

THE NABOKOVIAN

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Editor: Stephen Jan Parker

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THE NABOKOVIAN

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NEWS

by Stephen Jan Parker

In the fall issue we reported on the first tentative steps to discuss and publish VN in the USSR. Since then much has happened. The October 24 issue of the Moscow weekly Knizhnoe obozrenie (Book Review), with a circulation of 300,000, contained six poems from VN's 1929 collection of poems and stories, Vozvrashchenie Chorba, in a pull-out centerfold section. Oktiabr' (October), a Moscow monthly, published twenty-eight poems by VN in their November issue with an introductory article by the well-known Soviet poet, Andrei Voznesenskii. And, as promised, Moskva, another Moscow monthly, published Zashchita Luzhina (The Defense) in their December issue, with an introductory article by the critic, Oleg Mikhailov.

Other Nabokov works reported to be scheduled for publication include Nikolai Gogol in Novyi mir; Mashenka (Mary) in Literaturnaia uchyoba; the stories "The Circle" in Ogonyok, "The Return of Chorb" in Sel'skaia molodezh', "Spring in Fialta" in Neva; and a selection of poems in Druzhba narodov. Adolphs Shapiro, chief producer for The Theatre for Young Theatregoers in Riga, Latvia, is quoted in a published interview as saying, "We wish to stage something from the plays of the little known but interesting author, Vladimir Nabokov."

Essays and commentary mentioning VN and his writings have been appearing on a regular basis in various publications, including the official Literaturnaia gazeta (Literary Gazette). In several cities there have been public readings of VN's works, including the full text of "Cloud, Castle, Lake" and sections from Invitation to a Beheading and Lolita. Formal evenings devoted to VN have been planned, and lengthy articles are being prepared by such Soviet literary luminaries as Daniil Granin, Nikolai Anastas'ev, and Alexander Muliarchik.

Nabokov "specialists" are materializing throughout the USSR, including some of the worst hacks in the literary establishment. Apparently it is useful at this moment to be a Nabokov enthusiast. What will actually be published, the amount of textual mutilation, and the nature of accompanying commentary remains to be seen. "Glasnost" (a word now very much part of American, as well as Soviet, jargon) has permitted the introduction of VN to a broader Soviet public. Future developments, whatever they may be, will be noted in this column.

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The Nabokov Society sessions at MLA and AATSEEL (New York City, December) were well-attended and well-received. The MLA session, "Nabokov and the Short Story," was chaired by Julian Connolly. The papers presented were: Eric Hyman, "The Affinity between Chess Problems and Nabokov's Short Fiction"; Leona Toker, "Nabokov's 'Torpid Smoke'"; Stephen

Matterson, "Sprung from the Music-Box of Memory: 'Spring in Fialta'"; Zoran Kuzmanovich, "'Bright Blurbs and Dark Feuds': The Artist and the Critics in Nabokov's Short Stories"; Charles Nicol, "Nabokov's 'The Assistant Producer'." The other MLA session, "Nabokov on Freud and Freud on Nabokov," was chaired by Phyllis Roth. The papers presented were: Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, "The Brothers Nabokov"; Geoffrey Green, "Splitting of the Ego: Freudian Doubles, Nabokovian Doubles"; Alan Elms, "Nabokov, Freud, and the Preservation of Personal Identity."

The AATSEEL session, "Translated Things: Nabokov's Art as Translation and in Translation," was chaired by Dale E. Peterson. On the program: John Kopper, "Against Translation: Autology and the Paint of Mortality in Nabokov's Last Russian Fiction"; Gene Barabtarlo, "LOLITA in Russian"; Spencer Golub, "LOLITA on the Stage"; Priscilla Meyer, "Etymology and Heraldry: Nabokov's Zemblan Translations;" discussant, Beverly Lyon Clark.

At the business meeting Phyllis Roth was elected to serve for one more year as President of the Nabokov Society; Julian Connolly continues as Vice-President.

*

MLA and AATSEEL will meet in December 1987 in San Francisco. Sam Schuman (Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C. 27410) will chair one MLA session, "The Posthumous Nabokov." He explains: "1987 will mark the ten-year anniversary of Vladimir Nabokov's death. The decade since 1977 has seen a flood of second-

ary material on Nabokov which was without precedent during his lifetime. It has also seen the publication of several works, in several genres, written by Nabokov but, for one reason or another, not published while he lived. Finally, this has been a period in which considerable research and speculation has been focused upon aspects of Nabokov's life. A number of important, fascinating, and at times disturbing questions could be addressed in such a session. What important new directions have been found by scholars and critics in the past decade? How do new biographical discoveries and/or speculations color our understanding of Nabokov? What questions of literary morality are involved in bringing to light materials by or about an author after his death which that author chose not to make public during his life?"

The second MLA session, "Nabokov - Philosophy, Painting, Music," will be chaired by Leona Toker (Faculty of Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, 91905, Jerusalem, Israel).

At AATSEEL, the Nabokov session, "Authorship and Authority: Nabokov's Control of the Text," will be chaired by Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (English Department, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912).

The chairs of the three sessions encourage and welcome inquiries from persons interested in presenting papers.

*

Reviews of The Enchanter have been for the most part laudatory, and the novella continues to enjoy worldwide success (on best-seller lists, for example, in England, France, and Switzerland). The most amusing remark to date appears in Steven Kellman's review for The Nation. "[VN] delighted in pulling the legs of his readers, even out from under them. He might have enjoyed the suspicion that Dmitri, who was a 5-year-old in 1939, when The Enchanter is said to have been written, is using Vladimir Nabokov as his pseudonym. The coy master himself appended the name V. Sirin to his earliest fiction, including, according to Dmitri, The Enchanter." Interest in the novella has led to numerous interviews of Dmitri Nabokov regarding his father, the art of translation, and the novella itself. These have appeared in print, on radio and on television in Europe and the USA. Specific citations will be included in the annual Nabokov bibliography.

*

Mrs. Véra Nabokov has provided the following list of VN's works received September 1986 - February 1987:

September - "Pouchkine ou le Vrai et le Vraisemblable" in Magazine Littéraire No. 233, Paris; issue dedicated to VN, introduction by Gilles Barbedette.

September - Excerpt from Speak, Memory in The Joy of Football. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

September - Excerpt from Speak, Memory in 64, (August) Moscow, USSR.

October - Six poems (in Russian) in Knizhnoe obozrenie, 24 October 1986, Moscow, USSR.

October - Roi, dame, valet (King, Queen, Knave). Paris: Gallimard, édition Folio.

October - A Defesa (The Defense), tr. Luiz Fernando Brandao. Sao Paulo, Brazil: L & PM Editores.

October - The Enchanter, tr. Dmitri Nabokov. New York: Putnam's Sons.

November - Pnine, tr. Michel Chrestien. Paris: Gallimard, édition L'Imaginaire.

November - Parla, Memoria, tr. Oriol Carbonell i Curell. Barcelona: Edicions 62.

December - Zashchita Luzhina (The Defense) in Moskva, No. 12, Moscow, USSR.

December - Twenty-eight poems (in Russian) in Oktiabr, No. 11, Moscow, USSR.

December - The Enchanter. Cape Town, South Africa: Tafelberg Publishers.

December - Ada, tr. David Molinet. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, "Biblioteca Nabokov."

December - Lolita. Paris: Gallimard, Folio reprint.

December - Na Outra Margem Da Memoria (Speak, Memory), tr. Anibal Fernandes. Lisbon: Difel Lda.

December - De Tovenaar (The Enchanter), tr. Marja Wiebes (translated from the Russian); tr. Rene Kurpershoek for the Afterword. Amsterdam: Uit. Berk Bakker.

January - Mashenka (Mary) and Korol', dama, valet (King, Queen, Knave), introductions from the English editions translated into Russian by Vera Nabokov and Gene Barabtarlo. Volume One of Vladimir Nabokov, Collected Works. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis.

February - The Enchanter. London: Pan Books, Picador.

February - Invitation au Supplice (Invitation to a Beheading), tr. from the Russian by Jarl Priel. Paris: Gallimard, Folio edition.

February - "The Overcoat" and "The Lady with the Little Dog" in Ann Charters, The Story and Its Writers. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2nd edition.

*

While a number of ill-informed reviewers of Field's VN have enjoyed sloshing around in his innuendoes and misguided conjectures, the most lucid and germane reviews are represented, to take but two examples, by Joel Conarroe's piece in The New York Times Book Review and Simon Karlinsky's in The Washington Post Book World. To quote from the latter, "In VN,

Field still admires some of Nabokov's writings, but this is undermined by his seething animosity toward not only the writer himself, but also his family and ancestors." After expressing stupefaction at Field's bizarre and preposterous assertion that the name Zina (the heroine of The Gift) is an "easy anagram for Nazi," Karlinsky concludes his calmly and carefully detailed review: "In such passages of VN, both scholarship and common sense take a nosedive. Whatever value other portions of Field's book might offer, one thing is clear. A writer of Vladimir Nabokov's stature deserves a biographer who is more at home in Russian culture and has more respect and sympathy for the man and his achievement than Field now does."

*

The special Nabokov issue of Canadian American Slavic Studies edited by D. Barton Johnson, announced for publication in Fall 1985 and carrying that date, finally appeared in fall 1986. Since the contributors could not be included in the 1985 Nabokov bibliography, they are given below:

Editor's Preface; Brian Boyd, "A World Awakening: Petersburg 1899-1904 (Pages from a Nabokov Biography)"; Nina Berberova, "Notes on Nabokov's British Literary Ancestors"; Herbert Grabes, "The Parodistic Erasure of the Boundary between Fiction and Reality in Nabokov's English Novels"; Sonya Domergue, "Vladimir Nabokov: Mixed Doubles"; Maurice Couturier, "Death and Symbolic Exchange in Nabokov's ADA"; Leona Toker, "Ganin in MARY-land: A

Retrospect on Nabokov's First Novel"; Magdalena Medaric-Kovacic, "Nabokov's CAMERA OBSKURA as an Avant-Garde Ornamental Novel"; D. Barton Johnson, "Eyeing Nabokov's EYE"; Leszek Engelking, "Some Remarks on the Devil in Nabokov's 'The Visit to the Museum'"; Sergei Davydov, "THE GIFT: Nabokov's Aesthetic Exorcism of Chernyshevskii."

*

- It has been reported in the French press that plans are underway to publish VN's novels in Gallimard's "bibliothèque de la Pléiade" series, under the general editorship of Gilles Barbedette. In France it is understood that publication in the Pléiade is reserved for the greatest and most influential writers in world literature.

- A German film version of Mashenka (Mary) has been released. To quote one viewer, "[the film] has some virtues, but fidelity to the book and re-creation of an era are not among them." The film may be presented at this year's Cannes Festival; worldwide distribution is planned for the fall.

- For a book of articles on Nabokov's short stories, unpublished manuscripts are requested by Charles Nicol, English Department, Indiana State University, Terre Haute IN 47809.

- Maurice Couturier (Faculté des lettres, Université de Nice, 06007 Nice, France) writes that Magazine Littéraire, a Parisian monthly, is preparing a special Nabokov issue for next fall.

- Freud and Nabokov, a book by Geoffrey Green (English Department, San Francisco State University, CA 94132) will be published by University of Nebraska Press in January 1988.

- Simon Karlinsky (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of California, Berkeley 94720) notes that he polemicizes with VN in two sections of his book, Russian Drama from Its Beginning to the Age of Pushkin (University of California Press)--in the introduction ("Curtain Raiser") and in the section devoted to Kniazhnin's plays.

- Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (English Department, Brown University, Providence RI 02912) delivered a paper, "Purloined Letters: Poe, Conan Doyle, Nabokov," at Michigan State University's annual Conference in Modern Literature. She remarks that she also heard another paper by Clare Cavanagh, "The Madness of Method: Nabokov and Hitchcock."

- Anna Ljunggren (Visiting Scholar, Slavic Languages & Literatures, Yale University, New Haven CT) is a Short-Term Scholar this spring at The Wilson Center, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies (Washington, DC), while working on "Vladimir Nabokov and His Cultural Background in Prerevolutionary St. Petersburg."

*

Nabokoviana: From Japan, Peter Evans writes: "A Japanese magazine with the strange

name L'E started up in December last year. It's one of the many about fiction, architecture, jazz, cooking, and other aspects of fashionable life--good decoration for a coffee-table, and in the English words of the editors an 'enchanted spirit monthly magazine.' The L'E is short for 'L'Enchanteur,' as is made clear on the cover both by 'L'Enchanteur' and a short explanation of what the novel is."

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As in each of our issues for the past eight years, we wish to acknowledge and thank Ms. Paula Malone for her indispensable assistance in the publication of The Nabokovian.

More New Nabokov Works

by Brian Boyd

Since the last Nabokovian I have traced another thirty Nabokov works, early and late, including his first artistic prose in English (two pieces from 1923) and two surprising and very dissimilar short pieces from 1940, when Nabokov's Russian prose was at its peak. These four works alone add two more pseudonyms to Cantab., Vladimir Sirin, Vivian Calmbrood, Vasily Shishkov and Vivian Darkbloom: the transparent V. Cantaboff and the unexpected Ridebis Semper. One issue of the journal Karussel/Carousal/Caroussel actually contains three VN pieces, all in English, all signed differently: articles by V. Cantaboff and Vladimir V. Nabokoff and a poem by Vladimir Sirine. This fantastically rare journal, sent to the Nabokov archives by Stella de Does-Kohnhorst, does not appear in the German national bibliography, the American Union List of Serials, or the catalogues of the Bibliothèque Nationale or the British Library.

I am delighted to be able to key the works that follow to Michael Juliar's Vladimir Nabokov: A Descriptive Bibliography, an immeasurable advance over Andrew Field's Nabokov: A Bibliography in accuracy, completeness, fullness of detail, bibliographical understanding and attentiveness to the reader's needs. Though minor criticisms can still be made of Juliar's book, he does not deserve the gruff tone I adopted in the VNRN four years ago.

C132a Essay in English: Laughter and Dreams. Berlin: Karussel/Carousal/Carrousel. No. 2. 1923, p. 4-6.

note: Signed Vladimir V. Nabokoff.

C132b Essay in English: Painted Wood. Berlin: Karussel/Carousal/Carrousel. No. 2. 1923, pp. 9-10.

note: Signed V. Cantaboff.

C132c Poem in English: The Russian song. "I dream of simple tender things." Berlin: Karussel/Carousal/Carrousel. No. 2. 1923, p. 16.

note: Signed Vladimir Sirine.

C137a Poem in Russian: Leningrad [Leningrad]. "Velikiia, poroiu" ["Great, at times"]. Berlin: Nash Mir. No. 1. 23Mar24, p. 16.

note: Unsigned.

(Field 0487.)

C137b Verse riddle in Russian: Sharada [Riddle]. "Zver' zheltoglazyi Pervym ispeshchren" ["By my First a yellow-eyed beast is speckled"]. Berlin: Nash Mir. No. 1. 23March24, p. 16.

note: Unsigned. Solution appeared on 30Mar24, p.[24].

(Field 0487.)

C177 Chess problem in Russian: Add:

note: solution appeared on 7Dec24, p. 368.

C339a Crossword puzzle in Russian: Krestoslovitsa No. 5 [Crossword No. 5]. Berlin: Rul'. No. 3241. 26Jul31, p. 8.

note: Reprinted Playboy, Dec73.

C346 Novel excerpt in Russian: correct details to Nash Vek. No. 1. 8Nov31, pp. 2-3.

note: From 'Kamera obskura' ['Laughter in the Dark'], Chap. 30.

C346a Chess problem in Russian: Shutochnaya zadacha V. Sirina. Posviashchaetsia Evg. A. Znosko-Borovskomu, po sluchaiu ego 25-letniago iubileia. Pechataetsia v pervye. Belye berut obratno svoi poslednii khod i v odin khod delaiut mat. [Fairy problem by V. Sirin. Dedicated to Evg. A. Znosko-Borovsky on the occasion of his twenty-fifth jubilee. Printed for the first time. White takes back last move and mates in one.] Paris: Poslednie Novosti. No. 3891. 17Nov31, p. 5.

note: Solution appeared on 22Nov31, p. 5.

(Field 1221 misdates 17Nov32. Delete Juliar C372 and correct the date of cross-reference in C629.)

C415a Chess problem in Russian: Nom. 16. Zadacha V. Sirina (Mentona). Pechataetsia v pervye. Mat v tri khoda. [No. 16. Problem by V. Sirin (Menton). Printed for the first time.

Mate in three moves.] Paris: Poslednie Novosti. No. 6281. 7Jun38, p. 6.

C415b Chess problem in Russian: Nom. 17. Zadacha V. Sirina (Mentona). Pechataetsia v pervye. Mat v tri khoda. [No. 17. Problem by V. Sirin (Menton). Printed for the first time. Mate in three moves.] Paris: Poslednie Novosti. No. 6286. 12Jun38, p. 5.

note: Nabokov later noted that problem is cooked.

C428a Parody in Russian: Literaturnye parodii. Zud [Literary parodies. Zud]. New York: Novoe Russkoe Slovo. No. 10,114. 17Oct40, p. 4.

note: Signed Ridebis Semper. "Zud" would normally mean "The Itch," but here turns out to be the hero's name.

C429a Parody in Russian: Literaturnye parodii. 2. Pokupka sardinki nepmanom. [Literary parodies. 2. Nepman Buys Sardine.] New York: Novoe Russkoe Slovo. No. 10,116. 19Oct40, p. 6.

note: Unsigned. "Sardinka" in the title and the beginning of the story appears to mean "sardine," but turns out to be "Sardinian woman".

C430a Miscellaneous in Russian: Pomogite, gospoda [Help]. New York: Novoe Russkoe Slovo. No. 10159. 1Dec40, p. 3.

note: Part charity appeal, part essay.

C524a Poem in Russian: Byl den' kak den' [A Day Like Any Other]. "Byl den' kak den'.

Dremala pamiat'. Ddilias'" [A day like any other. Memory dozed. Dragged on"]. New York: Novoe Russkoe Slovo. No. 14,269. 20May51, p. 8.

H8a Interview in English: Author of 'Lolita' Airs Views on Censorship, Role of Artist. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Daily Sun. 25Sep58.

note: By Gladys Kessler.

H10a Interview in English: What Hath 'Lolita' Wrought? Ithaca Author Distressed by Some Reactions. Elmira, NY: Elmira Telegram. 14Dec58, p.

note: By Edward E. Van Dyke.

H11a Remarks in English: My Child Lolita. New Haven, CT: Ivy Magazine. Feb59, p. 28.

note: By Alan Nordstrom.

H12a Remarks in English: 'Lolita' Strewn Across Nation, Author Reveals. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Mirror News. 31Jul59, p. ?.

H23a Interview in French: Entretien: Vladimir Nabokov. Paris: L'Express. 26Jan61, p. ?.

note: By Anne Guérin.

H23b Interview in French: Si Nabokov vient en Israel ce sera a cause des papillons de Jérusalem. Tel Aviv: L'Information d'Israel. 3Feb61, p. ?.

note: By Janine Colombo.

H12a Remarks in English: 'Lolita' Strewn Across Nation, Author Reveals. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Mirror News. 31Jul59, p. ?.

H23a Interview in French: Entretien: Vladimir Nabokov. Paris: L'Express. 26Jan61, p. ?.

note: By Anne Guérin.

H23b Interview in French: Si Nabokov vient en Israel ce sera a cause des papillons de Jérusalem. Tel Aviv: L'Information d'Israel. 3Feb61, p. ?.

note: By Janine Colombo.

H25a Remarks in English: Nabokov, butterflies, and the Côte d'Azur. London: Daily Express. 8Apr61, p. ?.

note: By Rosalie Macrae.

H26 Interview in French: Sur la Promenade des Anglais Vladimir Nabokov le père de 'Lolita' a planté sa tente de nomade. Nice: Nice-Matin. 13Apr61.

note: By Claude Mercadie.

(Note corrected date.)

H26a Interview in French: Quand le parrain de B.B. parle de Proust au père de Lolita. Paris: Le Nouveau Candide. 30(or23?)Nov61, p. ?.

note: by Pierre Benichon.

H27 Interview in English: V. Nabokov Unresting. Providence, RI: Providence Sunday Journal, 13May62, p. ?.

note: By Phyllis Meras.

H27a Interview in English: Books and Authors. Nabokov's Plums. New York: New York Herald-Tribune. 17Jun62.

note: By Maurice Dolbier.

H33a Interview in French: L'Ecrivain Vladimir Nabokov aime Montreux et adore les papillons. Montreux: Journal de Montreux. 23Jan64, pp. 1-2.

H35a Interview in French: Buvant de xérès chez Monsieur Nabokov. Geneva: Journal de Genève. 13Mar65, p. ?.

note: By Guy de Belleval.

H35b Remarks in English: Nabokov and the Innocent Europeans. Geneva, Switzerland: Weekly Tribune. 28Jan66.

note: By Gordon Ackerman.

C620 Chess problem in English:

note: Add: Reprinted in Sunday Times Magazine, 20Jun71, p. 54 with solution 27Jun71, p. 2.

C621a Letter in ?German: Nabokov Contra Helwig. Vienna: Die Presse. 23May1969, p. 4.

note: In response to bogus interview by Werner Helwig, Die Presse, 25Apr69.

C652a Chess problem in English: ? London: New Statesman. 7Jul72, p. 32.

note: Reprinted from 'Poems and Problems.'

C667a Chess problem in English: Problem No. 28. London: Financial Times. 14 Jul73, p. 9.

note: Solution, p. 4. "Nabokov calls the problem 'getting around' because of the way in the first variation the White rook works around to taking the KBP in a devious manner, being unable to do any good by capturing it directly."

H63a Interview in English: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. 29Jan74.

note: Radio interview by Mati Laansoo, made 20Mar73. Text published as An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov for the CBC. Lawrence, KS: The Vladimir Nabokov Research Newsletter. No. 10. Spr83, pp. 39-48.

(Delete Juliar H75.)

C675a Chess problem in English: Problem No. 855. London: Sunday Times Magazine. 10Nov74, p. 90.

note: Solution appeared 17Nov74, p. 90.

H73 Interview in English:

note: By Hugh A. Mulligan. Syndicated by Associated Press under various titles, in Hanover Star Bulletin, 9Jan77, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 16Jan77, Dayton Leisure, 23Jan77 and elsewhere.

ABSTRACT

"LOLITA in Russian"

by Gene Barabtarlo

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual AATSEEL Convention, New York, December 1986)

The Russian Lolita is the only instance when Nabokov ferried the "English Channel" à rebours, from the English shore of his fiction to the Russian one. This fact alone should have justified intense comparative scrutiny of the two Lolitas; yet little has been published on the subject. It is a pity, for the Russian Lolita is freckled with nice little additions and elaborations and tricks that beam at the bilingual re-reader and collator. Thus the sophistication of many hermetically Russian realia that both Humbert and Quilty juggle with in the Russian version is so ostentatious as to make the exclusively Western literary setting of the original look perfectly portable and interchangeable. A good example is a hybrid reference in Eugene Onegin and Anna Karenin in the sentence added in the Russian text: "Princess N. will never abscond to Italy with Onegin" [256/234]. A few pages later, Humbert the French Scholar quotes Verlaine, "Souvenir, souvenir, que me veux-tu? Autumn was ringing in the air", and Nabokov not only identifies the reference for the Russian reader (as he does almost invariably throughout the book) but also creates an oblique but unmistakable echo coming from the famous autumnal poem by Tiutchev: "A Verlainesque autumn was ringing in the air kak by khrustal'nom."

Curiously, only one English passage was left untranslated (perhaps, accidentally) whereas the number of adjustments, additions, and fresh injections of tropes is staggering. Some expansions are necessitated simply by the absence of a corresponding term in the Russian language, and when Nabokov chooses not to invent such a term (or load an available one with an additional meaning) he often comes up with a curious gloss. In other instances, he may want to furnish a Russian reader with a clue the English one does not, or need not, have, e.g. "The Cantrip Review" is translated as "the scholarly journal Kantrip, which is Scottish for 'saurcery'." Charlotte's car which Humbert calls "Melmoth" becomes "Icarus" (changing the means of wandering, as it were) partly because Nabokov did not expect the new Russian readership to be sufficiently conversant with Maturin, partly because he must have thought the name particularly suitable for a motorcar: limited editions of an "Icarus" wheel across three other novels (and one novellette).

There are numerous cases when, trying to find a suitable Russian equivalent for an English word-play, Nabokov flashes with an entirely different mechanism which, however, helps to solve the original puzzle. Many such elaborations forestall or amplify some of Appel's or Proffer's commentaries by obliquely or directly identifying the allusions to Flaubert, Eliot, Browning, Poe, Mérimée, Goethe - all the major purveyors of parodic material in the novel. Even the dates are obligingly furnished in parentheses at appropriate moments lest the careless Russian reader should lose track of the time progress in the

book. Other Russian variants seem to question certain established interpretations. Nabokov changes Riggs's address at "24 Pritchard Road" to a less innocently looking "69, Linter Street - the name sounded somewhat familiar..." It should have, for "Dr. Gratiano Forbeson, Mirandola, NY" (one of Q's cryptograms) passes in the Russian Lolita as "Adam N. Epilinter. Esnop, Illinoy" (i.e., "Adam was no drunkard. One wonders if Noah was.") Occasionally, an especially dense and persistent sound-play in Lolita is designed to give the alert re-reader an advance warning of the plot's taking a crucial turn. The relatively plain alliteration "millions of so-called 'millers', a kind of insect" [243], intensifies in the Russian version into a lambent multitude of swarming m's, l's, and t's (there mingled motley millions of motel moths called "millers", either because they "mill around" or perhaps because of the "millet" shimmer they have when lit. 222).

I am certain that any student or annotator of Lolita simply cannot afford not to take the Russian text into consideration, and that someone ought to compile and publish a list of all important discrepancies. The second point I make in the paper stems from a popular opinion that, however "ingenious and talented" Nabokov's translation might be, the Russian Lolita's style "bears such strong traces of English constructions that it cannot safely be treated as an autonomous piece of Russian <prose>." [Grayson, 193] Such (often quite condescending) comments made by the "Soviet and émigré readers" first recorded in Ellendea Proffer's 1970 article ("even the most ardent fans [in the USSR] dislike the Russian trans-

lation of Lolita."). I want to put on record a sharply dissenting opinion.

I submit that the Russian Lolita is not merely an unprecedented triumph of the exceedingly sophisticated translation technique but also an ultimate masterpiece of Russian prose which ought to be studied and savored, and not dismissed by those who have little choice but to rely on a scarcely reliable source. The infinite diversity and rich shimmer of the vocabulary (registered, in part, in the English-Russian Lexicon of Lolita); the inimitably resourceful, singularly pliable, "gliding" syntax; the cornucopia of tropes whose very mechanism had been theretofore unknown in Russian prose; even the partly deliberate, partly automatic injections of what Grayson calls "English constructions" -in short, all ingredients of style that are affected by translation and all elements of structure and design that are not, combine to form a piece of art of the highest order and quality, which puts the Russian Lolita on the very top step of the frozen escalator of Russian masterpieces. The melancholy fact remains that there are very few Russians extant who can appreciate the opulent beauty of the thing because of the tragically rapid deterioration of the language and the irrevocable general oposhlenie of tastes and artistic criteria, most glaringly evident in prose. That is why I strongly disagree with Grayson when she states that the Russian Lolita should be "discounted in the analysis of the development of Nabokov's prose style" [193]. I believe quite the opposite to be true: not only is Nabokov's last Russian opus in many stylistic respects his finest but it is also a brill-

iant, albeit peculiar, achievement of Russian prose, whose spine-tingling intricacy and sudden vistas make "infinity imaginable".

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ABSTRACT

"Against Translation: Autology and the Paint of Mortality in Nabokov's Last Russian Fiction"

by John M. Kopper

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual AATSEEL Convention, New York, December 1986)

"Ultima Thule" and "Solus Rex" formulate in schematic fashion the central theme of Nabokov's fiction, the writer's position as a mediator between translated states. The cataclysm of a physical or spiritual translation is frequently the central event of Nabokov's fictions. In Mashen'ka, Dar, and Pnin, the instant of translation precedes the chronological frame of the story, while in Priglasenie na kazn' and Bend Sinister, it ends the text. The stories "Katastrofa," "Poseshchenie muzeia," and "Lance" describe a translation, while "Zaniatoi chelovek" tells of a forestalled translation. In Pale Fire and Solus Rex, translation is a project that cannot be disentangled from the work itself, a pursuit that transcends incidents of translation embedded within it.

In Nabokov's narrative economy, the migration of textual elements across the frontiers between two worlds is always accounted for. Hence a rhetoric of addition and subtraction, containment, emptying and filling, possession and dispossession. As in many of Nabokov's fictions, the disjuncture of two worlds is inscribed upon the body of his

characters, the physical landscape, and language itself.

Nabokov follows many tacks in creating a "translated universe." His noms parlants reverberate within a system of referents that are both multitextual and multilinguistic. "Kr" refers to the vocabulary of chess, "Gafon" to Pushkin and to hagiography, "Egel" to the epic genre, "Onze" to the clue of a sex-digitate hand mentioned elsewhere in the story, "Adam Falter" to the Bible, lepidoptery, and literary history. And the "working" languages of the references include Russian, German, French, and English.

Use of artificial languages reposes the problem addressed by proper names. The Thulean phrases in "Solus Rex" presuppose a Germano-Slavic patchwork language similar to the Zemblan language to be used in Pale Fire. The language is not remote at all, but a hodgepodge of roots recognizable to a polyglot European. The joke of Thulean is that it is already half translated. In the Thulean fragments Nabokov would seem to show us glimmers of an original language that need not be tampered with in any way, yet in fact that language is hybrid, not an untranslatable icon but a malleable sign system prone to adjustments. Both proper names and manufactured languages initially appear as inert bodies of material, resistant to translation, but on examination show themselves to be either already translated or readily translatable into other semantic fields.

The game of translations is played with a purpose. In both "Solus Rex" and "Ultima

Thule," characters attempt to halt the play of substitutions that translations force. The ancestor narrative--a tale of translated states--is displaced with an effort to remove the conditions of narrative (translations) and the effort itself produces the offspring text.

Nabokov's fictions lead one to ask if in fact there is anything to mitigate the inevitable and at times debilitating work of translation. Decipherment of "Ultima Thule" shows that a species of restoration is possible, if not in the plot, then in the work itself. The numerous buried clues of Nabokov's narratives, the jigsaw puzzle character of his fiction encourages constant review of the text. Re-reading produces the determinate and determined narrative, where the future event can be stored by the reader as an anterior one. In a textual universe rereading implies predestination; the anticipated shock is not a shock, but a scene which can be framed, rehearsed, and staged. Against the deceptive lure of strategies to restore a world without translation, Nabokov asserts the text as an experience in itself which, created in conjunction with the reader's mind, can halt time but remain within it.

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ABSTRACT

"Etymology and Heraldry: Nabokov's Zemblan Translations"

by Priscilla Myer

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual AATSEEL Convention, New York City, December 1986)

Nabokov's deep purpose in Pale Fire is to decipher his personal fate by tracing it to its earliest origins in history. As he was "an English child" with a "Russian childhood" (SO 81; 10), he locates his point of origin in Viking history: the beginnings of both Russian and Anglo-American culture are bridged by the Vikings who traveled east to Novgorod, west to Vineland, and conquered parts of what would become Great Britain. By constructing the Zemblan language as a synthesis of Slavic and Germanic roots, Nabokov merges his Russian and Anglo-American cultural strains in the regal realm of the imagination.

Tracing the etymologies of some of the Zemblan vocabulary uncovers themes important both for Pale Fire and for Nabokov's life. The Kongs-skugg-sjo is the tip of the iceberg of the Icelandic material: literally, a "King's Shade-Show", a Royal Mirror, it is the medieval speculum regale written by an Icelander in the 13th century. The kenning for mirror is a "shade show" (skugg-sja), and Pale Fire is a hall of mirrors designed to evoke the shades of the dead, both fictional

and real. Kinbote's Zemblan narstran, "a hellish hall where the souls of murderers were tortured under the constant drizzle of drake venom," is part of his Scandinavian-style mythology drawn from reading the Eddas, rather like the val-höll, or "hall of the slain." Etymologically, narstran is a Germanic cum Slavic translation of Valhalla: nar is Icelandic for "a corpse" "a dead man." The King's Shade Show reveals the country of a particular dead man, when we uncover the etymology of Kinbote's name.

Bot in Old Icelandic means 1) a bettering, a remedy 2) atonement, compensation, especially in the sense of mannboetr or weregeld, that is, compensation for a murdered man. The name Kinbote may be read as "the compensation for the murder of a relative."

Kinbote imagines the criminals sentenced by Judge Goldsworth "positively dying of raghdirst (thirst for revenge)" (note to lines 47-8). "Rage" comes from Latin rabies, "madness," and is akin to Sanskrit rabhas, "violence," "impetuosity." In the same note Kinbote describes Goldsworth's "chateau" as of a type "termed wodnaggen in my country." In Anglo-Saxon wod means, "mad," "frenzied," and gnagan "to gnaw," "to fret." Judge Goldsworth judges and condemns a criminal who seeks revenge by assassination; the etymologies associate madness and violence with his house and activities. Nabokov suggests that it is not for us to avenge ourselves through physical acts of retribution. But in art one may revile (nithra in Old Icelandic, a Zemblan word used twice) the murderer, indulge in mockery and buffoonery (gar in Old Icelandic)

of the murderer's shargar (Zemblan, "puny ghost").

The manner of Shade's death conspicuously mirrors the accidental assassination of Nabokov's father. Kinbote parodies Nabokov himself to the degree that Pale Fire bends all of northern history of the last 1000 years to his own personal ends--to atone through the wisdom of poetry for the pain of his loss. Zembla is Kinbote's palliative constructed by a combination of skewed scholarship and vivid imagination; it fails to turn outward and results in self-solipsism, for which homosexuality is the metaphor; Kinbote fails to cross-fertilize by exploring the world of nature and culture, a world whose astounding interconnections (mirrored in Pale Fire) can be verified in libraries. For Nabokov Pale Fire is a palliative, a recompense for a murdered relative. He wreaks revenge by means of parody--of disgusting Gradus and the obtuse revolutionists--while spiralling outward to weave connections among a vast body of literature and history. In a life-long struggle against despair and nostalgia, Nabokov writes Pale Fire as a hilarious speculum regale in the process of assuaging the pain of loss of his country, his language, and his father.

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Émigré Responses to Nabokov (II): 1931-1935

by Brian Boyd

Note: As in the previous issue's installment, an asterisk after an entry designates information recorded from clippings in the Nabokov archives and not verified from an intact original.

Al. Novik [G. Khokhlov.] Review of ZASHCHITA LUZHINA (THE DEFENSE).

Sovremennye Zapiski 45 ([Jan.] 1931), pp. 514-17.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 45.

[VN: Podvig (Glory), Chs. 1-9.]

Segodnia, 12 Feb. 1931 (#43), p. 2.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 45.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 1-9.]

Rul', 25 Feb. 1931 (#3116), pp. 2-3.

Vladimir Weidle. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 45.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 1-9.]

Vozrozhdenie, 26 Feb. 1931 (#2095), p. 4.

Vadim Andreev. Review of ZASHCHITA LUZHINA.

Novaia Gazeta, 1 March 1931 (#1), p. 5.

Mikhail Osorgin. "Pozhelaniia" ("Wishes")

[VN no longer a "beginning" writer but a master.]

Novaia Gazeta, 1 March 1931 (#1). *

Iu. Sazonov [Iuliia Sazonova-Slonimskaia]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 45.

[VN: Podvig, chs. 1-9.]

Poslednie Novosti, 5 March 1931 (#3634), p. 2.

A.B.V. "Literaturnyi vecher zhurnal'istov" ("Journalists' Literary Evening")
[VN: talk on Dostoevsky.]

Rul', 24 March 1931 (#3139), p. 4.

Al. N[ovik]. [G. Khokhlov]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 45.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 1-9.]

Volia Rossii, 3-4 (March-April) 1931, pp. 375-78.

Aleksandr Kuprin, Vladislav Khodasevich et al. [Answer to questionnaire.]

[VN: Zashchita Luzhina rated by Kuprin and Khodasevich one of most significant émigré works of last five years.]

Novaia Gazeta, 1 April 1931 (#3),
pp. 1-2.

Boris Poplavsky. "O smerti i zhalosti v
'Chislakh'" ("Of life and pity in Chisla").

[VN: death and mystical pity in Sirin and
other young émigré writers.]

Novaia gazeta, 1 April 1931 (#3), p.
3.

Alfred Bem. "Pis'ma o Literature" ("Letters
on Literature").

[VN: his acceptance among émigré readers
before being sanctioned by Sovremennye
Zapiski.]

Rul', 29 April 1931 (#3168), pp.
2-3.

[Gleb Struve]. "Les Romans-Escamotage de
Vladimir Sirine."

[Survey article: Mashen'ka, Korol', dama,
valet, Soglyadatay.]

Le Mois, April 1931, pp. 145-52. *

Vladimir Weidle. Review of journal Sovre-
mennye Zapiski 46.

[VN: Podvig Chs. 10-23.]

Vozrozhdenie, 28 May 1931 (#2186),
p. 4.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremenn-
ye Zapiski 46.

[VN: Podvig Chs. 10-23.]

Segodnia, 30 May 1931 (#148), p. 3.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovre-
mennye Zapiski 46.

[VN: Podvig Chs. 10-23.]

Poslednie Novosti, 4 June 1931
(#3725), p. 2.

Evgeny Znosko-Borovsky. "Magia i bezumie
shakkmat" ("The Magic and Madness of Chess").

[VN: Zashchita Luzhina's chess.]

Rul', 5 June 1931 (#3197), p. 2.

Georgii Adamovich. "O literature v emigrat-
sii" ("On Literature in the Emigration").

[On inflated claims for émigré writers,
including VN.]

Poslednie Novosti, 11 June 1931
(#3732), p. 2.

Gulliver [Nina Berberova and Vladislav Khodas-
evich]. "Literaturnaia Letopis'" ("Literary
Chronicle").

[Pasternak compared unfavorably to VN.]

Vozrozhdenie, 18 June 1931 (#2207).

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 46.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 10-23.]

Rul', 18 June 1931 (#3208), p. 5.

Gleb Struve. "Vladimir Nabokoff-Sirine, l'amoureux de la vie."

[Survey article.]

Le Mois, 6 (June-July 1931).

Evgenia Zalkind. "Die junge russische Literatur in der Emigration."

[VN: general remarks.]

Ost-Europa, July 1931, pp. 575-90.

Alfred Hackel. Review of ZASHCHITA LUZHINA.

Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, 5 July 1931 (#184). *

A. Giz. "Shakhmatist pod nozhom psikhoanaliza" ("Chess-player under the knife of psychoanalysis").

[VN: Zashchita Luzhina.]

Novoe Russkoe Slovo, 15 Aug. 1931. *

Mark Slonim. "Zametki ob emigrantskoi literature" ("Notes on émigré literature").

[VN: mention only.]

Volia Rossii, 7-9 (July-Sept.) 1931, pp. 616-27.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 47.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 24-35.]

Segodnia, 14 Oct. 1931 (#285), p. 3.

Vladimir Weidle. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 47.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 24-35.]

Vozrozhdenie, 15 Oct. 1931 (#2326), p. 4.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 47.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 24-35 and poems "Probu-zhdenie" ("The Awakening") and "Pomplim-usu" ("To a Grapefruit").]

Poslednie Novosti, 22 Oct. 1931 (#3865), p. 3.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 47.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 24-35.]

Nash Vek, 8 Nov. 1931 (#1), p. 5.

[Unsigned?]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 47.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 24-35.]

Rubezh (Kharbin), 14 Nov. 1931
(#47). *

Gleb Struve. "O romane Berberovy" ("On Berberova's novel").

[VN: versus 'humanism' of Russian literature.]

Rossia i Slavianstvo, 21 Nov. 1931
(#156).

Notice of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 48.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 36-50.]

Vozrozhdenie, 28 Jan. 1932.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 48.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 36-50.]

Segodnia, 3 Feb. 1932 (#35), p. 3.

Ilia Golenishchev-Kutuzov. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 48.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 36-50.]

Vozrozhdenie, 4 Feb. 1932 (#2438),
pp. 3-4.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 48.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 36-50.]

Poslednie Novosti, 11 Feb. 1932
(#3977), p. 2.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 48.

[VN: Podvig, Chs. 36-50.]

Nash Vek, 14 Feb. 1932 (#14), p. 5.

Gr. A. D. "Literaturnye ^{anet}Zemtaki" ("Literary Notes"): review of ZASHCHITA LUZHINA and Mark Aldanov's Begstvo.

Russkiy Invalid, 22 Feb. 1932 (#35).
*

Unkovsky. [On Shmelev.]

[VN: Shmelev's high estimate of Sirin.]

Rubezh' (Kharbin), 27 Feb. 1932
(#214). *

Sergey Gorny. [Answer to questionnaire.]

[VN: comparison of Olesha and Sirin.]

Rubezh', 12 March 1932 (#216). *

Vladislav Khodasevich. "Podvig" ("High Deed").

[VN: Sirin's talent recognized but underplayed. NB: not on VN's novel Podvig.]

Vozrozhdenie, 5 May 1932 (#2529), p. 3.

Ia. Mulman. "Vecher V. Sirina. Pis'mo iz Drezdena" ("Sirin Evening. A Letter from Dresden").

[VN: Sirin reading.]

Nash Vek, 15 May 1932 (#27), p. 6.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 49.

[VN: Kamera obskura (Laughter in the Dark), Chs. 1-7.]

Segodnia, 25 May 1932 (#144), p. 4.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 49.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 1-7.]

Poslednie Novosti, 2 June 1932 (#4089), p. 2.

Ilia Golenishchev-Kutuzov. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 49.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 1-7.]

Vozrozhdenie, 2 June 1932 (#2557), pp. 3-4.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 49.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 1-7.]

Nash Vek, 12 June 1932 (#31), p. 6.

L. K. Review of Zalkind article.

Chisla 6 (June 1932), p. 274.

Mikhail Osorgin. Review of journal Chisla 6.

[VN: the style of young émigré writers, including Sirin, too thin, too translatable.]

Poslednie Novosti, 30 June 1932 (#4117), p. 2.

Vladimir Weidle. "O romane" ("On the Novel").

[VN: characterization.]

Poslednie Novosti, 30 June 1932 (#4117), p. 3.

Nikolai Andreev. Review of Sovremennye Zapiski 49.

Volia Rossii, 4-6 (April-June) 1932, pp. 183-86.

Endi. "Pamiati A. Chernogo i. M. Voloshina" ("In Memory of A. Chernyi and M. Volshin").

[VN: summarizes Sirin memorial speech on Chernyi.]

Nash Vek, 25 Sept. 1932 (#45-46), p. 5.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 50.

[VN: Kamera obskura, chs. 8-17.]

Segodnia, 25 Oct. 1932 (#296), p. 2.

Mikhail Osorgin. Review of PODVIG.

Poslednie Novosti, 27 Oct. 1932
(#4236), p. 3.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 50.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 8-17.]

Poslednie Novosti, 27 Oct. 1932
(#4236), p. 3.

Vladislav Khodasevich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 50.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 8-17.]

Vozrozhdenie, 27 Oct. 1932 (#2704),
pp. 3-4.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 50.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 8-17.]

Nash Vek, 6 Nov. 1932 (#49), p. 3.

Zinaida Saranna [Shakhovskoy]. "Panorama de la jeune littérature russe. Les écrivains de l'emigration. Les écrivains de l'U.R.S.S."

Le Rouge et le Noir (Brussels), 16
Nov. 1932. *

M. "Vecher V.V. Sirina" ("Sirin Evening").

[VN: public reading in Paris.]

Vozrozhdenie, 17 Nov. 1932 (#2725),
p. 4.

"Vecher V.V. Sirina" ("Sirin Evening").

[VN: public reading in Paris.]

Poslednie Novosti, 17 Nov. 1932
(#4257), p. 3.

Lolly Lvov. Review of PODVIG.

Rossia i Slaviansstvo, 1 Dec. 1932
(#206), p. 3.

A. Savelev [Savely Sherman]. Review of PODVIG
and Nina Berberova's Povelitel'nitsa.

Nash Vek, 18 Dec. 1932 (#55), p. 3.

Vladimir Varshavsky. Review of PODVIG.

Chisla 7-8, [Jan.] 1933, pp. 266-67.

Mikhail Tsetlin. Review of PODVIG.

Sovremennye Zapiski, 51, [Feb.]
1933, pp. 458-59.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 51.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 17-26.]

Segodnia, 28 Feb. 1933 (#59), p. 2.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 51.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 17-26.]

Poslednie Novosti, 2 March 1933 (#4361), p. 3.

Vladislav Khodasevich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 51.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 17-26; mention only.]

Vozrozhdenie, 6 April 1933 (#2865), pp. 3-4.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 52.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 27-36.]

Segodnia, 31 May 1933 (#150), p. 3.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 52.

[VN: Kamera obskura, Chs. 27-36.]

Poslednie Novosti, 1 June 1933 (#4453), p. 3.

E.F. Maximovic. Review of ZASHCHITA LUZHINA.

Record (Prague), 21 July 1933. In Czech. *

Alexander Nazaroff. ?

[VN: general, esp. Kamera obskura.]

New York Times Book Review, 17 Dec. 1933, ?.

Georgii Adamovich. "Sirin."
[Survey article.]

Poslednie Novosti, 4 Jan. 1934 (#4670), p. 3.

Mikhail Osorgin. Review of KAMERA OBSKURA.

Sovremennye Zapiski, 54, [Jan.] 1934, pp. 458-60.

Petr Pilskii. Review of Sovremennye Zapiski 54.

[VN: Otchaianie (Despair), Chs. 1-4.]
Segodnia, 7 Feb. 1934 (#38), p. 2.

Mikhail Kantor. "Bremia pamiati (O Sirine)" ("The Burden of Memory (On Sirin).")

Vstrechi, 3 (March 1934), pp. 125-28.

Georgii Adamovich. "Nemetskaia Sloboda" ("The Nemetskaia Sloboda").

[VN: Zashchita Luzhina as influence on Soviet writers.]

Poslednie Novosti, 15 March 1934 (#4739), p. 2.

Iu. Sazonov. "Sovetskaia smert'" ("Soviet death").

[VN: contrasted with Zoshchenko.]

Poslednie Novosti, 17 March 1934 (#4741), p. ?

B.A. Review of KAMERA OBSKURA.

Illiustrirovannaia Zhizn', 29 March 1934 (#3), p. 10.

Petr Balakshin. "V. Sirin: Kriticheskie Zametki" ("V. Sirin: Critical Notes").

[VN: survey article.]

Novoe Russkoe Slovo, 1 April 1934 (#?), p. 7. *

V.P. Anichkov. "Sirin--'Bezdummyi' Pisatel' ili P. Balakshin Bezdummyi Kritik?" ("Sirin a 'Thoughtless' Writer or P. Balakshin a Thoughtless Critic?")

Novaia Zaria, ? april 1934. *

Vladislav Khodasevich. Review of KAMERA OBSKURA.

Vozrozhdenie, 3 May 1934 (#3256), pp. 3-4.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 55.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 5-7.]

Segodnia, 23 May 1934 (#141), p. 2.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 55.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 5-7.]

Poslednie Novosti, 24 May 1934 (#4809), p. 2.

Gaito Gazdanov. "Literaturnye priznaniia" ("Literary confessions").

[VN: "foreigners" in his work.]

Vstrechi 6 (June 1934). *

Iu. Terapiano. Review of KAMERA OBSKURA.

Chisla, 10 (June 1934), pp. 287-88.

V. Zlobin. Mock-review of Sovremennye Zapiski 55.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 5-7.]

Mech (Paris-Warsaw), 24 June 1924 (#8), pp. 13-14.

Dmitrii Merezhkovski. "Okolo vazhnogo (O Chislakh)" (An Important Matter: on Chisla").

[Compares and contrasts style of VN and Bunin with Ageev's in first installment of Roman s kokainom.]

Mech' (Paris-Warsaw), 5 Aug. 1934
(#13-14), pp. 3-5.

Al. Nazarov. "V.V. Sirin--Novaia Zvezda v Literature" ("V.V. Sirin--A New Star in Literature").

[Survey article.]

Novaia Zaria (New York), 11 Aug.
1934. *

Zinaida Shakhovskaia.

Le Thyse (Brussels), 1 Sept. 1934.
[Field 1503.]

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 56.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 7-end.]

Segodnia, 5 Nov. 1934 (#306), p. 3.

Vladislav Khodasevich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 56.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 7-end.]

Vozrozhdenie, 8 Nov. 1934 (#3445),
pp. 3-4.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 56.

[VN: Otchaianie, Chs. 7-end.]

Poslednie Novosti, 8 Nov. 1934
(#4978), p. 3.

[Unsigned?]. "Vl. Sirin."

[Reports talk on VN by N.A. Shchegolev,
Kharbin.]

Novoe Slovo (Berlin), Nov. 1934
(#12). *

A. Isacenko. "Sirin"

Listy pro umeni a kritiku (Prague),
13-14 (1934). In Czech. [Field
1505.]

Gleb Struve.

[Survey article.]

Slavonic and East European Review,
1934, pp. 436-44. Rpt. in Norman
Page, ed., Nabokov: The Critical
Heritage (London: Routledge and
Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 47-56.

Georgii Adamovich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 58.

[VN: Priglasenie na kazn' (Invitation to
a Beheading), Chs. 1-6.]

Poslednie Novosti, 4 July 1935
(#5215), p. 2.

Petr Pilskii. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 58.

[VN: Priglasenie na kazn', Chs. 1-6]

Segodnia, 5 July 1935 (#183), p. 3.

Vladislav Khodasevich. Review of journal Sovremennye Zapiski 58.

[VN: Priglasenie na kazn', Chs. 1-6.]

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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.]

Pnin: Mirrors and Doubles

1. Van Eyck's Mirrors

In Pnin, young Victor studies the shining curved parts of a car in which he sees himself, the street and the sky reflected. Nabokov compares this image with that produced by a convex mirror. Whatever its smallness, such an outstanding mirror can give a wholly comprehensive reflection of its exposure. A very close inspection of a convex mirror shows a Gogolian world in which the nose dominates, while the chin, cheeks and the rest of the face and background flee from it in concentric circles. In Speak, Memory Nabokov discusses the merits of microscopes and slides: "There is, it would seem, in the dimensional scale of the world a kind of delicate meeting place between imagination and knowledge, a point arrived at by diminishing large things and enlarging small ones, that is intrinsically artistic" (166-67). A convex mirror combines the opposite endowments of lenses and slides.

Another artist who worked with convex mirrors was Jan van Eyck, mentioned several times in Pnin. He is an artist who meets Nabokov's standard: his works show an unsurpassed skillfulness and expressiveness and a scrupulous concern for details; his paintings are partly built up out of three to four layers, and some of the details are, as is much the case in Nabokov's work, quite maddening. In the famous picture of the marriage of Giovanni Arnolfini from 1434, what is the richly coated dog (a griffin terrier or Bolognese dog) doing there, why is just one candle burning in the marvellously depicted chandelier, why those two pairs of slippers and those carefully located apricots? Like Nabokov, Van Eyck is present in his own works in one or several of the abounding minutiae. In the painting of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, we can see him "in that very special and very magical small convex mirror . . . behind the sour merchant" (97-98) as well as in the text on top of it.

Van Eyck enters again in chapter 6 where it is said that Laurence Clements has "a striking resemblance, somewhat en jeune, to Jan van Eyck's ample-jowled, fluff-haloed Canon van der Pael" (154). I have of course never seen Clements, but I daresay it is not impossible that he is merely another Pierre Delalande in disguise, because the Canon shows a striking resemblance to Nabokov himself, especially when one thinks of the photo of Horst Tappe, taken in Montreux in 1963.

Not mentioned in Pnin is another interesting painting of Van Eyck of a man who shares his name as well as his countenance

with Timofey Pnin, the so-called portrait of Timotheus: "clean-shaven," "an infantile absence of eyebrows, apish upper lip" (7). Timotheus holds a roll of written paper and the sculptured bar on the base of the painting shows the words "Leal Souvenir" which have been translated as meaning "true memory" (A. H. Cornette, De portretten van Jan van Eyck, Utrecht, 1947). Literature and reminiscences form the refuges of Pnin. The painting, however, is of a young man, and possibly can serve as a trait d'union between Pnin and Victor. Victor, who is greatly inspired by the Old Masters, was introduced to them by his teacher Lake, who shows much similarity to Dobuzhinski, Nabokov's instructor in St. Petersburg, and whose name, as Mary McCarthy remarks, reflects "the original mirrors of primeval man."

2. Namesakes

Liza mirrors Pnin inversely: an admirable outside, an unattractive inside. Her poetry consists of "lackadaisical little lyrics" (180) -- in the same manner as Akhmatova, as Nabokov tells us thrice. Liza inclines also to entwine religious items in her lyrics, doubtless a reference to Andrey Zhdanov's verdict on Akhmatova as "half nun, half whore" --which itself goes back to Boris Eykhenbaum's criticism of her poems: "One begins to sense the image, paradoxical in its duality--or rather oxymoronic quality--of a heroine who is partly a fallen woman with tumultuous passions, and partly a poor nun capable of praying successfully for God's forgiveness" (see Ronald Hingley, Nightingale Fever, Russian

Poets in Revolution [New York, 1981]: 81). Liza shares not only her poems and promiscuity with Anna Akhmatova but also her "sweep of dark brown hair above a lustrous forehead" (44), her scarf and cigarettes and one of her husbands. A clue is given by Miss Judith Clyde, vice-president of the Cremona Women's Club who introduced Pnin as "Professor Punneen" (26). N. N. Punin, art historian, was Akhmatova's second husband.

Pnin has a second footing in the history of Russian literature as Andrew Field mentions, namely the poet Ivan Pnin, son of Prince Reprin and author of The Wail of Innocence (Nabokov: His Life in Art 139). Field remarks that Pnin frequently "wails" and indeed, his eyes are often filled with tears, "pear-shaped" in the first chapter (12), evolving to "a film" in the sixth (172); in between he has indeed "wailed" (61). We also meet another prince, the Prince of Wales who forms part of Pnin's watertight arguments for the determination of the day of the beginning of Anna Karenina (122). The date is "February the twenty-third by the New Style," derived from the voyage undertaken by the Austrian Ambassador Von Beust in 1872 on his way to the thanksgiving service for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever (as a boy, Pnin too suffered from a severe fever). This service was held on February 27th. Because the New Style was introduced in Russia only in 1917, the corresponding date relevant for Tolstoy is February 15th. Pnin's birthday in 1898 and the day of his departure from Waindell in 1955 also fall on February 15th. Furthermore, 27-2-1872, 15-2-1898 and 15-2-1955 reckoned in New Style all fall on a

Tuesday. Therefore, no doubt is allowed about Pnin's being the real Prince of Wails.

-- Gerard de Vries, Voorschoten, The Netherlands

A Mound Found in Theobald

Lewis Theobald, the editor of the historically important 1730 edition of Shakespeare, made a mordant gloss to the lines in Timon of Athens which contain the title of Nabokov's fifth English novel ("...The Moon's an arrant thief, / And her pale fire she snatches from the Sun. / The Sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves / The Moon into salt tears." --iv, 3, 440-43):

The Sea melting the Moon into Tears, is, I believe, a Secret in Philosophy, which no body but Shakespeare's deep Editors ever dream'd of. There is another Opinion, which 'tis more reasonable to believe that our Author may allude to; viz. that the Saltness of the Sea is caused by several Ranges, or Mounds the Roch-Salt [sic] under Water, with which resolving Liquid the Sea was impregnated. This I think a sufficient Authority for changing Moon into Mounds....

This pathetic scholium is a charming illustration of the disregard for both poetry and the material world on the part of caustic but often tone-deaf philologists of the materialist age. The "other Opinion" was proffered by Warburton, and in his subsequent annotated editions of Shakespeare Samuel Johnson ridicules this reading and restores the "moon"

(reasoning that "the moon is supposed to be humid," 1785 ed., 8: 454) but nevertheless prints Tollet's suggestion of "main" (that is mainland) for "moon." By "deep Editors" Theobald could mean any authority from the recent editor of the first folio, Charlton Hinman (who has "The Moone into salt tears...") to the monumental edition brought out only five years prior to Theobald's Works of Shakespeare by Alexander Pope whose pendular iambics serve as a metronome for John Shade's poem.

Perhaps it is not for nothing that one of the poem's, and the novel's, most significant circumferential themes, the theme of a grotesque misreading or a silly misprint (e.g., fountain-mountain) on which one's notion of "life everlasting" may depend, should be echoed and emphasized by Timon's early editor's elaborate but erroneous erratum.

-- Gene Barabtarlo, University of Missouri, Columbia

The Poet as Clinician

Maud Shade was eighty when a sudden hush
Fell on her life. We saw the angry flush
And torsion of paralysis assail
Her noble cheek. We moved her to Pine
dale,
Famed for its sanitarium. There she'd
sit
In the glassed sun and watch the fly that
lit
Upon her dress and then upon her wrist.

Her mind kept fading in the growing mist.
She still could speak. She paused, and
groped and found
What seemed at first a serviceable sound,
But from adjacent cells imposters took
The place of words she needed, and her
look
Spelt imploration as she sought in vain
To reason with the monsters in her brain.

(Pale Fire, 11. 195-208)

Speech-language pathologists have observed, detailed, and treated the disorder called apraxia of speech, but no one else has described these isolated lesions ("monsters in her brain") with this degree of vividness. One so unfortunate as to experience the instantaneous results of the condition ("a sudden hush") is affected physically with paralysis of one side of the body ("torsion of paralysis"); emotionally by the consequences of the paralysis and speech disorder ("angry flush"); socially by the loss of self-esteem and the impaired ability to communicate with spoken word ("a sudden hush fell on her life"). The apraxic person's intellectual functions are often left intact, making him or her painfully aware of the losses of functions that once were as automatic as breathing ("her look spelt imploration"). The speech of the apraxic person is usually described as "effortful," with "starts and stops and trial and error groping for the correct postures of the articulators." The patient, usually aware of these misplacements of the lips, tongue, soft palate and larynx, is often surprised by the errors and attempts with intermittent success to correct them ("She paused, and groped and

found / What seemed at first a serviceable sound"). Although routine confinements are not a distant segment of our history, few modern-day apraxic patients are moved to the sanitarium, left to sit in the solarium and watch flies torment them, unable to combat the attack because of paralyzed limbs, the depression that often accompanies their loss of speech, or the dementia that accompanies their isolation and disuse of mind and body ("Her mind kept fading in the growing mist"). The apraxic person is described as having "islands of error-free productions" ("she still could speak") where they are able to formulate and execute sound sequences that are likely to give them pause on their next attempt to use them. The description Nabokov offers had to be derived from careful observation of some such Aunt Maud; however, his perceptions of the antecedents and consequences of such behavior must have come from strong insight as well in this small portion of a powerful poem.

-- Malcolm R. McNeil, University of Wisconsin,
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ABSTRACT

"The Affinity Between Chess Problems and Nabokov's Short Fiction"

by Eric Hyman

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual MLA Convention, New York City, December 1986)

Chess problems differ from chess games. Chess games operate in sequential time and are contests between two essentially equal opponents. But chess problems superimpose a false, or deceptive, pattern over a true pattern, and are two contests, one between the composer and chess forces and the other between composer and solver. The composer strives for both elegance and deception. The solver of a chess problem engages in two enterprises, one an aesthetic appreciation of the intermeshing forces and details, the other a puzzle with a key move to be figured out. "Virtual play" is a misleading line of play, resulting from a wrong key move, in which some detail is overlooked or a variation is not answered.

Similarly, some of Nabokov's short stories occur not in sequential time but require the reader to discern a true pattern or concatenation of details superimposed over a misleading pattern. The reader of this kind of Nabokov short story is not an equal with the writer, far less a co-creator, but is vulnerably engaged in a contest with the artist-magician Nabokov. If the reader does not realize the key move, he risks misreading the story, following the virtual play rather

than the true theme. The solver of a chess problem, or the reader of a Nabokov short story, who does not solve the problem component by himself and has the solution provided by the composer or a critic can still apprehend the aesthetic intricacies of the interworkings of the individual elements. In "The Vane Sisters," for example, the reader who does not pick up the acrostic in the last paragraph--the key move--takes the narrator at his word, thus failing to realize the narrator does not have total control over his own text. In "A Guide to Berlin" what appears to be a collection of details about city sights turns out to be a child's future recollection, created in advance by the story's narratorial consciousness.

A good illustration of the Nabokov short story as chess problem is "Details of a Sunset," the title story of his 1976 collection. In that story, Mark, the young protagonist, is unaware that fate has deprived him of both his fiancée and his life; the reader has to be aware that Mark is mistaken in believing he was almost hit by a bus, for Mark was indeed killed by the bus. Thus Mark is split into two existences, one after death and one in this world, and what Mark sees is some kind of post-mortem delusion or anticipatory fantasy. Thus the details of a sunset, which Nabokov calls attention to both by the title and in a headnote, suggest through their imagery of heaven that the story's true theme is a contrast between a largely unnoticed world above, glorious, paradisaical, artistic, and the world below, ordinary, sordid, disappointing.

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ABSTRACT

"Sprung from the Music-Box of Memory: 'Spring in Fialta'"

by Stephen Matterson

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual MLA Convention, New York City, December 1986)

This paper examined the relationship between memory and imagination as a theme in "Spring in Fialta".

The relation between memory and imagination has been of concern to writers since the late 18th century, and a variety of attitudes to it have developed. Some have seen the imagination as a substitute for memory; others as an adjunct to it. Some have seen only conflict in the relationship, considering the power of memory to defeat the imagination.

Although Nabokov said that "imagination is a form of memory", the relationship between memory and imagination is far from simple in his work. In "Spring in Fialta", Victor, the businessman who narrates the story, is obsessed by memory, which is personified by Nina. The narrative establishes Nina as a kind of "Goddess of Memory", and relates Victor's continuing allegiance to her: he is caught on the "sorry-go-round" of memory. At the end of the story, Victor is liberated from memory by Nina's death. The old key that he and Nina find prefigures this liberty, implying his freedom from a fairy-tale like spell, and connecting the other fairy-tale elements of the story.

Nina's death frees him from the past and allows him to write to her. Thus, liberation from memory releases Victor's imaginative power. His narrative is not memoir but a fiction shaped by his imagination. However, the sadness and pathos of the story testify to the fact that art and imagination are the results of human loss and are, finally, inadequate compensation for it.

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ABSTRACT

"Nabokov's Torpid Smoke"

by Leona Toker

(Abstract of a paper delivered at the Annual MLA Convention, New York City, December 1986)

Nabokov's short stories are highly polished self-contained works of art. However, like his novels and poems, they can be profitably read in the light of their place in his general canon. This place is determined, on the one hand, by the time when each story was written and, on the other hand, by the way in which other works enrich and elucidate the significance of its images.

The short fiction of Nabokov's Berlin period has been regarded largely as studies that a painter makes in preparation for a big picture. In some cases, however, the stories seem to serve as safety valves for the urgent material that had to be kept out of the novels in order not to interfere with their design. A case in point is the 1935 short story "Torpid Smoke," written at the juncture between Invitation to a Beheading and The Gift. The plight of the protagonist of "Torpid Smoke" is a hybrid of the tendencies manifest in Cincinnatus of Invitation and Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev of The Gift: unlike Fyodor, this young poet gets no encouragement in his wish to devote himself to literature; unlike Cincinnatus, he cannot reject his environment with a clear conscience. His father, the major obstacle to his literary pursuits, is essent-

ially decent, well-meaning, and pathetically human--a far cry from the obnoxious "parodies" that surround Cincinnatus. The young poet is trapped between the exquisite happiness that accompanies poetic experience and the price that he consciously pays for this happiness. The price is the touch of cruelty or at least callousness in his personal relationships; without it he cannot achieve artistic self-isolation. In a sense, the story dramatizes the conflict between morality and "aesthetic bliss."

As it is usual in Nabokov, the imagery of the story ostensibly serves to create the illusion of the density of a plausible setting. Actually, the imagery is also functional: it forms a subtle network of parallels and nuances that point both to the genuineness of the young man's talent and to the possible reasons for the "puerile" quality of his "perishable" production. The former effect is produced mainly by the motifs that the story shares with Nabokov's other works; the latter by its specific images. In particular, the selection of books on the protagonist's shelf and a few deft touches related to his family suggest the nature of personal and cultural problems that the protagonist does not wish to face. Though the young man is painfully aware of his unkindness to his father, those other issues remain unprocessed; and it seems that their pressure prevents him from successfully capturing his poetic experience in the flesh of language.

The necessity of facing poignant complexities is, thus, a thematic undercurrent of the story. The story itself, moreover, seems to

be Nabokov's way of confronting an issue of crucial relevance to Invitation and The Gift, viz., the morality of daily choices when the demands of personal relationships drain creative energies yet cannot be rejected as cavalierly as in Invitation to a Beheading. In the design of The Gift there was no place for this theme. Therefore, (in the words of the Foreword to Mary) Nabokov "got rid of it" through "Torpid Smoke," his safety valve. He was then free to show the balance between communication and isolation maintained, somewhat precariously perhaps, by the protagonist of The Gift.

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