



How I Learned to Drive and Lolita: A Comparative Study of Social and Cultural Myths

Prof. Rasha A. Azeez Alabdullah (PhD) 

Department of English Language, College of Languages, University of Baghdad, Iraq

rasha.alabdullah@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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Abstract

This paper discusses how victimizers are created by different social circumstances; these victimizers, in turn, make victims and other victimizers. The main question of the paper is "who is to be blamed and why?" This study aims at demonstrating how culture creates myths that define social concepts about victim and victimizer. The study follows a comparative approach based on a comparison between the play *How I Learned to Drive* (1997) by **Paula Vogel** and the novel *Lolita* (1955) by **Vladimir Nabokov**; the comparison leads to the conclusion that family, society, and media should collaborate to change these myths. The comparative approach is based on the theory of adaptation, and the whole study employs a qualitative analysis between the two texts. Vogel is a modern American playwright. She responds to classical texts and adapts them to create new stories. She adapts in order to question historical and cultural myths. She admires Nabokov's novel *Lolita*; Nabokov is a Russian American writer. She retells *Lolita* that is a story of pedophilia, but she treats the subject of pedophilia in *How I Learned to Drive* from a completely different angle.

Keywords: Pedophilia, Sexuality, Responsibility, Culture, Identification



مسرحية (كيف تعلمت السياقة) و رواية (لوليتا): دراسة مقارنة للأساطير المجتمعية والثقافية

أ.د. رشا عبد المنعم عزيز العبد الله 

قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية اللغات، جامعة بغداد، العراق

rasha.alabdullah@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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المستخلص

يهدف البحث لأثبات كيف ان الثقافة تخلق الاساطير التي تحدد المفاهيم المجتمعية عن الضحية والجاني. اعتمد البحث على منهج المقارنة بين مسرحية (كيف تعلمت السياقة) (١٩٩٧) للكاتبة باولا فوكل ورواية (لوليتا) (١٩٥٥) للكاتب فلاديمير نوبوكوف. اظهرت المقارنة ان العائلة والمجتمع ووسائل الاعلام يجب ان تتعاون لتغيير هذه الاساطير. منهج المقارنة الذي استخدمه الباحث يعتمد على نظرية الاقتباس ويتبع منهج التحليل النوعي للنصين المختارين. فوكل كاتبة مسرحية امريكية حديثة استلهمت اغلب مسرحياتها من اعمال ادبية اخرى. حيث تفاعلت مع الاعمال الكلاسيكية الرائدة واقتبست منهم لكتابة نصوص جديدة بنظرة جديدة لتناقش بعض الاساطير التاريخية والثقافية. اعجبتها رواية (لوليتا) للكاتب الروسي الامريكي نوبوكوف. حيث قامت بإعادة كتابة قصة الرواية والتي هي عن الولوج الجنسي بالأطفال لتكون مسرحيتها الموسومة (كيف تعلمت السياقة) حيث عالجت فيها هذا الموضوع من زاوية مختلفة تماما.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الولوج الجنسي بالأطفال، الجنس، المسؤولية، الثقافة، المماثلة

1. Introduction

After 450 performances over a fifteen-month run, *How I Learned to Drive* (1997) continues to be produced across the country and around the world. The play won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for drama. This winning ultimately confirms Paula Vogel's reputation as a daring and important American playwright (Mansbridge, *Paula Vogel* 2014). *Li'l Bit* narrates her past experience with Uncle Peck (her aunt's husband). The play is set in rural Maryland. It is a memory play that does not run chronologically. The readers first meet *Li'l Bit* at the age of seventeen (in 1969), then thirteen, eighteen, eleven, twenty-seven, and finally thirty-five. She reveals her sexually abusive relationship with Uncle Peck who molests her at the age of eleven while teaching her how to drive. *How I Learned to Drive* was inspired partly by Vogel's admiration of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. Vogel notes that she has been fascinated by this novel since high school, and she read it about half a dozen times. She admires the neutrality of the book: the neutrality of approaching a topic like the morality of child abuse (Bigsby, 1999). The narrator of *How I Learned to Drive* is the female character or the abused girl, not the abuser, Humbert, as in *Lolita*. Vogel attempts to achieve the neutrality of Nabokov through a feminine approach (the female character as the narrator). Vogel states that she wants to create a man who is a love object to a woman as subject (Bigsby, 1999). While Vogel might write from a feminist perspective, she does not portray her women uncritically and her men unsympathetically (Berney, 1994). Her play is about responsibility and empathy. Vogel as an adapter, or as "a playwright's playwright," using Joanna Mansbridge's term ("Paula Vogel" 2014, p.372), retells *Lolita* that is "a story of pedophilia" (Pellegrini, 2005, p.467). Vogel treats the subject of pedophilia in *How I Learned to Drive* from a completely different angle. She makes her reader listen or consider the other side of the story. Vogel remarks, "you have to go against the grain. If the audience does not embrace both sides of an issue, there can be no real ... dialogue... you can never be correct... open up a dialogue..." (Cited in Bigsby, 1999, p.319). In order to open up this dialogue, Vogel rewrites *Lolita* and presents social concepts of pedophilia and victim and victimizer in a different light. She indicates that such influential figures as Tennessee Williams, John Guare, and Caryl Churchill "gave [me] this huge permission: never write the same play

twice. Rip everything you did the last time apart. Start all over again” (Tichler and Kaplan, 2012, p.117). Vogel finds connections between pedophilia and social myths and culture. This research paper would investigate these connections in *How I Learned to Drive* and attempts, at the same time, in this perspective a comparative study with *Lolita*. The study will focus on the following questions as: who does become a pedophile? What are the social circumstances that make him a pedophile? Does the abused female figure play a role in encouraging him to practice his pedophilic desires?

2-Theory and Methodology

Linda Hutcheon, author of *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), which will be the base of comparison of this research study, finds that adaptation is so pervasive and is done in a variety of genres: stories, novels, poems, plays, paintings, and operas. Adaptation is an old habit, and the postmodern writer inherits this same habit with more possibilities (Hutcheon, 2006). It is an invitation from Hutcheon to investigate any possible adaptation in a literary work.

Although adaptation tends to be connected with a shift in media such as the adaptation of a novel to a film, or a play to an opera, adaptation from text to text is viable as well. Hutcheon also states that “[i]t is the very act of adaptation itself that interests me, not necessarily in any specific media or even genre” (Hutcheon, 2006). Her words open some chances for this research in exploring the theory of adaptation in one of Vogel’s plays. Some writers regard text-to-text adaptations as a typical adaptation: “[o]ne must remember that a novel is a peculiar, silent presentation, compromised solely of words; its messages are not meant to be heard or seen, but rather to be read” (qtd. in Jenkins 11). Thus, text-to-text adaptations’ messages are also meant to be read. Vogel’s adaptation is based on text-to-text adaptation. Hutcheon refers to three main ways of engaging with a story that is adapted to film: telling, showing, and interacting (xiv). These three ways correspond to a text, a film (a song, or even a video game), and an audience respectively. In the case of Vogel’s adaptation, the three ways will be telling, retelling, and interacting: a text, a text, and an audience. The main concern of this study will be adaptation as a text, a text, and a reader (text rather than performance would be the main concern of this research; that is why, the word “reader” will be more than “audience” hereafter).

Vogel shows in her play that even molesting a child can be something that a reader may reflect on: something that can be “greyer than most would be prepared to acknowledge” (Biggsby, p.289). Adaptations allow adapters to express their talent through prior voices. In effect, the process of adaptation is taking a possession of another’s story and filtering it by adding the adapter’s own ideas, sensibility, and interests. In fact, the fidelity and infidelity of the adaptation to the original represents a crucial part of the theory of adaptation. The fidelity- infidelity features will be observed in this research as a part of the theory of adaptation. Definitions and explanations are important first to understand adaptation, its process, and its aspects.

The research will depend on a qualitative textual analysis of the play and the novel compared here, and the argument will depend on linking the adaptation with the original. First, what Vogel adapts from the original will be identified, and then specify similarities and differences concerning that part. After that, her discourse will be discussed and analyzed. As an overview, in her *How I Learned to Drive*, Vogel borrows the theme of pedophilia from *Lolita*. She adapts this theme in a way to speak about other concerns in society and human experience: culture, sexuality, love, and family.

3- Previous Studies

Most previous studies on Vogel and her plays concentrate on the different themes discussed and treated by Vogel in her writing, such as past, memories, trauma, violence, and other issues. Her feminist approach is so clear in her plays; therefore, most of her plays deal with feminist issues, and her critics have written a lot about feminism in her works. All these matters have been discussed in previous studies but without a direct reference to Vogel's adaptive approach or the reference to her adaptations is done slightly and by the way not as a main focus with rich, deep analysis.

Joanna Mansbridge’s book *Paula Vogel* (2015) gives a critical and comprehensive review of Vogel’s plays that are written through 2014. Mansbridge’s chapters vary in discussing different themes that Vogel deals with in her plays. Each chapter of her book tackles a play or two plays under the same theme or aspect. Her chapter on *How I Learned to Drive*, for example, speaks about memory and past

lessons. Her other chapter on *Meg* and *Desdemona* concentrates on gender and authority. She also discusses in her book other aspects in Vogel's other plays like domestic violence, sexuality, fantasy, AIDS, pornography, body, empowerment, and haunted history. She shows how Vogel's plays are interrelated in the sense that to pose similar questions in different contexts and discuss them differently. Mansbridge explains how Vogel is influenced by many American and European writers in terms of defamiliarization, masquerade, plasticity, feminism, and politics to an extent.

Christopher Bigsby writes a book chapter on Vogel in his *Contemporary American Playwrights* (1999). His writing is a critical overview of Vogel's plays, and his focus is on themes and ideas provoked by Vogel such as illusion vs. reality, defamiliarization, sexuality, and feminism. He elaborates on how her plays deal with taboo subjects. He investigates how Vogel explores human life, moving around in time and space and mixing reality with fantasy. He describes how she uses humor and sentiment to state her point and make her reader acknowledge anxiety and pain and adjust to them. Bigsby indicates that she is inspired by other writers, but he does not include details or deep analysis of this inspiration.

Alan Shepard and Mary Lamb devoted a whole essay in 2002, "The Memory Palace in Paula Vogel's Plays," to memory and nostalgia in a number of Vogel's plays. The article explores Vogel's characters' attempt to remember the past to embrace the future. The writers of the article see that Vogel is staging the past memories in order to emphasize the future, the American future in particular. In Shepard's and Lamb's opinion, Vogel makes her characters busy with the memories they recollect in the play. They tell memories in the light of their present condition that form the backdrop of the action. The idea of the essay is to show how these memories come to life against the present, and how they help to imagine the future of the characters.

4- Victim and Victimizer

In the play, Peck appears the nice, kind person. He is Li'l Bit's aunt's husband. Peck does not have sex with Li'l Bit, but he molests her at the age of eleven. Peck, in the play, and Humbert, in the novel, find those little girls attractive and desirable? Who does bear the responsibility? Many critics or readers of these works easily put the blame either on those men and call them pedophilic or on the girls

themselves and call them seducers. Vogel's adaptation, however, opens readers to the possibility of reimagining and rescripting a number of myths and cultural truths around sexuality (Shepard and Lamb, 2002). Vogel finds culture, society, and family the most responsible agencies for creating these social problems of pedophilia, bad girlhood, and the sexualization of innocence. *How I Learned to Drive* starts with Li'l Bit saying that "[s]ometimes to tell a secret, you first have to teach a lesson" (Vogel, 2009, p.575). It seems that Vogel's or Li'l Bit's secret is a secret about social myths.

Li'l Bit's family is characterized by bleakness. Li'l Bit's family offers her no comfort or understanding. The family's speech is focused on sexuality but a sexuality that has no connection with genuine needs. The family offers merely mocking comments, for example those uttered by Li'l Bit's grandfather about her developing body. He leads a conversation about Li'l Bit's large breasts during dinner. He says, "[i]f Li'l Bit gets any bigger, we're gonna have to buy a wheelbarrow to carry in front of her" (Vogel, 2009, p.579). His remarks make her furious because she thinks that she needs privacy and understanding. Her grandfather, nonetheless, goes on to comment on her scholarship to study in college. In his opinion, education is useless for her. He says that "[w]hat does she need a college degree for? She's got all the credentials she'll need on her chest" (Vogel, 2009, p.580), and he wonders that "[h]ow Shakespeare going to help her lie on her back in the dark?" (Vogel, 2009, p.580). Even the names and nicknames of the family are derived from their genitalia. Li'l Bit is named by her mother when she changed Li'l Bit's diapers for the first time and parted her legs and saw the "[j]ust a little bit" (Vogel, 2009, p.578) that was between her legs. Therefore, for her family, her identity as a woman lies in her sexuality. Li'l Bit is Fed up by her family; hence, she resorts to Peck who is the one who understands her and offers her comfort. He is the one who is always ready to listen to her more than any other family member. He deals with her agony seriously. Purposefully, Vogel, in order to show the effect of the family, surrounds Li'l Bit with dysfunctional family members who seem to be unaware of their own abuse for Li'l Bit (Kimbrough, 2002). In some ways, the family might abuse her even more than Peck himself, who molests her at the age of eleven.

In a later conversation with her mother and grandmother about sex, Li'l Bit gets only confusion. The mother tells her that sex

is nice and does not hurt if the man and woman love each other, whereas her grandmother describes sex as something ugly and painful. As Andrew Kimbrough states, “[t]he three generations of women in [Li’l Bit’s] family portray the cyclical nature of the transference or responsibility, exhibiting their unwitting participation in an inheritance of abuse and violence” (2002, p.57). Li’l Bit’s mother (the second generation) blames Grandma (first generation) for providing negative information about sex; the Grandma, in turn, provides this information because she had a negative marriage experience that turned sex to be abuse. Both of the mother and the Grandma confuse Li’l Bit (third generation) about understanding sex. When Grandma married Big Papa, she was only fourteen. She was “an unwilling child bride” who still believed in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny (Vogel, 2009, p.591). The older husband, Big Papa, forced her to have sex with him at least three times a day. With Grandma’s age, the description of the sexual relationship between her and her husband, Big Papa, appears to be rape not marriage, or it appears to be a rape in a legal way or under law endorsement. Vogel here exposes the arbitrariness of the lines drawn by society (Bigsby, 1999). What is accepted and what is not accepted by society seem to be inconsistent, if not ironic: Peck waits till Li’l Bit’s eighteenth birthday to ask her for marriage when having sex with a woman is legitimate, while at the time of Grandma’s and Big Papa’s marriage, having sex at the age of fourteen was completely legitimate and acceptable. Peck is considered a pedophile while Big Papa is a legal husband that society accepts and praises. Grandma emphasizes that “[i]t was legal, what Daddy and I did! I was fourteen and in those days, fourteen was a grown-up woman” (Vogel, 2009, p.591). Big Papa himself appears here as a pedophile too. Noticeably, Humbert is depicted and called out as a predator many times in the novel; Peck is described in the stage direction when approaching the crying Li’l Bit, after her Big Papa’s harsh remarks, as if “*stalking a deer*” (Vogel, 2009, 581), but is not Big Papa a predator also when he is described in the stage direction “just like a lion chooses the gazelle” (Vogel, 2009, p.592) when he was choosing Grandma among her sisters. Correspondingly, all of them appear as predators; Big Papa is no exception.

Lucy, Li’l Bit’s mother, on the other hand, holds Grandma responsible for Lucy’s failure in marriage. Lucy blames Grandma that she did not teach her about men and sex, and she did not tell her

about real facts of life. Lucy was pregnant in her teenage years and she was forced to marry a dead-beat person, Li'l Bit's father, who left his family after a year. Lucy finds her mother responsible, while Grandma eludes responsibility and says that it was Lucy's decision. In turn, Lucy does not protect her eleven-year-old daughter when she suspects that Peck has "an unhealthy attraction" towards her (Kimbrough, 2002, p.57). She simply holds all responsibility on Li'l Bit, warning her against her long meetings with him: "[i]f anything happens, I hold you responsible" (Vogel, 2009, p.620). In this way, the teaching of family and parents is lost in this ironic cycle of who is holding responsibility. Peck comments on this teaching by telling Li'l Bit that:

[Y]ou're scared. Your mother and your grandparents have filled your head with all kinds of nonsense about men—I hear them working on you all the time—and you're scared. It won't hurt you –if the man you go to bed with really loves you. (*Li'l Bit is scared. She starts to tremble*) And I think everyone's just gotten you frightened to death about something that is just like breathing (Vogel, 2009, p.616).

Peck explains to her that sex or sexuality is as important as breathing, yet it is not taught by family or society correctly and clearly. Rebecca Murphy-Keith emphasizes that parents who are aloof from their children hold responsibility and encourage indirectly such abuse (Murphy- Keith, 2013). Likewise in Nabokov's novel, *Lolita's* mother is no better than Li'l Bit's mother. *Lolita's* mother appears removed from her daughter. She describes *Lolita* as "aggressive, boisterous, critical, distrustful, impatient, irritable, inquisitive, listless, negativistic,... and obstinate" (Nabokov, 1955, p.81). As a mother, she does not bother to understand why her daughter behaves in this way. She is instantly angry with *Lolita* and cannot be close to her while the girl is blundering as an adolescent and while "*Lolita* wanted attention" (Murphy-Keith, 2013, p.98). In a very practical way, the mother puts a plan to place her daughter even farther from her: sending her to a summer camp then immediately to a boarding school "with strict discipline" (Nabokov, 1955, p.83).

5- Culture, Society and Media

Similarly, the outside culture or society is tainted by a sexuality that does not express real sexual needs. Li'l Bit has long suffered sexual taunts made by her peers in school. Mansbridge indicates that Li'l Bit's family's teachings as well as the teaching of the community make the girl alienated from her body: "Li'l Bit's alienation from her body emerged [partly]... from the lessons taught to her by her family, her classmates, and the broader culture" (Vogel, 2014, p.142). As Li'l Bit enters puberty, she is recognized in school only because of her large breasts. Her classmates make jokes and bets over her breasts. Her female classmates watch her while showering only to make sure that her breasts are real and not foam rubber. While her female classmates envy her for her body, Li'l Bit does not understand what the big deal is about having large breasts. She does not care for being noticed by male classmates in school who like to dance with her. One of her classmates remarks, "you should take it as a compliment that the guys want to watch you jiggle. They're guys. That's what they're supposed to do" (Vogel, 2009, p.603). She considers her breasts a different entity. She separates herself from her body. Li'l Bit seems not interested in her body, and she wishes to hide (or wish away) her large breasts, as Mansbridge comments.

Drive shows how our sexualities and our subjectivities are not "our" but rather the products of culture and history. It shows a culture that separates sexual and social being and teaches young women to see their sexuality as something to flaunt and also to hide, something that defines them and yet is not theirs to define. With popular images and music punctuating the play world, we are continually reminded that this is not the private confession of an individual protagonist, but a public staging of a sexually fixated culture (Vogel, 2014, p.124).

While the classmates mock Li'l Bit's body, Peck praises it. These two different remarks make her blunder and have indelible effects on the way she sees and lives in her body. Mansbridge explains that as the play progresses Li'l Bit becomes acutely aware that her body is not hers, but it is the property of a cold and unfriendly culture (Vogel, 2014). That is why she finally retreats above her neck and lives inside the fire in her head. Li'l Bit will be responsible or she will be guilty if something wrong happens between her and Peck, as of her mother's words. But does the reader see her as guilty or cunning like Lolita?

Vogel poses through her adaptation of *Lolita* what is termed as the “Lolita” myth—the myth of a female sexuality that is both innocent and cunning, available and active. Vogel places this myth in direct tension with pedophilia (Mansbridge, *Paula Vogel* 2014). Shari Savage emphasizes that “Lolita-like or eroticized representations of girls in popular culture have been and continue to be transformational in our societal understandings of female sexuality” (2011, p.101). Savage explains how media, as its mainstream, introduces female sexuality through photos of nude minors and desirability of innocence and submissiveness. Girls themselves have no power over their own image. When *Lolita* first published in 1958, Nabokov insisted a girl should never appear on the cover. This fact indicates that, for Nabokov, the novel is not primarily about a bad girl who is abused, but it is about how a man becomes a pedophile, and about the circumstances around a girl’s abuse. Savage argues in another article entitled “*Lolita*: Genealogy of a Cover Girl” that Nabokov means to unveil Lolita slowly. Lolita is raped by her step-father at the age of 12, and Savage finds that her blameworthiness becomes more important than her abuse in discussing the novel. To cope with the mainstream of the media, publishers ignored Nabokov’s edict, and an image of a girl featured most of the novel’s covers. The novel has continued to sell the mythic version of Lolita and her bad-girl reputation. In Savage’s opinion, the cover should reflect the content of a book, and the novel is not about a bad girl (2015).

The notion of the bad girl comes mainly from the scene when Humbert describes his first intercourse with Lolita and how she seduces him after a failing night of planning to rape her while she is asleep under the effect of a sleeping drug. He is startled to see Lolita the morning after that night “a sportive lassie” who

[R]olled over to my side, and her warm brown hair came against my collarbone ... Her kiss, to my delirious embarrassment, had some rather comical refinements of flutter and probe... Her cheekbones were flushed, her full underlip glistened... with a burst of rough glee... here is where we start (Nabokov, 1955, p.133).

As a juvenile, she does not know about sex. Savage again discusses the visual rhetoric or myth of girlhood gone badly. She criticizes such myths and deems them dangerous and contends that

such narratives about sexuality can be harmful. The danger is that such myths transform history into nature. In other words, this transformation naturalizes myth; the eroticized girl seen so often in popular representations has been naturalized by contemporary culture (2015). Vogel is fundamentally aiming from her adaptation of *Lolita* to question this myth:

Myths are, by nature, untrue. But myths cannot be dismissed as fictions and fairy tales, because they have real impact on girls' lives. When sexuality is understood only in terms of cultural and social myths that operate in ways that are counter progressive, hidebound, and restrictive, we have a problem. It is imperative, therefore, to examine myths. (Cited in Savage, 2015, p.158)

Vogel prompts her readers to investigate social myths. *Lolita* is not to be blamed here; it is culture, according to Savage, to be blamed. Culture sexualizes girls and then blames them for desirability (Savage, 2015). Murphy-Keith, in correspondence, agrees with the appropriations of female sexuality, and she advocates confronting culture that pre-sexualizes children and makes pedophilia appealing (Murphy-Keith, 2013). Going back to *Lolita*'s covers' issue, the focus of the designers of the cover is to eroticize innocence (Savage, 2015). In a similar situation, at the age of thirteen, Li'l Bit is convinced by Peck to come to his studio and let him take some provocative pictures of her. He makes her show partial nudity. Li'l Bit responds to his instructions to make some poses. Christopher Bigsby notices that the photo shoot itself takes place against a background of other pictures from *Playboy* and Calvin Klein ads and the image of Carroll's Alice Liddell. Bigsby finds that there is "a context for the eroticization of children no less than of women, a legitimizing in cultural terms for what, on an individual level, is seen as deeply suspect" (1999, p.325). Vogel's play reveals how children become aware of sex. She emphasizes the role of images and ads in acquiring the sexual information in a culture. These images hold the moments when innocence turns to experience (Bigsby, 1999). Therefore, these images or poses are enjoyed according to the individual sensibility of the audience members (Kimbrough, 2002). Li'l Bit makes postures and moves her body according to Peck's desiring gaze: "*Li'l Bit turns to him like a plant to the sun*" (Vogel, 2009, p.605). The reader in this scene does

not see a thirteen-year-old girl, but he sees “an attractive adult pose proactively for her uncle” (Kimbrough, 2002, p.53). Li'l Bit does not respond because she is a bad girl, but she, as David Sarvan explains, “suddenly discovers that she has become an actor in a drama that has been scripted for her by an exploitative, if well-meaning spectator who is, in turn, the product of a society that values women for their allure” (1999, p.264). This drama is the whole society and culture we live in.

To realize this fact, Vogel makes the play's readers identify themselves with Peck because as they focus on Li'l Bit in the photo shoot scene, they are in part unwittingly standing in Peck's shoes gazing at her through the camera of Peck. The readers simply, in Kimbrough's opinion, feel uncomfortable; Vogel may have provided a means for readers to condemn pedophilia while at the same time indulging their erotic tastes. She wants to replace the old stories that hold the responsibility of child abuse only on the pedophile with new stories in order to escape the trap of “scapegoating porn-speak” (2002, p.53) or scapegoating the pedophiles. Kimbrough illustrates also that Vogel attempts and succeeds in providing “a more realistic, balanced and ethical consideration of the problem of child sexual abuse” (2002, p.53). Vogel tries to reveal that our society is made by media that prefers children for their allure. It is a cycle of media, society, children, and the pedophile that Vogel seeks to break by making every party admit responsibility towards children sexual abuse, and individuals learn that they are doing the objectifying; hopefully, they will do just like Li'l Bit: remember and reconstruct. There is a level of responsibility on Li'l Bit, as Bigsby notices that are declared in the words of the Voice: an “Implied consent” (1999, p.324). And when Li'l Bit revisits her past, she takes responsibility for a past that she, though, as a child, could not have had responsibility. The cycle is broken and the process of healing starts when Li'l Bit forgives Li'l Bit by the end of the play (Herren, 2010). That said, each party in the cycle needs to admit responsibility, recognize complicity, step to overcome the problem, heal, and reconstruct.

Vogel proposes that media or culture is the main party that needs to hold the responsibility of making children aware of sex and how they acquire sexual information through their culture. It is a culture that creates the Lolita archetype or the avatar for the present construction of femininity. Such an archetype encourages women to

conceive themselves as instruments and shatters the myth of innocence as Savage indicates (Savage, 2011). Hence, the myth of bad girlhood and the myth of Lolita end the myth of adolescence and the myth of innocence. The marketing of children's bodies permeates society. Fashion and advertising instruct young girls to become little women and then blame them, like Lolita, for being seductive and appearing sexual. Children are promoted as objects of desire and dominated by sexuality, while adults act as voyeurs. Innocence is repurposed in sexualized representations. The story of Li'l Bit's molestation could be a dramatization of how a girl, perhaps any girl, becomes an adult (Savran, 1999). It is this contradiction that calls upon teen or even preteen girls to attract and be desired but remain pure and untouched (Savage, 2011). It is the same contradiction that creates the pedophiles and then blames them for being children abusers. To the readers' surprise, however, Lolita becomes a name or a marker of girlhood gone bad (the myth of Lolita), while men who molest children are rarely called "Humberts" (there is no myth of Humbert) (Savage, 2015).

6- Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, Nabokov's and Vogel's messages overlap to form one message to society that persists that Peck is one of us; he is not the "other." In reality, he lives with our families, eats with us at our tables, and cares for our children. According to these writers, pedophilia is something that is out of the pedophile's control. Both texts employed in this research show that the pedophiles have experienced trauma at certain time during their early lives. Society should consider them as patients to be cured. This study shows how culture and media play a role in encouraging these patients to abuse children instead of containing these patients and healing them. The solution of the problem is not to feel disgusted and outrageous of the pedophile. The solution is to minimize the sexual abuse of children, and this action can be done with the interventions and collaboration of family, society, and media.

Pedophiles are supposed to be punished by law. Humbert himself admits many times in the novel his guilt and how he deserves punishment. He spends the whole novel speaking to and addressing the jury, the readers, to explain and justify his guilt. Paradoxically, Vogel in her play is suggesting treatment rather than punishment; it is a treatment in the sense of control. There is no complete cure for

child abusers or pedophiles, but there is limitation. Vogel converts the blame from the pedophiles themselves to media and society. She revolts against old social myths that merely resort to punish the outsiders (such as the pedophiles) instead of having a healthier social atmosphere that transforms outsiders into healthy insiders.

The researcher recommends investigating the negative role of culture and media in other texts. Media and social media are becoming an integral part of people's life, and attention needs to be paid to the content and messages of social media. Researches can explore this issue not only in literary texts but also in memes, videos, and posts.

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