

The rocking horse winner vs the destructor

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



"The Rocking Horse Winner" by DH Lawrence and "The Destroyers" by Graham Greene were both written post wars where poverty was abundant. These two fiction stories are written about the evil caused by materialism. Comparing the two short stories, we find that greed causes destruction. In both stories, the protagonist is a boy not yet grown. Lawrence creates a boy, Paul, who strives to change the luck of not only himself, but that of his entire family. Greene tells of a boy, T, who leads a gang into destructing the home of a wealthy man just because it still stands where others around it were destroyed by bombs from the war.

This leads to the obvious contrast that one boy is attempting the acquisition of material goods while the other is attempting the destruction of material goods. Still it remains that in both cases, greed causes destruction of great value. Similarly in both stories, the boy's mothers could be seen as the antagonist because they both are very materialistic and impress on the children the need to be seen as better than others. Lawrence describes Paul's mother, "felt themselves superior to anyone in their neighborhood" and Greene describes T's mother, "considered herself better than the neighbors". "The Rocking Horse Winner" is set in London soon after World War I. "The Destroyer" was set after World War II in a place where just about everything had been destroyed by bombs. Both stories are told in the third person narrative. And both stories end up with the same theme: greed and materialism. "The Rocking Horse Winner" begins by describing Paul's mother, "There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck." She obviously became a very bitter and jealous person unable to love even her children.

Because of her greed and belief that more money was always needed, the house became haunted and was constantly chanting, “ There must be more money. ” In this story the house was symbolic of people’s greed and never ending desire to always have more. Paul is lead to believe that only luck can bring enough money into the old house so he sets out to find his own luck. He finds that luck by frantically riding a toy rocking horse that “ takes him there” at which point he discovers the name of the horse that will win the next big race. Over time, Paul does make a lot of money gambling, but at the cost of his own life in the end.

In “ The Destroyers”, a group of teenage boys decide to destroy the beautiful house that sat alone in the middle of a bomb site. The house was symbolic of all they, and most of the town, had lost to the war. The owner of the house had always been kind to the boys, but T didn’t trust anyone or their motives. After destroying the house, he told Mr. Thomas “ There’s nothing personal. ” Although the gang destroyed everything Mr. Thomas had and burnt his life’s savings, they took care to make sure Mr. Thomas was not in the house and was not hurt. So in the end, all his material belongings were gone, but he still had his life.

The plot of both stories was about greed and resentment; Paul’s mother’s greed for more and more and never being satisfied and T’s greed of making sure Mr. Thomas had no more than anyone else. The complication found in “ The Rocking Horse Winner” was found in Paul having to frantically ride the horse at the cost of his own health in order to find the name of the next winner. In Destroyers, the complication was the time it took to destroy the

old house from the inside out without anyone noticing before Mr. Thomas returned from his trip. In each case, the denouement was the destruction that occurred because of greed.

For Paul, no matter how lucky he was and no matter how much money he made, he never acquired what meant most to him, his mother's love. In the end, Paul gained money and could have purchased material things, but lost his life. And in Greene's story, even though T destroyed the home and all its beauty, he saved the life of Mr. Thomas. So in this case, all material things were lost, but the life was saved. These stories are in some ways very different, but both come to the same conclusion - greed destroys. Greed is like Satan, it takes and takes but is never satisfied with what it has, it always wants more. Greed only leads to destruction.