

The highly controversial novel, *Lolita*, written by Vladimir Nabokov and published in 1955 has led to multiple film adaptations and influences in mainstream media. Of these are notably both the 1997 and 1962 film adaptation.

The 1997 adaptation of *Lolita* (which will be used in this comparison analysis) was directed by Adrian Lyne, starring Dominique Swain as Lolita and Jeremy Irons as Humbert. The adaptations stay relatively true in terms of dialogue as well as character and plot structure. Though the film manages to stay relatively mild mannered by adapting Humbert's persona, into something less dark and much more 'romantic' (if that can be said).

The importance of Humbert speaking to us individually and directly, is for no other reason than that we are the jury. We are the ones who will decide on his sins, of his love. The film ensures this literary plot point is still included, keeping a direct line of dialogue between the narration and speaking directly to the viewers. Equally important along the narration standpoint is the switch in audience at the very end of the movie. Humbert pleads no longer to us, but rather to Lolita; apologizing for robbing her of her childhood. In both standpoints, the only apology he gives in his life is to Lolita. The novel highlights so many of his previous crimes, against other nymphets, against his wives, crimes of perversion. And yet the focus is only on Lolita, because we both know that he's at the end of his life, and he's decided that the only real regret is her.

An interesting artistic decision from the film would be the lack of the entire first quarter of the novel. Practically everything before Humbert's original meeting with Lolita. Now the decision to take away a deletion of Humbert's life before or after Lolita, speaks only to nail in the coffin that Humbert can never live without Lolita, his life before her is so irrelevant that it's never truly worth mentioning. Even his first love, the origin of his pedophilia, took up only a minimal amount of his story (film wise).

I for one have a certain disappointment when it comes to this decision, because although the revolving around Lolita speaks for a lot of Humbert's obsession, there is also a lack of character build that comes from it. Humbert has always been a man of perversion and that to me is an important detail that never truly was brought up within the film. The man had both slept with and obsessed over little girls before, Lolita was never his first,

though she was the one he ‘loved’ the most. He had purposefully paid pimps for girls, or individually picked out prostitutes that he knew were lying about their age, taking advantage of their struggles for the satisfaction of his obsessions. All of these acts which make a reader sincerely hate a character are never mentioned in the film. So although Humbert is still a disturbing character he seems more romantic in his love for Lolita because you think that she’s special, well in fact his obsession all stems from a cumulation of the girls before and most importantly Annabelle, whom Lolita shares a face with.

Without such information from the novel, much is lost, and the tale of Lolita is not as disturbing as it should be.

Despite the erasure of essentially the first quarter of the novel. The following of the movie develops in the same way as the novel, following both plot structure and plot feeling. The commencement of ‘the Enchanted Hunters’ still stands as the pivotal moment in Lolita’s eventual escape. Humbert becomes paranoid and violent, but besides showing this is just word and action, the movie does a wonderful job at changing the atmosphere through color, setting, and score.

The places they stay are empty and dry or dark and wet, to the point where the only people that we can pay attention to are the main players, Lolita, Humbert, and Quibly.

The character of Lolita remains the same, swinging between a rebellious attitude, and that of a child which she is. The film of course couldn’t use an actress with the real age of Lo in the book, but the acting was done well, in terms that Lolita truly was still portrayed as a child.

As an overall comparison, the 1997 adaptation did a rather wonderful job with the novel, truly bringing the characters to life, as well the depth in which they felt.