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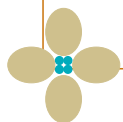
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# PEDOPHILIA IN THE NOVEL *LOLITA* BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV

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## ABSTRACT

*The study aimed to reveal the social phenomenon in a literary work, especially pedophilia. The research used qualitative approach by applying library research using psychological theory introduced by Sigmund Freud. The data source was Lolita, an English novel, written by Vladimir Nabokov. The analysis is divided into three parts; they are the identification of main character, characterization, and pedophilia. The findings were as follows. First, the main character was Humbert as his high intensity in all the events that build the whole story. Second, the characterization described that the main character was obsessive, possessive, and immoral. Third, the role of literary work revealed pedophilia phenomenon. Finally, it can be concluded that the literary work has played a very important role in revealing the social phenomenon.*

**Keywords:** *pedophilia, the psychology of literature, character and characterization, social phenomenon, literary works*

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian mendeskripsikan peran karya sastra dalam mengungkapkan fenomena sosial, khususnya pedophilia. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi pustaka menggunakan teori psikologi sastra oleh Sigmund Freud. Sumber data penelitian adalah Lolita, novel berbahasa Inggris karya Vladimir Nabokov. Analisis dilakukan dalam 3 bagian, yaitu identifikasi tokoh utama, penokohan, dan pedophilia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pertama, tokoh utama dalam novel adalah Humbert karena intensitas keterlibatannya dalam membangun keseluruhan cerita. Kedua, penokohan mengungkap bahwa tokoh utama dalam novel ini mempunyai sifat obsesif, ingin memiliki, dan tidak bermoral. Ketiga, peran karya sastra, khususnya novel, mengungkap fenomena sosial pedophilia. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa karya sastra sangat berperan dalam mengungkapkan fenomena sosial yang terjadi di dalam kehidupan masyarakat.*

**Kata kunci:** *pedophilia, psikologi sastra, tokoh dan penokohan, fenomena sosial, karya sastra*

## INTRODUCTION

Pedophilia has become the topic of increased interest, awareness, and concern for both the medical community and the public at large. It is a social phenomenon, which includes child molestation, pornography, and sexual orientation exposing to children, that has occurred from time to time. Nonetheless, unfortunately this phenomenon is unsolvable. It happens all over the world and takes place not only in developing countries but also in developed countries.

The diagnosis of pedophilia generally requires that the sexual encounters be with children under thirteen and initiated by sixteen-year-old persons or older. Pedophiles often threaten children, physically restrain them or tell them that they will punish them or their loved ones if the children do not comply with the pedophiles' wishes. The impact on the child victims of pedophiles can be great. The most frequent symptoms shown by sexually abused children are fearfulness, posttraumatic stress disorder, conduct disorder and hyperactivity, sexualized behaviors, and poor self-esteem. (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2004:575-579)

Since pedophilia problem becomes a global concern, many literary works include this matter in their storylines. A number of writers raise this event in order to obtain in depth understanding about pedophilia. "Lolita" is one of the best known novels which was written by Vladimir Nabokov. This novel is about Humbert, a middle-aged college professor, who becomes infatuated with a twelve-year-old girl, Lolita.

Thus, conducting this research hopefully can help people to know how pedophilia influences their lives in society. This study focuses on the problem of pedophilia which is related to sexual behavior, trauma, stress, and anxiety which can make people commit suicide. This research also gives information about how to control an ego in order to avoid disorder and hopefully it can be very useful for those who suffer from this disorder.

This study focuses on the analysis of main character, characterization, and pedophilia revealed in the novel "Lolita" using Sigmund Freud's theory. According to Freud's theory, the id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. This aspect of personality is entirely unconscious and includes of the instinctive and primitive behaviors. The id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality.

*"Freud considered the id to be the original aspect of personality, rooted in the biology of the individual (Jones, 1963, p.2), and to consist of unconscious sexual and aggressive instincts. These instincts might operate jointly in different situations to affect our behavior. For example, we might find ourselves hating and acting aggressively toward parents whom we dearly love, or we might feel sexually attracted to an arrogant and obnoxious person with whom we are continually arguing."* (Freud, 2013:40)

The ego is the part of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. According to Freud, the ego develops from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world. The ego functions in both the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind.

*"The ego in Freud's view is the organized aspect of the id, formed to provide realistic direction for the person's id impulses. It comes into existence because the needs of the person require appropriate transactions with the environment if they are to be satisfied. The ego, therefore, develops partially to carry out the aims of the id. There is a dynamic interaction between the two structures. At the same time, it functions to keep the impulses of the id in check until a suitable object is found."* (Freud, 2013:40)

The superego is the aspect of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society – our sense of right and wrong. The superego provides guidelines for making judgments. According to Freud, the superego begins to emerge at around age five. There are two parts of the superego, the ego ideal and the conscience.

*“The superego is the construct Freud used to describe the individual’s internalization of societal values. These values are instilled in the person primarily by parents, who teach which behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate in given situations. Freud eventually described the superego as having two major components, conscience and the ego ideal. Conscience is acquired through the use of punishment by the parents; the ego ideal is learned through the use of rewards. When we do something wrong, our conscience makes us feel guilty; when we obey our parents and win their approval by performing in socially accepted ways, we feel proud. The main functions of the superego are to inhibit the urges of the id, to persuade the ego to substitute moralistic goals for realistic ones, and to strive for perfection.”* (Freud, 2013:40)

Defense mechanism is psychological constructs inferred from observations of the way people behave. They are useful ways of summarizing what we think is going on when we observe behavior. But although some of the mechanisms are supported by experimental evidence, others have little scientific verification. Labeling a person’s behavior (e.g., projection, rationalization, or repression) may provide useful descriptive information, but it is not an explanation of the behavior. A full explanation requires understanding the needs that cause the person to rely on defense mechanisms in dealing with the problems. All defense mechanisms are to be found in the everyday behavior of normal people. Used in moderation, they increase satisfaction in living and are therefore helpful modes of adjustment. It is only when mechanisms become the dominant modes of problem-solving that they indicate personality maladjustment.

Minderop (2010) citing Krech (1974) tells that a defense mechanism in which a drive or feeling is shifted to a substitute object, one that psychologically more available. For example, aggressive impulses maybe displaced. In personality theory, defense mechanism is highly pervasive characteristics of the individual, they not only reflect their general personality, but also, in an important sense, may influence the course of its development. The failure of this mechanism to fulfill their defensive functions contributes to mental disorder. Moreover, the quality of the disorder may mirror the person’s characteristic defense mechanism (Minderop, 2010).

The most troubling and most common paraphilia is pedophilia. Pedophiles are sexually attracted to children and prefer to engage in sex with children rather than with other adults. The diagnosis of pedophilia generally requires that the sexual encounters be with children under the age of 13 and initiated by sixteen-year-old persons or older. Pedophiles often threaten children with harm, physically restrain them or tell them that they will punish them or their loved ones if the children do not comply with the pedophiles’ wishes.

Moreover, pedophiles may try to convince children that they are only showing love to the children through their actions. Most abusers are family members or acquaintance of the children. Some predatory pedophiles develop elaborate plans for gaining access to the children. The plans are such winning the trust of their mothers or marrying their mothers, trading children with other pedophiles, or in rare cases, abducting children or adopting children from foreign countries (McConaghy, 1998).

## METHODS

Research used qualitative approach with descriptive data by applying library research using Sigmund Freud's psychological theory. Moleong (2001), citing Bogdan and Taylor, describes that qualitative method is defined as a research procedure resulting descriptive data in writing and speaking taken from the people and their behaviour which can be observed. The data source for the research was Vladimir Nabokov's novel, *Lolita*.

*“Metode kualitatif sebagai prosedur penelitian yang menghasilkan data deskriptif berupa kata-kata tertulis dari orang-orang dan perilaku yang dapat diamati dan pendekatan ini diarahkan pada latar dan individu tersebut secara utuh.”* (Moleong, 2001:3)

Thus, the methodologies of the research used to analyze the pedophilia of the main character, Humbert, are as follows. Firstly, research explored the materials related to the analysis from the library by reading references that are relevant to the analysis and browsing the Internet to find more data needed for the research. Secondly, the researchers read the “*Lolita*” novel to know the character and characterization of the main character. Thirdly, after all the data were collected, research analyzed the novel through the intrinsic approach consisting of the analysis of the main character and characterization. Then, research analyzed the pedophilia using Sigmund Freud's theory.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Main Character

Nurdiyantoro (2009:177) stated that main character is a character that has a central position in a story. Main character is also the center of what the author wants to tell in her/his work. Moreover, main character is character that mostly appears in many events of the story. Based on the statement, the main character in novel “*Lolita*” is Humbert. He is the central part of the novel and dominates every part of the events in the novel from the beginning until the end of the story.

The following events prove Humbert is the main character. (1) Humbert describes his childhood. (2) Humbert has an adolescent love with a twelve-year-old girl named Annabel Leigh. (3) Humbert loses Annabel Leigh who died of typhus in Corfu. (4) Humbert has an affair with Monique, a young prostitute. (5) Humbert decides to get married for the first time to a Polish doctor's daughter named Valeria. (6) Humbert is separated from Valeria because she is having an affair with a taxi driver. (7) Humbert falls in love with Lolita, a twelve-year-old nymph. (8) Humbert gets married for the second time. (9) Humbert plans to kill Charlotte, but suddenly she is killed in an accident. (10) Humbert picks up Lolita from the camp. (11) Humbert has sex with Lolita. (12) Humbert gets upset by Lolita's shifting moods. (13) Humbert and Lolita's relationship has become more strained. (14) Humbert is called by Lolita's headmistress. (15) Humbert takes Lolita to the hospital because she is ill. (16) Humbert gets angry because Lolita has been kidnapped from the hospital. (17) Humbert tries to find Lolita. (18) Humbert begins a relationship with Rita, a woman in her late twenties. (19) Humbert receives a letter from Lolita and he goes in search of her. (20) Humbert has finally found Lolita. (21) Humbert departs to kill Clare Quilty, the man who kidnapped Lolita from the hospital. (22) Humbert gets arrested.



## The Characterization

Characterization is the way in which a character is created. The kind of conversation they have, the things they do, their appearances and so on (Gill, 1995:127). The following is the analysis of characterization of the main character.

### Obsessive

As a young boy, Humbert starts to make a short relationship, unconsummated relationship, and ultimately ends his relationship tragically with Annabel Leigh or also known as a “nymphet”. Since then, he has been obsessed with the particular type of a girl that is quite similar to Annabel. He is married to adult women as an effort to overcome his temptation to marry to “nymphets”. However, his marriages always fail and his obsession to a “nymphets” still remains.

Despite his failure in marriages, his mental problems and his career, Humbert is consistently attracted to the opposite sex, though he usually disdains this attention. That obsession can be shown when Humbert claims that he is only in love with Lolita. As a result, that obsession eventually haunts him.

*“I leaf again and again through these miserable memories, and keep asking myself, was it then, in the glitter of that remote summer, that the rift in my life began, or was my excessive desire for that child only the first evidence of an inherent singularity? When I try to analyze my own cravings, motives, actions and so forth, I surrender to a sort of retrospective imagination which causes each visualized route to fork and re-fork without end in the maddeningly complex prospect of my past. I am convinced, however, that in a certain magic and fateful way Lolita began with Annabel.”* (Nabokov, 1997:13–14)

Humbert has a traumatic experience in his childhood so it makes him frustrated of his miserable memory. His traumatic experience makes him anxious. Humbert’s obsession is revealed when he cannot stop thinking of Annabel and forget all memories about her. Nevertheless, he tries to imagine the ins and outs about his memory with Annabel. Furthermore, he does not accept Annabel’s death because he loves her so much. Humbert Humbert is confused and frustrated.

*“Saturday. My heart is still thumping. I still squirm and emit low moans of remembered embarrassment.”* (Nabokov, 1997:54)

*“...for I knew already that I could not live without the child.”* (Nabokov, 1997:64)

*“My heart beat like a drum as she sat down.....”* (Nabokov, 1997:58)

*“My heart expanded with such force that it almost blotted me out.”* (Nabokov, 1997:66)

*“...I a humble hunch back abusing myself in the dark.”* (Nabokov, 1997:62)

### Possessive

Humbert is considered a possessive man and it is seen when he claims that it is Lolita who seduces him and that she is in his control. However, Humbert as an adult clearly has the upper hand. His possessiveness is also revealed when he controls the money and Lolita’s freedom, and he often repeats that Lolita has no place to go if she leaves him. Alternately slavish and domineering, Humbert has little control over his feelings and impulses. He never considers the morality of his actions to Lolita. As his relationship with Lolita deteriorates, Humbert becomes more and more in control of her and less and less in control of himself.

*“It was she who seduced me. .... I had slipped quite a few pennies and two mint-bright dimes and told her to buy herself a magazine in the lobby. “give me some dimes and nickels. I want to call mother in that hospital. What’s the number?” “Why?” “Why can’t I call my mother if I want to?” “.... She had absolutely nowhere else to go”. “Dolores, this must stop right away, I*

*am ready to yank you out of Beardsley and lock you up you know where, but this must stop. I am ready to take you away, the time it takes to pack a suitcase. This must stop or else anything may happen.”* (Nabokov, 1997:132–205)

## **Immoral**

As a highly educated person, Humbert has an immoral behaviour. It can be seen that marrying Lolita’s mother, Charlotte Haze, is Humbert’s wicked plan in order that he can sleep with Dolores whom he calls Lolita. He believes that he can blackmail Charlotte if she tries to bar him from playing with his legal stepdaughter. Humbert is happy knowing that Charlotte is killed in a car accident. In addition to commit his immorality, Humbert does not want to waste his time taking Lolita to a hotel where they spend the first of many nights together.

*“...when I have brought up for detached inspection the idea of marrying a mature widow (say, Charlotte Haze) with not one relative left in the wide gray world, merely in order to have my way with her child (Lo, Lola, Lolita). I saw myself administering a powerful sleeping potion to both mother and daughter so as to fondle the latter through the night with perfect impunity. The house was full of Charlotte’s snore, while Lolita hardly breathed in her sleep, as still as a painted girl-child. “Mother, I swear Kenny never even touched me.” “You either lie, Dolores Haze, or it was an incubus.” No, I would not go that far. .... how eventually I might blackmail—no, that is too strong a word – mauve-mail big Haze into letting me consort with little Haze by gently threatening the poor dotting Big Dove with desertion if she tried to bar me from playing with my legal stepdaughter.”* (Nabokov, 1997:70–71)

His immorality is also seen when Humbert describes Lolita as an object, focusing on the nymphet qualities he finds himself so exciting but rarely exposes his inner feelings. Though he notes her bad moods and her vulgarities, Humbert nonetheless remains convinced of Lolita’s essential connection to Annabel. Another Humbert’s immorality is when he did his first masturbates against Lolita on the couch in the Hazes’ home, and his second masturbates is when Humbert goes to see Lolita in the study room, where Lolita and another girl are reading quietly. He is sitting beside Lolita and behind the other girl, then Humbert gives Lolita sixty-five cents to masturbate him. (Nabokov, 1997:198)

## **The Analysis of Pedophilia**

The analysis of pedophilia of the main character can be proven when Humbert meets his obsession that he is only interested in girls under twelve. Humbert loves young girls, but this behavior becomes complicated as he gets older. This desire perceives Humbert constantly, and he becomes frustrated and confused with the situation.

*“I leaf again and again through these miserable memories, and keep asking myself, was it then, in the glitter of that remote summer, that the rift in my life began; or was my excessive desire for that child only the first evidence of an inherent singularity?”* (Nabokov 1997:13)

*“I also know that the shock of Annabel’s death consolidated the frustration of that nightmare summer, made of it a permanent obstacle to any further romance throughout the cold years of my youth.”* (Nabokov 1997:14)

Humbert is sexually attracted to children, and this can be seen when Humbert has an affair with Monique, a young prostitute; later he falls in love with Lolita, a twelve-year-old nymphet; despite his unsuccessful relationships with several adult women before.

*“I remember walking along an animated street on a gray spring afternoon somewhere near the Madeleine. A short slim girl passed me at a rapid, high-heeled, tripping step, we glanced back at the same moment, she stopped and I accosted her. She came hardly up to my chest hair and had the kind of dimpled round little face French girls so often have, and I liked her long lashes and tight-fitting tailored dress sheathing in pearl-gray her young body which still retained – and that was the nymphic echo, the chill of delight, the leap in my loins—a childish something mingling with the professional fréttement of her small agile rump. ... and as usual I asked her name (Monique) and her age (eighteen).”* (Nabokov, 1997:22)

*“I was still walking behind Mrs. Haze through the dining room when, beyond it, there came a sudden burst of greenery—the piazza’, sang out my leader, and then, without the least warning, a blue sea-wave swelled under my heart and, from a mat in a pool of sun, half-naked, kneeling, turning about on her knees, there was my Rieviera love peering at me over dark glasses. ... and—“That was my Lo,” she said, “and these are my lilies.” “Yes, “I said, yes. They are beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!”* (Nabokov, 1997:37–40)

Humbert’s id towards little girls develops and Humbert’s traumatic experience gives an effect in his personality that influences his childhood. Humbert becomes a pedophile: a kind of psychosexual disorder or mental disorder where an adult has sexual fantasies about or engages in sexual acts with prepubescent child of the same or the opposite sex. This condition is revealed when Humbert likes to have an affair with nymphet prostitute in order to realize his id, but it is not long a relationship because this nymphet grows up and makes Humbert lose his desire.

*“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 women having pumpkins or pears for breast; inly, I was consumed by a hell furnace of localized lust for every passing nymphet whom as a law-abiding poltroon I never dared approach.”* (Nabokov 1997:18)

*“I remember walking along an animated street on a gray spring afternoon somewhere near the Madeleine. A short slim girl passed me at a rapid, high-heeled, tripping step, we glanced back at the same moment, she stopped and I accosted her. She came hardly up to my chest hair and had the kind of dimpled round little face French girls so often have, and I liked her long lashes and tight-fitting tailored dress sheathing in pearl-gray her young body which still retained – and that was the nymphic echo, the chill of delight, the leap in my loins—a childish something mingling with the professional fréttement of her small agile rump. ... and as usual I asked her name (Monique) and her age (eighteen).”* (Nabokov, 1997:22)

Humbert’s only interest in nymphet appears because of his miserable memories in his childhood. This situation creates a conflict between Humbert’s id and superego in realizing his desire. Instead of curing his illicit desire, Humbert decides get married. But unconsciously, he marries Valeria because of her childlike nature. Humbert’s id wins against superego, and his interest in the young girl can be shown when he wants to marry but unconsciously Humbert tries to find someone who still has a childlike nature. He tries to repress his id, but then he feels disappointed because Valeria is having an affair with Russian taxi driver.

*“I do not know if the pimp’s album may not have been another link in the daisy-chain; but soon after, for my own safety, I decided to marry. It occurred to me that regular hours, home cooked meals, all the conventions of marriage, the prophylactic routine of its bedroom activities and, who knows, the eventual flowering of certain moral values, of certain spiritual substitutes, might help me, if not to purge myself of my degrading and dangerous desires, at least to keep them under pacific control. After considerable deliberation, my choice fell on the daughter of a polish doctor ...what really attracted me to Valeria was the imitation she gave of a little girl. She gave it not because she had divined something about me; it was just her style—and I fell for it. In the summer of 1939 mon oncle d’Amérique died bequeathing me an annual income of a few thousand dollars on condition I came to live in the States and showed some interest in his*

*business. When I informed her we were shortly to sail for New York, she looked distressed and bewildered.... I let her go on for a while and then asked if she thought she had something inside. She answered "There is another man in my life." .... Now, these are ugly words for a husband to hear. They dazed me, I confess. To beat her up in the street, there and then, as an honest vulgarian might have done, was not feasible."* (Nabokov, 1997:24–27)

Humbert's obsessive nature to Annabel makes him haunted by an obsession. Humbert's sexual interest in young girls happens when Humbert meets Lolita. Humbert finds her resembles Annabel uncanny and immediately remembers his time with Annabel twenty-five years ago.

*"(and then I see Annabel in such general terms as: "honey-colored skin," "thin arms," "brown bobbed hair," "long lashes," "big bright mouth"); and the other when you instantly evoke, with shut eyes, on the dark inner side of your eyelids, the objective, absolutely optical replica of a beloved face, a little ghost in natural colors (and this is how I see Lolita) (Nabokov, 1997: 11). I was still walking behind Mrs. Haze through the dining room when, beyond it, there came a sudden burst of greenery—"the piazza", sang out my leader, and then, without the least warning, a blue sea-wave swelled under my heart and, from a mat in a pool of sun, half-naked, kneeling, turning about on her knees, there was my Riviera love peering at me over dark glasses. ... and—"That was my Lo," she said, "and these are my lilies." "Yes, "I said, yes. They are beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" (Nabokov, 1997:39–40)*

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the conclusion is as follows. First, the main character is Humbert because the intensity of his involvement from the beginning until the end of the story is high. There are twenty two events which form the plot. Second, the characterization of the main character, he is obsessive, possessive, and immoral. Third, pedophilia is revealed in the novel *Lolita*. It means that the literary work revealed the social phenomenon.

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