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“Mirages and Nightmares” (1): The narrative lessons of *Lolita* from novel to script to screen

I.

“How did they ever make a movie of ‘Lolita’?” This question is asked over and over in the trailer to Stanley Kubrick’s 1962 film adaptation, which was drawn in part from the script Nabokov prepared. What the disembodied voices asking the question were wondering, of course, in tones accompanied by curiosity, astonishment, and even an occasional leer, is How did Kubrick get past the censors with a project about a likable pedophile? That particular question was fairly simple to answer: he removed the pedophilia. Kubrick made Lolita a little older, Humbert a little more sympathetic, and didn’t shoot the sex. (For a more detailed analysis, see note 17.) James Harris even admitted, “We wanted [Humbert] to be the only innocent person in the piece.” (2) They succeeded: An exit poll conducted by the *New York Herald Tribune* at the premiere turned up, among others, a fifteen-year-old girl who felt sorry for Humbert because “the girl took [him] over,” and an incredulous 48-year-old man who asked, “What man would take all that abuse?” Sue Lyons’s own mother was concerned that “people may confuse my daughter with the slimy character she plays,” and one 24-year-old woman even blamed Shelley Winters’s Charlotte for bad parenting. Though essentially a marketing gimmick, the question implies that it is safer to publish a book on a delicate topic than to produce a film—safer, perhaps, because less immediate: the words on the page are distanced from the images they represent by a reader's mental translation of them into the visual. The question, then, reinforces the tension between the verbal and the visual that provides an undercurrent in much of Nabokov's work and the primary subject of the "Lantern Slides" chapter of his memoir. An examination of that chapter, applied to a reading a *Lolita*, illuminates the conflicts involved in producing a screen version of the novel.

The major and minor alterations from novel to screenplay to film are due only in part to Nabokov, who originally scripted the story to epic length. Kubrick took what he wanted from Nabokov's lengthy script, dipped into the novel for more, and included some of his own scenes and touches throughout, yielding a product Nabokov described twelve years later, just before the publication of *Lolita: A Screenplay*: "in its own right, it is first-rate, but it is not what I wrote." He further noted, "at least I shall be able to have people read my *Lolita* play in its original form." (3) Though he claimed this was the screenplay he submitted to Kubrick, a collation against the draft typescripts at the Berg Collection reveals that Nabokov reworked it before publication. The version ultimately published is as much a transformation of the original narrative into a new reading experience—a novel-in-script, as it were—as it is a blueprint for an unrealized film. Rather than a discrete version of the novel, *Lolita: A Screenplay* is a complement to it, and as such mandates a simultaneous reading. Nabokov uses quotation marks to denote excerpts from Humbert's confession (*Lolita: A Screenplay* 10; hereafter *L:AS*), and in a few instances even includes an ellipsis: if we want to read those quotes in their entirety, we must have a copy of the novel on hand. (4) But the complementarity is commutative:

Nabokov claimed he incorporated into the script scenes he had "discarded from the novel but still preserved," (5) as well as new scenes devised too late to have been included. So: A complete reading of the novel includes a review of *Lolita: A Screenplay*.

Lolita: A Screenplay may not represent a new genre, but when examined in light of *Lolita* the novel it does suggest the interplay and overlap of text and image VN had warned us of in the "Lantern Slides" chapter of *Speak, Memory*, and illustrated with the multiple permutations of that work. We are reminded of Nabokov's description of the process of working on his memoir, and its multiple revisions and translations between Russian and English: "This re-Englishing of a Russian re-version of what had been an English re-telling of Russian memories in the first place, proved to be a diabolical task, but some consolation was given me by the thought that such multiple metamorphosis, familiar to butterflies, had not been tried by any human before" (*Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited* 13; hereafter *SM:AAR*). Ultimately, Nabokov's screenplay for *Lolita* does as much to question the use of memory as a narrative device—in fiction and memoir both—as does "Lantern Slides," and as much to illuminate the reader's parallel translational role: With *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov translated visual memories into a text, which the reader translates into visual images—though obviously not back into their source material. With *Lolita: A Screenplay*, he created the verbal representation of a picture which was itself a visual translation from Humbert's written record of his visual memories. That reading and translation lead to no equivalencies, only to new iterations, represents a fundamental challenge to traditional generic distinctions, especially between fiction and memoir.

II.

"Lantern Slides," published in its first incarnation two years before the completion of *Lolita*, seems a caveat to readers of the novel, as Nabokov explores the verbal and visual aspects of memory, suggesting ways in which they might be used and abused by memoirists such as himself. As such it provides a road map to the narration of *Lolita*, the so-called "confession" of Humbert Humbert, who may not use slides to support and distort his story, but whose photographs, postcards, and film footage, real and imagined, serve the same function. In Nabokov's screenplay of *Lolita* he preserves the plot and characters of the original, with modest modification, and at least alludes to its style. (Both would, necessarily, be mangled much more by the exigencies of the media involved and by the dictates of "taste" and "compassion" than Humbert's original confession had been by its editor, Dr. John Ray, Jr. (*The Annotated Lolita* 3; hereafter *AL*) With the narrative structure he offers repeated nods to this slide show analogy, suggesting *Lolita: A Screenplay* not as his own translation or adaptation of Humbert's written confession, but as Humbert's own recomposition of the source material for the screen.

In "Lantern Slides," in which Nabokov's imagined slides stand in for his childhood tutors, he suggests to us the pitfalls inherent in the use of memory as a narrative device. The first problem is with the memories themselves, which can be handed off, or unconsciously created, or derived from other memories. Nabokov admits, for example, that in the case of his first tutor, he might have co-opted a memory from his mother's repeated retellings. (6) While the slides validate his existence as narrator, the people he claims the slides represent are ephemeral, reduced to anecdotal reports of scenes he witnessed, or heard described, or conflated with others, or possibly even invented. The second problem is that the mechanism by which memories are conveyed is as imperfect as the memories themselves. Visual memories must be translated into words, which will necessarily result in some distortion. (7)

Nabokov also reminds us that memories, and their concrete visual analogs, can be used either to support or to instigate a story—and sometimes, both. He opens the chapter: “I am going to show a few slides, but first let me indicate the where and the when of the matter” (*SM: AAR* 153), interpreting the evidence before we see it. He also devotes several pages to the Educational Magic-Lantern Projections series shown by his tutor Lenski (though it is suggested that this might not have been his real name). Nabokov highlights the deficiencies in Lenski’s plan to illustrate readings with pertinent images, just as he himself does in “Lantern Slides,” and as Humbert does in his confession.

Finally, by presenting memories as slides, and his narrative as captions, Nabokov calls attention to the credence we as an audience tend to give physical evidence. Perhaps this is why he includes photographs in his own memoir: to distinguish it in some palpable way from his fiction. (8) But we should be wary of such evidence. He speaks knowingly of his grandfather’s “sad and strange eyes,” but that assurance is derived from photographs which are used in place of memories.

III.

More than reminding us of what we already know—that first person narration is as fallible in autobiography as it is in fiction—“Lantern Slides” provides insight into

Nabokov's conception of character, illuminating another challenge he faced when translating *Lolita* into film.

Early in the chapter he writes, "Coincidence of pattern is one of the wonders of nature" (*SM: AAR* 157), and his slide show demonstrates the pattern of his tutors: "In the place where my current tutor sits, there is a changeful image, a succession of fade-ins and fade-outs; the pulsation of my thought mingles with that of the lead shadows and turns Ordo into Max and Max into Lenski and Lenski into the schoolmaster" (*SM: AAR* 171). His father, however, he can "visualize" without creating a slide, suggesting that he is not part of the same pattern; not a type, but an original.

This contrast between thematically related characters and unique individuals plays itself out more subtly in the novel, in which Humbert recognizes that "there are two kinds of visual memory: one when you skillfully recreate an image in the laboratory of your mind, with your eyes open (and then I see Annabel in […] general terms […]; and the other when you instantly evoke, with shut eyes, […] the objective, *absolute optical replica* of a beloved face […] (and this is how I see Lolita)" (*AL* 11; my italics). As Beaujour notes in her discussion of Nabokov's "Translation and Self-Translation," "…what Nabokov prizes in art is specificity and difference, mimics in his works always get things wrong and miss the essence, while slowly being transformed into cruder versions of their victims." (9) Applying this to conceptions of character, we must ask, Is Lolita a translation of Humbert's Annabel? Fittingly, though Humbert did once have a photo of Annabel, he recalls that she "did not come out well" in it (*AL* 13). This allows later nymphets to fit more easily the type he derives from that vague image, (10) and Lolita strikes the reader initially as one of that type: Humbert even refers to Annabel as

Lolita's "precursor" (*AL* 9). Later, of course, he dreams of Lolita in "strange and ludicrous disguises as Valeria or Charlotte, or a cross between them" (*AL* 254), suggesting that he sees Lolita as part of a different pattern. As the novel draws to a close we are asked to believe that Humbert loves Lolita apart from her similarities to Annabel and despite her affinity with Charlotte. Such a conception, however, is beyond him. He acknowledges later, "We would prefer not to have known at all our neighbor, the retired hot-dog stand operator, if it turns out he has just produced the greatest book of poetry his age has seen" (*AL* 265). (11) The only evidence that he might allow Lolita an existence apart from a precursor of any kind is the very absence of evidence: he has burned all his photographs of her, protecting her from a resemblance to Annabel or to Charlotte (*AL* 232).

IV.

As we apply the narrative lessons of "Lantern Slides" to *Lolita*, we see that though the truth of the story is *thwarted* by the fact that Humbert has "words to play with"—he laments, in fact, that he has "*only* words to play with" (*AL* 32; my italics)—the confessional narrative is by definition *enabled* by the fact that the key to the visually recollected past is in its translation into language.

Just as Nabokov tells us only of tutors who fall into a pattern, and only things about them that support it, Humbert recollects details that fall into a pre-selected pattern. He even admits, "It is just possible that had I gone to a strong hypnotist he might have extracted from me and arrayed in a logical pattern certain chance memories that I have threaded through my book with considerably more ostentation than they present themselves with to my mind even now when *I know what to seek in the past*" (*AL* 255; my italics). However, while Nabokov recognizes that the pattern he finds "curiously clear" in retrospect was probably not "a completely deliberate scheme" on the part of his father, who selected his tutors (*SM: AAR*.154), throughout Humbert's narrative we see him not just reviewing his past looking for patterns to emerge, or deciding on a pattern and selecting memories that fit; at times he even claims to act with a view in his mind of what the memory of the action will be, "trying to see things as you will remember having seen them" (*AL* 86), selecting significant moments as they arrive, storing them for future use. Later, however, he warns us that "destiny in the making is […] not one of those honest mystery stories where all you have to do is keep an eye on the clues" (*AL* 210-11). (12)

And so our attention is called not just to the content of Humbert's memories, but to their selection and arrangement. Just as Miss Pratt at Lolita's school explains that her teachers "cannot decide whether Dolly has exceptional emotional control or none at all" (*AL* 195), so too we are aware of the inconsistencies of Humbert's memories, and have to wonder if he has "exceptional" narrative control or "none at all." At one moment he tells us that their pursuer resembles "Gustave Trapp, a cousin of [his] father's in Switzerland […]." (*AL* 218). Seventy-five pages later he revives the association only to call attention to its failure. "I had lost contact with Trapp's image. It had become completely engulfed by the face of Clare Quilty—as represented, with artistic precision, by an easeled photograph of him that stood on his uncle's desk" (*AL*, p.290-91).

Finally, we must not forget that in addition to being at times a passive memoirist, Humbert is at others an aggressive narrator. Charlotte, he writes, "desired me to resuscitate all my loves so that she might make me insult them, and trample upon them […] thus destroying my past […] but I also had to invent, or to pad atrociously, a long series of mistresses for Charlotte's morbid delectation" (*AL* 79). So too he implicates the avid reader in any mischief he perpetrates, at our expense, to appease us. After her death he creates another false memory: To convince the Farlows that he is Lolita's biological father, he envisions a fictitious affair with Charlotte, which he fabricates in tragic-romantic detail courtesy a photo of her taken in "April 1934, a memorable spring" (*AL* 100). We can safely assume, then, that other details are designed to appease, sway, or even entertain, his readers.

Humbert repeatedly offers a menagerie of such evidence—present and lost, destroyed, or fictitious—to gain our confidence. As stand-ins for people and places from his past, photographs in the novel serve only to exemplify the limits of the visual component of memory. He offers a set of "glossy-blue picture postcards" depicting the "luxurious hotel" his father owned on the Riviera (*AL* 9), which ultimately stands in for the man himself. When the newspaper photo is taken at The Enchanted Hunters, Humbert recalls, "There came a blinding flash and (the group was) immortalized—insofar as the texture and print of small-town newspaper can be deemed immortal" (*AL* 127). Charlotte attempts to keep alive the memory of her son with a photograph, but, we are told, she seldom animates it with words (*AL*, p.80), suggesting perhaps that the visual is more reliable without narrative accompaniment. (It is worth noting that written evidence plays a similar role: Humbert works on his "confession" from the text of a supposedly photographically remembered diary, and offers as testimony to his wife's character various photographically recollected—and then, surely, edited—excerpts from her lengthy letter.)

V.

The evolution of the title of Nabokov's memoir from *Conclusive Evidence* to *Other shores*, to the proposed *Speak, Mnemosyne*, to the final *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*, illustrates a shift in the perceived role both of concrete and remembered images as mnemonic and narrative catalysts. The first suggests an active narrator deriving, or creating, a tale from visual evidence; the last, a passive narrator, whose story is alternately inspired and dictated by Memory. The transitional title, that of the Russian edition, represents the stage in which its translation into a new medium informed the final compositional understanding. Similarly, with the transfer of visual devices from the novel *Lolita* to the film, the narrative authority shifts, allowing Humbert a slightly revised and complementary vision of his confession, "the complete work being," as Beaujour puts it in her discussion of Nabokov's memoir, "the totality of the two variants which circle in orbit together." (13)

That Nabokov was creating a new work as a complement, or coda, to *Lolita*, rather than a marketable script to be merely filmed, is evident in his faithfulness to some aspects of the novel, most notably in his incorporation of the definition of a nymphet, a definition he illustrates in an unpublished scene with a veritable slide show of examples of nymphets. (The scene was cut by the British Board of Film Censors (14), and Nabokov ultimately rejected it.) He alludes to one of the most famous stylistic moments, by writing a new scene in which Quilty and Charlotte discuss Lolita's "lovely, lyrical, lilting name," and the “tears and the roses” of Dolores, and by incorporating his therapist/the rapist word play in another (*L:AS* 77). Edgar Allen Poe, Humbert’s shadow in the novel, takes at least as large a role in his screenplay; he is mentioned, quoted, and even envisioned as Humbert, who in one scene takes his name: “Edgar H. Humbert” (*L:AS* 76). Humbert’s desire to marry Lolita is more visible in the script, and is reinforced by references to Poe’s marriage, by the equation of both Lolita and Humbert’s Annabel with Poe’s (*L:AS* 67, 72), and of Charlotte with Poe’s mother-in-law (*L:AS* 74). But in re-conceiving Humbert’s confession as a film, Nabokov’s greatest challenge was illustrating the mechanisms of memory in a visual medium.

The first step was to cast the script as Humbert’s visual projection of his past. Throughout *Lolita* Humbert contemplates a film version of his memoir, a version implied not just through pervasive allusions to film culture, but through the regular reference to and use of film devices as narrative tools. In the one of the most notable instances, Humbert expresses regret at not having filmed his nymphet: “Idiot, triple idiot! I could have filmed her! I would have had her now with me, before my eyes, in the projection room of my pain and despair!” (*AL* 231). But there are dozens of examples. In some instances these devices in the script allow him to be more faithful to Humbert’s mental fluctuations and imagination than the novel had: capturing in an instantaneous visual flash what might have taken lines or pages to convey; using “optical interference” (*L:AS* 16, 18) to heighten his mental break-down at the women’s club; filming some of the “extended metaphors” of the novel (for example, Humbert as “the fairy-tale nurse of some little princess…” (*L:AS* 40)), as well as some of his dreams (as of himself as a “dark knight” who rescues the nymphet Lolita (*L:AS* 45)). As he reads Charlotte’s letter, he sees himself as "a gowned professor," "a routine Hamlet," and "a delapidated Poe" (*L:AS* 73)—and in his film version, we would see him that way, too.

Second, Nabokov establishes the theme of patterns of character in the script, (15) as when he describes the "Javanese gestures" of Mrs. Richard T. Schiller—Lolita—in the same language as those of her mother, some years and many pages earlier (*L:AS* 35, 202), and when he has them produce "the same rhythm of rustle and rerustle" (*L:AS* 53) when they seat themselves in full skirts, and tap their index fingers against their cigarettes in the same manner (*L:AS* 206). In the novel Humbert recognized the spectacular effect of such devises—as when he examines pictures of wanted criminals on display at the post office and suggests, "If you want to make a movie out of my book, have one of these faces gently melt into my own" (*AnL* 222). And in his mind he has affected a dissolve from Annabel to Lolita (he directs that the same actress play them both (*L:AS* 66)), and Valeria to Charlotte. Fearless of a lack of subtlety, Nabokov creates a new scene for the script in which Humbert asks Vladimir Nabokov, butterfly hunter, "Is that a rare specimen?" Nabokov replies, "A specimen cannot be common or rare, it can only be poor or perfect […]. You meant 'rare species.' This is a good specimen of a rather scarce subspecies" (*L:AS* 128). This scene also alerts us to the fact that if Nabokov can author a script with himself as a character, so too can Humbert.

Finally, Nabokov enhances the slide show element of the narrative, by which he allows us to see the *Screenplay* as a fictional memoir-in-script, meant to be read, rather than a straight adaptation for film. In fact he steers clear of the word "adaptation" in his foreword, in which he calls it rather a different version, a different vision, and even, in his last sentence, a "vivacious variant" of the novel (*L:AS* xii). In 1962 he noted that "[t]urning one's novel into a movie script is rather like making a series of sketches for a painting that has long ago been finished and framed" (*Strong Opinions* 6). (16) These so-called sketches, similar to the "slides" in his own memoir, become tableaux in the script—and even, in some scenes, film stills or actual slides—captioned by Humbert's stage directions. For example the scene of Charlotte's accident becomes a "picture," then a "still" which is examined by policemen "in a projection room," and then "comes to life" as film again (*L:AS* 87-88). When Lolita is in the hospital Humbert sees her as a painting, "Girl with a Hand Glass. Artist unknown" (*L:AS* 183). And in an effort to find the fled nymphet, Humbert presents to a detective a pack of photographs which "give a brief pictorial summary of Lolita's past life with him" (*L:AS* 189), a flip book, if not a slide show.

Despite much evidence that Humbert retains authorship of the screenplay and direction of the film—as when Humbert is directed to "gloat over the limp nymphet" (*L:AS* 62), and when Humbert himself directs a shot of two hands, those of "poor Humbert, poor Annabel" (*L:AS* 5)—Kubrick took strides to eradicate what he perceived as inconsistencies in the script's narration, inconsistencies that ultimately suggest the screenplay is undeniably Humbert's. (17) He discarded much of Nabokov's new material—expanded from the novel, rescued from earlier drafts of the novel as he remembered them, or invented anew, resembling somewhat Humbert's reconstruction of his own past—and returned to the source novel for replacement scenes. But the lines and paragraphs Nabokov lifted from the novel and used for stage direction are quotes from Humbert's confession; so, too, the new dialogue and description must be. (18) We regularly see the world through Humbert's eyes—most importantly, in the "shock of dazzling enchantment and recognition" (*L:AS* 40) when he first sees Lolita. And what of the scenes in which Humbert does not appear, and could not have witnessed? These are, simply, his imaginative projections. The camera is allowed occasional editorial comment, as when it "withdraws with a shudder" (*L:AS* 1) upon seeing the implements of Quilty's drug habit, or "examines ironically various crannies of the room" (*L:AS* 35) as Charlotte gives Humbert a house tour, or "gingerly inspects the litter receptacles with their cans and containers, and a small child's sneaker forgotten on the stone parapet," while Humbert merely "consults his wristwatch" (*L:AS* 177). Such commentary is in keeping with Humbert's acceptance of his culpability at the end of his confession: this is Humbert's camera. In the *Screenplay* we also hear from John Ray, who presents a sheaf of papers he claims is Humbert's confession. (That confession is a piece of evidence he narrates for us more than once.) Humbert might have, in these instances, imagined Ray in his custodial and editorial offices. Or perhaps Ray is Humbert's invention altogether. Completed over a decade after *Pale Fire*, the screenplay calls the existence of John Ray into question more forcefully than the novel does. Are Shade and Ray distinct individuals, or thematically related characters?

In *Lolita: A Screenplay* it is primarily through Ray's few appearances that Nabokov calls into question the reliability of the printed word, and the existence of patterns of character, and the validity of value judgments made on so-called evidence (*L:AS* 3). (Although: Nabokov does allow Quilty, also, to question the validity of Humbert's memoir when he states that his own imagination is stronger than his memory (*L:AS* 57).) Kubrick eliminates Ray altogether, (19) but restores his narrative function to some extent by questioning with his camera the visual component of Humbert's memory.

That Humbert has a terrible visual memory is driven home with more force in the film than in the novel or screenplay, most notably when he fails to notice that he's seen Quilty multiple times in various disguises. (20)

Kubrick contributed dozens of visual quips that alternately underscore or undermine the narrative content of the novel, being somewhat faithful to the concept of this confession by calling attention to the narrative inadequacies of his protagonist. Interestingly, though, he reverses the role of physical evidence in the construction of the story. In the novel and *Screenplay*, Humbert manipulates visual evidence to tell his story. (21) In Kubrick's vision, such evidence is mutely exploited for its connotative value. (22)

IV.

"How did they ever make a movie of 'Lolita'?" This question provided the marketing tag line for Kubrick's 1962 film, and is a question the author asked himself, and answered partially twelve years later in his preface to *Lolita: A Screenplay*, in which he collected, revised, and reduced the drafts of his original script, only parts of which Kubrick had employed. He recalls "attending with all my wits to the speech and pantomime" of the novel—its words and actions (*L:AS* ix), and claims, "all I could do […] was to grant words primacy over action" (*L:AS* x). But there is a sharp divide between the word and action of the novel and of the film. In the first, exposition and plot are implicated, with the narrative alternately instigated and reinforced by visual evidence *which we can't see*. In the second, the story is conveyed in a visual medium, in which the authority of the camera may or may not be questioned.

As with *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*—in its content, its form, and its publication history—as well as works such as *Pale Fire*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Look at the Harlequins!*, and others that reveal Nabokov's penchant for genre bending, *Lolita: A Screenplay* calls into question the generic distinction between fiction and autobiography. Just as Humbert Humbert re-imagined Annabel as Lolita, Nabokov re-imagined his novel as a script. Each discovered a Lolita /*Lolita* that was a version of its precursor, and that could not have existed without it; but both also discovered an identity entirely unique.

Notes

(1) Nabokov writes in his Foreword to *Lolita: A Screenplay* of its composition: "I persevered in the task until I could tolerate the rhythm of the dialogue and properly control the flow of the film from motel to motel, mirage to mirage, nightmare to nightmare" (*L:AS*, p.x).

(2) Corliss, p.32.

(3) Gold interview, *Strong Opinions*, pp.106-06.

(4) See also pp. 10, 114, 208-09.

(5) Appel interview, *Strong Opinions*, pp.165-66.

(6) "It seldom happens that I do not quite know whether a recollection is my own or has come to me secondhand, but in this case I do waver…" (*SM:AAR*, p.156).

(7) We are reminded of Vadim Vadimovich, who tells us in *Look at the Harlequins!*,

> We think in images, not words; all right; when, however, we compose, recall, or refashion at midnight in our brain something we wish to say in tomorrow’s sermon, or have said to Dolly in a recent dream, or wish we had said to that impertinent proctor twenty years ago, the images we think in are, of course, verbal—and even audible if we happen to be lonely and old. We do not usually think in words, since most of life is mimodrama, but we certainly do imagine words when we need them […]. (123)

(8) Though Virginia Woolf supported *Orlando*, a fictitious biography, with doctored photographic evidence in 1928, Nabokov never followed suit.

(9) Beaujour 716.

(10) “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 (that is, demoniac); and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as ‘nymphets’” (*AL* 16). Though the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers priority to the definition of “nymph” as “one of a numerous class of semidivine beings, imagined as beautiful maidens inhabiting the sea, rivers, fountains, hills ,woods, or tress, and frequently introduced by the poets as attendants on a superior deity,” it is also noted as “an insect in that stage of development which intervenes between the larva and the imago: a pupa” (1191).

(11) “We have it all arranged in our minds, and the less often we see a particular person the more satisfying it is to check how obediently he conforms to our notion of him every time we hear of him. Any deviation in the fates we have ordained would strike us as not

only anomalous but unethical. We would prefer not to have known at all our neighbor, the retired hot-dog stand operator, if it turns out he has just produced the greatest book of poetry his age has seen." (*AnL* 265)

(12) In this respect the late scene involving Humbert, Rita, and an amnesiac stranger is a telling set piece. The three awake together in a hotel, the stranger "completely amnesic," and "peevishly insinuating that somehow [they] had purloined his (worthless) identity," an identity bound up with personal memory. Six months later, still bearing the unfortunate cognomen "Jack Humbertson," he was reportedly "still isolated from his personal past" (*AnL* 260). This incident leads Humbert to contemplate the composition of an essay expounding his theories on the machinations of memory, developing a theory that the key to understanding "perceptual time" lies in a keen self-awareness, perhaps solipsistically so, yielding a sense of continuity between "the storable future and the stored past" (*AnL* 260). This view is consistent with his idea that memory does not begin with a reflection on the past but with observation of the present.

(13) Beaujour 723.

(14) Corliss 60.

(15) Humbert voices this distinction in relation to the McCoos' house, now reduced to a heap of ashes: "I'm sure there would have been some flaw, some disappointment. What I mean is that I was pursuing a particular dream, not *any* house but *that* house" (*L:AS* 36).

(16) Scenes Nabokov extrapolated from the novel for the *Screenplay* include Humbert's speech at the women's club, at which he offers his definition of a nymphet and suffers a break-down; Humbert at the sanitarium; Lolita and her friends talking about going to camp; Charlotte on the phone with the McCoos; Humbert at the train station, in the cab,

and at the McCoos'; Lolita talking to Charlotte about Humbert; heightened allusions to Charlotte's impending demise and the role of the dog. Many of these scenes were ultimately discarded by Kubrick, who returned to the novel itself for replacement material. Nabokov's dance scene, which gave Kubrick the opportunity for some of the most hilarious blocking in the film, was entirely new, as were scenes Kubrick later discarded in which Lo invites Humbert to the dance; models her clothes for him before hand; and the drive over (though elements of the drive might have inspired the scene at the drive-in).

(17) Nabokov wrote in his foreword, "only ragged odds and ends of my script had been used. The modifications, the garbling of my best little finds, the omission of entire scenes, the addition of new ones, and all sorts of other changes may not have been sufficient to erase my name form the credit titles but they certainly made the pictures as unfaithful to the original script"—he does not say "original novel"—"as an American poet's translation from Rimbaud or Pasternak" (*L:AS* xii). While using more than Nabokov suggests of his 403-page script, and resuscitating many unused scenes from the novel, Kubrick still managed to alter the structure and characters wildly. By making Lolita too old; a sexual aggressor; and a brat, he makes her more predator than victim, offering Humbert up instead as an object of sympathy. In his casting and directing of Shelley Winters as Charlotte, he recalls Nabokov's slide show phenomenon: Winters's Charlotte looks and acts more like Nabokov's description of Valeria in the novel: rather than his weak solution of Marlene Dietrich, "Humbert had on his hands a large, puffy, short-legged, big breasted and practically brainless *baba*" (*AnL* 26). He also creates a larger role for Quilty, who then robs our protagonist of much of his wit and charm.

Of Nabokov's scenes, Kubrick kept the following, at times verbatim, at others rewriting dialogue completely: Humbert's tour of the Haze house; the idea of the dance, and some of the dialogue, and Uncle Ivor; the introduction of Quilty, and his history with Charlotte. Scenes of Charlotte and Humbert's domestic interaction, their dance lesson, their discussion of child-rearing, Lo's return from the dance and the ensuring fight are all retained in the spirit of Nabokov's script, if not with all of his dialogue. Most of Charlotte's love letter, Humbert's imagination running with Charlotte's gun, the dialogue about Lolita's future at camp and boarding school, and Charlotte's speeches when she discovers the diary, through to her death, all originate with Nabokov, as do Lolita's aggression after leaving camp, and the scene at the Enchanted Hunters, from their arrival to departure, though admittedly Nabokov was least pleased with the changes to those scenes. Also kept in one form or another were the fight over friends and the school play; the scene about the piano lessons; Lolita at the phone booth; Humbert's belief that the police are following them. Throughout, some of Nabokov's allusions to the verbal might of the novel were kept, such as "Lolita" as a "lovely lyrical lilting name," the "tears and roses" of "Dolores," Lolita's "corny" "Lolita-sweeter" rhyme and of course Poe's "mid-dim." Kubrick also kept, but altered, Quilty's call from the hospital; and Humbert's visit to Mrs. Richard Schiller. (Though importantly, Nabokov makes it plain that Lolita has turned into a version of her mother, mimicking her "Javanese gestures"; similarly, instead of showing a photo of Lo when Humbert is in bed with Charlotte, Nabokov would have shown a photo of Charlotte at 25, to reinforce their resemblance. Kubrick avoids these gestures.)

Kubrick omitted almost everything else in Nabokov's script, most importantly several scenes making Lolita look like a victim: Nabokov had Humbert use sleeping pills to knock her out; he wanted to pan into "normal" rooms of the motel, and to highlight Lolita as Ibsen's Nora: Humbert says he'll die if she leaves him, threatens that if she turns him in she'll end up in a home, and twice she points out that she has no where to go; but in Kubrick's version, it is Lolita who begs Humbert not to leave. Also, sadly, Kubrick axed the scene into which Nabokov wrote himself, as a butterfly hunter encountered on their road trip.

Kubrick revised other scenes from the novel and script, and invented replacement scenes, such as Humbert's drink in the bathtub after Charlotte's death, and his ping-pong match with Quilty. He derived the Dr. Zimph scene from a scene VN wrote for the script (and never published) between Humbert and Miss Pratt, a school official, as well as from his published scene of a phone call from Quilty discussing Humbert's legal guardianship of Lolita. Kubrick also added visual cues throughout to text and composition, and made a few subtle but effective changes, such as turning Nabokov's doctors at the Enchanted Hunters to policemen, turning Quilty's playfrom *The Nymphet* to *The Woman Who Loved Lightning*, and adding Peter Sellers's line at the motel: "you have a most interesting face."

(18) See *L:AS* 10, 40, 87, 99, 108, 114, 175, 208-09.

(19) For other appearances by Ray, see *LA:S* 187-8, 212-13.

(20) Quilty, Dr. Zimph (Miss Pratt in Nabokov's version), and the policeman at the Enchanted Hunters—Ye Unforgettable Inn (Quilty's disembodied voice in the *Screenplay*) are the same man. Kubrick's Quilty, in the guise of state trooper, ends their

dialogue at the hotel with a terse, “You have a most interesting face Goodnight.” No face is interesting to Humbert except Lolita’s—a point underscored both by Nabokov and by Kubrick in panning from him rocking with laughter on Lolita’s bed as he reads Charlotte’s letter, to Quilty’s Drome ad on Lolita’s wall. Kubrick also suggests Humbert’s solipsism. As Humbert reads aloud the idea that “only a devoted wife could discern my microscopic script,” a speech buried as a stage direction in Nabokov’s screenplay (*L:AS* 84), unaccompanied by visual direction, Kubrick shows us the happy homemaker Charlotte Haze.

(21) For examples in the screenplay, see *L:AS* 65, where Humbert shows Lolita his drawing of her, and his photo of Annabel: Lo says she does not resemble Annabel in the least; and *L:AS* 66, where Humbert is in the photo of Annabel, which is then animated into film; and *L:AS* 78, where a photo of Charlotte twenty years earlier reminds him of her daughter (But we see this snapshot: “Charlotte at 25 resembles her daughter more than she does now” (*LAS* 78), and Charlotte inscribes the photo to Humbert: “April 1946 [if it is now 1960.]”)

(22) For example, the photograph of The Late Mr. Haze, and the photograph of Lolita, both in Charlotte’s bedroom.

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