly occurs in society, especially the bourgeoisie class which needs to keep their possessions and use them excessively.

First of all, Humbert Humbert as the object of this study can be considered to live a luxurious life since his childhood, as explained from the first until third paragraph in the novel. It is said that Humbert was supported by the material circumstances due to his father's job as a hotel owner and his great grandfathers who were rich merchants and sold expensive goods such as wine, jewels and silk. He is also able to do extravagant activities (water-ski, boating, etc.) which are often affiliated as high class and only belong to wealthy people. The proofs are cited below:

I was born in 1910, in Paris. My father was a gentle, easy-going person, a salad of racialgenes: a Swiss citizen, of mixed French and Austrian descent, with a dash of the Danube in his veins. ... He owned a luxurious hotel on the Riviera. His father and two grandfathers had sold wine, jewels and silk, respectively.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 4)

He, *mon cher* petit papa, took me out boating and biking, taught me to swim and dive and water-ski, read to me Don Quixote and Les Miserables, and I adored and respected him and felt glad for him whenever I overheard the servants discuss his various lady-friends, beautiful and kind beings who made much of me and cooed and shed precious tears over my cheerful motherlessness.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 4)

Besides, another evidence of his wealth is stated in the parts below:

I grew, a happy, healthy child in a bright world of illustrated books, clean sand, orange trees, friendly dogs, sea vistas and smiling faces. Around me the splendid Hotel Mirana revolved as a kind of private universe, a whitewashed cosmos within the blue greater one that blazed outside.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 4)

Thus, it can be concluded that he never experienced hard life as a children, as Humbert claimed himself in this sentence: "I grew, a happy, healthy child..."

However, despite of his life which is filled with extravagant facilities, there is an

interesting fact related to his character development. He lived without mother's figure due to her death when Humbert was still a child, as stated in the first paragraph on page four: "My very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning) when I was three, ..."

Without mother's existence in the early stage of children's development, it is possible for them to be emotionally unbalance and unstable. Father's presence is not enough in the matter of raising kids because mutual family relationship in context of social and emotional things is needed by children, as stated by Falzon (2007, para. 2):

Central to Bowlby's theory was the maternal deprivation hypothesis, which was based on the belief that if an infant does not sustain a warm, intimate and continuous relationship to the mother or substitute caregiver, he/she will suffer a number of consequences. Research conducted mainly in orphanages and hospitals showed that maternal deprivation could result in depression, intellectual retardation, emotionally disturbed behavior and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationship.

Humbert idolized his father as his role model, but he was abandoned by him who was busy with the hotel business, and most of the time he was raised by his aunt Sybil. Still, he can't build close, emotional relationship to his aunt due to her strictness in treating him and the fact about their non-biological relation, as mentioned in the paragraph below:

My mother's elder sister, Sybil, whom a cousin of my father's had married and then neglected...I was extremely fond of her, despite the rigidity-the fatal rigidity-of some of her rules. Perhaps she wanted to make of me, in the fullness of time, a better widower than my father.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 4)

This resulted in Humbert's lacking of emotional needs. It is in line with the research's result from Tanfer & Mott (1997) about the effect of children's guarding under the vision of non-family member: "Similarly, the presence/arrival of step-parents are non-neutral events. These are often found to have negative consequences, contingent on a number of characteristics, such as the child's gender or the parent's race." Then, in the end, as the effect from his childhood, Humbert grew up with a character that has psychological illness, *pedophilia*. Pedophilia itself, according to Hall (2007, para. 1) is a person who has sexual intentions toward children, and can be directed to same sex, different sex, or directed to both children and adult, which cause interpersonal problem. Humbert's enthusiasm to younger female children is proven from such statement:

... Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travelers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demoniac); and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as "nymphets."  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 6)

It is visible that Humbert's sexual interest turns into such obsession, clearly stated in the quotation above. His obsession is a commodity which is called 'nymphet', means young adolescent girls who has certain interesting characteristics. In the story development, this psychological illness, namely his obsession towards adolescent girl will contribute greatly to commodification interaction between Humbert and his desired object, Dolores Haze or Lolita.

In short, from the previous statements related to Humbert's characterization, especially in terms of his transition into adulthood and critical part concerned with commodification issue, it is not apart from his role model's figure, his father.

Rotundo (1985, cited in Tanfer & Mott, para. 8) tells about the consequences of father's role for the children:

In the traditional model of fatherhood, fathers played a dominant role in the lives of their children, assuming a broad range of responsibilities defining and supervising the children's development. Domestic control was largely in the hands of men; wives were expected to defer to husbands on matters of childrearing. A father's moral role persisted through childhood into adult life. His influence was pervasive and usually exceeded the mother's responsibilities over the child.

Humbert admires his father very much, the point of his admiration is visible through his statement in *Lolita* (1958, page 4, par. 3): "I adored and respected him and felt glad for him whenever I overheard the servants discuss his various lady-friends, beautiful and kind beings who made much of me and cooed and shed precious tears over my cheerful motherlessness." Therefore, he is the one who influence Humbert's character development the most. The example of Humbert father's influence to his son can be seen from this passage:

My mother's elder sister, Sybil, whom a cousin of my father's had married and then neglected, served in my immediate family as a kind of unpaid governess and housekeeper. Somebody told me later that she had been in love with my father, and that he had lightheartedly taken advantage of it one rainy day and forgotten it by the time the weather cleared.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 4)

Sybil's love for Humbert's father is being co-modified with use value. The practice of use value occur when Humbert's father treat Sybil as a commodity who is dependable

to take care of his children. This incident thus inserted commodification point of view in Humbert's way in treating people, due to his imitation of his father.

Thoroughly, there are three factors that stimulate the tendency of commodification in Humbert's personality and his relationship with other people.

The first is the surrounding material circumstances around him which is dominated by glamorous lifestyle and easy-money access. Second is the absence of mother in his parenting issue which made him turn into a pedophile person, and have strong obsession in a commodity called adolescent girls. The last is direct influence about commodification treatment towards other people that is demonstrated by his role model, the father. Next section will cover more about the focus of Humbert's commodification interaction with Lolita and other minor characters.

### **3.2 Commodification in Humbert's Relationship with Dolores Haze (Lolita)**

Mainly, the commodification pattern which is portrayed in Humbert's relationship with Dolores Haze (Lolita) is centered in the objectification of Humbert's interest, Lolita. This objectification specifically point to sexual matters, in which Lolita is the target of Humbert's desire. Due to Humbert's pedophilia characteristic, immoral occurrence between Humbert (who act as her step father) and Lolita (Humbert's step daughter from his marriage with Lolita's mother, Charlotte) is unavoidable, causing continuously rape towards her. According to Baker (1997, para.

1), rape, as viewed from commodification theory is seen as “crime of property, in which sex is a commodity which is stolen from a woman by a rapist.”

However, before sexual-related commodification relationship occurs between Humbert and Lolita, there are few Humbert self-actions which are also related with commodification value. These actions are still implicated with Humbert’s hidden motive towards Lolita engaging sexual matters. Yet, kinds of commodity values (exchange value and sign-exchange value) are able to be analyzed there.

### 1.2.1 Humbert’s Sign-exchange value with Lolita

Humbert, who lived as a lodger under the same roof with Lolita, actually has no exact reason which is able to link him to be closer to that girl. He was there due to his job, and Lolita herself is not always around at home. Initially, he applied sign-exchange value to himself, inferred from this paragraph (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 17): “I have all the characteristics which...start the responses stirring in a little girl: clean-cut jaw, muscular hand, deep sonorous voice, broad shoulder. Moreover, I am said to resemble some crooner or actor chap on whom Lo has a crush.” Humbert made himself into objectification. His behavior belongs to the conception of self-objectification, as explained by Mead (1934, cited in Rosenberg, 1988, p.551):

Man's behavior is such in his social group that he is able to become an object to himself, a fact which constitutes him a more advanced product of evolutionary development than are the lower animals. ... it is this social fact . . . that differentiates him from them.

The result of Humbert's self objectification is beneficial for his sake and proven to be efficient to be applied on his target, none other than Lolita. Self-objectification can be developed, as stated by Rosenberg (1988, p. 551): "Humans, however, also can intentionally produce effects on themselves. The evolutionary significance of this ability is that it enables humans to construct the kinds of behaviors that are better adapted to meet the demands of the environment." Sign-exchange value existed when Humbert used his handsome physical appearance as a sign in exchange for Lolita's good impression about him. This is done in order to gain Lolita's interest in Humbert. In short, the sign-exchange value (Humbert's appearance) is a tool to impress the target (Lolita's sympathy). In line with the previous statement, Tyson (2006, p. 62) suggests an example of sign-exchange value of a book: "If I leave that book out on my coffee table to impress my date, it has sign-exchange value." Here, Humbert's appearance works similarly as Tyson's description on the book's function.

Another action to Lolita with sign-exchange values are also committed by Humbert with different purposes. Here are the citations of Humbert's sign-exchange values behavior, where the sign given is his friendly attitude towards Lolita. Most of Humbert's behavior is meant to give a "Fatherhood" feeling to the girl, such as putting on a joke and hugging her casually. Humbert did these continuously so that Lolita will get used to it naturally and if there are people around him when he did

that, they will see it as a normal relationship between a man and a little girl. In exchange of that, he will get a chance to grope Dolores' desired body parts intimately without clearly viewed in that way by others. Below are the proofs of his activities in engaging sign-exchange value:

All the while I was acutely aware of L.'s nearness and as I spoke I gestured in the merciful dark and took advantage of those invisible gestures of mine to touch her hand...

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 18)

*Saturday*. For some days already I had been leaving the door ajar, while I wrote in my room; but only today did the trap work... As she bent her brown curs over the desk at which I was sitting, Humbert the Hoarse put his arm around her in a miserable imitation of blood-relationship; ... and I felt the heat of her limbs through her rough tomboy clothes. All at once I knew I could kiss her throat or the wick of her mouth with perfect impunity.

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 23)

At last I was right behind her when I had the unfortunate idea of blustering a trifleshaking her by the scruff of the neck and that sort of thing to cover my real *mange*, and she said in a shrill brief whine: "Cut it out!" most coarsely, the little wench, and with a ghastly grin Humbert the Humble beat a gloomy retreat while she went on wise cracking streetward.

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 23)

Humbert's action didn't stop here, after he gained Lolita's trust by applying the sign-exchange value in himself, he tried another way to get Lolita's good impression on him. He took advantage from Lolita's interest in "girlie things" such as pretty clothes, accessories, and so on. As cited from *Lolita* (1958) in page 47, "What next? I proceeded to the business center of Parkington and devoted the whole afternoon (the weather had cleared, the wet town was like silver-and-glass) to buying beautiful things for Lo." Humbert's goal in purchasing such goods is still related to his effort to get Lolita's trust to him. Since Lolita has bad relationship with her mother, Humbert

is trying to divert Lolita's attention to him. Lolita's mother, Charlotte, rarely took her demands seriously because she thought that her daughter is spoiled and rebellious.

When Humbert applied this sign-exchange value, he is already married to Lolita's mother. Therefore, if Humbert is willing to spoil Charlotte's daughter as a good father, he will get a positive point from that girl's side. On *Lolita* (1958) page 51, there were similar interactions like the previous one, when Humbert grants most of Lolita's wishes over trivial things as can be seen from this citation:

"Oh, I want to see that picture. Let's go right after dinner. Oh, let's!"

"We might," chanted Humbert, knowing perfectly well, the sly tumescent devil, that by nine, when *his* show began, she would be dead in his arms.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 51)

When Humbert has already reached his goal to co-modify Lolita in sexual matter, his pride grows bigger and thus he objectified that girl in sign-exchange value manner even more. He felt proud whenever people saw him around with Lolita. He thought that his togetherness with Lolita aroused people's curiosity and jealousy. Humbert himself felt jealous if any man is staring at Lolita because he thinks of his own step-daughter as his sexual object that belongs only to him. Here is the citation of Humbert's self-narration which explains about his excitement of having Lolita with him:

Pubescent sweetheart! How smugly would I marvel that she was mine, mine, mine, and revise the recent matitudinal swoon to themoan of the mourning doves, and devise the late afternoon one, and slitting my sun-spearedeyes, compare Lolita to whatever other nymphets... I really do not think that any of them ever surpassed her in desirability,...

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 68)

All of these sign-exchange value activities are listed according to Humbert's chronological memory order. It is explained from the start when he has decided to make Lolita as his target in physical relationship. The first sign-exchange value he used is his superiorities: outer appearance and friendly attitude. It was Humbert's alibi to make his starter move to the girl, as a way to communicate and build a close relationship with her. By doing this, he is able to get more information about his target- her hobby, favorite things, and so on -and make strategy in realizing his plan to make her as his.

The later activity when Humbert used his wealth, like bought her many gifts and obeyed Lolita's wish to eat and go anywhere she likes are his effort to impress Lolita in materialistic point-of-view. Moreover, he has become Lolita's father when he did such things, so this attitude won't make that girl suspicious to him in relation to his true wish to her. It is true that at first, Humbert has done such sign-exchange values related activities only to abstract things that can't be valued materially. He applied the sign to himself, both physically and characteristically in exchange of Lolita's feeling towards him. However, after he had already achieved what he really wants, he started to co-modify Lolita with the same value that he used to her. He is sure that Lolita's existence, especially if he is also around with her, will boost his pride as a man. Even though there are many other beautiful adolescent girls out there, Humbert is convinced that none of them beat Lolita's rank of beauty. So it was Humbert's belief

that Lolita has her own sign-exchange value that led him to treat her that way, and this thing is also strengthened by Tyson's statement (2006, p. 62):

Most of us know what it means to treat a person like an object (for example, a sex object). An object becomes a commodity, however, only when it has exchange value or sign exchange value. Do I choose my dates based on how much money I think they will spend on me (their exchange value) or on how much I think they will impress my friends (their sign-exchange value)? If so, then I'm commodifying them.

Humbert choose Lolita among other girl as his 'lover' because she is able to appeal other people with her persona. It was proven with Clare Quilty's existence, the person who stalked both of them along their journey. Quilty is also interested in that girl's charm; means that the sign-exchange value in Lolita has its own selling point in impressing and attracting other people, even though in reality Lolita never allowed herself to receive such treatment. Other Humbert's interaction with Lolita also entails exchange value and elaborated in the explanation below.

### **1.2.2 Humbert's Exchange value with Lolita**

Not only sign-exchange value, Humbert is also commodifying Lolita in exchange value. It was started first when Lolita was mad at him after he harassed her in a physical way. Humbert bought Lolita her favorite items and tried to understand the girl's feeling by separating himself from her when he ordered hotel room, in exchange of her feeling. He needs her willingness to continue the journey with him,

so it can be said that the exchange value is applied to get abstract thing (feeling). He tried to win Lolita's heart with material objects.

In the gay town of Lepingville I bought her four books of comics, a box of candy, a box of sanitary pads, two cokes, a manicure set, a travel clock with a luminous dial,... At the hotel we had separate rooms, but in the middle of the night she came sobbing into mine, and we made it up very gently. You see, she had absolutely nowhere else to go.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 63)

In order to obtain his desire, Humbert tried many ways so that the little girl will let him do anything to her. He used two efforts that can be exchanged to that girl with his sexual pleasure. The first is that he will follow Lolita's demand occasionally so that she won't bicker if Humbert asked for sexual physical contacts. Here is the proof about that matter, in *Lolita* (1958) on page 64: "But I did surrender, now and then, to Lo's predilection for "real" hotels. She would pick out in the book, while I petted her in the parked car in the silence of a dusk-mellowed, mysterious side-road...." Same things occurred in this citation from page 64 in Sub-chapter 33, when Humbert needs to pay to let Lolita's listen to the music in every of their meal time. He also needs to spend money on superficial items for Lolita's sake, as can be seen in this sentence:

If a roadside sign said: Visit Our Gift Shop we *had* to visit it, *had* to buy its Indian curios, dolls, copper jewelry, cactus candy. The words "novelties and souvenirs" simply entranced her by their trochaic lilt. ... She it was to whom ads were dedicated: the ideal consumer, the subject and object of every foul poster.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 65)

He did this merely to be able to objectify Lolita's physically afterward. Yet this effort is only applicable when Lolita is still in his adolescent age. When she

grows up later, Humbert used his second effort. Instead of giving her material objects, he will give her money as the sexual gratification. He used two different things to be exchanged with Lolita's body; they are material objects and money. His way in applying this exchange value has negative effects on the girl: Lolita became a very materialistic person who likes to take advantage from other people, as can be seen from this citation:

I am now faced with the distasteful task of recording a definite drop in Lolita's morals. If her share in the ardors she kindled had never amounted to much, neither had pure lucre ever come to the fore.... With the human element dwindling, the passion, the tenderness, and the torture only increased; and of this she took advantage. ... She was, however, not easy to deal with. Only very listlessly did she earn her three pennies or three nickels per day; and she proved to be a cruel negotiator...  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 81)

After the times when Humbert commodifying Lolita has passed when she is finally able to run away with the help from Quilty- the man who stalks them, he got another chance to apply his exchange value activity with that girl. The object that is exchanged is still the same, the money. However, the things that differentiate this activity from the previous exchange value manners is that he gave money to his step daughter as long as she is willing to give information about Quilty, her kidnapper's whereabouts.

He did it right after he received the letter from Lolita, who is in short of money and needs material helps badly. It is revealed that Quilty himself is actually has similar goal with Humbert. He wished to use Lolita in a commercial way by

putting her in an adult film that was his own production. Since she's not willing to do that, Quilty told her to go away. This is proven from this paragraph below:

He was not a hog. ... And, of course, he was a complete freak in sex matters, and his friends were his slaves. I just could not imagine (I, Humbert, could not imagine!) what they all did at DukDuk Ranch. She refused to take part because she loved him, and he threw her out. ...

"It is of no importance now," she said pounding a gray cushion with her fist and then lying back, belly up, on the divan. "Crazy things, filthy things. I said no, I'm just not going to [she used, in all insouciance really, a disgusting slang term which, in a literal French translation, would be *souffler*] your beastly boys, because I want only you. Well, he kicked me out."

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 123)

Overall, from Humbert's exchange value activity with Lolita, he involved material things to be exchanged with two objects. The first object is Lolita's body in order to get physical pleasure and the second object is an abstract thing, which is the information about her kidnapper so that he can give Quilty his revenge.

### 3.3 Commodification in Humbert's Relationship with Other Minor Characters

There were some minor characters in this novel that have commodification relationship with Humbert. Some of them were involved in exchange and/or sign-exchange value. This section will be divided into four parts in general, starting from the first character that has early relationship with Humbert to the characters that only have little interaction with him in the novel.

### 3.3.1 Humbert's Relation with Monique

Monique is a woman with unknown background that appears in the first part of story. It was told that she was coincidentally met Humbert on the street one day.

Humbert was suddenly attracted to her due to her appearance that reminded him with a 'nymphet' that has already grown up from their pubescent era. It is clear that the commodification that happens between them mainly related to sexual objectification.

The relationship between Monique and Humbert is only a matter of business, in which Humbert exchanged his money – he paid Monique – in order to satisfy his biological need towards Monique. The proof is cited below when Humbert met Monique for the first time:

I learned, however, what they looked like, those lovely, maddening, thin-armed nymphets, when they grew up... A short slim girl passed me at a rapid, high-heeled, tripping step, we glanced back at the same moment, she stopped and I accosted her. ... I asked her price, and she promptly replied with melodious silvery precision (a bird, a very bird!) "Cent."  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 8)

From the paragraph above, it can be inferred that Monique is actually a prostitute.

It is her job to give sexual service and Humbert is none other than her customer. Their relationship is merely a business related. Prostitute, as defined by Veen (2001, page 33), can be seen in the citation below:

Sexuality is regarded as one of the most intimate aspects of the self. It is integral to and cannot be separated from the self; therefore, a prostitute who sells her sexuality is also selling her "self." ... The buying and selling of sexuality for the client's own use transforms the body into a vessel or object; the body becomes alienated as it is used as a "thing" for someone else. This process of objectification is also seen to spill over to the objectification of all women.

In Humbert's case, if we relate his relation to the passage above, Monique has certain quality. She offers both of her sexual quality and her physical impression that similar to the 'nymphet' label, which is 'valuable' for Humbert's use of her.

Technically, Monique has exchange value in which she trades her own body, which has resemblance for Humbert's sexual desire of young girls for the sake of Humbert's money.

### 3.3.2 Humbert's Relation with Valeria

Before Humbert is married to Lolita's mother, Charlotte, he was married to a woman named Valeria, a daughter of a Polish doctor, for about four years before they getting divorced because of Valeria's affair with another man. Humbert had his own certain reason on choosing Valeria as his wife. One of his considerations for marriage is due to exchange value that contained in the marriage itself as he believed. Humbert was sure that being in a commitment to a certain person is useful as a restrain from his desire towards younger girls, as cited on this paragraph:

...for my own safety, I decided to marry. It occurred to me that regular hours, homecooked meals, all the conventions of marriage, the prophylactic routine of its bedroom activities and, who knows, the eventual flowering of certain moral values, of certain spiritual substitutes, might help me, if not to purge myself of my degrading and dangerous desires, at least to keep them under pacific control.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 8)

As for Valeria, she is chosen due to her appearance that gave Humbert a reminiscent of a young girl. Even though he was able to seduce any women who were more

attractive than Valeria as he said in page nine, he felt that she is the right choice to be objectified in a physical way:

... I might have easily found, among the many crazed beauties that lashed my grim rock, creatures far more fascinating than Valeria. My choice, however, was prompted by considerations whose essence was, as I realized too late, a piteous compromise. All of which goes to show how dreadfully stupid poor Humbert always was in matters of sex.

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 9)

He tried to seek for a refugee in her, since Humbert's real desire at that time was aimed towards another 'nymphet', as quoted from his narration in *Lolita* (1955) page 10, "The grocer opposite had a little daughter whose shadow drove me mad; but with Valeria's help I did find after all some legal outlets to my fantastic predicament." It is easy for Humbert to get Valeria's attention, since he used the same way that he did with Lolita: he commodified himself with sign-exchange value, as cited in this sentence:

After considerable deliberation, my choice fell on the daughter of a Polish doctor... his daughter watched me from behind hereasel, and inserted eyes or knuckles borrowed from me... Let me repeat with quiet force: I was, and still am, despite *mesmalheurs*, an exceptionally handsome male; slow-moving, tall, with soft dark hair and a gloomy but all the more seductive cast of demeanor.

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 9)

In short, Valeria has a sign-exchange value, in which her role is as a substitute of Humbert's sexual object that is able to give similar impression like a girl child, the thing that Humbert is yearning for.

While in general, at this stage, Humbert's thought about marriage is being commodified with two values. He commodified marriage with exchange value itself existed in the marriage when Humbert mentioned the benefits that he will get from

being a married man such as getting home-cooked meals, spiritual and moral values, and etc. as mentioned in the quotation above, and also use it as a way to restrain himself from his forbidden desire. Humbert's consideration in his decision to marry Valeria, in line with the previous citation from page 8, is due to his pressured feeling about his pedophilic nature and his need of a sense of self-fulfillment and self-worth.

Since his marriage is out of real emotional connection and intimacy, it can be concluded that if, for example, Valeria is not Humbert's choice, he is still able to choose another woman as long as she has childish quality. In short, the objectification of Valeria can be illustrated briefly with Delphy and Leonard (1992, p.3) statement below:

When thus stripped of emotional ties, sexual services (and other forms of emotional labour) should clearly be classed as production activities according to the third person criteria - someone else could be paid to perform the services.

Later, Humbert will change his commodification perception about marriage when he married to Charlotte, and it will be explained further in the section below.

### **3.3.3 Humbert's Relation with Charlotte**

The relationship between Humbert and Charlotte was begun when he started to live under the same roof with her as a lodger. From their first meeting, Humbert has realized that Charlotte, the widower, already attracted to him. It can be seen from Humbert's words here:

"I was perfectly aware that if by any wild chance I became her lodger, she would methodically proceed to do in regard to me what taking a lodger probably meant

to her all along, and I would again be enmeshed in one of those tedious affairs I knew so well.”

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 15)

Even though he wanted to escape in the beginning, he changed his mind when he saw

Lolita, Charlotte's daughter. Humbert used his own method to reach that girl, but he

eventually changes his mind when he read the love letter from Charlotte. She started

the letter with “This is a confession. I love you...” (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 29) and pushed

Humbert to answer by giving him two choices. The first is to stay if he wants to

become Charlotte's partner, and the second is to leave if he didn't love her like she

did, as quoted in the letter below:

*If you decided to stay, if I found you at home ... the fact of your remaining would only mean one thing: that you want me as much as I do you: as a lifelong mate; and that you are ready to link up your life with mine forever and ever and be a father to my little girl. ... My dearest, your curiosity must be well satisfied if you have ignored my request and read this letter to the bitter end. Never mind.*

*Destroy it and go. Do not forget to leave the key on the desk in your room. ...*

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 29)

At this rate, Humbert is already close enough with Lolita, and to keep it in progress,

he decided to co-modify Charlotte's love confession. He tried to use the marriage

with Charlotte as a medium that act as a bridge between him and Lolita, so that the

marriage is beneficial for a direct access to his real desire. Humbert's real intention is

depicted from this sentence:

*I imagined (under conditions of new and perfect visibility) all the casual caresses her mother's husband would be able to lavish on his Lolita. I would hold her against me three times a day, every day. All my troubles would be expelled, I would be a healthy man. “To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee and print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss...” Well-read Humbert!*

(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 30)

Yet in the end, Humbert's commodification didn't work as he already planned. After Charlotte officially became his wife, she planned to get rid of her own daughter by send her to a boarding school so that her relationship with the new husband won't be disturbed. It means that Humbert will have no chance to get closer to Lolita, as inferred from this paragraph:

...“I just wonder where will you put your daughter when you get your guest or your maid.”  
 “Ah,” said Mrs. Humbert, ... “Little Lo, I'm afraid, does not enter the picture at all, at all. Little Lo goes straight from camp to a good boarding school with strict discipline and some sound religious training. And then Beardsley College. I have it all mapped out, you need not worry.”  
 (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 36)

And things got worse when Charlotte finally found out the truth about Humbert's desire for her daughter. It was explained in *Lolita* (1958) page 42:

I went up to the ex-semi-studio. Arms akimbo, I stood for a moment quite still and self-composed, surveying from the threshold the raped little table with its open drawer, a key hanging from the lock, four other household keys on the table top. I walked across the landing into the Humberts' bedroom, and calmly removed my diary from under her pillow into my pocket.  
 (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 42)

From the sentence, it is explained that Charlotte found Humbert's secret diary that tells about his hidden feeling for Lolita and how he actually feels towards Charlotte.

Inside his diary, Humbert showed his adoration to Lolita and how he loathe Charlotte and called her with bad nicknames, as cited below:

“The Haze woman, the big bitch, the old cat, the obnoxious mamma, the the old stupid Haze is no longer your dupe. She has she has...”

... Whatever Humbert Humbert said or attempted to say is inessential. She went on: "You're a monster. You're a detestable, abominable, criminal fraud. If you come near I'll scream out the window. Get back!"  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 42)

Knowing the truth made Charlotte driven by rage and she decided to leave Humbert and take Lolita as far as she can from him, as Charlotte said to Humbert in page 42:

"I am leaving tonight. This is all yours. Only you'll never, never see that miserable brat again. Get out of this room."

However, due to her carelessness, before she's able to do it, she died in a car accident in front of her own house. The accident was described in this paragraph:

At this point, I should explain that the prompt appearance of the patrolmen, hardly more than a minute after the accident, ... concealed the mangled remains of Charlotte Humbert who had been knocked down and dragged several feet by the Beale car as she was hurrying across the street to drop three letters in the mailbox, at the corner of Miss Opposite's lawn.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 43)

Also later, Humbert use her death as a reasoning to keep Lolita with him. He made use of it for his own benefit, described in such paragraph:

My scheme was a marvel of primitive art: I would whizz over to Camp Q, tell Lolita her mother was about to undergo a major operation at an invented hospital, and then keep moving with my sleepy nymphet from inn to inn while her mother got better and better and finally died.  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 46)

Overall, there are two values involved in the commodification relationship between Humbert and Charlotte. Exchange value occurs when Charlotte provides her home for Humbert in exchange of money, while the marriage between Humbert and

Charlotte has certain value, in Humbert's case, as a reason and a tool that is able to link him closely to Lolita.

### 3.3.4 Humbert's Relation with McCoo

Humbert made a contact through letters with a man named McCoo, who used to be a cousin from his uncle ex-worker, right after he's out from the Sanatorium. McCoo offered Humbert to stay with him and he was agreed due to the reasoning below:

One of his former employees, the scion of a distinguished family, suggested I spend a few months in the residence of his impoverished cousins, a Mr. McCoo, retired, and his wife, who wanted to let their upper story where a late aunt had delicately dwelt. He said they had two little daughters, one a baby, the other a girl of twelve, and a beautiful garden, not far from a beautiful lake, and I said it sounded perfectly perfect. ... imagining in all possible detail the enigmatic nymphet I would coach in French and fondle in Humbertish. (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 14)

It is clear that Humbert is commodifying McCoo as a connector between him and McCoo's daughter. He tried to exchange his money that will be spent in McCoo's house as a lodger with a chance to made a close contact with McCoo's daughter, who is enlisted to Humbert's type as a 'nymphet'. However, his plan on this commodification is failed due to an accident that occurred in McCoo's house, and he is transferred to stay at Charlotte Haze's place, as proven from this paragraph:

eventually, however, a distraught McCoo in wet clothes turned up at the only hotel of green-and-pink Ramsdale with the news that his house had just burned down possibly, ... but a friend of his wife's, a grand person, Mrs. Haze of 342

Lawn Street, offered to accommodate me. ... Now, since the only reason for my coming at all had vanished, the aforesaid arrangement seemed preposterous. (*Lolita*, 1958, Page 14)

Also in the paragraph above, Humbert emphasized his real intention that is related to McCoo's daughter, but later, he did another commodification relation with Charlotte Haze and her daughter Dolores Haze, or as known as Lolita. In short, it was revealed that Humbert has his intention to have exchange value with McCoo, to objectified McCoo's children for his own pleasure in exchange of the money for lodging in McCoo's house.

### 3.3.5 Humbert's Relation with Clare Quilty

As already explained from the previous sections, Quilty is the person who was accused with his crime to take Lolita away from Humbert. This Quilty, or simply known with his nickname Cue, has already followed Humbert and Lolita from the start of their journey through America. He is a scriptwriter for stage drama and has blood relation with a dentist who lived in Rammsdale, and from that dentist he gained information about them. He also used such method by changing his name in every hotel that he checked-in to avoid suspicion and to made Humbert let his guard down, to made him feel safe and not feel as if he's being stalked. Gratiano Forbeson and Gustave, the names that appeared in the previous section is also his other pseudonym.

When Humbert finally find him after he received some information from Lolita, he intends to kill Quilty right away. But in this part of the story, Humbert is not the one

who acts in a commodification manner. It was Quilty who tried to commodify Humbert in order to save his life. He tried to bargain for his safety by offering almost all of his assets to Humbert so that he won't be killed. Below is the proof of Quilty's effort for exchange value with Humbert:

...This house is not as modern as that ranch we shared with dear friends. But it is roomy, cool in summer and winter, and in a word comfortable, so, since I intend retiring to England or Florence forever, I suggest you move in. It is yours, gratis. Under the condition you stop pointing at me that [he swore disgustingly] gun. ...  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 135)

There is another citation which has similar idea with the sentence above:

... I can offer you, also gratis, as house pet, a rather exciting little freak, a young lady with three breasts, ... Now, soyonsraisonnables. You will only wound me hideously and then rot in jail while I recuperate in a tropical setting. I promise you, Brewster, you will be happy here, with a magnificent cellar, and all the royalties from my next play ... There are other advantages. ... Now drop that pistol like a good fellow. ... You may use my wardrobe. Oh, another thing you are going to like this. I have an absolutely unique collection of erotica upstairs....  
(*Lolita*, 1958, Page 135)

The result of Quilty's commodification to Humbert was unsuccessful because Humbert shoot him for more than once after Quilty continuously tried to bribe him. In other words, here Humbert acts as a person that has exchange value for Quilty's safety. If Quilty is able to exchange his assets to Humbert for the sake of his life, Quilty will end up alive. But in the end he rejects it and still insists to pursue his revenge towards his step daughter's kidnapper.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

From the analysis in the previous chapter, even though the focus of the research lies on Humbert's character and his commodification relationship, it is also known that he's not the only one who applied the commodification value. Other character like Quilty, is also notable to apply those when he offered Humbert his assets in exchange of his life's safety. It proves that material-based way of thinking occurs to anyone and also happens beyond sanity, even though the doer doesn't intend to do so.

In short, everyone has chance to have their own material point of view on social relationship if they see everything around them economically, see it from its benefit or loss, and then use the values accordingly depends on their own needs.

After the analysis of commodification by using Marxism is already done, the writer finds out that sign exchange value and exchange value that contained in Humbert's interaction reflects a lot with the life of people in the modern days. The connection between those values with each character that is involved in an interaction with Humbert show that commodification point of view is inseparable from the way people treat each other, and how the relationship itself evolves differently from the common social relationship.

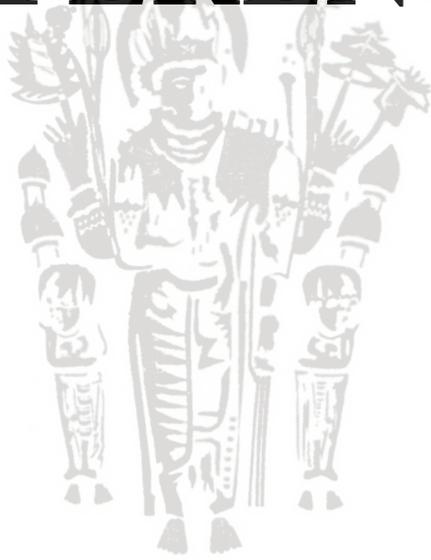
It is important to be noted that not all of Humbert's commodification relationships work well. In the parts where Humbert involved in commodification relationship with other minor characters like Charlotte and McCoo, he is unsuccessful in applying the values and reaching his purpose related to each character. His failure emphasizes that the real human's relationship can't be changed into pure commodification relationship; there has to be social value and humanity side in it.

The last, the involvement and portrayal of commodification values in most of Humbert's relationship with other characters is clearly visible, it can be noted from his objectification and treatment towards other characters such as Lolita and Charlotte and from the way he objectified himself, which can't be separated from his view of human's social relationship and the way it works.

#### 4.2 Suggestion

For the next researcher, the writer suggests using Michael Foucault's New Historicism theory. *Lolita* is a novel with broad theme and this theory can be applied to explain brief economy situation and aspects depicted in the novel, especially about people's life in America during 1950's.

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# APPENDICES





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