“Layers of Manipulation within Nabokov’s Lolita”

and the associated presentation:

“Exploring the Relationship between Humbert Humbert, Popular Media and the Reader in Nabokov’s Lolita” written and presented by R. Anaya Jones

Annotated Bibliography


Fieldler, Leslie A. Love and Death in the American Novel. New York: Stein and Day, 1966. Print. Fieldler mentions Lolita in passing at the close of Chapter 10, summarizing Lolita as “whose subject is the seduction of a middle-aged man by a twelve-year-old girl” This summary fits into his verbose chapter about the representation of women in American fiction, but is misleading at best and downright inaccurate. It is one way that critics have viewed Lolita, and thus has merit in a historical sense.

She chastises critics who overlook the male-minded narrator and the female oriented injustice within the text. Of particular interest to me, she notes how Humbert conceives of himself as flesh, and Lolita in multiple instances as a spirit, an idea, a phantom, but not a person at all.


Naiman, Eric. *Nabokov, Perversely*. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2010. Print. Naiman insists that Lolita is full of schoolyard level humor, which is arguable. He also claims the novel in whole is perverse. He is in danger here I think of confusing Humbert’s obviously perverse narration with the status of the novel as a whole. He also considers the manipulation inherent in Humbert’s narrative in relation to the lack of Lolita’s character.

Olsen, Lance. *Lolita: A Janus Text*. New York: Twayne-Simon & Schuster, 1995. Print. Olsen’s discussion of ethics is really a detailed account of Humbert’s unreliability. He delves also into Lolita as Humbert’s construction. Olsen also touches on the author’s deception of the reader. The difference is that as orchestrator, and Olsen notes this, the author is a guide, deceptive to the unwary reader but leaving behind clues for the careful.

Pifer, Ellen. “Her monster, his nymphet: Nabokov and Mary Shelley.” *Nabokov and His Fictions: New Perspectives*. Ed. Julian W Connolly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 158-176. Print. This source was not particularly useful to me for my thesis, but was a fascinating article about Nabokov’s feminist leanings.


<http://proxy.mbc.edu:2054/stable/pdfplus/1772041.pdf?acceptTC=true>. Tamir-Ghez notes critics’ comments about Humbert’s appeal, his sway over readers, and embarks to analyze the rhetoric used to such manipulative effect. Tamir-Ghez sees Nabokov behind Humbert’s rhetoric, guiding the reader’s experience of the novel.
