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The Enchanted Hunters in Nabokov's Lolita

Abstract

In Nabokov's Lolita, Humbert Humbert's The Enchanted Hunters, as a quest for love, aims to reconstruct a felicitous world or integrate various fragmentary details into an organic unity that revives a lost love, experiencing it on the basis of irony, and revealing a simulation of the desire, violence, and despondency which have been expressed in myths of nymphs and Persephone. The protagonist never reaches this unity, but his narrative of erotic and romantic love reveals him as a pathetic addict engaged in mechanical reproduction related to the phenomena of desire, seduction, violence, and sex. His The Enchanted Hunters does not simulate what he expects of his childhood love with Annabel; rather, it simulates the erotic imagination suggested in Mary D. Sheriff's term "nymphomania," in which artists fall degenerately to a model of tragedy.

Keywords: simulation, nymph, nymphomania, The Enchanted Hunters

1. Introduction

The Enchanted Hunters in Nabokov's Lolita refers to the name of a hotel and the title of a play. This seeming coincidence is actually not coincidental: Nabokov weaves a story concerning a pedophile's seduction of a prepubescent child into a "story within a story," in which the girl is imagined as a seducer who bewitches a number of hunters. Just as the girl in the play is a figment of a poet's imagination, so Lolita in the novel Lolita is an imaginary production of a middle-aged pedophile. Yet Lolita is not so much a novel revealing guilt and mental disorder, but a mélange of art and reality, or more specifically, it is about a coinage in which the author fabricates art and myth in real life. Parallel to the protagonist who simulates what he expects of his childhood love, Annabel, in the form of the nymphet, Lolita, Nabokov replicates the beauty of butterflies in the pursuit of beauty and immortality, and develops the world of art with a pathetic tone whereby we

gradually perceive a simulation of the desire, violence, and despondency which have been expressed in the myths of nymphs and Persephone. As Mary D. Sheriff's term "nymphomania" suggests, Nabokov's artist falls degenerately to a model of tragedy in the pursuit of butterflies (i.e., love and beauty).

2. Nabokov's Sense of the Butterfly

Nabokov's idea for writing Lolita came from his lifelong passion for collecting butterflies. Nabokov began the novel while gathering butterflies in the western United States. In 1953, he finished Lolita in a house on Meade Street, in Oregon, which was near the mountains where he looked for butterflies. What started Nabokov's passion for lepidoptery was his unexpected encounter with a "bright swallowtail" at his childhood home in Vyra, Russia, when he was seven. The family's janitor trapped the butterfly in the boy's cap, and after this Nabokov took up the hobby of tracing the wings of these evanescent insects in mountains, valleys, and forests. He never ceased his collections of butterflies, and while this activity was interrupted by war and exile, when Nabokov was more settled he resumed his butterfly-collection trips, even travelling to the Alps, Corsica, and Sicily to find new specimens. Harvard's Museum of Comparative Biology still has his collection. For Nabokov, butterfly collecting was not merely a hobby, but a bridge that connected him to "the highest state of the soul." The collection represented a mortal's desire for connection with a spiritual (or physical) world. Moreover, as Nabokov once wrote in a poem, "We are the caterpillars of angels" (Boyd 71). Death seemed to him to be a process of pupation, before one transforms to the highest soul which takes its form as a butterfly. Nabokov's passion for butterflies is thus "equal [to] faith in the existence of another world" (Speak Memory 39). H. W. Dillard compares Nabokov's early story "Christmas" to the story of Jesus' resurrection. The character of Attacus in the story, as Dillard observes, is a resurrected spirit that has experienced the transfiguration from a caterpillar to a moth, and at the moment of the spiritual transfiguration of the moth, the depressed father witnesses his beloved son reviving in the form of the insect. Butterflies are involved in hidden secrets, and hunting them in nature is Nabokov's way of capturing "the particular," which exists in "the succession of deeper and deeper levels of specificity" (Boyd 83). Nabokov is aware of the brief lives of butterflies and the threat of extinction these delicate creatures face due to factors such as

the use of pesticides or fires destroying their habitats![1] If a vision of ethereal beauty is revealed in "Christmas," Nabokov's regret at "the impossibility of comprehending it [a butterfly] in terms of earthly life" (qtd. in Boyd 72) is emphasized in Lolita. In Lolita, a middle-aged man who once lost Annabel, his childhood sweetheart, encounters a girl who reminds him of this lost love. He calls this child his nymph, his revived Annabel, and he even has sexual fantasies about her as a form of compensation for his lost love. The child is Lolita, an imaginary constructed image formed from fragmentary memories of his childhood love. Though grotesque and controversial, Lolita demonstrates a displeased mortal who never stops constructing his own surreal dimension with considerable psychic force, though this fails to draw him back to his original beloved. The protagonist's "wish fulfillment" thus confronts a crisis that threatens to make his imaginary world with its imaginary nymph disappear.

3. Beauty and Death in the Nymph-butterfly

The term "nymph" or "nymphet" is so variously defined that it is hard for us to settle on one definition. The Oxford Dictionary defines "nymphet" as "a young or little nymph" or "a nymph-like or sexually attractive young girl." The nymphet-lover Humbert also offers the following definition:

> *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; and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as "nymphets." (Lolita 16)*

A nymph in mythology is "one of a numerous class of semi-divine beings, imagined as beautiful maidens inhabiting the sea, rivers, fountains, hills, woods, or trees, and frequently introduced by the poets as attendants on a superior deity" ("Nymph," def.). Such beautiful maidens frequent poets' imagination as "a young and beautiful woman" or "maiden" or "damsel" ("Nymph," def.). Since the Renaissance, praise for nymphs has been a common theme in art![2] Moreover, a nymph is also used as a term in biology, which indicates the progress of life towards perfection: a nymph is "pupa," "an insect in that stage of development which intervenes between the larva and the imago" (qtd. in Clarke 169). The image of a nymph is characterized by beauty and fecundity. This sort of nymph appears in various human forms, varying from the creative goddess of a Muse, the

mild companion of the silens-lovers,[3] to the motherly nurse of Dionysus. In highly creative and fostering activities, she is often identified with "the outflow of springs,"[4] which is seen in the Muses' inspiring of poets' imaginations and Nysa's raising of the infant god Dionysus. Yet nymphs are also connected with dark aspects of the psyche. Water-nymphs draw Hylas into water; the Sirens sing narcotic songs to their victims; and the nymph Calypso imprisons Odysseus for seven years. It makes sense that if a nymph appears in a world of delirium and infatuation, stagnation and death, then she will be constantly shown as a seducer or a horrible witch, as is seen in the still waters she inhabits. Viewed from this aspect, a nymph is paradoxically endowed with the images of life and death, love and fear, the power of creation and the misery of claustrophobia.

The terms "nymph" or "nymphet" are linked with Nabokov's sense of butterflies as creatures of beauty and death. Perhaps the most impressive nymph as a butterfly in the domain of death appears in Lolita. In Humbert's description of his fantasy world where a child-girl "permanently" dwells, he constantly recalls the vision of a nymph or butterfly. His vision of a butterfly-nymph replicates itself in Humbert's sensation of death and beauty. This sensation begins with Humbert's boyhood with a nymph-like girl, Annabel. She is a mixture of love and beauty, but an incurable illness suddenly strikes her and becomes a mystical power that veils beauty with the mysterious shadow of death, which has an effect in Humbert's mental world. "I was on my knees, and on the point of possessing my darling … and four months later she died of typhus in Corfu" (Lolita 13). Humbert silently witnesses his heavenly love buried by Annabel's abrupt death. Since then, he has been psychologically stationed in "eclipse"; he has been numb after this accident and perceives the images of beauty and death in nymph-like girls as if they were the reincarnation of his lost love. When affected by Annabel's death, one of H.H.'s responses is to seek a protective shield that wards off grief for the dead, and he tries to achieve this with mental numbness.

Walter Benjamin, in Illuminations, discusses the phenomenon of fighting against shock in terms of Freud's protective shield. According to Freud, "the protective shield is equipped with its own store of energy and must above all strive to preserve the special forms of conversion of energy operating in it against the effects of the excessive energies at work in the external world" (qtd. in Benjamin 161). Benjamin then applies Freud's view to the situations in Baudelaire's works – the pedestrian's mechanical movement among the crowd, gambling, and narcotic addiction. Shocks stimulate the

neurotic system to depend on a protection that forces the scared to focus on a mechanical operation. “Each operation at the machine is just as screened off from the proceeding operation as a coup in a game of chance is from the one that preceded it” (177). A scared person looks for oblivion, whether consciously or unconsciously; therefore, he indulges in games or mechanical drudgery, for such activities require “a reflex action” that pushes all the emotional responses to the previous events to oblivion.

McLuhan, in Understanding Media, links such a protective shield to the aftermath of physical stress: “In the physical stress of superstimulation of various kinds, the central nervous system acts to protect itself by a strategy of amputation or isolation of the offending organ, sense, or function” (46). Gambling or other mechanical activities are thus the best way for a scared man to move forward when he wants to leave sorrow behind. Humbert’s play, The Enchanted Hunters, is one way in which he indulges a fantasy and defends himself against trauma.

Humbert encloses himself in a world where he perpetually stares at an illusionary image of Annabel. Humbert’s vision of Annabel is replaced by demonic female images. Lolita is “a sleek, slender Monique” (Lolita 23); “a delinquent nymphet shining through the matter-of-fact young whore” (23); “a plaster replica of the Venus” (58); “little Carmen” (58). And she became the fallen Eve when “she was holding in her hollowed hands a beautiful, banal, Eden-red apple” (57). Lolita’s demonic nature overlaps with the monstrous Hylas’ nymphs or the nymph-sirens in myth – painfully walled up in dark water. Humbert’s narrative emphasizes Lolita as a sick nymph in a world of death in delirium. Lolita’s image draws Humbert back to the world of love and life with Annabel, but that is a temporary joy. Gazing at Dolores, Humbert Humbert perceives a fictional world where she and Annabel are mingled in the newly fabricated figure of Lolita. As he imagines that Annabel springs to the present moment and incarnates in the child, the present moment being combined with “the immortal day” when the two child-lovers dwell in their own heaven, the image of Annabel is replaced by that of a demonic Lolita in Humbertland. However, Annabel has died and cannot be revived in a fantastic world that overlaps the magical fairy-tale realm of a discovered princess.

Julian W. Connolly’s “Black and White and Dead All Over: Color Imagery in Nabokov’s Prose” notes the importance of death in the novel. At the very beginning, Lolita presents Humbert as a motherless child. The loss of his mother is followed by the death of Annabel, his first love. Humbert

grows into a sick man involved in a series of deaths – a car accident that kills his wife Charlotte, his murder of the pedophile Quilty, and the death of Lolita in childbirth. Even the girl Dolores ("Lolita") is connected with the myth of death (the myth of Persephone) in Humbert's comparison of her to a nymphet. His quest for love ironically simulates desire, violence, and despondency in a world controlled by death.

4. Affection by Love and Death

As Connolly notes, there is no "beyond the threshold of death," but there are "unfathomable riches" of death by which Humbert's activities are affected. Lionel Trilling, in "The Last Lover: Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita," sees the novel as one that contrives "the old kind of love" (8) in which a passionate lover is desperately and painfully on a quest for a perverse love. Trilling argues that Lolita is not so much about sex but instead about love, which involves the code of courtly love that originated in the Arthurian romances. The convention of courtly love is highly associated with the figure of a passionate lover, who, with emotionally obsessive masochism, submits himself to a mistress as a slave. Scandalous and pathological, courtly love usually leads the lover to death. What needs to be added is that H.H.'s adoration of Lolita is a form of fetishism, masochism, and emotional eroticism that leads him to degenerate into a model of nymphomania. Julia Bader, in " Lolita: The Quest for Ecstasy," observes a perverse, lewd character, Quilty, who, as an alter ego projecting the guilt of H.H., "stages the conventional scenes in order to torment the hero, or to seduce the tantalizing, elusive women" (Bader 62), and "makes use of art in a cold, calculating way" (73). What makes H.H. extremely complex in critics' views – a sympathetic victim or a guilty tyrant – depends much on his preoccupation with the fear of losing love. Sometimes he slips into the unnamable realm of death as a masochist; sometimes he distances himself from it with the mask of a cruel tyrant within a castle. Lolita is extremely ambiguous; H.H. shifts between a passionate lover falling under the spell of female mystery and a coercive, patriarchal king controlling a child. Whether a masochist lover in the archaic form of courtly love, as Trilling observes, or a pedophilia kidnapper in Bader's reading, Humbert is grasped or affected by love and death. Jennifer L. Jenkins even views him as a pilgrim who "casts his lifelong journey in the form of a grail quest" (211) after the "chaste death" of Annabel. I believe Humbert's activities shift

between approaching the territory of death and distancing himself from it. Both “approaching to” and “distancing from” death accompany Humbert’s feelings of pleasure and pain and his emotional disturbances of ecstasy and fear, so as to reveal to readers the ambiguities in his personality.

As a desperately pained lover on a journey of love and death toward Annabel (or Lolita), the agent proceeds with the construction of Humbertland by his double Quilty, who perpetually dwells in darkness. Humbert himself is a weak spirit, unable to consolidate his Humbertland. He is merely an inflated spider “sitting in the middle of a luminous web and giving little jerks to this or that strand” (Lolita 49). To strengthen his will, Humbert depends on his double, Quilty. If Humbert is the one who is affected, Quilty is the one who moves the being he loves. He has actions; he brings about “the perfect murder” (Lolita 84), “killing” those who intend to take his nymphet away. When Valeria demands an immediate divorce, Humbert fears the loss of his love. In response, he shoots, strangles, and drowns the woman in his imagination. When Charlotte decides to send Dolores to the Beardsley boarding school, Humbert is aware that he may lose his nymphet. Quilty thus calls on Humbert to drown Charlotte at a beach, with Quilty’s voice appearing when Humbert is hurt or vulnerable. On occasion, Quilty encourages Humbert to bring his lost love into real life. Bader observed the phenomenon of shifting a past ghost to a real object: “The product of the imagination is transformed into a passionately emotional object, which then lives independent of any conventional ‘reality’” (Bader 61). Indeed, Quilty’s voice often floats in Humbert's mind, after he first gazes at Dolores, which draws him into a fantastic world whenever he becomes a passionately emotional lover. With the two major features in the other self – violence and emotion – Humbert disguises himself as a dilative figure, a dark shadow lurking in his hallucination. Quilty appears in many forms: magician, artist, and omnipotent manipulator. As a magician, he becomes a playwright directing the play The Enchanted Hunters, for which he creates a plot in which Lolita possesses the magical power to seduce him; he changes into a dentist pulling Humbert's aching teeth; and he becomes a pursuer, reminding Humbert that he could go along with him and stay with his princess-nymphet in his fantasy land. As an artist, who deliberately ignores Dolores’ vulgarity, Quilty idealizes the banal child as an innocent incarnation of Annabel. As a manipulator of fate, with the motto – “above the tribulations of ridicule, beyond the possibilities of retribution,” (Lolita 60), Humbert transcends reality. Quilty prolongs Humbert’s fantastic reflections on physical

life. On occasion, Quilty's (imaginary) voice lulls Humbert in his own kingdom, a crenellated land for him and Lolita: "what I madly possessed is not she, but my own creation, another, fanciful Lolita – perhaps, more real than Lolita; overlapping, encasing her; floating between me and her" (Lolita 62). This is an "otherness" existing beyond and overlapping with the physical world, in which real figures are combined with the dead and re-shaped as newly fabricated fictional characters.

5. Mechanical Reproduction of a Nymphet

Humbert's play The Enchanted Hunters involves the invention and simulation of nymphéa, which emphasizes Lolita's hypersexuality. Lolita is many times described as a prostitute, whose hypersexuality is rather like that of a mad nymph-seducer in myth. Humbert's representation of Lolita as a nymphet distances his heroine from the real girl Dolores, who in real life is drawn to as well as escapes from H.H. Lolita is expected to be shaped as a controlled / controlling sexual object. Separate from real life, Humbert's Lolita is a strange and lewd artificial object, one fabricated in his fantastic world as a pornographic treasure. The visual effect in the pornographic play is monotonous, for Lolita is created as an Other very different from what Dolores is in real life. The transformation of Lolita to an Other in the play goes through a process of diminishing the nymph's multiplicity (a creative Muse, a nurse of Dionysus… etc.) to an image of the monomythic nymphet characteristic of debauchery, hysteria, and immorality. To achieve the transformation of Lolita into a lewd creature, H.H. engages in a series of violent acts on Dolores – kidnapping, rape, incarceration, and child-abandonment. H.H.'s love for Annabel is perversely reversed to desire and violence directed towards a living girl.

The term nymphomania refers to "a feminine disease characterized by morbid and uncontrollable sexual desire" (qtd. in Bullough 422). A similar term was coined in 1775 by Richard Chandler: "Nympholepsy is characterized as a frenzy, which arose from having beheld [nymphs]" (Chandler 172). It seems the definitions show what differentiates women's hypersexuality from men's in this context: Women's desire is bound to a carnal disease that she fails to control, while men's is in a state of spiritual inspiration. The contrasting desires of the two sexes are obvious in the nymphomaniac records by an 18th-century Encyclopédist.[5] As Mary D. Sheriff observes, the aesthetic representation of the nymphomaniac women orients to drawing a madwoman enclosed in

a space of mental disorder: “moved by her projection, the nymphomaniac touched herself in a literal gesture of onanism. Hers was an enclosed and nonproductive circuit of self-gratification; her desire had no proper aim, although it could lead to insanity, death, or social disorder” (Sheriff 51). Moreover, women artists who expressed passion and desire were often considered mad. If their works or performances were in some way erotic, then they were associated with the “infernal flame of lubricity” (qtd. in Sheriff 73) that raged and very rapidly grew. Among the 18th-century theorists on nymphomania, Sheriff observes how a female artist, when driven by impulses of creativity to make her own “tableau” erotic, was condemned as a morbid, dangerous, and deviant monster. The same drive of passion in women, when taking effect in men, was endowed with the meaning implied by the term nympholepsy: Men’s enthusiasm, far from an irrational sickness, was the power of God directed toward cultural production.

Rather than focusing on the mental condition of hypersexual “mad” women, Sheriff examines the mental activity of male artists towards their works with regard to their representations of nymphomaniac women. No longer equating the male artists’ passion to a divine creative drive, Sheriff instead claims that the erotic art works of the 18th century demonstrated the male artists’ “narcissism,” and “obsessive fixation on a single object, his attachment to sensory perceptions” (51). Sheriff presents the story of Pygmalion and Galatea in Ovid’s myth as a good example of how men indulge in fantasies about nymphomaniac women. In Ovid’s myth, Galatea is an ivory sculpture who is forbidden to move until Pygmalion’s desire brings her to life. Galatea’s passion is virtuous, because it is caused by the male artist, not by herself. The virgin that the sculptor shapes in his fantasy is deprived of her autonomy, and perhaps of any natural impulses until the sculptor wills her to move with a sexual desire that she cannot control. In other words, Galatea is repressed and falls into madness due to Pygmalion’s sado-masochism.

A man who suffers from nymphomania imagines that the women they are interested in also suffer from the condition: “a feminine disease characterized by morbid and uncontrollable sexual desire,” and this idea is rather attractive to those who desire to control women. When combined with the fantasy of a narcissistic artist, the psychological term “nymphomania” becomes a violent one that encloses women within the images the male artist desires in his imagined tableau. Representations of nymphomaniac women in art work enhance the value of their sexuality. On the

one hand, the nymphomaniac is presented as an infernal whore whose potential for causing social disorder makes her a voluptuous target to satisfy the male artist's eroticism; on the other hand, the nymphomaniac is confined in an enclosed space, like an obedient lamb, who never enflames her own morbid sexuality until a male artist who ignites it secures his control of her. The psychological term "nymphomania" mirrors the male artist's desire to possess a mad woman within the confined space that is a work of art, where the obsessive fixation of the man is passionately met at the cost of the woman's natural instinct.

Humbert's representation of Lolita in his play is full of voluptuous female images. H.H.'s narrative of the hysterical Lolita reflects his own hysteria or hypersexuality, as seen in Sheriff's characterization of nymphomania. The grotesque, fantastic, and abnormal Lolita is what the artist wants to show through a teenage girl (Dolores). As readers, we hardly know what Dolores thinks of herself or her step-father. She is silent, and while she does act, her activities are explained in the monotone of an omniscient narrator, presented in the form of a memoir, one that repeatedly directs readers to the thought that Lolita is a nymphet-seducer, and that Humbert Humbert is a victim-lover under "the perilous magic of nymphets" (Lolita 133). Humbert's fantasy has much to do with a nymph in darkness, a world of death in delirium. Drawing Lolita to Humbertland – Humbert's fantastic world – is like entering a sirens' world of witches and dark magic:

I sensed strange thoughts form in the minds of the languid ladies that escorted me from counter to counter, from rock ledge to seaweed, and the belts and the bracelets I chose seemed to fall from siren hands into transparent water. (Lolita 108)

The fantastic world of an enchanting nymphet that Humbert presents is bestial, barbarous, and annihilating, rather like a rope around his neck. "My schoolgirl nymphet had me in thrall" (181). This reminds readers of the world in myth where nymphs like sirens or Hylas-seducers are in dark waters of Despond. Humbert's nymphet is involved in a parody of incest, cast in a play to satisfy her tyrant-father's fantasy life. Lolita's confinement reveals to readers a process of transformation from ordinary life to fantastic image – or, more specifically, from a rounded, multi-faceted character in myth to a single-side monster in a monomyth. The representation of a mad nymph, as a result,

ironically reflects the fantasy of the madman-creator who reduces Dolores to the subjected being[6] of Lolita.

Lolita can also be seen as an incarnation of Persephone in Greek and Roman mythology, in which Hades is responsible for the eclipses and darkness in nature. Zsuzsa Hetényi, in “Lolita as Goddess between Life and Death: From Persephone to the Poplars,” examines the characters in Lolita who closely resemble Demeter and Persephone, since the patterns or archetypes in the novel correspond to incidents that occur around Lolita. The myth of Persephone is related to the phenomena of abduction and eclipse. Persephone had lived a tranquil life, for she had a protective mother who turned down all her daughter’s suitors and carefully hid her from Olympian deities. But this scrupulous mother could not hide the beauty of her child. One day, when the beautiful goddess was innocently gathering flowers with her playmate-nymphs, Hades in Enna was so entranced that he came to abduct her with a chariot through a cleft in the earth. The anxious mother looked everywhere for her lost child and, during the search, the earth became barren and chilly, crying out men’s hunger and agonies. These cries for the return of fertility reached the gate of Heaven, and under this pressure Zeus demanded that Hades return the child to her mother. Instead, Hades tricked everyone by making Persephone eat the seeds of a pomegranate, with a narcotic effect that controlled her mind. The seeds took effect when they forced her to return to the underground at the end of each year, a period then known as winter. During Persephone’s disappearance her mother hid herself away and wept, and the earth was thus bathed in sterility until the return of her beloved child in the spring. When serving as the wife of Hades, Persephone was an “Iron Queen,” seated inanimate on her throne, indifferently ruling the ghosts, and cruelly sending curses to all men. Her heart was controlled by the seeds of the pomegranate, so strongly that even the powerful Earth Mother could not overcome the magic of the drug. H.H.’s The Enchanted Hunter presents mechanical reproduction related to the phenomena of desire, seduction, violence, and sex, and thus is a simulation of Hades’ chariot, a vehicle that symbolizes the darkness of nature and causes eclipses and death. The plot of kidnapping and putting drugs in Dolores’ drink corresponds to Hades’ abduction of Persephone and use of pomegranate seeds. H.H.’s play does not show spiritual love, but instead the violence and desire of Hades.

6. Conclusion

A vieillard encore vert (Lolita 172) shows Humbert's desire to keep young and aloof from the grasp of death. It is the fear of the growing power of nature shown in the growth of Lolita that urges him to mask himself as a tyrant of time, calling on it to stop. He seeks love and immortality by the replication of Lolita; he rejects death by immortalizing himself as her father. Ironically, the art that Humbert creates is mechanical, replicating eclipses and death in nature. By the time Lolita escapes his pornographic film, the tyrannical Humbert has abandoned her. He leaves her alone to her wandering, and immediately looks for another girl to be a new Lolita. Though H.H. wants to escape from the forces of time, from the absorption of death, he loses his Lolita, who, like a butterfly, has the potential for metamorphosis, a process of rising from its cocoon. Martin Amis in Koba the Dread observes, "Nabokov, in all his fiction, writes with incomparable penetration about delusion and coercion, about cruelty and lies" (37). Azar Nafisi also argues that Lolita's real history has been deliberately erased and replaced with Humbert's imagination (36). Aside from a tyrant's tyranny, Lolita is satirical and pathetic. What it leaves with us is not merely an image of a cocooned (trapped) butterfly, but also a cocooned artist falling degenerately to a model of tragedy.

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[1] For the link of Nabokov's observation of butterflies to ecology, see Johnson.

[2] In 1584, Lodge's Forbonius and Prisceria has a confident-nymph: "O Nimph of beauties train / The onely cause and easer of my paine" (Publications 104). In 1590, a nymph appears as a mortal's child in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: "But soft, what nymphs are these? / Egeus. My Lord, this is my daughter here asleepe." Sir William Mure's nymph in his miscellaneous poems brings peace: "Then happie nymph, quhoise spreit in peace repoises."

[3] Guy Hedreen observed nymphs painted on vases and concluded that there was a conspicuous shift in their attitude toward silens. While the nymphs in the 6th-century Athenian black figure vase paintings are friendly and often intimate with the silens, those in the 5th-century Athenian red-figure vase paintings assume new attributes, such as thyrsus, snakes, panther skin, and fawn skin, and are hostile to silens if the latter woo them. See Hedreen.

[4] Burkert in Greek Religion identifies nymphs with springs: "The idea that rivers are gods and springs divine nymphs is deeply rooted not only in poetry but in belief and ritual; the worship of these deities is limited only by the fact that they are inseparably identified with a specific locality" (Burkert 174).

[5] For a study of the records of nymphomania and transgressive women, see Tissot and de Binville.

[6] The term is borrowed from Catherine Belsey's "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text." The subject of the self is "constructed in language and in discourse and, since the symbolic order in its discursive use is closely related to ideology, in ideology" (660). The constructed subject is no longer the real self, but the "subjected being" who, conforming, or being conformed to what is expected in culture, education, or convention, becomes partially real, partially illusionary.

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