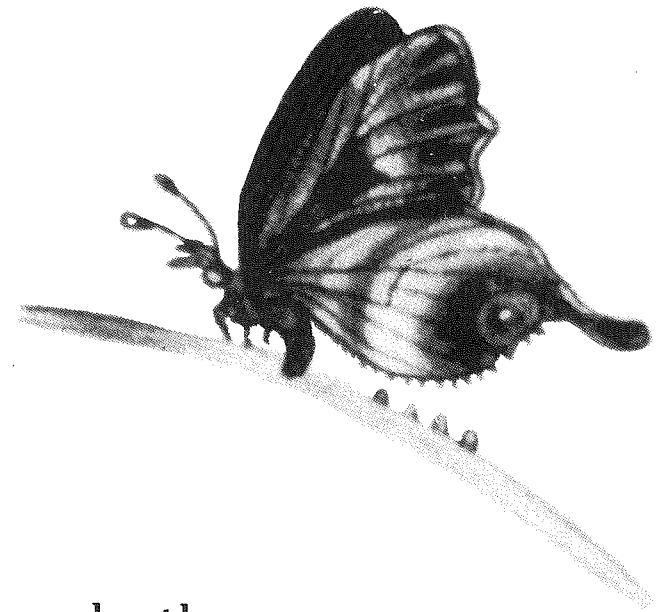


The Nabokovian



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Research Newsletter

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THE NABOKOVIAN

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THE NABOKOVIAN

Number 13

Fall 1984

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NEWS

by Stephen Jan Parker

Readers' were nearly unanimous in their support of our title choice. This is the first issue of THE NABOKOVIAN, the newly renamed VNRN, but with format intact.

Please note the revised subscription rates which are now in effect. They are listed on the inside of the front cover. We hope you will continue to support our efforts and those of The Nabokov Society by renewing your subscriptions now.

*

Two meetings of The Nabokov Society will be held this year in Washington, D.C.. There will be a session under the title, "Nabokov and 'The Passion of Science'," followed by the business meeting of the Society, on Thursday, December 27, 7:00 - 10:15 pm, in the Franklin Room of the Sheraton Washington Hotel, in conjunction with the MLA National Convention. On Friday, December 28, 3:15 - 5:15 pm, in the Massachusetts Rooms of The Mayflower Hotel -- in conjunction with the ATTSEEL National Convention -- there will be a session under the title, "Nabokov and Cultural Synthesis."

Papers on Nabokov will also be read at four other AATSEEL sessions, all in The Mayflower Hotel: Thursday, December 27, 8:30 am, at the session "Parody and Satire in the Slavic Literatures"; 3:30 pm, at the session

"Russian Modernism: Art and Literature"; December 28, 1:00 pm, at the session "Time and Narrative in Russian Fiction"; and 3:15 pm, at the session "Russian Emigré Literature."

*

1984 will be an exceptional year for Nabokov studies. In November, "The Man from the USSR" and Other Plays will be published by Brucoli-Clark/ Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. The volume includes the title play, "Event," "Grand-Dad," "Pole," and two lectures given by VN at Stanford University, "The Tragedy of Tragedy" and "Playwriting." The translations, introduction, and headnotes are by Dmitri Nabokov. In conjunction with the publication of this volume, Ardis is releasing P'esy (Plays) which for the first time collects all of VN's plays in book form, including previously unpublished materials.

Ardis has also announced the publication of a Collected Works of Vladimir Nabokov in Russian in fifteen volumes. According to their announcement, this will be "a standard edition with a standard format, including introductions. A small but accurate number of scholarly notes will come at the end of each volume. The texts will essentially be those of the first editions, but all the typographical errors will be corrected, and occasional corrections will be made from the original manuscripts." The volumes will not appear in strict numerical-chronological order. Volume 9, the first to appear, is the P'esy volume mentioned above, while the second to be published will Mashen'ka (Mary), numbered as Volume 1 of the Collected Works.

In regard to Nabokov criticism, volumes which have already been published in 1984 are:

-- Laurie Clancy. The Novels of Vladimir Nabokov. New York: St. Martin's Press.

-- George Gibian and Stephen Jan Parker, editors. The Achievements of Vladimir Nabokov. Ithaca, New York: Center for International Studies, Cornell University.

-- Michael Long. Marvell, Nabokov: Childhood and Arcadia. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

-- Donald E. Morton. Vladimir Nabokov. Bildmonographien. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Rororo.

-- David Rampton. Vladimir Nabokov: A Critical Study of the Novels. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-- Phyllis A. Roth, Editor. Critical Essays on Vladimir Nabokov. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co.

Volumes announced for publication this year include:

-- Brian Boyd. Nabokov's ADA: The Place of Consciousness. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

-- D. Barton Johnson. Worlds in Regression: Some Novels of Vladimir Nabokov. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

-- Joann Karges. Nabokov's Lepidoptera: Genres and Genera. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

-- Christine Rydel. A Nabokov Who's Who. A Complete Guide to Characters and Proper Names in the Works of Vladimir Nabokov. Ann Arbor: Ardis.

-- The special Nabokov issue of Canadian-American Slavic Studies, edited by D. Barton Johnson, will carry the date 1984 though it will not be published until 1985.

*

The publication of the inaugural issue of Russian Literature Triquarterly in the fall of 1971 was noteworthy not only because it was the debut of a "thick journal" in the Russian style which answered to many needs in the Slavic profession. Its publication signalled as well the activities of Ardis, a larger venture which over the following years would make accessible a steady stream of indispensable and previously unavailable texts and translations and would offer an outlet for the works of Soviet and émigré writers, as well as literary scholars.

Ardis Press, from its inception, has been the major publisher of Vladimir Nabokov's works in Russian, as well as the leader in the publication of Nabokov critical literature. The recent untimely death of Carl Proffer, the founder and director of Ardis, and a most perceptive commentator of Nabokov's writings in his own right, is a great and irreplaceable loss. We can only hope that Ardis will find a

way to continue its activities, as one fitting and continuing memorial to Carl Proffer's many accomplishments.

*

Mrs. Vera Nabokov has provided the following list of VN's works published February - September 1984:

February - Sprich, Erinnerung, Sprich (Speak, Memory), tr. Dieter Zimmer. Rienbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

February - Speak, Memory. New York: Putnam's, A Perigee Book, paperback, 6th impression of revised edition.

March - Curso de Literatura Europea (Lectures on Literature), tr. Francisco Torres Oliver. Barcelona, Spain: Bruguera.

March - Laughter in the Dark, Hebrew edition. Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Poalim publishing house.

March - Pnin, Russian edition, tr. G. Barabtarlo with the collaboration of Vera Nabokov. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis.

March - Excerpts from Nikolai Gogol in Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism, vol. 5. New York: Gale Research Co.

March - Priglasenie na kazn' (Invitation to a Beheading). Ann Arbor: Ardis, paperback, new reprint.

March - Vesna v Fial'te (Spring in Fialta). Ann Arbor: Ardis, paperback, new reprint.

March - Dar (The Gift). Ann Arbor: Ardis, second corrected edition, reprint of 1975 edition.

April - Lolita, tr. Brenno Silveira. Sao Paulo, Brazil: Circulo do Livro S.A., new reprint, "Colecione Este Selo."

April - The Gift. New York: Putnam's, fifth impression of 1963 edition, a wideview Perigee Book, paperback.

April - Despair. New York: Putnam's, sixth impression of 1979 edition, a Perigee Book, paperback.

April - Lolita. New York: Putnam's, sixth impression of 1980 edition, paperback.

April - Invitation to a Beheading. New York: Putnam's, ninth impression of Perigee edition, paperback.

April - The Defense. New York: Putnam's, sixth impression of Perigee edition, paperback.

April - Pale Fire. New York: Putnam's, second impression of 1980 first edition, a wideview Perigee book, paperback.

April - Pnin. New York: Doubleday, Anchor paperback reprint.

April - Nabokov's Dozen. New York: Doubleday, Anchor paperback reprint.

April - Paris, Ricordo (Speak, Memory), tr. Bruno Oddera. Milan, Italy: Mondadori, "Oscar" edition paperback.

April - Excerpt from Speak, Memory in Liz Smith, The Mother Book. New York: Crown Publishers.

April - Lectures on Don Quixote. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, a Harvest paperback.

June - Le Gnetteur (The Eye), tr. George Magnane. Paris: Gallimard, a Folio paperback reprint.

June - Russian translation of "Art and Commonsense", tr. Mme. Ulanovski. 22 (Jerusalem, Israel) No. 35.

June - French translation of letter of 24 August 1942 to Edmund Wilson, tr. Michel Gautier. Consequences (Paris).

July - Pale Fire. Japanese edition. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, an anthology published through Uni and Scott Meredith agencies.

July - Long excerpt from Ada. In Almanach 2. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

September - "The Visit to the Museum." In David Young and Keith Hollaman, eds. Magical Realist Fiction: An Anthology. New York: Longman Inc.

September - Lolita. Athens, Greece: Erato publishers.

September - La Méprise (Despair), tr. Marcel Stora. Paris: Gallimard, a Folio paperback reprint.

September - Lolita, tr. Brenno Silveira. Sao Paulo, Brazil: Victor Civita editor, series Ouro 32, reprint of 1981 edition.

*

Leona Toker (English Department, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 91905 Jerusalem, Israel) writes that her essay, "Between Allusion and Coincidence: Nabokov, Dickens, and Others," will be appearing in a forthcoming issue of The Hebrew University Studies in Literature and Arts.

*

D. Barton Johnson (Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of California, Santa Barbara 93106) has had two articles on Look at the Harlequins! published in 1984, one in the spring issue of Studies in Twentieth Century Literature and the other in Critical Essays on Vladimir Nabokov, Phyllis Roth, editor, as well as a review of Lucy Maddox' Nabokov's Novels in English in the summer 1984 issue of SEEJ. Professor Johnson is working on an article which discusses parallels between the writings of Nabokov and Sasha Sokolov, and a note on the place of Nabokov-Sirin in the memoirs of Gessen.

*

Stephen Jan Parker (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045) is writing a book on Nabokov to be published by the University of South Carolina Press in their series, "Understanding Contemporary American Literature." His article, "The Nabokov Library: A Writer's Books," will appear in 1985.

*

Susan Sweeney (English Department, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912) will have an article, "The Classification of Genus Nabokov," appearing in a special issue of Massachusetts Studies in English. She has also completed another article, "Nabokov's Amphiphorical Gestures," which, she says, examines sustained ambiguity in several metaphors from Speak, Memory and Bend Sinister. She is writing a doctoral dissertation at Brown University "which will discuss the hero as detective in the work of Nabokov and other postmodernists."

*

Z. Kuzmanovich (Department of English, University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706) is writing a doctoral dissertation entitled "Deception and Detection: Theory and Technique in Nabokov's Art, 1923-1941."

*

Leszek Engelking continues to provide news of Nabokov-related publications in Poland. He corrects two items listed in "Nabokov

in Poland," [VNRN 12 (Spring) 1984]: The fragment from Lolita published in Odra was not translated by H. Raszka, but by Eugenia Sienaszkiwicz. In the same monthly (No. 5, 1978) the whole "Terra Incognita" was printed, not just a fragment.

Works by Nabokov most recently published:

[1] "Znaki i symbole" (Signs and Symbols) and "Krag" (The Circle), tr. from English by Teresa Truszkowska. Literatura (Warsaw) 3, No. 1, 1984, pp. 22-23, 50-52.

[2] "Zawiadomienie" (Breaking the News), tr. from English by Maria Korusiewicz. Zycie Literackie (Cracow) 34, No. 31, p. 7.

[3] Don Kichot, fragments of Lectures on Don Quixote, tr. from English by Bohdan Zadura. Akcent (Lublin) 4, No. 4, 129-136.

Recent published criticism:

[1] Lech Budrecki, "Nabokov i literatura." Pietnascie szkicow o nowej prozie amerykanskej (Fifteen Essays on Modern American Prose). Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983, pp. 113-138.

[2] Leszek Engelking, "W jednej trzeciej Amerykanin. O Wladimirze Nabokowie" (One-Third American. On Vladimir Nabokov). Studio (Katowice) Vol. 5, pp. 79-92.

[3] Leszek Engelking, "Przezroczone rzeczy, przezroczone osoby" (Transparent Things, Transparent Persons). Literatura na Swiecie (Warsaw) 14, No. 2, pp. 322-341.

[4] Leszek Engleking, "Poezje Vladimira Nabokova" (Vladimir Nabokov's Poetry). Literatura na Swiecie (Warsaw) 14, No. 4, pp. 308-320.

Mr. Engleking encloses a copy of an announcement published in the daily, Express Wieczorny, of a Nabokov evening held in one of Warsaw's student clubs. He writes: "The evening took place in the Students' Culture Centre of the Main School of Planning and Statistics 'Park' on March 5, 1984. After my rather long introduction [basic information about VN's life and works], the actor, Mr. Brzeski, read my translations of 'The Visit to the Museum' and 'Signs and Symbols'. After each of them I gave a short literary analysis. The whole evening lasted more than two hours."

*

Peter Evans (158 Tokyo-to, Setagaya-ku, Higashi Tamagawa 1-3-4, Japan) writes: "I have belatedly come across Henry Roots World of Knowledge, originally published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1982, and reprinted as a 'Futura' paperback in 1983 by 'Futura Publications--A Division of Macdonald & Co,' London. This encyclopaedia is introduced as containing "everything that you cannot afford not to know if you are to hold your end up at a literary luncheon or agreeable dinner-party," and is perhaps most easily described as a large, topical and British Dictionnaire des idées reçues. Under 'Literature,' Nabokov's description of the prehistoric origin of poetry is now presented as an explanation of the source of literature as a whole. Henry Root,

incidentally, is renowned or notorious in Britain for two volumes of correspondence with politicians and other celebrities published in the late seventies. Two entries are:

"LITERATURE: Literature is in a perilous way. Is there anyone alive today who could, or would, write Paradise Lost? The answer, alas, must be 'probably not.' See LARKIN, Philip. Literature was born on the day that a boy came crying 'Wolf! Wolf!' and there was in fact no wolf in pursuit." [page 217]

"NABOKOV, VLADIMIR (1899-1979 [sic, ED]): His eyes glinted with mockery in an otherwise solemn face. Was he teasing us when he said he was prouder of having named a butterfly than of having written Ada and Lolita? We shall never know, and that's how he would have wished it." [page 249]

*

Very special thanks to Ms. Paula Oliver for her invaluable assistance in the publication of this issue, and to Mr. Chol-Kun Kwon for his kind help.

The photograph on page 4 was taken in 1959, Colin Sherborne Studio, London.

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

[The text given below is taken from a hand-corrected typescript signed by Vladimir Nabokov and dated mid April 1975, Montreux.]

Mr. Nabokov's Acceptance Speech

I am sorry not to be able to accept in person the National Book Award but I could not find a suitable boat to take me across the ocean and flying is for the birds.

To illustrate, through an amiable representative, my appreciation of this splendid prize allow me to dwell briefly on the bright side of a writer's life by listing the delights of the greatest of arts, the art of fiction. I enjoy, I have always enjoyed stressing the word "art," an unpopular intonation nowadays: art not as a profession, not as a summer commune of kindred minds, and not as a demonstration of topical ideas in a drizzle of politics, but Art with a capital A as big as the biggest Arch of Triumph, art careful and carefree, selfless and self-centered, art burning the brow and cooling the brain.

I have in view, naturally, my dedication to it not my achievement, which today is given a rich tangible prize and tomorrow may have to be content with a footnote in a survey of extinct authors -- one of those suppositions that are permissible then only, when one does not really believe them.

My sense of utter surrender to art started sixty years ago when my father's private librarian typed out for me and posted to the best literary review my first poem which, though as banal as a blue puddle in March, was immediately accepted. It's printed image caused me much less of a thrill than the preliminary process, the sight of my live lines being sown by the typist in regular rows on the sheets, with a purple duplicate that I kept for years as one does a lock of hair or the belltail of a rattler.

I must skip the later delight of writing a novel over which I took such fond trouble that I can still regurgitate it in my mind; and one always remembers the arrival of one's published book, the precious, the pure volume which one tenderly opens -- to find a fatal misprint of the plausible kind that will keep up with the book's destiny through hard and soft, from one edition to another, like a tenacious ancestral wart. A much later be-dazzlement was the Boxed Book, with its Order of the Ribbon affixed to the headband -- and this touch of luxury leads me back to the thrill of a Literary Award.

And even if, at this eloquent point, to the stupefaction of the audience, a wild-eyed messenger on a real horse gallops onto the stage crying that it all had been a hideous mistake I would be delightfully recompensed by the embarrassed smile of the real winner waiting in the wings with his little speech.

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ABSTRACT

"Advice to the Emigration: Didacticism in Mary and Glory"

by Charles Nicol

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual National Meeting of AATSEEL, New York, December 1983.)

Mary was VN's first published novel; there are indications that although published fourth, Glory was also conceived extremely early. The paper suggests that the two can be considered together not only as the novels most obviously related to VN's biography but as perhaps the only VN novels that are both symbolic and didactic.

The central symbolism in Mary, the equation of Mary with Russia, came naturally to Nabokov, because Mary was "a twin sister of my Tamara" and he equated the loss of Tamara with the loss of Russia. The writings of Blok also seem instrumental in this symbolism. Other symbols in the novel (the stalled elevator, the ever-present trains, the calendar pages on the doors) illustrate the inertia and "dispersion of the will" of the endlessly waiting émigrés. The ending is a clear message to the emigration: having exhausted one's memories of Russia, one must break with the past and move on.

The message of Glory is similar: the émigrés should be happy, relishing their

freedom in a world of possibility. However, because Martin Edelweiss on one hand represents the emigration and on the other hand has a private agenda, he seems the central problem in this novel's weakness. Other characters symbolize different attitudes of the writer toward Russia: Alla Chernosvitov continues to write her poetry as though nothing has happened, rapidly becoming outdated; homosexual Archibald Moon assumes that Russia is now dead, and consequently is treated as a sterile writer who will never finish his book; Bubnov appropriates Zoorland for his own writings, indicating that it is better to write fantasies about contemporary Russia than to ignore its existence. Though unsuccessful, Glory also seems an attempt by Nabokov to draw general lessons and meaningful symbols from his own experience in a novel directly addressed to an émigré audience.

ABSTRACTS

"Madness and Doubling: From Dostoevsky's The Double to Nabokov's The Eye"

by Julian W. Connolly

(Abstract of a paper presented at the Annual National Meeting of AAASS, Kansas City, October 1983)

Although Nabokov was often harsh in his criticism of Dostoevsky's abilities as a writer, his fiction demonstrates that Dostoevsky's work had a palpable impact on him. A comparison of Nabokov's The Eye with Dostoevsky's novella The Double, which Nabokov termed "a perfect work of art," reveals several points of congruity. Both works explore a situation in which an imaginative yet insecure individual first projects an image of an alter ego into the surrounding world and then becomes obsessed with his created character's actions. One notes many similarities between the central protagonists of the two works. Both characters see themselves as decent, modest individuals capable of dashing adventure and impressive wit; both become infatuated with one woman while involved with another (in both cases, the other woman is a German); both possess a rich fantasy life. Most importantly, each character is highly sensitive to others' opinions of him, and each feels very vulnerable to criticism and embarrassment. In fact, in both cases the projection of an alter ego is precipitated by a

moment of public humiliation followed by an impression of destruction or death. Yet despite these similarities, Nabokov and Dostoevsky ultimately differ in their treatments of the impact of the creation of an alter ego. In Dostoevsky's hands, the projection of an alter ego leads into an investigation of the dark recesses of human insecurity and mental suffering. For Nabokov, the same concept provides an opportunity to explore how mental instability and inspired imagination can lead to a possible defense against the vicissitudes of life. A comparison of The Eye and The Double thus indicates the extent to which Nabokov was influenced by Dostoevsky's fiction and demonstrates the fundamental ways in which his artistic methods and world-view differs from Dostoevsky's.

"'Terra Incognita' and Invitation to a Beheading: The Struggle for Creative Freedom"

by Julian W. Connolly

(Abstract of a paper presented at the Annual National Meeting of AATSEEL, Chicago, December 1982)

While "Terra Incognita" and Invitation to a Beheading differ substantially in plot and setting, certain thematic parallels between the two deserve commentary. It is possible that the short story served as a kind of preliminary sketch for Nabokov as he began to wrestle with the ideas that would become his central concerns in the later novel.

An account of a European expedition into a tropical jungle, "Terra Incognita" begins in the style of an H. Ryder Haggard adventure story, but Vallière, the narrator of the tale, becomes increasingly confused and chaotic in his descriptions of his experience. In particular, he is distressed by his recurring visions of objects normally found in a European bedroom. At the end of the tale he lapses into unconsciousness, seemingly surrounded by the trappings of the European bedroom but protesting vehemently that "reality was here beneath that wonderful, frightening tropical sky." Despite this declaration, however, the careful reader surmises that Vallière is not in fact an explorer having hallucinations of a European bedroom, but rather is a sick person in a European bedroom having hallucinations of a jungle expedition. Yet "Terra Incognita" is not merely a study in relative realities. Of particular note in the work is the narrator's rejection of the everyday world of the bedroom--"an imitation of life hastily knocked together"--and his preference for a world of personal vision. The narrator's struggle in "Terra Incognita" anticipates Cincinnatus' struggle in Invitation. Cincinnatus too rejects the confines of the banal environment that surrounds him, a "hastily assembled and painted world." The two characters are further linked by a series of motifs, including the sensation of doubling and the concept of writing as a difficult but important process of recording experience. In the end, however, Cincinnatus succeeds where Valliere fails. While he manages to channel his creativity and escape the confines of the conventional real-

ity around him, Vallière eventually slips back from his exotic fantasy into a bleak world of "realistic furniture and four walls." With "Terra Incognita" Nabokov outlined the desperate yet futile struggle of an imaginative individual trying to break free from the bonds of routine existence; in Invitation to a Beheading he took this struggle one step further, and presents the triumphant victory of the creative imagination over the constraints of stifling convention.

NABOKOV IN JAPAN

by Peter Evans

Peter Evans has regularly kept us informed of Nabokov-related publications in Japan. His citations have been, and will continue to be, incorporated into our yearly bibliographies.

Mr. Evans' own Japanese Nabokov bibliography, primarily of Japanese translations and criticism, has been published in the Keio University Shogakubu Hiyoshi ronbunshu. He has sent the following abstract:

A Japanese Nabokov Bibliography. This bibliography covers both Japanese editions--primarily but not exclusively translations--of the works of Vladimir Nabokov, and Japanese scholarly and other articles about these works and their author. Full publication details are given for each of the entries, almost all of which have been personally examined (exceptions are so marked).

The preface briefly explains why such a project was undertaken. It is argued that the complexity of the publishing history of the "originals" makes it more than ordinarily difficult for the Japanese reader to find out what is available, and from where it derives. Moreover, instead of simply asserting that, in Japan, Nabokov's works have not yet attracted the attention they deserve, the preface also attempts to show something of their uniqueness. This is done, not by generalization,

but by illustrations drawn from a single novel:

Transparent Things, as yet unavailable in Japanese translation. A description of the linguistic and other quiddities of this work leads into a comparison with some aspects of the novels of Raymond Queneau, although no evidence is adduced of either author's having influenced the other. The preface ends with a few observations on the fate of Nabokov's works in Japan.

Mr. Evans also sends information about a new anthology published in Japan:

Aojiroi honoo. A translation by Fujikawa Yoshiyuki of Pale Fire. The book is entitled Boruhesu/Nabokofu (Borges/Nabokov), and is published by Chikuma Shobo as number 81 of its series "Chikuma sekai bungaku taikei" (World Literature Outline/Series). Pages 5-187: translations of works by Borges ("Fictions," "The Aleph," and "Dr. Brodie's Report"). Pages 191-361: Pale Fire (including the poem in translation and in English, pp. 200-239). Pages 363-373: A Translation of "The Literature of Exhaustion" (John Barth). Pages 374-386: "Seiten no hekireki," a translation, by Kato Mitsuya, of "A Bolt from the Blue," by Mary McCarthy. Pages 387-390: an essay on Borges by Shinoda Hajime. Pages 391-395: "[Kaisetsu] Nabokofu" ([Description] Nabokov), an essay on Nabokov by Fujikawa Yoshiyuki. Pages 396-402: A Borges chronology. Pages 403-408: "Nabokofu nenpu" (A Nabokov chronology), by Fujikawa Yoshiyuki. Inserted in the book is a ten page newsletter entitled "Series

Supplement No. 87, Appended to Volume 81." This contains on pages 1-3 "Amerika bungaku to Nabokofu" (American literature and Nabokov) by Kanaseki Hisao; on pages 3-5, "Kagami no kuni no jumin-tachi -- Nabokofu to Boruhesu" (Inhabitants of mirror worlds -- Nabokov and Borges) by Shimizu Toru, and thereafter an article about Borges, and odds and ends including, across the bottom half of pages 8 and 9, a simplified Japanese Nabokov bibliography.

ANNOTATIONS & QUERIES

by Charles Nicol

[Material for this section should be sent to Charles Nicol, English Department, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809. Deadlines for submission are March 1 for the Spring issue and September 1 for the Fall. Unless specifically stated otherwise, references to Nabokov's works will be to the most recent hardcover U.S. editions.]

Vanessa Atalanta and Raisa Orlova.

I.

In his notes to line 347 of Shade's Pale Fire Prof. Kinbote quotes "the jumble of broken words and meaningless syllables" which is supposed to encode a message from Aunt Maud's spirit (in the "Old Barn" episode). The transcription goes

pada ata lane pad not ogo old wart alan
ther tale feur far rant lant tal told

Kinbote then makes a half-hearted attempt to unscramble the string: "some of the bald-erdash may be recombined into other lexical units making no better sense (e.g., 'war', 'talant', 'her', 'arrant', etc.)". The gloss is not totally disorienting; in fact, "talant" may be a clue but in an oblique application.

I propose that the message contains the thrice repeated and scattered Latin name of the Red Admirable butterfly, Vanessa atalanta:

pads ATA LANE pad noT ogo old wArT ALAN
Ther tAle feur far rAnT LANT tAl told

This may be indeed a warning issued to John Shade by his Aunt's ghost; the beautiful Nymphalid hovers around him just six lines before his death. The Red Admirable Theme is quite important in the novel. The Kinbotian Index lists it as being "evoked, 270; flying over a parapet on a Swiss hillside, 408; figured, 470; caricatured, 949; accompanying S's last steps in the evening sunshine, 993." The fatidic role ascribed to this butterfly is discussed by Nabokov in his interview with Alfred Appel (Strong Opinions, 170).

With the kind permission of Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov, I should like to quote here a passage in her letter to me on the subject, which definitively decodes the cipher (she refers to her Russian rendition of it; interpolations in square brackets mine):

The entire message of the ghost, if carefully read, represents a clear warning from Aunt Maud advising Shade not to go to Goldsworth's. Pada and tata hint at "father"; then: "pada ATA i ne LANTA. Then: "nedi" -- neydi, ne khodi [NOT oGO]. Then: oGOL VARTA [Go OLD WART]. Strakh (feur), lane [...], and tale are also represented [in the Russian version]".

II.

In a recent article by John V. Hagopian and Slava Paperno, "Official and Unofficial

Responses to Nabokov in the Soviet Union" (The Achievements of Vladimir Nabokov, Ithaca, 1984, pp. 99-119), the authors state that there was no mention of Nabokov in the Soviet press between 1957 and 1965 (p. 105). A correction is in order. Apart from an entertaining reaction to the Russian version of Conclusive Evidence (Drugie Berega, New York, 1954), entitled "Golos s drugogo berega" [A Voice from the Other Shore], published in the leading Soviet daily Sovetskaya Rossiya in the late 1950s, and signed by an incredibly well-informed Soviet kolkhoznitsa whose name escaped me (but I do remember, vaguely, the name of the kolkhoz, something like Virgin Soya, apparently after the Soviet Jeanne d'Arc, Zoya Kosmodemianski), there were at least two references to Nabokov made by Raisa Orlova, at the time an official Soviet interpreter of American letters (now a Soviet dissident in exile). The first was published in the paper Literature and Life (September 11, 1959) under the title "Let's Set the Record Straight! (What We Value in American Literature)". I shall quote, in literal translation, the beginning, the central part, and the end of this incendiary piece.

There is not a single honest person who would not be cheered by the forthcoming meeting of Nikita Sergeevich Krushchev with D. Eisenhower...

One of the hottest [khodovykh] and most noisily advertised books in the U.S. (and not only there) has been the novel by a Russian émigré Nabokov Lolita. But surely one cannot believe that the tech-

nically glittery description of the way a 12-year-old erotomaniac girl ingeniously seduces an elderly man is really the present day of American literature.

We hope that vicious enemies of peace won't be able to thwart the materialization of that good will; similarly, the development of American Literature will never be stopped or sidetracked to dead ends of decadence by champions of transient aesthetic fads alien to the wholesome traditions of the national culture.

The second mention of Lolita (curiously resembling the first one) by Miss Orlova can be found in the monthly Culture and Life (No. 6, 1960, "From Tom Sawyer to the Santiago Fisherman"). Here it goes:

Last year on the lists of American best-sellers there figured such books as, for example, Lolita by Nabokov and The Ugly American [by William Lederer]. Soviet critics - experts in American Literature, translators, *littérateurs* - upon examining these books, do not think that their publication in the Soviet Union would be appropriate [*tselesoobraznyi*, a Soviet untranslatable signal formula literally meaning "teleological"]. Meseems, the story of an affair between an elderly man and the 12-year-old erotomaniac Lolita (even if one allows that it is written with certain skill) cannot reveal [sic] to our readers anything new about the Americans, about our time - indeed, about Man in general. (p. 42)

There was, I am reasonably sure, an article by Miss Orlova devoted entirely to Lolita and published in one of the Soviet literary monthlies in 1959 or 1960 (which was yet another amusing proof that the critiquess had not read the novel) but unfortunately I can't locate it now.

-- Gene Barabtarlo, University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign)

Nabokov's Symbolic Cards and Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades"

In an interesting essay on "Signs and Symbols" ("Deciphering Nabokov's 'Signs and Symbols'," Nabokov's Fifth Arc, p. 147), Larry R. Andrews has sought to establish the literary subtexts for the passage where the old woman picks up from the floor the following three cards: knave of hearts, nine of spades, ace of spades (Nabokov's Dozen, p. 73). The playing cards belong to a larger network of "symbols" in the story, designed to anticipate the fate of the deranged protagonist (his suicide). According to Professor Andrews this symbolism derives from three literary sources: Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (likewise referring to a "knave of hearts"); Baudelaire's "Spleen" ("Le beau valet de coeur et la dame de pique"); and VN's own King, Queen, Knave, where the three court cards are given a somewhat similarly emblematic function.

He may be right, but I would still suggest another source, perhaps better suited

to the Russian émigré background of the story. The motif of "three cards" figures also in Pushkin's "Pikovaja dama" ("The Queen of Spades"). Here it is Hermann, the protagonist of the story, who is supposed to make three draws in a game of bank (faro)--if his third card is an ace of spades he will gain a considerable fortune. Instead, he draws a queen, which causes him to lose his mind, and the rest of his days are spent in a mental institution. The parallel with the insane hero of "Signs and Symbols" is an obvious one. It becomes still more enhanced when we remember that in Tchaikovsky's opera (1890) based on the story, Hermann actually commits suicide after his third draw. (For VN's own remarks on "The Queen of Spades" cf. his Commentary to Eugene Onegin, II, 258-59; for comments on Tchaikovsky cf. 333-34).

Consequently, the card motifs in VN's story are seen to enter its narrative system also via a Pushkinian linkage. I have tried to place this system into a more general theoretical network in my Kerronnallisista paradokseista ja itsensa tiedostavista fiktiivisistä ("Narrative Paradoxes and Self-Consciousness in Fiction"), published in Taiteen monta tasoa (Festschrift for Professor Maija Lehtonen), Mänttä: SKS, 1983, pp. 121-37. The same volume contains an excellent discussion by my colleague Jyrki Nummi on VN's (and Pushkin's) uses of the authorial persona as a textual device. Finnish-Reading Nabokovites are hereby notified.

--Pekka Tammi, The Finnish Academy, Helsinki

A Note on Nabokov's Unity

Priscilla Meyer's article on Lolita and Eugene Onegin (abstracted in VNRN No. 12 and published in The Achievements of Vladimir Nabokov)--which convincingly demonstrates that Nabokov's novel can be seen as an acknowledged "paraphrastic" version of Pushkin's master piece--tends to support and to be supported by a discovery that I made about ten years ago.

While reading Lolita for the ?th time, I abruptly realized that the description of "Lo's bare feet practicing dance techniques" (184) was more than routinely familiar. Several of the details recalled Pushkin's description of Istomina's dancing in Eugene Onegin. Turning to Nabokov's (1964) translation, I found, among these similar details: "and lo! a leap, and lo! she flies" (I,105). Could the two uses of "lo!" (in this famously literal translation) possibly confirm as a purposeful parallel the description of "Lo's" dancing? And were there other such (conformed) parallels as well?

There apparently were. In fact, each of the other five uses of the word "lo" in Nabokov's translation can be seen to function similarly. First, Nabokov's Pushkin's description of his muse ("lo! in my garden she appeared/ as a provincial miss," I,293) parallels Humbert's first glimpse of Lolita as a provincial miss in a "breathless garden" (42), where she is identified by her mother as "my Lo." Humbert's later glimpse of the married Lolita parallels Onegin's glimpse of the

married Tatiana, introduced by "But lo!" (I,298) Third, Pushkin's description of Onegin "And lo-- his eyes were reading, but his thoughts/ were far away," I,311) may be related to the famous episode in which Humbert pretends to read a magazine with "Lo" on his lap. Fourth is the "But lo" that introduces Tatiana's name-day festival (I,221), which may remind us of the importance of Lo's so-often-punned-upon name, particularly since, as Nabokov notes in his Commentary, the "But lo" in Pushkin's Russian introduces a playful allusion to Lomonosov (II,522; see also I,43). Fifth, when Olga marries not Lensky but the uhlan ("and lo!" I,266) she looks down, smiling--as does the married Lolita when Humbert goes to see her (272). I was somewhat disappointed that this "lo!" referred to Olga, not Tatiana, until I read in Nabokov's Commentary that Olga has at this point become a "sly nymph" (III,80).

All this seemed in keeping with Clarence Brown's suggestion that there is "absolute unity" in Nabokov's writing and that in a sense he kept writing the same book over and over, even when he translated Eugene Onegin (Dembo anthology, pp. 200, 205), now further substantiated by Priscilla Meyer. My research uncovered teasingly possible confirmed parallels even in other works. For example in Pale Fire, "Hurricane Lolita" from Florida to Maine (ll. 679-80) echoes a TV weather report of "Aeolian wars" from Florida to Maine (408-9), followed by: "A nymph came pirouetting" (413). This last line, Kinbote tells us in his Commentary, was originally "A nymphet pirouetted," amplifying the triple parallel of

ballet dancing: Lolita is of course a nymphet, and Istomina, who "flies like fluff from Eol's lips," is echoed by the "Aeolian wars" used to describe Hurricane Lolita. A final note: when Nabokov revised his EO translation in 1975, he replaced the two uses of "lo!" (for Istomina) with "suddenly"-- and added the following (I,242): "then, lo, 'tis bedtime."

--W.W. Rowe

"Nabokov and Mirsky"

While preparing to teach Crime and Punishment, I reread Nabokov's insightful and infuriating remarks on Dostoevsky in Lectures on Russian Literature. I then turned, for what I remembered as a more balanced treatment, to D. S. Mirsky's classic and compact A History of Russian Literature: From Its Beginnings to 1900, ed. Francis Whitfield (New York: Vintage, 1958)--only to discover how very attentively Nabokov had done likewise.

Nabokov, of course, admits his familiarity with Mirsky and often gives him credit for being a good reader (no small compliment from Nabokov). I was, however, struck by the close correspondence between the following pair of citations.

Mirsky writes: "His second story, The Double, is also rooted in Gogol and still more original. It is the story, told in great detail and in a style intensely saturated with phonetic and rhythmical expressiveness, of a government clerk who goes mad, obsessed by the idea that a fellow clerk has usurped his identity" (p. 184). Nabokov's version is as

follows: "The very best thing he ever wrote seems to me to be The Double. It is the story--told very elaborately, in great, almost Joycean detail (as the critic Mirsky notes), and in a style intensely saturated with phonetic and rhythmical expressiveness--of a government clerk who goes mad, obsessed by the idea that a fellow clerk has usurped his identity" (p. 104). The echo is particularly ironic in that Nabokov acknowledges neither the wording nor the description of "expressiveness," but only the comparison with Joyce--whereas Mirsky had in fact invoked Gogol.

It is possible, of course, that Fredson Bowers, who edited the lectures for publication, is responsible for the buried citation. The reference to Mirsky seems to show that Nabokov wanted to indicate a quotation. As the text stands, however, the lecture gives credit only for the original material (the parallel with Joyce) and withholds credit for the borrowed material (the rest).

My purpose in calling attention to this borrowing is definitely not to impugn Nabokov's integrity. When I steal pale fire for my own lectures, I may write Nabokov's name on the board, but I do not draw quotation marks in the air. The genre of the lecture permits one to dispense with elaborate documentation. I simply want to point out the hybrid qualities of that genre, even when practiced by a genius, and to offer, if it is needed, a sort of reassurance to Nabokov's admirers: if a sentence in one of Nabokov's edited lectures seems too awkward or conventional to have been written by Nabokov, it probably wasn't.

--Shoshana Knapp, Virginia Tech

Field Update, Continued

by Z. Kuzmanovich

[The letter to the editor which carried these important corrections to Field's Nabokov: A Bibliography was accompanied by copies of the items found in Segodnya. Ed.]

Most Nabokov scholars are familiar with that mixture of chagrin and disappointment when after a painstaking search through library catalogues, foreign language bibliographies of bibliographies and their supplements, specialized collections catalogues, on-line data bases and systems of inter-library loans, they discover that the microfilmed issue of the journal they finally receive does not contain the story or article they were searching for.

Hoping to reduce the number of such occasions and an even greater number of guessing games which attend them (is it the publication's title, the date or the page that is wrong?), as well as the numbing impatience of waiting for the geologically paced inter-library mail systems, I am sending you the following additions and corrections to supplement the invaluable update already begun by Boyd, Karlinsky, and Mrs. Nabokov:

0422 Add May 20, 1921

0480A "Christmas ("Rozhdestvo") in Today (Segodnya). Riga. December 25, 1923. p. 5. This

- is not the same poem as 0271 or 0422.
- 0497 Add Indexed as 0494 in Field
- 0499 Add Also included in this issue on page 21 is Civis's (S.D. Tsivinskiy's) drawing of V. Sirin along with the drawings of the other Segodnya contributors.
- 0513A "Poem" ("Stikhotvorenie--Poyu. Gde Angeli?") in Today (Segodnya). Riga. April 1, 1925. p. 5.
- 0915 "The Thunderstorm" ("Groza"), not as previously thought in The Rudder (Rul') but in Today (Segodnya). Riga. September 28, 1924. p. 6. Annotated at the end with "22-25 July, 1924. Berlin."
- 1158 Delete "Word." Add "World" . . . p. 15
- 1168 Add Revised and Reprinted as "The Art of Literature and Commonsense" in Lectures on Literature. pp. 371-380.
- 1170 Both title of magazine and the date of the issue are incorrect.

- 1308 Add [Iakov Tsvibak] after Andrey Sedykh.
- 1417A Review of A University Poem by P[yotr] P[ilsky] in Today (Segodnya). Riga. December 9, 1927. p. 6.
- 1422A Review of King, Queen, Knave in Today (Segodnya). Riga. October 13, 1928. p. 8.

One further addition: I am grateful to J.E. Tilastotoimisto of Helsinki for his or her mysterious foresight in preserving the back issues of Segodnya in which many of the above entries were found, not without drudgery but also not without a degree of delight.

ABSTRACT

"Vladimir Vladimirovich in Berlin"

by Marina T. Naumann

(Abstract of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of AATSEEL, New York, December 1983)

Nabokov's fourteen years in Berlin were significant ones for him as a Russian writer; the period between 1923 and 1930 comprised his formative stage, while 1930 to 1937 was his most productive time. This paper first describes the vibrant, fertile enclave of Russian émigrés which Nabokov found when he arrived in Berlin. It touches upon the non-literary activities which financially supported him, finally focussing on his early developing literary associations there, particularly the key ones. These included the editor Iosif Hessen, the poet Sasha Chorny, Nabokov's colleagues Iurii Ofrosimov and Ivan Lukash, and his wife, Vera Slonim. Also discussed are his valuable contacts with his friends, the Mikhail Kaminkas; his patrons, the Tatarinovs; and the critic Iulii Aikhenval'd, who in 1926 helped launch Nabokov's career with an influential and perceptive review of Mashen'ka.

A chronological account of Nabokov's literary activities is then given. These activities not only centered on Nabokov's writing, but soon expanded to include invited readings of his new works. In their turn, these readings took Nabokov on short trips abroad where he met such luminaries of the

Russian literary world as Khodasevich and Tsvetaeva. Already in Berlin he had become acquainted with Bunin and Zamiatin. With such a supportive circle it is therefore understandable that Nabokov readily isolated himself from the surrounding German milieu. Thus he could concentrate on preserving not only the poignant memories of his homeland but, more fundamentally, his "natural idiom," his "untrammelled, rich and infinitely docile Russian tongue." (Much later Nabokov was to observe that paradoxically the seven novels and numerous stories composed in Russian during this German time, "had entirely, or in part, a Berlin background.")

I show that, although Nabokov was on the crest of a wave at the beginning of the 1930s, Berlin with the rise of the Nazis was not. Consequently most all Russian émigrés moved away to Paris, taking with them Nabokov's friends, audience, journals, and publishing houses. Nabokov's decision to remain is considered and his next quiet and most fruitful years as an author are examined in depth. His 1937 decision to leave Berlin is then explained. My conclusion is that Nabokov's Berlin years were his finest years not just in terms of literary friendships and activities, but in the very high level of his artistic output. In Berlin Nabokov had not merely taken root as a Russian writer, but he had blossomed as one. This is a distinction few émigrés have achieved.

ABSTRACTS

"Cloud, Castle, Clastrum: Nabokov as a Freudian in Spite of Himself"

by Alan C. Elms

(Abstract of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Psychohistorical Association, New York, June 1983)

Vladimir Nabokov was militantly anti-Freudian. In prefaces, in essays and in interviews, he denounced the psychoanalytic interpretation of literature as farcical. In his autobiography he strongly rejected any use of Freudian perspectives in understanding his own psychological development. In several fictional works (including *Lolita*), he ruthlessly parodies psychotherapists and psychoanalytically-oriented academics. He even planted blatant Freudian symbols in his fiction, then mocked scholars or ordinary readers who "discovered" them.

Nabokov's offensive against psychoanalysis appears to have been quite effective, at least in terms of dissuading most scholars from applying analytic interpretations to his work. Yet the work is difficult to understand without relating it to Nabokov's own unusual developmental history. Various analytic constructs are readily applicable both to Nabokov's life and to his work. As a brief example of such applications, one of Nabokov's most striking short stories, "Cloud, Castle, Lake" is examined.

This story deals explicitly with several major Nabokovian themes, and includes several crude "Freudian" symbols, perhaps planted deliberately. But it also includes a subtle symbolic depiction of a return to the idealized womb and a forceful expulsion, apparently not consciously recognized as such by Nabokov but central to the story's psychological impact. Similar imagery is prominent in a major novel written not long before, *Invitation to a Beheading*, though the novel's outcome is quite different. Fetal and birth imagery in the story and the novel are compared and related to themes and images in Nabokov's earlier and later works. Explicit and implicit themes in the story and the novel are considered in terms of Nabokov's developmental history and his life circumstances at the time both works were written.

"Nabokov Contra Freud"

by Alan C. Elms

(Abstract of a paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Anaheim, California, August 1983)

Vladimir Nabokov was not only a superb stylist but a sophisticated delineator of character. He often employed sexual symbolism, dreams, slips of tongue or pen, projections, denials, obsessive behaviors, and other psychological expressions to depict underlying motives. Yet he displayed an implacable hostility toward Sigmund Freud, and seldom

passed up an occasion to vilify Freud and Freudian psychology in his writings.

Scholars and critics have generally assumed that Nabokov's hostility toward Freud was simply a matter of the artist resisting reductionistic interpretations of his work, or of Nabokov's often-stated refusal to subscribe to any organized system of thought. But a close examination of Nabokov's fictional and autobiographical works suggests that his hostility had more complex and more personal origins. His early development in an aristocratic Russian family, his relationships with his parents and other relatives, his exile from Russia during adolescence, and the early critical reception of his fiction, are all implicated in his almost obsessive vilifications and parodies of Freudian psychology. An examination of these sources of Nabokov's anti-Freudianism also casts a new light on several of the major themes in his fiction and poetry.

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