

THE NABOKOVIAN

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Compiled by Gene Barabtarlo

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NEWS

by Stephen Jan Parker

In remarks opening our last issue, I mentioned how nice it would be to provide readers an index of our first ten years of publication. My wish unexpectedly came true thanks to the unsolicited, admirable efforts of Gene Barabtarlo. His thorough and most useful compilation provides the closing feature of this issue.

If this issue appears a bit thin on prose and a bit long on listings, it is due solely to the lack of submissions to the editor. Though we continue not to publish scholarly articles, we have and do publish essays, short and long notes, abstracts of books, papers, articles, and dissertations, as well as bibliographies and listings of various sorts. I would once again like to encourage our readers to submit items for publication.

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Because of our new capabilities, we are now able to work off of 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disks (in MSDOS or Macintosh), which are formatted using almost any wordprocessing software (WordStar, WordPerfect, Nota Bene, etc.). Contributors are thus urged to submit their material to the editor on disks.

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The Nabokov Society meetings at the MLA Convention are as follows: (1) Friday, December 30, 8:30 - 9:45 am, Salon 5 of the New Orleans Hilton: "Nabokov and Contemporary Critical Theory." Presiding will be Geoffrey Green (San Francisco State University); papers will be presented by Brenda K. Marshall (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Martina Sciolino (University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg), James F. English (University of Pennsylvania), and Brian Richardson (University of Washington, Seattle). (2) Friday, December 30, 10:15-11:30 am, Salon 5, Hilton: "Nabokov and Others: Affinities and Arguments." Presiding will be Ellen Pifer

(University of Delaware); papers will be presented by Samuel Schuman (Guilford College), Thomas Woodson (Ohio State University), and Pascal Ifri (Washington University); respondent, Edith Mroz (Delaware State College). The annual business meeting will be held between the two sessions.

The AATSEEL program is as follows: Thursday, December 29, 8:30-10:00 am, New Hampshire Room, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC, "Nabokov's Poetics." Presiding will be John Kopper (Dartmouth College); Secretary, Galya Diment (University of California, Berkeley); papers will be presented by Yvonne Howell (University of Michigan) and E. Rush Barrett III (Yale University).

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The following list of VN works received March - September 1988 has been provided by Mrs. Véra Nabokov:

March - *Le Gnetteur* [The Eye], tr. Georges Magnane. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.

March - *King, Queen, Knave*. London: Oxford University Press, 20th Century Classics paper.

April - *Opowiadania* [Breaking the News] (Collection of Stories), tr. Teresa Truszowska. Krakow, Poland: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

April - "Correspondence, Vladimir Nabokov/Edmund Wilson" (extracts). In *L'Infini* (Paris) no. 21 (Spring).

April - *La Dadida* [The Gift], tr. Carmen Giralt. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama.

May - *La Defense Loujine* [The Defense], tr. Genia et René Cannac. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.

May - *Lolita*, tr. E. H. Kahane. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.

May - *La Vraie vie de Sebastian Knight*, tr. Yvonne Davet. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.

May - "Der Museumbesuch" [A Visit to the Museum]. In *Amerikanische Erzähler des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: Wilhelm Heyne.

May - *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (Hebrew). Tel-Aviv: Zmora, Bitan.

May - *Ada ali strast'* [Ada], tr. Ksenija Dolinar. Ljubljana, Yugoslavia: Cankarjeva Založba.

June - *A Hero of Our Time*, Mikhail Lermontov. Translation, introduction, and notes by VN. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis reprint.

June - "First Love." In *Contemporary American Literature*, eds. George and Barbara Perkins. New York: Random House.

June - Extract from *Lolita*. In *Das Handbuch des literarischen Hoherotik*, ed. Dr. H. Kinder. Zurich: Hoffmans Verlag.

June - *L'Incantatore* [The Enchanter], tr. and afterword, Dmitri Nabokov. Parma, Italy: Ugo Guanda.

June - *Fuoco Pallido* [Pale Fire], tr. Bruno Oddera. Parma, Italy: Ugo Guanda. New translation; first edition Longanesi, 1983.

July - *Der Zauberer* [The Enchanter]. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Rorroro. Two cassettes, Armin Mueller-Stahl liest.

July - *The Gift*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin reprint.

July - *Anya v strane chudes' [Alice in Wonderland]*, VN's Russian translation. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis reprint.

August - *A Gargalhada no Escuro [Laughter in the Dark]*, tr. Waltensir Dutra (Portuguese). Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira.

August - *Lumooja [The Enchanter]*, tr. Margit Salmenoja. Helsinki: Gummerus, Jynaskyla.

August - *Despair* (Hebrew). Jerusalem: Keter.

September - *De Lach in Het Donker [Laughter in the Dark]*, tr. Peter Bergsma. Amsterdam: Athanaeum, Polak & van Genneep.

September - "Die Fahrt in den Suden" [extract from *Glory*]. In *Geschichten aus der Provence*, ed. Ernst M. Frank. Munich: Wilhelm Heyne.

September - "Le Rasoir" [The Razor], tr. Laurence Doll. In *Le Serpent à plumes* (Paris), no. 1.

*

Starting in early 1989, with the publication of *Lolita*, Random House, in their Vintage International series of quality paperbacks, will embark on the publication of a nearly complete set of VN's prose writings, including all of the novels, *Strong Opinions*, and *Speak, Memory*. These editions will include all of the corrections made by VN to first publications (typos, editing errors, dropped materials, etc.).

*

The Poetry Room of the Harvard College Library has published *Vladimir Nabokov at Harvard*, a boxed, two-cassette album that contains readings by VN of his own prose and poetry, and his translations of Russian poets, in English and Russian. The recordings were made by Nabokov at Harvard 1941-48, 1952, 1959, and 1964. The 1964 reading is accompanied by an eloquent

introduction by Harry Levin. The album may be purchased for \$24 by direct mail: Poetry Room, Lamont Library, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA 02138.

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Publication of VN's writings and commentary on them continues to accelerate in the USSR. The editor has not seen all of the following and therefore cannot attest to completeness, fidelity to original texts, or quality of translation. Noted thus far in 1988:

WORKS

- *Dar* [The Gift]. *Ural*, nos. 3-6.
- "Tolstoy" (poem). *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, no. 14.
- "Pilgram" [The Aurelian, story]. *Voprosy istorii estestvoznaniia i tekhniki* no. 2.
- Chapter from *Drugie berega* [Other Shores; VN's Memoirs in Russian]. *Ogonek*, no. 14.
- "Obida" [A Bad Day, story] and poems. *Leningradskii rabochii*, 20 May.
- *Drugie berega* [Other Shores]. *Druzhiba narodov*, nos. 5-6.
- VN's Introduction to Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, tr. S. Task. *Novyi mir*, no. 4.
- "Universitetskaia poema" [University Poem]. *IUnost'*, no. 5.
- "Sobytie" [The Event, play]. *Teatr*, no. 5.
- "Solus Rex." *Avrora*, no. 6.
- "Britva" [The Razor, story]. *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 10 June.
- "Ultima Thule." *Avrora*, no. 7.
- "Tri shaxkmatnye sonety" [Three chess sonnets]. *Avrora*, no. 7.
- VN's 1927 review of *Capablanca and Alekhin* by A. Znoski-Borovsky, Three chess sonnets. *64* [Chess Monthly], no. 13.
- "Sluchainost'" [A Matter of Chance, story] and "Draka" [The Fight, story]. *Nedelia*, no. 33.
- "Terra Incognita" [story]. *Nauka i tekhnika*, no. 8.
- *Kamera obskura* [Laughter in the Dark]. *Volga*, nos. 6-8.
- "Smert'" [Death, play] and "Dedushka" [The Grand-dad, play]. *Sovremennaia dramaturgiia*, no. 11.
- *Mashen'ka. Zashchita Luzhina. Priglasenie na kazn'. Drugie berega (fragments)* [Mary, The Defense, Invitation to a

Beheading, Other Shores (excerpts)]. Moskva: Zhudozhestvennaia literatura; one volume; published in 200,000 copies.

COMMENTARY

- "Kakaia strela letit vechno?" [excerpts from an interview with VN]. *Teatralnaia zhizn'*, no. 6.
- "Pervaia kniga na rodine" [announcement of the publication of the first book of VN's writings -- see above for contents]. *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 19 october: 2.
- "Vladimir Nabokov: Mezh dvukh beregov. Kruglyi stol." [Roundtable discussion on VN. Participants: Andrei Bitov, Viktor Erofeev, Ol'ga Matich, Vadim Medish, Vladimir Soloukhin, Dmitrii Urnov, Roger Henkel, Svetlana Selivanova, Vladimir Kunitsyn]. *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 17 August: 5.
- Forewords, afterwords, brief commentaries, biographical outlines, brief bibliographies accompany many of the individual publications of VN's works listed above.

OTHER

- The August issue of *Znamia* announces that future issues will carry stories by VN; the November issue of *IUnost'* also promises VN stories.
- Gene Barabtarlo and Ardis have received word that there is interest in publishing the Ardis edition of *Pnin* (1983; translation by Barabtarlo with the assistance of Vera Nabokov) in the USSR. If it comes to pass, it would be an unprecedented occurrence.

*

From Leszek Engelking comes additional information on VN works published in Eastern Europe in 1988.

HUNGARY

- Poems, tr. from Russian by Miklos Veress; *The Enchanter*, tr. from English by Janos Szekey; Forewords to both works by Janos Szekey. *Nagy Vilag* [Budapest] 33, no. 3 (March): 384-418.

POLAND

- "The Leonardo," tr. from English by Teresa Truszkowska. *Przekroj* [Cracow] no. 2225 (31 January): 15-16.

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Upcoming Publications

- Priscilla Meyer. *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's PALE FIRE*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. "Meyer links a wealth of allusions to historical fact and discovers that *Pale Fire* is a vast tapestry of interwoven cultural strands--English, Scandinavian, Russian--depicting the history of the North over the last one thousand years. Kinbote is a parody of his author, who interprets history through a highly personal lens ground by fate."

- Leona Toker. *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. "The book deals with the relationship between the humanistic concerns of Nabokov's fiction and its virtuoso techniques, showing also that the need to reconcile the human element with aesthetic or metaphysical pursuits is a recurrent theme of his novels."

- Brian Boyd's biography of VN will be published by Princeton University Press in two volumes a year apart, one (to May 1940) in spring 1990, the next in spring 1991.

- Work on the French Pleiade edition of VN's works is proceeding. Three volumes are planned, and a fourth is possible.

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Odds and Ends

- The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University has announced a visiting fellowship program for Academic Year 1989-1990. These are short-term fellowships to support visiting scholars. Among the various collections at the Beinecke are materials relevant to Nabokov studies, including the Edmund Wilson papers. Interested persons should write to the Director, Box 1603A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520-1603. Deadline for applications is January 15, 1989.

- *Russian Literature Triquarterly* continues to welcome contributions for a special Nabokov issue. Send queries and manuscripts to the editor, D. Barton Johnson (Dept of Germanic, Oriental, and Slavic Languages, Phelps Hall, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106; phone (805) 682-4618).

- Sam Schuman presented a paper at the 1988 annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association in the South (PCAS) entitled "Sue Lyon Joins N.O.W.: Rethinking Lolita, Nabokov and Feminism."

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Simon Karlinsky (Dept of Slavic Languages & Literatures, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720) writes: "The bad luck that dogged my edition of *The Nabokov-Wilson Letters*, the hardback version of which was put on sale before I had finished correcting the page proofs, continues. The translation rights were sold to Editions Rivages in Paris without anyone informing me. What is even odder, the editor in charge of the translation at Rivages, whom I know and whom I had put in touch with the Nabokovs, never told me about the translation--I learned about it only when I got a complimentary copy of the finished product and received some clippings of reviews of the translation in the French press. The translation itself, by Christiane Raguét-Bouvard, is excellent. But apart from that one good feature, the French edition is even more catastrophic than the American hardback. To begin with, it was the hardback, rather than the corrected and updated paperback (the version that was also published in England), that

was translated. So all the misdatings and the uncorrected errors were rendered into French.

Also, an editor or someone has corrected the names I cited to what he or she thought was more probable: Sherman Paul to Paul Sherman, Vladimir Markov to Vladimir Nabokov, *The New Review* (*Novyi zhurnal*) is everywhere changed to *The New York Review*, Robert de Calry to Robert de Carly, etc. Worst of all, an expert on Russian went over the text and "corrected" all the unidiomatic and ungrammatical Russian passages in Edmund Wilson's letters (which I had carefully preserved and then explained in annotations). But my notes about what was wrong with the Russian of these passages were retained--and of course they now make no sense."

*

Jan Hölmstrom (Kalsangsgrand 1 B, S-753 23 Uppsala, Sweden) provides the following comment concerning recent Swedish translations of *Lolita* and *The Enchanter*. "Let us look at Holmberg's rendering of the opening chapter of *Lolita*. 'She was Dolores on the dotted line' is translated with the Swedish equivalent of 'She was Dolores in the church-books' [where births and deaths are registered by the State church in Sweden]. 'A certain initial girl-child' is rendered by Holmberg with 'a little girl who had initiated me.' 'Look at this tangle of thorns' is in Holmberg's version, 'Let us examine this thorn-brake.' And so it goes throughout the book. Holmberg is capable of translating 'indecent' as 'innocent,' 'arms akimbo' as 'with his arms folded,' 'the belts and the bracelets' as 'the bra and the girdle,' 'gasped' as 'yawned,' 'drawers' as 'slippers,' etc. There are at least a hundred cases where Holmberg has added comments of his own, all of them uncalled for. There are some 250 omissions, ranging from single words and phrases to whole paragraphs. Holmberg's translation was first published in 1960 and has been published again at least once before the edition of 1987. As for Annika Preis's translation of *The Enchanter*, it is a good one but not at all faultless. The Swedish title, *Forforaren* means 'the seducer'."

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Our thanks to Ms. Paula Malone for her continuing, invaluable aid in the preparation of this issue, and thanks also to Mr. Hyun-Taek Kim for his assistance.

Nabokov's Russian Poems: A Chronology

by Brian Boyd

Many of the dates of composition in Nabokov's collected Russian poems, *Stikhi* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), are approximate or ambiguous or prove to be erroneous when checked against Nabokov's manuscripts and correspondence. The following list supplies dates as precise as the evidence allows, in the order in which the poems appear in *Stikhi*. Occasionally dates of publication provide the only *terminus ad quem*.

Although Nabokov omitted from *Stikhi* many more poems than he included--especially among those written before 1924--I have confined this chronology to the poems he did select for the Ardis volume. There seems little point at present in dating a mass of still-unpublished juvenilia or even published poems that are extremely difficult to obtain and that Nabokov in a by no means severe scrutiny of his Russian verse in the mid-1970s preferred to leave out of the canon.

The Nabokov family retained the Old Style calendar until their arrival in England in late May 1919. Dates prior to this are therefore given in both Old and New Style.

"Dozhd' proletel"
May 1917

"K svobode"
3/15 December 1917

"Poet"
23 September/6 October 1918

"V khrustal'nyi shar zaklyucheny my byli"
13/26 November 1918

"Ty na nebe oblachko neznoe"
10/23 December 1918

"Rossiia"
5/18 March 1919

"Arkhangely"
29 September/12 October 1918

"Tainaia Vecheria"
12 June 1920

["Otryvok"] ("Tvoikh odezhd vozduzhnykh ya kosnulsia")
29 May 1920

"Dvizhen'e"
9 March 1920

"Rytsar"
18/31 March 1919

"Esche bezmolvtsvuiu"
23 March/5 April 1919

"Nomer v gostinitse"
26 March/8 April 1919

"Akropol'" ("Chei shag za mnoi? Chei shelestit visson?")
7 June 1919

"Football"
26 February 1920

"La Morte d'Arthur"
16 December 1919

"Bud' so mnoi prozrachnee i proshche"
12 November 1919

"U kamina"
13 March 1920

"Liudiam ty skazhesh': nastalo."
3 May 1920

"Telegrafnye stolby"
11 May 1920

"Kogda, mechtatel'no sklonivshis' u dverei"
12 May 1920

"V nevole ia, v nevole ia, v nevole!"
31 May 1920

"Romans" ("I na bereg vesennii prishli my nazad")
8 June 1920

"Lastochki"
10 June 1920

"Tak budet"
11 June 1920

"Ia bez slez ne mogu"
1 April 1921

"Kashtany"
20 May 1920

"I.A. Buninu" ("Kak vody gor, tvoi golos gord i chist") probably
written between September 1921 and September 1922

"Razgoraetsia vys'"
11/24 November 1918

"V raiu"
13 August 1920

"Pir"
22 May 1921

"Tristan"
30 August 1921

"Oblaka"

17 May 1921
"V poezde"
4 July 1921
"Kto menia povezet"
8 August 1920
"Pero"
7 June 1921
"Mechtal ia o tebe tak chasto, tak davno"
6 July 1921
"Kak bylo by legko, kak vesenno, kak druzhno"
9 July 1921
"Ot vzgliada, lepeta, ulybki"
6 August 1921
"Pozvol' mechtat' . . . Ty pervoe stradan'e"
31 July 1921
"Mertsatel' noe tikaiut pruzhinki"
14 August 1921
"Rozhdestvo" ("Moi kalendar' polu-opalyi")
23 September 1921
"Osennie list'ia"
8 November 1921
"Domoj"
1917-1922?
"Velosipedist"
30 September 1918
"Babochka (Vanessa antiopa)"
10 January 1921

"Koni"
26 May 1921
"P'iani rytsar"
4 June 1921
"Ia dumaiu o nei, o devochke, o dal'nei"
4 June 1921
"Znaesh' veru moiou?"
published 22 June 1922
"Kto vyidet poutru? Kto slepyi plod podmetit?"
published in collection *Grozd'*, 20 December 1922
"Paskha"
published in *Grozd'*
"Griby"
13 November 1922
"Iasnookii, kak rytsar' iz rati Khristovoi"
1 December 1922
"Volchonok"
8 December 1922
"Kak ob'iasniu? Est' v pamiati luchii"
10 December 1922
"V.Sh." ("Esli veter sud'by, radi shutki")
29 April 1921
"Finis"
9 January 1923
"Ia videl smert' tvoiu, no prazdnoiu mol'ba"
10 January 1923
"Kak zataiu, chto iskonni kochuii"
13 January 1923

"Zhemchug"
14 January 1923

"Son" ("Znaesh', znaesh', obmorochno-p'iano")
15 January 1923

"V kakom raiu v pervye prozhurchali"
16 January 1923

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"V kastal'nom pereulke est' lavchonka"
17 January 1923

"... I vse, chto bylo, vse, chto budet"
18 January 1923

"Ia gde-to za gorodom, v pole"
20 January 1923

"Tramvai"
21 January 1923

"Pis'ma"
23 January 1923

"Den' za dnem, tsvetushchii i letuchii"
24 January 1923

"Ephemery"
26 January 1923

"Ty vse gladi'sh' iz tuchi temnosizoi"
27 January 1923

"I utro budet: pesni, pesni"
30 January 1923

"Glaza prikroiu--i mgnovenno"
3 February 1923

"Pri lune, kogda kosuiu kryshu"

6 March 1924

"Berezhno nes ia k tebe eto serdtse prozrachnoe. Kto-to"
7 March 1923

"Pamiati Gumileva"
19 March 1923

"Rodine" ("Vorkuiushcheiu teplotoi shestaia")
31 March 1923

"Reka"
3 April 1923

"Kogda ia po lestnitse almaznoi"
21 April 1923

"V chasy trudov schastlivykh i ugriumykh"
28 April 1923

"O, kak ty rvesh'sia v put' krylatyi"
2 May 1923

"Ia stranstvuiu... No kak zabyt'? Svistiashchii"
May 1923

"Net, bytie--ne zybkaia zagadka!"
6 May 1923

"Vstrecha"
1 June 1923

"Pesnia" ("Ver': vernutsia na rodinu vse")
19 July 1923

"Provans":
1. "Kak zhadno zataia dykhan'e"
15 June 1923
2. "Sloniaius' pereulkami bez tseli"
19 August 1923

- "Zovesh',--a v derevtse granatovom sovenok"
26 July 1923
- "Kak blednaia zaria, moi stikh negromok"
31 July 1923
- "Noch' svishchet, i v pozhary mlechnye"
2 September 1923
- "Ia pomniu v pliushevoi oprave"
25 September 1923
- "Sankt-Peterburg--uzorynyi inei"
25 September 1923
- "Groza"
7 May 1923
- "Avtobus"
5 October 1923
- "Bars"
13 April 1923
- "Milaia, neznaia--etikh starinnykh"
17 October 1923
- "Iz mira upolzli--i noiut na lune"
18 November 1923
- "Ia Indiei nevidimoi vladeiu"
7 March 1923
- "Videnie"
January 1924
- "Ob Angelakh":
1. "Nezemnoi rassvet bleskom oblii"
24 April 1924
2. "Predstav': my ego vstrechaem"
8 July 1924

- "Smert"
13 June 1924
- "Skital'tsy"
24 February 1924
- "Na rassvete"
8 February 1924
- "Gost"
15 May 1924
- "Kuby"
published 9 March 1924
- "Stansy" ("Niche ne smoesh' podpisi kosoi")
24 March 1924
- "La Bonne Lorraine"
6 September 1924
- "Molitva"
3 May 1924
- "Stikhi" ["Smekh" in original manuscript]
9 March 1924
- "Sankt-Peterburg" ("Ko mne, tumannaia Leila!")
26 May 1924
- "Vecher"
10 July 1924
- "Otkuda priletel? Kakim ty dyshish' gorem?"
27 September 1924
- "Strana stikhov"
26 October 1924
- "Iskhod"

11 September 1924
"Koster"
26 November 1924
"Utro"
5 December 1924
"V peshchere"
11 December 1924
"K rodine"
before 14 December 1924
"Velikan"
13 December 1924
"Shekspir"
28 February 1924
"Gadan'e"
27 July 1924
"Mat"
published 19 April 1925
"Gerb"
24 January 1925
"Kon'kobezhets"
5 February 1925
"Vesna" ("Pomchal na dachu parovoz")
2 May 1925
"Berlinskaia vesna"
14 May 1925
"Son" ("Odnazhdy noch'iu podokonnik")
published 30 June 1925

"Voskresenie mertvykh"
by 4 July 1925
"Krushenie"
published 16 August 1925
"Ten"
3 September 1925
"Vershina"
31 August 1925
"Elektrichestvo"
21 July 1925
"Prokhozhi s elkoi"
published 25 December 1925
"Lyzhnyi prizhok"
25 December 1925-7 January 1926
"Ut pictura poesis"
April 1926
"Pustiak--nazvan'e machty, plan--i sledom"
published 4 July 1926
"Komnata"
published 11 July 1926
"Aeroplan"
by 10 July 1926
"Sny"
22 July 1926
"Prelestnaia pora"
published 17 October 1926
"Godovshchina"
published 7 November 1926

"Snimok"
20 August 1927

"V raiu"
25 September 1927

"Rasstrel" ("Byvaiut nochi: tol'ko liagu")
1927

"Palomnik"
4 February 1927

"Snoviden'e"
22 May 1927

"Bilet"
14 May 1927

"Rodina" ("Bessmertnoe schast'e nashe")
4 June 1927

"Kinematograf"
10 November 1928

"Ot schastiia vliublennomu ne spitsia"
18 May 1928

"Lilit"
13 December 1930

"Rasstrel" ("Nebrityi, smeishchiisia, blednyi")
20 December 1927

"Ostrova"
late February 1928

"Kirpichi"
published 1 April 1928

"Siren"

7 May 1928

"K Rossii" ("Moiu ladon' geograf strogii")
23 June 1928

"Stansy o kone"
26 November 1928

"Dlia stranstviia nochnogo mne ne nado"
19-20 July 1929

"K muze"
5-13 September 1929

"Tikhii shum"
by 8 June 1926

"Oblaka" ("Nasmeshliva, medlitel'na, legka")
25 August 1929

"Na smert' Iu. I. Aikhenval'da" ("Pereshel ty v novoe zhilishche")
1929

"Vzdokhnut' poglubzhe i, do plech"
1929

"Vozdukhnyi ostrov"
late August 1929

"Shel poezd mezhdru skal v ushcheli glubokom"
10-11 March 1930

"Predstavlenie"
6 October 1930

"Sneg"
published 7 February 1930

"Budushchemu chitatel'iu"
published 7 February 1930

"Pervaia liubov"
11-12 February 1930

"Ul'daborg"
April 1930

"Okno"
5 May 1930

"Iz Kalmbrudovoi poemy 'Nochnoe puteshestvie'"
1 July 1931

"Formula"
published 5 April 1931

"Pomplimusu"
24 January 1931

"Neokonchennyi chemovik"
1 July 1931

"Vecher na pustyre"
July 1932

"Sam treugol'nyi, dvukrylyi, beznogii"
2 September 1932

"Bezumets"
1933

"Kak ia liubliu tebia"
17 April 1934

"L'Inconnue de la Seine"
published 28 June 1934

"Na zakate"
1935

"Iosif Krasnyi--ne Iosif"
1937

"My s toboiu tak verili"
October 1939

"Chto za noch' s pamiat'iu sluchilos'?"
1938

"Poety" ("Iz komnaty v seni svecha perekhodit")
published July 1939

"K Rossii" ("Otviazhis', ia tebia umoliaiu!")
16 September 1939

"Oko"
1939

"Slava"
21-22 March 1942

"Vot eto my zovem lunoi"
25 June 1942

"Parizhskaia poema"
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ANNOTATIONS AND 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, reference to Nabokov's works will be to the most recent hardcover U.S. editions.]

THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY "BLUE CLOAK" IN VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S *LAUGHTER IN THE DARK*

We have two English versions of Vladimir Nabokov's 1932 novel *Kamera obskura*: a 1936 translation by Winifrid Roy entitled *Camera Obscura* and a 1938 translation/revision by Nabokov entitled *Laughter in the Dark*. In *Nabokov Translated* (Oxford UP, 1977), Jane Grayson posits that when the novel's main character Albinus, a lover of visual art, loses his sight, "the pathos of his condition is underlined in all versions by references to the coloured quality of his memory" (36). She notes that the color symbolism already present in *Kamera obskura* is "considerably elaborated" (34) in *Laughter in the Dark*. One example she cites (37) is Albinus's death vision, in which Nabokov increases the use of the color blue to five instances:

I must keep quiet for a little space and then walk very slowly along that bright sand of pain, towards that blue, blue wave. What bliss there is in blueness. I never knew how blue blueness could be. What a mess life has been. Now I know everything. Coming, coming, coming to drown me. There it is. How it hurts. (291-92)

Jane Grayson does not speculate about the reason for Nabokov's striking use of the color blue. But I would like to suggest that he adds more blue in order to recreate Breughel's sixteenth-century painting *The Proverbs*. In his revision, Nabokov has the artist Axel Rex suggest making a film based on this painting, which, according to Walter S. Gibson, is also called *The Blue Cloak* (*Breugel*, Oxford UP, 1977, 66).

Before further discussion of the painting, I would like to point out that Nabokov augments blue not only in the death scene, but throughout *Laughter in the Dark*. For example, Albinus drives a blue (previously black) car along a blue (previously white) road into the catastrophe that blinds him. Also, Nabokov renames the artist: Robert Horn becomes Axel Rex. According to Nabokov's system of colored hearing (*Speak, Memory*, 34), blue predominates in this name because the 'x' sound in both Axel and Rex evokes steely blue.

The most impressive instance of Nabokov's intensification of blue, however, is the Solfi beach scene whose imagery of sand and waves (added by Nabokov in 1938) remarkably foreshadows that of the death vision cited above. Albinus had often dreamed of "coming across a young girl lying asprawl on a hot lonely beach" (17). His dream comes true when he takes Margot, a cinema attendant, to the beach at Solfi. In this scene Nabokov expands the use of blue from two instances in *Kamera obskura* ("'Heavens,' said Magda, 'what a blue sea!' It was really very blue" [76-77, my translation]) to seven instances in *Laughter in the Dark*:

With nothing but deep blue above, Margot lay spread-eagled on the platinum sand....She...blinked in the silver-blue blaze...."Heavens," said Margot, "how blue the sea is today."

It really was blue: purple-blue in the distance, peacock-blue coming nearer, diamond-blue where the wave caught the light. The foam toppled over, ran, slowed down, then receded, leaving a smooth mirror on the wet sand, which the next wave flooded again. (112-13)

Albinus refers to this as "the first chapter of his new life" (114).

But why does Nabokov make the Solfi scene and the death scene so similar? Why does he paint them so blue? Is it because he is acting as an elusive triple reflection of Albinus, Udo Conrad, and Axel Rex? Albinus, inspired by a phrase in Udo Conrad, wants to make an animated Breughel film in which the starting and ending scenes would be the same painting (8, 9). Nabokov, in his

translation *Laughter in the Dark*, brings to fruition Axel Rex's subsequent proposal to design a film based on Breughel's painting *The Proverbs* (11), or *The Blue Cloak*. The Solfi beach scene and the death vision, both of which evoke this painting because of their remarkable intensification of the color blue, correspond to the first and last scenes of the film.

In Breughel's painting, the center foreground is an adulterous wife who places a blue cloak over the shoulders of her deceived husband. In *Laughter in the Dark* Margot places a blue cloak over her deceived lover Albinus. But the blue cloak signifies more than unfaithfulness. Walter S. Gibson writes:

Specifically the Blue Cloak alludes to the unfaithful wife, but as blue was the traditional colour of deceit, it also possessed wider connotations. In the procession held in Antwerp in 1563...one of the floats carried an old woman named 'Old Deceit' who blinds Everyman with the Blue Cloak so that he seeks himself, but never finds what he is seeking. (76)

Breughel used as his model a certain Hogenberg who, in 1558, had drawn an abstract etching entitled *The Blue Cloak* depicting proverbs with the inscription: "This is generally called the Blue Cloak, but it would be better named the world's follies" (71).

In *Laughter in the Dark* Nabokov shows Albinus's follies: starting with the Solfi beach scene, the "first chapter in his new life," Albinus is blinded by the "Blue Cloak" so that he seeks himself to the point of ignoring his dying daughter. Yet, like the sixteenth-century Everyman, he never finds what he is seeking. Ironically, Albinus, who "had often amused himself by having this or that Old Master sign landscapes and faces which he, Albinus, came across in real life" because "it turned his existence into a fine picture gallery" (8), does not realize that the tale of his own follies--signed by Nabokov with the Old Master Breughel--resembles *The Blue Cloak*.

--A. Katherine Dewey, University of Colorado

PALE FIRE AND POE'S PAST

Nabokov's fondness for Edgar Allan Poe has left another footprint in *Pale Fire* that provides a geographical metaphor for time, once more linking John Shade and Charles Kinbote and perhaps gesturing toward the author's past as well. Shade, of course, is fond of borrowing titles from other literary works. In addition to "Pale Fire" and *The Untamed Seahorse*, Shade's first book, a collection of free verse called *Dim Gulf*, is similarly lifted, this time from Poe's "To One in Paradise," that typical Poesque salute to lost loves and blighted futures. In the second stanza we find:

Ah, dream too bright to last!

Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise

But to be overcast!

A voice from out the Future cries,

'On! on!' -- but o'er the Past

(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies

Mute, motionless, aghast!

Whatever past Shade was originally commemorating, in "Pale Fire's" present the association of the past with water evokes Hazel Shade's early death by drowning. Associated with time in her school girl role of Mother Time and having eluded the "watchman, Father Time" (*Pale Fire* 50), Hazel is central to Shade's own recollection of the past in the specifics of his poem.

But the dynamics of the novel and Shade's own stress on "combinational delight" (69) would promise that the past be balanced by the future, Shade by Kinbote, New Wye by Zembla. And there is a balancing metaphor in Kinbote's account of the confusion during his escape. "A crimson balloon was enthusiastically shot down and the aeronaut . . . drowned in the Gulf of Surprise" (149). With Poe's "Dim Gulf" marking the past, this

gulf should point to the future. "Life is a great surprise," Shade tells Kinbote. "I do not see why death should not be an even greater one" (225).

The metaphor may finally lead back to Nabokov himself. From Mt. Glittertin in Zembla, Kinbote tells us, "one can distinguish on clear days, far out to the east, beyond the Gulf of Surprise, a dim iridescence which some say is Russia" (138). Throughout the novel, whatever is beyond the human present is necessarily dim. Kinbote sees only the "dim distant music" (297) of his history in Shade's poem and evokes God's presence as "a pale light in the dimness of bodily life. . ." (227). The authorial past, transformed by art, may well be linked to that noted by both Kinbote and Shade, all three pointing to whatever surprise the future brings.

--Paul R. Jackson, Temple University

TO THE OTHER SHORE

In *Drugie berega*, Nabokov adverts his Russian reader to literary styles and facts more often than in either of the English versions of the memoir. In the chapter on his French governess, he ends the first paragraph of Section Seven (Six in *Conclusive Evidence and Speak, Memory*), which describes the arrival of guests at Vyra for a name-day dinner, with this prompt, absent elsewhere: "*I wonder who will notice that this paragraph is informed by Flaubertian intonations*" (103; here and below, text omitted in the English versions is given in my italicized translation).

For an obvious reason, most such allusions are Russian, some obligingly explained, others slightly veiled, still others left without light or hint. For example, in the same Chapter Five, I suspect a muffled reference to *Dead Souls* (composed around 1840) in the otherwise dangling "*s 1840 g., chto li*" in the following parenthesis written specially for the Russian edition:

---(we shall presently pass through a dilapidated village in a ravine, past the slightly weatherworn but sturdy sign on the board which has been there since about 1840; it says

"116 souls [of serfs]," although one will barely find thirty now). (88; cf CE 61 and SM 99)

The first paragraph of Chapter Nine's Section Three (four in SM), on *Tenishev School*, contains a brief and at once exposed parody of Tolstoy's knack for the anadiploic period: "*Apart from these peculiarities, *Tenishev School* differed in nothing from any other school anywhere else. As in all schools everywhere (if I may mimic here Tolstoy's didactic diction) the boys tolerated some teachers and loathed others. As in all schools...*" etc. (169)

But perhaps the most interesting instance of a deliberately relieved stylistic imitation concerns Bunin. The Russian version of the famous episode in a Parisian restaurant, while dropping a reference to Fondaminski, closes on an elegant tribute to the Russian writer who had died shortly before *Drugie berega* appeared. The long straggling sentence grades into a concentrated sample of Bunin's typical "brocaded" [*parchevaya*--the epithet is "celebrated" in the English versions] prose, with the richly embossed images and lyrical soaring of his short stories' finali. Here is this sentence, collating all three versions (CE 216; SM 286-87; DB 244):

Subsequently we used to meet quite often, but always in the midst of other people [CE, SM: generally in the house of <SM: I.I.> Fondaminski <CE: -Bunakov> (a saintly and heroic soul who did more for Russian émigré literature than any other man and who died in a German prison)], and somehow Bunin and I adopted a bantering and rather depressing [CE: Give-and-take sort of double talk, which I regret now when there is so little chance of my ever revisiting him in remote France.] [SM, DB: mode of conversation.] [SM: a Russian variety of American "kidding," and that precluded any real commerce between us.] [DB: and we never really managed to talk about our craft, and now it is too late, and the hero leaves the house and walks through the inevitable park, and sheet lightnings flash, and then he rides to the railway station, and the stars glow ominously and wondrously on the mournful velvet, and a keen bitterish whiff comes from

cornfields, and in the infinitely responsive remoteness of our youth roosters carol the night.]

Both the wistful closing of the first variant (which Bunin lived to read in his "remote France") and the matter-of-fact tone of the second one, written a dozen years after Bunin's death, lack the placency of this Russian salute to a fellow craftsman retired to still farther regions, this farewell gesture of deference, with the twinkle and trick of a younger and better joustier.

Alexander Tvardovski, a Soviet poet, also points out this passage and calls it an example of Nabokov's "above average talent for imitation, befitting an imitative ["epigonous," a pejorative term in today's Russian] writer such as he was," in a preposterous account of the episode given in his introduction to Bunin's *Collected Works* (vol. 1, Moscow, 1965), now reprinted in the first volume of a new edition (Moscow, 1987, p. 25).

Corrigendum: While compiling an index to *The Nabokovian*, I noticed that in my piece in No. 14 in which I mention, among other things, Otto van Veen's *Amorum Emblemata* (in connection with *Ada*), I failed to give credit to Patricia Crown who had made a similar observation five years earlier (4: 38). I apologize for the oversight.

--Gene Barabtarlo, University of Missouri, Columbia

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by Stephen Jan Parker

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The Vladimir Nabokov Society

THE NABOKOVIAN

1978-1988

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Compiled by Gene Barabtarlo

The *Index* lists and cross-checks all items that have appeared in the twenty issues of *The Nabokovian* (the first twelve issues were published under the title *The Vladimir Nabokov Research Newsletter*), except for regular features (general and specific information, lists of new VN publications supplied by Mrs Vladimir Nabokov, correspondence, research news, etc.) comprising the Editor's Introductory Notes.*

Entries within sections B and C are arranged alphabetically; section D, thematically; the rest, chronologically, as are all items within an entry.

Roman figures refer to the issue number, arabic, to page number. To save space, the year of publication is omitted, but since the newsletter comes out semi-annually (spring and autumn), and since the first issue was published in the Fall of 1978, the time of publication of any given issue can be instantly reckoned by the formula $78 + 1/2 n$, where n is an even (Spring) issue number, or $78 + 1/2 (n - 1)$, if n should be an odd (Fall) number; e.g., No. 16 was issued in $(78 + 8 =)$ 1986 (Spring), while No. 9 in $(78 + 1/2 [9 - 1] =)$ 1982 (Fall).

Adopted abbreviations and symbols:

"VN" or "N", for Nabokov's name;

<abs>, for an abstract of a delivered paper or dissertation;

COF, for corrections of Andrew Field's Bibliography (1973).

The ampersand following a page number in section C indicates that N's work in question is dwelled upon but briefly. ** References in this section are given to the page or pages on which the work is mentioned.

* There are a few exceptions to this exception, for I have extracted from these Introductions, and listed separately, bibliographical information and meetings reports.

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