

Littérature anglophone | *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov « The Garden Scene »

Film adaptations analysis

Kubrick's movie is rather different from the book even though the plot is exactly similar. The film focuses more on Lolita and not on Mrs Haze's house and character. The most striking thing **regards/ concerns** the actress playing Lolita: she looks much older than what she is supposed to be in the novel (12 years old). Here in Kubrick's film, she is at least 18 - otherwise the audience **would have been** way too shocked and **uncomfortable/ uneasy/ ill-at-ease**. Moreover, the dialogue differs from the original one and we are not given Humbert's thoughts.

In Adrian Lyne's version of the book, however, we are given more study material. First, the adaptation of the plot is very faithful and a voiceover **ushers us into Humbert's mind**. The only slight difference is Mrs Haze's house which is bigger and brighter. It's definitely not dingy, **albeit** in mess. Mrs Haze is flirting with her gaze with Humbert and tries to chat him up « *I myself cherish the French tongue* ». Right from the start she mentions that she's a widow.



Let us now focus on Lolita herself and the way she appears in the movie. First, she is younger than Kubrick's Lolita, **albeit** definitely not 12 years old. When the audience sees her for the first time, she is depicted in a kind of sensual and erotic way – she is laying on the ground with her soaked



clothes on under a sprinkler. She is also wearing a white outfit which is meant to symbolize her innocence and purity. Then, her face cannot be seen (hidden behind a bush) and so the audience might assume that she is a young adult.

However, as the camera shifts to the right, the audience discovers her juvenile body. When the audience see sthat she is wearing **braces, it is the straw that breaks the camel's back**: the audience feels then guilty of **having imagined / imagining** her in a sexual way when she is just a little girl/ child.



Finally, in the scene, two colors (green and white) stand out and this serves two purposes. First, those bright colors emphasize the magical aspect of the encounter. It is as if Humbert Humbert was finding himself in heaven when his eyes **slither onto** Lolita. Then, of course, the white color reminds us of Lolita's innocent sides.