

THE NABOKOVIAN

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THE NABOKOVIAN

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NEWS

This is a year of transition for the society in several ways. Stephen Jan Parker, to whom both of this year's issues are dedicated, stepped down from editing *The Nabokovian*, which he created thirty-five years ago, originally as the *Vladimir Nabokov Research Newsletter*. This modest publication has been the venue for more than its share of remarkable discoveries, and Nabokovians everywhere owe Steve a debt of gratitude for making their appearance possible. I'm very thankful to Steve for the generous and helpful reception he gave me when I went to Lawrence to be instructed on how to manage the Society's affairs for the year.

In January, Leland de la Durantaye took on the presidency, and Zoran Kuzmanovich was appointed vice-president by general acclamation, in a one-time delay of the usual alternation between English- and Slavic-studies-based scholars. Zoran has undertaken to coordinate the creation of a new Society web site that will have many members-only features, including a concordance as well as old issues of *The Nabokovian*. He also continues to edit *Nabokov Studies*, which is now published exclusively in electronic format via ProjectMUSE. Jeff Edmunds has ceased updating the ZEMBLA web site, which no longer seeks member donations (though the Society does seek them!).

Other transitions are afoot: as readers of Nabokv-L will know, the society's Board voted to discontinue print publication of the journal after this year, with electronic publication as part of the web site still under debate. Print-on-demand *may* be an option, if demand exists. Either way, this year will mark the launch of the new web site, which will take the Society into a new era of information publication and sharing. The not-yet-active domain will be: www.nabokovsociety.org.

Membership has reversed its decline, and as of this writing there are 101 Society members, as well as 83 institutional subscribers.

Other News: *Letters to Véra*, ed. and trans. by Olga Voronina and Brian Boyd (with help from Gennady Barabtarlo) will be published by Penguin and Knopf on September 3rd. *Fine Lines: Nabokov's Scientific Art* (edited by me and Kurt Johnson), a collection of about 150 of Nabokov's scientific drawings, along with several scholarly essays, has been delayed and will be published by Yale UP next spring.

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Thanks are due to Margaretta Jolly and Jillian Piccirilli for providing and allowing publication of the images accompanying Priscilla Meyer's Note.

NOTES AND BRIEF COMMENTARIES
By Priscilla Meyer

Submissions, in English, should be forwarded to Priscilla Meyer at pmeyer@wesleyan.edu. Please send attachments in .doc or .docx format. All contributors must be current members of the Nabokov Society. Deadlines are April 1 and October 1 respectively for the Spring and Fall issues. Notes will be sent, anonymously, to a reader for review. If accepted for publication, some slight editorial alterations may be made. References to Nabokov's English or Englished works should be made either to the first American (or British) edition or to the Vintage collected series. All Russian quotations must be transliterated and translated. Please observe the style (footnotes incorporated within the text, American punctuation, single space after periods, signature: name, place, etc.) used in this section.

***PALE FIRE'S "THE LAND BEYOND THE VEIL" AND THE AENEID'S
"THE LAND WHICH EARTH CONCEALS"***

I

The many allusions in Nabokov's prose deserve much attention and increasingly so when his imagery looks unsuspecting. Usually one follows an interpretive guidance for approaching his rich textual adornments. But in the present case the coherence of some allusions is so dominant that it makes sense to start with their identification before formulating an hypothesis regarding how their meaning fit into the whole.

When John Shade has finished his poem, the reader is informed in great detail about what happened during the very last minutes of his life. He sees "[p]art of [Sybil's] shadow near the shagbark tree;" "a dark Vanessa ... that [w]heels in the low sun" and "the flowing" and "ebbing" of shade and light. He hears that "somewhere horseshoes are being tossed, Click. Clink" and most likely he hears also "the ecstatic barking" of a dog, mentioned by Kinbote.

Invited by Kinbote to join him for dinner, Shade "descended" and starts "crossing" the lane that is filled with the tidal flow of light and shade. All these particulars—Sybil, the (shag)bark, the butterfly, the

water that lends its movements to the lights in the lane, the descent, the crossing, and the barking dog—recall Aeneas’ descent into the “Underworld” as described by Virgil in “Book VI” of *The Aeneid*. In fact, all these images but one (the butterfly) appear in lines 400-415 of this “Book” (*The Aeneid*. Trans. C. Day Lewis, Oxford: OUP, 1986, 169). In the preceding “Book” Aeneas is urgently requested by his dead father, who speaks to him in “a vision,” to come and see him in Elysium, green pastures watered by the Lethe, where he “dwell[s]” among the “Blessed” (147-48). Aeneas is then brought to the shore of Cumae by his comrades, where he meets the “holy Sibyl, Foreseer of future things.” Together they proceed until they arrive at the banks of the Styx and hear Cerberus, the watch-dog on the other side of the river, barking loudly and scaring Charon, “the ferryman,” who refuses to convey a living man. But upon Sibyl’s showing him “the golden bough,” he complies and they safely cross the river. After drugging the dog, they continue and Aeneas sees numerous dead souls, many old acquaintances among them (164). Finally they reach the “green valley” where the “souls who are destined for Reincarnation” live (179, 181). Here they meet Aeneas’ father who explains that the cosmos can exist because “immanent Mind, flowing/ Through all its parts and leavening its mass, make the universe work” (181). This is comparable to Kinbote’s dictum that “somehow Mind is involved as a main factor in the making of the universe” (227).

The horseshoes might refer to the “horse’s hoof” which, in Greek mythology, is a “proof against the poisonous water” of the Styx (Robert Graves. *The White Goddess*. London: Faber and Faber, 1986, 368). (Actually it was the Nabokovs who caused the metallic melodies by pitching horseshoes—see Stacy Schiff, *Véra* (*Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov*. [New York: Random House, 1999, 217].)

The Cumae Sibyl used to write her oracles on leaves, but Aeneas asks her “to speak them aloud,” “[l]est they become the sport of whisking winds and are scattered” (157). “[I]f perchance at the opening of the door the wind rushed in and dispersed the leaves ... the oracle was irreparably lost,” writes Thomas Bulfinch (*The Golden Age of Myth and Legend*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994, 336). This is probably the reason why Sybil Shade “hated the wind” (90). (The Cumae Sibyl is one of the many sibyls, “women who acted as mouthpieces of the ancient miracles.” From the 12th C. onwards the name was used as a given name, of which Sybil is a “misspelling,” “common to the present day.”

[E.G. Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946, 118.]

Shade has his last vision of his wife when she is near the shagbark tree, a nut-tree, also called hickory (or shagbark hickory). This tree's Latin name is *Carya ovata*, after Carya, venerated by the ancient Greeks as goddess of nut-trees (Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*. London: Penguin Books, 1992, 289), just as Sybil Shade is "worshipped" by her husband (42). And the shagbark points to Charon's ferry, a "bark" as it is called in *The Gift* (75).

Aeneas is successful in seeing the soul of his father, and Shade sees a "dark Vanessa," which represents, as Brian Boyd has persuasively argued, the soul of Shade's deceased daughter Hazel (*Nabokov's Pale Fire. The Magic of Artistic Discovery*. Princeton: PUP, 1999, 129-145). The mythological rendering of souls as winged apparitions (like bats, birds and butterflies) is discussed in detail by Emily Vermeule (*Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). The first "psyche," Greek for "soul," shown as a winged image, she has found on one of the "big Tanagra coffins" (65). In a variant, "discovered" by Kinbote, Shade asks where the dead abide or whether they perish like "Tanagra dust" (231).

Aeneas' descent into the Underworld is regarded as "the keystone of the whole poem" and the "symbol of the golden bough" as "the supreme *motif* of the story" as it represents "the power of poetic faith and vision" (Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*. London: OUP, 1974, 123;133;136). In *The Golden Bough*, a vast anthropological study, dating from the 19th C., showing how the sciences supersede magic cults and religious beliefs, James Frazer argues that the Golden Bough is a mistletoe. At the same time he gives the main reason why it is not, as "Virgil does not identify but only compares it with a mistletoe" (703 of the 1922 edition, abridged by the author, Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993). From a botanic point of view, Nabokov offers a better alternative. Virgil emphasizes thrice that the bough is a golden one, because its leaves have the colour of this metal (lines 137, 144, 208). Although it is not the shagbark which provides this bough, it is this tree, the hickory, that does direct the way. In Shade's poem the shagbark is associated (in line 49 and line 990) with the deceased Hazel and with Sybil, while Kinbote in his commentary to lines 49 and 90-93 connects this tree with ancient Greece (with "Hebe," Zeus' cup-bearer [line 49], and with a "sarcophagus," a coffin [line 90-93]). Virgil calls his bough with the golden leaves "sacred" (159), and Nabokov's (or Shade's) golden leaves

also belong to a “Sacred Tree” as this is the title of a poem from which Kinbote quotes a quatrain:

The ginkgo leaf, in golden hue, when shed,
A muscat grape,
Is an old-fashioned butterfly, ill-spread,
In shape.

A ginkgo tree is not, like Virgil’s bough, a parasite, and it was non-existent in Europe in Virgil’s time. But the autumnal color of its leaves (that is, after the tree has shed its nuts) are distinctly bright yellow. And it offers a likeness with a butterfly (see Brian Boyd, “Notes.” *Novels 1955-1962* by Vladimir Nabokov, Library of America, 1996, 894).

Virgil compares the leaves of the Golden Bough with “gold-foil” which “rustle[s]” in a “gentle wind” (159; 162). Another translator, J. W Mackail, renders this as “the foil tinkled in the light breeze” (*Virgil’s Works*. New York: The Modern Library, 1934, 109). This image brings to mind “the glitter and rattle of the so-called *feuilles-d’alarme*” and “the flashing in tinfoil scares” in *Pale Fire* (152; 201). On the same hillside where these tinfoil scares produce their “antiphonal” chants, the “Clink and tinkle of distant masonry work” is heard, while a “heraldic butterfly” presents itself, a setting so very similar to that of Shade’s last minutes (although the “train” is replaced by “trucks”) that one seems to be invited to recollect this tinfoil when reading that scene, thus completing the *Aeneid*-like context with the (leaves of the) golden bough (202; 293). The “heraldic” butterfly is a *Vanessa atalanta*, see Dieter E. Zimmer, *A Guide to Nabokov’s Butterflies and Moths 2001*, 275).

No less than Shade’s death does King Charles’s flight through the secret passage evoke burial rites in ancient Greece. He passes a statue of “Mercury, conductor of the souls to the Lower World” and a “sick bat” (133). Mercury is the Latin name of the Greek god Hermes. When at the very end of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Penelope’s suitors are killed, their souls, “squeaking like bats” are led by Hermes “down the dark paths of decay” (Trans E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin Books, 1991, 355). The impression the king gets of “an Egyptian child’s tame gazelle” brings to mind the “bulls and deer and goats... protected in rustic sanctuaries” depicted on Greek coffins. The adjective “Egyptian” refers to the influence of Egypt, as it “had the grandest, most monumental, and most detailed funerary traditions of the ancient world” (Vermeule 66 and 69). The playing of board games is such an “Egyptian theme converted to a Greek funerary

imagery” and the “krater with two black figures shown dicing” that King Charles sees is very similar to the picture on an Attic amphora that is reproduced by Vermeule (although the “palm” is missing) (see Vermeule 77 and fig. 35). Why is King Charles’ dash for freedom presented with so many sepulchral tokens? It seems as if the king fears that once he is expelled, he is doomed to expire.

Exile presented as a passing away is also the subject of the closing passages of the first Chapter of *The Gift*. The Sibyl’s Golden Bough is here a minatory “crooked bough” which “looms near the ferry” pushed by “Charon with his boathook” (75). These quoted phrases are spoken by Koncheyev, when he joins Fyodor in finishing a poem. This poem germinates from Fyodor’s musings while he is buying shoes. Then he grows aware that it is “in his feet that he had the feeling of Russia.” In the shop his feet are X-rayed and Fyodor sees its phalanges: “[w]ith this, with this I’ll step ashore. From Charon’s ferry” (64). The morbid turn Koncheyev gives to Fyodor’s lines is not at all what he has been dreaming of and he cancels the poetical trip: “Homeward, homeward!”

It can be concluded that the image of the “descent into the Underworld,” as employed in ancient times, is used twice in *Pale Fire*: as a sub-text for King Charles’ exile, and as an analogue for Shade’s departure from earthly life. The antidote seems in both cases identical as well: to retrieve or to retain what one fears will be lost—the remembrances of the life one had in the past. To Kinbote exile seems disastrous *unless* he will be successful in his endeavours to revive his lost kingdom in Shade’s art. And Shade “turn[s] down eternity unless” the richness of earthly life, “stored in the stronghold through the years,” can be recollected in “Heaven” (53).

The paradoxical pairing of parting and perpetuation is beautifully expressed in the image of the “wheelbarrow” in Shade’s poem, line 999. In *The Gift* this vehicle is more simply called a “barrow” (359). The two meanings of “barrow,” corresponding with two different etymological origins, covers the two aspects of a farewell discussed here: the ending and the continuation of (part of) one’s life with what one has been able to take along. “Barrow,” as derived from the Old English “beorg” (the German “berg” [mountain]), means “tumulus,” “hill” or “grave-mound.” “Barrow,” as derived from the Old Teutonic “beran,” meaning “bear,” is the equivalent of the “wheelbarrow.” (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1929. The 10th *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* elaborates on the first “barrow:” “a large mound of earth...over the remains of the dead.”)

The first time Nabokov uses this motif is in *King, Queen, Knave* at what might be called the turning point of the protagonists' lives: Martha's discovery of her doomed desire for Franz. A "Red Admirable" appears, and the souls of the dead are congregated in the title of the book Dreyer is reading, "*Die toten Seelen* by a Russian author," Gogol's *Dead Souls*. In *Glory* it is a "luggage cart" which marks the beginning and the end of Martin's stay in Molignac, where he decides to make his fated expedition (158, 165). On the platform with the luggage cart a "dark moth" is swirling "around a milky white arc light" (158). Electric light may represent the souls of the dead, as John Shade speculates in his poem "The Nature of Electricity," in which with perfect foresight he gives a "brightly beaming" streetlamp the same number as the last line of his great poem (192, see also Rachel Trousdale, "'Faragod Bless Them': Nabokov, Sprits, and Electricity." *Nabokov Studies* 7 (2002/2003): 119-128). The wheelbarrow in *Pale Fire* is unfortunately empty instead of being loaded with all that had been "stored" by Shade "through the years." But luckily the gardener, during the few minutes that Shade is still alive after having written line 999, is actively engaged with his wheelbarrow. And the reader is also told that "simultaneously" with the firing of the bullet that killed Shade, the gardener dealt Gradus "a tremendous blow on the pate" with his "spade" (294). The immediacy of the gardener's action strongly suggests that he, when he hears the shooting, was using his spade loading the wheelbarrow with earth (and maybe this word must be written with a capital "E").

II

Because Aeneas leaves his father through one of the "two gates of Sleep," it has been suggested that his "descent into the Underworld was in a way analogous to a dream" (187; Jasper Griffin, "Notes" *The Aeneid*, op.cit., 427). Because in *The Gift* Fyodor's meeting with his father turns out to be a dream (it is still unclear whether his father "had perished at all" [136]), it is tempting to find out whether the allusions to Aeneas' journey might be related to Nabokov and his father. Starting from the "bark" from Pushkin's poem "Arion," Maria Malikova discusses the connection Nabokov makes in his poetry and *The Gift* "between his father's death and the image of a boat," which has, she argues, its origin in "Charon ferrying the souls of the dead across the Styx" and Anna Akhmatova's poem "And Our Lady of Smolensk celebrates today her saint's day." ("V.V.Nabokov and V.D. Nabokov: His Father's

Voice.” Jane Grayson, Arnold McMillin and Priscilla Meyer, eds, *Nabokov's World. Volume 2: Reading Nabokov*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002 [15-26] 21-22.) Several critics have observed that *Pale Fire* has many autobiographical aspects, and some of these point to Nabokov's father's tragic death (see i.a. Robert Alter “Autobiography as Alchemy in *Pale Fire*.” *Cycnos* 10, 1 (1993): 135-41 and Gerard de Vries “*Pale Fire*, Pushkin, Belkin, Botkin and Kinbote.” *Nabokovskii sbornik* 1 (2011): 104-15).

But Nabokov's overall appreciation of Virgil does not really support the pursuit of this subject. Brian Boyd has quoted a paragraph from Nabokov's unpublished papers in which he classifies writers in two groups according to their originality. To the group of writers “who have adopted a popular point of view” belong “all second-rate writers from [Virgil,] the minor poet of Rome [,] to Mr. Hemingway of Spain.” And to the second group belong “all great writers from William Shakespeare to James Joyce” (*Stalking Nabokov*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011, 45). (Territorial boundaries [Nabokov invented Zembla and Antiterra] seem however more relevant for Joyce's Dublin than Virgil's “land which earth conceals” [159].) Nabokov “crossed out” this passage, but what he wrote some decades later is no less surprising. In his “Commentary” to Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* he calls Virgil (Dante's guide and one of Milton's sources for their hypogean journeys) “insipid” (2, 55). The “criticism” of French writers who “accused Theocritus of affection and of giving his Sicilian goatherds more grace of expression” than they might have possessed, is “more applicable” to Virgil's “pale pederasts” (2, 55). When discussing the name of “Phyllis” Nabokov mentions its use by “[t]he overrated Virgil” whose shepherds “when not burning for some young assistant shepherd, court[.] an occasional shepherdess” (2, 232). Here Nabokov refers to Virgil's *Eclogue* II: “The shepherd Corydon burned for fair Alexis” (*Virgil's Works* 268). In *Lolita* Virgil is also mentioned as one “who could the nymph sing in single tone, but preferred a lad's perineum” (19). The first part of this sentence has been clarified by S. E. Sweeney (“Nymphet-Singing in Singleton.” *The Nabokovian* 15 [1985]: 17-18). If the second part is not meant to asperse Virgil, then it is an inappropriate way to criticize the scarce incidents of Greek love in Virgil's work. And the word “perineum,” the least visible part of the human body, is one which would never, if a Latin equivalent had existed, have been used by the decorous Virgil, as I have been told by scholars who know their Virgil.

This makes it understandable that the name of Virgil could not have been mentioned by Shade. Then Kinbote could not have refrained from feasting on these pale pederasts and shepherds in fire, which would have it made quite difficult to appreciate the allusions to Aeneas' crossing unbiased. And Aeneas' journey to the underworld, so firmly embedded in Greek mythology, has become such a canonized literary icon, that its recognition does not need the author's name. J. W. M. Turner's famous painting, *The Golden Bough* (1843), and Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1689) are examples of the numerous, no less famous, artists who have been inspired by Virgil's art.

It is, however, most courteous that the invitation extended by Tityrus to his friend, the exiled king whose "realm sunk to a poor cabin," to sup with him in the low sun on "mellow apples and soft chestnuts and curdled milk [cheese]," is reciprocated by Kinbote when he welcomes his friend to a crepuscular dinner with "a knuckle of walnuts, a couple of tomatoes, and a bunch of bananas" (*Virgil's Works* 267 [*Eclogue* I] ; *Pale Fire* 288).

(I gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments I have received on the various drafts of this note from Wiebe Hogendoorn, Stephen Blackwell and Priscilla Meyer.)

—Gerard de Vries, Voorschoten, Netherlands



*Mural in Willard Straight Hall, and detail, by Ezra Winter
(photographs by Jillian Piccirilli)*



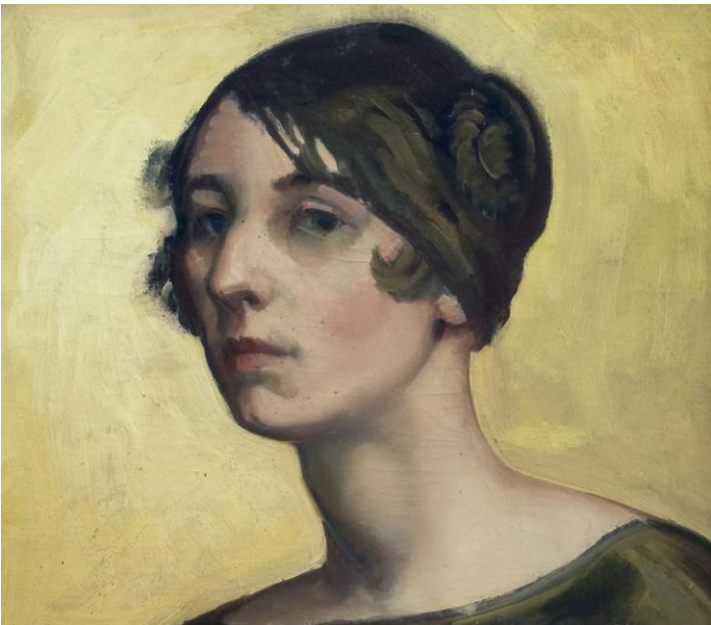
*Two portraits of Morris Bishop, by Alison Mason Kingsbury, 1930
(photographs by Jillian Piccirilli)*



Canon van der Paele



Morris Bishop



Alison Mason Kingsbury, self-portrait (1928)
(photograph by Jillian Piccirilli)

MORRIS BISHOP, HIS WIFE, AND THE MURAL IN *PNIN*

Morris Bishop was one of the first Americans to recognize Nabokov's genius, and was instrumental in bringing him to Cornell in 1948. Bishop's obituary in *The New York Times* says that "Mr. Nabokov considered Professor Bishop as one of his closest friends in the United States and as a sort of spiritual father. They shared a fondness for exactitude in language and for japery as well as a common commitment to literature" [Whitman, Alden (1973): "Morris Bishop, Scholar and Poet, Dies." *The New York Times*, November 22, 1973, p. 40].

The Nabokovs regularly spent time with the Bishops during their ten years at Cornell. Bishop was responsible for getting Nabokov salary increases, helping him to find lodgings every semester, and eventually, when Nabokov was transferred from the Division of Literature to Romance Literatures in 1951, was the chair his department. The two occasionally exchanged limericks, which Bishop enjoyed composing as well as other forms of light verse (Boyd, *AY*, 135, 205).

Bishop's wife was the painter Alison Mason Kingsbury. They met in 1925 when Alison was assistant to the muralist Ezra Winter. Winter was commissioned by Cornell University to decorate the main lobby of its student union, Willard Straight Hall, with a fresco cycle. She accompanied Winter to Ithaca, where Bishop began courting her as she worked, perched on the scaffolding. They married in 1927, the year the project was completed.

In *Pnin*, Nabokov describes a mural in Frieze Hall on Waindell College's campus:

[President Poore] came, a figure of antique dignity, moving in his private darkness to an invisible luncheon, and although everybody had long grown accustomed to his tragic entrance, there was inevitably the shadow of a hush while he was being steered to his carved chair and while he groped for the edge of the table; and it was strange to see, directly behind him on the wall, his stylized likeness in a mauve double-breasted suit and mahogany shoes, gazing with radiant magenta eyes at the scrolls handed him by Richard Wagner, Dostoevski, and Confucius, a group that Oleg Komarov, of the Fine Arts Department, had painted a decade ago into Lang's celebrated mural of 1938, which carried all around the dining room a pageant of historical figures and Waindell faculty members. (*Pnin*, 71)

Winter's mural is accompanied by a placard:

As a theme for the mural in the lobby of Willard Straight Hall, commissioned artist Ezra Winter chose to represent phases of human character. Each group in the continuous frieze symbolizes an ideal character trait.

The mural makes reference to aspects of the life of Willard Dickerman Straight '01, after whom the building is named, and reflects his diplomatic and business career in China, his broad interests in the arts, and his overall enthusiasm for life.

Waindell College's mural in Frieze Hall resembles the frieze in Cornell's Willard Straight Hall in that it incorporates President Poore into its allegorical setting, just as Winter incorporates the donor's life and works into the idealized representation of "phases of human character."

Mikhail Efimov recently analyzed Nabokov's choice of mural characters, showing them to be linked via Alexander Blok's writings to anti-Semitism (Dostoevsky, Wagner) and Aryanism (Confucius) [M. O. Efimov, "O prisutstvii Rikharda Vagnera v romanakh V. Nabokova (k teme 'Nabokov i Blok'), *Russkaia literatura*, n. 2, 2014, forthcoming]]. If Nabokov's mural is inspired by Winter's frieze, then Confucius also refers to Willard Straight's business career in China. In both cases the mundane references comically undercut the mural's idealization, making a mockery of the faculty members consorting with historical figures by juxtaposition.

Nabokov's affection for Morris and Kingsbury and the tale of their courtship on the mural scaffolding would have kept him from making fun of the kitschy representations of human qualities in togas; it did not however keep him from having his laugh in *Pnin*, where he heightens the kitsch in Frieze Hall's (only apparently) ill-sorted and naively chosen quartet of a Russian novelist, a Chinese sage, a German composer and the blind president of a small and ridiculous American college. Efimov's analysis suggests that the august assemblage implicitly provides a critique of the naïve pinko politics on American campuses that Nabokov deplored.

Nabokov's use of Ezra Winter's frieze in *Pnin* raises the question of whether he incorporated Bishop and Kingsbury themselves into his depiction of the Waindell faculty. The most positively depicted couple

in the novel is Lawrence and Joan Clements. Lawrence and Joan think Lawrence resembles the Canon van der Paele in Jan van Eyck's "Virgin and the Canon van der Paele":

"The publisher of my new book on the Philosophy of Gesture wants a portrait of me, and Joan and I knew we had seen somewhere a stunning likeness by an Old Master...Well, here it is..." (162)

Kingsbury's portraits of Bishop are from 1930, but Bishop was twenty years older by the time Nabokov was writing *Pnin*, by which time he too may have had "the knotty temple, the sad musing gaze, the folds and furrows of facial flesh, the thin lips, and even the wart on the left cheek" (154).

And if Nabokov intends this resemblance, then he may be playing with the ecclesiastical relationship of Bishop's name to the Canon's title.

Alison Mason Kingsbury had lived in New York City in the 1920s, where she studied at the Art Students' League. In 1922, she went to Europe and joined the École des Beaux-Arts at Fontainebleau, where she studied fresco, sculpture and mural composition, later following one of her teachers to the French School in Rome. She would have been, then, more cosmopolitan than many of the Cornell faculty wives of the 1950s.

In *Pnin*, Nabokov describes Joan Clements as more sophisticated than the women around her. She "wore an old black silk dress that was smarter than anything other faculty wives could devise, and it was always a pleasure to watch good old bald Tim Pnin bend slightly to touch with his lips the light hand that Joan, alone of all the Waindell ladies, knew how to raise to exactly the right level for a Russian gentleman to kiss" (154). She is "dark blue-eyed, long-lashed, bob-haired."

Details from Bishop's life might be espied in Nabokov's later works: like Humbert Humbert, who is writing a "comparative history of French literature for English-speaking students" (*Lolita*, 32), Bishop published a *Survey of French Literature* (1955), which he would have been working on while Nabokov was writing *Lolita*, and a poem: "How to Treat Elves," that would have been useful to John Shade.

While the resemblances of the portraits can only be speculative, the Waindell frieze has enough relationship to Ezra Winter's to suggest how

the facetious narrator in *Pnin* transforms some of the material from Nabokov's experience while teaching at Cornell.

Permission to publish the paintings of Alison Mason Kingsbury is generously granted by her granddaughter, Margaretta Jolly. They, and the mural, were photographed by Jillian Piccirilli, who kindly provided high-resolution images.

—Priscilla Meyer, Middletown, CT

PNIN'S CINDERELLA: HIS HISTORY

In a letter he wrote about *Pnin*, Nabokov explained that the book's "inner core" is built on a "whole series of organic transitions" [Vladimir Nabokov, *Selected Letters, 1940–1977* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989) 156–9]. *Pnin*'s main character is himself an author writing about how the "concatenations" of small events mirror those of larger events, how *La Petite Histoire* mirrors *La Grande Histoire* [Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin* (1957; New York: Vintage International, 1989) 76]. Together these two ideas address the "inner core" of the book; it is a series of "organic transitions"—"concatenations"—that mirror one another in large and small ways.

These "organic transitions" can be found in the book's treatment of the Cinderella tale. The story of Cinderella, like all fairy tales, has been passed down orally from person to person, from country to country, from generation to generation. New tellers change the story as they tell it; the story thus undergoes its own "series of organic transitions." Timofey Pnin, the book's main character, explains such transitions in the Cinderella tale: Cinderella, he says, began in Russia; there, the heroine wore slippers of squirrel fur (Russian *veveritsa*; in French—*vair*); when the tale transitioned to France, the homonym *vair-verre* turned the slippers from fur to glass (*verre*). The squirrel fell out of the story, a loss invisible in English translation. When the tale reaches America from Russia via France, the squirrel slippers have become glass slippers (88).

In the novel *Pnin*, then, the history of Cinderella has two defining features: 1) it moves from Russia to France to America and 2) squirrel fur becomes glass. These "organic transitions" or "concatenations" are not only seen in the history of Cinderella; they are seen throughout *Pnin* in large and small ways.

Pnin's first love is Mira Belochkin. Her last name means "little squirrel." Pnin knew her in Russia. She married a fur dealer of Russian descent (133-35). She went to France where the author imagines her being killed in a concentration camp by an injection of broken glass (135). Pnin then sees her shade while he is in America. The pattern in Pnin's life is thus the same as in the Cinderella tale: squirrel to glass; Russia to France to America.

The pattern applies to the much-discussed motif of the squirrels that appear throughout the book. Viewing their appearances chronologically, the same "organic transitions" emerge. The first squirrel is painted on the wall of Pnin's childhood home in St. Petersburg (23-24). The second squirrel sits beside a map of Russia (177). The third squirrel "departs without the least sign of gratitude" on the Waindell campus (58). The fourth runs up a tree and becomes "invisible" (73). The fifth follows a letter written "in beautiful French" (88). The sixth is present but unseen and unmentioned (115). The final squirrel, at a dinner party in America, does not appear at all, but Victor's glass bowl is said to be the color of squirrel fur. Again the pattern emerges: squirrel to glass; Russia to France to America.

The pattern repeats itself in different ways. The squirrels in Cinderella mirror the squirrels in the life of Pnin (Belochkin killed by glass), and these mirror the squirrels in the book of *Pnin* (squirrel to glass). In each situation, a squirrel goes to glass, and a transition is made from Russia to France to America. The squirrels are a connecting thread between the fairy tale, the novel and Pnin himself.

* * *

This same "organic transition" can also be seen in the scene where Pnin is walking to the college library. Earlier Pnin's dentures have been described as a "firm mouthful of America" and later Cinderella's glass slippers as having a "bluish . . . columbine, shade—from *columba*, Latin for pigeon" (38, 158). With this in mind, consider the following "concatenation" of events: Pnin is walking towards the library. He hears a train whistling as mournfully "as in the steppes." He sees a squirrel. It dashes up a tree. Pigeons sweep by overhead. The squirrel now is said to be "invisible." Then Pnin gently "champ[s] his dentures" (74-75). This passage, then, through a series of emblems, creates the same journey from Russia to France to America (steppes, squirrel, dentures) and squirrel to glass (squirrel, invisible, *columba*). *La Petite Histoire* mirrors *La Grande Histoire*.

Walking to the library, Pnin is carrying a Russian book: *Sovetskiy Zolotoy Fond Literaturny*, in English *The Soviet Gold Fund of Literature* (66). The passage refers to the book in abbreviated form as *Zol. Fond Lit. Zol.*, the abbreviation of *Zolotoy*, “gold,” could also, however, allude to *Zolushka*, the Russian name of “Cinderella,” from *zola*, ash. It is as if Pnin, in his journey, carries with him a collection of Cinderella literature and as if, in Pnin’s hands, Cinderella is gold—*Zolushka* is *zolotoy*.

Here the journey of Timofey and that of Cinderella do not just mirror each other. They are the same journey. Cinderella travels with Pnin.

* * *

Pnin does not just travel with a single tale of Cinderella. Instead, he travels with *Zol. Fond Lit.*, that is, Pnin travels with a fund, a collection, of Cinderella tales. Indeed, the novel *Pnin* takes pains to explain that there is not a single Cinderella tale but, rather, there are many different variations of the tale. Cinderella tales appear throughout Europe (Russia, France, America, etc.); their main characters have had many different names (Cinderella, Cendrillon, Aschenputtel, *Zolushka*, etc.); the main character has had many different distinctive features (slippers, dresses, jewelry, slender feet, etc.). In short, Cinderella takes many different forms.

Some of these different forms appear throughout *Pnin*. Cinderella herself is mentioned at certain points in the book. In addition, Pnin himself is a Cinderella figure with his “curiously small” “almost feminine feet” (7, 131), his unappreciative taskmasters, and his transformation “sometime after midnight” when he decides to leave the town of Waindell for good (189). Mira Belochkin is yet another Cinderella figure. Pnin’s former sweetheart has a “slenderness of arm and ankle,” as opposed to his two other possible romantic partners—his former wife with her “thickness of ankle and wrist” and his former student Betty Bliss who is described as “plump” (9, 44, 134).

The cook at the Pines, Praskovia, is yet another Cinderella figure. She tends chickens, owns a dress of rhinestones, and has a husband who likes to kill small forest animals (119). In certain variants of the Cinderella tale, the main character watches over her family’s chickens, owns a dress (not slippers), and finds her prince while he is hunting animals through the forest [See Cox, Marian Roalfe, ed. *Cinderella: Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants of Cinderella, Catskin, and Cap O’Rushes*. London: Folk-Lore Society, 1893. 432, 434, etc. (chickens),

62, 101, 353, etc. (hunting), passim (dress)]. In a variant published by Friedrich von der Hagen (Prenzlau, 1825), called “The Three Sisters,” Cinderella’s suitor has a little dog who identifies the stepsisters as false claimants, and the youngest as the right one [Cox, 243-44]. Pnin by his kindness wins the loyalty of the little dog who accompanies him when he leaves Waindell.

The name “Praskovia” is also significant: it is the same name as one of Russia’s real-life Cinderellas, an eighteenth-century serf actress who fell in love with and married a wealthy Russian count.

Pnin is thus a collection of Cinderella tales. It contains multiple Cinderellas: Pnin, Cinderella, Mira, Praskovia. While Pnin the character carries a volume of collected Cinderellas, *Pnin* the novel is a collection of Cinderellas, itself a *Zol. Fond Lit.*

But would there really be a collection of the same sort of characters in a single novel? The book suggests that there would. In fact, the narrator himself explains that there are often what appeared to be “twins” or “triplets” among the staff at college campuses and that at one intensive language school there were “as many as six Pnins” (148).

One of the great compilers and popularizers of fairytales in the English language was Andrew Lang. In *Pnin*, it is “the great Lang” who created the “celebrated mural . . . a pageant of historical figures and Waindell faculty members” in Frieze Hall (71, 188). By the book’s end, Nabokov has added the image of Pnin to this pageant. He is now in the Valhalla of fairytale characters.

Nabokov has replaced the basic structure of a novel—beginning, middle, end—with a different kind of structure: a structure based on interlocking “organic transitions” and mirroring “concatenations” of events. Nabokov has not just created a new novel; he has, perhaps, created a new way of creating novels.

Nabokov was striving for something more profound in his writing of these concatenations. The first time squirrels are mentioned in the book, they appear in a recurring pattern on wallpaper, and the key to unlocking that pattern, the narrator explains, “must be precious as life itself” (23).

Perhaps the narrator’s explanation of this pattern applies to Nabokov’s novel. Perhaps unlocking this pattern can indeed be considered precious as “life itself.” For what Nabokov is exploring through these interlocking patterns is nothing less than the meaning of mortality. What does it mean to die? What are mortality’s limitations? What are its possibilities? Is there hope—is there future—is there life—in the transition

from one stage to the next? Is death a simple stop? Or, like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly or a fairytale changing its form over time, is death merely a grading from one form into the next with a continued, enduring existence?

Nabokov searches for the answers to these questions by exploring the Cinderella tale. Cinderella changes over time, as it goes from one place to another, from one language to another. It changes but endures. It changes but does not die. Indeed, its ability to transform itself is part of its strength. It is part of Pnin's as well; he is able to change, and so he is able to survive: in Russia, in France, in America. Transformation is key—perhaps *the* key—to continued life.

It is no coincidence that Pnin lives in the town of Waindell, a name similar to Wandel, the German word for change or transition. In German Wandel is pronounced “Vandel,”; Pnin himself calls the town “Vandal” and the university there had built structures on a nearby hill copied from a “the ancient little burg of Vandel” (34, 140).

* * *

The character Pnin undergoes metamorphosis much the same way as the Cinderella tale does: he changes, and endures, with each new narrator who tells his story. The book *Pnin* starts with the narrator describing Pnin going to address the Cremona Women's Club. The book ends with another narrator about to tell a variant of Pnin's going to address the Cremona Women's Club. His story, delivered orally like Cinderella's, will be told again, and change again, with a new narrator, the novel's narrator who, like the European recorders of oral tales, will transcribe and alter the oral tale in the process.

But Pnin's story does not end with the book *Pnin*. He resurfaces in Nabokov's later novel, *Pale Fire*. In *Pnin*, the narrator describes Pnin as “beloved,” “benevolent,” and “good-natured” (11-13). The narrator of *Pale Fire* describes Pnin as a “regular martinet” and “grotesque perfectionist.” Pnin's transformations are similar to those in Cinderella: he has changed because his narrator has changed. In this way, the character, once again, mirrors the tale; Pnin is a new variant of Cinderella.

The squirrels in Cinderella show how a story can transform itself from one place to another while still maintaining its identity. Something may be lost during its transition from one culture and language to another (*veveritsa* becomes *verre*). But one can still detect the tale's Russian origins even today. *Vair* does not simply die; it continues in an altered form. It is perhaps not surprising that Mira Belochkin, the little squirrel,

is repeatedly described as being “immortal” (27, 134). For, in a sense, nothing can kill her. She changes and endures.

The same is true for Pnin. Something may be lost during his periods of transition, but something essential lives on. Indeed, it may be the very act of change and transition that allows the man to live on. It is therefore fitting that date on which Pnin leaves Waindell for good—the date on which he moves yet again—the date on which his tale is to be told by yet another new narrator—is also the date of his birthday (21, 186) [Charles Nicol “Pnin’s History,” *Novel*, Spring 1971, 207-08]. For his departure suggests a new transition—and, in the process, the birth of a new Pnin and a new version of the tale.

* * *

They all change, and they all endure—Cinderella, Pnin, squirrels, Mira Belochkin. None of them simply end or die. They all endure, in one form or another, by means of their own “organic transitions.” And if they can escape the simple finality of death, then there exists some “faint hope” that we might escape it as well. A fairytale? Exactly. Cinderella, to be precise.

I would like to thank Priscilla Meyer for her help with this note.

—Gerry Cahill, Boston, MA

SOLVING “SIGNS AND SYMBOLS”

“Surely the saddest story that Vladimir Nabokov ever wrote” is how John Banville described “Signs and Symbols” (“The Saddest Story,” in Yuri Leving, ed., *Anatomy of a Short Story: Nabokov’s Puzzles, Codes, “Signs and Symbols,”* New York, Continuum, 2012, 332). Nabokov’s story merely describes a very bad day in the life of an old immigrant couple with a disturbed suicidal son, and ends without resolving the fate of the young man. He leaves that to the reader. By the end of the tale, the reader is so subtly terrorized by its unnerving implications, that he finds himself forced to resolve the son’s fate by examining the multitude of clues Nabokov has planted in the text, especially the final scene when the father’s attempt to enjoy the jellies is interrupted by three telephone calls. Just before the third call, the father begins to read the “eloquent labels” of the “the luminous yellow, green, red little jars” of jellies, (a near rainbow of colors) starting with “apricot,” and continuing

with “grape, beech plum, quince. He had got to crab apple, when the telephone rang again.”

Nabokov says that the father “spelled out” the names on the jars. Surely he didn’t speak each individual letter. He may have slowly savored each name, as he “reexamined with pleasure” the jars. “A-pri-cot”: three equal definite beats.—like the rapping of a gavel bringing order to the court: be quiet and pay attention. Could there be a message in the meter of the words? As a poet, Nabokov was interested in scansion, and engaged in verbal fencing matches in his correspondence with Edmund Wilson over metric issues.

We are told that the son’s “inmost thoughts are discussed at night-fall, in manual alphabet, by darkly gesticulating trees.” Morse code is a manual alphabet. It is also a binary system that uses long and short beats, as does the scansion of poetry; but in the case of Morse code each unique combination of long and short pulses, called dashes and dots, signifies a letter of the alphabet. Using an on-line Morse Code translator, at <http://morsecode.scphillips.com/jtranslator.html>, I entered the long or short (dash or dot) length of each syllable of the jelly names. I did not use stresses, but rather the length of syllables: a long syllable being one that takes longer to pronounce than a short syllable, as with Classical Latin and Classical Greek poetry, because that seemed to correspond with the long and short beats of Morse code.

For example, APRICOT presents either three equally short beats (a tribrach in scansion) or, rather unlikely, but logically, three equally long ones. Short beats would be DOT DOT DOT or letter S. As long beats, apricot is DASH DASH DASH, or letter O. Which letter is preferable? Well, normally one would not pronounce “apricot” with lengthened syllables. But curiously, if one follows the mother’s instructions to the caller to avoid dialing O, we find that the O would cancel out to zero, leaving only the S option. I proceeded much the same way through the rest of the fruitful names, as indicated in the Appendix. All the logical possibilities of applying the Morse code breaker are summarized in the following table:

Flavor	Dot (short) Dash (long)	Options	Preferred Option
APRICOT	...	S	
(alternative)	---	O	
Common usage and mother’s no O rule:		S	S

GRAPE (long beat preference)	-	T	T (but E possible)
(short beat)	.	E	
BEECH PLUM (long short pref.)	-.	N	N, (but I a less satisfactory option)
(Short short)	..	I	
(long long is not entertained because of the obvious shortness of plum.		(M)	
(two word option—short, short)	(.), (.)	E, E	
(two word option—long, short)	(-), (.)	T, E	
QUINCE (short stress pref.)	.	E	E, but T possible)
(long stress)	-	T	
CRAB APPLE (as single word)	...	S	S
(as single word - alternative)	-.	D	
Crab (separately)	.	E	E
	-	T	
Apple (separately)	..	I	I
	-.	N	

Notice that the five flavors produce only two variations of five letters: either STENI or SDENI. The remaining letters are repetitions. STENI rearranged yields I SENT. SDENI rearranged yields I SEND.

Shawn James Rosenheim, author of *The Cryptographic Imagination: Secret Writing from Edgar Poe to the Internet* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997) discusses the use of cryptography (a term he says was invented by Edgar Allan Poe) in fiction. Nabokov greatly admired Poe. According to Rosenheim, Poe’s famous story, “The Gold Bug,” was the first to attempt a cryptographic solution to a plot, and met with such enormous success that it catapulted Poe’s reputation. Interestingly, the story not only inspired other fiction writers, quite possibly Nabokov, it had important, if unlikely, historical repercussions. Two cryptogra-

phers, a married couple, William and Elizabeth Friedman, who began their cryptographic careers assisting with a study of Francis Bacon as the possible author of Shakespearean works, went on to crack the Japanese cipher Purple used during World War II, “an achievement of the same magnitude as the Polish and British solution of the Enigma,” according to Rosenheim (11). William Friedman attributed his interest in ciphers to his youthful reading of Poe’s “The Gold Bug.” Rosenheim also quotes the author Joseph Wood Krutch (whom Nabokov amusingly and pedantically corrected in his lectures, with reference to the number of wins and losses chalked up by Don Quixote) as saying that ‘nothing contributed to a greater extent than did Poe’s connection with cryptography to the growth of the legend which pictured him as a man at once below and above ordinary human nature (11).’ ”

The cracking of the cryptography of “Apricot ... Crab Apple” by means of Morse Code involved a fairly simple application. The identification and interpretation of the message sent is far more challenging. A message strongly appears to have arrived by means of the errant caller who twice calls the parents looking for “Charlie.”

Rearranging the letters of “Charlie” yields two interesting words: “chialer” and “heliarc.” “Chialer” is an informal, usually derogatory term meaning “to cry” in French, and “to complain” in French Canadian. “Heliarc” is a concoction not to be found in a dictionary, from “helios,” the Greek word for sun, and arc. “Helio” as a prefix appears in words like heliograph, defined by Webster’s Dictionary (1971) as “1. An apparatus for telegraphing by means of the sun’s rays thrown from a mirror”—a magnificent word for a man with Nabokov’s interests in reflections, mirrors and rays; and it brings to mind the telegraph.

The importance of the sun in the story cannot be overstated. Mrs. Sol (Latin for sun, and also related to the Russian word for nightingale, *solovei*, a meaning that has eclipsed that of the sun in the literature) arises early in the story, with a face “all pink and mauve with paint” like a sunrise in artifice. She wears a “cluster of brookside flowers” on her hat. One notes that the flowers, unlike her facial coloring, are not branded as artificial. Flowers and pinkness also figure in the name of Aunt Rosa, who, although named for a hardy perennial, perished in the Nazi death camps, like Mira in *Pnin*. The multiple references to the sun continue with the name of the father’s physician Dr. Solov and the mother’s memory of a friend’s daughter who “married one of the Soloveichiks.”

In “heliarc” the combination of helio and arc presents a stunning image in a story where rain and darkness are ever present, and the

sun is banished, winking only from the names of acquaintances. The arc produced by the sun is the rainbow, a symbol as old as story-telling. The flood (note the constant rain in Nabokov's story) was not the destruction of the earth, but a cataclysm, to be followed by the re-flowering of the earth. This would be the third reference to Genesis in Nabokov's tale. The allusion to the story of Adam and Eve, a story of "the origin of human suffering" has been noted by Joanna Trzeciak in "The Last Jar," (in Leving, Yuri, *Anatomy of a Short Story*, 143). She points out that the Russian name for crab apple, *raiskoe iabloko*, means "paradise apple." The second reference to Genesis is the unfortunate birthmark on the father's head (the mark of Cain.)

If there is a hidden solution, in the form of a message from the son, is it a complaint ("*chialer*"), but at the same time, a vision of the rainbow signifying that all will be well, the sun also rises, and real flowers will grow? Or is it a message of death and possible resurrection?

Surely a story of an old couple suffering "endless waves of pain" being struck down by the death of their child on his birthday, just as they are about to take steps to bring him home is simply cruel, is worthy only of Elsa's "bestial beau." There is more than sufficient evidence that a living son, or possibly the trees, on his behalf, (trees that discuss his inmost thoughts "at nightfall, in manual alphabet") sent a message to the parents, and the reader, that he is "all right." This interpretation aligns with Nabokov's own aversion to pain and suffering and his grief for the humanity grossly obliterated in the Holocaust. Nabokov used his art not to realistically portray suffering, but to urge the reader's compassion and understanding through more subtle means. At the same time he has shown great sympathy for his own suffering creations. In *Bend Sinister* and *Invitation to a Beheading*, Nabokov spares the sufferer (by madness in the former and artfulness in the latter) as well as the reader.

As the narrator says in *Pnin*: "if one were quite sincere with oneself [referential mania? -FA], no conscience, and hence no consciousness, could be expected to subsist in a world where such things as Mira's death were possible. One had to forget," and if forgetfulness is not possible, one transforms, with art. "Signs and Symbols" challenges the reader to find the rainbow, or reassurance, for the couple by means of cryptography, just as the characters of Poe's "The Gold Bug" found Captain Kidd's buried gold.

Appendix

GRAPE is either one DASH (T) or one DOT (E). I thought the shorter syllable preferable. However, one should keep in mind that T is still a possibility.

BEECH PLUM. The two syllables clearly are not of the same length. BEECH, especially with a double “e” is more drawn out than the unavoidably short PLUM. Thus, the word sounds like DASH DOT. Entering BEECH PLUM as DASH DOT gives the letter N. Another option is to treat each word separately. BEECH alone is DASH (T) but possibly DOT (E); Plum, being shorter, has the opposite preference of DOT (E), with DASH (T) as a secondary possibility.

QUINCE, like grape, sounds short, or a DOT (E), but one cannot rule out DASH (T.)

CRAB APPLE: Like Beech Plum, gives us the option of considering the words separately, or as a unit. The syllables of APPLE sounds short, DOT DOT. In contrast CRAB is longer—DASH. Together, DASH DOT DOT make letter D. Separating the words yields a different result. CRAB, alone, is DASH (T) or possibly DOT (E). APPLE is DOT DOT, or (I).

—Frances Peltz Assa, Milwaukee, WI

Annotations to *Ada*, 38:
Part 1 Chapter 38 (Part 2)
Brian Boyd

Annotations, continued:

242.16: Prascovie de Prey has the worst fault of a snob: overstatement: Demon, a snob himself, will also show the same “fault of a snob,” in his eagerness to imagine Ada married into a distinguished family, as when he refers to Andrey Vinelander as “Ada’s fiancé” at 436.11.

242.16: Prascovie: French form of Praskovia (the form used at 257.16). Praskovia is “a common Russian feminine name” (*EO* 2:296); Nabokov had an “Aunt Praskovia” (*SM* 67-68), and there was a Tsaritsa Praskovia Fyodorovna, 1664-1732, married in 1684 to Tsar Ivan V.

242.17: Bouteillan. You look as ruddy as your native vine: Bouteillan is the (rather obscure) name of a red wine in the Basses-Alpes (*Litré*). Demon’s knowing it indicates his connoisseurship.

242.18: we are not getting any younger, as the amerlocks say: *Amerloque*, French (now outdated) slang for “American, Yank.” In the novel *Zazie dans le metro* (1959), by Raymond Queneau (1903-1976), whose work, including *Zazie*, Nabokov admired, Queneau uses the form *amerloquaine* in ch. 5, a chapter where *Zazie* goes shopping for “bloudjinnzes” (see J.A. Rea, Nabokv-L, 28 March 1996).

242.19-23: that pretty messenger of mine must have been waylaid by some younger and more fortunate suitor . . . might offend a menial: The pretty messenger is Blanche. Bouteillan himself indeed lost Blanche to a younger and more fortunate suitor, his son Bout, late in *Ardis the First*.

242.24: to use a hoary narrational turn: MOTIF: *novel*.

242.24-25: the old Frenchman knew his former master too well: Cf. 35.32-36.01: “Bouteillan . . . had once been the valet of Van’s father.”

242.26-28: His hand still tingled nicely from slapping Blanche’s compact young bottom for having garbled Mr. Veen’s simple request and broken a flower vase: Demon has apparently asked her not only to get him a drink (239.25-27) but has also taken a carnation from her vase for his lapel—which adds a resonance to Van’s “You look quite satanically fit, Dad. Especially with that fresh oeillet in your lapel eye” (239.08-09): cf. 252.33-253.01, “Demon in much the same black jacket (minus perhaps the carnation he had evidently purloined from a

vase Blanche had been told to bring from the gallery).” Cf. also Blanche’s confession that she was called “Cendrillon” “because she broke and mislaid things, and confused flowers” (49.04-06).

242.30-31: Was Monsieur’s health always good?: Bouteillan says “always” rather than “still” good through confusion with his native French, in which *toujours* means both “still” and “always.”

242.33-34: Château Latour d’Estoc: Château Latour is one of the great French wine estates, in Pauillac, in the Médoc region to the northwest of Burgundy. It was one of the first four vineyards to earn the Premier Cru (First Growth) designation in the first classification of Bordeaux wines in 1855. Hugh Johnson’s *Modern Encyclopedia of Wine*, 3rd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991) compares it to the other great Pauillac premier cru, Château Lafite-Rothschild: “Lafite is a tenor; Latour a bass. Lafite is a lyric; Latour an epic. Lafite is a dance; Latour a parade” (60). *Être de bon estoc*: to be of good stock.

243.01: a crumpled little handkerchief from the piano top . . . : How do you get along with Ada? She’s . . . Very musical and romantic?: Demon, who prides himself on his powers of deduction, deduces that the handkerchief on the piano is Ada’s. (In Austen’s *Emma* (1815), Ch. 24, Emma, also priding herself on her quick powers of deduction, asks: “Mr Dixon is very musical, is he?”) A few days ago Van, awakening from a dream that had prefigured the Second Crimean War, “still clearly saw Blanche wiping Crimea clean with one of Ada’s lost handkerchiefs” (231.27-28). A few minutes after Demon’s comment, we see Ada rubbing “fiercely her lips with a tiny handkerchief produced from her bosom” (246.01-02).

Talking to Ada after the dinner, Van returns to Demon’s question: “I wonder if some inner sense in him smelled you in me, and me in you. He tried to ask me . . .” (263.27-28).

243.07-08: We have really more things in common than, for instance, ordinary lovers or cousins or siblings: While trying to mislead Demon, Van speaks the truth: they are lovers *and* cousins *and* siblings. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

243.10: her granddad’s library: Ardelion’s.

243.10-11: She knows the names of all the flowers and finches in the neighborhood: An echo of the finch Van threw a cone at, in their first play together, 50.11-18. MOTIF: *Ada—taxonomy*.

243.13-15: “Van . . . ,” began Demon, but stopped—as he had begun and stopped a number of times before in the course of the last years: Presumably, to tell Van only that he, Demon, was Ada’s father,

not also that Marina was Van's mother: that would be enough to stop any dangerous interest of Van and Ada in each other, he would think. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

243.17-18: aperitifs . . . Lilletovka and that Illinois Brat: Lillet is an aperitif in white and red varieties, made of 85% Bordeaux wines and 15% macerated liqueurs, made by the Maison Lillet, founded in 1872. It was especially popular during the 1920s. The “-ovka” ending sounds playful and funny to a Russian ear, and recalls *nalivka* and *nastoyka*, a wine or vodka, respectively, infused with berries, etc. (cf. the Czech *becherovka*, an alcoholic herbal bitter drink) (Gennady Kreymer, private communication). “Illinois Brat” garbles Noilly Prat, the French vermouth, first formulated by Joseph Noilly in 1813; his son-in-law Claudius Prat joined to found the Noilly Prat Company in 1855. The names Demon juxtaposes pair two place names of French origin (Lille, Illinois), each with an -ill-.

243.19: antranou svadi, as Marina would say: Darkbloom: “Russ. mispronunciation of Fr. *entre nous soit dit*, between you and me.” Marina is more emphatically Russian than any other of the Veens, and tellingly unable, for an actress, to master another mode of speech. MOTIF: *Marina's Russian French*.

243.20: solanders: W2, *solander*: “A box in the shape of a book, used for keeping pamphlets, papers, maps, illustrations, etc.” And liquor bottles.

243.20-22: a finer whisky than this usque ad Russkum unless you are a filius aquae: Multiple puns: *usquebaugh* (W2), “[Ir. & Gael. . . . lit, water of life . . .] Whisky, as made in Ireland or Scotland”; *usque ad nauseam* (W2): “[L.] Even to nauseam; even so far as to disgust”; *usque ad filum aquae* (W2): “[L.] Law As far as the filum aquae (which see),” and *filum aquae* (W2), “[L.] Law. The middle line, or thread, of a stream.” *Darkbloom* glosses *filius aqua* [sic]: “‘son of water,’ bad pun on *filum aquae*, the middle way, ‘the thread of the stream.’” Demon is asking, at the end, then, “unless you are a son of water, that it, in this context, a teetotaler.” MOTIF: *water*.

243.22-23: unless you are a filius aquae? (No pun intended, but one gets carried away and goofs.): Demon *does* intend the strained pun on *filum aquae* (see *Darkbloom* in previous note), but not the pun on the name of his wife, Aqua, Van's ostensible but not actual mother. He does not *intend* to call into question Van's being a son of Aqua—a rather dangerous admission, since it involves a baby-swap—but in the

flow of his verbal exuberance, he does. MOTIF: *family relationship; water.*

243.24-25: Latour later on. . . . no T-totaller: Note the play of letters and sounds.

243.228: tittery: W2: “Gin, the alcoholic liquor. *Obs. Slang.*” With, in this novel, a pun on “tit.” Cf. Demon’s comment on Dan to Marina: “he overdoes the juniper vodka stuff” (255.33-34). Gin derives most of its flavor from juniper berries.

243.29: Califrench: California has been a wine-growing area since the eighteenth century and has had a wine industry since the late nineteenth, not confined to French grape varieties.

243.29-30: after that little stroke he had: Cf. Lucette’s report to Van in 1892 that “Dad has had another stroke” (369.15-16).

243.30: near Mad Avenue: Presumably a version of Earth’s New York’s Madison Avenue, the celebrated center of American advertising, and from 34th to 90th Streets an upscale shopping street also rich in private art galleries; but on Antiterra, where the city is known only as Manhattan, its inhabitants were once “Madhatters” (222.16-17).

243.31-34: saw him walking toward me quite normally, but . . . the clockwork began slowing down. . . . hardly normal: Cf. Demon’s more elaborate report on a similar incident to Marina, 255.33-256.10, where the “clockwork” here becomes not a metaphor for Dan’s body but the “mechanism” of his two-seater town car. Cf. also Demon’s report to Van of Dan’s death, 435-38. MOTIF: *technology.*

243.34: Let our sweethearts never meet: *Kyoto Reading Circle:* “A toast common in the British Royal Navy: ‘To our sweethearts and wives. May they never meet.’” Ironic, given Demon’s fateful discovery that Ada is Van’s sweetheart, just after Demon’s disclosure of Dan’s death (438).

244.01: as we used to say, up at Chose: Cf. 173.17: “Chose . . . where his fathers had gone.”

244.01-02: Only Yukonians think cognac is bad for the liver, because they have nothing but vodka: Cf. *EO* 2:226: “The implication is presumably that Onegin prefers a beaker of foreign wine to a jigger of national, right-thinking vodka.”

244.04: I ran into a remarkably pretty soubrette: Blanche. W2, *soubrette:* “*Theat.* originally, in comedies, a lady’s maid who acts the part of an intrigante; a coquettish maidservant or frivolous young woman; by extension, an actress who plays such a part.” Cf. Demon’s recollection a few hours later: 262.10-11: “I recall the cold of this

flower, which I took from a vase in passing. . . .’ He now threw it away, discarding with it the shadow of his furtive urge to plunge both hands in a soft bosom.” Cf. Van’s first one-on-one encounter with Blanche: “She wore what his father termed with a semi-assumed leer ‘soubret black”” (48.22-23). Cf. also “Pretty Blanche” (226.05); “she had become wonderfully pretty” (191.10-11).

244.07-08: the stab of a sunset, especially from under a thunderhead: Cf. a little earlier, “the sun-dusted music room” (238.05-06) and “certicle storms” (258.06: electrical storms, although they prove to be only Kim Beauharnais’s photographic flashes).

244.08: Or poor ventricles: Cf. Demon’s thought, 240.01: “bad for the heart.” Perhaps to be linked with the impending “certicle storms” (258.06).

244.12: the youngest Venutian: W2: “An imaginary inhabitant of the planet Venus”; here, a member of the Villa Venus Club. Van owes his membership to Dick C., who offers him at eighteen this “ticket to paradise” in payment of a gambling debt (176.14-18). MOTIF: *family resemblance; Venus; Villa Venus*.

244.14: my torrid affair: Cf. Marina’s recollections of “her three-year-long period of hectically spaced love-meetings with Demon, *A Torrid Affair* (the title of her only cinema hit)” (253.14-16). MOTIF: *torrid affair*.

244.15: my tango-partner: “Rita” from Chufut Kale (185.23), who in fact spurned his advances (185.30-32).

244.17: Curious, your calling it that: For the reason this is curious to Demon, see 244.14n, or 253.14-16. Cf. 397.21, Ada to Van: “Odd, your saying that.” MOTIF: *family resemblance*.

244.19-21: a subtle question which only the ineptitude of a kindred conjecture had crowded out of Marina’s mind: Presumably the conjecture would have been: does Van (or Ada) know about our (Demon’s and Marina’s) affair? Pun on “kindred,” since the conjecture is one about the children’s knowledge of their kinship. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

244.21-22: granted it could have entered by some back door: If, that is, it could have entered a mind so focused on her theatrical world and her amorous present.

244.22: ineptitude is always synonymous with multitude: An aphorism consonant with Nabokov’s own sense that talent is individual, not communal or collective. On the production of plays as collaborations: “collaboration will certainly never produce anything as permanent

as can be the work of one man because however much talent the collaborators may individually possess the final result will unavoidably be a compromise between talents, a certain average, a trimming and clipping” (*MUSSR* 323-34); unpublished interview with Jacob Bronowski, 1963, from TS in VNA: “The real unreality is the conventional and the common.”

244.23: and nothing is fuller than an empty mind: Cf. 294.16-18: “This created a vacuum into which rushed a multitude of trivial reflections. A pantomime of rational thought.” Aleksey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 11 Sept 2012): “In his memoir essay *About S. A. Tolstoy* (1924), . . . Gorky quotes an entry in Leo Tolstoy’s diary” for 22 March, 1852: “Mysley osobenno mnogo mozhet vmeshchats’ya v pustoy golove” (“An empty mind is particularly prone to be overcrowded with thoughts”).

244.25: a restful summer in the country: Ironic, given Van and Ada’s sexual exertions.

244.28-29: a fourth shallow: Not in W2, W3, OED as a noun in this sense.

244.32: that lovely Erminin girl: Grace.

244.33: une petite juive très aristocratique: *Darkbloom*: “a very aristocratic little Jewess.” Demon seems to keep tabs on aristocratic pairings.

244.34-245.01: the de Prey woman tells me her son has enlisted: Cf. 231.32-34: Van “decided that Blanche or rather Marina probably wished to know if he had been serious when he said the other day he would enlist at nineteen.” He never does enlist; the wound he will sustain in the duel in I.42 may well have made him ineligible, and in any case the Second Crimean War has ended by early September 1888, before he has turned nineteen (329.04-5: “a newspaper that said in reversed characters ‘Crimea Capitulates’”).

245.01-02: that deplorable business abroad: The Second Crimean War.

245.02-05: “I wonder if he leaves any rivals behind?” “Goodness no,” replied honest Van. “Ada is a serious young lady. She has no beaux—except me”: Unable even to have anyone think Percy de Prey has some kind of emotional claim on Ada, or some acknowledged position as her beau, Van has to deny Demon’s implication. He is “honest” here because he genuinely does not think Percy has been entertained by Ada, despite the evidence in I.31 of Percy’s interest in her. He is also “honest” in proclaiming that Ada has no beaux except him—

assuming that this way of stating the case will throw Demon off any scent.

245.05: ça va: Darkbloom: “it goes.”

245.05: seins durs: Darkbloom: “mispronunciation of *sans dire*, ‘without saying.’” The mispronunciation turns *sans dire* into *seins durs*, French for “hard breasts.”

245.07: King Wing!: Mention of him here, amid the possibility raised and dismissed of Percy as Ada’s beau and as having a rival, foreshadows Van’s wrestling match with Percy in the next chapter, where Percy’s presence is tantamount to a claim on Ada’s affections, and where Van defeats him using King Wing’s techniques (275.11).

245.07-08: When I wanted to know how he liked his French wife: As if it goes without saying that the wife of a wrestler like King Wing would have hard breasts.

245.08-09: She likes horses, you say?: Cf. 242.13: “Both like horses” (both Ada and Percy): Demon reverts to this, as if unable to get Percy out of his mind in connection with Ada.

245.10: what all our belles like—balls: With an implicit Ada as “belle of the ball.” Commenting on a photograph she shows later, Ada says “It’s like the Beast and the Belle at the ball where Cinderella loses her garter and the Prince his beautiful codpiece of glass” (401.24-26), in part an inadvertent reminiscence of Percy as Beast, in Van’s eyes, at the “big party” (187.05) at whose end Van arrives at Ardis, and where Ada is the obvious *belle*.

245.10: balls, orchids: Highlights the sexual quibble on “balls” as being what “belles” like, since “orchid” comes from the Greek for “testicle” (because of the shape of the bulb). MOTIF: *orchid*.

245.10-11: orchids, and The Cherry Orchard: For *The Cherry Orchard*, see 115.16-18 and n. As an aspiring actress, Ada will soon become particularly interested in Chekhov, acting in his *Four Sisters* (427-30), in a play the discussion of which introduces another of Van’s rivals (380.19-23).

It may be relevant that there is a Cherry Orchid, *Mediocalcar uniflorum (sepikanum)*.

245.14: Demon, iridescent wings humped: Proffer: “The iridescent wings allude to Lermontov’s Demon again. In the poem the Demon does not swoop down on Tamara’s castle—he visits her at night in a monastery, there implanting a satanic kiss on her labia, which makes her die.” The iridescence makes Demon’s wings here particularly reminis-

cent of Vrubel's paintings of Lermontov's Demon. MOTIF: *Demon's wings*.

245.17: with more than an uncle's fervor: Since he is her father, though he does not know she knows this. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

245.21-22: Swooping down on Tamara's castle: *Kyoto Reading Circle*: "Based on Lermontov's poem, 'The Demon,' Anton Rubinstein [1829-1894] created an opera by the same name [written 1871, with libretto by Pavel Viskatov, premiered 1875], in which the Demon falls in love with Tamara, a princess who is to wed a prince. The Demon promises the whole world's submission to her if she will be his. She is both horrified and attracted and locks herself up in her castle. The prince's procession is stopped by a landslide, the prince killed by Tartars. His body is brought to the castle which had been prepared for the wedding. Tamara flees to a convent but the Demon pursues her inside and she can no longer resist him. The angel appears and shows him the ghost of the dead prince. Tamara falls dead."

245.23: Lermontov paraphrased by Lowden: For Lowden, see 127.32n. MOTIF: *translation*.

245.24: The last time I enjoyed you: Not meant in a sexual sense, just Demon's extravagant compliment; but it cannot help having such an overtone, in this novel, and involving these characters (especially given Demon's attraction to younger and younger women); all the more ironic, given Demon's horror when he discovers the incestuous relationship between Ada and Van. MOTIF: *family relationship; incest*.

245.24-26: in April when you wore a raincoat . . . and simply reeked of some arsenic stuff: Reminiscent of *Van's* much earlier (1884) meeting with Ada, 167.15-21, in a raincoat, with her breath smelling of ether.

245.25: white and black scarf: MOTIF: *black-white*.

245.26: seeing your dentist: In 1884 Ada visits the family dentist in Kaluga, 139.10-12. Van asks Cordula as he takes the train to Kalugano: "Do you know Kalugano? Dentist? Best hotel?" (303.16).

245.27: Dr Pearlman: For another comically-named dentist, see *Lolita's* Dr. Molnar (*Lolita* 293).

245.27-28: married his receptionist, you'll be glad to know: Once again, Demon seems obsessed with others' pairings, even if not in the beau monde.

245.28-29: your dress" (the sleeveless black sheath): The dress she was wearing when Van arrived back at Ardis in 1888: "the black of her smart silk dress with no sleeves, no ornaments, no memories"

(187.15-16). By now it *has* memories for Van: of his watching Ada's hand being held by Percy de Prey between kisses.

245.29-32: I tolerate . . . I abhor and reject: Presumptuous judgements in a rarely-seen uncle. Demon almost seems to forget his ostensible relationship to Ada. Preparation, in a sense, for his judgement on Van and Ada in II.10-11. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

245.31: Beau Masque: Fr., handsome mask/face. Cf. earlier on the page, "She has no beaux—except me" (245.05); and 401.07-24: "black masks . . . for masked balls (*bals-masqués*) . . . like the Beast and the Belle at the ball."

245.31: passe encore: Darkbloom: "may still pass muster."

245.31: my precious: As Marina also calls Ada, at 62.01, 62.14.

245.33-34: Ladore. . . London. "*Ladno*:" a curious interplay of sounds across two speakers and a shift of thought.

245.34-246.01: fiercely rubbed: emended by DN from 1969, "rubbed fiercely." (An unnecessary emendation.)

246.03: That's also provincial. You should: Demon has a strong sense of the socially acceptable, if not of ordinary morality.

246.04-05: what a diviner I am: your dream is to be a concert pianist: Demon has wrongly inferred this, after seeing Ada using her handkerchief now and recalling having seen the crumpled handkerchief Bouteillan has removed *en passant* from the piano top, 242.34-243.01. Ada's Uncle Ivan "had been a famous violinist at eighteen" (65.26-27), but Ada's own professional dreams will be of drama (in her "Dreams of Drama" letter to Van in 1891, 336.21). Demon's deduction is wrong, but the gift of deduction, and pride in it, have passed on to both his son and his daughter, as we know from the attic scene in I.1. MOTIF: *family resemblance*.

246.04: what a diviner I am: Cf. 73.32: "the demon counterpart of divine time."

246.07: She can't play a note!: Cf. 253.27-28: "playing *à quatre mains*?—no, neither took piano lessons."

246.08-09: Observation is not always the mother of deduction: Play on the aphorism "Necessity is the mother of invention." Also links neatly with the 1884 scene in the attic, where Van and Ada's observations about their mother and her relationships led to such swift deductions.

246.09-11: nothing improper about a hanky dumped on a Bechstein. You don't have, my love, to blush so warmly: Has Ada been with Rack? But he seems to have been discarded, and has not been

at Ardis since the poolside scene in I.32. Why then is she blushing?
MOTIF: *Ada's blushes*.

246.10 Bechstein: From the C. Bechstein Pianofortefabrik, founded in 1853 by Carl Bechstein. By 1870 its pianos had become standard (along with Steinway and Blüthner pianos) in concert halls and elegant private homes.

246.12-14: Let me quote for comic relief “*Lorsque son fi-ancé . . .*” : *Darkbloom*: “When her fiancé had gone to war, the unfortunate and noble maiden closed her piano, sold her elephant.” Rivers and Walker 284-86: “The lines here translated are a comical distortion of the opening lines of the sentimental narrative poem ‘La Veillée’ (‘The Vigil’) by François Coppée. The poem appeared in the collection *Les Récits et les élégies* (*Narratives and Elegies*; 1878) and is one of Coppée’s so-called *récits épiques* (‘epic narratives’). In the poem Roger, the fiancé of Irène de Grandfief, goes to war. While Irène waits anxiously for news of him, there is a skirmish near her castle. Irène takes one of the enemy wounded and promises the doctor she will watch over him all night. Alas! She discovers that this very man has killed her fiancé. Should she take revenge by stabbing the man in his sleep? Should she withhold the medicine the doctor has left and allow the man to die? She turns her eyes to an image of Christ hanging over the bed and there finds the strength to put her wicked thoughts behind her and minister to her fiancé’s killer. When the doctor arrives in the morning, he finds Irène still caring for the wounded man and sees that during the trials of the night her hair has turned white. The poem’s opening lines are:

Dès que son fiancé fut parti pour la guerre,
Sans larmes dans les yeux ni désespoir vulgaire,
Irène de Grandfief, la noble et pure enfant,
Revêtit les habits qu’elle avait au couvent,
La robe noire avec l’étroite pèlerine
Et la petite croix d’argent sur la poitrine.
Elle ôta ses bijoux, ferma son piano,
Et, gardant seulement à son doigt cet anneau,
Seul souvenir du soir de printemps où, ravie,
Au vicomte Roger elle engagea sa vie.
Aveugle à ce qu’on fait et sourde à ce qu’on dit,
Près du foyer, stoïque et pale, elle attendit.

The moment her fiancé had left for the war,

Without tears in her eyes or vulgar despair,
 Irène de Grandfief, the pure and noble child,
 Put on again the clothes she wore in the convent,
 The black dress with the narrow cloak
 And the little silver cross upon her breast.
 She took off her jewels, closed her piano,
 And keeping only that ring on her finger,
 Sole reminder of the spring evening when, enraptured,
 She pledged her life to the Vicomte Roger,
 Blind to what people do and deaf to what they say,
 Near the hearth, stoic and pale, she waited.

. . . Ada shares Irène's pale skin and preference for black dresses. But there is ironic humor in the equation of Ada ("Ada de Grandfief "[p. 246]) with the chaste and patient Irène, since Ada, unlike Irène, is neither chaste nor particularly patient in matters of love."

D. Barton Johnson notes: "As with the song 'Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre,' Ada is cast as the abandoned fiancée and Percy's death [in the Crimean war] is forecast" ("Ada and Percy: Bereft Maidens and Dead Officers," *The Nabokovian*, 30 (Spring 1993), 55-57, p. 56). MO-TIF: *Percy's fiancée*.

246.12: Irène de Grandfief, la pauvre et noble enfant: Later Ada reports on her theatrical role, "myself as [Chekhov's] Irina, *la pauvre et noble enfant*" (427.32), Irina Prozorov, the youngest of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, or *Four Sisters* as it becomes on Antiterra. As D. Barton Johnson notes, the link is that Chekhov's Irina has become engaged to Baron Tuzenbakh; "As the regiment departs on the eve of her wedding, Lt. Tuzenbakh is killed in a duel by a friend, a disappointed suitor" (loc. cit, 57).

246.13-15: la pauvre et noble enfant . . . vendit son elephant. "The gobble *enfant* is genuine, but the elephant is mine: Rivers and Walker 285: "Demon's 'gobble *enfant*' (p. 246) is a mocking distortion of the phrase 'noble enfant,' the sound of which it approximates. But 'gobble *enfant*' is not, in fact, 'genuine,' as Demon claims, for Coppée's phrase 'la noble et pure enfant' has been changed in the text to 'la pauvre et noble enfant,' thus making Demon's pun possible." The distortion in "la pauvre et noble enfant" is probably Nabokov's memory lapse (such minor lapses were common in his recollection of verse lines), as is indicated by the recurrence of the phrase in this form at 427.32 (see previous n.).

246.17-247.26: Our great Coppée . . . one very fetching little piece which Ada de Grandfief here has twisted into English . . . *trouvaille*: Cf. 127.25-128.06 and nn. MOTIF: *translation*.

246.20: Ada with unusual archness: MOTIF: *Ada—arch*.

246.24-28: The neat interplay . . . all this is easier described than imagined. “Old storytelling devices,” said Van, “may be parodied only by very great and inhuman artists: The paragraph ostensibly written by Van the narrator in the 1960s, seems, as it were, to have been foreseen by Van the character in 1888, in the midst of this scene: the character seems to know the future account of his life. Or less fantastically, playful Van as narrator slips his young self this spurious line of dialogue. MOTIF: *novel*.

246.26: all this is easier described than imagined: Cf. 79.33-34: “all this is more readily imagined than described.” (Noted by Cancogni, 76-77.)

246.28: very great and inhuman artists: Cf. 388.19-20: “a discoverer, pure and passionate, and profoundly inhuman.”

246.30: the effort of a cousin—anybody’s cousin: MOTIF: *cousin*.

246.30-31: by a snatch of Pushkin, for the sake of rhyme: See 247.09-10 and n. VN had denounced rhymed translations of Pushkin while preparing his *EO*, and in *EO* itself and after.

246.31-32: for the sake of rhyme—“For the *snake* of rhyme!”: Itself, of course, a rhyme.

246.32-247.02: For the *snake* of rhyme! . . . “snakeroot” into “snagrel”—all that remains of a delicate little birthwort: *Snakeroot* (W2): “Any of numerous plants, most of which have had repute as remedies for snake bites; also, the roots of any of these. Among the more important are: *Virginia snakeroot*, *Aristolochia serpentaria*; . . .” *Snagrel* (W2): “[Prob. corrupt. of *snakeroot*. Cf. SANGREL.] The Virginia snakeroot (*Aristolochia serpentaria*).” *Birthwort* (W2): “any of several species of *Aristolochia*, esp. *A. longa* . . . , the aromatic roots of which are reputed to aid in parturition; also, sometimes, the American *A. serpentaria*, or allied species.” MOTIF: *Ada’s taxonomy; snake*.

247.03: amply sufficient: A cliché in circulation since 1880 (Partridge, *A Dictionary of Clichés*, London: Routledge, 1941, p. 15).

247.03-04: sufficient . . . for my little needs: Cf. “‘enough for my little needs.’ ‘Little needs!’” (418.10-11).

247.07-09: not so much as a remedy for the bite of a reptile, as the token of a very young woman’s early delivery: see 246.32-

247.02n: what the Ladore legend adds is the “very young woman,” reflecting Demon’s penchant for “young mistresses” (4.27). Cf. perhaps Lucette as a “baby serpent” (369.17-19).

247.09-11: “By chance preserved has been the poem. In fact, I have it. . . . and one can know ’em. . . .” *Darkbloom*: “The verses are by chance preserved. / I have them, here they are (*Eugene Onegin*, Six: XXI: 1-2).” These lines, introducing Lensky’s verse effusions, were VN favorites. He echoes them in *Pnin*, 182: “The letter has by chance remained among my papers. Here it is: . . .” Cf. another echo of different *EO* verse lines at 454.03-09.

247.12: “Oh, I know ’em,” interrupted Demon: Cf. Van’s and Ada’s triumphantly quoting verse lines when poets or poems are named, at 64.20 and 65.09-12. MOTIF: *family resemblance*.

247.10-26: *Leur chute est lente . . . trouvaille*: See 127.25-32 and nn. MOTIF: *leavesdrop*.

247.18: now comes the cousin: Cf. 246.30: “the effort of a cousin—anybody’s cousin.” MOTIF: *cousin*.

247.20-24: “Their fall is gentle. . . .” “Pah!” uttered the versionist: Because although Van feigns to Demon to be reciting Ada’s version (at 127.26-29), he in fact cleverly corrects it in ways that echo his criticisms when he first heard her version. He cites her first sentence but then switches for her “woodchopper” (which suggests not the gentle fall of leaves but the thunder of falling trees) the ingenious “leavesdropper.” For further implications of the “leavesdrop” motif, see Boyd 2001: 56, 148, and I.20 Afternote.

247: 20-25: leavesdropper . . . leavesdropper: Cf. 98.12: “with only that stray ardilla daintily leavesdropping.”

247.24: Pah!: A favorite expostulation of Ada’s: see 38.21.

247.26: trouvaille: Cf. 106.04.

247.27: *Klubsessel*: *Darkbloom*: “Germ., easy chair.”

247.30: Marina’s turn to make her entrée: Phrased in the theatrical terms in which she thinks.

247.34-248.02: a spangled dress, her face in the soft focus sought by ripe stars: *Kyoto Reading Circle* notes the submerged echo of the Star-Spangled Banner, “a minor motif in this chapter.” Not quite: but “God Bless America” also echoes at 238.17, 238.25, and Van and Demon’s meeting is said to be “*Très Américain*” (238.15).

248.01: ripe stars: “Ripe” here is a flattering euphemism inflected by Marina’s wishes. Though she is only 44, that age already limits her choice of roles and beaux.

248.03-05: the odd little go-away kicks he was aiming backwards at a brown flurry in the shadows: MOTIF: *dackel*.

248.07: patted her hand as he joined her on a settee: In marked contrast to his almost lascivious response to Ada, gluing a kiss on her ear, drawing her on to his armchair.

248.08-09: dragon-entwined flambeaux: Cf. “a satanic snake encircled the porcelain basin” (42.20-21). Cf. 226.05-08 and 228.24-25: “Blanche . . . had brought a still unneeded lamp” and “the lampshade’s parchment (a translucent lakescape with Japanese dragons”

248.12: quickly motioned by Marina: To keep the lighting flatteringly dim.

248.12: near the striped fish: The scene is still the music room, with the “lone convict cichlid” (239.31) and night drawing on.

248.15: Jones was new . . . his ways and wheeze: Cf. 407.24-27: “ ‘Isn’t that wheezy Jones in the second row? . . . ’ ‘No,’ answered Ada, that’s Price. Jones came four years later [than 1884, the year of the photograph they are inspecting]. He is now a prominent policeman in Lower Ladore.”

248.16: Years later, he rendered me a service that I will never forget: Jones tells Van where to find Kim Beauharnais, whom Van blinds out of fury and a desire to make it impossible for him ever again to blackmail Ada and himself through incriminating photographs: cf. 445.31-33: “there’s one thing I regret. . . . Your use of an alpenstock to release a brute’s fury. . . . I should never have told you about the Ladore policeman” (see previous note).

248.17: jeune fille fatale: Rather than *femme fatale*, “a mysterious and seductive woman whose charms ensnare her lovers in bonds of irresistible desire, often leading them into compromising, dangerous, and deadly situations . . . an archetype of literature and art” (Wikipedia, accessed 13 October 2013). Rather than “fatal woman,” Ada seems to Demon not just a *fille fatale*, a “fatal girl,” a regular variation, but a *jeune fille fatale*, a “fatal young girl” (she is all but, yet still not quite, sixteen).

248.21-22: and showing too much leg in the process: In this summer heat, she wears no knickers: cf. 265.01-05: “I really think you should wear *something* underneath on formal occasions. . . . You were in peril whenever you bent or sprawled.”

248.21-33: to corner the dog . . . Dack and his poor plaything: For the echo of Cheever’s story “The Country Husband,” see 68.21-69.20 and n. Note that in “The Country Husband,” just after Jupiter

bounds in, Francis Weed is at a party where he is attracted to the new French maid, as Demon here is attracted to Blanche (239.26-27, 244.04-05, 262.12-13). Note also the image of Jupiter as a “black . . . rakehell,” helping himself to whatever he wants, as Demon, “Dark” Walter, “quite satanically fit” (239.08), helps himself to what he wants (brandy, Château La Tour d’Estoc, Ada, as it were). Note in the story, as Francis becomes increasingly smitten with the schoolgirl Anne Murchison, he is in feverish spirits: “If Francis had believed in some hierarchy of love—in spirits armed with hunting bows, in the capriciousness of Venus and Eros—” (*Stories of John Cheever*, 396), elements reflected in the Veens as “the children of Venus,” 410.10, and Van as “the youngest Venutian,” 244.12. MOTIF: *dackel*.

248.22-24: Our old friend . . . with an old miniver-furred slipper in his merry mouth: Cf. the scene in 68.23-69.20 where Ada and others chase Dack, with blood-soaked cottonwool in it its mouth, apparently snatched from Blanche’s room; and on the Night of the Burning Barn, 114.14-17: “our little goose Blanche. . . . rushed down the corridor and lost a miniver-trimmed slipper on the grand staircase, like Ashette in the English version.” MOTIF: *Cinderella; miniver; replay; slipper*.

248.22-23: Our old friend, being quite as excited as the rest of the reunited family: The most explicit statement yet of the peculiar situation in this chapter.

Cf. Marina in the past arriving to see Demon wounded in a duel “with five trunks, Dack’s grandsire, and a maid” (252.02-03).

MOTIF: *family relationship*.

248.27-28: a chill of déjà-vu (a twofold déjà-vu . . . : Dack and the cotton wool, I.11, and Blanche’s lost slipper, I.19. In view of the Cheever echoes (see 248.21-33n.) the “twofold déjà-vu” could be seen as fourfold. MOTIF: *memory test*.

248.29: Pozhalsta bez glupostey (please, no silly things): In response to Demon’s praise of Ada.

248.30: devant les gens: Darkbloom: “in front of the servants.”

248.30-31: sounding the final “s” as her granddams had done: The *s* of *gens* would be silent in regular French but was customarily pronounced by Russian aristocrats referring to their servants.

248.31-32: slow fish-mouthed footman: An echo of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Ch. 6: “a footman in livery came running out of the wood—(she considered him to be a footman because he was in livery: otherwise, judging by his face only, she would have called him a fish). . . . The Fish-Footman.” One of Tenniel’s most famous illustra-

tions shows the Fish-Footman handing the huge letter to the Frog-Footman. MOTIF: *Alice in Wonderland*.

248.33-249.01: in comparison to the local girls, to Grace Erminin: As Demon calls her, “that lovely Erminin girl,” who has become engaged (244.32-34). Despite Marina’s comments, Grace had seemed decidedly more naïve and innocent than Ada, even at Ada’s twelfth birthday picnic, 85.08-19; and Ada of course became sexually active soon after.

249.02: Cordula de Prey: Who is indeed sexually available and active, as she is to Van in I.42 and I.43, and, despite being married, on a chance encounter in Paris, III.2. MOTIF: *prey*.

249.02: a Turgenevian maiden: Proffer: “A maiden known for maintaining her maidenhood, Turgenev’s novels and stories being heavily populated by virgins.” See especially the novel *Dvoryanskoe gnezdo* (*A Nest of the Gentry*, 1859), in which the hero Fyodor Lavretsky, betrayed by his unfaithful wife, severs relations with her then falls in love with Liza Kalitina, the daughter of his cousin. Having read that his wife has died, he declares his love for Liza, who returns it, only to discover that his wife is still alive. Liza decides to enter a remote convent and live out her life as a nun.

249.02-05: even a Jane Austen miss . . . Fanny Price . . . In the staircase scene: *Darkbloom*: “Fanny Price: the heroine of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*.” In Part II, Ch. 9 of *Mansfield Park*, Edmund Bertram happens on his cousin Fanny Price on the staircase, and discloses his misgivings about Mary Crawford’s lack of seriousness in a way that gives Fanny a thrill and the reader hope for her. He resolves her problem about which necklace to wear for a ball (she has been given a necklace by Mary Crawford, whose motives she suspects, and would prefer to wear the cross given her by brother with the chain given her by Edmund; he urges her not to spurn Mary’s necklace, given for the occasion, but to keep the other combination for other occasions, and gladdens her heart by saying: “I would not have the shadow of a coolness arise . . . between the two dearest objects I have on earth”). Fanny’s love for Edmund had begun in response to his tenderness towards her when he found her crying on the stairs in Part I, Chapter 2, soon after her arrival at Mansfield Park.

The relationship of cousinage between Fanny and Edmund (see 8.25-28n.) matches the ostensible family relationship between Ada and Van. Van ascends the spiral stairs to the library on the Night of the Burning Barn (115.20); Ada comes up the main staircase and joins Van

on the divan (116.28-33); she joins him the next morning, after they have made rudimentary love, descending the staircase (125.27) that he has also come down (124.20-22). To shift from staircase to necklace: returning to Ardis, Van has brought a diamond necklace for Ada, but tears it apart out of jealousy for Percy de Prey (189.32-33), but when reassured by Ada she has only one beau, he promises to have it “reassembled in Ladore” (194.01). In the chapter before this dinner scene, Van has met Ada “as she climbed rather wearily up the grand staircase. . . Worries? She smelled of tobacco” (234.26-29): we can infer that she has been with Percy de Prey, and has heard he is heading to the Crimean War.

249.06: Let’s not bother about their private jokes: Marina’s literary range does not extend far into English or non-dramatic authors.

249.08-09: Mlle Larivière . . . has written a wonderful screenplay about mysterious children doing strange things in old parks: MOTIF: *Enfants Maudits*.

249.10-11: but don’t let her start talking of her literary successes tonight: Though Mlle Larivière has been delayed in Ladore with Dan and Lucette, she is at this stage expected back with Dan later that evening (see 249.12-13).

249.13-14: By the way, how’s Lucette?: Demon will repeat his question, not answered here, word for word at 261.34. He asks because, reminded of Dan’s being in town, he recalls the reason: Lucette has been having tests at Tarus Hospital.

249.15-16: At this moment both battants of the door were flung open by Bouteillan in the grand manner: *Ada* 1968 contains the remarkable variant:

“At this moment both battants of the door—

(Typical! In Lucette’s hand, for the nonce, circa 1925.)

—were flung open by Bouteillan.”

249.20: she slapped his wrist away with a sisterly *sans-gêne*, of which Fanny Price might not have approved: *Sans-gêne*: W2: “Disregard of ordinary civil restraint; familiarity.” Of course they are not officially supposed to be, or to know that they are, brother and sister.

Fanny disapproves of the boisterous ways of her family in Portsmouth, when she returns to them (for instance, Ch. 38, “I was upstairs, mama, moving my things’ said Susan, in a fearless, self-defending tone, which startled Fanny”), and, in a different manner, of what she sees as the looseness of Henry Crawford and his sister Mary. To Lucette in Kingston, Van says: “Slapping a person’s wrist that way is not your

prettiest mannerism on the Irish side” (466.26-27). MOTIF: *family relationship; family resemblance*.

249.22: Another Price, a typical, too typical, old retainer: This footman seems to have stepped out of the mention of *Mansfield Park*’s Fanny Price at 249.04 and 249.21: the footman Price will be listed as one of three Ardis 1884 “footmen, Price, Norris, and Ward” (405.10)/ He, like the other two, bears the names of one of the three Ward sisters in Austen’s novel: Mrs Price, Fanny’s mother; the intrusive Mrs Norris; and Lady Bertram of Mansfield Park, formerly Miss Maria Ward. But in fact the footman introduced here is “Another Price,” a second Price, not the Price of 1884, as becomes clear when Marina refers to him as “poor Jones” (254.34). (A trap for the reader: cf. 250.11-14: “It should be observed that nobody, not even the reader, not even Bouteillan (who crumbled, alas, a precious cork), was at his or her best at that particular party.”) But to compound the relationships, the original “Price, the mournful old footman” of 1884, “resembled Van’s teacher of history, ‘Jeejee’ Jones” (38.03-05).

249.23: Marina (and G.A. Vronsky, during their brief romance): In 1871: 26.17-18.

249.24: dubbed, for unknown reasons, “Grib”: *Darkbloom*: “*Grib*: Russ., mushroom.” Presumably, because bald, and therefore reminding them of the cap of a mushroom? Cf. 203.03, where mushrooms feature in the imagery in the one scene with G.A. Vronsky present.

249.24: an onyx ashtray: Cf. 239. 16-17: “an onyx ashtray astray” on the floor of the music room.

249.26-32: A side table supported, also in the Russian fashion, a collection of . . . hors-d’oeuvres. . . variously flavoured *vodochki*: Cf. VN interview with Andrew Field, June 6, 1970: “Vodka appeared only on the hors-d’oeuvres sidetable, and hors-d’oeuvres appeared only when there were guests. . . . See ADA, ch. 38 for other gastronomic items shared by Ardis and Vyra” (unpublished, forthcoming in *Think, Write, Speak*, ed. Brian Boyd and Anastasia Tolstoy).

249.30-31: boletes, “white”: The mushroom *Boletus edulis*, widely distributed in the Northern Hemisphere, has a reddish-brown cap. It is one of the most valued edible mushrooms. “Subbetuline”: growing under the canopy of birch trees, as *Boletus betulicola*, now believed to be a supspecies of *Boletus edulis* rather than a different species. MOTIF: *boletes*.

249.32: Westphalian ham: A classic ham, W2, “of distinctive flavour produced by smoking with juniper twigs and berries over a beechwood fire.” Cf. Byron, *Don Juan*, XV.lxv: “a glazed Westphalian ham.”

249.32: vodochki: *Darkbloom*: “*vodochki*: Russ., pl. of *vodochka*, diminutive of *vodka*.”

250.01: chaudfroids: W2: “A delicate dish of fillets of game, poultry, or the like, served cold in a jellied sauce.”

250.01: foie gras: W2: “Fat liver, esp. of a goose. It is usually imported in the form of a pâté, purée, or saucisson.” (In this context, it would be a pâté.) VN in *EO* 2:74, quotes at length James Forbes quoting in turn from the *Almanach des gourmands*, describing the process of producing *foie gras*: “At Strasburg are manufactured those admirable pâtés that form the greatest luxury of an *entremet*. . . .”

250.01-03: the crickets were stridulating at an ominous speed in the black motionless night: Cf. 537.33: “Time is rhythm: the insect rhythm of a warm humid night.”

250.04-05: It was—to continue the novelistic structure—a long, joyful, delicious dinner: Cf. *Gift* 216: “Winter, like most memorable winters and like all winters introduced for the sake of a narrational phrase, turned out (they always ‘turn out’ in such cases) to be cold.” MOTIF: *novel*.

250.05-06: although the talk consisted mainly of family quips and bright banalities: Cf. once more VN on his own family: “Our relationship was marked by that habitual exchange of homespun nonsense, comically garbled words, proposed imitations of supposed intonations, and all those private jokes which is the secret code of happy families” (*SM* 191).

250.07-08: to remain suspended in one’s memory as a strangely significant, not wholly pleasant, experience: Especially since it illustrates Demon’s desire to have Ada marry well, and his conventionality in high-society marriages, and therefore prefigures his decree severing Van and Ada once he discovers them as lovers in 1893.

250.12-14: nobody, not even the reader, . . . was at his or her best at that particular party: Cf. Lucette on her visit to Van at Kingston in 1892: “Neither half-sibling was at her or his best that day” (386.25-26). MOTIF: *novel*.

250.12-13: not even Bouteillan (who crumbled, alas, a precious cork): Perhaps that of the bottle of Château Latour d’Estoc (242.33-34), when uncorking the bottle.

250.15-16: preventing an angel—if angels could visit Ardis—from being completely at ease: Cf. Blanche, seen by Demon as a “passing angel” (239.26-28). Demon of course is visiting Ardis, and is winged (245.14), but is no angel. MOTIF: *angel*.

250.18-19: attracted timorous or impetuous moths: Timorous, because fearing the dark, impetuous, because risking incineration?

250.19-20: moths among which Ada, with a ghost pointing them out to her, could not help recognizing many old “flutter-friends”: The ghost, perhaps, of her mentor in lepidopterology, Dr. Krolik, who “died (in 1886) of a heart attack in his garden” (219.11-12)? VN associated ghosts and moths in his 1922 poem “Nochnye babochki” (“Moths,” lexically “night butterflies”): “i nezhnye nochnitsy / eshchyo k nemu [“duba”] letyat v lilovyy sonnyy chas: / trepeshchut v temnote nezrimye resnitsy, / porkhayut prizraki pushistye” (*Grozd’*, 51), “and downy moths / still fly to it [an oak] at the dreamy lilac hour; / unseen eyelashes tremble in the dark, / puffy ghosts flutter” (translated by DN, *N’sBs* 105).

Although Ada “could not help recognizing many old ‘flutterfriends’” these moths might seem too imagistically and impressionistically described to be taxonomically identified even by an informed reader, but see next few notes.

MOTIF: *Ada’s taxonomy*.

250.20: “flutterfriends”: Nabokov commented a number of times on the possible derivation of “butterfly” from “flutter by”: *Letters to Véra*, trans. and ed. Olga Voronina and Brian Boyd (London: Penguin, forthcoming 2014), 5 October 1942: “Tell my Mitenka that one child here calls a ‘butterfly’ a ‘flutter-by’”; “A child in Georgia called a butterfly a ‘flutter-by’—which almost solves the puzzling origin of that word” (*DBDV* 95, *N’sBs* 271); “My flutterbys have lost their grip during my illness” (*DBDV* 151, *N’sBs* 314).

250.22: in guildman furs: Only “guildsman” is listed in W2, W3, OED, not “guildman.” The body of the *Agris convolvuli* referred to in 250.24n offers a good illustration of the aptness of this description, which however is not enough to identify a particular species.

250.23: thick-set rake-hells with bushy antennae: Konstantin Efetov (personal communication) notes that the “bushy antennae” (technically, “pectinate” or “plumose” antennae) indicate that these “are of course males” and “can be found in families Saturniidae, Lasiocampidae, Lymantriidae and some others.”

Cf. Van at fourteen: “our hell-raker” (33.10). MOTIF: *hell*.

250.24: hawkmoths with red black-belted bellies: Easily recognizable to expert eyes like Ada's as sphingid moths of the genus *Agrius*. The widespread North American species is *Agrius cingulata* (Fabricius, 1775); closely related to it is *Agrius convolvuli* (Linnaeus, 1758), which can be found in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia (Konstantin Efetov, personal communication).

Cf. the invented Cattleya Hawkmoth at 56.05-10 and 56.32-57.02.

MOTIF: *black-red*.

250.27: It was a black hot humid night in mid-July, 1888, at Ardis: Echoes both the opening of the previous paragraph but one, "It was—to continue the novelistic structure—a long, joyful, delicious dinner" (250.04-05) and the close of the immediately preceding sentence, "into the dining room out of the black hot humid night" (250.25-26). Cf., for the repetition, also announcing a portentous scene about to unfold, the story "The Circle": "After that there followed several other chance encounters and finally—all right, here we go. Ready? On a hot day in mid-June— // On a hot day in mid-June . . ." (*SoVN* 376).

Cf. 71.28-30: "The males of the firefly . . . appeared on the first warm black nights of Ardis"; 537.33: "Time is rhythm: the insect rhythm of a warm humid night." Cf. also *Lolita* 148: "in the monstrously hot and humid night"; 283: "It was a black warm night, somewhere in Appalachia"; *Pale Fire* 90: "It was a hot, black, blustery night."

250.28: let us not forget, let us never forget: Continues the emotional ramping-up of the repetitions begun in the previous line.

250.28-30: a family of four . . . not a scene in a play: They are indeed a family, in the sense of two parents and their two children, but Van is not acknowledged as Marina's son, or Ada as Demon's daughter, or Marina and Demon as partners. "A scene in a play" in the sense also of the *scene à faire*, the obligatory scene in a plot-driven play or story. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

250.30-34: not a scene in a play, as might have seemed . . . to a spectator . . . placed in the velvet pit of the garden. Sixteen years had elapsed from the end of Marina's three-year affair with Demon: Cf. the night scene in the play in which Marina performs, with Demon in the "pink velvet chair" in his "orchestra-seat" location, at the start of their affair, in 1868, in Pt. 1 Ch. 2 (11.14, 10.15).

250.30-32: a play . . . the velvet pit: Cf. *WI*, Foreword: "the footlights and the black pit beyond."

250.31: a spectator (with a camera or a program) placed in the velvet pit of the garden: Foreshadows the flashes of Kim Beauharnais's camera from the "velvet pit of the garden," at 258.05-18, and the role of his recognition of the family connections of all four Veens at table, in his scheme to blackmail Ada and Van for their incestuous love (see especially Pt. 2 Ch. 7). MOTIF: *family relationship; Kim's photography.*

250.33-34: from the end of Marina's three-year affair with Demon: It began on January 5, 1868 (10.02) and ended on December 15, 1871 ("a final, quite final, row, on the eve of her wedding," 252.19-20, which is dated December 16, 1871, at 6.10). Cf. 253.14-15: "her three-year-long period of hectically spaced love-meetings with Demon."

250.34: Intermissions of various lengths: Continues the theatrical imagery appropriate to the start of the affair, to Marina's profession, and to their love.

250.34-251.01: a break of two months in the spring of 1870: Not otherwise explained. After Demon's marriage to Aqua in 1869, the substitution of baby Van for Aqua's lost child on January 15, 1870 (8.07-09), and Marina's leaving the Hotel Florey on March 28, 1870 (8.12-13), presumably: but we do not know why.

251.01-02: another, of almost four, in the middle of 1871: When Marina was conducting an affair with "G.A. Vronsky, the movie man" until he left her "for another long-lashed *Khristosik* as he called all pretty starlets" (26.17-19). By about October or November of 1871 Marina is briefly back with Demon, and pregnant, by him, with Ada (as can be discerned through the mist of 26.16-25).

251.03-04: that sequin-spangled dress: *Ada* 1968 has: "that sequin-spangled *eau de Nîmus* dress."

251.04-05: her strawberry-blond dyed hair: Cf. 188.24-25: "a repainted, red-wigged, very drunk and tearful Marina."

251.05-06: melodramatic make-up: Cf. the "regular little melodrama acted out by the ghosts of dead flowers" in Marina's herbarium, 7.20-21; 253.12-15: "safely transformed by her screen-corrupted mind into a stale melodrama was her three-year-long period of hectically spaced love-meetings with Demon"; 440.26-27: "the melodramatic details of the subterfuge" (of Marina's substitution of Van for Aqua's still-born boy).

251.09-13: It aggrieved him—that complete collapse of the past . . . remembrance: Again Van presumes to know his father's intimate thoughts. The "complete collapse of the past" on the reunion with Ma-

rina will seem to be repeated for Van and Ada when they meet for dinner at Mont Roux in 1922, 557-58.

251.11-13: the logical impossibility to relate the dubious reality of the present to the unquestionable one of remembrance: Cf. Demon's sense, after his first sexual enjoyment of Marina, of "the wonder of that brief abyss of absolute reality between two bogus fulgurations of fabricated life" (12.09-11). MOTIF: *reality*.

251.13: zakusochniy stol: Darkbloom: "Russ., table with hors-d'oeuvres."

251.14: its painted dining room: MOTIF: *painted ceiling*.

251.15: petits soupers: Darkbloom: "intimate suppers."

251.16: pickled young boletes in their tight-fitting glossy fawn helmets: With obscene overtones. MOTIF: *boletes*.

251.17-19: the gray beads of fresh caviar . . . goose liver paste . . . Périgord truffles: MOTIF: *riches*.

251.17-18: the gray beads of fresh caviar: Cf. at Ada's twelfth birthday picnic, 79.30: "pots of Gray Bead caviar."

251.18: the goose liver paste: Cf. 250.01: "*foie gras*."

251.18-19: pique-aced: *As de pique* is French for "ace of spades." Here, in arrangement like that of the ace of spades: with a truffle in each corner, and another (a very large one, like the main ace symbol?) in the center. *Piqué* in cookery means "larded."

251.18-19: Périgord truffles: The black truffle, or black Périgord truffle (*Tuber melanosporum*), the second most expensive truffle (after the Italian white truffle) and therefore one of the most expensive edible mushrooms in the world, currently (2014) 1,000 to 2,000 Euros per kilogram; from Périgord, a former province of southwestern France, corresponding roughly to the modern department of Dordogne.

Cf. VN's gloss on *truffles*: "These delicious fungi were appreciated to a degree that we, in a palateless age of artificial flavors, might hardly credit" (EO 2:73). (Cf. with this the comment at 238.30: "God save their poor little American tastebuds.")

251.21: samlet: W2: "A young or small salmon; a parr." MOTIF: *-let*.

251.21: pony of vodka: W2: *pony*: "Of a size smaller than usual; as, a *pony* (glass of) beer, car, glass. . ." Cf. Lucette's last night: "She drank a 'Cossack pony' of Klass vodka" (493.06). A pony glass of beer (140 ml., 4.7 U.S. oz.) is a decidedly *large* glass for vodka.

251.24: Calville apples: A large-medium spicy and aromatic apple, yellow tinged with green, with exaggerated ribbing. The Calville

Blanc d'Hiver is "the ultimate gourmet French variety" (Wikipedia, 14 October 2013). In his notes to his father's letters from Kresty prison, VN described them as "a kind of apple highly valued in those years" (he is writing of 1908), "Pis'ma V.D. Nabokova iz Krestov k zhene, 1908g.," *Vozdushnye puti*, 4 (1965), 265-75, p. 270, n11. MOTIF: *apple*.

251.24: elongated Persty grapes: *Darkbloom*: "evidently Pushkin's *vinograd*: as elongated and transparent / as are the fingers of a girl (*devi molodoy, jeune fille*)."
Proffer: "This difficult allusion is to a not particularly well-known eight-line 1824 lyric by Pushkin—*Vinograd* ('Grapes'). *Persty* is an archaic, poetic word for 'fingers.' The last two lines of the poem, describing clusters of grapes, are: 'Elongated and transparent / like the fingers of a young maiden.'"

251.26: reopening what he gallicistically called condemned doors: *Litré*, "*porte, fenêtre condamnée, porte, fenêtre qu'on a bouchée et qui ne s'ouvre plus*" ("condemned door, window: door, window that has been blocked up so as not to open again").

251.28: ciel-étoilé: *Darkbloom*: "starry sky."

251.29-30: to realize (in the rare full sense of the word), tried to possess the reality of a fact: MOTIF: *reality*.

251.34: in the Tigris-Euphrates valley: MOTIF: *Eden*.

252.01-02: would woosh down fluffy slopes on a bobsleigh a fortnight after parturition: At Ex en Valais, after having given birth to Van on January 1, 1870: therefore about January 15, apparently the day when still-pregnant Aqua skis into a larch stump, killing the male foetus she carries (8.07-09; 25.25-30).

252.02: the Orient Express: "the brown Orient Express," 345.27.

252.03-04: Dr. Stella Ospenko's ospedale: Proffer: "Ospenko is based on *ospa* – smallpox, *ospennyi*—varicolor, i.e. pockmarked. Ospenko is in the hospital." The very name of the hospital's director seems to carry a disease. Alexey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 5 April 2013) that in Act Two of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* the doctor Chebutykhin, who compulsively consults newspapers, reads out, comically *à propos* of nothing: "Tsitsikar. Smallpox is raging here." Later, discussing her acting with Marina in *Four Sisters*, Ada summarizes how the character Marina plays, "Varvara, the late General Sergey Prozorov's eldest daughter, comes in Act One from her remote nunnery, Tsitsikar Convent, to Perm" (429.03-05).

The star in "Stella," coupled with the hospital, brings to mind the "astorium"—"sanatorium" motif, especially since smallpox is closely

related to the much less virulent cowpox, and a bull features in “The astorium in St. Taurus, or whatever it was called” (27.19-20).

MOTIF: *sanatorium; Stella*.

252.04-05: scratch received in a sword duel . . . still visible as a white weal under his eighth rib after a lapse of nearly seventeen years: Not necessarily the duel described in Pt. 1 Ch. 2, which took place nineteen years earlier, not seventeen, and after which Marina rejoins Demon in his villa Armina (15.14), not at Dr. Ospenko’s *ospedale*. Duels are a way of life for Demon and those he mixes with.

Cf. Ada on the Night of the Burning Barn: 120.27-28: “A bad boil had left a pink scar between two ribs.” Cf. Van’s scar in his pistol duel, “at least eight inches long,” four years after the wound (411.25-26).

MOTIF: *duel*.

252.19-20: on the eve of her wedding: Therefore on December 15, 1871, since Marina marries Dan on December 16, 1871 (6.04-10).

252.21: Marina, essentially a dummy in human disguise: Cf. 583.02-07, Van speaking first, Ada responding: “only at the very last interview with poor dummy-mummy. . . . ‘Dummy-mum’—(laughing).”

252.22: lacking . . . individual, magically detailed imagination: Cf. 65.20-22: “ ‘But you just said you collected flowers?’ said Ada. [Marina:] ‘Oh, just one season, somewhere in Switzerland. I don’t remember when. It does not matter now.’” Cf. *Glory* 198: “to his horror Martin realized that Darwin’s recollections had died, or were absent, and the only thing that remained was a discolored signboard.”

252.22: that *third sight*: Play on *second sight* (W2: “The power of discerning what is not visible; a capacity for seeing visions, foreseeing future events, or the like; as, the gift of *second sight*”) and the notion of a *third eye* (“a mystical and esoteric concept referring to a speculative invisible eye which provides perception beyond ordinary sight,” Wikipedia, accessed 30 April 2014).

252.25-26: technician of genius: MOTIF: *of genius*.

252.26: tear-sheet: W2: “A sheet torn from a publication, esp. one to send to an advertiser whose advertisement appears on it.”

252.31-32: “juvenile” (in movie parlance . . . “ingénue” on her left: W2, *juvenile*: “1. A young person or youth. 2. *Theat*. An actor of youthful parts”; *ingénue*: “An ingenuous or naïve girl or young woman, or an actress representing such a person.”

252.33-253.01: Demon . . . (minus perhaps the carnation he had evidently purloined from a vase Blanche had been told to bring from the gallery): Cf. 262.10-13: “ ‘I recall the cold of this flower,

which I took from a vase in passing . . .’ He now threw it away, discarding with it the shadow of his fugitive urge to plunge both hands in a soft bosom.”

252.33: Demon in much the same black jacket: Cf. 240.10-12: “Your dinner jacket is very nice—or, rather, it’s very nice recognizing one’s old tailor in one’s son’s clothes.”

253.02: Praslins’: corrected from 1969, “Praslin’s.”

A French noble name, featuring in Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*. In *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, Madame de Villeparisis recalls an armchair given to her mother “par la malheureuse duchesse de Praslin,” and recalls a contretemps of social precedence between her mother and the duchess, whose full title is Duchesse de Choiseul-Praslin. In telling the story, she notes that “Les Choiseul sont tout ce qu’il y a de plus grand, ils sortent d’une soeur du roi Louis le Gros, ils étaient de vrais souverains en Bassigny” (Pléiade ed., 1954, I.725: “by the unfortunate duchess of Pralin. . . . The Choiseuls are as grand as you get, they come from a sister of King Louis the Fat [reigned 1108-1137], they were real rulers in Bassigny”). The historical Duchess of Choiseul-Praslin, born Françoise (Fanny) Altaria Rosalba Sébastiani della Porta (1807-1847), the daughter of the French military hero General Sébastiani (1772-1851), was indeed unfortunate: her husband Charles Laure Hugues Théobald, Duke of Choiseul-Praslin (1805-1847), stabbed her to death, and after being charged with her murder killed himself by taking arsenic.

There is no other reference to a Praslin in *Ada*, but there is a reference to a Kim Beauharnais photograph of “the cross and the shade of boughs above the grave of Marina’s dear housekeeper, Anna Pimenovna Nepraslinov (1797-1883)” (399.02-04), who also features only this once in the novel.

It may be relevant that Praslin is the second largest island in the Seychelles (and close to a smaller island called Cousin), named in 1768 after the French diplomat César Gabriel de Choiseul, the first Duke of Praslin (1712-1785); perhaps this could link to the toponymic allusions in the name of the Tobaks (Tobago) and the Vinelanders (Vineland).

253.02-04: The dizzy chasm . . . , that awful “wonder of life” with its extravagant jumble of geological faults: Cf. Nabokov’s essay “The Lermontov Mirage”: “A geological transverse section of the most prosaic of towns may show the fabulous reptile and the fossil fern fantastically woven into its foundation” (*The Russian Review*, 1:1 (November 1941), 31-39, pp. 32-33).

253.05: a dotted line of humdrum encounters: Cf. 252.25: Marina's memory as "a stereotype or tear-sheet."

253.05-06: "poor old" Demon (all her pillow mates being retired with that title): Cf. 223.27-29: "an old friend of the family (as Marina's former lovers were known), Baron Klim Avidov."

253.09-11: or once in Lincoln Park, indicating an indigo-buttocked ape with his cane and not saluting her, according to the rules of the *beau monde*, because he was with a courtesan: Oddly echoes a scene evoked in Pt. 1 Ch. 5, on Van's first arrival in Ardis, where Van recalls how ten years previously "'Aunt' Marina had swooped upon him in a public park where there were pheasants in a big cage. She . . . told him that if his father wished she would replace his mother and that you could not feed the birds without Lady Amherst's permission, or so he understood" (37.21-29). In fact the birds are of the species Lady Amherst's Pheasant (*Chrysolophus amherstiae*). A page later, back in the "present" of 1884 at Ardis, "Marina's portrait, a rather good oil by Tresham, . . . showed her wearing the picture hat she had used for the rehearsal of a Hunting Scene ten years ago . . . with a . . . great drooping plume of black-banded silver. . . . nothing in her attire or adornments echoed the dash of her riding crop in the picture" (38.22-39.01). In between these eerily connected passages (Tresham is of course "Amherst" spelled backwards, and the feather described is from a Lady Amherst's Pheasant), Marina says to Van, in the first of her theater digressions: "I loved to identify myself with famous . . . beauties—Lincoln's second wife" (38.08-09).

253.09: Lincoln Park: On earth, Lincoln Park is the largest public park in Chicago, on the north side of the city, on the shore of Lake Michigan. Established in 1860, it was renamed after Abraham Lincoln in 1865, after his death. In addition to a Nature Museum, a History Museum, parklands and beaches, there is a Lincoln Park Zoo, one of the oldest in the US, founded in 1868.

253.09-10: indigo-buttocked ape: The mandrill, *Mandrillus sphinx*, the most brightly colored primate. Both males and females have brightly colored genital and anal areas, red, pink, blue, scarlet, and purple, brightest of all in dominant males.

253.11: courtesan: MOTIF: *whore*.

253.13: stale melodrama: Cf. 251.05-06, "melodramatic make-up," for other references to the melodrama of her affair with Demon.

253.14-15: her three-year-long period of hectically spaced love-meetings with Demon: Cf. 250.33-34: “Marina’s three-year affair with Demon.”

253.15: A *Torrid Affair*: MOTIF: *torrid affair*.

253.16: passion in palaces: Presumably “palaces” is italicized to be pronounced in the French way (with a slight stress on the second syllable, and its long *a*), indicating a *hôtel de luxe*, like the Hôtel Montreux-Palace in which the Nabokovs lived from 1961, before, during and after the writing of *Ada*.

253.16-17: his Utter Devotion: The capitals ironically echo his exact words and the force with which he proclaimed his feelings to her.

253.18: Blue Trains: Cf., perhaps, *SM* 141: “The then great and glamorous Nord-Express (it was never the same after World War One when its elegant brown became a nouveau-riche blue), consisting solely of such international cars and running but twice a week, connected St. Petersburg with Paris.”

253.18-20: tears . . . leaving their tiger-marks on the drapery of dreams: Cf. 123.08-09: “and tears in a silly dream; but the tiger of happiness fairly leaped into being.”

253.20-21: especially when dampness and dark affect one with fever: Cf. Marina after the dinner: “I’ve grown allergic to damp and darkness”(262.25-26).

253.21-22: And the shadow of retribution on the backwall (with ridiculous legal innuendoes): Retribution for what? Demon’s retribution against *her*? Surely not. His retribution, in the form of duels, against her lovers? Legal retribution for her substituting newborn Van for Aqua’s still-born child?

253.21: backwall: As one word, now used for curved display walls at conferences and exhibitions. Although W2, W3 and OED do not list “backwall” as one word, it may mean here (especially given Marina’s theatricality, and “All this was mere scenery, easily packed,” in the next sentence) a theatrical backdrop.

253.22-23: mere scenery, easily packed, labeled “Hell” and freighted away: Cf. “For seven years, after she had dismissed her life with her husband, a successfully achieved corpse, as irrelevant, . . . Van’s mother” (450.26-29).

MOTIF: *hell*.

253.24-31: some reminder would come . . . doing what? . . . when?: Some reminder of the dangerous consequences of her affair with Demon, and especially of her substituting Van for Aqua’s lost

babe: especially, as we know, from Van and Ada's acting as much more than cousins. Cf. 237.23-30n for other lists of questions in *Ada*. MOTIF: *incest*.

253.24-25: in the trickwork closeup of two left hands: Notice the camera imagery.

253.26: Marina could no longer recall: Cf. her poor memory in action at 65.21-22: ("I don't remember when. It does not matter now") and the general discussion of her thin memory at 252.21-26.

253.26-31: could no longer recall (though only four years had elapsed!)—playing à quatre mains?—no, neither took piano lessons—casting bunny-shadows on a wall?—closer, warmer . . . measuring something? But what? Climbing a tree? The polished trunk of a tree? But where, when?: À quatre mains: Fr. "for four hands." The main source of the memory Marina cannot retrieve comes from the end of Pt. 1 Ch. 5, as Van and Ada head upstairs together on Van's first night at Ardis in 1884: "Presently, as Marina had promised, the two children went upstairs. 'Why do stairs creak so desperately, when two children go upstairs,' she thought, looking up at the balustrade along which two left hands progressed with strikingly similar flips and glides like siblings taking their first dancing lesson. 'After all, we were twin sisters; everybody knows that.' The same slow heave, she in front, he behind, took them over the last two steps, and the staircase was silent again. 'Old-fashioned qualms,' said Marina" (39.31-40.06). Note the question Marina poses herself in the original scene, prefiguring the questions she bombards herself with in trying to recall the scene four years later; the left hands are imagined not as playing a piano but as "siblings taking their first dancing lesson"; they are flipping and gliding on the polished wood of the balustrade. She does not know of their climbing the shattal tree and their fortunate fall (94.01-20).

Why does Marina think "casting bunny-shadows on a wall" is "closer, warmer?"

Cf. also "he clattered, in Lucette's wake, down the cataract of the narrow staircase, *katrakatra* (*quatre à quatre*). Please, children, not *katrakatra* (Marina)" (386.01-03).

MOTIF: *memory test; shattal tree*.

253.31-254.03: Someday, she mused, one's past must be put in order. Retouched, retaken. . . . before death with its clapstick closes the scene: Van imagines actress Marina imagining restoring her memories as re-editing a film. Cf. Marina's "Because if it is a flashback . . ." (201.04).

254.02: definite guarantees obtained: That there would be no further memory loss? No repercussions from her past?

254.09-10: pirozhki—peer-rush-KEY, thus pronounced: W3, *piroshki*, “small pastry turnovers stuffed with a savory filling.” Cf. *Gift* 42: “He bought some piroshki (one with meat, another with cabbage, a third with tapioca, a fourth with rice . . .)”; *BS* 225: “Gorged with . . . rich local food (wrongly accented *piróshki*. . . .)”

254.12: bread-crumbed sander: W2: *sander*, “var. of zander”; *zander*, “A pike perch (*Sander*, syn. *Lucioperca*, *lucioperca*), of central Europe, allied to the walleyed pike.” Wikipedia (accessed 24 October 2013): “**Zander** (*Sander lucioperca*, syn. *Stizostedion lucioperca*) is a species of fish from freshwater and brackish habitats in western Eurasia. It is closely related to perch. Zander are often called **pike-perch** as they resemble the pike with their elongated body and head, and the perch with their spiny dorsal fin. Zander are not, as is commonly believed, a pike and perch hybrid. . . . The zander is considered one of the most valuable food fishes native to Europe. It is esteemed for its light, firm but tender meat with few bones and a delicate flavor.”

254.12-13: hazel-hen (ryabchiki): Wikipedia, accessed 24 October 2013: “The **Hazel Grouse** or **Hazel Hen** (*Tetrastes bonasia*) is one of the smaller members of the grouse family of birds. It is a sedentary species, breeding across northern Eurasia.” See also: 256.27: “*geli-notte*”; 256.29-30: “The roast hazel-hen . . . accompanied by preserved lingonberries”; 258.29-30: “Peterson’s Grouse, *Tetrastes windriverensis*.” Cf. also 46.16, “*grevol* [as Spanish for], hazel hen.”

Cf. *SM* 286: “Bunin . . . was puzzled by my irresponsiveness to the hazel grouse of which I had had enough in my childhood.”

D. Barton Johnson notes: “One of *Ada*’s most memorable scenes is Demon’s visit to Ardis where he enjoys a family dinner with Marina and their children, Van and Ada (254-62). Much is made of the *pièce de résistance*, roast hazel-hen, a favorite of Demon. Changes on the bird’s names are rung in five languages. The name is first introduced in an earlier scene. At dinner with a monolingual Spaniard, Ada can summon up only a few words, for her vocabulary is limited to items from ‘ornithological guides’: *grevol* ‘hazel-hen’ and *paloma* ‘pigeon’ (46). The menu for the gala family dinner features the Russian *ryabchik* (254).” (Johnson 2000: 175)

254.13-14: that special asparagus (bezukhanka) which does not produce Proust’s After-effect, as cookbooks say: *Bezukhanka* means “earless.” Although in Pt. 1 Ch. 1 Van has compared the after-effect of

reading Proust to “a roll-wave of surfeit and a rasp of gravely heart-burn” (9.26-27), he refers here specifically to the effect eating asparagus has on the smell of one’s urine, long noticed but never so lyrically described as in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. In the “Combray” section of *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann’s Way*), the narrator describes the asparagus his family ate almost every night one summer in terms of “des irisations qui ne sont pas de la terre. Il me semblait que ces nuances célestes trahissaient les délicieuses créatures qui s’étaient amusées à se métamorphoser en légumes et qui, à travers le déguisement de leur chair comestible et ferme, laissaient apercevoir en ces couleurs naissantes d’aurore, en ces ébauches d’arc-en-ciel, en cette extinction de soirs bleus, cette essence précieuse que je reconnaissais encore quand, toute la nuit qui suivait un dîner où j’en avais mangé, elles jouaient, dans leurs farces poétiques et grossières comme une féerie de Shakespeare, à changer mon pot de chambre en un vase de parfum” (“rainbow effects which are not of this earth. It seemed to me that these celestial shades betrayed the delightful creatures who had amused themselves by being metamorphosed into vegetables and who, through the disguise of their firm, edible flesh, allowed one to perceive in these nascent colors of dawn, in these sketched rainbows, in this extinction of blue evenings, this precious essence that I would recognise again when, all night after I had eaten them, they played, lyrical and gross in their trickery like the fairies in Shakespeare, at changing my chamberpot into an urn of perfume,” Pléiade edition, 1954, I, 121).

J.E. Rivers observes that the allusion to Proust “takes on a special resonance when we realize that this dinner at Ardis is filled with other, more significant kinds of Proustian after-effects. One of the most important of these is the description of the reaction of Demon and Marina when they meet again many years after their love has died. Their meeting poses, in miniature, the essential question of *Ada*, which is also the essential question of *A la recherche*: How can the destructive action of time be halted or reversed?” “Proust, Nabokov, and *Ada*,” in Phyllis A. Roth, ed., *Critical Essays on Vladimir Nabokov* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 134-57, p. 146).

Cf. *PF* 162, where Kinbote calls *A la recherche du temps perdu* “a huge, ghoulish fairy tale, an asparagus dream” (n. to l. 181).

254.18: de vos domestiques: Fr., “of your servants.”

254.18-34: vos domestiques . . . some kind of *odishka* (shortness of breath. . . a rhythmic pumping pant. . . poor Jones is not at all asthmatic: Appears to continue the after-echo of Proust. Three pages

after the asparagus effects described above, the narrator records: “Françoise trouvait pour servir sa volonté permanente de rendre la maison intenable à tout domestique, des ruses si savantes et si impitoyables que, bien des années plus tard, nous apprîmes que si cet été-là nous avions mangé presque tous les jours des asperges, c’était parce que leur odeur donnait à la pauvre fille de cuisine chargée de les éplucher des crises d’asthme d’une telle violence qu’elle fut obligée de finir par s’en aller” (“Françoise found, to serve her permanent wish to render the house unbearable for any servant, ruses so cunning and pitiless that many years later we learned that if we ate asparagus almost every day that summer, it was because their smell gave the poor kitchen girl who had to peel them attacks of asthma so violent that she had to leave,” *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Pléiade edition, 1954, I, 124).

254.18-19: switching to Russian: So that the servant (Jones) cannot hear. Jones would presumably not have understood French either, but Bouteillan is still in attendance.

255.20: *chelovek*: Russ., “man, person.”

255.24-27: not the point. He pants. . . . depressing. . . . a rhythmic pumping pant. . . . made my soup ripple: The Kyoto Reading Circle draws attention to the *p* alliteration.

254.32: The Veen wit, the Veen wit: Cf. Ada on Van as narrator, “The wit of the Veens (says Ada in a marginal note) knows no bounds” (224.11-12); Van, as narrator, on his own conversational flourish: “Once a Veen, always a Veen” (368.34).

255.01-03: eager to please. He’s as healthy as a bull and has rowed me from Ardisville to Ladore and back, and enjoyed it, many times this summer: Sexually active and quick to flit from partner to partner though she is, Marina usually seems to prefer her male partners to be from the *beau monde* or the acting world. Nevertheless, in this garden of delights, given Ada’s escapades with Van and others on the Ladore river, and the emphasis here on physical health involving a male and a female by themselves, and Jones’s enjoyment, we can strongly suspect the footman did more than row for Marina, especially as the one other mention of Ardisville emphasizes Van and Ada’s physical and sexual energy: “They visited the fair at Ardisville. . . . They made love—mostly in glens and gullies. To the average physiologist, the energy of those two youngsters might have seemed abnormal” (139.14-21).

255.03: *ne pīkhtīte*: *Darkbloom*: “Russ., do not wheeze.”

255.04-05: can't tell Kim, the kitchen boy, not to take photographs on the sly: MOTIF: *Kim's photography*.

255.06: otherwise an adorable, gentle, honest boy: MOTIF: *adore*.

255.06-08: nor can I tell my little French maid to stop getting invitations . . . to the most exclusive *bals masqués* in Ladore: Blanche: "not Marina's poor French—it was our little goose Blanche" (114.14-15). MOTIF: *Cinderella*.

255.08: *bals masqués*: Fr., "masked balls." Cf. 293.27-29, Blanche reporting on Ada's affair with Philip Rack: "Perhaps because he made songs for her, a very pretty one was once played at a big public ball at the Ladore Casino, it went . . ."; 401.08: "'For masked balls (*bals masqués*),' murmured Van."

255.12: I'm a dirty young man: Though he referred to himself not long before as "an aging man with shoe-shined hair" (240.10).

255.13-14: what other good white wine do we have: In response to Demon's complaint at 254.18.

255.17-19: Now about rowing—you mentioned rowing. . . . Do you know that *moi, qui vous parle*, was a Rowing Blue in 1858?: *Moi, qui vous parle*, Fr. "I myself," "yours truly" (in the colloquial sense of referring to oneself in speech or writing). Rather a change of subject, or an odd return: Jones rowing Marina on the Ladore in a clapboard dinghy bears little relation to Demon's competitive rowing.

255.19-20: a Rowing Blue . . . Van prefers football, but he's only a College Blue: Nabokov himself was "only" a college blue in football (soccer) at the Terran equivalent of Chose (Trinity College, Cambridge), not a university blue.

255.21-22: tennis—not lawn tennis, of course, a game for parsons, but 'court tennis': "Tennis. Two games bearing the name tennis are closely connected by origins but are widely different. One, 'lawn tennis,' may be regarded as the descendant of the other, which is sometimes termed 'royal tennis, 'real tennis' or simply 'tennis' in England but is called 'court tennis' in the U.S." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1972 ed., 21: 844). W2: *tennis*, "1. An ancient and complicated game played with a ball, which is struck with a racket (in early times, with the palm of the hand) in an enclosed court, usually a covered building, of peculiar construction, there being used in play, besides a specially marked out floor with a net crossing it, the main walls, lower inner walls with a sloping roof (penthouse), various openings, as the *dedans*, grille, and winning gallery, a projection in the main wall called the *tambour*, etc.;

d—now often called specifically *court tennis*. 2. Short for LAWN TENNIS.”

Cf. *Glory* 107: “the old royal game of court tennis”; *Pnin* 53: “It was a ‘very fancy’ school—she said this in English—the boys played a kind of indoor tennis with their hands, between walls.”

Nabokov, a keen lawn tennis player and even a tennis coach in his twenties, seems to have been suspicious of the snob value of “court tennis.”

255.23: You still beat me at fencing, but I’m the better shot: Cf. Demon’s fencing duel at 14.27-15.12; Van setting out “for a bit of shooting practice” at Ardis in 1884 (96.04); Van’s pistol duel in Pt. 1 Ch.42, as a surrogate for the duel he could have had with Percy (Pt. 1 Ch. 38-40); Van’s toying “with the idea of challenging Mr. Medlar (who, he hoped, would choose swords)”—this, after Van’s being wounded in the 1888 duel—to a duel at dawn [for a condescending and ill-informed review of his *Letters from Terra*]. . . he fenced with a French coach twice a week” (344.28-31); 401.16: “I can still fence” (after his being wounded in a pistol duel); 571.26-27: “He could still click foils at sixty.”

255.24: sudak: Russ., sander or zander: see 254.12.

255.26-27: the nearest thing, wall-eyed pike, or “dory”: Wikipedia (accessed 24 October 2013), “**Walleye** (*Sander vitreus*, formerly *Stizostedion vitreum*) is a freshwater perciform fish native to most of Canada and to the northern United States. It is a North American close relative of the European pikeperch.” Marina also has to substitute a North American hazel hen for the European: see 256.29-30.

255.27: or “dory”: Dory is a name usually applied to one of a number of kinds of marine rather than freshwater fish; perhaps influenced here by the Ladore. MOTIF: *dor(e)*; *Ladore*.

255.27: Tartar sauce: W2: “A sauce consisting of mayonnaise dressing with chopped green herbs, pickles, olives, and capers, often served with fish.”

255.29-30: Lord Byron’s Hock. “This redeems Our Lady’s Tears: Apart from the superiority of this “hock” (Hochheimer, see next n.) to Dan’s choice of white wine, Stan Kelley-Bootle notes the pun on “to hock” as a verb, meaning “to pawn”: “You pawn/hock diverse objects at the pawn/hock-shop, depositing them as security for short-term cash loans. Later your goods are REDEEMED = returned to you, by paying back the loan plus, of course, an exorbitant interest. It was a regular weekly feature of working-class ‘cash-trickle management’ in

my Liverpool youth: Paid Friday; Broke Monday; Pawn Tuesday; Redeem Friday. Failure to redeem on time means you relinquish your goods, which then go on sale in the pawn-shop window” (Nabokv-L, 3 April 2013). The pun, unmissable once seen, has been all the better concealed because of the aura of snobbishness and untold wealth that surrounds Baron Demon Veen and is reinforced here with “Lord” Byron and Our Lady (even if her “Ladyship” is of a religious rather than an aristocratic provenance), all of which keeps the pawnshop well away in most readers’ minds from the “hock”-“redeem” pairing.

255.29: Lord Byron’s Hock: Wikipedia (accessed 24 October, 2013): “**Hock** is a British term for German white wine; sometimes it refers to white wine from the Rhine region and sometimes to all German white wine. It is short for the obsolete word ‘hockamore,’ which is an alteration of ‘Hochheimer,’ derived from the name of the town of Hochheim am Main in Germany. The term seems to have been in use in the 17th century, initially for white wines from the middle Rhine, but in the 18th century it came to be used for any German white wine sold in Britain.” Hock and soda-water (in modern terms a “spritzer”) was one of Byron’s favorite drinks. As Abdel Bouazza noted (Nabokv-L, February 2013), see for instance *Don Juan* II.180:

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you’ll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water. (ll. 1433-40
of the poem)

Aleksey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 3 February 3 2013) this mention in Byron’s *The Waltz* (1813):

Imperial Waltz! Imported from the Rhine
(Famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine),
Long be thine import from all duty free,
And hock itself be less esteem’d than thee;
In some few qualities alike—for hock
Improves our cellar—*thou* our living stock.

The head to Hock belongs—thy subtler art
Intoxicates alone the heedless heart:
Through the full veins thy gentler poison swims,
And wakes to Wantonness the willing limbs. (ll. 29-38)

Byron also mentions hock in “The Blues: A Literary Eclogue” (1821), a satire on bluestockings, Eclogue 2, where Inkel says (ll. 156-57): “Then at two hours past midnight we all meet again, / For the sciences, sandwiches, hock, and champagne!”

255.30: Our Lady’s Tears: As Jansy Mello and Jorio Dauster suggest (Nabokv-L, 8 April 2009 and 12 February 2013), *Our Lady’s Tears* may combine the sweet wine *Lacrima Christi* (“tear of Christ,” “Our Lord’s Tears,” as it were), grown on the slopes of Vesuvius, and named after “an old myth that Christ, crying over Lucifer’s fall from heaven, cried his tears on the land and gave divine inspiration to the vines that grew there” (Wikipedia, accessed 24 October 2013), and *Liebfraumilch* (“Our Lady’s Milk,” as it were), a German semi-sweet white wine, mostly for export, whose name means “Beloved Lady’s Milk,” after wine originally from the vineyards of the *Liebfrauenkirche* or Church of Our Lady in Worms. Neither wine is of high quality, and would certainly merit the disdain of a wine connoisseur like Demon.

255.30: Our Lady’s Tears: Cf. 371.14: “*Our Laddies*”?

255.33-34: the juniper vodka stuff: Cf. 243.28: “her husband should stop swilling tittery.”

256.01-02: Pat Lane on the Fourth Avenue side: In Manhattan. Defocalizes Park Avenue (which in Earth’s Manhattan *becomes* Fourth Avenue below East 14th Street), by way of another thoroughfare lined with wealth, Park Lane in London’s Mayfair, with perhaps a hint of “patrician lane” (especially given “Pat Rishin” at 224.15). Cf. also “Mad Avenue,” 243.30, which Demon mentions when telling the same story.

256.03: town car . . . primordial petrol two-seater . . . with the tiller: Again, defamiliarizes “town house.” MOTIF: *technology*.

256.05: the whole contraption began to shake down: Dan’s mishaps with modes of transport are legion: his missing the morning train (79.18); “As usually happened with Dan’s most carefully worked-out plans, something misfired” (236.15-16).

256.10: Hardpan’s: W2: “*Chiefly U.S.* 1. A cemented or compacted layer in soils. . . . 2. Hard unbroken ground; . . . also, the lowest level; rock bottom.”

256.12: art adviser, Mr. Aix: Aix-en-Provence became “a favorite sojourn for painters” (Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer) after Paul Cézanne set up his studio there. Bodenstein 7.11 suggests a pun on “Mr. X.”

256.13: for a few thousand dollars from a gaming friend of Demon’s: MOTIF: *Demon-gambler*.

256.14: fake Correggios: Antonio Allegri, called Correggio (1494-1534), the most important Renaissance painter of the school of Parma.

256.16-17: half a million which Demon considered henceforth as a loan his cousin should certainly refund him: Cf. 241.28-29: “would cost hardly more than a couple of million minus what Cousin Dan owes me.”

256.17-18: if sanity counted for something on this gemel planet: “Gemel”: W2: “Coupled; paired; twin.” Cf. the association of the notion of the twin planet Terra with insanity, especially in Pt. 1 Ch. 3 (e.g. 20.27-29) and in Pt. 2 Ch. 2.

256.20: ever since his last illness: “that little stroke he had,” 243.29-30.

256.21: she, busybody Bess: *Proffer*: “‘Bes’ is the Russian for ‘devil,’ ‘demon.’” She remains with him, milking him, as it were, to the end, four and a half years hence: Van explains that her name means “‘fiend’ in Russian” and calls her “his buxom but otherwise disgusting nurse . . . the old whore” (435.18-21). MOTIF: *Bess; Demon; devil*.

256.21-23: whom Dan had asked on a memorable occasion to help him get “something nice for a half-Russian child interested in biology”: The pre-injured doll Ada is given and recoils from on her twelfth birthday, 84.16-29.

256.22-23: half-Russian child: Although Marina is decidedly Russian, Dan is much less so: “Directions in Russian or Bulgarian made no sense because they were not in the modern Roman, but in the old Cyrillitsa, a nightmare alphabet which Dan had never been able to master” (84.20-22).

256.24: Vous me comblez: *Darkbloom*: “you overwhelm me with kindness.”

256.24-25: in reference to the burgundy: He tasted “Lord Byron’s Hock” with delight on the previous page, 255.29-30; now he is already sipping (or he has he merely been brought) a burgundy, presumably the Château Latour d’Estoc he had ordered at 242.33-34.

256.25: pravda: *Darkbloom*: “Russ., it’s true.” Demon presumably switches to Russian, after switching back to English from the French in which he addressed Bouteillan, as he thinks of his Russian maternal grandfather, the father of Countess Irina Garin.

256.25: my maternal grandfather: Apparently a Count Garin (see previous n.), otherwise unidentified.

256.27: gelinotte: *Darkbloom*: “hazel-hen.” See 254.12-13 and 258.29-30 and Johnson at 254.12-13n.

256.29-31: The roast hazel-hen . . . accompanied by preserved lingonberries: Cf. *Glory* 24: “during supper at the station (hazel hen with lingonberry sauce).”

256.29-30: The roast hazel-hen (or rather its New World representative, locally called ‘mountain grouse’): W2: “a European woodland grouse (*Tetrastes bonasia*) related to the American ruffed grouse” (*Bonasa umbellus*). See 254.12-13 and n. and 258.29-30. Cf. *EO* 3:9-13’s discussion (re *cheryomuha-racemosa*) of taxonomic terms, local terms, and translation; VN also cites a mention of “hazel grouse” in a discarded variant of *EO*, at *EO* 2:75. MOTIF: *transatlantic doubling*.

256.30-31: locally called “mountain grouse” . . . locally called “mountain cranberries”: Cf. *PF* 184: “Incidentally, the popular nomenclatures of American animals reflects the simple utilitarian minds of ignorant pioneers and has not yet acquired the patina of European faunal names.” MOTIF: *patois*.

256.31: lingonberries (locally called “mountain cranberries”): W2, *lingonberry*, “The mountain cranberry” (under which the full definition is given). Cf. *EO* 2:324-26: “lingonberry: *Brusnika* is *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* Linn., the red bilberry—the ‘red whorts’ of northern England, the *lingon* of Sweden, the *Preisselbeere* of Germany, and the *airelle ponctuée* of French botanists—which grows in northern pine forests and in the mountains. It is also called ‘cowberry’ and ‘windberry,’ but so are some of its congeners. In Scotland it goes under the names of ‘common cranberry’ and ‘lingberry,’ both of which are misleading since it has nothing to do either with the true cranberry, *Oxycoccus oxycoccus* or *palustris* (the Russian *klyukva*), or with the capsules of ‘ling,’ heather, *Calluna*. In America it is termed ‘mountain cranberry’ (e.g., by Thoreau in *The Maine Woods*, 1864) and ‘lowbush cranberry’ (by Canadian fishermen), which leads to hopeless confusion with American forms of true cranberry, *Oxycoccus*. Dictionaries, and the harmful drudges who use them to translate Russian authors, confuse the lingonberry with its blue-fruit ally, *Vaccinium myrtillus* Linn. (bilberry

proper, whortleberry, the ‘hurts’ or ‘roundels azure’ of heraldry; Russ. *chernika*); and I notice that Turgenev lets Viardot get away with the ridiculous ‘cassis,’ black currant! The lingonberry is popular in Russia as are the bilberry, the cranberry, the raspberry (*malina*), the wild and cultivated strawberry (*zemlyanika*), and the wild and cultivated hautbois or green strawberry (*klubnika*—often confused by provincial Russians with the ordinary garden strawberry, *sadovaya zemlyanika*, *viktoriya*, etc.) . . . I expect some acknowledgment for all this information from future translators of Russian classics.”

256.34: *La fève de Diane*: Fr., “Diana’s bean”: after Diana, the Roman goddess of hunting. Diana as the goddess of hunting plays a motif in association with the Enchanted Hunters in *Lolita*: see BB, *Stalking Nabokov*, ch. 23. The Kyoto Reading Circle notes the allusion also to *la fève du roi*, “a broad bean (*fève*) hidden in *la galette des rois* (‘the cake of the kings’), a cake celebrating the Epiphany [6 January]. Tradition holds that the cake is ‘to draw the kings’ to the Epiphany. The person who finds the trinket in their slice becomes the king for the day and will have to offer the next cake. In 1870 the beans were replaced by various figurines of porcelain. These days many of them are made of plastic. Various fèves can be seen at: <http://fevemania.exblog.jp/i18/2/>”

257.01: How is the car situation: Cf. Van to Demon: “Your new car sounds wonderful” (238.31).

257.03: Rosely: After two distinguished English car makes, Rolls-Royce, founded in 1906, the supreme name in stately luxury cars, and Wolseley, founded in 1901, which “initially made a full range topped by large luxury cars and dominated the market in the Edwardian era” (Wikipedia, accessed 25 October 2013). When Nabokov was a child his family had two cars, a Benz and a Wolseley. He recalls being driven to school: “I would ascertain which of our two cars, the Benz or the Wolseley, was there to take me to school. The first, a gray landaulet . . . was the older one. Its lines had seemed positively dynamic in comparison with those of the insipid, noseless and noiseless, electric coupé that had preceded it; but, in its turn, it acquired an old-fashioned, top-heavy look, with a sadly shrunken bonnet, as soon as the comparatively long, black English limousine came to share its garage. To get the newer car was to start the day zestfully. . . . Later, sometime in 1917, soon after my father resigned from Kerenski’s cabinet, Tsiganov decided—notwithstanding my father’s energetic protests—to save the powerful Wolseley car from possible confiscation by

dismantling it and distributing its parts over hiding places known only to him” (*SM* 182-83).

257.04-06: Silentium with a sidecar . . . could not, because of the war, though what connection exists between wars and motorcycles is a mystery: Silentium, Latin for “Silence; hence a room, as in a library, where silence is imposed” (W2). Nabokov, whose hearing was overacute (VN to Danny Halperin, 13 November 1974, VNA), said in an interview “I would outlaw the diabolical roar of motorcycles” (*SO* 150). Perhaps on Antiterra some motorcycles are indeed equipped, like guns, with silencers?

What connection between wars and motorcycles? Perhaps: machismo, noise, power?

Despite the war, Greg Erminin has managed to obtain a new Silentium, 268.08. The link between motorcycles and Antiterra’s Crimean War may invite readers to imagine the Charge of the Light Brigade on motorcycles.

Cf. Van meeting Ada at Forest Fork in 1886: “He rented a motorcycle, a venerable machine . . . “ (179.26-28).

MOTIF: *technology*.

257.07-10: “Ada and I, we manage, we ride, we bike, we even jikker.” “I wonder . . . why I’m reminded all at once of . . . blushing Irène”: Ada could be blushing because she recalls the sexual romps she and Van have had after car, bike and jikker rides, or because the mention of the war brings to mind Percy de Prey, whom she knows has enlisted for the war, or because, despite the war, Percy has a new steel-grey convertible (270.32).

257. 07-08: we even jikker: Cf. 44.27-34: “jikkers were banned . . . ; but four years later Van who loved that sport bribed a local mechanic to clean the thing . . . and many a summer day would they spend, his Ada and he. . . . “

257.09-10: “I wonder,” said sly Demon, “why I’m reminded all at once of . . . blushing Irène”: Demon seems hypersensitive to Ada’s readiness to blush, as at 246.10-11, where he quoted Coppée in one wrong guess about Ada that nevertheless was right about one of her other lovers, and here has guessed more accurately that the connection between the war and Percy de Prey (who is seeing much of Ada, Percy’s mother has told him, 242.10-11) is on her mind.

257.10: our great Canadian’s: Cf. 246.17: “Our great Coppée.” Coppée, whom Demon is about to quote again, is French on Earth, though Canadian here on Antiterra, where Mlle Larivière is also a

Canadian equivalent of the French writer Maupassant. MOTIF: *transatlantic doubling*.

257.10-12: lines about blushing Irène: “Le feu si délicat de la virginité / Qui something sur son front”: About blushing Irène de Grandfief: see 246.12-14n, 246.12n. *Darkbloom*: “the so delicate fire of virginity / that on her brow . . . “ Although the lines purport to be to be from “La Veillée,” they are Nabokov’s invention (although the phrase “*sur son front*” (“on her brow”) does occur in Coppée’s poem.

257.14-18: “where and how can I obtain the kind of old roomy limousine with an old professional chauffeur that Praskovia, for instance, has had for years?” “Impossible, my dear . . . “: At Ada’s birthday picnic in 1884, “Marina came in a red motorcar of an early ‘runabout’ type, operated by the butler very warily as if it were some kind of fancy corkscrew” (79.03-05).

Praskovia de Prey (cf. “Prascovie de Prey,” 242.16, introduced as vouching for the close relationship of Ada and her son Percy): one of the de Preys surfaces explicitly here, in a context where Percy de Prey has been implicit, and his sleek, much-admired “steel-grey convertible” (270.32) at Ada’s birthday picnic in the next chapter outdoes Ada’s mother’s gig (277.07) and especially Van’s carlessness.

257.18: in heaven or on Terra: Versus the earthly phrase “in heaven or on earth.” MOTIF: *Terra*.

257.19: what would my silent love like for her birthday: Since Ada has not responded to his comment on her blushing—so as not to compound her embarrassment, presumably. But Demon’s phrasing reinforces the link with the Silentium that will be ridden by one of her admirers to her birthday picnic (268.08-10: “Greg, who had left his splendid new black Silentium motorcycle in the forest ride”), after the foreglimpse of the sleek Percy de Prey car that *he* will drive to the picnic (see 257.14-18n. above). Note the caressive tenderness in Demon’s voice, rather more than that of the uncle he is supposed merely to be. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

257.19-21: her birthday? It’s next Saturday, *po razschyotu po moemu* (by my reckoning): *Darkbloom*: “an allusion to Famusov (in Griboedov’s *Gore ot uma*) calculating the pregnancy of a lady friend.” *Proffer*: “Quoted from Famusov in Griboedov’s *Woe from Wit*, Act II, Scene 1, ll. 30-31. To be precise, Famusov mentions a recent widow who has not yet had a baby, but he reckons that she will give birth and that he will be at the christening. A hint at the matter of Ada’s birthday and parentage.” Karlinsky, *DBDV* 113n13: “The often overlooked

implication of the passage is that Famusov has to have been responsible for the pregnancy of the doctor's widow. In *Ada* (p. 257) Demon Veen subtly asserts that he is the true father of Ada by citing the same Griboyedov quotation." MOTIF: *family relationship*.

257.21: Une rivière de diamants: Fr., "a river of diamonds": a diamond necklace, as Van had brought to Ardis for Ada (187.02-03) and tore apart on watching Ada tolerate Percy de Prey's familiarities, 189.32-34. Cf. Demon's extravagance on Marina's giving birth to Van, sending her 99 orchids (7.33), and most recently "the jewels he had brought" for his "very expensive, and very faithless, and altogether adorable young Créole" (239.18-22). MOTIF: *diamonds; necklace; La Parure; La Rivière de diamants*.

257.22: Protestuyu: *Darkbloom*: "Russ., I protest."

257.22: seriozno: *Darkbloom*: "Russ., seriously."

257.23-24: I object to your giving her kvaka sesva . . . , Dan and I will take care of all that: Marina is trying to maintain the fiction that she and Dan, rather than she and Demon, are Ada's parents. Note that Demon's offer to buy Ada a diamond necklace occurs within an interrupted offer to provide Van with a car, 257.01-30. MOTIF: *family relationship*.

257.23: kvaka sesva (quoi que ce soit): *Darkbloom*: "whatever it might be." A comical Russian pronunciation of the French. MOTIF: *Marina's Russian French*.

257.25-27: very deftly showed the tip of her tongue to Van who had been on the look-out for her conditional reaction to "diamonds": Because of his having bought her a diamond necklace, torn it up, and promised to mend it (193.34-194.02). See 257.21n. above. MOTIF: *diamond*.

257.28: Van asked, "Provided what?": Returning to Demon's "You can ship mine [the Roseley] to England, provided—" (257.13), before Marina's interruption.

257.30: George's Garage, Ranta Road: Demon's reminiscence of his own years at Chose (and cf. "*The Ranter* . . . the Rantariver Club" during Van's time at Chose, 181.01-05). Notice, beside the sound-play in "George's Garage" itself, that its initials spell "Gee-gee" or horse, ironic for a motorcar garage (and cf. "only gee-gees and sugar daddies," 179.01-02, and "Van's teacher of history, 'Jeejee' Jones," 38.04-05).

257.31-32: Ada, you'll be jikking alone soon. . . . I'm going to have Mascodagama round out his vacation in Paris: Demon picks up on 257.07-08: "Ada and I we manage, . . . we even jikker"; he calls Van

Mascodagama here after his recalling Chose via “Ranta Road” in the previous line. Cf. Demon’s earlier “Oh let’s spend a month together in Paris or London before the Michaelmas term!” (239.02-03). Despite Van’s fleeing Ardis, getting wounded in Kalugano, and spending a month at Cordula de Prey’s in Manhattan, he *does* spend “a fortnight in Paris before the next term at Chose” (324.26-27). MOTIF: *Mascodagama*.

257.33: *Qui something sur son front, en accuse la beauté: Darkbloom:* “brings out its beauty.” Demon resumes and continues the quotation from the Antiterranean version of Coppée’s “La Veillée” at 257.12 because Ada has again blushed at Demon’s comment that she’ll “be jikking alone soon”—perhaps also because she knows that not only will she not be making love with Van, she will also not have Percy at hand, since he will be fighting in the Crimea.

258.01-05: Who does not harbour. . . . Who, in the terror and solitude of a long night—: Parody of nineteenth-century novelistic narration. Cf. the other lists of questions noted at 237.23-30n. Retrospectively, it can be seen, despite the parody, to sum up Van’s sense of solitude after Demon orders Ada and him to remain apart, in Pt. 2 Chs. 10-11. MOTIF: *novel*.

258.04-06: Who, in the terror and solitude of a long night— “**What was that?**”: As the Kyoto Reading Circle notes, Van’s questions as narrator break off, as if Marina is responding to them (although they will not be written until the 1960s) in 1888, as if she can overhear what Van will one day write.

258.06: What was that?: Not sheet lightning, as Van suggests, but as Demon suspects, “a photographer’s flash” (258.11-12)—from Kim Beauharnais’s camera, peering through the window from the garden, 258.14-16.

258.06: certicle storms: Darkbloom: “anagram of ‘electric.’” To avoid the Antiterranean ban on electricity (which obviously cannot extend to lightning storms) and even on mentioning it. MOTIF: *electricity*.

258.07: Antiamberians: Cf. “amber” or “lammer” as a euphemistic periphrasis for “electricity” on Antiterra: 23.12, “the banning of an unmentionable ‘lammer.’” MOTIF: *amber; electricity*.

258.09-18: Sheet lightning aiming a camera at the harmless, gay family group. . . Nobody was taking pictures except . . . the unmentionable god of thunder: Cf. *SM* 40: “heat lightning taking pictures of a distant line of trees in the night”; *LS* 26: “thunder, lightning printing reflections on wall.”

258.11-16: photographer's flash. . . . white-faced boy flanked by two gaping handmaids . . . aiming a camera at the harmless, gay family group: Kim Beauharnais

with Blanche and another maid (not French, who has not yet returned from Kaluga (236.02)). The phrasing highlights the ironies: they are not *officially* a “family group,” but are in fact, and Kim knows this (cf. 6.24-25, “according to Kim, the kitchen boy, as will be understood later,” and “your father, who, according to Blanche, is also mine,” 8.32), and will use it for the purposes of blackmail (Pt. 2 Ch.7).

Cf. the Night of the Burning Barn, another July night when summer lightning has in fact set fire to the barn, 117.11-15: “three shadowy forms, two men . . . and a child or dwarf. . . . the smaller one walking à *reculons* as if taking pictures.”

MOTIF: *family relationship*.

258.14: From under the anxious magnolias: A mock-pathetic fallacy, as if the magnolias fear being struck by lightning. MOTIF: *under tree*.

258.15: two gaping handmaids: Cf. 271.24-25: “two pretty gossips form a dangerous team.”

258.17: only a nocturnal mirage, not usual in July: Cf. the nocturnal mirage Van sees from the library window, on the Night of the Burning Barn, when he thinks he sees Ada outside “right there in the inky shrubbery” (116.28), but she is actually behind him, reflected in the window.

258.18: Perun, the unmentionable god of thunder: *EO* 2:192: “Perun, who is the Slavic Jove.” *Proffer*: “the Russian god of thunder.”

Cf. the unmentionability of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible, and similar prohibitions in other religions; unmentionable here on Antiterra because of the way the “L disaster” has made electricity taboo: 23.11-12, “the banning of an unmentionable ‘lammer.’”

258.18-22: thunder . . . a doomed herdsman: Cf. 409.16-18: “Herdsman, spared by thunderbolts on remote hillsides, used their huge ‘moaning horns’ as ear trumpets to catch the lilt of Ladore.”

258.29: Might I have another helping: For Ada’s unusual and “invincible appetite” not just for sex, but for food, cf. 155.09-18.

258.29-30: Peterson’s Grouse, *Tetrastes bonasia windriverensis*: *Darkbloom*: “Latin name of the imaginary ‘Peterson’s Grouse’ from Wind River Range, Wyo.” Cf. *SO* 322, describing the locations of a recent season of butterfly hunting: “Western Wyoming: . . . immediately east of Dubois along the (well-named) Wind River.” Cf. Johnson 2000:

175-76: “The name ‘Peterson’s Grouse’ may be imaginary but the *Te[tr]astes bonasia* is not. It is the common European ‘hazel hen,’ a species of grouse, which, incidentally, is not found in the Americas. Only the last part of its name, *windriverensis*, . . . is imaginary. Here Nabokov is commemorating a 1952 butterfly collecting trip to Wyoming where Ruffed Grouse (*bonasia* [actually *bonasa*] *umbellus*) are common. . . . Nabokov has here created a new race of grouse combining the European hazel-hen with a Wyoming race. The ‘Peterson’s Grouse’ is indeed imaginary but is laden with meanings. Most obviously, it is a tribute to Roger Tory Peterson, the originator of the modern standard field guide. . . . Many of the avian species in *Ada* share coronal adornments such as crests, tufts, and ruffs, although such are relatively rare among birds.”

Roger Tory Peterson (1908-1996), naturalist and ornithologist: “In 1934 he published his seminal [*A Field*] *Guide to the Birds [of Eastern and Central North America]*, the first modern field guide, which sold out its first printing of 2,000 copies in one week, and subsequently went through 6 editions. . . . He developed the Peterson Identification System, and is known for the clarity of both his illustrations of field guides and his delineation of relevant field marks. . . . Paul R. Ehrlich, in *The Birder’s Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds* (Fireside, 1988), said this about Peterson: ‘In this century, no one has done more to promote an interest in living creatures than Roger Tory Peterson, the inventor of the modern field guide’” (Wikipedia, accessed October 26, 2013).

Nabokov reviewed Alexander B. Klots’s *A Field Guide to the Butterflies of North America, East of the Great Plains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), part of the Peterson Field Guides series, for the *New York Times Book Review*, (“Yesterday’s Caterpillar,” June 3, 1951; repr. in *N’sBs* 475-76) and was proud of the book’s references to his own work as a lepidopterist. Alfred Appel, Jr. recalls: “While I was visiting him in 1966, he took from the shelf his copy of Alexander B. Klots’s standard work, *A Field Guide to the Butterflies* (1951), and, opening it, pointed to the first sentence of the section on ‘*Genus Lycaides Scudder: The Orange Margined Blues*,’ which reads: ‘The recent work of Nabokov has entirely rearranged the classification of this genus’ (p. 164). ‘That’s real fame,’ said the author of *Lolita*. ‘That means more than anything a literary critic could say’ (*Annotated Lolita*, 327-28).

Cf. the other references to the hazel hen, in various languages: 46.18 (“*grevol*, hazel hen”), on another night when Dan cannot make it to Ardis for a discussion with a professional; 254.12-13 (“hazel-hen (*ryabchiki*)”; 256.27 (“*gelinotte*”); 256.29-30 (“The roast hazel hen (or rather its New World representative, locally called ‘mountain grouse’)”).

Cf. “says Pierrot in Peterson’s version” (282.01-02)?

MOTIF: *transatlantic doubling*.

258.31-259.03: diminutive cowbell of bronze . . . muffling the tongue of memory, examined the bell; but it was not the one that had once stood on a bed-tray in a dim room of Dr. Lapiner’s chalet; was not even of Swiss make: When he muffles the tongue of memory, Demon holds the bell’s tongue so as not to make it ring, but also remembers not to ask Marina did it come from her Swiss sojourn in Dr. Lapiner’s “rented chalet” (7.11), with its “walled alpine garden” (7.25-26) that served to screen pregnant but unmarried Marina from prying eyes.

258.31-32: Demon placed his palm on the back of Ada’s hand and asked her to pass him the oddly evocative object: Cf. 515.28-30, where Van feels the urge “to insult Yuzlik for having placed his hand on Ada’s when asking her to pass him the butter two or three courses ago.”

259.03-05: merely one of those sweet-sounding translations . . . lookup the original: MOTIF: *translation*.

259.06-07: “the honor one had made to it”: A translation of the French idiom (and quite likely Bouteillan’s remark), “*l’honneur qu’on lui a fait*.” Cf. Littré, s.v. *honneur*, 7: “Familièrement. Faire honneur à un repas, y bien manger” (“*Familiarly: Do honour to a meal, eat it heartily*”).

259.08: incongruous but highly palatable bit of saucisson d’Arles: “Incongruous,” since Ada had wanted more hazel hen. *Saucisson d’Arles*, a specialty of Arles since 1655, a sausage classically consisting of lean donkey meat, pork and beef, with pork fat, salt and spices. The greyish-red cylinder, especially as a testament to Ada’s appetite, adds to the connotations of fellatio in her ingesting the asparagus stalks in the next sentence.

259.09-14: asperges en branches . . . voluptuous ally of the prim lily of the valley: *Asperges en branches*: asparagus stalks served whole. “Asparagus, a large genus of the lily family (Liliaceae). . . . Perhaps the best-known asparagus is the garden asparagus (*A. officinalis*, especially variety *atilis*)” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed.). “Lily of the valley

(*Convallaria majalis*), a beautiful plant of the lily family (Liliaceae), native to woods in some parts of England, Europe, northern Asia. . . . It is widely cultivated for its dainty, white, nodding, fragrant flowers” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed.). Wikipedia, s.v. *asparagus* (accessed 26 October 2013): “It was once classified in the lily family, like its *Allium* cousins, onions and garlic, but the Liliaceae have been split and the onion-like plants are now in the family Amaryllidaceae and asparagus in the Asparagaceae. *Asparagus officinalis* is native to most of Europe, northern Africa and western Asia.”

Lara Delage-Toriel observes (“Some Foodnotes to Nabokov’s Work,” *Nabokov Upside Down*, ed. Brian Boyd and Marijeta Bozovic, forthcoming) that the asparagus and the flower “are personified in such a way that one may easily identify the asparagus, ‘the voluptuous ally,’ with Demon and ‘the prim lily of the valley’ with his young daughter” (whom we know to be anything but prim, but whom Van has assured Demon “is a serious young lady. She has no beaux,” 245.04-05).

Cf. 254.13-14: “that special asparagus (*bezukhanka*) which does not produce Proust’s After-effect.”

259.10-15: It almost awed one to see the pleasure with which she and Demon distorted their shiny-lipped mouths in exactly the same way . . . holding the shaft with an identical bunching of the fingers: MOTIF: family resemblance.

259.14-18: holding the shaft with an identical bunching of the fingers, not unlike the reformed “sign of the cross” for protesting against which (a ridiculous little schism measuring an inch or so from thumb to index) so many Russians had been burnt by other Russians: With the first two fingers joined with the thumb, held at the point (rather than, as in the old ritual, two fingers, index finger straight up, middle finger slightly bent). “In Russia, until the reforms of Patriarch Nikon in the 17th century, it was customary to make the sign of the cross with two fingers (symbolising the dual nature of Christ). The enforcement of the three-finger sign was one of the reasons for the schism with the Old Believers whose congregations continue to use the two-finger sign of the cross” (Wikipedia, s.v. *sign of the cross*, accessed 26 October 2013). “Nikon (Nikita Minin) (1605-1681), Russian patriarch and the leader of the Reform movement that caused the schism in the Russian Orthodox Church . . . became patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (1652). Nikon accepted the highest post in the Russian church only on the condition that he should receive full authority in matters of dogma and ritual. . . . He now undertook a thorough revision of Russian

books and rituals in accord with their Greek models to bring about unity in the whole Orthodox Church. . . . he now carried out several reforms of his own: he . . . replaced the two-fingered manner of crossing with the three-fingered one. . . . Though all the changes introduced by Nikon affected only the outward forms of religion, some of which were not even very old, the population and much of the clergy resisted him from the beginning. . . . This was the origin of the *Raskol* or great schism within the Orthodox Church. . . . [A council of 1666 exiled Nikon but] retained, however, the reforms he had introduced and confirmed the excommunication of those who had opposed them and who were henceforth known as Old Ritualists (or Believers)” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed.). Archpriest Avvakum Petrov (1620 or 1621-1682), one of the leaders of the Old Believers and one of Russian’s most distinguished early prose writers (Nabokov taught Avvakum’s autobiography in his survey of Russian literature course at Cornell), was burned at the stake in 1682. Persecution of Old Believers, including both torture and executions, began in 1685 and continued with varying intensity “up to the edict of toleration, April 17, 1905.” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed.).

There may be a connection between the way that Demon and Ada hold the *asperges en branches* (259.09) and the aspergillum as an element of Russian Orthodox ritual (an aspergillum in a quite different form from that of Greek Orthodox or of Roman Catholic or Anglican rites). (See the similar subliminal play on *asperges* and “asperged” suggested in 259.24-25n.)

Cf. 20.33: “the New Believers” (on Antiterra, those who believe in Terra).

Cf. VN on the *Julie* (see 10.16n.) of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he generally did not care for: “Rousseau’s (admirable) footnotes on religious persecution” (*EO* 2:339).

Cf. *A la recherche du temps perdu*, where the narrator comments on Françoise, his aunt’s cook at Combray, who looked after him while he was there: “Elle possédait à l’égard des choses qui peuvent ou ne peuvent pas se faire un code impérieux, abondant, subtil et intransigent sur des distinctions insaisissables ou oiseuses (ce qui lui donnait l’apparence de ces lois antiques qui, à côté de prescriptions féroces comme de massacrer les enfants à la mamelle, défendent avec une délicatesse exagérée de faire bouillir le chevreau dans le lait de sa mère, ou de manger dans un animal le nerf de la cuisse)” (“She had a code for things that could or could not be done that was imperious, abundant,

subtle and unyielding about distinctions ungraspable or insignificant (which made it look like those ancient laws which, side by side with fierce ordinances like the massacre of infants at the breast, prohibited with exaggerated delicacy seething a kid in his mother's milk or eating the sinew of the thigh)," I. 28-29).

259.18-19: on the banks of the Great Lake of Slaves: No such lake in Russia, the largest country of Slavs, but in part an Antiterranean reflection of Canada's Great Slave Lake, in Northwest Territories and named after the First Nation people, the Slaves or Slaveys, part of the Dene group, and in part a reflection of the forced labor Stalin (about to appear in the next sentence of *Ada* but one) used to build the White Sea-Baltic Canal, in 1931-33, via Lakes Vygozero, Onega and Ladoga (the largest lake in Europe). 126,000 Gulag inmates were used, and between 12,000 and 25,000 died.

VN would have known the etymology of English *slav*: "The English word Slav is derived from the Middle English word *sclave*, which was borrowed from Medieval Latin *sclavus* or *slavus*, itself a borrowing and Byzantine Greek σκλάβος *sklábos* 'slave,' which was in turn apparently derived from a misunderstanding of the Slavic autonym (denoting a speaker of their own languages)" (Wikipedia, s.v. *Slavs*, accessed October 26, 2013).

VN wrote in a letter to the editor in *Esquire*, June 1961 (p. 10), responding to an August 1960 article by Helen Lawrenson, "The Man Who Scandalized the World": "let me quote this incredible passage: 'He [VN] . . . of course, feels that in the good old days of the Czar, "a freedom-loving Russian had more freedom than under Lenin," without, however, specifying whether he meant freedom-loving aristocrats or freedom-loving serfs.' Irony, of course, is all right, but when starved by ignorance it chokes on its own tail; for surely any schoolgirl should know that no serfs existed in Russia since 1861, one year before the liberation of slaves in this country, and all lovers of freedom certainly realize that it was Lenin who restored serfdom in Russia."

259.19: his tutor's: Cf. "his chaste, angelic Russian tutor, Andrey Andreevich Aksakov," 149.12. Here, as at 171.05-08, Van's tutor has a keen interest in Pushkin.

259.20-22: Semyon Afanasievich Vengerov, . . . already a celebrated Pushkinist (1855-1954): Genuine, and "the preeminent literary historian of Imperial Russia" (Wikipedia, accessed 26 October 2013), but he died in 1920. He "edited the grand Brockhaus-Efron

edition of Pushkin's works (1907–16) in 6 large quarto volumes; D. S. Mirsky refers to this edition as ‘a monument of infinite industry and infinite bad taste’. . . . In [*The Sound*] of *Time*, Osip Mandelstam claimed that Vengerov had ‘understood nothing in Russian literature and studied Pushkin as a professional task’. For Vengerov, the greatest merit of Russian literature was its essential didacticism” (Wikipedia, accessed 26 October 2013).

Nabokov refers to Vengerov in *Pnin*, where Pnin at last identifies a memory: “Of course! Ophelia's death! *Hamlet!* In good old Andrey Kroneberg's Russian translation, 1844. . . . But where to check properly? Alas, “*Gamlet*” *Vil'yama Shekspira* . . . was not represented in Waindell College Library, and whenever you were reduced to look up something in the English version, you never found this or that beautiful, noble, sonorous line that you remembered all your life from Kroneberg's text in Vengerov's splendid edition” (*Pnin* 79).

“Pushkinist”: Vengerov edited the first three volumes of the journal *Pushkinist*, published in Petrograd from 1914; its final volume, edited in 1923 by Nikolay Vasilevich Yakovlev (a friend of VN's in the later 1920s), was dedicated to Vengerov's memory. Since Vengerov died of typhus brought on by hunger in the wake of the Bolshevik coup (see Yuri Lotman, *O sovremennom sostoyanii pushkinistiki / Vospitanie dushi*, St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-St. Petersburg, 2003, pp. 124-25; at <http://vikent.ru/enc/4744/>), Nabokov may have been making an ironic point about his death in letting him live to 1954 (a year after Stalin's death) on Antiterra.

259.24-25 : gourmets tearing ‘plump and live’ oysters out of their ‘cloisters’ in an unfinished canto of *Eugene Onegin*: Proffer: “The plump, live oysters and cloisterers, are in the *Fragments of Onegin's Journey*, XXVI—Nabokov's translation goes

What news of oysters? They have come. O glee!
Off flies gluttonous juveny
to swallow from their shells
the plump, live cloisterers
slightly asperged with lemon. (Volume I, p. 434).

Nabokov has a paragraph on Tolstoy's description of oysters in *Anna Karenina* (Part 1, Chapter 10), in his notes to this stanza.”

(Note the “asperged” in VN's translation, which seems to supply a mental link to the *asperges en branches* earlier in the paragraph (259.09).)

259.25-31: “everyone has his own taste,” as the British writer . . . mistranslates a trite French phrase (*chacun à son goût*) . . . according, of course, to the cattish and prejudiced Guillaume Montparnasse: *Chacun à son goût* means “each to his own taste,” but the writer has made the elementary blunder of translating the French as if it were *chacun a son goût*, “everyone has his own taste.”

Cf. “Monparnasse” (Larivière’s) denunciation of England for its translations of French, 270.17-26.

259.27: goût: corrected from 1969, “gout.”

259.26-28: the British writer Richard Leonhard Churchill . . . his novel: An Antiterranean version of the British statesman Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill (1874-1965), Prime Minister of Great Britain 1940-1945 and 1950-1955. He is named “Richard Leonhard,” in tribute to Sir Winston Churchill’s courageous wartime leadership of Great Britain, after the famously valiant English king Richard I, the Lionheart (1157-1199, king 1189-1199), and called “the British writer” and author of “his novel” in amused reference to Sir Winston Churchill’s winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953—although he was a prolific historian, and won the Nobel especially for his six-volume set *The Second World War*, and had written a novel, *Savrola: A Tale of the Revolution in Laurania* (1899) (its heroine, incidentally, or perhaps not, is called Lucile), and there was an American historical novelist, Winston Churchill (1871-1947). MOTIF: *transatlantic doubling*.

259.28-29: about a certain Crimean Khan once popular . . . “A Great Good Man”: *Darkbloom*: “A Great Good Man: a phrase that Winston Churchill, the British politician, enthusiastically applied to Stalin.”

Churchill called Stalin “that great and good man” in a 1944 letter to his foreign minister, Anthony Eden (cited in Georges André Chevalaz, *The Challenge of Neutrality: Diplomacy and the Defense of Switzerland* [Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001], p. 245).

In a speech in the British House of Commons on November 7, 1945, Churchill declared: “Personally I cannot feel anything but the most lively admiration for this truly great man, the father of his country, the ruler of its destiny in peace and the glorious defender of its life in war” (reported in the *New York Times*, November 8, 1945, p. 4). Nabokov’s poem “O pravivelyakh” (“On Rulers,” 1945), which in its antepenultimate and penultimate lines pairs rhymes for “Stalin” and “Churchill,” as if from the pen of an obsequious poet, “seethes with contempt for those with an awed respect for Stalin or for any of the

other great leaders who have inflicted so much suffering on the world” (VNAY 86).

Stalin here is a “Crimean Khan” partly because the Crimean Khanate, one of the last remnants of the Golden Horde, persisted until 1783 and because Stalin at Yalta in the Crimea, in his famous February 1945 conference (the Yalta or Crimea Conference) with Churchill and American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, agreed to the post-World War II occupation zones in Europe, promising but never intending to make the Soviet zones democratic. Stalin, in a sense, could be seen as setting up a new khanate from the Crimea.

Nabokov also seems to have remembered Churchill’s very different attitude to the Soviet Union and its leader in a speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Convocation in Boston Garden, on March 31, 1949, at the height of the Cold War (and three years after his famous “iron curtain” speech at Fulton, Missouri on 5 March, 1946: cf. 181.11, “Golden Curtain,” and n.): “It is certain that Europe would have been communized like Czechoslovakia and London under bombardment some time ago but for the deterrent of the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States. War is not inevitable. . . . Four or five hundred years ago Europe seemed about to be conquered by the Mongols. Two great battles were fought almost on the same day near Vienna and in Poland. In both of these the chivalry and armed power of Europe was completely shattered by the Asiatic hordes—mounted archers. It seemed that nothing could avert the doom of the famous continent from which modern civilization and culture have spread throughout the world. But at the critical moment something happened—the great Khan died. The succession was vacant and the Mongol armies and their leaders trooped back on their ponies across the 7,000 miles which separated them from their capital in order to choose a successor. They never returned till now” (*New York Times*, 1 April 1949, p. 10).

259.29: politicians,; Textual: corrected from 1969, “politicians.”

259.31-33: Guillaume Monparnasse about whose new celebrity Ada . . . was now telling Demon: Cf. 194.16-32, which introduces this theme (in a paragraph that then segues into Cordula and Percy as the objects of Van’s jealousy).

259.32: reversed corolla: W2, *corolla*: “1. *Bot.* The petals of a flower collectively; the inner perianth, or floral envelope immediately surrounding the sporophylls.” “The reversed corolla” in this metaphor is the flower facing downwards, the fingers and thumb like the upside-down circle of petals.

259.33-34: telling Demon, who was performing the same rite in the same graceful fashion: The theme of Ada's and Demon's matching actions, in holding the asparagus with their fingers in a manner likened to the "sign of the cross" (259.14-15), continues with this additional "rite" with the fingers. MOTIF: *family resemblance*.

260.01-02: an Albany from a crystal box of Turkish cigarettes: "Albany" was a genuine cigarette brand, made in a firm started in the nineteenth century by F.L. Smith in Burlington Gardens, London: see <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/natureplus/community/antarctic-conservation/blog/tags/cigarettes>.

In *Ada* Albany cigarettes are linked with Albania and therefore Turkish cigarettes (and the Crimean War theme): Ada tells Van that Percy "left yesterday for some Greek or Turkish port" (296.14-15).

The Kyoto Reading Circle notes that the reference in the previous paragraph to Churchill, famous for his cigars, may in a sense introduce the smoking theme in the exchange that follows. Nabokov notes the way conversations change and continue themes, and matches the change-and-continuity in another dimension in his narrative.

MOTIF: *Alban-; Turkish tobacco*.

260.02: Turkish cigarettes tipped with red rose petal: Cf., on board the *Tobakoff*, 482.21: "five Rosepetal cigarettes" 483.05-06: "here Lucette returned for her Rosepetals." Percy, the center of the Turkish tobacco motif, brings Ada "a bouquet of longstemmed roses" for her birthday (271.11).

260.04-07: "your father disapproves of your smoking at table." "Oh, it's all right," murmured Demon. "I had Dan in view," explained Marina heavily: MOTIF: *family relationship*.

260.12-17: "I think I'll take an Alibi—I mean an Albany—myself" ". . . some romantic Turk or Albanian met in the woods": Cf. 234.28-33: "Worries? She smelled of tobacco, either because (as she said) she had spent an hour in a compartment for smokers, or had smoked (she added) a cigarette or two herself in the doctor's waiting room, or else because (and this she did not say) her unknown lover was a heavy smoker, his open red mouth full of rolling blue fog." MOTIF: *Alban-; Turkish tobacco*.

260.14: voulu: Darkbloom: "intentional."

260.15: I like a smoke when I go mushrooming: MOTIF: *Ada's botany; boletes*.

260. 20-23: profitrol' . . . cooks in Gavana . . . larger puffs . . . creamier chocolate than the dark and puny "profit rolls" served in

European restaurants: W3, *profiterole*: “[F., fr. *profiter* to profit . . .] a miniature cream puff with sweet or savory filling.” The “puffs” and “rolls” and the hint in Gavana (the Russian transliteration of Havana) of Havana, the capital of the cigar trade, in which tobacco leaves are rolled, seems to continue the “smoking” theme, despite the shift to dessert. *Gavanna* in Russian means Havana tobacco or a Havana cigar.

Cf. 515.23-27: “*sharlott* (not the charlatan ‘*charlotte russe*’ served in most restaurants, but the hot toasty crust, with apple filling, of the authentic castle pie. . . .”

260.24: *chocolat-au-lait*: Fr., “milk chocolate.”

260.27-261.03: All the toilets and waterpipes . . . seized with borborygmic convulsions. . . a long-distance call . . . first bubbling spasm . . . “*A l’eau!*”: MOTIF: *hydro; technology; water*.

260.28: borborygmic: W2: *borborygmus* “[. . . fr. Gr. . . . borboryzein to rumble in the bowels] *Med* = RUMBLING”; “borborygmic *adj.*” Cf. 476.06-07: “old people . . . awaiting with borborygmic fore-bubbles.”

260.29-32: awaiting . . . a certain message from California in response to a torrid letter. . . her passionate impatience: Marina is awaiting a message from Pedro, who “had suddenly left for Rio” (232.06). Cf. 272.22-31: “aerogram. . . Marina’s face gradually assumed an expression of quite indecent youthful beatitude as she scanned the message. . . . ‘Pedro is coming again,’ cried (gurgled, rippled) Marina.”

Cf. “*Torrid Affair*,” 253.15.

260.32: dorophone: MOTIF: *dor(e); dorophone*.

261.01-02: series of swells and contractions rather like a serpent ingesting a field mouse: MOTIF: *snake*.

261.03: Marina . . . “*A l’eau!*”: Fr. “to the water”; homophonic pun on “Allo,” the Russian “Hello” on the telephone. MOTIF: *water*.

261.10: the first half of a gambling night in Ladore: Cf. 241.34-242.01: “Ladore Town has become very honky-tonky, and the gaming is not what it used to be.” MOTIF: *Demon-gambler*.

261.16-29: Norbert von Miller . . . a Baltic Russian . . . you’ve got two Millers mixed up. . . my old friend Norman Miller. . . striking resemblance to Wilfrid Laurier. Norbert . . . a head like a *kegelkugel* . . . an unmentionable blackguard: Despite VN’s denying Alfred Appel, Jr.’s identification (Appel, *Ada*, 183) of Norbert von Miller as Mailer (“My Baltic Baron is totally and emphatically unrelated to Mr. Norman Mailer, the writer,” *SO* 286), this seems in part a comic blend of two prominent twentieth-century American writers, neither of

whom Nabokov liked, Henry Miller, “writer and perennial Bohemian” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed.), who is alluded to at 136.29-30 (“they loathed *le sieur Sade* and Herr Masoch and Heinrich Müller”) and 371.15 (*Clichy Clichés*, a version of Miller’s *Quiet Days in Clichy*, 1951), who did have “a head like a *kegelkugel*”; and novelist, journalist and essayist Norman Mailer (1923-2007), who did resemble the young Wilfrid Laurier. For Nabokov’s dislike of Miller, see: 136.30n; he wrote to his sister that Miller was “*bezdarnaya pokhabschina*” (“talentless obscenity,” 3 August 1950, *Perepiska s sestroy*, 63); “Artistically, the dirtier typewriters try to get, the more conventional and corny their products become, e.g. such novels as *Miller’s Thumb* and *Tailor’s Spasm*” (SO 133; the second is Philip Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint*, via *portnoy*, Russ., “tailor”); in his diary entry for December 21, 1969, he commented: “Henry Miller on TV, ape-like, moron, pronouncing, in his atrocious French, ‘*sage*’ [good, wise] as ‘*singe*’ [monkey]. Retribution!” (VNA). On Mailer: “I detest everything in American life that he stands for.” (Interview with Martha Duffy, “I Have Never Seen a More Lucid, More Lonely, Better Balanced Mad Mind Than Mine,” *Time*, 23 May 1969, pp. 47-51, 49).

261.16-22: Norbert von Miller . . . a Baltic Russian . . . but really *echt deutsch*, though his mother was born Ivanov or Romanov. . . . in Finland or Denmark. I can’t imagine how he got his barony: Cf. 440.23-31: “Norbert von Miller, amateur poet, Russian translator at the Italian Consulate in Geneva. . . . hugely admired wealthy people and, when name-dropping, always qualified such a person as ‘enawmously rich.’” Given the *echt deutsch*, and the “Baltic Russian” (and “in Finland or Denmark”: Lithuania lies between the two) and the “born . . . Romanov,” and his connection with Countess Alp, and the mountain scenery and Aqua’s “skiing at full pulver into a larch stump” (25.28), cf. T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922), ll. 12-17:

Bin gar keine Russin, stamm’ aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
 And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke’s,
 My cousin’s, he took me out on a sled,
 And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
 Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
 In the mountains, there you feel free.

The speaker of this section of Eliot's poem is sometimes identified as Countess Marie Larisch (1858-1940), the niece and confidante of Empress Elisabeth of Austria.

261.16-21: Norbert von Miller . . . does not realize . . . that Dan's wife is me: He certainly does, as Demon responds (261.28-29: "knows perfectly well whom you married"): the "Black Miller" (440.20), he blackmails Demon over Marina's being the true mother of Van, and the substitution of Van for Aqua's child: see 440.20-441.18.

261.18-22: Baltic Russian . . . can't imagine how he got his barony: Cf. "Baron Klim Avidov," 223.28-29, also associated with the theme of snobbishness and aristocratic credentials ("how clever it was to drop the first letter of one's name in order to use it as a *particule*, at the Gritz, in Venezia Rossa," 224.03-05). Cf. *Defense* 177, "Baltic baron."

261.19: echt deutsch: Darkbloom: "Germ., a genuine German."

261.25: Fainley, Fehler and Miller: "Fainley" is a genuine English surname, but perhaps has an overtone of "feign" and "vainly" in this context, although W2 defines *fainly* as "Joyfully, gladly. *Rare*"; *Fehler* is German for "mistake, fault."

261.26-27: physically bears a striking resemblance to Wilfrid Laurier: Sir Henri Charles Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919), known as Wilfrid Laurier, Canadian Liberal Party leader, and Prime Minister of Canada from 1896 to 1911. Cf. 382.34-383.01: "Portrait of Vladimir Christian of Denmark, who, she claims, is the dead spit of her Ivan Giovanovich" Tobak. Cf. also "The Return of Chorb": "Keller, a thickset old German, closely resembling Oom Paul Kruger" (1825-1904, State President of the South African Republic (Transvaal) from 1880, and the face of South African resistance to the British, until he fled the advancing British forces in the Boer War in 1900), (*SoVN* 147); *Despair* 26: "I looked like Amundsen, the Polar explorer."

261.27-28: a head like a kegelkugel: Darkbloom: "Germ., skittleball." Cf. 440.34, describing Norbert von Miller: "round head as bare as a knee."

261.28: lives in Switzerland: Cf. 440.22-441.06: works in Geneva, lives with Countess Alp, the wife of Dr. Lapiner of Ex en Valais, Switzerland, smuggles neonegrine, "found only in the Valais," marries an innkeeper's daughter, and dies on a border trail into Italy.

261.29: an unmentionable blackguard: A long-term blackmailer of Demon, 441.04-05, and a smuggler of "neonegrine" (440.25) which, whatever else it may be, is presumably black. MOTIF: *black*.

261.32: *Partir c'est mourir un peu, et mourir c'est partir un peu trop*: Darkbloom: “to go away is to die a little, and to die is to go away a little too much.” The first phrase is the opening line of “Rondel de l’adieu” (1890), by French poet and song-writer Edmond Haraucourt (1856-1941), which became famous and almost proverbial in France. The next line in the poem is “*C’est mourir à ce qu’on aime*” (“It is to die to what one loves”).

Cf. 234.17-18: “the shortest separation is a kind of training for the Elysian Games.”

261.34: at the Bryant: Cf. Van and Ada’s walking up “to the black ruins of Bryan’s Castle” in Ladore (139.08), which becomes in Mlle Larivière’s *Les Enfants Maudits* “Bryant’s château” (205.16). Presumably the hotel is named in honor of the ruined castle. MOTIF: *Cha-teaubriand*.

261.34: By the way, how’s Lucette?: Demon asks the identical question at 249.13-14, and is not answered at all there.

262.05: “Oh, we had quite a scare”: Lucette “had to undergo a series of ‘tests’ at the Tarus Hospital to settle what caused her weight and temperature to fluctuate so abnormally” (236.06-08).

262.07: be a good scout: Cf. Ada at 226.15: “Pet (addressing Lucette), be a good scout.” Partridge, *Dictionary of Slang*, s.v. *scout, good*: “A good, trustworthy or helpful person: U.S., anglicised, ca. 1920.”

262.08: I did have gloves: Cf. Demon arriving at Riverlane, as remembered by Van on Demon’s arriving at Ardis: “Always gloves” (238.16).

262.10-11: I recall the cold of this flower, which I took from a vase in passing: Cf. 252.34-253.01: “the carnation he had evidently purloined from a vase Blanche had been told to bring from the gallery.” Cf. 32.01-09: “those flowers were artificial . . . always pander so exclusively to the eye instead of also copying the damp fat feel of live petal and leaf. . . . cheated of the sterile texture his fingertips had expected when cool life kissed them with pouting lips.”

262.12-13: discarding with it the shadow of his fugitive urge to plunge both hands in a soft bosom: Blanche’s: she is to Demon “a passing angel” (239.26-27), “a remarkably pretty soubrette” (244.04); he is interested in her appearing at masked balls, and called for that reason “a dirty old man” (255.09-10).

262.18: his key: 221: The Kyoto Reading Circle suggests that this may allude to Sherlock Holmes, of 221b Baker Street, London, given Demon’s pride in his powers of observation and deduction, as at 246.04:

“I’ll show what a diviner I am: your dream is to be a concert pianist!” and his concession “Observation is not always the mother of deduction” (246.08-09), and perhaps the retrospective reasoning in his immediately previous speech: “No. Stay! . . . I left them in the car, because I recall the cold of this flower, which I took from a vase in passing” (262.09-11).

262.21: the slant of Pedro’s narrow, beautiful nostrils: Cf. “Pedro . . . a repulsively handsome, practically naked actor, with . . . lynx nostrils” (197. 06-09).

262.23: in the Russian manner kissed her guest: Cf. 188.25-27: “Marina was gluing cherry-vodka lips . . . with smothered mother-sounds, half-moo, half-moan, of Russian affection.”

262.24-27: forgive me . . . for not going out on the terrace. I’ve grown allergic to damp and darkness: Cf. 253.20-21, of Marina: “especially when dampness and dark affect one with fever.”

262.27: thirty-seven and seven: 37.7° Celsius (=99.86°F); said in the Russian manner.

262.28-29: tapped the barometer next to the door . . . tapped too often to react: As if Marina’s reference to the thermometer readings makes him notice the barometer? Cf. *KQK* 251: “a conservative barometer, also refused to be propitiated either by prayer or knuckleknock”; *Defense* 15-16: “his father would already be rapping with feigned interest on the barometer dial, where the hand always stood at storm.”

262.28-30: the barometer . . . remained standing at a quarter past three: Is the barometer French, confusing *temps* as “weather” and “time”? Or just Antiterran?

262.32: dripping with what Ladore famers called green rain: Cf. 4.14-15, “drizzly and warn, gauzy and green Kaluga”; 230.01, “It was raining. The lawns looked greener.”

263.01-02: in the hollow of the white arm that clasped his neck: The inside of the elbow, presumably, rather than the armpit that Van kisses on Lucette (415.19-26).

263.03-04: Marina . . . waved . . . a spangled shawl: To match the “spangled dress” (247.31) she is wearing.

263.03: tangelo-colored: Darkbloom: “a cross between the tangerine and the pomelo (grapefruit).” First cultivated in 1911, so Darkbloom’s sense he needs to identify it in 1970 is rather surprising.

263.13-14: under the shelter of an indulgent tree: MOTIF: *under tree*.

263.15-17: Tranquilly, innocently, side by side in their separately ordained attitudes, they added a trickle and a gush to the more professional sounds of the rain in the night: Partly (especially given the adverbial precision and the distinction between their different modes) an echo of Stephen and Bloom urinating side by side in the night, and looking back at the house, in Chapter 17 (“Ithaca”) of *Ulysses*:

What visible luminous sign attracted Bloom's, who attracted Stephen's, gaze?

In the second storey (rere) of his (Bloom's) house the light of a paraffin oil lamp with oblique shade projected on a screen of roller blind supplied by Frank O'Hara, window blind, curtain pole and revolving shutter manufacturer, 16 Aungier street.

How did he elucidate the mystery of an invisible attractive person, his wife Marion (Molly) Bloom, denoted by a visible splendid sign, a lamp?

With indirect and direct verbal allusions or affirmations: with subdued affection and admiration: with description: with impediment: with suggestion. . . .

Were they indefinitely inactive?

At Stephen's suggestion, at Bloom's instigation both, first Stephen, then Bloom, in penumbra urinated, their sides contiguous, their organs of micturition reciprocally rendered invisible by manual circumposition, their gazes, first Bloom's, then Stephen's, elevated to the projected luminous and semiluminous shadow.

263.18: the latticed gallery: Cf. 44.01-02: “A latticed gallery looked across its garlanded shoulder”; 589.03-04: “Not the least adornment of the chronicle is the delicacy of pictorial detail: a latticed gallery.”

263.22: And yet I adore him: Cf. Van's “indifference to Marina and his adoration for his father” (237.14). MOTIF: *adore*.

263.27: fal'shivo: Darkbloom: “Russ., false.”

263.28: He tried to ask me . . . : Presumably “How do you get along with Ada?” (243.02-03).

263.29: not a nice family reunion: MOTIF: *family relationship*.

263.32-33: till dee us do part, but we shall never be able to marry: “Till Death us do part,” a phrase from the marriage liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer. “Dee” here also stands in a way for Demon, who will part them for many years, and the *death* of Dan, the announcement of which brings Demon to call on Van and discover he and Ada are living together, and to order them apart (Pt. 2 Chs. 10-11). Cf. Van and Ada, safely ensconced, as they think, in Van’s Manhattan apartment, just before Demon’s arrival to announce Dan’s death: “The only personage they had not reckoned with was the old scoundrel usually portrayed as a skeleton or an angel” (433.06-08).

263.34-264.01: he’s more conventional in his own way than even the law and the social lice: In, for instance, his snobbishness and his eagerness to have Ada married into a family of standing.

264.01-02: One can’t bribe one’s parents: Cf. Demon, issuing his edict of separation to Van: “I have bribed many officials in my wild life but neither you nor I can bribe a whole culture, a whole country” (443.05-07). MOTIF: *family relationship*.

264.02-05: waiting forty, fifty years for them to die is too horrible to imagine— . . . the mere thought of anybody waiting for such a thing is not in our nature, is mean and monstrous: As it turns out, Marina will die in another 12 years, Demon in 17.

Cf. *Don Juan*, Canto I, lxxxiv, ll. 1-3: “And if in the meantime her husband died, / But heaven forbid that such a thought should cross / Her brain, though in a dream!”

264.09-11: two secret agents in an alien country. . . . Spies from Terra?: Cf. 342.03-04: “agents on Terra.”

264.11-15: Spies from Terra? . . . you want to prove it is the same thing: MOTIF: *Terra*.

264.18-22: One of these days . . . I will ask you for a repeat performance. You will sit as you did four years ago . . . gratitude!: Cf. the orchid-painting scenes, 99.11-101.06. MOTIF: *replay*.

264.24-29: “Lights in the rooms were going out. / Breathed fragrantly the rozī. / We sat together in the shade / Of a wide-branched beryozī.” “Yes, ‘birch’ is what leaves the translator in the ‘lurch’ . . . by Konstantin Romanov”:

Darkbloom: “Russ., roses . . . birches.”

A poem without title by Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich Romanov (1858-1915), composed on July 30, 1883, published under his nom-de-plume “K.R.” and set to music by Chaikovsky in 1887, in op. 63, “Shest’ romansov” (“Six romances”).

Uzh gasli v komnatakh ogni . . .
Already lights in the rooms were going out
Blagoukhali rozī . . .
The roses were fragrant
My seli na skam'yu v teni
We sat down on a bench in the shade
Razvesistoy beryozī.
Of a wide-branched birch.

My bili molodi s toboy!
We were young, you and I!
Tak schastlivī mī bili
So happy we were
nas okruzhavsheyu vesnoy,
at the spring surrounding us
tak goryacho lyubili!
so ardently we loved!

Dvurogiy mesyats navodil
The two-horned moon directed
na nas svoyo siyan'ye;
on us its shining;
ya nichego ne govoril,
I said nothing,
boyas' prrvat' molchan'ye...
afraid to interrupt the silence.

Bezmolvno sinikh glaz tvoikh
Wordlessly your blue eyes'
tī opuskala vzorī –
gaze you lowered –
krasnorechivey slov inykh
more eloquent than other words
nemie razgovorī.
these mute conversations.

Chego ne smel poverit' ya,
What I did not dare believe
chto v serdtse tī taila, -

what in your heart you were hiding
vsyo eto pesnya solov'ya
all this a nightingale's song
za nas dogovorila.
finished saying for us.

Although there exist feminine rhymes in English for “roses” (closes, dozes, hoses, noses, poses), nothing in the sense of the first stanza, especially the word “birch,” can match the sound of “roses” to allow an exact rhymed translation. The irony here is that these rhymes, impossible to translate into English, are fatally easy in Russian. Commenting on his own derivative early verse, Nabokov writes: “The hackneyed order of words (short verb or pronoun—long adjective—short noun) engendered the hackneyed disorder of thought, and some such line as *poeta gorestnie gryozī*, translatable and accented as “the poet’s melancholy daydreams,” led fatally to a rhyming line ending in *rozī* (roses) or *beryozī* (birches) or *grozī* (thunderstorms), so that certain emotions were connected with certain surroundings not by a free act of one’s will but by the faded ribbon of tradition” (SM 221).

A little later in the same discussion he writes about his own early verse: “Worst of all were the shameful gleanings from Apuhtin’s and Grand Duke Konstantin’s lyrics of the *tsiganski* type. They used to be persistently pressed upon me by a youngish and rather attractive aunt” (SM 225).

Cf. also, in the story “The Admiralty Spire”: “That upper-class milieu—the fashionable set, if you will . . . had backward tastes, to put it mildly. Chekhov was considered an ‘impressionist,’ the society rhymester Grand-Duke Constantine, a major poet” (SoVN 347).

Grand Duke Konstantin was himself a translator, of Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Musset and Hugo, for example.

Cf. 409.07-11: “Their swains, plucking ballads on their seven-stringed Russian lyres under the racemosa in bloom or in old gardens (while the windows went out one by one in the castle).”

MOTIF: *translation; under tree.*

264.30-31: Just elected president of the Lyaskan Academy of Literature, right?:

Aleksey Sklyarenko notes: “K. R. (Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich Romanov, 1858-1915, the nephew of the tsar Alexandr II, the first cousin of Alexandr III) [w]as . . . elected a Honorary Member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1887 and . . .

appointed its President only in 1889, after about two years of formal membership. Later, he was the initiator of establishing of the belles-lettres section (*razryad izyashchnoy slovesnosti*) in the Academy. Besides him, eight other men . . . elected the first Honorary Members in 1900 are: L. N. Tolstoy, A. A. Potekhin, A. F. Koni, A. M. Zhemchuzhnikov, A. A. Golenishchev-Kutuzov, V. S. Solovyov, A. P. Chekhov and V. G. Korolenko.” (Nabokv-L, 15 November 2002).

MOTIF: *Lyaska*.

264.31-32: Wretched poet and happy husband. Happy husband!: Grand-Duke Konstantin married his second cousin Princess Elisabeth of Saxe-Altenbrug (1865-1927) in 1884. They had nine children. Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra “found KR’s devotion to his family a welcome respite from the playboy lifestyle of many of the other Grand Dukes” (Wikipedia, accessed 28 October 2013). In fact Konstantin was bisexual, and in his diary disapproved whenever he succumbed to his “depraved” attraction to other males.

265.01-02: I really think you should wear something underneath on formal occasions: MOTIF: *pantyless Ada*.

265.08: Memoirs of a Happy Chair: The idea of the happy this or that, associated with a beloved, is a common motif in love poetry, as in Sidney’s “Astrophel and Stella,” sonnet 104, l. 9: “But if by a happy window I do pass” (a window through which Stella used to gaze). Cf. *EO*, Chapter 1, xxxiv:03: “the happy stirrup.” *Memoirs of a . . .* was a title commonly used in pornography, as in the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (the actual title for the 1748 novel by John Cleland, 1709-1789), whose title Nabokov cites in his afterword to *Lolita* (*Lolita* 318).

265.11: Ou comme ça?: Darkbloom: “or like that?”

Afternote

As the one family reunion in *Ada . . . : A Family Chronicle*, Part I Chapter 38 is in a sense the *scène à faire*, the obligatory scene in a story of a given type, and marked out in importance here by its sheer length. In another sense, I.1 was the *scène à faire*, the scene in a story of incestuous love where the lovers discover their true relationship and therefore that their love amounts to incest. But just as that scene overturned the convention by having the lovers discover themselves brother and sister, only to resume their love-making, quite unconcerned, so this dinner scene challenges the notion of the *scène à faire* and the convention of determinism. The family meets, the secrets and who has

access to them remain as before, and Van and Ada once again end the scene by resuming their love-making.

Nabokov was always fiercely anti-deterministic. Deploring the relentlessly inescapable causal chains that he thought vitiated drama and especially tragedy, he wrote in “The Tragedy of Tragedy” that in plays any promises of future developments, “being links in the iron chain of tragic causation, are inevitably kept. The so-called *scène à faire*, the obligatory scene, is not, as most critics seem to think, *one* scene in the play—it is really every *next* scene in the play” (*MUSSR* 335). The dinner scene, the family reunion, places the four core Veens together for what could be a climax, but Nabokov takes care that it leads nowhere: no disclosure occurs, no argument erupts, no inevitable consequence ensues. Yet despite the protracted meal, not a moment is wasted.

The scene lingers over fine (if not overfine) food and drink. Nabokov in an interview commented of himself and his wife: “We do not attach too much importance to food or wine” (interview with James Salter, “An Old Magician Named Nabokov Writes and Lives in Splendid Exile,” *People*, 17 March 1975, 64). Nevertheless he felt food, drink and mealtime rituals and talk, like any other part of the natural and social world, invaluable for a storyteller to observe and reimagine in his own terms, and within the uniquely tinted terms of a particular work.

Lara Delage-Toriel notes that in the context of the rest of Nabokov’s work, “*Ada* is remarkable for the number of meals it features, including breakfasts (I.12, I.20, I.31, II.6, II.10), lunches (I.10, II.7, III.3, III.5), dinners (I.6, I.10, I.38, III.8), evening tea (I.7), high tea (I.14), and birthday picnics (I.13, I.39). Perhaps the most interesting are the lunch in Part I, chapter 10 and the dinner in Part I, chapter 38, both elaborate scenes in which Nabokov highlights the theatrical quality of the meal as social, and more particularly, family ritual” (paper at Nabokov Upside Down conference, University of Auckland, January 2012, forthcoming in *Nabokov Upside Down*, ed. Brian Boyd and Marijeta Bozovic).

Though it does much else, *Ada* also transplants to America and preserves there some of Nabokov’s Russian past. How much so can be seen in the author’s response to Andrew Field’s 1970 questions about family meals in his Russian youth: “Vodka appeared only on the hors-d’oeuvres sidetable, and hors-d’oeuvres appeared only when there were guests. There was always claret and port wine on the dining table, and a furtive boy would find some way to take a forbidden sip of one or the

other. A typical dinner menu would start with a Russian soup or a French potage, invariably accompanied by hot *pirozhki*, fish would follow (trout, sole or zander), the meat course might consist of beef steak or veal, or chicken or game (such as hazel-hen or duck) and then there would be icecream or a soufflet or stewed fruit. My father (a non-smoker but a great lover of good wine) frowned on my smoking and drinking even at fifteen, but my mother was more lenient. See ADA, ch. 38 for other gastronomic items shared by Ardis and Vyra” (unpublished interview with Andrew Field, 6 June 1970). I.38 has “variously flavored *vodochki*” (249) on a tray beside the hors-d’oeuvres table, a Russian soup, *shchi*, with *pirozhki*, zander (here, “sander (*sudak*),” 254), hazel-hen, and, the only slight variation from the routine of his personal past, profiteroles for dessert.

Although *Ada* at times pays homage to Nabokov’s youth, it often does so through the perverse prism of Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights* (see many previous discussions in *AdaOnline* and in Boyd 2011, ch. 25). If *Ada* is “a novel about appetite, mostly sexual, but also literal,” to cite the forenote above, so is Bosch’s *Garden*, from the fatal apple in the paradisaical panel to the lush berries and cherries in the earthly one, to the foul ingestion and excretion in the hell panel. In Bosch’s earthly panel, eating parallels and accompanies sex. At Ardis, where *Ada* has exhibited an insatiable literal as well as sexual appetite, the fare becomes more diverse than in Bosch: the lingonberries come with hazel hen, and arrive only after the sumptuous hors-d’oeuvres (caviar, boletes, *chaudfroids*, *foie gras*, truffles, salmon, ham) and a soup-and-*pirozhki* and then a fish course. The food also becomes even more sexual than in Bosch, in the asparagus that Demon and *Ada* distort “their shiny-lipped mouths in exactly the same way to introduce orally from some heavenly height”; they hold “the shaft with an identical bunching of the fingers” (259) that matches the emphatic repetitions of poses in Bosch’s central panel. But these voluptuous “heavenly” earthly pleasures easily tip or flow, Bosch-like, into the hellish: Veen father and daughter hold the asparagus shafts “with an identical bunching of the fingers, not unlike the reformed ‘sign of the cross’ for protesting against which . . . so many Russians had been burnt by other Russians . . . on the banks of the Great Lake of Slaves” (259). More of that later.

I.38’s dinner scene is part remembered, and realistic (the meals of an old Russian aristocratic home), part reflected through art, and fantastic (the Boschean indulgence and ambivalence), and part literary

homage and reworking. Many writers have rendered dinners and feasts, from Homer and Petronius through Rabelais and Dickens, but none has done so at more length and more often than Proust.

J.E. Rivers observes that the chapter's explicit allusion to Proust's After-effect (254) "takes on a special resonance when we realize that this dinner at Ardis is filled with other, more significant kinds of Proustian after-effects. One of the most important of these is the description of the reaction of Demon and Marina when they meet again many years after their love has died. Their meeting poses, in miniature, the essential question of *Ada*, which is also the essential question of *À la recherche*: How can the destructive action of time be halted or reversed?" ("Proust, Nabokov, and *Ada*," in Phyllis A. Roth, ed., *Critical Essays on Vladimir Nabokov*, Boston: G.K. Hall, 1984, 134-57, p. 146). Marijeta Bozovic, examining intertextuality in Nabokov, cites a three-page long passage from the dinner scene to indicate the "ways that Nabokov manipulates Proust's presence in his text. Nabokov borrows his precursor's style, embellishes and expands on it, and uses it to enchant and snare his reader" (*From Onegin to Ada: Nabokov's Canon*, forthcoming, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2014).

As noted in the Forenote, I.38 provides a more leisurely revisiting of the themes and facts of the Demonically swift exposition in *Ada's* de facto Prologue, Pt. I Chs. 1-3. That too, has its Proustian side, because Nabokov has borrowed the Proustian pattern of love in an older generation (Swan and Odette) which prefigures the main love story (the narrator and Albertine) when he makes Demon and Marina's passion prefigure that of Van and Ada (see Afternote to I.2). Nabokov also adds the considerable complication of incest, of course. In the showpiece of I.38, an extended dinner uniting just the two sets of lovers, a scene quite without precedent in Proust, incest makes the conjunction of the two sets of lovers hyper-Proustian in its entanglements, concealments and undercurrents: one set of lovers from an affair long ended and supposed not known to the other set, the other set still in the complicated throes of their jealousy-troubled passion and knowing that they must at all cost keep it hidden from their parents.

Even in setting up the scene so that Demon, Marina, Van and Ada can all dine just *à quatre* at Ardis, Nabokov signals the chapter's tight links with *Ada's* Prologue. Dan intends to bring a lawyer from Kaluga to Ardis for a discussion with Demon about selling "some 'blue' (peat-bog) land which belonged to both cousins," but "As usually happened with Dan's most carefully worked-out plans, something misfired, the

lawyer could not promise to come till late in the evening, and just before Demon arrived, his cousin *aerogrammed* a message asking Marina to ‘dine Demon’ without waiting for Dan and Miller” (236: italics added). That echoes Pt. 1 Ch. 1, where we learn of Ardis, Dan’s “magnificent manor near Ladore” and of “another estate he had . . . near Luga, comprising, and practically consisting of, that large, oddly rectangular though quite natural body of water which a perch he had once clocked took half an hour to cross diagonally and which he owned jointly with his cousin, a great fisherman in his youth” (5). As previously noted (Afternote to I.1), that strange sentence flow wryly reflects Demon’s fishing in Dan’s marital waters, landing *his* Marina; and it also echoes the next paragraph, which shows Dan setting off on “a triple trip round the globe” to assuage his feelings after Marina rejects his marriage proposal, only for this trip, like his later carefully-worked out plan to meet Demon at Ardis, to be disrupted, in this case with an “*aerocable* from Marina . . . telling him she would marry him upon his return to America” (5: italics added) but not telling him the reason: that she is pregnant by Demon, now married to Aqua.

The next sentence in Pt. 1 Ch. 1 begins Van and Ada’s discovery in Ardis’s attic that they are full brother and sister, the children of Demon and Marina; their rapidity of thought and swiftness of deduction in that scene will be matched by Demon’s rapidity of thought and pride (if not success) in deduction on his visit to Ardis in I.38, as if in proof of his paternity. And just as after discovering their true relationship to Demon and Marina, the children in the attic causally plan to resume love-making at once, right there, so in I.38 after Demon leaves they casually agree to resume love-making at once, right where they are (both are naked in the attic; Ada has been pantyless during the dinner, as Van’s probing hand discovers once Demon drives off). As if to highlight the connection, Ada’s noting in the attic that they “still have an hour before tea” segues into a passage where Van discloses that “In later years he had never been able to reread Proust . . . without a roll-wave of surfeit and a rasp of gravelly heartburn” (9), while in the dinner scene Marina has decided that to accompany the meat course there will be “that special asparagus . . . which does not produce Proust’s After-effect, as the cookbooks say” (254).

In Proust, dinners and parties disclose characters, relationships, and modes of interaction. So too here. In the grand scheme of *Ada* Nabokov needs to make plausible Demon’s “last judgment” on Van and Ada’s

relationship in Pt. II Chs. 10-11, his expelling his incestuous children, seemingly forever, from the paradise of their love for each other. (Demon comes to Manhattan to tell Van about Dan's death—which his drug-speeded brain describes in terms of Bosch's *Last Judgment*, a gross detail from which has haunted Dan for some time before his death—only to find his son and daughter are lovers, and then to issue *his* final judgment on their affair.) Nabokov needs therefore to establish the character of Demon, little seen after the Prologue, since Van's memoir of his love for Ada naturally focuses on his own time at Ardis, where Demon has never been during Van's summer stays. In order to make plausible Van and Ada's obeying Demon's decree, Nabokov also needs to establish the emotional relationship between Demon and Van—so far glimpsed only fleetingly together, given the narrative focus on Ardis—and between Demon and Ada, never previously seen together by Van apart from one blurry childhood memory. The chapter therefore begins with Van greeting and talking to Demon as his father downs his “prebrandial’ brandy” (238), before Ada joins them, and ends with Van and Ada discussing together Demon and the awkward tone of the dinner.

Elsewhere in the novel Van and Demon meet intermittently, affording glimpses of a much more sustained relationship between father and son. Both being male, they share a great deal. Van has inherited from his father, by nature or nurture, a passionately romantic side (directed toward two Veen women, Marina and Ada) and a fiercely jealous side (their jealousy of these women leads to a duel for both), a taste for affairs (with two de Prey women, for instance) and whores and the Villa Venus Club; a gift for rapid thought and speech and retentive memory; a flair for gambling, fencing, shooting, wrestling, and dueling. Iridescent-winged “Raven” Veen becomes the gravity-defying black-cloaked Van-as-Mascodagama.

But I.38, uniquely, shows father and son in sustained intimate interaction. Eagerly anticipating Demon's visit to Ardis, Van voices the intensity of his admiration for his father, while seeing his faults: despite “a tinge of repulsion (the same repulsion he felt in regard to his own immorality)” and his full knowledge of his father's excessive drink, women, and gambling, he vouches that “the older he grew the more firmly he felt that he would give his life for his father, at a moment's notice, with pride and pleasure, in any circumstance imaginable” (237). The second section of the chapter, their meeting, reveals Van's sense of kinship with Demon's hyper and retentive mind, and their shared past

and present: the same high school, the same college, the same tailor, a host of overlapping memories and attitudes and familiar family quips, even in the smallest things (like their amusement at American modes and mores: “D’you want to go to the ‘bathroom’?”; “God save their poor little American tastebuds,” 238).

Unlike Van and his father, Ada and Demon interact together on stage *only* in this chapter. (Apart from Ada’s blurted “*Bozhe moy!*” when, in her peignoir, she sees Demon in the Manhattan apartment she shares with Van, before “darting back into the dusk of the bedroom” (438), we do not see father and daughter together even there, in their most serious confrontation.) Nabokov has to make the most of Demon and Ada together at Ardis as Van watches closely, for the first time, the two people he loves most.

In planning *Ada* Nabokov has posed himself a tricky problem that he perhaps solves less than perfectly: how to make Demon both a demon throughout, a monster of irresponsibility, on the one hand, and in II.10-11 the stern godlike Father invoking what is proper as he expels his children from their private paradise of love. With his passion for ever-younger women already in train, lecherous Demon on arriving at Ardis eyes up Blanche, and has to suppress the urge to plunge his hands down her bosom (in this showing how much he has passed on to Van, who had lusted after Blanche on his first night and morning at Ardis). Compulsive womanizer that he is, Demon also leers at the almost sixteen-year-old Ada, enveloping her, as soon as she enters, “with one arm, holding his glass in the other hand, kissing the girl in the neck, in the hair, burrowing in her sweetness with more than an uncle’s fervor” (245) not just because he *is* more than her uncle, but because he is an incorrigible lecher. “The last time I enjoyed you” are his first words to her (245). Here, in the third section of the chapter, as Ada arrives to join “cousin” and “uncle,” we see Demon’s delight and pride in his daughter, and her rapport with him: their both knowing and being able to recite Coppée, for instance. His pride in her translation of Coppée, nevertheless, finds a very Demonian expression: “He pulled the girl to him . . . and glued himself with thick moist lips to her hot red ear through the rich black strands” (247). After the “perfunctory enthusiasm” of his cry “Marina!” as his former mistress enters, he confides to Ada’s mother at once, with much more feeling, “She’s a *jeune fille fatale*, a pale, heart-breaking beauty” (248).

Yet despite the Demonically unsavory erotic tinge to his appreciation of the daughter he cannot acknowledge, Demon also

presumes to claim an intimacy “more than an uncle’s” (“what would my silent love like for her birthday?,” 257) and a right to advise her, before her mother arrives (“Now to business, my darling. I accept . . . I tolerate . . . I abhor and reject . . .,” 245; “That’s also provincial. You should . . . ,” 246; “Van’s quite right to look after your morals,” 260). And while he does leer at Ada, he never lusts after her. Instead, snobbish socialite that he is, he gets a charge from imagining her well married to someone of the right set. The thought that the son of Countess Praskovia de Prey may be involved with Ada excites him (242), and despite Van’s attempt to deny anything between Ada and Percy, Demon returns to the possibility again, twice invoking Coppée’s Irène de Grandfief and her fiancé headed for war (246, 257). Later Demon will feel the same snobbish excitement and respect for social convention at the interest shown in Ada by Andrey Vinelander or in Cordula by someone from Boston’s elite Backbay area (“I remember Ada’s fiancé telling me—he and young Tobak worked for a while in the same Phoenix bank. Of course. Splendid broad-shouldered, blue-eyed, blond chap. Backbay Tobakovich!” 436).

After Demon’s departure, Ada tells Van that although she too of course noticed there was something off-key about the whole dinner, “yet I adore him. I think he’s quite crazy, and with no place or occupation in life, and far from happy, and philosophically irresponsible—and there is absolutely nobody like him” (263). But the most vivid, memorable and revealing image of Ada’s special relationship with her father occurs in the strangest paragraph in the chapter, showing them both eating asparagus stalks as Van watches on, entranced. Ada’s voluptuary nature, and its debt to Demon, could not be clearer, even if the implications—via the careening, recondite, disturbing references in the rest of the paragraph to religious schism and persecution, slavery, cannibalism and khans—could hardly be, on first glance, more opaque. We will return to it later.

Apart from deploying Demon’s visit for dinner in order to define character and relationships, Nabokov also shows a keen interest here in the sheer flow of conversation, on an occasion when he needs to have four key characters interacting. He famously thought little of fiction that relied heavily on dialogue, but *Ada* has more dialogue than any of his other novels, and the dinner scene of I.38 lasts longer than any other stretch of talk in his fiction. The dialogue, as always in Nabokov’s fiction, remains interspersed with narration that records present events,

past memories and images and ideas unlimited to any specific moment. But despite the high stylization of the scene, a sumptuousness of talk to match the sumptuousness of the fare, Nabokov has acutely observed, and relishes rendering, the unpredictable flow of conversation, as it picks up on shared knowledge or introduces new gossip, lingers over some subjects and shifts rapidly through others, picks up dropped threads, interlards probes, disclosures and concealments, mixes “family quips and bright banalities” (250), familiar routines and unexpected turns. I suspect that Nabokov deliberately tried to propose alternative ways of rendering the course of conversation, to challenge Proust’s handling of dialogue even while he paid homage to it.

Proust of course famously interleaves present and past, immediate experience and memory. So too does Nabokov, and in this chapter in richly Proustian ways. Bozovic notes that “Marina, Demon, and their two biological children dine together, but deceits run between them like fault lines” (Bozovic, forthcoming). While Proust often focuses on the recurrent, as does much of *Ada*, especially in Part I, this dinner shared just by Van and Ada and their parents in I.38 is a one-off occurrence. There is not therefore the rich overlay of patterns within Van and Ada’s overlapping lives at Ardis that has become so familiar in Ardis the Second and that will be present with more force than ever in the next chapter, when Ada’s sixteenth birthday picnic recalls and contrasts with her twelfth. In its place in the dinner scene is another overlay of patterns of the past, but from different eras, and with the shared and the unshared apportioned differently: Van’s meeting his father after separations, as at Riverlane, for instance, or Demon’s favorite dishes, as reconstituted by Marina. The “fault lines” Bozovic refers to reflect that Van and Ada have so much to hide, that patterns of inheritance between Demon and Ada cannot quite be acknowledged, that Marina has forgotten so much (or so Van thinks) of her past with Demon, and that Demon, who *can* remember (“with that special concussing of instant detail that also plagued his children,” 239), has no wish to do so, no sense whatever of any emotional connection to the woman he once loved so passionately.

Bozovic comments that “Demon experiences ‘that complete collapse of the past,’ when the ‘human part of one’s affection’ for an old lover vanishes with ‘the dust of the inhuman passion.’ How similarly Marcel mourns the collapse of his memories, his past selves, and the vanished house of Combray; how exaggeratedly Proustian too is Demon’s ardor—an inhuman or inhumane passion” (Bozovic, forthcoming). Proust’s narrator eavesdrops on others with extraordinary

ease, but Van almost seems to eavesdrop on—or project onto, or extrapolate from speech or perception into—memories in the minds of the father he adores and the mother he recoils from. As he does so, he emphasizes and laments the meagerness of Marina’s memories and Demon’s inner remoteness from his past with Marina and almost jitterily excitable attention to the present and to Ada—or as Van interprets it for him, “the logical impossibility to relate the dubious reality of [Marina in] the present to the unquestionable one of remembrance” (251).

I.38 offers an implicit contrast: on the one hand Van and Ada’s sharing their rich memories of their past from the moment they begin to accumulate, even within Ardis the First, and into Ardis the Second, and all the way unto their deaths, as they revisit together and recount their shared past; on the other Marina’s threadbare and stereotyped memories and Demon’s vivid memories that he no longer wants to share even with his present self, let alone with the virtual stranger sitting at the opposite end of the table. Just as the jealousy that destroyed Demon and Marina’s passionate love in the Prologue threatens to be repeated, over the next few chapters, when rivals disrupt Van’s love for Ada, Demon’s sense of the “complete collapse of the past” (251) in I.38 almost prefigures the sense of physical and emotional distance from Ada that Van intends to maintain after he flees from her infidelities and Ardis.

In a novel as tightly interlinked as *Ada*, a chapter as long as I.38 has many ties with other parts of the book. Most immediate is the looming threat of Percy de Prey. If I.38 pointedly *leads* nowhere in plot terms, it nevertheless *points* to a painful disclosure that cannot be withheld for much longer.

Demon’s love of social (and sexual: “a woman I preyed upon years ago”) connectedness makes him eager to pass on that Countess de Prey “tells me her boy and Ada see a lot of each other, et cetera” (242). Van, for the moment confident, denies that there is any “et cetera, that’s out of the question,” but Demon reintroduces the theme when he cites Coppée’s “La Veillée” (246), with its heroine loyal to a man who has gone off to war (he knows from Praskovia that Percy has enlisted, 245-46), then returns to the poem again (257). In a discussion of a possible car for Van, the interleaving of a Silentium motorcycle, Demon’s reprise of lines supposedly from “La Veillée,” and a mention of the elegant car Praskovia de Prey has, for instance (257), anticipate the Silentium the besotted but unrequited Greg Erminin will bring to Ada’s picnic and the

“steel-gray convertible” that uninvited but not unrequited Percy drives into the glade (270). Although Van has believed Ada’s denial of any relationship with Percy, he still harbors suspicions of her fidelity with an unknown other, and makes an intentional slip, calling the postprandial Albany cigarette that she takes from a box of Turkish cigarettes an Alibi, only for Ada to challenge him: “Please note, everybody, . . . how *voulu* that slip was! I like a smoke when I go mushrooming, but when I’m back, this horrid tease insists I smell of some romantic Turk or Albanian met in the woods” (260). But Percy de Prey also smokes Turkish cigarettes and, when Van confronts her with his knowledge of her infidelity, she declares that his rival has “left yesterday for some Greek or Turkish port” (296)—only for Van to disclose that the rival he had been informed about and was asking about had been Philip Rack, not Percy.

(This leads to the subject of Ada’s blushing embarrassment at being discovered to have left a handkerchief on the piano, which becomes part of Demon’s prurient-paternal probing of her love-life. She does lose handkerchiefs (231), and she has had an affair with Rack, and does not play the piano herself. Her response when Demon comments “there is nothing improper about a hanky dumped on a Bechstein. You don’t have, my love, to blush so warmly. Let me quote for comic relief *Lorsque son fi-ancé fut parti pour la guerre / Irène de Grandfief . . .*” (246) would, within Ada’s usual web of implications, seem to link Rack here to de Prey as another of Ada’s lovers—as indeed he has been. But the affair with Rack ended months before, and he has not been at Ardis for weeks, and the Ardis maids would not leave a handkerchief on a piano all that time. What do I not understand? Or has Nabokov made a slip?)

While Percy poses an almost immediate threat to Van’s happiness with Ada at Ardis, a much longer-term threat to their happiness together lies ahead: Demon’s ban, almost five years hence, on their seeing or communicating with each other, which will darken their lives for almost thirty years. At the start of I.38, meeting Van, Demon declares: “We waste life in separations! We are the fools of fate!” (239)—not yet knowing that he himself will cause Van and Ada to waste, as they can only see it, a long stretch of their life in separation (from 1893 to 1922, in effect).

Demon’s visit in I.38 prepares us for his later driving Van and Ada out of their paradise together, as we see his conventional attitudes to high-society marriages coexisting with his rakehell ways. After he

leaves, Ada points out to Van what was so uncomfortable and false about the dinner: “My love, my love, as if you don’t know! We’ll manage, perhaps, to wear our masks always, till dee do us part, but we shall never be able to marry—while they’re both alive. We simply can’t swing it, because he’s more conventional in his own way than even the law and the social lice” (263-64). “Till dee do us part” contains an irony Ada cannot foresee: her euphemism to avoid “death” can stand for both Demon, who *does* part them, *and* for death, or Dan’s death, since it is to announce Dan’s death that Demon will call on Van in Manhattan, only to find him living with Ada.

In I.38 a curious double report that Demon makes on meeting Dan in Manhattan, first to Van, then to Marina, itself anticipates Dan’s death and Demon’s report on it to Van in Manhattan, and therefore his discovery that his children are lovers. To Van, Demon says, after another mouthful of cognac, that Dan should not drink so much gin. He adds: “I met him in town recently, near Mad Avenue, saw him walking towards me quite normally, but then as he caught sight of me, a block away, the clockwork began slowing down and he stopped—oh, helplessly! before he reached me. That’s hardly normal” (243). To Marina he volunteers: “I was telling Van a moment ago . . . about your husband. My dear, he overdoes the juniper vodka stuff, he’s getting, in fact, a mite fuzzy and odd. The other day I chanced to walk through Pat Lane on the Fourth Avenue side, and there he was coming, at quite a spin, in his horrid town car, that primordial petrol two-seater he’s got, with the tiller. Well, he saw me, from quite a distance, and waved, and the whole contraption began to shake down, and finally stopped half a block away, and there he sat trying to budge it with little jerks of his haunches, you know, like a child who can’t get his tricycle unstuck, and as I walked up to him I had the definite impression that it was his mechanism that had stalled, not the Hardpan’s” (255-56). The paragraph concludes with Van noting that Demon does not mention to Marina the fake Correggios Dan had recently bought, while Marina refrains from telling Demon about the young hospital nurse, Bess, Dan has “been monkeying with” (256).

All these details anticipate II.10, where Demon calls on Van to tell him Dan has died. Dan had developed shortly before his death a passion “for the paintings, and faked paintings, associated with the name of Hieronymus Bosch” (433). As Demon tells Van when he finds him, “According to Bess (which is ‘fiend’ in Russian), Dan’s buxom but otherwise disgusting nurse . . . he had been complaining for some time,

even before Ada's sudden departure, that a devil combining the characteristics of a frog and a rodent desired to straddle him and ride him to the torture house of eternity" (435): a detail from Bosch's *Last Judgment*. In the curious doubled encounters with Dan that Demon reports in I.38, the incidents seem similar, the locations *could* be the same (on earth, Madison Avenue and Park Lane, along with Lexington Avenue, occupy the expected place of Fourth Avenue in midtown Manhattan and the upper East side), but in the first incident Dan is walking, in the second driving. The incidents seem oddly replayed in II.10. There Demon notices "—just as he was about to cross Alexis Avenue, an ancient but insignificant acquaintance, Mrs. Arfour, advancing towards him" (433). Here is a third variation on the New York thoroughfares between Third and Fifth Avenues (Antiterranean "Alexis" for the actual Lexington here in II.10, like "Mad" for Madison and "Pat" for Park in I.38), and a match for Demon's encounters with Dan's stalling mechanism. Stopping to talk to Mrs. Arfour, Demon could have learned from her where Van now lives in Manhattan. But unlike Dan, whose mechanism he reports almost stalled near this spot, Demon is propelled faster than ever by "a very exotic and potent pill to face the day's ordeal" (433) and slips past Mrs. Arfour. "But precisely in regard to such a contingency, Fate had prepared an alternate continuation. As Demon rushed (or, in terms of the pill, sauntered) by the Monaco, . . . it occurred to him that his son (whom he had been unable to 'contact') might still be living with dull little Cordula de Prey in the penthouse apartment of that fine building" (434). He ascends, finds Van, and fuelled by the pill, launches into the circumstantial account of Dan's death, then an even more elaborate disquisition on Bosch, that keeps him there until Ada emerges in a pink peignoir and with a "*Bozhe moy!*" ("My God!", 438) gives the game away. In I.38 Demon's gossip about encountering Dan's mechanism stalling anticipates both Dan's death, five years later, and his own anything-but-stalled mechanism reporting on Dan's death with such volubility that Ada will emerge, disclose to him that she and Van are living as lovers, and precipitate his last judgment on them, decreeing they must part.

Even more pointed as forewarnings of Demon's ban on Van and Ada's affair lurk in what we can later discern as signs of blackmail. They begin with the playful references to Kim Beauharnais's photographing the family group at the dinner table from out in the garden. Even if he is, as Marina says, "a regular snap-shooting fiend," he seems to her "otherwise an adorable, gentle, honest boy" (255), but

his indefatigable snapshots around Ardis will later prove the basis of his attempted blackmail. At the dinner scene, a flash outside bothers Marina. Van suggests “Sheet lightning” but Demon guesses it is “a photographer’s flash,” and indeed Ada looks out at “a white-faced boy flanked by two gaping handmaids” (258). This closely echoes the first unofficial photographs Kim has been known to take, in 1884, on the Night of the Burning Barn, when “remote sheet lightning” (115) comes closer to Ardis until it strikes a barn and sets it alight. While others rush to watch the fire, Van and Ada join one another on the library divan—and generate their own first sexual fire. As later at the 1888 dinner scene, Kim photographs them from out in the dark garden (and perhaps, with the help of the ladder, from much closer to the library window). On this earlier occasion too Ada looks out to see “three shadowy forms—two men, one with a ladder, and a child or dwarf—circumspectly moving across the gray lawn. They saw the candle-lit window and decamped, the smaller one walking *à reculons* as if taking pictures (117). On the night of the 1888 dinner, Van reports Ada’s seeing “a white-faced boy flanked by two gaping handmaids . . . aiming a camera at the harmless, gay family group.” “But,” he continues, “it was a nocturnal mirage, not unusual in July, nobody was taking pictures except Perun, the unmentionable god of thunder” (258). We trust Ada’s perception rather than Van’s deflection: it surely *is* Kim taking pictures, flanked by the gossipy maids. But the mention of “Perun, the unmentionable god of thunder” evokes both the punitive thundergods of European myth and the unmentionable Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible, who expels Adam and Eve from Eden, and prefigures Demon as the implacable Father expelling Van and Ada from their Manhattan paradise.

Kim may be photographing the Ardis the Second dinner, but his blackmail threats lie several years in the future. Yet the blackmail theme will be subtly sounded again at the dinner, a couple of pages after the flash outside, when Marina refers to “that dislikable Norbert von Miller,” whom she has confused with Dan’s lawyer, Norman Miller. As Demon notes, the two men are quite distinct and Norbert von Miller “an unmentionable blackguard” (261). Over four years later, after he discovers Van and Ada together in Manhattan, Demon prepares to forbid his children from seeing one another by starting to tell Van about his true relationship with Ada, and especially about Marina’s having substituted newborn Van for Aqua’s still-born boy. Half aside, he mutters “Some other time I’ll tell you about the Black Miller; not now;

too trivial” (440)—but Van in a long parenthesis both explains how Norbert von Miller learned what Marina had done, and how he blackmailed Demon for almost twenty years. In the same “useful parenthesis” Van more obliquely reports on Kim, as a less successful blackmailer, “who would have bothered Ada again had he not been carried out of his cottage with one eye hanging on a red thread and the other drowned in its blood” (441).

The need for secrecy secretly shapes the dinner scene. Marina and Demon have much to conceal from their children, Van and Ada even more to keep from their parents. No wonder the evening seems “faintly off-key” (263) even to the passionate siblings who already know what their parents think they have hidden from them. But the advance introduction of the blackmailers, Miller, in action already, and Kim, yet to make his move, compounds the discord, and anticipates the end of Part II, when Demon discovers Van and Ada’s secret and moves from blackmail victim to judging father, ordering his children to part, while Van brutally ensures Kim at least cannot disclose their secret to a wider world.

Lucette is away from Ardis throughout this long chapter, and pointedly so. Demon does ask “By the way, how’s Lucette?” (249) (a polite inquiry from a family member: she is, after all, having “a series of ‘tests’ at the Tarus Hospital,” 236), only for an answer to be forestalled by Bouteillan’s grandly flinging open the double door for the Veens to go into dinner. He asks the same question, in the very same words, after the last sip of dinner, and when Marina begins to answer, “Oh, we had quite a scare, quite a nasty scare. But now, apparently—” (262), Demon himself interrupts to ask after his gloves.

Lucette had also been pointedly physically absent, and yet thematically powerfully present, at the one dinnertime recorded in detail prior to this, in I.10, when Ada focuses on Fowlie’s mistranslation of Rimbaud’s “Mémoire” in a way that richly anticipates both Lucette’s too-early “deflowering” by exposure to Van and Ada’s sexual antics and her suicide, still a virgin, because she can never have Van (see especially Afternote to I.10, and Boyd 2001: 51-59 and 291-96). The mistranslation-over-dinner theme recurs in I.38, where Van cites Ada’s own version of another French poet, Coppée, in his own corrected form that highlights her mistranslation. Ada’s 1884 translation “Their fall is gentle. The woodchopper / Can tell, before they reach the mud” (127) destroys Coppée’s invocation of the quiet fall of leaves in an autumn

garden; Van's revised version, quoted to Demon as if it were Ada's, brilliantly solves the problem: "Their fall is gentle. The leavesdropper / Can follow each of them . . . " (247). The two examples of mistranslation of French verse and correction, at two different meals with Lucette absent, are linked further by the loss of a flower in one and leaves in another. Nabokov orchestrates the first so it points to the ironies of Lucette's "deflowering," her too-early initiation into Van and Ada's sexual hyperactivity, and the second so that it echoes the first raw sexual contact of Van and Ada, Van's falling on pantyless Ada's crotch in the shattal tree, that parody Tree of Knowledge. For Lucette is within earshot, and covertly equated with "that stray ardilla daintily leavesdropping" near the shattal tree (98: see Afternotes I.15, I.16, and I.20)—as if this were also her fall into knowledge—which implicates her in turn in Van's "leavesdropper."

All through the dinner chapter Marina, Demon, Van and Ada have much to hide from one another. What Demon and Marina have to hide leads to Miller's blackmail; the family links uniting the four captured on film by Kim will lead to his blackmail of Ada for what she and Van have to hide; and Van's and Ada's emotional blackmail of Lucette, as they try to stop her seeing what they wish to hide from her—but often fail to do, in the throes of their ardor—drive *this* "leavesdropper" to her far from "gentle" fall to her death.

Much of the special spikiness of *Ada*, I suspect, comes from Nabokov's trying to find literary equivalents for Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. In the central, earthly, panel, endless naked humans seem to have gone forth and multiplied and to be eating endless fruits in a replay of the fruit of the fall. Their delight seems harmless, but the hell panel looms to the right. In *Ada*'s dinner scene, one particularly memorable and puzzling paragraph, although it pays homage to the asparagus in Proust, may owe even more to Bosch.

Many of the characters in the central panel of Bosch's triptych match the actions of those close by. So too do Ada and Demon at this most visually vivid moment of the dinner scene. As they devour the asparagus, the shared sensual avidity of father and daughter, and the sexual overtones of their actions, the almost comically visual analogy to fellatio, could not be plainer: "It almost awed one to see the pleasure with which she and Demon distorted their shiny-lipped mouths in exactly the same way to introduce orally from some heavenly height the voluptuous ally of the prim lily of the valley, holding the shaft with an

identical bunching of the fingers” (259). But then the paragraph begins to veer wildly, sentence after sentence.

First, Van explains that “identical bunching of the fingers” as “not unlike the reformed ‘sign of the cross’ for protesting against which (a ridiculous little schism measuring an inch or so from thumb to index) so many Russians had been burnt by other Russians only two centuries earlier on the banks of the Great Lake of Slaves” (259). As the annotations suggest, this seems to link Ada’s and Demon’s actions somehow with religious persecution in Russia’s Great Schism and with Stalin’s exploiting slave labor in the White Sea-Baltic Sea Canal project. But how, why?

When Lucette visits Van at Kingston in 1892, she tells him (as she has earlier, by letter) about insatiable Ada’s initiating her into lesbian love-making. Lucette leads up to it gingerly but at last tells her story: “‘She taught me practices I had never imagined,’ confessed Lucette in rerun wonder. ‘We interweaved like serpents and sobbed like pumas. We were Mongolian tumblers, monograms, anagrams, adalucindas. She kissed my *krestik* while I kissed hers, our heads clamped in such odd combinations . . .’” (375). Van professes not to know what she means by *krestik* (“Come, come, Lucette, it means ‘little cross’ in Russian, that’s all, what else?,” 378), although he plainly intuits that she intends the word to stand for “clitoris.” Stung by jealousy at the thought of Ada’s ardor directed elsewhere, Van continues in an outburst typical of his moments of anger:

“Oh, I know,” cried Van (quivering with evil sarcasm, boiling with mysterious rage, taking it out on the redhaired scape-goatling, naive Lucette, whose only crime was to be suffused with the phantasmata of the other’s innumerable lips). “Of course, I remember now. A foul taint in the singular [stigma—BB] can be a sacred mark in the plural. You are referring of course to the stigmata between the eyebrows of pure sickly young nuns whom priests had over-anointed there and elsewhere with cross-like strokes of the myrrherabol brush.” (378)

Here Van refers to a part of the Russian Orthodox liturgy, a section of the vigil before a festival or a Sunday, in which the priest, with a brush dipped in myrrh, marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of

each member of the congregation who has come up to kiss the icon or gospel of the day.

Lucette then explains further what she means by *krestik*, coyly recalling a game of Russian Scrabble where the letters LIKROT or ROTIKL turned up in her tray. Van torments her, still feigning not to know what she means, with variants on the English *clitoris*:

“Okay, okay,” replied her and his tormentor, “but, you know, a medically minded English Scrabbler, having two more letters to cope with, could make, for example, STIRCOIL, a well-known sweat-gland stimulant, or CITROILS, which grooms use for rubbing fillies.” (379)

The “sign of the cross” links one instance of Ada’s oral voraciousness, her eating asparagus—as if in a replay of the fellatio she has treated Van to (140-41)—with another, with her feasting on Lucette’s “little cross.” Her Demonically insatiable craving for sensual pleasure, so brightly rendered as her lips close around the asparagus, segues only bafflingly into the persecution after Russia’s Great Schism, until we connect her insatiability with Lucette and the “martyr” Lucette becomes to Ada’s appetite (see Boyd 200: 129-31 for the martyr motif).

The next sentence of the asparagus paragraph swerves immediately to another example of extreme oral gratification: a Pushkin passage purportedly evoking “the cannibal joy of young gourmets tearing ‘plump and live’ oysters out of their ‘cloisters’ in an unfinished canto of *Eugene Onegin*.” (259) In fact there is nothing cannibal about the image in Pushkin (although the oysters *are* called (female) “recluses”—the Russian for “oyster” being female), but the combination of the idea of eating human flesh present in “cannibal joy,” and the slippery mouth-feel of oysters, and the near-anagram of “clitoris” in “cloisters,” seem to link again with the “pure sickly young nuns” and the *krestik*-“sign of the cross,” *clitoris* and cunnilingus elements of the Kingston passage.

The next sentence in the asparagus paragraph lurches sharply aside again, while continuing the idea of cannibalism—“everyone has his own taste,” a purported mistranslation from a “novel about a certain Crimean Khan” by “the British writer Richard Leonard Churchill” (259). The sentence fuses what Sir Winston Churchill actually said about Stalin with Churchill’s one early novel, *Savrola*—whose heroine’s name is Lucile.

All through these hellish images pairing Demon and his daughter—whose very name in Russian means “of hell”—“introducing orally from some heavenly height the voluptuous ally of the prim lily of the valley” (259), Nabokov seems to be linking the individual pain of Lucette, as martyr to Ada’s roving desire, as Aqua had been to Demon’s, to the victims of mass persecution and terror: the Russian schism, Soviet forced labor, Stalinism in the decades that followed. (Aqua, committing suicide a generation before Lucette, had been driven mad by a combination of Demon’s incessant infidelity and her belief in Terra: as a “New Believer” (20), an Antiterran schismatic, Van comments, “she might have been just another consumable witch” two or three centuries earlier (21).)

All that Nabokov means to imply in this challenging paragraph and its connections with human history and Lucette’s personal story may not be fully legible for some time. But we can at least see the strong link between Demon and Ada, the craving for sensual pleasure that seems to attain a “heavenly height” at one level but discloses its connections with the hellish in human life, not least, in Ada’s case, through the sexual insatiability that leads her to avail herself of Lucette and to compound the sexual fragility of a girl already disturbed by being so embroiled in her elder siblings’ desire.

Nabokov also seems to suggest more generally that the search for a heaven on earth, whether a sensual heaven, or a religious or social one, has often led to the hellish. In any case, he seems to bring in both the obvious but distorted references to historical hells and the oblique but pointed references to Lucette’s fate, and before her, of Aqua’s, in order to emphasize the failure of Demon and of Ada to accept responsibility for the kind of indulgence that helps drive Aqua and Lucette to take their own lives.

The last sentence of the weirdly disconcerting asparagus paragraph ends with “Ada . . . dipping the reversed corolla of one hand in a bowl” as she recounts local gossip to “Demon, who was performing the same rite in the same graceful fashion” (259). Another “rite,” then, links Ada and Demon: not just their voluptuously eating the asparagus, in a parody of the “sign of the cross,” but washing their hands after handling it, as they wash their hands of so much of the responsibility for their untrammelled desire. Nabokov has talked of the “proper sense” of “the term ‘responsibility’ . . . , linked with moral tradition, with principles of decency and personal honor deliberately passed from father to son” (interview with Mati Laansoo, 1973, *The Nabokovian* 10 (1983)).

Demon has passed on a good deal to Ada, but perhaps above all an absence of any sense of responsibility in the face of desire. When eventually he finds out the secret Ada and Van have been able to hide from him throughout the dinner scene, he will try at last to impose on them some sense of responsibility—at least to social propriety. And if it's too late by then to save Lucette, what's that to him?

