

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

As social beings, it is within human nature to interact with and depend on another human being. Aware or not, humans instinctively form relationships with other human beings as a means to survive. Henceforth, in relationships, each individual tends to set certain expectations of each other. One may form a formal relationship with a business person to assist them in business matters. One may form an intimate relationship with someone they love, hoping the love is mutual. This aligns with Littlejohn's statement which says, "A relationship is defined not so much by what is said as by the partners' expectations for behavior" (Littlejohn, 1992:262). Thus, there is always something one expects in forming relationships with others, which commonly in order to gain certain benefits. It can be for satisfaction, well-being, or other purposes.

In parent-child relationships, some might perceive the relationship to be unconditional, where the parent loves and takes care of the child unconditionally. However, it is not always the case. To compensate for the efforts they put in taking care of the child, some parents set certain expectations for their child. Whether they expect the child to excel in academic matters, pursue a certain career path, take care of them in their elderly days, or behave in a way they tolerate, in truth, not all parent-child relationships are unconditional. Thus, if the expectations are not met, conflicts may appear in the relationship and affect the

child's development negatively. For example, there are strict parents who expect their children to achieve perfect scores in school, and often reprimand the child in a harsh manner if they fail to accomplish it. This might result in the children's low self-esteem, behavioral and psychological issues, or even intergenerational effects—in which, the child adopts a similar parenting style once they become parents themselves—due to the stress and trauma of the inability of accomplishing their parents' expectations. This shows that how parents treat their child affects their development and well-being greatly.

The memory of one's experiences as a child is often reflected in their adulthood experiences—such as the intergenerational effects mentioned previously. Aleksiejuk explains about the effect of one's childhood experiences on their adulthood experiences, “Undoubtedly, events that take place in the family constitute such experiences, because they occur first chronologically” (Aleksiejuk, 2015:159). This implies that one's childhood experiences are the experiences that first formed in their memory and engraved in their mind until adulthood, constructing their belief, behavior, and identity as they grow. In this case, said experiences include how the parents treat their child according to the expectations and the parents' expectations of what they gain in return for raising the child, such as perfect scores as mentioned previously. However, the parents also might expect something as deviant as the fulfillment of their carnal desires from their children, which, then, drives them to sexually abuse their children.

Parents who sexually abuse their child commonly force or encourage their child to engage in any sexual activities—such as fondling, oral sex, anal sex, and

sexual intercourse—through threats, psychological manipulation, or physical abuse. Maltz and Holman believed that in most cases, the victims of child sexual abuse are the daughters while the perpetrators are often their father or step-father (Maltz & Holman, 1987:14). The abuse happens because the child, who has no power against the parents, is left with no other options, but complying with the parents' carnal desires, considering that the victim is often very young. Though there are cases of parents who sexually abuse the child that are already come-of-age, the case of child sexual abuse is more commonly found in children of younger age due to the belief that younger children are easier to manipulate, especially young girls.

There are numerous cases of fathers or step-fathers who sexually abuse their daughters, such as what is depicted in *Lolita*, a novel written in 1955 by Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), a Russian-American novelist. Other than writing novels, Nabokov is known for researching butterflies as a lepidopterist, writing poems and short stories, and translating literature works (mainly English-Russian translations) under the pen-name Vladimir Sirin. At the time *Lolita* was written and published, Nabokov was teaching Russian and European literature as a professor at Cornell University. Though Nabokov has released a number of notable works before (such as *The Defense* in 1930, *Invitation to a Beheading* in 1936, and *The Gift* in 1938), it was a challenge for Nabokov to publish *Lolita* because back in 1950s, the contents of *Lolita* are considered as taboo. The novel even got rejected by a lot of American publishers due to its obscene content until a French publishing house, Olympian Press—which is a publishing house for vulgar

books—accepted and published *Lolita* in 1955. The novel is immediately surrounded with controversies not long after it got published, and even banned in several countries, such as in France, England, and New Zealand. This is mainly because of its disturbing premise which tells about the intimate relationship of a middle-aged man and his step-daughter.

Set in the late 1940s of North America, *Lolita* is narrated by Humbert Humbert, a 37-years-old literature professor, which mainly tells about Humbert himself and his life experience with Dolores Haze (or Lolita, as Humbert refers), a 12-years-old girl. Humbert, who is attracted to young girls, finds haven in Dolores's presence as she is first introduced by Charlotte Haze, her mother and the master of the Haze's house in which they live in. During his stay, Humbert and Dolores often interact with each other in a sexual manner, as Humbert depicts it. He writes each and every thoughts and interactions related to Dolores, even after he marries Charlotte. However, keeping the journal is a mistake of his since Charlotte eventually finds out about it. She dies while walking across the street to send some letters after confronting Humbert of his shameless act. With the mother gone, Humbert immediately takes action as the sole guardian of Dolores. He takes Dolores on a long trip across the United States. However, unlike normal parent-child long trips, in each city or in every chance he has, they have numerous sexual intercourses. Humbert's sweet long trip with Dolores comes to a halt once they reach Beardsley. Oblivious to the truth, Dolores finds someone else, someone who she has feelings for, and someone who then assists her to run away with him—Clare Quilty, a man in his forties who is also a playwright. Despite Humbert's

efforts in finding Dolores or who takes her away from him, he never did. Not until a letter arrives in his residence, inviting him to a conversation which leads to their relationship's closure and the reveal of the truths. After finding out about the truth of Dolores's disappearance, he immediately sets off to murder Clare—a price he has to pay for taking his lovely step-daughter away from him.

It is intriguing to explore the truth of Dolores and Humbert's relationship which involves love and emotions unlike many parent-child relationships. However, the story only reveals the truths from Humbert's side while leaving Dolores's truths in the dark. It is unknown whether Dolores ever possesses mutual feelings as Humbert, or if she ever sees Humbert more than her guardian and step-father.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

In order to examine Dolores's Electra complex, four research questions composed of this study are as follows.

1. What are the symptoms of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*?
2. What are the causes of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*?
3. What are the effects of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*?
4. How does Dolores Haze resolve her Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To identify the symptoms of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.
2. To identify the causes of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.
3. To identify the effects of Dolores Haze's Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.
4. To identify Dolores Haze's attempts in resolving her Electra complex in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.

### **1.4. Previous Studies**

Previous studies are essential to ensure the authenticity of this study and assist the process of analyzing the findings and discussion in this study. Therefore, this passage provides previous studies that focus on examining and researching Nabokov's *Lolita*.

To begin with, Mosi's thesis "Sexual Abuse in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*: A Psychoanalytical Approach to Humbert Humbert's Sexuality" (2020) focuses on examining Humbert's psychological state which drives him to be sexually abusive. Mosi's study proves that from a psychoanalysis perspective, Humbert's sexually abusive behavior towards Dolores is driven by his psychological defense mechanism due to the fear of being abandoned by his step-daughter. Similar to this study, Mosi employs a psychoanalytical approach to

examine Humbert's behavior. However, Mosi's study is rather focusing on Humbert's experiences, which differs from this study which focuses more on Dolores's experiences.

Further, it is important to deepen the understanding of Humbert's reliability as the narrator and the nature of his narration. Sharma's journal article "The Viability of Narration in Nabokov's *Lolita*" (2015) and Derehed's thesis "Worldmaking and Victim-Blaming in Nabokov's *Lolita*" (2023) provide further understanding of Humbert's narration. Sharma proves that Humbert is 'unreliable' as a narrator according to his ways of conveying the message to the readers. Meanwhile, Derehed further proves it by highlighting Humbert's attempt in creating a world of narration that blurs the line between the narrator and the reader using his literary prowess, encouraging the readers to side and relate with him. Though have different focus from this study, both of Sharma's and Derehed's studies further assist this study as they provide insights regarding Humbert's reliability as the narrator of Nabokov's *Lolita*.

If the above previous studies focus on Humbert, these two studies focus on Dolores's experiences and examining beyond what is depicted by Humbert. Ratna's journal article "Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*: The Representation and the Reality Re-Examining *Lolita* in the Light of Research into Child Sexual Abuse" (2020) and Fathanah thesis "The Sexual Harassment in Nabokov's *Lolita*" (2021) examines Dolores's experiences of being sexually abused by Humbert. Ratna proves that Humbert tends to hide his sexually abusive side towards Dolores in an implicit manner throughout his narration. In this case, Fathanah's study further

elaborates that the sexual abuses that Dolores experienced include visual, verbal, and physical abuse. Similar to this study, Ratna's and Fathanah's studies examine Dolores's experiences by analyzing beyond Humbert's narration. However, the two studies are not taking Dolores's feelings into consideration, as her feelings are mutual as Humbert's is also a possibility.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to certain issues related to Dolores Haze within the novel *Lolita* written by Vladimir Nabokov in 1955. This study analyzes intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Nabokov's *Lolita*. The intrinsic elements analyzed in this study are including the character and characterization, settings, and conflict of Nabokov's *Lolita*. In analyzing the extrinsic elements, this study borrows Freud's psychoanalysis concepts related to Electra complex and Jung's Electra complex theory to analyze the symptoms, causes, effects, and resolutions of Dolores's Electra complex. The examination result of both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of Nabokov's *Lolita* is to address the main issue: identifying Dolores's Electra complex symptoms, causes, and effects which drives her to be in a relationship with her step-father, Humbert, and how she resolves it.

### **1.6. Writing Organization**

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

## **CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD**

This chapter describes the theoretical framework and research method employed in this study. Theoretical framework consists of: intrinsic elements which include the narrative aspects of Nabokov's *Lolita*, and extrinsic elements which include the theories and concepts employed in the research, focusing on the theory of Electra complex. While the research method includes the research approach and method of data collection applied in this study.

## **CHAPTER III DOLORES HAZE'S ELECTRA COMPLEX IN VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S *LOLITA***

This chapter consists of the discussion of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements based on the findings from examining Nabokov's *Lolita*. The intrinsic elements include the characters and characterization, settings, and conflicts that significantly affects Dolores's Electra complex. The extrinsic elements mainly discuss the symptoms, causes, effects, and resolutions of Dolores's Electra complex.

## **CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains the conclusion of the analysis based on the findings and discussion of the research.