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Lolita Forever: A Nymphet's Effects on '90s Culture

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Lolita Forever

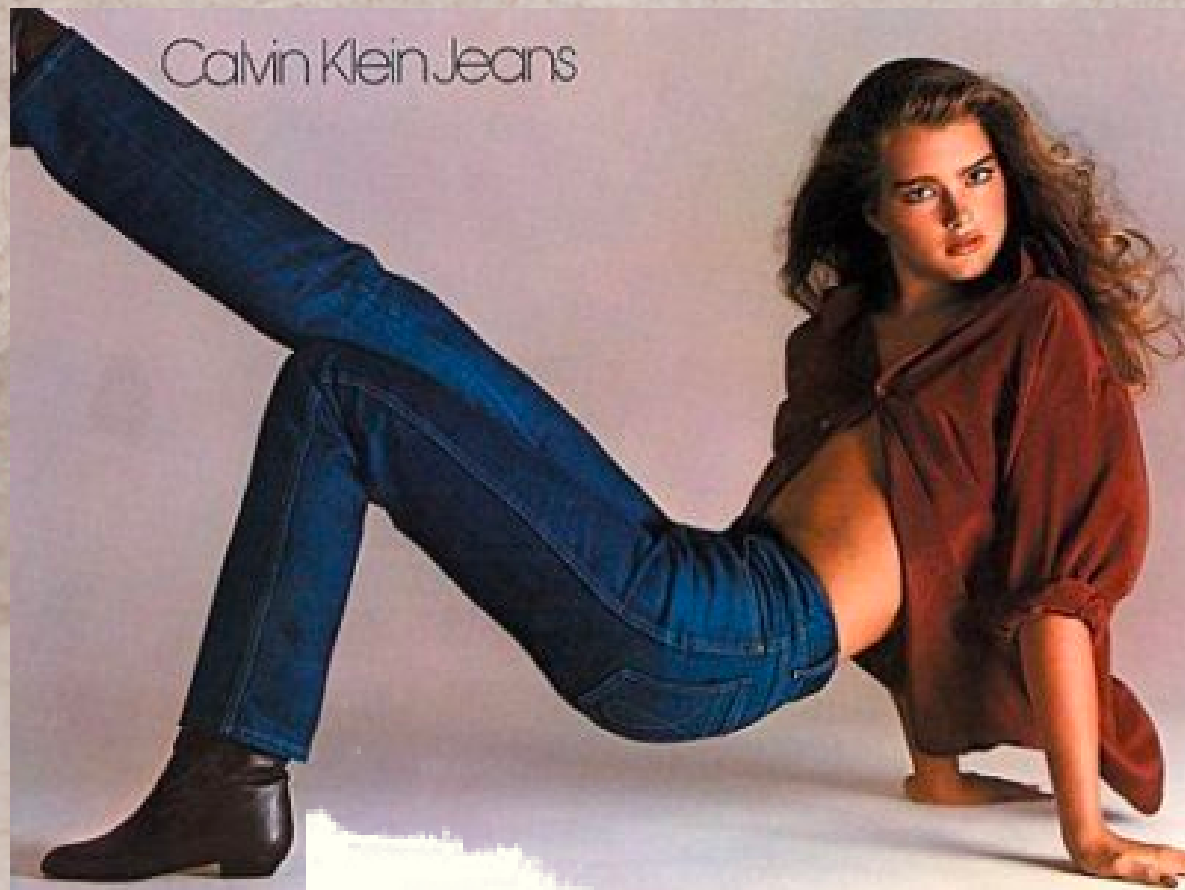
AN INVESTIGATION ON THE
NYMPHET'S EFFECT OF 90'S CULTURE

BY: RACHEL SMITHGALL

Research Topic

This is an investigation into the effects that the release of Lolita both the book and 1997 film had on the young girls of the 1990's and their culture





LOLITA CONTROVERSY

- Due to the topics such as pedophilia and incest, Lolita has been criticized since its release in 1955
- The novel has been adopted twice, once in 1962 by Stanley Kubrick and again in 1997 by Adrian Lyne

Context

90'S CULTURE

- During the 90s, the idea that innocence was sexy was at its height and portrayed young looking girls as the sex standard
- Controversial ads such as the Calvin Klein ad with Brooke Shields also perpetuated this idea

Vladimir Nabokov

Lolita



INFLUENCE OF LOLITA

- Nabokov wrote Lolita to criticize the public and their ideas on morals
- Instead, it became a concept that many wished to idolize or adapt rather than understand its satirical nature

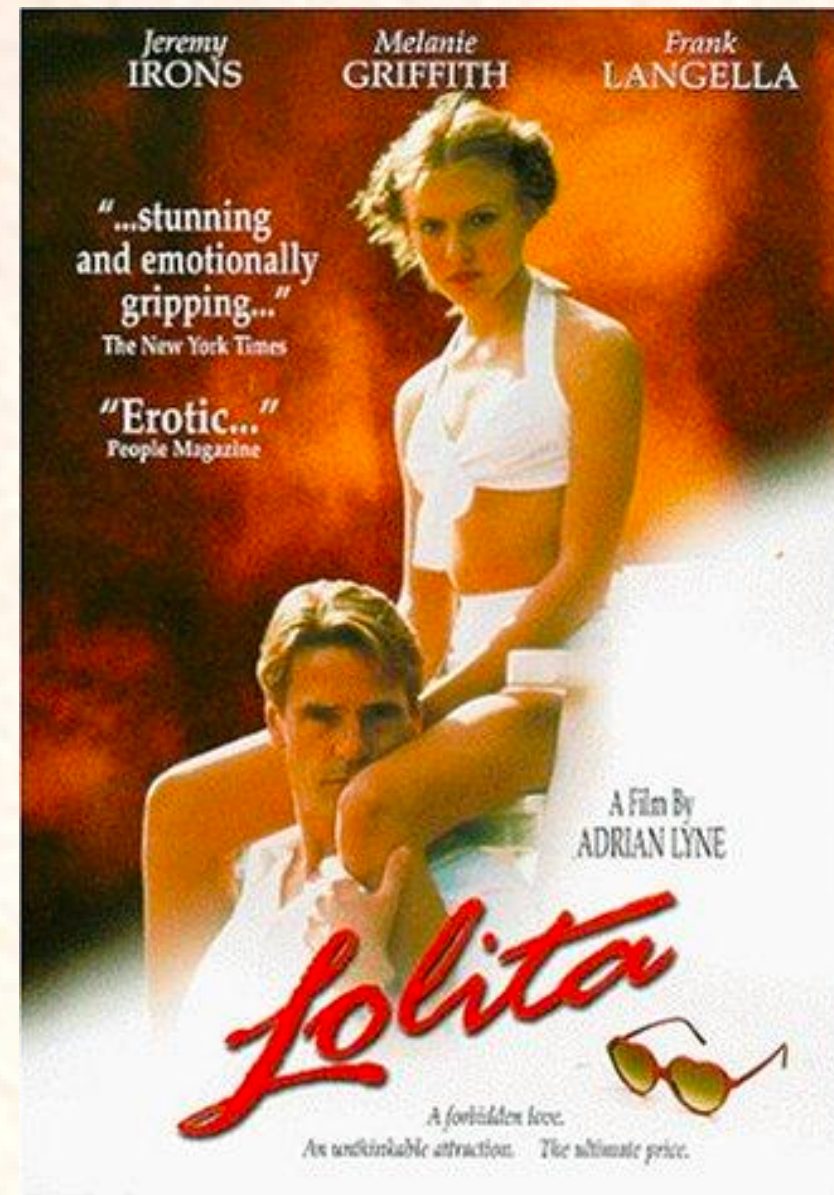
Lolita



NOVEL INFO

**Published:
1955**

**Author:
Vladimir
Nabokov**



FILM INFO

Released: 1997
**Director: Adrian
Lyne**

**Cast: Jeremy Irons
and Dominique
Swain**

Synopsis: Middle-aged professor Humbert Humbert falls in love with his 12-year-old stepdaughter, Dolores, and the two develop a relationship as they journey throughout the country

The Crush

INFO

Released: 1993

Director: Alan Shapiro

Cast: Alicia Silverstone and Cary Elwes



THEMATIC CONNECTION

- The younger girl and older writer relationship is replicated
- The female protagonist (Adrian) is the main instigator of the relationship
- The idea that no fault can be placed on the male character (Nick)



Synopsis: 14-year-old Adrian develops an obsessive crush on her much older neighbor Nick that turns into more than either was expecting

American Beauty

INFO

Released: 1999

Director: Sam Mendes

Cast: Mena Suvari and Kevin Spacey



THEMATIC CONNECTION

- The audience is forced to sympathize with the main male protagonist
- The sexual father/daughter dynamic
- The pedophilic nature is extremely apparent and not hinted to similar Humbert's explicit feelings



Synopsis: Lester Burnham spirals into a midlife crisis and with this comes an infatuation with his teenager daughter's best friend, Angela

How I Learned To Drive

INFO

Released: 1997

Playwright:

Paula Vogel

Cast: Lil Bit,

Uncle Peck



THEMATIC CONNECTION

- The clear incestuous relationship presented to the audience
- The manipulation used to excuse such relationships
- Difference: This play examines the cycle of abuse that occurs after such a relationship

Synopsis: The play follows Lil Bit as she recounts the sexual relationship she had with her uncle under the guise of driving lessons that he gave her as she grew up



Findings

- Lolita's influence continued even into the 2000s with singers such as Lana Del Rey
- The sexualization of young girls was seen throughout pop culture with an increase in ads containing pornographic undertones featuring adolescent models
- The desire for an older man's attention continued to grow in the minds of young girls, thus allowing them to use Lolita as an archetype
- Specific "femme fatale" character types begin to appear and contain characteristics that modeled Lolita increasing the desire to embody her



Findings

- The influence was able to continue as media use continued to rise in 90's culture with the popularity of TV and teen magazines
- Girls turned to these outlets to determine whom they should like and what they should look like. Many times a Lolita-inspired model was used
- The 90's created a variety of blueprints that gave any young girl the tools to attract the man next door



Full Thesis:



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