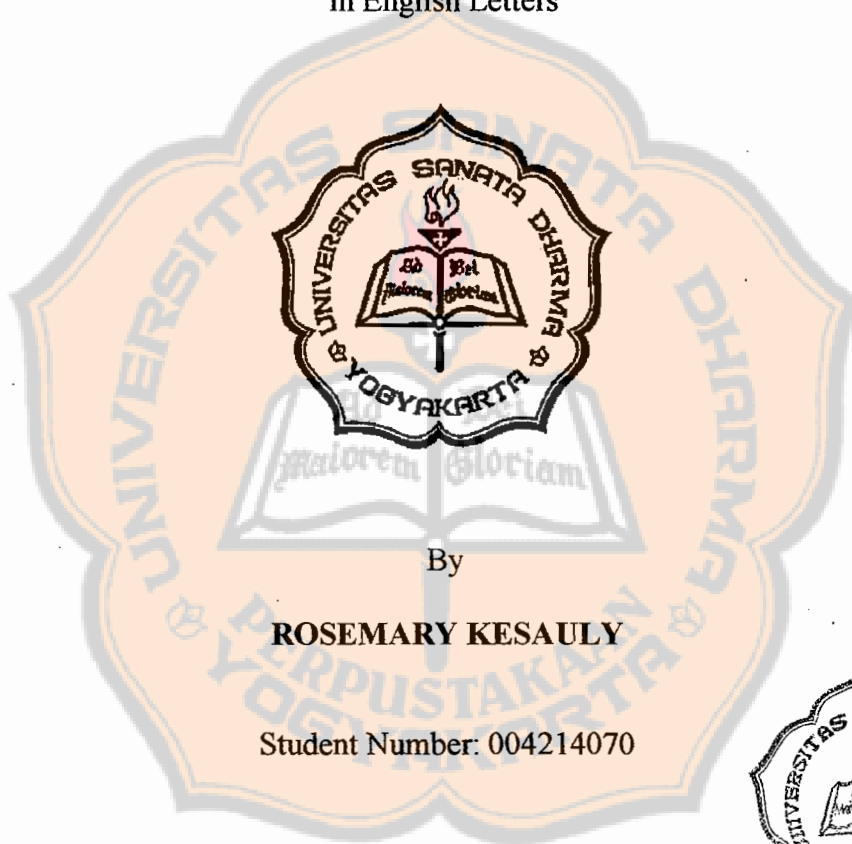


**Symbols and Figurative Language as Means of Delivering the Theme of  
Nabokov's *Lolita***

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra*  
in English Letters



By

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**ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAMME  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS  
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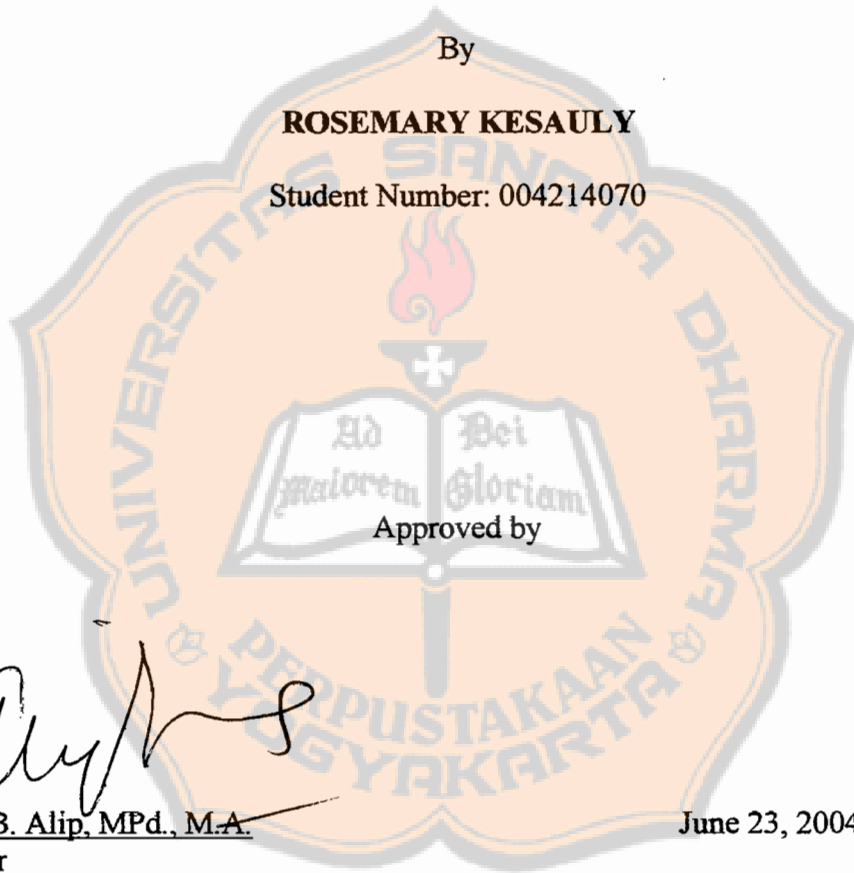
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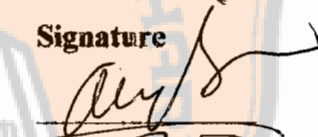


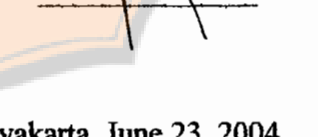
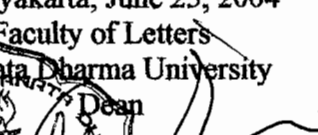
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**ABSTRACT**

ROSEMARY KESAULY (2004). **Symbols and Figurative Language as Means of Delivering the Theme of Nabokov's *Lolita***. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

*Lolita* is a controversial novel because it presents a topic that is considered too vulgar by traditional readers. The topic of sexual abuse towards children is still an uncommon issue to discuss at the time the novel was written. However, as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's master prose stylists Nabokov has used symbols and figurative language in order to disguise the vulgarity of what he presents in the novel. Although many critics have analyzed the novel using the psychological or moral-philosophical approach, it is still interesting to observe the novel from the point of view of the text itself. By seeing the text as an independent entity, it is hoped that the aesthetic value of Nabokov's work can be more highly appreciated.

Based on the background above, there are three objectives of the study. The first is to find out the symbols and their underlying meaning in the novel. The second is to identify what type of figurative language is used in the novel. Finally, the third objective is to discover how do the symbols and the figurative language help to deliver the theme of the novel.

A library research was applied in doing this study. The primary data was the novel *Lolita*, written by Vladimir Nabokov. The secondary data was several criticisms on the novel. Various books that provided the theories of symbols, figurative language, and theme were also used to support this study. This study used New Criticism. The approach was used in studying the unity between the symbols and figurative language, and also in interpreting their meanings. The approach was also used in discovering the central idea that binds them together.

The result of the analysis shows that symbols and figurative language in the novel are effectively used to deliver the theme. Both the symbols and the figurative language show that the theme of the novel is that a painful event in one's past may result in an excessive sexual obsession that controls one's behaviours, and ruins one's psyche. Through the use of symbols and figurative language, the cause and effect of the sexual obsession can be clearly presented.

## ABSTRAK

ROSEMARY KESAULY (2004). **Symbols and Figurative Language as Means of Delivering the Theme of Nabokov's *Lolita***. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

*Lolita* adalah sebuah novel yang kontroversial karena novel ini mengangkat topik yang dianggap vulgar oleh kalangan pembaca yang tradisional. Pada saat novel ini ditulis, pelecehan seksual terhadap anak-anak masih merupakan topik yang jarang dibahas. Namun, sebagai salah seorang pakar prosa stilistika di abad ke duapuluh, Nabokov menggunakan banyak simbol dan gaya bahasa untuk menyamakan vulgaritas yang ditampilkannya pada novel tersebut. Meskipun banyak kritikus telah menganalisa novel ini dengan menggunakan pendekatan psikologis dan moral filosofis, namun novel ini tetap menarik untuk dianalisa dari sudut pandang tekstual. Dengan melihat teks tersebut sebagai suatu karya yang berdiri sendiri, diharapkan bahwa nilai estetis dari karya Nabokov dapat lebih dihargai.

Berdasarkan latar belakang tersebut, studi ini memiliki tiga tujuan. Yang pertama adalah untuk menemukan sekaligus mengungkap arti dari simbol-simbol yang terdapat pada novel tersebut. Yang kedua adalah untuk menemukan gaya bahasa apa saja yang digunakan pada novel tersebut. Akhirnya, tujuan yang ketiga adalah untuk menemukan bagaimana simbol-simbol dan gaya bahasa tersebut mendukung penyampaian tema dari novel tersebut.

Studi pustaka telah digunakan dalam studi ini. Data primernya adalah novel *Lolita* karya Vladimir Nabokov. Sementara data sekundernya adalah beberapa kritik mengenai novel tersebut. Beragam buku yang memuat teori-teori mengenai simbol, gaya bahasa, dan tema juga digunakan sebagai pendukung. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan *New Criticism*. Pendekatan ini digunakan dalam mempelajari kesatuan antara simbol dan gaya bahasa dan juga dalam menginterpretasikan makna mereka. Pendekatan ini juga digunakan dalam menemukan ide sentral yang mengikat mereka.

Hasil dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa simbol dan gaya bahasa telah digunakan secara efektif untuk menyampaikan tema. Baik simbol maupun gaya bahasa yang digunakan dalam novel ini menunjukkan bahwa tema dari novel ini adalah bahwa suatu kejadian yang menyakitkan yang terjadi di kehidupan masa lalu seseorang, dapat menimbulkan suatu obsesi seksual yang berlebihan, yang mengontrol tingkah laku orang tersebut dan merusak jiwanya. Melalui penggunaan simbol dan gaya bahasa, sebab dan akibat dari obsesi seksual tersebut dapat ditampilkan dengan lebih jelas.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

Instead of the many literary works written by English or American writers Nabokov's work is chosen in particular because as an immigrant in the United States Nabokov's achievement as one of the twentieth century's master prose stylist is considered amazing. During his life Nabokov had published eighteen novels, eight books of short stories, seven books of poetry and nine plays. *Lolita* is considered as his masterpiece and its success became monumental. It is considered extraordinary that even though he is from Russia Nabokov is able to write in English a superb piece of writing combining various figurative languages with a series of symbols to form his own unique style that not only makes the novel interesting to read but also provides the readers with aesthetic pleasures. His rich vocabularies and intense creativity are among many of his qualities as a gifted writer. It is interesting to note that he is very detail-conscious. The places, events, and basically every single thing in the story are described with vivid clarity, using beautiful, witty, and sometimes humour-filled sentences, which are still deep and meaningful. It must take true brilliance to do so considering that English is not his mother tongue. His qualities as a gifted writer are the ones that trigger the interest to analyze his work.

*Lolita* is an interesting work of fiction. It is rich with symbols and figurative language, which are beautifully crafted to arouse a sense of pleasure in reading the novel and also to deliver the central idea of the story. Although it is a novel it contains elements that are commonly found in poetry. The use of alliteration for example makes the novel

unique and indeed very poetical. Reading *Lolita* feels like reading poetry in the form of a novel. Although at the time the novel was published it was still taboo to talk about illicit sexual behaviour especially the one directed towards children, still the issue presented in the novel is very close to reality, thus emotional involvement with the story is easily developed.

Symbols and figurative language are chosen to be the focus of this study because of three reasons. First, they are found to be the most striking aspects of the novel, they seem to stand up among all the other intrinsic elements. Objects such as an old grey tennis-ball, an exotic lake among the woods, or simply one sock exist in the novel to reveal a certain idea. Similar to that, a seemingly simple sentence that describe a character in the novel like “but instead I am lanky, big-boned, woolly-chested Humbert Humbert with thick black eyebrows and a queer accent, and a cesspoolful of rotting monsters behind his slow boyish smile” can reveal far beyond its literal meaning when related to the story as a whole (Nabokov, 1997:44). Combined together the symbols and figurative language in *Lolita* function effectively as a means of delivering the theme of the novel. Second, the use of symbols and figurative language in the novel is interesting to analyze because it proved to be an excellent way of presenting the somewhat controversial issue in the novel in a highly poetical way. As Couturier stated in his book *Novel and Censorship or Eros' Bad Faith* by using poetical language Nabokov seeks to transmute Humbert's erotic experience into a work of art, by doing so Nabokov manages to abolish the obstacle that prevented novelistic language from representing sexual act (1996:55). Third, symbols and figurative language are chosen because uncovering their hidden meaning can be a worthwhile challenge because it will hopefully developed a new

sense of appreciation for Nabokov's works not only *Lolita* but also his other works such as *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*, and *Pale Fire* which are also highly poetical.

Other researchers in the field of English Literature often focus their attention only on the work written by English or American writers while actually there are many great authors like Nabokov, who wrote superb literary works that deserve the same portion of attention regardless of their origins. The study of English Literature should therefore expand itself in order to embrace the works written by these authors. Meanwhile, since *Lolita* is one of the most controversial novels in the twentieth century, by studying the symbols and figurative language that exists in the novel not only a deeper understanding of the novel can be gained but also the significance of symbols and figurative language itself can be understood more clearly. These understanding can be very useful in further research of other literary works. Aspects outside of the novel are of course important in comprehending its meaning, however, it must also be noted that a literary work contains aesthetic elements that need to be explored more, symbols and figurative language are among many of those elements.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

From the background above the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the symbols and their meanings in Nabokov's *Lolita*?
2. What types of figurative language are used in Nabokov's *Lolita*?
3. How do the symbols and figurative language help to deliver the theme of Nabokov's *Lolita*?

### C. Objectives of the Study

There are three objectives of this study. The first objective is to find out the symbols and their underlying meaning in Nabokov's *Lolita*. The second objective is to identify what types of figurative language are used in Nabokov's *Lolita*. The third objective is to discover how the symbols and figurative language help to deliver the theme of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

### D. Definition of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms need to be defined clearly:

#### 1. Symbols

According to Holman and Harmon in *A Handbook to Literature* "symbol is an image that evokes an objective, concrete reality and suggest another level of meaning. It is a trope that combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect" (1968:44).

#### 2. Figurative Language

According to Perrine in *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* "figurative language is language using figures of speech or language that cannot be taken literally, broadly defined a figure of speech is any way of saying something other than the ordinary way" (1974: 610).

#### 3. Theme

According to Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* "theme is a central or dominating idea in a work" (1957:90).

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL REVIEW

#### A. Review of Related Studies

Several studies that have been done on Nabokov's *Lolita* focus on the moral-philosophical message of the novel, the idea of love found in the novel, and the influence of the mass American culture on the novel. In his essay *Lolita: from a moral perspective*, August C. Bourre writes that Nabokov has brought up the issue of what is and what is not accepted by society. He argues that Humbert Humbert's attraction to Dolores Haze and other nymphets is not a moral choice on his part. It is an aesthetic choice. Humbert Humbert refers to nymphets as maidens, and to the men who are attracted to them as bewitched travelers. By bringing fairy-tale language into play Humbert Humbert is distancing himself from the reality of the fact that his attraction is socially unacceptable.

Another critic, Lionel Trilling, in his essay entitled *The Last Lover: Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita*, suggests that *Lolita* is not about sex but about love. He develops his essay by discussing the types of love in modern day culture. In his opinion, Nabokov's purpose is to show that the theme of *Lolita* is solely about love, and the kind of love that is portrayed in the novel is what Trilling calls "passion love". Trilling argues that Humbert Humbert's relation with *Lolita* scandalously defies society; it puts the lovers beyond the pale of society (1987:5-11).

Another essay, written by Susan Amper, entitled *Lolita and Her Movies: The Unmaking of Humbert Humbert*, argues that there is a link between Nabokov's *Lolita* and America's infatuation with movies. By using a chronological study of Humbert Humbert's fall into a movie-land illusion combined with references to contemporary



ideas about Hollywood and the theatre, Amper argues that the power of America's love for movies is similar to Humbert's obsessive actions (1995:41-55).

Meanwhile, some other critics construct their arguments about *Lolita* by comparing it with Nabokov's other novel or with works by different authors whose styles are similar with Nabokov. In his book *Novel and Censorship or Eros' Bad Faith*, a leading French Nabokovian Maurice Couturier makes a comparative study between *Lolita* and Nabokov's other novel *Invitation to a Beheading*. In his opinion both novels can be considered as 'poerotic' novel because both of them contain erotic scenes, which are disguised in highly poetical language. Focusing on *Lolita* Couturier further explains that there are four main purposes of Nabokov's usage of poetical language in the novel: in order to mimic as closely as possible the sensual pleasures experienced by the main characters in the novel, to make the readers feel the voluptuousness intensely in sympathy, to cast aside the vulgar clichés used in literature to represent sex, and to prepare the readers for the blossoming of the final metaphor which bears little trace of trepidation and self-censorship (1996:49). Couturier further argues that there are many erotic signs that evolve around Lolita as a character in the novel. In his opinion by using poetical language Nabokov transforms Lolita so that she is not seen as a vulgar little flirt but as the archetypal seductress and temptress, like Eve in the Garden of Eden. At the same time, Nabokov seeks to transmute Humbert's erotic experience into a work of art. By doing so he manages to abolish the obstacle that prevented novelistic language from representing sexual act. Couturier argues that Nabokov does not want the readers to simply identify with his protagonist as a crude pornographer would, but to bring the readers to adhere totally to the novel in which the gradual eroticisation of the language eventually creates a 'poerotic' ecstasy (1996:53-55).

Another criticism on *Lolita* also comes from Sam Schuman. He tries to point out that Nabokov's *Lolita* is a satiric travel narrative. In his essay, *On the Road to Canterbury, Liliput and Elphinstone – The Rough Guide: Satiric Travel Narratives in Chaucer, Swift and Nabokov*, he makes a comparison between Swift's *Gulliver's Travel* and Nabokov's *Lolita* claiming that both novels are well-known satiric masterpieces of the English language and that both works derive much of their vigor from the Chaucerian tradition. Both authors seek to instruct and correct their society by presenting the readers with venomous portraits of an unredeemable culture. Schuman argues that both Nabokov's masterwork and Swift's are accounts, which describe, in minute satiric detail, multiple voyages to strange lands. In his opinion the readers need to be reminded that Humbert Humbert is as new to America as Gulliver to Liliput. Schuman further compares both works with Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, in order to support his argument that both works are influenced by Chaucer's style of using the narrative of the journey in his novel to offer the readers with a panoramic view of both the travelers themselves, and the world through which they move, which is most conducive to sweeping satire.

This study agrees with Bourre's argument that what Humbert Humbert has done is socially unacceptable, however the focus of this study will not be on the moral message of the novel, rather this study will try to formulate the theme of *Lolita* reflected through the symbols and figurative language which are used in the novel, and in doing so Bourre's essay will be used as a reference. This study disagrees with Trilling's argument, even though *Lolita* is not a novel about sex, still it is too soon to judge that it is a novel about love, since love and obsessions are two different things even though they can be quite similar in certain situations. The symbols and figurative language that will be analyzed in this study will be related to the representation of the sexual obsession in the

novel rather than to the idea of love. While Amper's attempt to relate *Lolita* with the mass American culture is considered acceptable even though this study will only focus on the symbols and figurative language and their relation to the aspects within the story and not to the aspects outside of the story.

On the other hand, Couturier's argument will be very useful for the analysis on this study since he tries to present the function of the highly poetical language in the novel. However, this study will be different from what Couturier has done. While Couturier only relates the poetical language in the novel with the elements of eroticism in the novel, this study will explore the poetical language in a deeper way. This study will try to interpret the symbols and various figurative languages that are used in the novel and try to find out their interrelation with the internal logic of the novel, and also their contribution towards delivering the central idea of the story. In doing so this study will be limited to the novel itself and will not try to compare it with works of other authors like what Schuman has done since it is believed that Nabokov has his own, unique and individual style which is different from any other writer. Moreover, Nabokov himself in his own personal comment on the novel states, "Now I happen to be the kind of author who in starting to work on a book has no other purpose than to get rid of the book" (1997: 311). He also adds that *Lolita* has no moral in tow,

For me a work of fiction exists only insofar it affords me what I shall bluntly call aesthetic bliss, that is a sense of being somehow, somewhere, connected with other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm (1997:315).

From his statement it can be concluded that *Lolita* exists for the purpose of the art itself, and that the author has no purpose of satirizing the community around him. That is one of the reasons why this study will only focus on some of the intrinsic elements of the novel

without trying to relate them with the moral message, the culture, or the society that serves as the background of the novel.

## **B. Review of Related Theories**

### **1. Theory of Symbols**

According to Holman and Harmon (1968:44), symbol is an image that evokes an objective, concrete reality and suggests another level of meaning. It is a trope that combines a literal and sensuous quality with an abstract or suggestive aspect. While according to Guth (1997:189), symbols are images that have a meaning beyond themselves. Symbol is a detail, a character, or an incident that has a meaning beyond its literal role in the narrative. In order to fully respond to a story, it is necessary to become sensitive to symbolic overtones and implications. Meanwhile Abrams (1975: 195), defines symbol as a word or phrase that signifies an object or event, which in turn signifies something, or a range of reference, beyond itself.

In his book, *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, Perrine (1974:20), states that a symbol may have more than one meaning. He adds that at its most effective a symbol is like many faceted jewels. It flashes different colours when it is turned in the light. Furthermore, the area of the symbols' possible meaning is always controlled by the context. Therefore, it can be said that the meaning of a literary symbol must be established and supported by the entire context of the literary work, which means that a particular symbol has its meaning within the story. According to Rohrberger and Woods (1971:17), the presence of symbols in literary works is inevitable. Some people think that many great works of art use literary symbols because they suggest complexity, intricacy, and richness. If symbols are present in literary works, whether through emphasis,



repetition, implications, or recurring patterns, it means that the author wants to say something in terms of another. Therefore, such a hint should not be neglected in order to get the actual understanding of the literary work itself.

Related to the interpretation of symbols, Guth (1997:189-190), states that some symbols come into a story from a shared language of symbols. He notes that much in human experience has traditional symbolic associations. Dawn for example, is often associated with hope, dark forest with evil, clay with death, water with fertility, and light with knowledge or enlightenment. Symbols may be ambiguous; the Whale in *Moby Dick* may represent everything that is destructive in nature, but it may also represent everything that is most serenely beautiful in nature. Guth further adds that literary symbols are rich in associations. They have more resonance, and more reverberations than simple signs. Garden as a symbol may be associated with the Garden of Eden, nature, or an oasis in the desert. Guth also notes that some symbols have a special personal meaning for the writer; their meaning may come into focus as they return again and again in the writer's work.

Symbols can be classified into several categories. According to Reaske (1974:109), there are two types of symbols: public symbol and private symbol. Public symbol is a symbol that through repeated use has the same connotations whenever they occur. While private symbols are products of particular poet's imagination and fairly mysterious. If a poet has a private symbol, it often remains private uses until someone decides that the symbol has some particular meanings, which become dear when one has observed carefully how the symbol functions in every poem in which it is observed. Reaske's explanations is supported by Guth (1997:589), who states that some poets develop a symbolic language of their own that may at first seem private or obscure.



However, it gradually becomes meaningful as the readers learn more about the poet or read several poems by the same poet. As the readers learn the poet's symbolic language, the readers gradually feel less like strangers in the poet's world of meanings. The theories above not only can be applied when analyzing symbols in a poem but they can also be applied in analyzing symbols or symbolical language in any other genre of literature such as short story, novel, or a play, because symbols also exist on those other types of literary genres.

A little bit different from Reaske, Myers and Simms in *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms* (1985:297-298), divide symbols into three generic forms:

- 1) The archetypal or cultural symbol, in which a natural object refers to a limited number of interpretations that transcend cultural barriers. For example the sun, which represents energy, a source of life, and the male active principle.
- 2) The general symbol, which appeals to a smaller audience but which contains more associative meanings.
- 3) The private, authorial, or contextual symbol, which is created in an author's imagination and conveying any number of meanings in the guiding context.

Apart from the three forms of symbol mentioned above, Guth in his book *Discovering Literature: Stories, Poems, Plays* (1997:192-193), mentions what is called the central symbol. Guth explains that a central symbol is a symbol that becomes the focal point of a story. A central symbol functions to focus the readers' attention. It provides a tangible object for the readers' emotions. Another function of a central symbol is that it becomes the hub for meanings and associations. A central symbol may slowly evolve, acquiring its full meaning only as the story as a whole takes shape.

Symbols can also be categorized according to its phase. According to Frye (1990:73-105), there are three phases in which symbol can be identified:

- 1) The literal and descriptive phase, in this phase symbol functions as motif and sign. Symbol as motif means verbal elements are understood inwardly or centripetally. While symbol as sign means verbal units which, conventionally or arbitrarily stand for and point to things outside the place where they occur.
- 2) The formal phase, in this phase symbol functions as image. Formal phase deals with nature and reality. In this phase the work of art does not reflect external events or ideas but it exists between the example and the precept. In the formal imitation the readers reach a more unified conception of narrative and meaning. Formal phase views image as symbols that show an analogy or similarity proportion between a work of art and the nature that it imitates. In this phase a work of art is not a shadow of nature, but it enables the nature to be reflected in it.
- 3) Mythical phase, in this phase symbol functions as archetype. Mythical phase looks at literature as a technique of communication. The symbol in mythical phase is the communicable unit called archetype, that is a typical of recurring image. The recurring image within a work of art is not a coincidence, but a certain unity in the nature that it imitates. The nature that is imitated is not nature as a structure of system, but nature as a cyclical process.

There are various ways of identifying symbols. Kennedy (1983:147), in his book *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* suggests several ways of identifying symbols. In his opinion, in order to look for symbols it is necessary to focus on certain characters and actions because usually the author invents them based on certain purposes. By holding up for inspection certain characters and their actions, the

author lends them some special significance in order to support the idea. Kennedy further adds that the readers should be careful with words, phrases, or sentences which are mentioned repeatedly, because they might suggest symbols. While Rohrberger and Woods (1971:136), states that the readers can usually trust the story for the identification and discovery of symbols, because when an author wishes to mark an object or detail with symbolic significance, then he will indicate, either explicitly or implicitly, his intended meaning or meanings. Symbols are not things invented by an author to confuse the reader, not strange objects with far-fetched meanings arbitrarily attached to them, but they are, in literature as in life, a vital part of our experience. Guth (1997:223-225), also suggests several ways of identifying symbols. According to Guth, in order to identify the role symbols play in a work of fiction there are a few steps that must be taken: first, the full range of possible associations of a symbol need to be explored. Second, it is necessary to trace the full meaning of a gradually evolving central symbol. Third, it is important to look for secondary symbols that echo the major theme of a story. Fourth, contrasts or polarities need to be found. Fifth, relate key terms specifically to the story, if a term is brought into the story from the outside, show how it applies to the story. For instance, if a certain story is simply a fantasy, then it is suggested to find out what kind of fantasy is acted out in the story, and what are its workings or dynamics. The last step is to look for personal connection between the use of symbols in a story and our own life and experience.

## **2. Theory on Figurative Language**

According to Perrine (1974:610-614), figurative language is language using figures of speech or language that cannot be taken literally. Broadly defined, a figure of speech is any way of saying something other than the ordinary way. Figurative language often provides a more effective means of saying what we mean than does direct statement. Perrine also says that there are several functions of figurative language: first, figurative language affords us imaginative pleasure. Imagination might be described in one sense as that faculty or ability of the mind that proceeds by sudden leaps from one point to another. The mind takes delight in these sudden leaps, in seeing likenesses between unlike things. Figures of speech are therefore satisfying in themselves, providing us with a source of pleasure in the exercise of the imagination. Second, figures of speech are a way of bringing additional imagery into verse, of making the abstract concrete, of making poetry more sensuous. Figurative language is a way of multiplying the sense appeal of poetry. Third, figures of speech are a way of adding emotional intensity to otherwise merely informative statements and of conveying attitudes along with information. For example when Wilfred Owen compares a soldier caught in a gas attack to a man drowning under a green sea, he conveys a feeling of despair and suffocation as well as a visual image. Fourth, figures of speech are a means of concentration, a way of saying much in brief compass.

There are many types of figurative language, however, in relation with the analysis, this chapter will only deals with three types of figurative language namely metaphor, simile, and allusion since those three types of figurative language are used most dominantly in *Lolita*. The theories on figurative language in this chapter are mostly taken from the theories of poetry. They are used because many elements of the novel are found to be poetical. It is therefore necessary to use the theories of poetry in order to

interpret the meaning of the figurative language in the novel, so that the way they deliver the theme can be discovered.

#### a. Theory of Metaphor and Simile

Guth (1997:554-555), defines metaphor as language used imaginatively to carry ideas and feelings that otherwise might be hard to put into words. It is a brief, compressed comparison that talks about one thing as if it were another. The comparison is implied, not spelled out. If the comparison is signaled with words such as *like* or *as if*, it is called a simile. The sentence *my reason, the physician to my love* contains a metaphor, while the sentence *my love is a fever, longing still* contains a simile. Guth (1997:561), adds that throughout the centuries metaphor and simile are used to express feelings that might otherwise be hard to put into words.

According to Perrine in *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense* (1974:615), metaphor and simile are both used as a means of comparing things that are essentially different. The only distinction between them is that in simile the comparison is expressed by the use of some words or phrases such as *like*, *similar to*, *resembles*, or *seems*. In metaphor the comparison is implied that the figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal term.

While Burton, in his book *The Criticism of Poetry* (1985:109-110), states that metaphor identifies two distinct objects and fuses them unforgettably in a white heat of imagination. So swiftly does it work, that it often finds expression in one word, and the sense impression that it conveys is always subordinate to the emotional and intellectual associations that it is its business to arouse. Burton further adds that great metaphors, like



poetry itself should surprise by a fine excess, and yet have the unmistakable ring of imaginative truth.

In a novel the use of metaphors is also significant in arousing the sense impression of the readers because of its powerful effect. As Guth (1997:557), describes, both an image on the literal level and a metaphor may appeal strongly to our visual imagination. The difference is that the metaphor makes us visualize something that we could not literally interact with or see. Metaphor (from a Greek word meaning “to carry over”) carries us over from the normal surface meaning of a word to something else. It exploits similarities and makes connections between things we might otherwise keep apart. Guth further explains that a metaphor may be a single word or beyond a single word. A metaphor that is beyond a single word is called an extended metaphor. An extended metaphor traces the ramifications of the implied comparison, following up related similarities.

Guth (1997:574), suggests several ways of identifying metaphor or simile. First, it is suggested that the readers look for imaginative comparisons whether they are spelled out or implied. Second, it is suggested that the readers look for sustained or extended metaphors that the author traces into their ramifications. Third, it is suggested that the readers try to respond to the range of associations of key metaphors. Guth also adds that the readers must try to do justice to what is left out in a simple prose paraphrase of a metaphorical line. It is important to explore the images it conjures up and respond to the emotions it brings into play. From Guth’s explanations it can be concluded that there are four possible functions of metaphors in a literary work: as means of representing variations on a theme, as means of reinforcing the central concern of the author, as means

of reflecting polarities that set up the basic tension or challenge in a literary work, and as part of an escalating series of metaphors that lead up to a new way of seeing and feeling.

### **b. Theory on Allusion**

According to Perrine (1974:675), allusion is a reference to something in history or previous literature. It is like a richly connotative word or a symbol, a means of suggesting far more than it says. Perrine (1974:677-678), states that allusions are a means of reinforcing the emotion or the ideas of one's own work with the emotion or ideas of another work or occasion. Allusions vary widely in the amount of reliance that the poet puts on them to convey his meaning. Poet may use allusion not only to reinforce emotion but also to help define his theme. The use of allusion is not only common in poetry but also in other types of literary works such as short story, play, or novel. The functions of allusion in a novel are more or less the same with the functions of allusion in a poem. In a novel allusion may still have a powerful emotional effect for the readers.

### **3. Theory on Theme**

Rohrberger and Woods (1971:186), define theme as the central idea or point of a poem, story, play, or novel. While according to Baldick (1990:225), theme is prominent abstract idea that emerges from a literary work's management of its subject matter, or a topic recurring in a number of literary works. The theme of a work may be announced explicitly; but more often it emerges indirectly through the recurrence. Similarly, Guth (1997:231), states that a story that has a strong impact is likely to raise questions to which the story as a whole suggests answers. It is likely to make you re-examine or re-think some facet of human life. Guth (1997:232), adds that the themes of modern fiction tend

to be implied rather than spelled out. They are ideas organically embedded in image, action, and emotion.

According to Kenney (1966:95), one way to discover the theme of the story is by a thorough and responsive reading of the story, involving a constant awareness of the relations among the parts of the story and of the relation parts to whole. While Stanton (1965:21-22), suggests that to identify a story's theme, one must start with a clear idea of the characters, the situation, the plot, and the literary devices: symbolism, irony, and so on. Although these devices cannot carry the theme by themselves, they can help to define and emphasize the theme, and they can support a tentative interpretation. While according to Perrine (1974:105), there are six principles in discovering the theme, as follows; first, theme must be expressed in a form of a statement, with a subject and a predicate. Second, the theme must be stated as generalization about life. Third, the justified theme must be universally explicit. Fourth, theme should not contradict to the detail of the story and it must account for all the major details of the literary work. Fifth, theme can be stated in more than one way. Sixth, it is better if the theme is not expressed in familiar sentence or expression, as it will be an obstacle in conveying the essential meaning of a literary work.

### **C. Theoretical Framework**

The theory of symbols, figurative language, and theme above will be used in order to answer the problem formulations as stated in chapter I. The theory of symbols will be relevant in order to identify and interpret the symbols found in Nabokov's *Lolita*. The definition of symbols given by Holman and Harmon, Guth, and Abrams will be used as guidance in determining which object or objects in the story that can be considered as

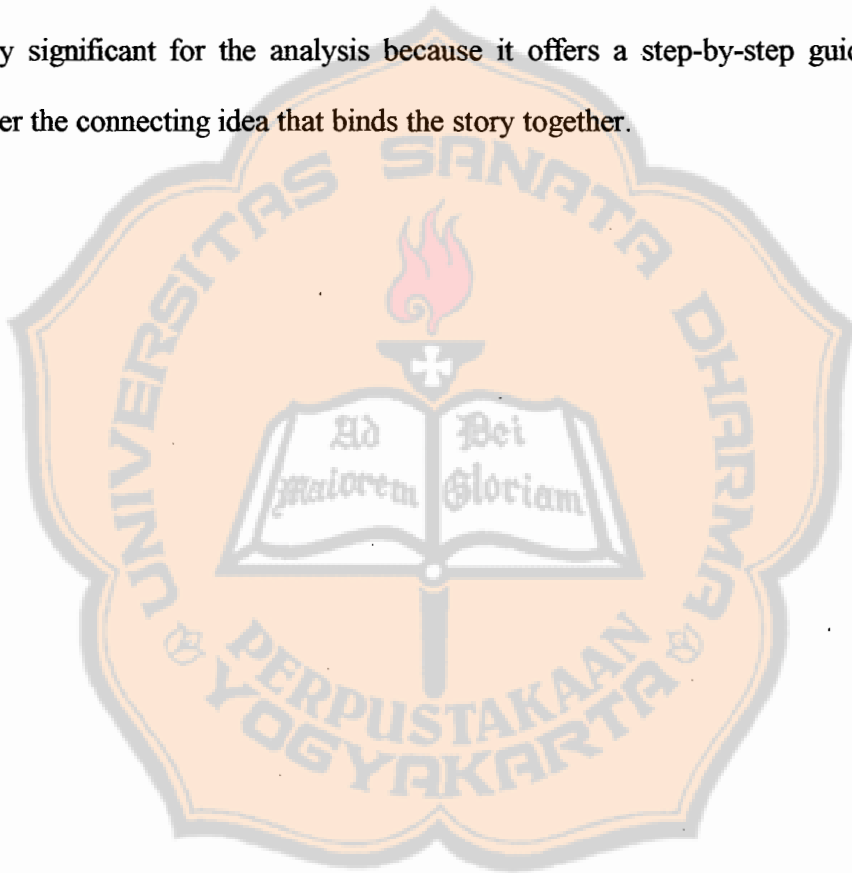
symbol or symbols. The theories of the types of symbols as described by Myers and Simms, and Reaske will be used in order to identify the symbols in the novel and also to find out the function of each major symbol in the story so that the overall significance of the symbols especially their contribution towards delivering the theme can be found. While Frye's explanations on the phases of symbols will be used in order to get a deeper understanding about the symbols that will finally be useful in interpreting and relating them with the theme of the story. On the other hand Rohrberger and Woods', Kennedy's and Guth's explanations about how to interpret the symbols will also be very useful in order to uncover or decode the hidden meanings of the symbols in the story. They suggest a very systematic and practical way of identifying and interpreting the symbols so that it can be directly applied in analyzing the symbols in Nabokov's *Lolita*.

The theories on figurative language are also important since it will be used in order to answer the second problem formulation, which deals with the types of figurative language found in the novel. The theories of metaphor, simile, and allusion, will be used in order to analyze the figurative languages used in Nabokov's *Lolita*. It is important to understand the functions of each type of the figurative language so that their significance towards the central idea of the novel as a whole can be properly identified. By knowing the effects that these figurative languages produce, the author's purpose of using them can be explored in a deeper way, so that in the end how they are used to deliver the theme can be determined.

Similar to the other theories, the theories on theme will be very significant for the analysis in this study because they will be used to connect all of the elements that will be analyzed in this study. As has been stated before, the purpose of this study is in order to find out how the symbols and figurative language help to deliver the theme in Nabokov's

*Lolita*. Therefore, the definition of the theme itself is very much needed in order to avoid making a general statement about the story while neglecting the central idea of the story itself.

Meanwhile, Kenney's and Stanton's suggestions on how to discover the theme will be very useful in the attempt of formulating the theme based on what the symbols and figurative language reflect in the novel. The six principles stated by Perrine will also be very significant for the analysis because it offers a step-by-step guide in order to discover the connecting idea that binds the story together.





### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

##### A. Object of the Study

The object of this study is Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. The novel was first published in 1955, in France, by Olympia Press. However, it received no public attention until after it was banned in France, under pressure from the British Home Office along with many other Olympia Press titles. At that time *Lolita* was considered as a controversial novel because it portrays the lustful obsession of a middle-aged man for his 12 years old step-daughter. In spite of that Graham Greene (whom at that time worked for the *London Times*) included it in a year end list of the three best novels of 1955.

*Lolita's* first publication in the United States occurred in 1958 when Putnam publishing company agreed to publish it. It became an instant success, selling more than 100,000 copies in its first three weeks. It held at number one on the best-seller list for six months and stayed on the list for a year. *Lolita* was made into a motion picture in the 1970s with Stanley Kubrick as the director, about two decades later Jeremy Iron directed the re-making of that movie. In 1998, a board of distinguished writers convened by Random House's Modern Library Series placed *Lolita* at number four on the list of 100 best novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The edition used in this study is the second Vintage International edition, which was published by Vintage Books on June 1997, in New York. The novel consists of 317 pages, 309 pages contain the story while the remaining pages contain the author's personal comment on the novel. *Lolita* is divided into two parts: the first part consists of

33 chapters, while the second part consists of 36 chapters. Each chapter is quite short, ranging from two to five pages.

In general the novel is about a pedophilic man named Humbert Humbert who is madly obsessed with his step daughter Lolita. The novel is set out to be Humbert Humbert's personal journal in which he records every detail of his obsession towards Lolita. The first part of the novel gives a brief introduction about Humbert Humbert's past before he meets Lolita, how he meets Lolita, and how he finally managed to fulfil his lust towards Lolita. The second part of the novel describes Humbert Humbert and Lolita's extensive travels all across the United States, their lives at Beardsley, their second tour around the United States and finally how Humbert Humbert became a murderer. Overall the novel is about the sad and tragic life of Lolita because she has been the object of sexual abuse for several years.

#### **B. Approach of the Study**

This study uses the New Criticism. New Criticism according to Mario Klarer in *An Introduction to Literary Studies* (1998:86), is an approach whose main concern is to free literary criticism of extrinsic factors and thereby shift the center of attention to the literary text itself. According to Guerin in his book *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1999:81), the new criticism insisted on the presence within the work of everything necessary for its analysis. The focus of the new critics are what the works says and how it says it as inseparable issues. Meanwhile, according to Leitch in his book *American Literary Criticism from the Thirties to the Eighties* (1988:31), the value of a literary text for a new critic does not only depend on its meaning and content but it also depends on the structural unity between its elements. This can be related to Guerin's

explanation (1999:75), that any literary work will reveal its internal logic through its elements such as the words, phrases, metaphors, images, and symbols.

Upon reading *Lolita*, it is noticeable that Nabokov has used a highly poetical language in the novel. He uses symbols and figurative language such as metaphor, simile, allusion, and alliteration that are commonly used in poetry. This fact is found to be unique and fascinating. The use of symbols and figurative language in the novel has created a sense of aesthetic pleasure. Therefore, since the analysis in this study is focused on the aesthetic aspects of the novel it is decided that the new criticism is the most appropriate approach in doing the analysis. Other researchers have analysed the work using psychological, social-historical, and even moral-philosophical approach, however, the author himself stated that in his opinion a work of fiction exists only insofar it affords aesthetic bliss (1997:315). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the author himself admitted that his work, in this case *Lolita*, exists for the sake of the art itself. That is the reason why new criticism is thought to fit perfectly well in analysing the novel, because it only focuses on the aspects within the novel itself. The new criticism is applied in the examination and observation of symbols and figurative language in the story.

### C. Method of the Study

A library research was applied in doing this study. In relation to that, two types of data were used: the primary data and the secondary data. The primary data was *Lolita*, a novel written by Vladimir Nabokov. The secondary data was several criticisms on the novel (taken from on-line articles in the internet and also from papers that were written by other researchers). Various books which provided the theories of symbols, figurative language, and theme were also used to support the secondary data. Other supporting

books were also used such as books on literary studies, and books which offer comprehensive guides on how to analyze works of literature. In order to support the analysis books that consist the theories of poetry were also used since the novel contains poetical elements.

Several steps were taken in doing this study. The first step was doing the close reading of the novel. This was done in order to find the most dominant and most significant symbols and types of figurative language used in the novel.

The second step was collecting all the necessary datas and relevant sources that were needed in order to provide the theoretical ground for this study and also in order to support the analysis. Criticisms on the novel were collected from on-line articles and other research papers. Other than that books on the theories of fiction and poetry were skimmed, scanned, and browsed in order to get all the significant theories that were needed for the analysis.

The third step was doing the analysis. Since the aim of the analysis was to answer all of the problems in the problem formulation section, therefore the steps of doing the analysis was divided into four smaller steps. The first step was identifying and interpreting the significant symbols in the novel. The second step was making a list of the most dominant figurative language found in the novel and then interpreting them by relating them to the story as a whole. The third step was drawing a connection between the symbols and the figurative language in order to find the internal logic that binds them together. Finally, the last step of the analysis was analyzing how the symbols and figurative language deliver the theme of the story.

The fourth step was drawing a conclusion by making a summary of all the findings and discoveries made in the analysis of the novel.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first part is the analysis on the symbols. The second part is the analysis on the figurative language. While the third part is the analysis on the theme.

#### A. Symbols

Throughout the whole story it can be seen that there are several significant symbols. These symbols are reflected through the name of the main characters, the setting, and the characters' actions and behaviours.

##### 1. Symbols reflected through the name of the main characters

The main characters of the novel are Humbert Humbert and Lolita. It is interesting to note that each of their names actually symbolizes the life they live, and also their characters. It is therefore important to analyze what lies behind their names in order to get a better understanding of the story. It is believed that their names are carefully chosen as one of the tools to represent the theme of the story.

##### a. Humbert Humbert

As the narrator of the story Humbert Humbert indulges the readers with vivid description and carefully recorded details of his obsession for Lolita. In the foreword of the novel it is stated that *Lolita* is a confession of a white widowed male that is Humbert Humbert himself. In *Lolita* Humbert Humbert confesses about his life before he met Lolita, his life with Lolita, and also his life after Lolita runaway. *Lolita* is a journal that records his fantasies, his desire, his state of mind, his feelings, and also his day-to-day reality of his life in relation to a very special girl child called Lolita. From all the





information that are gathered from this journal it can be seen that Humbert Humbert is a man that leads a double life, and that is what the name symbolizes. It is assumed that Nabokov purposefully repeats the name of the hero of the novel Humbert Humbert in order to symbolize the double life that Humbert Humbert leads. Although he does not have a multiple personality disorder, still it is evident that there are actually two Humberts inside one person. The first Humbert is the one he shows to the world while the second Humbert is the one he conceals from the world. To the world he is known as an educated man, a French scholar, a professor of literature, and a charming and respectable man. However, there is actually another Humbert that lies deep within him. This second Humbert is a man who creates his own world of illusions and illicit sexual desire where he nurtures his idea of nymphets and nymphet land. He, himself is conscious of his twofold nature,

No wonder, then, that my adult life during the European period of my existence proved monstrously twofold. Overtly, I had so-called normal relationships with a number of terrestrial woman having pumpkins or pears for breasts; inly I was consumed by hell furnace of localized lust for every passing nymphet whom as law-abiding poltroon I never dared approach (1997:18).

The first Humbert tries to lead a normal life by conforming to the society. He even gets married in order to make himself appear normal. This Humbert is sensible enough in a sense that he tries to control himself.

Humbert Humbert tried hard to be good. Really and truly, he did. He had the utmost respect for ordinary children, with their purity and vulnerability, and under no circumstances would he have interfered with the innocence of a child if there was the least risk of a row (1997:19).

However, he cannot deny that there exist a second Humbert who is much more complex than the first Humbert. There is a dangerous 'monster' lurking from beneath the charming appearance of Humbert Humbert, "But instead I am lanky, big boned, wooly-

cheded Humbert Humbert with thick black eyebrows and a queer accent, and a cesspoolful of rotting monsters behind his slow boyish smile” (1997:44).

This second Humbert is invisible to the society who can only see the first Humbert. This second Humbert lives in his own world where he can nurture his secret passion for girl children. He creates his private paradise unseen by the people around him who simply think that he is an ordinary man, and the foundation of the paradise that he creates is his desire for girl children whom he considers as nymphets, “I still dwelled deep in my elected paradise, a paradise whose skies were the color of hell-flames but still a paradise” (1997:166).

After interpreting the symbolic meaning of the name Humbert Humbert, it is also important to interpret the meaning behind Lolita’s real name.

#### **b. Dolores Haze**

Dolores Haze is Lolita’s full name. In order to determine what does the name symbolize it is important to explore the meaning of the name. The name Dolores comes from a Latin root ‘dolor’. In *Cassel’s New Compact Latin Dictionary* the word ‘dolor’ is defined as pain, physical or mental, especially disappointment and resentment. Another meaning of the word is the cause of sorrow. Meanwhile, her last name, Haze, according to *Merriam Websters Collegiate Dictionary* means vagueness of mind or mental perception. Those definitions can be related with one of the ways Humbert Humbert refers to her. On page 53 he refers to her as “my dolorous and hazy darling”. Therefore it can be interpreted that the name Dolores Haze symbolizes her characteristics; dolorous and hazy. Although Lolita often appears cheerful and energetic actually she is full of sadness, she is not as cheerful as she tries to show. Sadness has welled up inside her that she often burst into tears during the night, “...and her sobs in the night – every night,

every night – the moment I feigned sleep” (1997: 176). The reality that she has to experience is too heavy for her; after all she was only a child. She resented reality and this is shown by her often-cynical replies when she talks to Humbert Humbert. She is not happy and she is distressed by the situation, “...and where she asked, à propos de rien, how long did I think we were going to live in stuffy cabins, doing filthy things together and never behaving like ordinary people” (1997:158).

Lolita is dolorous, she is full of sorrow. She is also hazy, and this is reflected in her constant mood swings. In a trip around the States with Humbert Humbert Lolita's mood swings is very obvious. She often changes from being loud and cheerful into being sullen and evasive. Moreover she cannot focus her mind when she is involved in an activity. Her mind constantly changes, and this makes her gives up in the middle or quit altogether when she is engaged in one activity, “Oh, Lolita, you should be careful of those surrenders of yours. I remember you gave up Ramsdale for camp, and camp for a joyride, and I could list other abrupt changes in your disposition” (1997:209). By looking at the story as a whole the name Dolores Haze not only reflects Lolita's characteristics but also her sad and tragic life.

After the interpretation of the name Humbert Humbert and Dolores Haze, it is also important to see what do the settings symbolize.

## **2. Symbols reflected through the setting**

Other than the name of the main characters, it can be seen that the settings used in the story are also symbolical. The story has many different settings, especially because Humbert Humbert and Lolita travel extensively across the United States. They have visited many sites, and have stayed in many different accommodations. However, by looking at the story as a whole, it is believed that there are two significant settings that

are considered to be the means of delivering the theme of the story. Those two settings are the setting of lakes, and the setting of room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters hotel.

#### **a. The Lakes**

The Lakes function as symbols of sexual desires. Throughout the whole novel it can be seen that the setting of lakes is quite dominant. In the beginning of the novel there is a place called Our Glass Lake or Hourglass Lake. It is a lake near Ramsdale that Humbert Humbert wants to visit with Lolita, but the trips are continually cancelled by Mrs. Haze or bad weather. It can be interpreted that Humbert Humbert's sexual desires for Lolita is not fulfilled and difficult to be realized when he still lives in the Haze' House. Humbert Humbert also sees Charlotte as an obstacle for fulfilling his sexual desires and even though he marries her he has absolutely no desire for her, this is symbolized in his imagination of drowning Charlotte while they were both swimming on the lake (page 86).

Another setting of lakes is the lakes near Camp Q, where Lolita has her first sexual experience. There are two small lakes in the woods, which are called Onyx or Eryx, and finally there is a populated lake called Lake Climax. The two small lakes reflect the sexual desires of Lolita and Barbara; their desires are purely childish and are aroused more by curiosity rather than real desires. While Lake Climax symbolizes Charlie's sexual desire for the two girls because it is him that leads the two girls into their first sexual experiences. The name Climax itself is symbolical, it can be interpreted that it is called Lake Climax because it is Charlie's sexual desire that has caused Lolita to lose her innocence for the first time. Lolita's sexual experience with Charlie near Lake Climax can be seen as a turning point in Lolita's life. Because of this experience she catches a glimpse of an adult's life. Later on when she meets Humbert Humbert she is



very excited to show him about what she has experienced. Thus, it appears as if Lolita is the one who seduces Humbert Humbert, although actually with her child mind she does not fully 'comprehend' what she is doing.

She saw the stark act merely as part of a youngster's furtive world, unknown to adults. While eager to impress me with the world of tough kids, she was not quite prepared for certain discrepancies between a kid's life and mine (1997: 133-134).

There is another lake, which is located in front of the Enchanted Hunters (page 117), this symbolizes that Humbert Humbert's sexual desire for Lolita is getting closer towards fulfillment. Another significant lake in the novel is the one Humbert Humbert visualize in his mind. Humbert Humbert imagines that if he were to paint scenery it would consists of a lake.

There would have been a lake...there would have been poplars, apples, a suburban Sunday. There would have been a fire opal dissolving within a ripple-ringed pool, a last throb, a last dab of colour, stinging red, smarting pink, a sigh, a wincing child (1997:134-135).

It can be seen from the quotations above that a child enters the picture in his mind. Therefore the lake here symbolizes his sexual desire towards a child. It stresses the fact that he is madly obsessed by his sexual desire for girl child or nymphets in his own term.

Another setting that is also considered as a symbol in the story is the setting of Room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters hotel.

#### **b. The Setting of Room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters hotel**

Room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters is a significant place in the novel because the Enchanted Hunters is the first hotel that Humbert Humbert visits with Lolita. Meanwhile, room 342 is the place where he and Lolita had their first sexual intercourse. It can be said that what have happened in that room are the turning point in both Humbert Humbert's and Lolita's lives. The place is historical in terms of their journey together.



Even after she and Humbert moves to Beardsley Lolita still remembers that place. Out of the many hotels and motor courts that they visit, Lolita remembers that place in particular. While Humbert himself cannot bear visiting that place again, long after Lolita ran away, when his girlfriend Rita asks him to, “No – I felt I could not endure the throes of revisiting that lobby. There was much better possibility of retrievable time elsewhere in soft, rich-colored, autumnal Briceland” (1997:261). At one glance there is nothing outstanding about the place. However, when it is observed closely, it begins to be clear that the place actually symbolizes something in relation to Humbert Humbert and Lolita’s affair. Even the name of the hotel, *The Enchanted Hunters*, is symbolical. Throughout the course of the story, it can be seen that Humbert Humbert himself is an enchanted hunter. He is enchanted by Lolita’s charm and he uses all of his effort to pursue her, thus making Lolita an object to hunt.

It is important to note that the room number in that hotel is the same with the room number of the Hazes’ residence in Lawn street: 342. The occurrence of the same number in both places can be interpreted as a symbol of the double life that Humbert Humbert leads. In the Hazes’ house he is a different person, trying to be a loyal husband as well as a good stepfather, while in the hotel his true self as a ‘hunter’ is revealed. This idea of ‘double life’ can also be seen from the description of the room,

There was a double bed, a mirror, a double bed in the mirror, a closet door with mirror, a bathroom door ditto, a blue dark window, a reflected bed there, the same in the closet mirror, two chairs, a glass-topped table, two bedtables, a double bed, a big panel bed, to be exact, with a Tuscan rose chenille spread, and two frilled, pink-shaded nightlamps, left and right (1997: 119).

Most of the furnitures in that room are double. Not only that, since the room is full of mirrors, everything is reflected in the mirror, and also on the window-glass, thus everything becomes double. Again, this reflects that there are actually two Humberts

inside one person. On the one hand he is Humbert the 'nice' stepfather who picks up his daughter from camp while on the other hand he is the dangerous pedophilic, ready to debauch his victim. Thus, the setting of the room is symbolical when it is related to Humbert Humbert.

From another point of view, when related to Lolita, the room can also be considered as a symbol. The room is full of mirrors, thus the reflection of everything in that room can be seen in the mirror. When related to Lolita it can be said that Lolita is the mirror image of Annabel. Although they are different in appearance and Humbert Humbert does not consider Annabel as a nymphet, still his attraction towards girl-children is triggered by the sudden loss of Annabel, which happened in his childhood, "I am convinced, however, that in a certain magic and fateful way Lolita began with Annabel" (1997:13-14). Annabel is the girl Humbert Humbert is attracted to one summer in his past, near the splendid Hotel Mirana. Years later he is attracted to with a girl who bears a certain "Annableness" in her characteristics. There is a glimpse of Annabel in Lolita, thus making her the mirror image of Annabel, and this is what the room full of mirrors symbolizes.

The symbols in the story are not only reflected through the name of the main characters, and the setting, but they are also reflected through the characters' actions and behaviours.

## **2. Symbols reflected through the characters' actions and behaviours**

The character's actions and behaviours are also considered to be symbolical. In this case, the explanation is only focused on Lolita's actions and behaviours. However, it must be noted that Lolita's actions and behaviours are always related to Humbert Humbert, in one way or another. Therefore, although the focus is on Lolita, the

explanation about Humbert Humbert is also included. The reason why there is no independent section that talks about Humbert Humbert's actions and behaviours is because it is believed that Humbert Humbert's actions and behaviours hold no hidden meaning, since his intention to debauch Lolita can be plainly seen from his every movement. Meanwhile, Lolita's actions and behaviours tend to reveal much more than what they appear to be. The analysis about these symbols are divided into three sections: Lolita's eating an apple, Lolita's wearing only one sock, and Lolita's playing tennis.

#### **a. Lolita's eating an apple**

In the story the apple that Lolita eats symbolizes sexual temptation. It is a symbol alluded to the story about Eve in the garden of Eden which will be explained in the next section of this analysis. *Apple* is used repetitively in the story. Even from the very beginning when Humbert Humbert just arrives at the Hazes' House the word apple is already used to describe the temptation to seduce Lolita that stirs Humbert Humbert's heart, "Saw Dolores taking things off a clothesline in the apple-green light behind the house" (1997:41). The apple-green light used in the quotations above implies that Humbert Humbert begins to be sexually tempted. The light is apple-green, which describes the color reflected by the light behind the house: Lolita is within the light, and it is as if a spotlight is shone on her. She is the object of the sexual temptation; it is the beginning of the revelation that Humbert Humbert's desire is directed to her.

As the story develops, apple as a symbol for sexual temptation becomes more evident, "...she had painted her lips and was holding in her hollowed hands a beautiful, banal, Eden-red apple" (1997:58). On the lines following the description above it is described that Lolita sat next to Humbert and begins to play with the apple, which is then called 'her glossy fruit', by tossing it up into the air and catch it. The existence of the

apple, which is described as *beautiful*, *banal*, and *Eden-red* gives an emphasis on how seductive Lolita appears before Humbert Humbert's eyes. Her innocent action of playing with the fruit stirs Humbert Humbert's manhood and makes him sexually tempted. Another line mentioned that Lolita was musical and apple-sweet (1997:59). Again this strengthens the fact that she is sexually tempting for Humbert Humbert.

Other than Lolita's action of eating an apple, her behaviour of wearing only one sock is also considered to be symbolical.

#### **b. Lolita's wearing only one sock**

In one of his very first descriptions of Lolita, Humbert Humbert mentions that she is wearing one sock instead of a pair of socks. "She was Lo, plain Lo in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock". The description is followed by another description of Lolita, "She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita" (1997: 9). By observing the description given above it can be seen that there are different versions of Lolita, even though to Humbert Humbert she is always the same. Among many of her characteristics Lolita's wearing one sock is mentioned first, showing that it is a very significant and specific aspect of her that Humbert Humbert wants to point out. When Lolita is standing in one sock, she is just Lo, plain Lo, which means that she is her true self despite the many different versions she shows to the world. Despite her trying to be a normal girl at school, her often snappy and cynical comment during conversations, her trying to act like real adult, and her reluctant submission to Humbert Humbert's control, she is simply just a child, a mere child, with one leg covered with a sock, while the other one is bare. Actually both of her two legs should be covered, not just one, thus, her wearing only one sock symbolizes her incomplete life. There is something missing in her life, and that is

genuine love and affection, a loving protection that a child her age deserves. During his first tour around the Haze house Humbert Humbert notices a white sock on the floor, this being presumably Lolita's missing sock, neglected and abandoned on the floor. Again, it can be interpreted that it symbolizes genuine and pure love that she fails to receive. Humbert Humbert showers her with presents, gives her a sufficient amount of cash for her allowance but it was all done to fulfill his desire for her, thus she fails to receive unconditional love, parental love that is essential for her psychological development as a child.

Lolita's wearing only one sock can also be interpreted as a symbol for Lolita's double role. There are two roles that she has to play in her daily life. One leg is covered with a sock, showing that she is an innocent child. She is a plain 12 years old girl that still likes to do the activities that most children her age love to do. For example she likes to play hopscotch, and she often indulges herself by reading comic books and magazines where she can see her handsome movie idols. On the other hand, her other leg is not covered, showing that despite her tender age unfortunate situation forces her to play a role as an adult; as a mistress whose role is to fulfill Humbert Humbert's desire. She is a plain child, a cheerful and easy going school girl. However, she is also Humbert Humbert's 'chained' seductress. She is trapped in the dark world of a pedophilic that sexually abuses her, takes advantage of her innocence and exploits her.

Apart from Lolita's behaviour of wearing only one sock, her action of playing tennis is also considered to be symbolical.

### **c. Lolita's playing tennis**

In the second part of the story, it is mentioned repeatedly that Humbert Humbert is trying to make Lolita like tennis. He tries to teach her himself, he hires a tennis coach



for her, and he keeps encouraging her to play tennis. Later on, through his own confession it is found out that seeing her play tennis produces sexual pleasures for him,

But all that was nothing, absolutely nothing, to the indescribable itch of rapture that her tennis game produced in me – the teasing delirious feeling of the teetering on the very brink of unearthly order and splendor (1997:230).

Thus, it gives a hint that the tennis game means something more than just a chosen sport for Lolita to play. It can be seen that from page 231 to 236 Humbert Humbert gave a detailed description about Lolita's tennis game. His descriptions actually have hidden meaning. When the story is observed as a whole it can be interpreted that the game of tennis actually represents Humbert Humbert's sexual life with Lolita. Through his descriptions of Lolita's tennis game there are three things that became evident: the reasons behind his sexual desires for Lolita, the sex itself (the sexual intercourse that they have), and Lolita's reaction towards the sex.

When he was still a preadolescent Humbert Humbert and his girlfriend Annabel enjoyed competitive tennis games, they had played tennis together, and 24 years later Humbert Humbert is trying to make Lolita learn to play tennis so that he can play tennis with her. Lolita in a way is the re-incarnation of Annabel, "And that little girl with her seaside limbs and ardent tongue haunted me ever since – until at last, twenty four years later, I broke her spell by incarnating her in another" (1997:15). Humbert Humbert had fallen madly in love with Annabel and her sudden death has created hollowness inside him, until he met Lolita. Humbert Humbert never gets a chance to see Annabel grows up. So, the only vivid image he has of her is her image as a girl-child, and he tries to re-live that image in Lolita. The tennis game in this case represents the sexual experience that Humbert Humbert tries to relive. He had played tennis in Annabel, meaning he had experienced sex with Annabel. Even though it was not actually a sexual intercourse but

they had been involved sexually, “Her legs, her lovely live legs, were not too close together, and when my hand located what it sought, a dreamy and eerie expression, half-pleasure, half-pain, came over those childish features” (1997:14).

From page 14 to 15 Humbert Humbert describes his sexual experience with Annabel. He can freely describes the sexual experience since that time they were both children. Since Lolita is a minor it would be too vulgar to reveal his sexual experience with her in a blunt way, and that is why the tennis game is used as a symbol. One of the examples can be seen in the quotation below,

The exquisite clarity of all her movements had its auditory counterpart in the pure ringing sound of her every stroke. The ball when it entered her aura of control became somehow whiter, its resilience somehow richer, and the instrument of precision she used upon it seemed inordinately prehensile and deliberate at the moment of clinging contact (1997: 231).

By using the tennis game Humbert Humbert is actually describing about his experience of having sex with Lolita. For him she bears a certain charm, and her every movement when they are having sex is exquisite. He is under her control when they are having sex because he is like an addict who craves for sexual pleasures, which can only be given by her. Lolita uses this fact as a way of obtaining bigger allowance, often she would not give him what he wants until he raises her allowance, thus, he is in her control in a way,

And she proved to be a cruel negotiator whenever it was in her power to deny me certain life-wrecking, strange, slow paradisaal philters without which I could not live more than a few days in a row, and which, because of the very nature of love's languor, I could not obtain by force (1997:184).

Tennis game is reciprocal. It requires a partner, someone who can return the ball back. Humbert Humbert is trying to make Lolita enjoy the sex. He wants her to be able to experience the sexual pleasures that he feels. However, for Lolita the sexual life with Humbert is like a game, at first she seduces Humbert out of the desire to impress him

with what she had learned in her summer camp (the sex she had with Charlie), without realizing what it meant for Humbert Humbert,

While eager to impress me with the world of tough kids, she was not quite prepared for certain discrepancies between a kid's life and mine. Pride alone prevented her from giving up; for, in my strange predicament, I feigned supreme stupidity and had her have her way – at least while I could still bear it (1997:134).

For innocent Lolita, sex is but a game of pretending to be an adult, although she herself considers it as something real, “Her tennis was the highest point to which I can imagine a young creature bringing the art of make-believe, although I dare say, for her it was the very geometry of basic reality” (1997: 231). Lolita adores trying to act like an adult, as many other young pre-teens and teenage girls do. Still, sex with an older man requires her highest efforts of trying to act like an adult, because despite her mature way of talking she is still a child. She herself dislikes the sex and does it only because it is the day-to-day reality that she has to face since she has no other choice but to live with Humbert Humbert.

Other than the symbols, figurative language are also used as a means of delivering the theme.

### **B. Figurative Language**

There are three types of figurative language that are discussed in this part. Those three are metaphor, simile, and allusion. The discussion on the metaphor and simile is combined together since they are similar to each other. It is strongly believed that the figurative language used in the novel is very essential towards the development of the theme of the story. Understanding the meaning of the figurative language used in the story is important in order to see how the figurative language help to deliver the theme of the story.

## 1. Metaphors and Similes

The discussion about metaphors and similes in this section is divided into two categories: the metaphors and similes that are used to describe Humbert Humbert and the metaphors and similes that are used to describe Lolita.

### a. Metaphors and Similes that are used to describe Lolita

In the story, Humbert Humbert compares Lolita with many things. She is considered to be his pet, and she is also considered to be like a ghost of natural colors. However, among the many metaphors and similes that are used to describe her, there are two whose meaning are significant in presenting the theme of the story, namely the comparison between Lolita and nymphet, and the comparison between Lolita and Boticelli's russet Venus.

#### (i) Lolita vs Nymphet

The most significant metaphor that is prevalent all throughout the story is the metaphor that compares Lolita with a nymphet. This metaphor is used repeatedly in the story. An example of such metaphor can be seen in the following sentence, "The passion I had developed for that nymphet – for the first nymphet in my life that could be reached at last by my awkward, aching, timid claws" (1997: 56). From the metaphor it can be seen that Humbert Humbert views Lolita not as an ordinary girl child but as a kind of special charming creature called nymphet. In order to understand this metaphor it is best to look at the definition of nymphet according to *Grolier Encyclopedia of Knowledge*,

Nymphets or Nymphs, in Greek and Roman mythology, were female nature spirits who were associated with such natural phenomena as seas, rivers, mountains, woods, meadows, and caves, as well as with specific localities. Young and beautiful, these mortal creatures figured frequently in myth, sometimes as the love objects of the Olympian god Apollo or of various nature deities. Although characteristically gentle and benevolent, nymphs could also be vengeful and destructive (1993:18).



Referring to the definition above and comparing it with the description of Lolita in the story, three similarities between Lolita and nymphets can be found. First, nymphets are young and beautiful creatures. To Humbert Humbert Lolita also possesses these two characteristics. She was only twelve years old when he met her and for him she possesses a certain kind of charm, a rare beauty. Since the first time he met her, her charming appearance has attracted him, "...the vacuum of my soul managed to suck in every detail of her bright beauty" (1997:39). In his eyes Lolita is so beautiful that he gets a certain thrill and excitement just by looking at her. Besides her beauty what makes him attracted to her is her young, fresh, and vibrant characteristics.

Humbert Humbert is a paedophilic and for him girl children are 'magical' creatures. However not all of them are nymphets, nymphets are only his chosen ones. He develops certain characteristics of nymphets in his mind, and Lolita falls into his category of being a nymphet,

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" (1997:16).

To Humbert Humbert Lolita becomes the first nymphet that he has ever managed to come close to. Before Lolita the closest he ever gets to a girl child or girl children is just by watching them in the public park, but now, at last he manages to have physical contact with what he considers as true nymphet. He managed to sit close with her (Lolita), and even managed to touch and caress her in the Haze house, by pretending that all he does are innocent acts, "I gestured in the merciful dark and took advantage of those invisible gestures of mine to touch her hand, her shoulder..."(1997:45).

Second, nymphets are the love objects of Apollo or of various nature deities while Lolita is the love object of Humbert Humbert. Lolita as Humbert Humbert's love



object in this case means that she is the object of his lust, his obsession, and his sexual fantasy. He pictures himself as an enchanted traveler, moreover as an enchanted hunter and Lolita is the object that he pursues. Her every movement becomes important for him. He keeps a record of what she does and he treasures every chance he could get to touch her. Lolita's vibrant beauty and youth are his ecstasy, "In the possession and thralldom of a nymphet the enchanted traveler stands, as it were, beyond happiness" (1997:166). From the quotation, it is evident that since Lolita has become his love object, he is possessed and enslaved by his 'love' for her.

Throughout the story it can be seen that his every action and his every thought is directed towards fulfilling his lust for her. Other than that, there are many evidences that show that Lolita is his love object. The first evidence is that he showers her with presents, just to amuse her and keep her in a good mood. He buys trunks of clothes for her, and all sorts of other stuff that he thinks she would like. Most of chapter 33 in the first part of the novel contains the list of stuff that he bought for her.

The second evidence is that he is addicted to her, he craves for her touch, and very thirsty for the pleasure that only she can give him, "I would shed all my pedagogic restraint, dismiss all our quarrels, forget all my masculine pride and literally crawl on my knees to your chair, my Lolita!" (1997:192). Lolita is his love object, his source of pleasure and he depends on her to keep providing him with that pleasure.

The third evidence is that he becomes possessively jealous towards her. He is jealous when he saw her talk to strangers, when he saw a boy walks her home from school, he is even jealous when she gave her friendly smiles to shopkeepers or the gas station attendant. He creates all sorts of rules to prevent her from going out and meeting boys. In the later chapters it is noticeable that he becomes somewhat paranoid because of

his jealousy. He keeps thinking that she is betraying him, the moment she was out of sight he thought that she has left him for good. The worst of his jealousy can be seen on chapter 16 in the second part of the novel, when he makes love to her rudely and violently because he is madly jealous, although he has no prove of her infidelity, "Wildly, I pursued the shadow of her infidelity, but the scent I traveled upon was so slight as to be practically undistinguishable from a madman's fancy" (1997:213). All those evidences show that Lolita has become Humbert Humbert's love object. That is why Lolita is being considered the same as the nymphet that becomes the love object of Apollo or of various nature deities.

Third, nymphets and Lolita have twofold natures. As stated before, although nymphets are characteristically gentle and benevolent they can be vengeful and destructive, this is also true for Lolita. At certain times she can be very sweet and cheerful but at other times she can be very cynical and defiant. Lolita's twofold natures are best described by the following quotation, "A combination of naïveté and deception, of charm and vulgarity, of blue sulks and rosy mirth, Lolita, when she chose, could be a most exasperating brat" (1997:147-148). Her twofold natures are also shown by her moodswings. She can be very excited about a certain thing for a moment but then she can become listless and considers the thing to be dull and boring the next moment. When she wants something or when she tries to negotiate with Humbert Humbert to get what she wants she can be very sweet and obedient. But at other times she can be rude and pretty violent, shouting dirty words at Humbert Humbert, and gave him rude cynical reply when he has conversation with her. To Humbert Humbert, Lolita is a nymphet because she has twofold natures; she gives him pleasure and pain at the same time. Lolita gives him sexual pleasures that he craves for, but she also gives him pain because there are times

when he cannot control her behaviour. He cannot stop her terrible fits of moodiness and he is tortured by his jealousy and his fear of losing her. He knows that there are two sides of Lolita, yet he still cherish her because to him she is paradise,

Despite our tiffs, despite her nastiness, despite all the fuss and faces she made, and the vulgarity, and the danger, and the horrible hopelessness of it all, I still dwelled deep in my elected paradise – a paradise whose skies were the color of hell-flames but still a paradise (1997:166).

Another simile that is used to describe Lolita is the simile that compares her with

Boticelli's Russet Venus.

### (ii) Lolita vs Botticelli's Russet Venus

Apart from being considered as a nymph, Lolita is also considered to be like Botticelli's russet Venus. This is shown by the simile below,

Curious: although actually her looks had faded, I definitely realized, so hopelessly late in the day, how much she looked – had always looked like Botticelli's russet Venus – the same soft nose, the same blurred beauty (1997:270).

Lolita's beauty is being compared with the beauty of Venus in Botticelli's painting. The birth of Venus, a painting by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) depicts a modest Venus rising from the sea on a pastel-pink shell. Botticelli himself is one of the most important and individual figures of the late fifteenth-century Florentine school. According to the *Encyclopedia of Painting*, Botticelli's painting is lyrical and graceful. He had a tendency to draw slightly melancholy figures in which detailed anatomy is sacrificed for smooth, linear elegance, in their unreal and tapestry-like, flower-studded setting, and in their youthful and sensuous exuberance. *The Birth of Venus* was painted in 1478. It was one of the two large panels for which he is best known, the other one is the *Primavera* (Spring). These works represent a flowering of secular humanist spirit, and frank and open use of figures from classical mythology.

The colour of Venus in Botticelli's painting is dominated by yellowish and reddish brown colour. That is why it is called russet. The beauty of Venus is somewhat blurred, giving a sense of mystery and arousing curiosity to look at it longer and closer. Botticelli painted the goddess of love and beauty based on his free interpretation and imagination of her, for no one truly knows what Venus really look like, since she only exists in myths. By comparing Lolita with Boticelli's Venus it can be understood that actually Lolita's beauty exists only in Humbert Humbert's mind. He perceives Lolita as being truly beautiful, while the people around her may not have the same perception. It seems that Humbert Humbert has overrated Lolita's beauty. Just as Botticelli painted Venus based on his own imagination that is how Humbert Humbert paints Lolita in his mind. In his mind there is already a fixed picture of Lolita, and it can be interpreted that it is based on his imagination and not the actual reality. Even though (based on the description given about her) Lolita is not ugly, still, Humbert Humbert description about her beauty seems to be exaggerated. What may appear to be an ordinary school-girl to a normal man may appear as an absolutely gorgeous girl who possesses magnificent beauty to Humbert Humbert. As Humbert Humbert himself has stated in his journal, that only an artist and a madman that can discern the beauty of a nymphet, or that can be able to perceive the beauty of a girl child, a specific girl child that has stolen his heart and driven him crazy. Only a creature of infinite melancholy like himself can truly see her beauty,

A normal man given a group photograph of school girls or Girl Scouts and asked to point out the comeliest one will not necessarily choose the nymphet among them. You have to be an artist and a madman, a creature of infinite melancholy, with a bubble of hot poison in your loins and a super-voluptuous flame permanently aglow in your subtle spine.....she stands unrecognized by them and unconscious herself of her fantastic power (1997:17).



In order to understand the metaphor more, it is necessary to refer to the description of Venus according to the Greek mythology. In the Greek mythology, Venus, who is also known as Aphrodite is the goddess of love and beauty, who beguiled all, gods and men alike. In her book, *Mythology*, Edith Hamilton (1961:32,33) explained that Venus is the laughter-loving goddess who laughed sweetly or mockingly at those her wiles had conquered; she is the irresistible goddess who stole away the wits of the wise. She is said to have sprung from the foam of the sea and her name was explained as meaning "the foam-risen". Aphros is foam in Greek. One of the Homeric Hymns refers to her as "beautiful, golden, goddess". With her, beauty comes. Without her there is no joy nor loveliness anywhere. This is the picture the poets like best to paint of her. However, Venus has another side too. In later poems she is usually shown as treacherous and malicious, exerting a deadly and destructive power over men. In most of the stories she is the wife of Hephaestus (Vulcan) the lame and ugly god of the forge.

By looking at the descriptions above there are certain similarities between Venus and Lolita. Like Venus, Lolita is the goddess of love and beauty for Humbert Humbert. Even though she is under his control, however, in a way she is the one who controls him,

She proved to be a cruel negotiator whenever it was in her power to deny me certain life-wrecking, strange; slow paradisaal philters without which I could not live more than a few days in a row, and which, because of the very nature of love's languor, I could not obtain by force (1997:184).

As a paedophilic Humbert Humbert is addicted to Lolita. For him she provides what he called 'paradisaal philters'. He is thrall'd by his passions, and enslaved by his desires for her. In a way Lolita knew that she can 'use' him to get what she wanted. She can refuse to perform her 'duties' unless he raises her allowance, allows her to join the school play, or let her have a party with her friends. The explanation above is meant to show that like



Venus, Lolita also has a bad side even though in this case her bad side can be seen as a reaction or an effect of what he had done to her.

Venus is the irresistible goddess who stole away the wits of the wise. This is also true of Lolita. She has made Humbert Humbert becomes foolish, and she easily deceits him when she plots to runaway and leaves him to pieces whe she disappears from his life forever. Humbert Humbert is fooled by his obsession,

But I was weak, I was not wise, my school-girl nymphet had me in thrall. With the human element dwindling, the passion, the tenderness, and the torture only increased; and of this she took advantage (1997:183).

It is said that without Venus there is no joy nor loveliness anywhere. This is actually how Humbert Humbert feels when Lolita is no longer with him. In despair he tried to trace her but to no avail. His life from that moment became miserable.

Venus or Aphrodite is said to have sprung from the foam of the sea. Figuratively speaking, Lolita can also be said to have sprung from the foam of the sea, because Humbert Humbert's passion for her has emerged as a result of his incomplete childhood romance with Annabel and that romance has taken place by the sea. Thus, it can be said that Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita had sprung from the leftover memories about Annabel, and the sea-side affair he had with her.

In the myths, Venus is the wife of Vulcan, the lame and ugly god of the forge. This is also similar to Lolita's relationship with Humbert Humbert. In a way her relationship with him is like marriage, she is attached to him and cannot let go. They are not compatible to each other just like Venus is not compatible with Vulcan. It seems outrageous that Venus who is the goddess of beauty must relate with Vulcan who is lame and ugly. This same outrageousness is also true for Humbert Humbert and Lolita's

relationship, it is sickening that Lolita who is only twelve must relate with the middle-aged pedophilic Humbert Humbert.

Thus, by studying this simile, there are three things that can be understood: how Humbert Humbert pictures Lolita in his mind, how deep his obsession for her is, how his passion developed in the first place, and how outrageous the relationship is.

Other than finding the meaning and significance of the metaphors and similes that describe Lolita, finding the meaning and significance of the metaphors and similes that describe Humbert Humbert is also necessary, in order to find the central idea that binds them together.

#### **b. Metaphors and Similes that are used to describe Humbert Humbert**

In the story, Nabokov not only use metaphors and similes to describe Lolita, but also to describe Humbert Humbert. Humbert Humbert as one of the main characters is being compared to an enchanted hunter, a spider, and an ape.

##### **(i) Humbert Humbert the Enchanted Hunter**

Among many metaphors/similes that are used to describe Humbert Humbert, the one that compares him with an enchanted hunter is the most significant, “Oh miserly Hamburg! Was he not a very enchanted hunter as he deliberated with himself over his boxful fo magic ammunition?” (1997:109). The metaphor gives a clear description of Humbert Humbert’s position in his relationship with Lolita. The metaphor compares him with an enchanted hunter that has a boxful of magic ammunition. By looking at the story as a whole it is obvious that Humbert Humbert is indeed ‘a hunter’ while Lolita is the object that he pursues, and in order to capture her he has prepared a boxful of ‘magic ammunition’. From the very first moment he arrived in the Haze House, Humbert Humbert has been enchanted by Lolita’s charm, “The vacuum of my soul managed to

suck in every detail of her bright beauty, and these I checked against the features of my dead bride” (1997:39).

Humbert Humbert is enchanted by Lolita because of the striking similarities she has with Annabel. The moment he saw Lolita, he cannot help but comparing her with Annabel, and as a result Lolita brings back the memories he had about Annabel,

It was the same child – the same frail, honey-hued shoulders, the same silky supple bare back, the same chestnut head of hair. A polka-dotted black kerchief tied around her chest hid from my aging ape eyes, but not from the gaze of young memory, the juvenile breasts I had fondled one immortal day (1997:39).

His encounter with Lolita has brought back the sparks of passion that he once felt for Annabel. Humbert Humbert wants to experience again the tenderness, the pleasure, and the warm glittering excitement of fondling and caressing a girl-child the way he had fondled and caressed Annabel. From that moment Lolita becomes a desirable object to fulfill his mad obsession for a girl child. Lolita becomes his distant golden goal and in his mind he carefully knitted a plan to capture her.

There are several characteristics of a hunter that are similar to Humbert Humbert. A hunter normally hunts silently in order not to surprise the victim. In the story it can be seen that Humbert Humbert managed to disguise his desire for Lolita. His act of touching her is always done in a discreet kind of way as if he had not done it deliberately. No one ever finds out how much pleasure he gets by having her sit on his lap or just by touching her in a simple and seemingly innocent kind of way. At least not until Charlotte reads his journal. Other than that, a hunter usually sets a trap to capture the object he/she hunts. In the story, Humbert Humbert tries to trap Lolita by opening the door of his study so that she feels curious to enter. Moreover, he pretends to pay attention to the bruises she has on her thighs while actually what he wanted to do were touching them. He likes to joke

around with her to get one or two chances to stroke her without her ever knowing of his intention,

And every movement she made, every shuffle and ripple, helped me to conceal and to improve the secret system of tactile correspondence between beast and beauty – between my gagged, bursting beast and the beauty of her dimpled body, in its innocent cotton frock (1997:59).

By looking at the story as a whole it can be seen that there are three things that Humbert Humbert has used as ‘magic ammunitions’ to capture Lolita. First, he has used his status as her stepfather. The fact that Charlotte Haze had fallen in love with him is an advantage for him. By marrying Charlotte he will have more chances to be with Lolita, and when by chance Charlotte had an accident his plan to capture Lolita becomes more smooth. As Lolita’s guardian for the time being, he can take her anywhere he wants. He has also used his status to be in the same hotel room with her since after all he is her father.

His second ammunition is the stuff he has bought for her. He has given her all the stuffs that a girl her age dreams of having; new clothes, sunglasses, roller-skates, a portable radio set, and all sorts of other things. Basically he showers her with everything she wants. This is done for the purpose of getting her attention, and it functions as some kind of bribe so that she would do what he asks her to.

He has also used Lolita’s innocence as his magic ammunition. That is his third ammunition. As a child Lolita has absolutely no idea how things work out in the adult world. As an adult Humbert Humbert has taken advantage of her innocence. Lolita admires Humbert Humbert in a childish way. There is nothing serious in her affectionate action towards him. When she deliberately kissed Humbert Humbert after he picked her from camp, she has done it childishly and innocently, and Humbert Humbert realizes it,

“I knew, of course, it was but an innocent game on her part, a bit of backfish foolery in imitation of some simulacrum of fake romance” (1997:113). He realizes that Lolita is still an innocent child, however, the knowledge does not stop him from fulfilling his plan yet it encourages him even more to debauch her. He knows that Lolita’s innocent mind will make it easier for him to debauch her.

An example of how he has used Lolita’s innocence can be seen when they had dinner in the Enchanted Hunters. When he plans to give Lolita a sleeping pill, he has told her that it was vitamin, and Lolita’s innocent curiosity had made her try that pill,

“Blue!” she exclaimed. “Violet blue. What are they made of?”

...

Lolita stretched out her hand, nodding vigorously (1997:122).

In the next morning, when Lolita wants to show off about her sexual experience in camp, Humbert Humbert had also taken advantage of her innocence. He has considered her acts as something very fortunate because then he does not have to try so hard to seduce her since she is the one who came on to him on the first place. Instead of stopping her as a normal man would, he has used the situation to fulfill his desire for her,

While eager to impress me with the world of tough kids, she was not quite prepared for certain discrepancies between a kid’s life and mine. Pride alone prevented her from giving up; for in my strange predicament, I feigned supreme stupidity and had her have her way – at least while I could still bear it (1997:134).

Other than that, by taking advantage of Lolita’s innocence, Humbert Humbert has successfully terrorized her by exerting the idea of how horrible her life would be if she tells the police what they had done together. Thus, Lolita is trapped under his power. As an enchanted hunter Humbert Humbert has successfully managed to use all his magic ammunitions to capture Lolita.





After observing the meaning of the metaphor that compares Humbert Humbert with an enchanted hunter, it is important to observe the meaning of the simile that compares him with a spider.

**(ii) Humbert Humbert the Spider**

Besides being compared with an enchanted hunter Humbert Humbert is also being compared with a spider, this can be seen in the simile on page 49, "I am like one of those inflated pale spiders you see in old gardens. Sitting in the middle of a luminous web and giving little jerks to this or that strand" (1997:49). In order to understand this simile, it is best to observe the description and characteristics of a spider as stated in the *Columbia Encyclopedia* (2003:1048). According to the encyclopedia, a spider is an organism, mostly terrestrial, of the class Arachnida, order Araneae, with four pairs of legs and a two-part body consisting of a cephalotorax, or prosoma, and an unsegmented abdomen, or opisthosoma. The cephalotorax is covered by a shield, or carapace and bears eight simple eyes. By looking at this first description about spider and relating it with Humbert Humbert it can be interpreted that figuratively speaking Humbert Humbert has 'many eyes' and 'many legs'. Interpreted further, this may mean that he is paying close attention to Lolita and he observes carefully every movement she makes. Not only that, he is very mobile in his movement of approaching her. Since the moment he arrives in the Hazes' House Humbert Humbert has paid close attention to Lolita. The daily entries in his journal always begin with the details of what Lolita does, what she wears that day, and any specific action that is particularly important for him to note. He has optimally made use of his eyes and legs to observe the object of his desire: his eyes to watch her, and his legs to follow her movement.

However, that is not the only reason why a spider is used to compare Humbert Humbert with. In order to explore this simile more it is important to refer to what Foelix (1982:18-19) wrote in his book *Biology of Spiders*; he stated that a spider have two pairs of appendages on the other side of the head, with which the spider captures and paralyzes its prey, injecting into it venom produced in the poison glands. The spider then liquefies the tissues of the prey with a digestive fluid and sucks this broth into its stomach where it may be stored in a digestive gland. Just as a spider may capture and paralyze its prey (by injecting venom to it before digesting it), so is Humbert Humbert. In the first part of the story his master plan was to capture and paralyze Lolita, whom he considers as his prey, "The bathroom door has just slammed, so one has to feel elsewhere about the house for the beautiful warm-colored prey" (1997:49). He has refer to her as his beautiful warm-colored prey, that sentence effectively describes that she is the object of his fatal lust. Like a spider Humbert Humbert is waiting to inject his venom to his prey. He is waiting to finally enjoy Lolita sexually.

The spider may digest its prey by liquefying its tissues, so that nothing is left of the prey. Similarly, Humbert Humbert wants to 'digest' Lolita, he wants to 'use' her to satisfy his desire. When the story as a whole is observed, especially part II of the story, it shows that Humbert Humbert has used her to the max, so that figuratively speaking nothing is left of her. He has made her perform her duties to him every single day, be it sexual intercourse or other types of sexual acts. Lolita's freedom as a child is lost under his power. She must always obey whenever he needs her to fulfill his lust.

In his book *How to Know the Spiders*, Kaston (1978:23-25) stated that a spider owns three pairs of spinnerets toward the tip of the abdomen. These organs produce protein-containing fluids that harden as they are drawn out to form silk threads. Several

kinds of silk glands and spinnerets produce different kinds of silk used variously for constructing cocoons or egg sacs, spinning webs, and binding prey; other light strands are spun out for ballooning or floating. One important fact that needs to be highlighted from the description above is that one of the functions of the spider's silk strands is to bind the prey. While inflating its body to make the prey attracted to it, the spider produces strands of silk to trap the prey. One of the ways that Humbert Humbert uses to trap Lolita is by leaving the door to his study open and pretending to write something on a paper so that Lolita is curious to watch what he is doing and then approaches him. That is the reason why Humbert Humbert compares himself with a spider that produces silk strands that are spread all around the house, always alert and ready to trap its prey, "My web is spread all over the house as I listen from my chair where I sit like a wily wizard. Is Lo in her room? Gently I tug on the silk. She is not" (1997:49).

Lolita's whereabouts always are Humbert Humbert's main concern so that he can figure out what moves he can make to attract her attention. The spider's action of producing silk strands can be interpreted as Humbert Humbert's ways of trying to capture/get Lolita into his aura of control. When his action is successful he compares it with a prismatic weave of silk strands but when it is not successful he compares it with an old gray cob-web (1997:50). Thus, the simile that compares him with a spider show his cruel intention and illicit sexual desire for Lolita. It also emphasizes his active movements of trying to be close to her, since he has hidden lust for her. As spider produces different kinds of silk Humbert Humbert also use different kind of action in trying to capture Lolita whom he considers as his warm-colored prey.

The last metaphor that is used to describe Humbert Humbert is the metaphor that compares him with an ape.

### **(iii) Humbert Humbert the Ape**

An Ape is another animal with which Humbert Humbert is being compared to. The ones that are particularly/specifically mentioned are that he has ape eyes and ape paws, as shown by the following metaphor, "A polka dotted black kerchief tied around her chest hid from my aging ape eyes" (1997:39), and also another metaphor, "She placed her trembling little hand in my ape paw" (1997:213). As has been known, an ape like any other types of primate bears the closest resemblance with human beings. However, no matter how close the resemblance is, an ape is still governed by animal instinct and not blessed with conscience like human. An ape may seem like a friendly hairy animal but they can actually be wild and dangerous. It can be interpreted that actually what the two metaphors wanted to show is that even though Humbert Humbert may appear 'human-enough' like any other normal man actually he is governed by an animal instinct, that is why he cannot control his illicit lust towards Lolita. Even though he appears as a charming adorable scholar he is actually dangerous because he is governed by his sexual desire. Beneath his friendly appearance lurks a paedophilic waiting to debauch his victim.

It is believed that the use of an ape's hands and eyes in each of the metaphor has specific purposes. Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to the characteristics of primate which is compiled by Brian Schwimmer from the University of Manitoba, (1996:1-3). According to Schwimmer, an ape as a type of primate has basic arboreal adaptation, especially to tropical forests, although some species have become terrestrial. It has excellent manual dexterity, well-developed sense of sight, and good hand-eye coordination, its cerebral cortex is highly organized, involving a dependence upon learned behaviour. An ape is considered as a smart animal who has many characteristics similar to human. An ape's hands are prehensile with opposable thumbs, and they are adapted for precision grip. They have tactile pads and nails on fingers and toes; facilitating feeding and locomotion in the trees. Meanwhile, its eyes have binocular vision, and colour vision.



By studying the characteristics of an ape above, there are two reasons why Humbert Humbert is being compared with an ape. First, an ape has mobile hands and prehensile hands with the length of its hands being longer than its body. An ape's posture frees arms and hands for grasping. Therefore, the statement that Humbert Humbert has ape hands can be interpreted as having a purpose of saying that Humbert Humbert likes to touch Lolita. As stated on page 67, "the hollow of my hand was still ivory-full of Lolita". Humbert Humbert has gained sexual pleasure by touching her, and 'touching' here refers to the sexual act of touching. He is particularly fond of touching Lolita's breasts because her breasts remind him of Annabel's juvenile breasts he once fondled. On page 274, Humbert Humbert marks Lolita's breasts as having look like Venus' Florentine breasts in Botticelli's painting. Therefore, the metaphor that compares Humbert Humbert with an ape emphasizes the fact that one of the ways Humbert Humbert use to gain sexual pleasure is by touching Lolita. Moreover, since figuratively speaking he has strong, mobile, and prehensile ape hands then Lolita is always within his reach. Being a child as she is Lolita as the victim of abuse cannot go anywhere as she is always within Humbert Humbert's control (that is until she plotted an escape) however before the escape she has been abused for approximately three years.

Second, an ape has binocular and colour vision. Binocular vision means that an ape's vision is capable of making distant objects seem nearer. Thus, it can be interpreted that Lolita appears 'closer' to Humbert Humbert. That is why he records every single detail of her appearance that any other person may normally miss or consider unimportant to note. As he stated on page 39, "the vacuum of my soul managed to suck in every detail of her bright beauty". Since he is obsessed with her, he sees her in details. He notices every single detail of her physical appearance. Ape also has colour vision,



which is a unique characteristic because most animals do not have this. Logically, colourful things are more attractive than colourless ones. Having ape eyes Humbert Humbert sees Lolita in full colours, she appears attractive to him, making her a fanciful object for him to pursue. Thus, by using the metaphor the author manages to emphasize how obsessed Humbert Humbert is with Lolita. Other than that it also emphasize that Humbert Humbert is governed by his instinct and not by his conscience.

Besides metaphors and similes, a type of figurative language that is also used in the novel is allusion.

## **2. Allusion**

There are several allusions in the novel but the most significant ones in relation to the theme are the allusion of Catullus, and the allusion of Eve in the garden of Eden. In this section the two allusions are explored in order to find out their function in the story and also the effect that they produce.

### **a. The Allusion of Catullus**

The name Catullus, a Latin poet who lived approximately from 84-54 BC, is mentioned on the following sentence, “You will go there, Lolita – *my* Lolita, *this* Lolita will leave her Catullus and go there, as the wayward girl you are” (1997:151). The sentence mentions that Humbert Humbert’s is Lolita’s Catullus. In order to understand the emotional effect that the sentence produces, it is important to observe closely who Catullus was. Gaius Valerius Catullus was a latin poet who is said to be the precursor to Ovid. John Porter from the University of Saskatchewan, in his essay entitled *Catullus and his World: A Reappraisal* (2003:11-14) states that Catullus is known for his infatuous lyric poetry dedicated to a woman named Lesbia, who is in fact his mistress. It is said that for Catullus, Lesbia was an obsession, and his love for her became his religion. The name

Lesbia itself is a pseudonym. Lesbia's real name is Clodia. The name Lesbia means woman from the island of Lesbos. Lesbos itself was associated with beautiful women and cultured refinement. By addressing Clodia as Lesbia, it is believed that Catullus suggests not only a woman of beauty, grace, and culture, but also a woman of strong passions. Clodia or Lesbia already has a husband when he met Catullus, but she is described as a type of woman who loves love-affairs. It is stated that in the end she left Catullus for yet another man. Catullus early poems for her were very passionate but his later poems for her were mostly bitter since their affair had left him heart-broken. It is also stated that what most impresses about Catullus is his ability to portray so vividly and convincingly both the rapturous delight of one caught up in a new affair and the tormented emotions of love gone sour.

By looking at the description about Catullus above it can be seen that there are several similarities between Catullus and Humbert Humbert. First, Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is as strong as Catullus' obsession for Lesbia. A collection of Catullus' poems for Lesbia is similar to Humbert Humbert's very poetical journal in which he wrote about Lolita. Catullus' affair with Lesbia defies the norms of the society yet Catullus followed his heart and was still obsessed by her and did not pay attention to any other things but her. This is also the same with Humbert Humbert, he has crossed the lines of moral norms by debauching Lolita. He is so obsessed with her that nothing else matters for him. He is willing to take the risk of getting caught and plunge himself into a very dangerous affair of having sexual relationship with under-aged girl simply to fulfill his obsession.

The second similarity is that Catullus relationship with Lesbia is mostly physical, and only concerns with the sexual aspects. So is Humbert Humbert's relationship with

Lolita. Catullus uses many infatuous lyrics to describe his affair with Lesbia. His poems for her are considered erotic. Meanwhile, it is quite clear that Humbert Humbert wanted Lolita for sexual pleasures. Physical relationship thus becomes the main issue. Sexual desires are the essence of both Catullus-Lesbia's and Humbert Humbert-Lolita's relationship. Lesbia in Catullus poems is described as passionate and luscious, similar to the way Humbert Humbert describes Lolita in his journal. The way Catullus craves for sexual pleasures from Lesbia is similar to the way Humbert Humbert craves for sexual pleasures from Lolita.

The third similarity is that Catullus's affair for Lesbia has ended bitterly. So is Humbert Humbert's affair with Lolita. Catullus becomes very bitter and heart-broken in the end. The same case happens to Humbert Humbert. Lolita's disappearance has left him in despair and has practically ruined his life. What has started as something that gives him ecstasy ended in a depressing way for him. In the ninth stanza of his poem for Lolita he wrote,

Dying, dying, Lolita Haze,  
Of hate and remorse, I'm dying.  
And again my hairy fist I raise,  
And again I hear you crying.

(1997:256)

After Lolita is gone he describes himself as being corrupted by solitude. From then on his life enters a decline until he finally hit the rock bottom, he ended up in jail and died there, a very tragic ending indeed.

By looking at the similarities between Catullus and Humbert Humbert above it can be seen that there are four importance of including the allusion of Catullus in the story. First, the allusion gives a vivid picture of Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita. It shows how strong his obsession with her is. Second, it gives emphasis on the fact that

sexual pleasures are what Humbert Humbert seeks in his relationship with Lolita, thus, the allusion helps to make it more clear that Humbert Humbert is governed by his sexual desires. Third, the allusion gives emphasis on how dependent on Lolita Humbert Humbert is. By using the allusion, the intensity of Humbert Humbert's addiction to Lolita becomes more clear. Fourth, the allusion also help to intensify how destructive Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is, since in the end his own action has destroyed his life.

Besides the allusion of Catullus, there exist in the story the biblical allusion of Eve tempting Adam to eat the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden.

#### **b. The Allusion of Eve in the Garden of Eden**

In the thirteenth chapter of the novel it is described that when Charlotte went to church one Sunday, Humbert Humbert and Lolita were alone in the house, then he describes Lolita as follows,

She wore that day a pretty print dress that I had seen on her once before, ample in the skirt, tight in the bodice, short-sleeved, pink, checkered with darker pink, and, to complete the color scheme, she had painted her lips and was holding in her hollowed hands a beautiful, banal, Eden-red apple (1997:58).

Further in the chapter it is described that Lolita is playing with the glossy fruit, tossing it up into the air and catching it again until Humbert Humbert intercepts the apple and she pleads to have it back again. The presence of the red apple shows the allusion of Eve in the garden of Eden, holding the desired-fruit and gave it to Adam. It is not stated in the Bible that the forbidden fruit was an apple, however it has been known that there has been a universal misinterpretation that has made apple considered as the forbidden fruit. Throughout the century, a red apple has been widely recognized as a symbol for temptation.

By stating that Lolita is holding an Eden-red apple the author is in fact making a reference to the third chapter of the book of Genesis,

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat (Genesis 3:6).

In Genesis 3 it is described that Eve is the one who ate the fruit first and afterwards she gave it to Adam. Here, Eve is described as being the temptress, had she not tempted Adam, man would not have fallen into sin. Adam is described as being the passive one, while Eve is the one who actively persuade him to eat the forbidden fruit.

By making a reference to this story the author then gives an emphasis of how tempting Lolita is for Humbert Humbert. Eve in the garden of Eden is always associated with temptation, lust, and carnal desire. Humbert Humbert finds Lolita tempting. In his opinion, she is the temptress, she is the one who seduce him, while he describes himself as being helpless to resist the temptation, "I was as helpless as Adam at the preview of early oriental history, miraged in his apple orchard" (1997:71). The allusion then helps to present Lolita's position in Humbert Humbert's mind. He is trying to show how he is tempted by Lolita. This shows how distorted his mind is. Lolita who is merely a child is being presented as someone totally different. Humbert Humbert pictures her differently. Humbert Humbert pictures her as luscious, and even flirtatious. In one of the later chapters he even refers to her as a vulgar little flirt.

The allusion of Eve in the garden of Eden also helps to intensify Humbert Humbert's desire for Lolita. Eve and Eden marks man's lost against carnal desire. Humbert Humbert is weak to his desire, he is under its control. He finds Lolita sexually tempting. His act of intercepting the apple from Lolita's hands shows how he craves for sexual pleasures only she can give him. The allusion of Eve in the garden of Eden thus,



help to build the atmosphere of Humbert Humbert's lust and desire in that room. It creates an atmosphere of hot bubbling passion waiting to explode.

From all of the analysis above, it is clear that in *Lolita*, symbols and figurative language are used effectively as a means of delivering the theme. The way they deliver the theme can be seen in the analysis below.

### C. Theme

In *Lolita*, symbols and figurative language are used effectively as a means of delivering the theme. The theme of *Lolita* is that a painful event in one's past may result in an excessive sexual obsession that controls one's behaviours and ruins one's psyche. By paying close attention at the story it can be seen that the symbols and figurative language are in unity with each other, they are interrelated with one another in delivering the theme.

When the symbols are observed it can be seen that there are three ways through which they deliver the theme. First, the symbols deliver the theme by describing about Humbert Humbert's obscure sexual obsession. The lake as a symbol give a clear description of the force of sexual desire that lies in the core of Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita. This symbol stresses the fact that Humbert Humbert is madly obsessed by his sexual desire for girl child or nymphets in his own term. Meanwhile, the obscurity of the obsession is shown by the symbol of Lolita's eating an apple. This symbol puts an emphasis on how seductive Lolita appears for Humbert Humbert. This shows how obscure Humbert Humbert mind is, since to any other normal men Lolita is simply a child. By using the symbol of Lolita's eating an apple the author has managed to show the excessiveness of Humbert Humbert's desire. In his delusional mind he finds Lolita tempting, and he cannot resist the temptation to possess her. This symbol helps to

deliver the idea that Humbert Humbert views Lolita differently, it shows the voluptuousness of Humbert Humbert's desire for Lolita, so it makes the sexual obsession becomes clearer.

Second, the symbols deliver the theme by showing how the sexual obsession has emerged in the first place. Two symbols are used to describe this, namely the symbol of Lolita's playing tennis, and the setting of the room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters hotel. These symbols strengthen the idea that Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession for Lolita has emerged from his incomplete childhood romance with Annabel. His sexual experience with Annabel is stuck in his mind, he cannot forget Annabel, her sudden death creates a void in his soul and he tries to fill the void by trying to re-experience again the sexual pleasures he once enjoyed when he was a child. The two symbols emphasize the fact that Lolita is Annabel's mirror image. The two symbols give a dramatic effect on Humbert Humbert's motives of abusing Lolita. They show that Humbert Humbert's sexual obsession is deeply-rooted in his painful past.

Third, the symbols deliver the theme by showing how Humbert Humbert's excessive obsession has ruined his psyche and controls his behaviours. This is shown by the use of the name Humbert Humbert in order to represent Humbert Humbert's twofold nature. There is a beastly creature beneath his charming and well-groomed appearance. His ruined psyche is shown by the double life he leads. Humbert Humbert's ruined psyche is also shown by the two other symbols namely the use of the name Dolores Haze, and the description of Lolita's wearing only one sock. These two symbols function to describe the result or effect of Humbert Humbert's ruined psyche, and they also show the impact of Humbert Humbert's uncontrolled behaviour. Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession has negative impacts upon Lolita's life, since she is the victim of his

uncontrolled behaviour. His uncontrolled behaviour has impaired both Lolita's personality and also her morals. The two symbols indirectly show that Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession has transformed him into a heartless 'monster'. For the sake of fulfilling his sexual desire he cruelly plotted his way into debauching an innocent 12 years old girl. His psyche is already badly infected by his excessive sexual obsession that he no longer use his conscience.

The figurative language more or less use similar ways to deliver the theme. As has been stated before, there are three types of figurative language used in the novel namely metaphor, simile, and allusion. Combined together they prove to be very significant in delivering the theme. The figurative language delivers the theme in four ways: by showing the way Humbert Humbert views Lolita, by showing that the obsession for Lolita actually emerged from Humbert Humbert's painful past, by describing the intensity of Humbert Humbert's obsession, and the last by showing how Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession has controlled his behaviour.

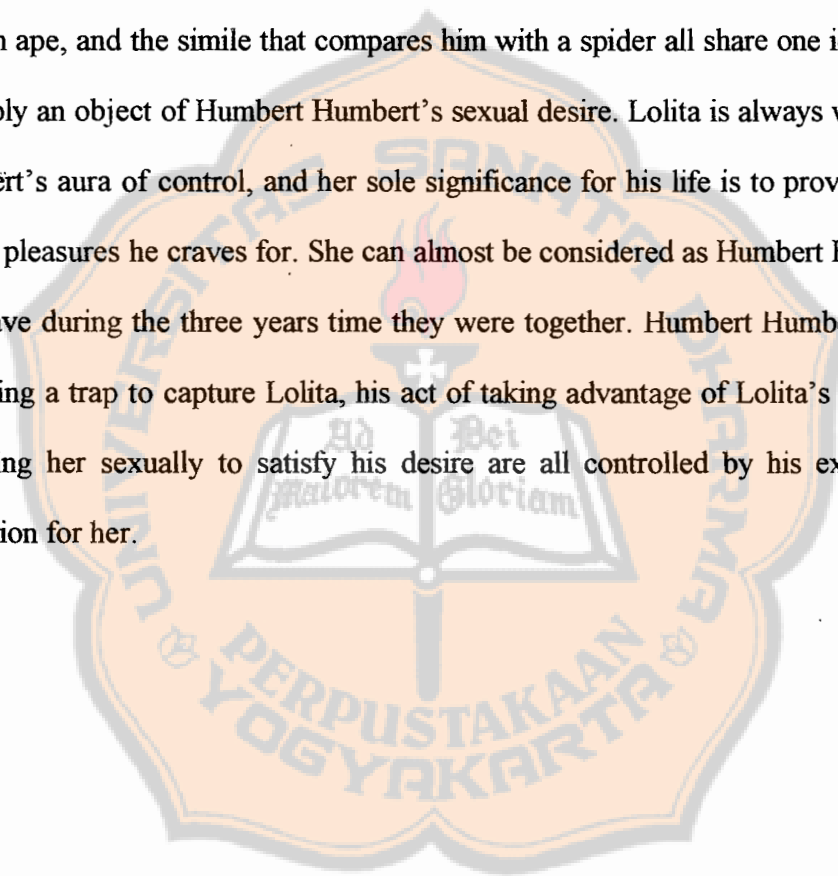
The way Humbert Humbert views Lolita is shown by the metaphor that compares Lolita with a nymph and the simile that compares Lolita with Botticelli's russet Venus. The metaphor and simile show that Humbert Humbert has his own version of Lolita. This version of Lolita exists only for himself. For him, Lolita possesses magical beauty and special charm. The way he views Lolita is influenced by his memory of Annabel's image, "The vacuum of my soul managed to suck in every detail of her bright beauty, and these I checked against the features of my dead bride" (1997:39). As Humbert Humbert's dead bride, Annabel is Lolita's precursor; and to Humbert Humbert Lolita serves as Annabel's mirror image. Humbert Humbert's sexual obsession for Lolita actually emerges from the

painful event that he has experienced in the past when Annabel suddenly dies because of Typhus in Corfu.

The way Humbert Humbert views Lolita implies the fact that his psyche is ruined, because Humbert Humbert seems to be trapped in his world of illusion in which he nurtures his idea of 'nymphetland'. He views Lolita as a nymphet that provides for him what he calls 'paradisal philters'. This clearly shows his disturbed mind that has been caused by his overwhelming sexual desire for Lolita. Humbert Humbert views Lolita as the goddess of beauty that rules his heart. He is obsessed by her beauty. He already has a fixed image of Lolita in his mind. His excessive sexual obsession for her has made him view her not as an ordinary little girl but as a seductive nymphet that possess rare beauty that makes her irresistibly tempting for him. Lolita's being sexually desirable for Humbert Humbert is strengthened by the use of the allusion of Eve in the garden of Eden. This allusion helps to arouse an atmosphere of overflowing passion that Humbert Humbert feels towards Lolita.

Meanwhile, the allusion of Catullus functions as a means of delivering the theme by describing how intense and deep Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is. Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is being likened with Catullus' obsession for Lesbia. As has been explained in the previous section, Catullus' obsession for Lesbia is very intense that she becomes almost like a religion for him. Catullus worships Lesbia. Thus, the mentioning of Catullus helps to show how infectious Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is. It infects his heart, his mind, his soul, and his behaviours. The allusion of Catullus delivers the theme by showing how extreme Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita is.

Apart from the allusion, Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession for Lolita is effectively shown by the metaphor and simile that describes about Humbert Humbert. By comparing Humbert Humbert with an enchanted hunter, an ape, and a spider, the metaphor and simile managed to show that Humbert Humbert's behaviours are actually controlled by his sexual obsession. Carefully observed, the metaphor that compares Humbert Humbert with an enchanted hunter, the metaphor that compares him with an ape, and the simile that compares him with a spider all share one idea; that Lolita is simply an object of Humbert Humbert's sexual desire. Lolita is always within Humbert Humbert's aura of control, and her sole significance for his life is to provide for him the sexual pleasures he craves for. She can almost be considered as Humbert Humbert's little sex-slave during the three years time they were together. Humbert Humbert's actions of preparing a trap to capture Lolita, his act of taking advantage of Lolita's innocence, and his using her sexually to satisfy his desire are all controlled by his excessive sexual obsession for her.





## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In *Lolita*, symbols and figurative language function as a means of delivering the central idea that binds the story together. There are several significant symbols in the novel. Those symbols are reflected through the choice of name of the main characters, the setting, and the characters' actions and behaviours. In the story the name Humbert Humbert and Dolores Haze symbolize their personality and reflect the kind of life that they are living. Meanwhile, by observing the setting it is apparent that there are two significant symbols: the first symbol is the setting of room 342 in the Enchanted Hunters hotel which symbolizes Humbert Humbert's double life as well as symbolizing the fact that Lolita is the mirror image of Annabel, while the second symbol is the lake that symbolizes Humbert Humbert's sexual desire for a girl child. Apart from the setting, the symbols can also be seen from the characters' actions and behaviours. Symbols that fall into this category are the symbol of Lolita's eating an apple, Lolita's wearing only one sock, and Lolita's playing tennis. Lolita's eating an apple symbolizes the temptation to seduce Lolita that Humbert Humbert cannot resist. Lolita's wearing only one sock symbolizes the double role that Lolita has to play and also the condition of her well-being. While the symbol of Lolita's playing tennis symbolizes the sexual relationship between Humbert Humbert and Lolita.

Nabokov delivers the theme not only through the symbols but also through the use of figurative language. From the analysis it can be concluded that there are three significant figurative languages that are used in the novel namely: metaphor, simile, and allusion. The metaphors and similes show what Lolita is for Humbert Humbert. They

explain how Humbert Humbert views Lolita, not only that they also show the true Humbert Humbert who only considers Lolita as a mere object to fulfill his sexual desire.

Other than metaphor and simile there are two allusions that help to deliver the theme of the novel. The first allusion is the allusion of Eve in the Garden of Eden which shows how seductive Lolita appears for Humbert Humbert. This allusion also builds the atmosphere of overwhelming passion that Humbert Humbert feels towards Lolita. The second allusion is the allusion of Catullus which gives emphasis on the intensity of Humbert Humbert's obsession for Lolita.

All of the symbols and figurative languages found in the novel lead to the central idea of the story that a painful event in one's past may result in an excessive sexual obsession that controls one's behaviours and ruins one's psyche. The symbols deliver this central idea by describing about Humbert Humbert's obscure sexual obsession, by showing the cause of the sexual obsession, and by showing how Humbert Humbert's excessive obsession has ruined his psyche and has controlled his behaviours. Meanwhile, the figurative language delivers the theme by showing the way Humbert Humbert views Lolita, by showing that the obsession for Lolita actually emerged from Humbert Humbert's painful past, by describing the intensity of Humbert Humbert's obsession, and the last by showing how Humbert Humbert's excessive sexual obsession has controlled his behaviours.

The symbols shown by the name of the main characters in the story stress the fact that Humbert Humbert is controlled by his excessive sexual obsession for Lolita. These symbols are supported by the metaphor and simile that compare Humbert Humbert with an enchanted hunter, a spider, and an ape. These symbols show that he cannot control his behaviours and as a result he destroyed Lolita's life, this is shown by the symbol of

Lolita's wearing only one sock. Humbert Humbert's excessive obsession has ruined his psyche and caused him to create his own private world in which he views girl children as nymphets and in which he considers Lolita as a goddess of beauty. This is shown by the metaphor and simile that describe about Lolita, and is supported by the allusion of Catullus, which gives a clear picture of the intensity, and also the excessiveness of Humbert Humbert's obsession. He finds Lolita tempting in every way, and this is shown by the allusion of Eve in the Garden of Eden and it is supported by the symbol of Lolita's eating an apple in the story. Sexual desire lies in the core of Humbert Humbert's excessive obsession and this fact is shown by the symbol of the lake. The excessiveness of the obsession can also be seen from the symbol of Lolita's playing tennis which function to represent the sexual relationship between Lolita and Humbert Humbert. Humbert Humbert's sexual obsession towards Lolita is emphasized even more by the use of alliteration which indirectly shows that the obsession is deeply rooted in his painful past. Overall, it can be concluded that the symbols and figurative language in the story are interrelated with one another and together they form a unity that effectively delivers the theme of the story.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: Summary of the Nabokov's *Lolita*.**

Humbert Humbert is a handsome and charming French scholar who leads a double life. To the world he is a well-educated man who is kind and friendly. However, beneath his charming appearance he holds hidden desires for every passing girl-child whom he considers as a nymphet. His encounter with Dolores Haze who is often called by her nickname, Lolita, changes his life forever. For Humbert Humbert, Lolita is a true nymphet. In his eyes Lolita possesses extraordinary beauty, like Venus in Boticelli's painting.

When Humbert Humbert becomes a lodger in the house of Charlotte Haze (Lolita's mother), Lolita is only 12 years old. She can be sweet and cheerful, but she can also be dolorous and hazy. At home she often wears only one sock because her other sock is missing. Lolita likes to eat apples. In one occasion, while her mother is not at home, Lolita eats an Eden-red, banal apple. Humbert Humbert finds this very seductive, and his desire to have sex with her becomes greater. Humbert Humbert's sexual desire is symbolized by the setting of lakes that are mentioned repeatedly throughout the story.

During his stay at the Haze's house, Humbert Humbert keeps a journal in which he records every detail of Lolita's movements. Meanwhile, he carefully plots a scheme so that he can finally seduce Lolita. Humbert Humbert compares himself with an enchanted hunter, while Lolita is the warm-colored prey that becomes his target of hunting. Humbert Humbert also compares himself with a spider, and an ape. He is like a spider that spread its web to trap its victim; he is also like an ape whose long hands are very mobile to reach the object that it desires to touch.

Chance, opportunity, and his careful planning finally enable Humbert Humbert to debauch Lolita. His first sexual intercourse with her has taken place in room 342 of the Enchanted Hunters hotel, a room filled with mirrors, in which all the furnitures are double. This room is actually a symbol that Lolita is actually the mirror image of Annabel, Humbert Humbert childhood lover, who died because of Typhus in Corfu. For Humbert Humbert, Lolita is the reincarnation of Annabel. With Lolita, Humbert Humbert hopes to experience again the sexual pleasures he once experienced with Annabel.

Humbert Humbert considers himself as Catullus, and Lolita is his obsession. Lolita is his paradisal philter, without her he feels he cannot live. In his eyes, Lolita is as seductive as Eve in the Garden of Eden. He extensively travels all across the United States with her. Meanwhile, he continues to write everything he experiences with her in his journal. In the journal he tries to disguise the description of his sexual activities with her by using Lolita's game of tennis as a symbol.

In the end, Humbert Humbert and Lolita's relationship ends tragically. At one point Lolita escapes from him, and eventually marries a young man named Dick. She dies while giving birth to a stillborn girl. Meanwhile, Humbert Humbert is sent to jail after killing Clare Quilty, the man who helps Lolita run away from him. Quilty is not a good man because he also has hidden motives to take advantage of Lolita. Humbert Humbert kills him to pay his revenge. Humbert Humbert finally dies in jail. Humbert Humbert wishes his journal to be published when neither he nor Lolita is still alive.

## **Appendix 2: Biography of the Author.**

Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov was born on April 23, 1899 in St. Petersburg, Russia. He was the eldest of five children. His wealthy and aristocratic family owned two

houses: one house in St. Petersburg, and an estate fifty miles to the south, in the countryside. In his youth, Nabokov enjoyed playing tennis and soccer, other than that he also spent many hours chasing and collecting butterflies. Nabokov's father, Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, was a known and respected politician. His mother, Elena Ivanova, raised Nabokov and his siblings in aristocratic fashion, using several governesses and tutors who taught the children French and English, along with Russian.

Nabokov entered the highly regarded Tenishev School in 1911. At the age of 15 he wrote his first poem, and privately published two books of poetry. The Bolshevik Revolution and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II forced Nabokov's family to move to England in 1919. Nabokov and his brother subsequently enrolled at Cambridge University, where Nabokov majored in French and Russian literature.

Nabokov's first Russian novel which was then translated into English, *Mary*, was published in the year 1925, however, it only received little attention. In the late 1927 Nabokov moved to Paris. Over there he continued to write, publishing the novels *King, Queen, Knave* in 1928 and *The Defense* in 1930. He soon developed a Russian and French reader base that admired his writing talent.

In 1940, Nabokov, his wife Véra, and his son Dmitri moved to New York. At that time, although he was known among Russian writers, he had not reached an English audience. In 1941, Nabokov published his first English novel, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, the novel was full of references to chess, a trademark that Nabokov used in his writing. In the early 1950s during one of his trips to collect butterflies, Nabokov composed his masterpiece, *Lolita*. The novel proved initially difficult to sell to publishers, but within a decade it was such a success that the novel sales and movie rights allowed him to focus exclusively on his writing.

Nabokov moved to Montreux, Switzerland in 1961, in an attempt to escape American publicity. He spent his last years publishing several novels, including *Pale Fire* in 1962. His works peaked in 1969 with the publication of *Invitation of a Beheading*. Nabokov remained in Switzerland until his death in 1977. During his life he had published eighteen novels, eight books of short stories, seven books of poetry and nine plays.

