Title: Lolita in Humbert's Camera Obscura and Lolita in Nabokov's Camera Lucida
Author: Boungsam Jeung, Stanford University

Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to explore the inconsistency between reality and mimetic representations in Nabokov's *Lolita*. The current study thus seeks to gain an understanding of Humbert's two different kinds of visual perceptions, photographic and painterly, and the technique of depicting reality in these two branches of visual arts. The examination of these mimetic techniques shows how the temporal gap between the processes of perception and inscription creates inconsistency in the mimetic representation of reality. The photographic perception that demonstrates how Humbert voyeuristically takes in external objects and transforms them into his personal and internal images causes the random distortion of reality. A final picture, or an image, which a spectator looks at, may not register a scenery, that a photographer has observed through the viewfinder. The congruity of an image is mechanically dissected by the camera structure itself. An internalized random image (obraz) is later converted into Humbert's subjective imagination (voobrazhenie), thus making Humbert perceive reality in painterly images. The painterly perception (izobrazhenie) functions as Humbert's exhibitionistic externalization of his furtive sensual pleasures. It can be argued that this painterly perception intentionally distorts reality, unlike the photographic perception. By projecting a three-dimensional object onto the two-dimensional canvas, a painter distorts reality out of necessity. Moreover, this correlation between Humbert's two different visual perceptions suggests the analogy between Humbert's two different types of writings: a private diary and a manuscript that is meant to be published. In conclusion, this paper studies how Nabokov adeptly intertwines these two different visual arts and two different types of writings to expose art as a mimesis of absence.