THE NABOKOVIAN

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NEWS

by Stephen Blackwell

This issue marks the final print-only edition of *The Nabokovian*, and the final issue that will be held by libraries around the world. If enough members wish to continue receiving a printed and bound copy, and are willing to pay extra for it, it may be possible to do one printing per issue. I encourage those interested in such an option to contact me upon receiving this issue, so we can assess demand. 2015 membership rates have not yet been set; they will probably be lower than 2014, to reflect savings in printing and mailing costs (though the web site does have maintenance costs associated with it).

It was with very deep sadness that all Nabokovians learned of the death of Samuel Schuman in November of this year. Sam was a benefactor of the Society, and a major supporter of *Nabokov Studies*, the Society's "thick journal." I first met Sam at the 2002 conference at the Nabokov Museum in St. Petersburg, and remember several wonderful conversations with him at that gathering. He was remembered fondly by many on Nabokv-L in the days after his death. In his remarks on the new Society web site, Zoran Kuzmanovich made special note of Sam's intellectual bravery, and Brian Boyd observed that "we'll miss his warmth, kindness, and gentle acumen." By all accounts, Sam embodied the best in all of us.

This issue also marks the culmination of our tribute to Stephen Jan Parker, who retired last year after 35+ years guiding *The Nabokovian* and managing the Society's rolls. The whole issue is dedicated in his honor; there are three new separate tributes (one embedded in an article), and all of the issue's contents were submitted in the spirit of honoring Steve. Fittingly, this issue is especially robust, with a larger-than-usual number of discoveries and worthy speculations, as well as a newly published and translated Nabokov story. It also includes a special feature, "Nabokovian Moments," *q.v.*, and what I hope will become a new permanent department: "Translated Commentaries," where unique annotations from non-English editions of Nabokov's works will be translated and published. The first entry is from Andrei Babikov's Russian edition of *Look at the Harliquins!*; suggestions and submissions for future installments are welcome.

TRIBUTES TO STEPHEN JAN PARKER

STEPHEN JAN PARKER

In the fall of 1978, I was completing my PhD on Nabokov and *Ada* when Professor Stephen Jan Parker's call for submissions to the *Vladimir Nabokov Research Newsletter* appeared. Among the five contributions I made to the first issue, one was "The Mysterious Dozen: A Problem in *Ada*," where I raised the question of the "mysterious pastors" in *Ada*'s Part I Chapter 39, "a most melancholy and meaningful picture—but meaning what, what?," as Van provocatively asks (269). I must confess I was a little disgruntled with Steve's printing another Nabokovian's response that proposed, in answer to the riddle, Leonardo's *Last Supper*—ruled out by the reference I had quoted to "a canvas" (Leonardo's painting is a fresco) "from Cardinal Carlo de Medici's collection" (impossible for a painting on a convent wall). But Steve took my vexation very well, and that was the last time in the almost forty years of his editing what soon became *The Nabokovian* that there was the slightest friction between us. He edited with a light, tolerant hand, and proved a fine explicator of Nabokov in his own right in *Understanding Nabokov* (1987). He became a friend of mine, and a much closer friend of Dmitri Nabokov, a trusted advisor to the family, a trusted conduit for Véra's annual bibliographic updates, and the expert on the library Nabokov left in Montreux. In the days before e-mail, the Internet, and even the first Nabokov conference (which he also set up, with George Gibian of Cornell's Slavic Department, in 1983), he helped create a cohesive center for Nabokov scholarship that continues to serve the field. This modest man should be proud of what he has done for Nabokov studies. I am personally grateful for his early publications of my work, and for his hospitality to the vast "Annotations to *Ada*"—vaster than either of us dreamed—still going strong after 21 years, and at last catching up to I.39 and that mysterious dozen.

—Brian Boyd, University of Auckland

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* *

The Nabokovian may be the mouthpiece of the Nabokov Research Society (*The VNRN* was in fact the newsletter's title until No. 13), yet everybody knows that it has really been Steve Parker's child and charge

since conception. For thirty-five years he wrote its first item and its last, collected and arranged material, saw it through the production and mailing.

I learnt of its existence in 1980, soon after our emigration, from Nabokov's widow who sent me the latest issue (No. 3) while sending Steve a paid request to subscribe me. He then mailed the previous one, adding that he was out of the first, which had to be xeroxed. We met in Urbana, Illinois (where I was then a paperless refugee and graduate student); later I went to see him in Lawrence, and then we would see each other often at conferences. We exchanged numerous letters, his typed, mine handwritten. Soon I began regularly to contribute small pieces in whimsical, clunky English, mostly to the *Notes* section then run by Charles Nicol.

Steve is a very quiet and very intelligent editor, who knows where to draw the line and when to withdraw it. He good-naturedly let me publish under four or five pseudonyms, was open, even game, to all sorts of fanciful suggestions, for instance, the three-way mutual parody issue No. 20, or the centenary "Nabokov Prose-Alike Contest" in No. 52—a humbling anonymous competition, in which two genuine excerpts from TOOL were voted by the membership to the last and next to last place, behind Nicol's unanimously winning entry and two runner-ups (signed by me and my alternative). At the same time, the seventy-two issue run of this publication has been a treasure-trove of many scores of brilliant hypotheses and discoveries, both by scholars of renown and by the beginners for whom *The Nabokovian* became their first credit card. Dmitri Nabokov occasionally would give it VN's unpublished flinders; Steve Parker kept up a running bibliography of the latest publications in the field; and for over twenty years, since No. 30, Brian Boyd has been sharing with us his astonishingly detailed description of *Ada*'s meandrous organization.

Now that his newsletter is about to slide from *terra firma* it has been roving for thirty-five years into the seas of the ethernet, I want to use this chance to thank Steve for this "feat of an honest man," as Pushkin sparingly but weightily called Karamzin's twenty-five-year span of admirable labors in a different field.

—Gennady Barabtarlo, University of Missouri

FROM THE ARCHIVE: AN UNPUBLISHED STORY

[LUZHIN'S CHILDHOOD]. By Vladimir Nabokov. Translated by Gennady Barabtarlo.

The manuscript—a fair copy, in clean, careful hand—of this early Nabokov story, published here for the first time, bears neither a title nor any sign of intended continuation: just three short, numbered sections, and a blank nothing under the carefully written number four. The seasoned reader will, however, at once see a pathway to the remarkable "A Matter of Chance," the first in the series of very strong short stories Sirin sent to periodicals in 1924, the year that rapidly lifted his prose to a much higher level. There, Alexey Luzhin, a cocaine-ravaged expatriate, twice uncoupled from his wife—first by the Russian catastrophe, then by a matter of cruel chance—throws himself under the passing train on the anniversary of their wedding. Here, we have what looks to me like a prologue to that story, discarded by the author who probably wanted to forgo introductions and flashbacks and pick up Luzhin's lifeline at its end. He left Luzhin his Christian name but changed that of his father (Lev, instead of Ivan). The theme of suicide looms like a semaphore both in the story and in this detached early stage.

In a preface to the English version, Nabokov remembered that he wrote "A Matter of Chance" early in 1924; I think that this abandoned beginning precedes it by some time—perhaps, months, judging by the quality of the prose, still constrained and rather shy. On the other hand, Brian Boyd—to whom I am very grateful for a number of gainful suggestions—points out that the inscription "Before 1929" at the top of the first page, in Nabokov's later hand, may bespeak a mental link, even if erroneous, with *Luzhin's Defense*.

The original is part of the Berg Collection of the New York Public library and is published here, in my translation, with their kind permission.

—G.B.

1.

In the morning he went to see Voronin. A desk drawer was pulled out. Voronin was rummaging in it, his elbows spread out. A small pistol lurked among the papers like a black stone. Is it loaded? he asked.

—Seven deaths, my friend, one in the barrel, Voronin remarked casually and pushed the drawer back in with his belly.

He remembered this when he woke up in the middle of the night. On the ceiling above him the moon sketched a blueprint of the window. He remembered it—and felt as if he had caught furtive sight of something dreadfully obscene. He tried to beat the thought of it back, to press it shut like that drawer. But something got in the way, the drawer stuck and wouldn't go in. Suddenly he realised—and shuddered from the nauseating temptation and shame—that inside that man's desk the naked lump of his death was slumbering. He realised that he was destined to wake it up. And the moonlit frame on the ceiling looked to him like the black cage of a newspaper obituary, and inside that cage he could discern three words: *Aleksey Ivanovich Luzhin*.

2.

His entire life was a matter of chance. He spent his childhood in Italy, where his father, a boorish artist, painted madonnas resembling shopkeepers and filled his glass-walled villa with the rumbling of his guffaws, the champing creaking of his leather sandals, the fire of his red beard.

At nine the boy was sent to a Catholic school near Rome. There, a huge abbot with an ivory face would make him kneel in the corner, and he would stand there for an hour, two hours, and not just on the floor but on dried peas. The stony peas bit into his kneecaps, rolled round, convulsion gripping his cartilages. On Saturdays he wrote meek letters home, to Fiesole. His supervisor would first dictate, then inspect them.

His mother, a carefree Pole, who day in and day out dragged her shawls—her colourful indolence—from armchair to bed, from bed to hammock—believed that her son was indeed surrounded by hallowed, gentle care… They instilled in him the coarse fear of hell, of God, of the abyss. They painted earthly life black. Even bees committed iniquity when they sweetly buzzed in the purplish clusters of wisteria. At frequent confessions they tormented him so much that he took to preparing in advance a set of made-up sins: not only was it simpler to

repent that way, but he was thereby spared the reproach of malicious concealment.

3.

The fly-catchers darting along the walls like fuzzy phantoms, the peas, the intricate prayers, the timid twitter of his classmates, the smell of unwashed flannels, and perhaps the sun-dappled (all clubs) soil under the plane-tree in the schoolyard—that was all that his memory preserved of Italy. As for St Petersburg, where he was born, the only notion he had formed of it at the time came from the lithograph that the abbot once gave him, with a pale smile, as a present. Before falling asleep he often imagined that he was in the middle of a vast city square: on his right, a toy-like horseman on a triangular pedestal; a rotund cathedral straight ahead; funny carriages scattered all over the grey expanse, cavorting dogs, odd little figures in masquerade garments. He was especially curious about the tiny, aproned man with a huge beard, carrying a tray on his head.

4.

NABOKOVIAN MOMENTS

Inconclusive Evidence

In the autumn of 1987 [*I recall it as March, cold, nobody about—PM*], after my giving a lecture at Wesleyan University on Pushkin's longest non-long poem (the English literary taxonomy is among the coarsest), my amiable hostess, Professor Priscilla Meyer, drove me to Old Lyme. It was a weekday, and the entire stretch of the beach, what Pushkin called *lukomor'e* (a bandy shoreline), looked empty in both directions. The pale sand felt firm underfoot, and we shambled up and down, and sat on a rock, chatting about Nabokov. [*You picked up a shell and said, "This is the origin of the notion of* symbol*"; I asked if you'd traced the shell motif through Nabokov and reminded you of Colette stepping on a mussel shell in Speak, Memory.—PM*]. I was then translating VN's short stories into Russian and had no idea how to render "beech plum" from the last sentence in "Signs and Symbols." I had a theory that the jams in that sentence are lined up in the order of gradually mounting tartness, thus leading up to the third call, and was not sure whether this odd plum fit the sequence. PM thought, with good reason, that VN must have meant, but misspelled, the "beach plum" (*Prunus maritima*), common on the East Coast, a grove of which could well be found in the vicinity, and that it was probably tart enough to take its proper place. After a while, we got up and resumed our stroll along the edge of the beach. It was low tide, and we had not walked a hundred yards when I stopped and called PM who was a few steps ahead of me: the name COLETTE [*The complete inscription was "COLETTE + ?"—a teenager considerately (from our point of view) not naming her beloved—PM*] had been freshly written on the wet sand in large cursive. [*It was a case of passed and repassed: we walked out to the rock with the ocean on our right; we returned with the ocean on our left and, making it all the more spine-tingling, you found the inscription at the halfway point to the rock where we had talked about Colette—PM*]. I don't remember seeing anybody nearby capable of writing [*four teenagers were walking ahead of us in the distance —PM*]. Nor do I recall, but PM does, that prior to coming upon that spot we had talked about that Riviera chapter of Nabokov's memoirs, which makes an already big coincidence cubed. It is certain, however, that neither of us had a camera, and even if we had one, it would somehow feel wrong to take a picture of this little miracle, as if the "snapping" and "shooting"

components might regain something of their crude primary meaning. — *G.B.* [*with P.M.*]

Genius Loci

Those who have been exposed to N-rays long enough can probably relate similar stories, either real "coletters" or at least what may be called "pnincidents": little episodes or situations, sometimes amusing, often baffling, always smile-worthy, that sometimes remind one of this or that corresponding place in a Nabokov novel. My personal store grew manifold in the early 1990s, in the course of my extensive travels through Europe and America on a self-imposed photographic assignment for a planned picture book *Nabokov's Itinerary.* I would haul heavy equipment in two bags (I had one camera for Kodachrome slides and another, large format, for grayscale negatives) to places where he lived or stayed in emigration, from London to Clarens. Wanted buildings would hide in backstreets, or cover themselves with dense scaffolding, or clean vanish; those considered long razed would spring up at the right address; an old woman with a stringbag, much resembling Evgenia Isaakovna from "Breakng the News," would come out of a house in Mozartstrasse, and on the deserted bank of the Grunewald lake, early in the morning, a man in shirtsleeves tirelessly tossed a stick far into the water, sending his dog to retrieve it, just as he does, time after time, in *The Gift*. The impossible-to-find pension *Les Hesperides* in Menton where the Nabokovs stayed late in 1937 (there is a picture of it in *Speak Memory*) is suddenly mentioned in a local newspaper, with a photograph, during a conference in Nice, and Gerard de Vries, Pekka Tammi, and I had a jolly yet hard time of locating it in the maze of the old town back alleys, armed just with the paper clipping. The same trio had an even jollier and harder time (suspicious peasants, vicious dogs) tracking down the Domain Beaulieu, near Toulon, where Nabokov worked as a farmhand in the summer of 1923.

As I approached the apartment building where Nabokov stayed when he visited Paris, I saw a glazier coming out carrying the flat box of his rectangular wares on his shoulder, as if he had only now got to replacing the windowpane in the Fondaminskys flat broken in winter of 1937 by Orlov's smartly launched snowball. I steadied my camera on the parapet of an overbridge—the very bridge, as it turned out, of the last chapter of *Conclusive Evidence*, which led straight to Nestorstrasse I had been trying to find and for some reason couldn't—at the moment of

just the right collocation of the densely darkened skies, the recurvate, sharp view of half-a-dozen railways forking and converging into the long of beyond, two goods trains standing next to each other on the left, and the needle of a TV tower pricking a heavy storm cloud on the horizon (I can recall this in precise detail because I am looking at a picture I took there and then).

More prosaically, on the landing right outside the door of apt. 35 in 8, Craigie Circle, Cambridge, Mass., two pairs of rubber boots, his black, hers white, stood under an elegant old "accent table." And in the backyard of a famous house in Ithaca, in the place where the incinerator used to be, I found a carefully assembled mise-en-scène of loose plank lumber, a wheeled garbage can with "802 Seneca" stenciled on it, a sign "handicap parking" placed next to it, and above it all, a crude abstract painting in staring colors affixed to the retaining wall made of creosoted railroad ties.

An especially strange encounter happened in the churchyard of the Russian Church of SS. Constantine and Helen, near the Tegel airport in Berlin. Looking for Nabokov-Sr.'s grave, I came upon an old, plain wooden cross, its whitewash peeling and crumbling, the almost obliterated inscription retaining only the name and patronymic, *Vasily Ivanovich*, and the barely visible year of death—same year the narrator's agent of the same name is "let go" in the last sentence of "Cloud, Castle, Lake."

In *The Nabokovian* 45 (Fall 2000), soon after Nabokov's sister died, I published my recollections of her, mentioning a curious last game of scrabble we played, in which words we would in turn place on the board formed strangely meaningful strings, of which fact both of us gradually became aware but said nothing to each other. I didn't mention then that in that game, or the one right before it, Elena Vladimirovna kept pulling tiles with the letter "V" out of the knitted bag, an even less gainful letter in the Russian game than in the English, for chances to get rid of more than one at a time are fewer—few words like vivid or savvy, no flivvers to vivify. She had used one but then drew another, placed that one down, but immediately collected two more (thereby exhausting the v-stock), and flipping her rack so that I could see the tiles looked at me and said, "Well, I never!.." (*Nu znaete!..*). She fell silent ("*umolkla*", a 50-point premium word that was already on the board), then said that it was a shame the rules didn't allow her to play "*Veve*" (Vevey in Russian spelling).

Aping the Ape

As said before, it seems that any concentrated Nabokov enterprise, be it writing an essay about him, teaching a course, or mapping his topography, brings up little curiosities: high-definition coincidences, arrows chalked on housewalls, gentle strokes of luck. Here is the latest example from a long string of similar incidents.

This past spring I taught a "writing intensive" undergraduate course on the novel; the fourth and last specimen under study was *Lolita*. On the second week of lectures, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a piece that began: "Eight months ago, 11-year old Amna was married off to a man three times her age to settle a crime her uncle had committed." In itself a twingled skein of literary associations, it carried a byline of *Annabel Symington*, a British reporter ("exposed to risk while gathering news," says Frontline Freelance Register). The Pakistani hamlet where the deal took place is called Grilagan—a perfect anagram for a glaring coincidence.

At the end of the course, the brightest student in that class came to my office and related, casually, that her mother had brought her from the Ukraine to Missouri when she was twelve, after an online marriage to a local man. They soon divorced, the mother remarried in another town, and the girl remained with her unremarried step-father. She was telling me this without showing the slightest awareness of the inevitable reference to the basic thematic line of the novel we had just finished ploughing back and forth.

A Visual Pnincidence

Every time I come to Montreux I notice a slight change, a shift, even if it has only been two years since the previous visit. This past July it was big: they are building something grandiose slap in front of the Palace. Ensconced amidst the chaos of the construction site, pressing heavily with all his hepatizon bronze mass against the back of a Vienna chair whose slender front legs are precariously suspended in the air, a clotty, bilious "Nabokov" looks like a sedentary parody of Falconet's Peter I and, uncannily, of Pnin who is about to lose balance in his Pushkin class. Several years ago this "Nabokov in Knickerbockers" (1999) by Alexander Rukavishnikov, the author of monuments to honour a broad range of Russian and Soviet eminences, from Emperor Alexander II to potentate Kobzon to strongman Zass, had been taken

alfresco from its original mooring in the vestibule of the Palace. Bronze busts of famous jazzers are scattered all over the grassy expanse, a short distance from "Nabokov," who turns away in disgust, his eyebrow permanently arched, as if muttering "Jazz, jazz…," also very much like Pnin in *The Pines*.

A monstrous statue à la Komarov by a "no-relation" Rukavishnikov; an odd ensemble of musicians busking next to it; in front, a completely blocked view of the lake; behind, a completely redone set of small rooms of his longest dwelling in emigration, turned into a larger two-room suite offered for $1,800 a night and usually booked (and when not, a specially hired member of the hotel staff takes visiting "Russian" nouveaux riches on a private tour)—not even Nabokov could have imagined this in the strangest of his fancies.

—*G.B.*

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* *

LIFE AS PARODY

I *Paul Hentzner*

On a walk in Vermont one autumn, my husband and I discovered the foundation of an old barn, surrounded by milkweed plants with full pods. Nearby we encountered a woman with a German accent who offered to show us her garden. I asked what some plant was, and she answered, "I never can remember the names of things." Nabokovian moments in life appear as inversions or parodies of their originals.

II

In a class on *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, I point out the "mustache of ten to two" and look up at the wall clock: it's ten to two.

IIII *A Gift*

In the late 1970s a group of Russian émigrés gathered in a fellow poet's Paris apartment for a reading. For some reason during the reading there developed a suppressed hilarity; it finally burst into the open as the leg of a stool under Dmitri Segal (Hebrew University), a rather monumental figure both literally and figuratively, cracked loudly, and he teetered

briefly until he managed to shift himself onto another one without hitting the ground.

Are Russian writers forever fated through the generations to give readings in scantily furnished apartments in Berlin and Paris? Where will this scene next be restaged?

—Priscilla Meyer, Wesleyan University

*
* *

A DISTANT MIRROR

Unsurprisingly, several of my "pnincicidences," if I may be the first to quote Gene Barabtarlo's coinage, relate to *The Gift*. I made my first and only trip to Berlin in March of 2004, helping a friend lead a group of students in a course studying the city's cultural history. We were there for about five or six days, and of course I visited every Nabokov or *Dar*-related site I had time to reach. It was not in Charlottenburg but at the University that I saw—was even temporarily blocked by—a pair of workers carrying a large, wardrobe-sized mirror (sans wardrobe) into one of the University's buildings (which I was exiting). I wish I could say that I remember what was reflected in the mirror, or whether it was a parallelepiped. I'll let fancy fill in the gaps with sky and bare branches.

Once during a Nabokov course, just after reading "A Visit to the Museum," a student reported that he entered a campus building he did not know well, got lost in a labyrinth of stairways and basement passages, and eventually—very eventually—emerged outdoors from the basement of an entirely different building.

—S.B.

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.

"FROST AT MIDNIGHT": SHADES OF COLERIDGE'S POETRY IN PALE FIRE

The first time I met Stephen Jan Parker I was curious to learn whether his second given name (not an unusual one in my country) indicates Dutch roots. It does not; his parents just liked the name. So this could not explain the kindness he had shown to me by publishing my first notes in *The Nabokovian*, a rather "uncouth manuscript flaunting its imperfections." The occasion of our meeting was the 1992 Nice Conference, "[s]uperbly organized and conducted by Maurice Couturier, with the assistance of Mme. Couturier" as professor Parker writes in his report "Nabokov in Nice. The Second International Nabokov Conference" (*The Nabokovian* 29 [1992]: 17-29). He also praises the "daily gourmet luncheons" and the "closing banquet" and the many papers which he summarizes most attractively. One afternoon, while we were waiting outside for the next session, Parker appeared smartly dressed in a dark suit with matching tie and shoes. Because the sun was shining brightly, most of the participants were informally attired, and inevitably Parker was asked why he preferred his obviously less comfortable costume. His answer was clear: he had packed it and did not wish to return it unused. It is, I think, thanks to this stoic logic, to stick to a decision once made (and to Ms. Paula Courtney), that we owe the amazing number of 71 volumes of his splendid journal.

In his *Understanding Vladimir Nabokov* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), Parker writes that "Nabokov maintained that the genealogy of a literary work is not 'reality' but the literary tradition of which it is a part" (115). I think my note in the previous issue of *The Nabokovian* on *Pale Fire* and Virgil's *Aeneid* shows how valuable this observation is, as in its first part the Homer, Virgil, Dante, Akhmatova and Nabokov lineage is discussed. Parker also calls Nabokov an "iconoclast" and this, I think, is amply illustrated in its second part (143).

There is a nice counterpoise to Nabokov's loud derision of some well-established names, as his voice becomes more muted the more he admires an author. The present note may prove this.

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* *

In *Pale Fire* many if not all the best known English Romantic Poets are mentioned, paraphrased or referred to: Byron, Keats, Shelley, Scott and Wordsworth. Even Robert Southey, as highly ranked in his own days as he is forgotten now, is honored with some quotations. But where is Coleridge, certainly not the least gifted among his peers? "Read: Milton, Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth," is Nabokov's advice to a future novelist (quoted by Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov. The American Years*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, 317).

Strangely it is not the poet, but his wife, Sara Coleridge (née Fricker), who is alluded to by Kinbote. "Dear Stumparumper" (76), comes from the letter Southey, Mrs. Coleridge's brother-in-law, wrote in September 1821 to his friend Grosvenor Charles Bedford. In it the reader is informed about "the language spoken in this house by Mrs. Coleridge" and it is she who calls Bedford "stumparumper" (Molly Lefebure, *The Bondage of Love: A Life of Mrs. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. London: Victor Gollancz, 1986, 21).* And the "Lingo-Grande" (76) that Kinbote attributes to Southey, is in fact the name "the family" gave to Mrs. Coleridge's private language, of which "stumparumper" is an example (Lefebure 22). This "family" consisted of all the inhabitants of Greta Hall, a big house in Keswick, in the English Lake District: Robert Southey, his wife Edith, their children, Mrs. Coleridge (who was Edith's sister) and her children. (Coleridge rented Greta Hall in 1800 and soon invited his friend Robert Southey for a long visit. After their arrival, Coleridge moved to London, abandoning his family, who stayed for three decades in the house thanks to the

generous hospitality of Southey, who in 1802 succeeded Coleridge in leasing the manor.) Mrs. Coleridge's biographer, Molly Lefebure, explains Sara's private language not as merely funny as her family did, but caused by "the necessity to have something of her own, that could not be taken from her as everything else was taken," (an explanation which might apply to Kinbote's Zemblan as well) (222).

Although Sara Coleridge is probably unique in having a poem in her own included in her husband's collection of poems ("The Silver Thimble," "around whose azure rim/ Silver figures seem to swim,") it is of course Coleridge's poetry that justifies these references (*The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* London: Oxford University Press, 1957, 104-105, henceforth referred to as *PW of STC).* Some of Shade's images are strongly reminiscent of Coleridge's perceptions. Shade's lines, "My eyes were such that literally they/ Took photographs," and "…all I had to do/ Was to close my eyes," recall Coleridge's "My eyes make pictures, when they are shut," which is the opening line of "A Day-Dream" (34; *PW of STC* 385. Curiously the second line has: "I see a fountain, large and fair"). And Shade's "And heard the wind roll marbles on the roof" sounds as vigorously as Coleridge's "When stormy Midnight howling around/ Beats on our roof with clattering sound" from his "Lines at Shurton Bars" (48; *PW of STC* 99). And Shade's "green, indigo and tawny sea" is as colourful as the ocean in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which Coleridge gave all sorts of dyes, as in lines 129 and 130: "The Water, like a witch's oils,/ Burnt green, and blue and white" (48; *PW of STC* 191. In my "'Mountain, not Fountain,' *Pale Fire*'s Saving Grace," *The Nabokovian* 63 (2009): 39-52, I referred to Coleridge's "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni" and "Kubla Kahn").

But even more interesting than these "parallelisms" (as Nabokov uses to call such correspondences in his commentary on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*) are the striking similarities in setting, atmosphere and philosophical bent in the last parts of Shade's Cantos Two and Four and Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" and "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" respectively. These two poems Coleridge wrote in 1797 and 1798, when he and his family lived in Nether Stowey, a small village on the eastern slope of the Quantock Hills in England.

In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" the poet, who is forced to stay at home, imagines how his friends go out for a walk in the late afternoon. He knows their way and can recollect what they will see; first a "roaring dell" and next a "waterfall." Progressing to the hill-top, they

will admire the view which commands the blue sea and the setting sun. In the third section the poet feasts on the riches he can see from his bower, and speculates on life's sharing nature's eternity.

Like Shade, Coleridge had a neighbour (Thomas Poole) who intensely admired his poetical gifts. The neighbouring backyards communicated with one another, so that Coleridge could as easily as Shade walk into the adjacent garden. Both poets meet, after having finished their work, an acquaintance called Charles, Shade his neighbour Charles Kinbote, Coleridge his friend Charles Lamb. Lamb stayed in Coleridge's cottage and it is he who is addressed in the poem. Both poets composed their verse in mid-summer, the month of July. (In a note preceding his poem Coleridge states that he wrote it in June. This is obviously a mistake, as in June Charles Lamb was still writing letters from London to his friend [*The Letters of Charles Lamb.* Vol.1. London: J.M. Dent, 1911, 86-7].)

The poets were both, slightly and temporarily, incapacitated and could only walk with some difficulty. Shade because his "[f]oot [has] gone to sleep," Coleridge because his foot was burned by spoiled hot milk (Richard Holmes, *Coleridge, Early Visions.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989, 153). They penned their lines while sitting in an arbour, Shade in an "arborlike porch," Coleridge in a linden-bower. In front of their seat is a nut tree, a "shagbark tree" in Shade's garden, a "walnut-tree" in Coleridge's.

Both poets (Shade now transfers his pen to Nabokov) are captivated by the spectacle the late-summer afternoon offers: the setting sun, the changing appearance of the foliage in the pervading crepuscular light and the curving chase of a flying creature, as can be shown by the following quotations:

…Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling in sunshine!...
…and in deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy,…
…and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
Wheels silent by,… (*PW of STC*, 180-1, lines 47-57)

"…on that same spot, where the low sun finding an aperture in the foliage splashed the brown sand with a last radiance while the evening's shade covered the rest of the path" (290).

Also "a lacquered leaf" is observed just before "the shade reached the laurels" (290) while

> "A dark Vanessa with a crimson band
> Wheels in the low sun, settles on the sand" (69)

It is difficult to follow the flights in the dazzling sunbeams, as the fly, according to Kinbote "flashed and vanished," while a bird in Coleridge's vision was "[n]ow a dim spot, now vanishing in light."

Shade and Coleridge finish their poems with the image of a bird. The waxwing to which Shade returns in line 1000 (which is the same as line 1, see my "*Pale Fire* and Dr. Johnson," *The Nabokovian* 66 [2011]: 21-30), although "slain," "live[s] on" (33). In Coleridge's poem it is a "rook" which "tells of Live," although it is dissolved in the light of the setting sun. Shade's metempsychosis is comforted by his last earthly abode, which he calls "his Nest" and which Kinbote calls his "perch" (287). Coleridge often used bird-images, sometimes as a self-image but also as a metaphysical one (see Holmes 80 and 327).

Coleridge acquired fame because of his fascinating "Kubla Kahn" and the magical stories of *The Ancient Mariner* and "Christabel."

His Conversation Poems, however, to which "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" and "Frost at Midnight" belong, have quite different qualities. They are primarily meditative and totally devoid of such thrilling events which stupefied so many readers of *The Ancient Mariner*. But the modulations of mood and thought, expressed in beautiful and subtle observations, are no less exciting. "Frost at Midnight" is usually regarded as his finest Conversation Poem, and may be appreciated as his most perfect verse as well. The poet is sitting in the parlour of his cottage in the dead of winter and his imagination, ignited by a "thin blue fame," wanders to various places in the past and future.

The lines devoted to the night when John and Sybil Shade wait at home for the return of their daughter [ll. 403-500] contain the lines 418 and 433 mentioned above as recalling images from Coleridge. The word "Aeolian" in line 409 brings to mind Coleridge's "Eolian Harp," his first Conversation Poem. That evening the Shades watch "the preview of *Remorse*," a film featuring Marilyn Monroe. There is, however, no such

movie which fits this title (see Dieter Zimmer, "Anmerkungen des Herausgebers." *Fahles Feuer* [*Pale Fire*] by Vladimir Nabokov. Reinbek: Rowohlt: 2008, 448). *Remorse* is the title of a play by Coleridge, originally called *Osorio*, after its main character (for a summary, see Richard Holmes, *Coleridge, Darker Reflections*. London: Harper Collins, 1998, 323-327).

In lines 403-500, the word "frost" or "Frost" appears twice, and the word "midnight" is mentioned three times (lines 426, 428, 483, 490). A preliminary reference to "Frost at Midnight" is found in Kinbote's comments on Shade's use of the word "stillicide" in line 35. As Kinbote rightly notes, a stillicide is a "succession of drops," to which he, seemingly capriciously, adds "drops falling from the eaves, eavesdrop, cavesdrop." Kinbote continues his comment with "I remember having encountered it for the first time in a poem by Thomas Hardy. The bright frost has eternalized the bright eavesdrop." In Hardy's poem "Friends Beyond" the poet imagines that he hears his dead friends whispering from the churchyard:

> "In the muted, measured note
> Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide"
> (*Selected Poems*. London: Everyman's Library, 1982, 145)

But there are no eaves in Hardy's poem, nor is there any frost. On the contrary, the poet hears the whispering "at midnight when the moon-heat breathes it back from walls and leads." The eaves appear in Shade's lines 39-40:

> "… close my eyes to reproduce the leaves
> Or indoor scene or trophies of the eaves"

These trophies of the eaves are obviously the "stilettos of a frozen stillicide" of line 35, and have their origin in "Frost at Midnight:"

> "…whether the eaves-drops fall
> Heard only in the trances of the blast,
> Or the secret ministry of frost
> Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
> Quietly shining to the quiet Moon"
> (*PW of STC,* 242, lines 70-74)

Like Coleridge, the Shades are sitting at midnight in their living room. Outside frost is reigning. Coleridge is meditating on a "film," but, it being the winter of 1798, this is a layer of soot which "flutters" on the grate of his "low-burnt fire." The Shades are watching the TV which offers a debate on poetry, a travelogue and the preview of *Remorse* before they turn it off. The "film" Coleridge sees reminds him of his schooldays when he dreamed so often of his "sweet birth-place." The movie shown during the travelogue presents the seaside the Shade had visited "[n]ine months before her [their daughter's] birth." (By coincidence the thoughts of both poets travel back 26 years as Coleridge composed his lines in 1798 and was born in 1772, while Shade is writing his poem in 1959, 26 years later than 1933 when Hazel Shade was born.)

Coleridge's recollections of his schooldays are framed by his intense longing for a familiar face, of an "aunt or sister more beloved." (Raised in West-England, Coleridge, at the age of ten, became, after his father's death, an inmate of a London charity school and was hardly ever allowed by his mother to go home during the nine years of his stay, which explains why he regarded himself as an orphan [see Holmes, *Early Visions* 24-25]). A visit by a member of Coleridge's family was promised, albeit only proverbially, by the fluttering film, because, as Coleridge writes in a note, "these films are called *strangers* and supposed to portend the arrival of some absent friend" (*PW of STC* 240). Likewise the thoughts of the Shades are with their daughter to whose arrival they look forward with increasing uneasiness, due to the misgivings they have about their daughter's date. Because of their edginess, they even twice think that they hear the telephone ringing. While waiting, Coleridge glanced at "the door half opened," just as Sybil "listened at the door."

Despite the many correspondences (the sitting room, the time at midnight, the remembrances, the film, the dejection, the waiting in vain, the frost) there is a decisive difference between Coleridge's and Shade's lines. In Shade's verse a steadily growing inquietude destroys the soothing monotony the evening otherwise would have had. The movement in Coleridge's poem, however, is an upward one as the placid mood of the poet—being chilled by the desolate memories of his own childhood and his abandonment by his family—soars into elevated vistas when he imagines the boyhood of his newly born baby who is sleeping in the cradle next to his chair. This might be, I think, the precise reason for the echoes of "Frost at Midnight" in "Pale Fire."

Doubtless, Nabokov was attracted by the striking novelty of Coleridge's very meticulous and studied observations of natural phenomena (see for example his note on the "creeking" noise [the quill-feathers of] the rook makes in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison"). But what might have weighed even more for Nabokov is the way in which Coleridge makes his child share the eternity he, Coleridge, had already discerned. Coleridge envisages that his boy in his adolescence shall "see and hear/ The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible/Of that eternal language…." "[A]ll seasons shall be sweet to thee," Coleridge writes, and this seems to resonate in Shade's lines when he writes "It was a night of thaw," suggesting that spring can not be far behind. In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" Coleridge too knowingly encourages his friend to "gaze till all doth seem/ Less gross than bodily; and such hues/ As veil the Almighty Spirit, when he yet makes/ Spirits perceive his presence."

Shade, who devoted his whole life to finding true signs of an eternity in which human beings partake after death, must have found Coleridge's conviction most reassuring. And especially as Coleridge in "Frost at Midnight" foresees eternity as an aura of his child's life, Shade might have regarded this poetical vision as a stimulus for his own quest, which finally leads him to believe that "his darling is somewhere alive."

Although Coleridge is not among the twenty-five English poets mentioned in *Pale Fire* (see my "Fanning the Poet's Fire. Some Remarks on *Pale Fire*. *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 24 (1991) 239-267), his poems which are discussed here seem far more important subtexts for this novel than the poetry of most of the others. Most likely Coleridge's poems are so close to the story of Shade's coping with the death of his daughter that a more direct reference might have overemphasized their importance. It seems another case of Nabokov's well-known indirectness; the masking of subtexts, especially when these have been reworked to become part of his own unique art.

—Gerard de Vries, Voorschoten, Netherlands

NABOKOV'S SILVERFISH

An expert in Lepidoptera, Nabokov often mentioned other insects as well. Some of these served him famously, such as the *cigale* in *Pale Fire*, the Chateaubriand's mosquito in *Ada*, or several genera of true bugs (Heteroptera, also in *Ada*; see my note "Adakisme, Dolykisme: the

Kirkaldy connection", *The Nabokovian*, 2006, 56: 14-19). Nabokov gladly admitted that his knowledge of general entomology was only introductory. He was, however, perfectly aware of high-level insect classification and, as any entomologist, could easily identify common non-butterfly insects, assigning them to higher categories such as orders (there are about 20 of those) or, even further, families.

Oblako, ozero, bashnya (first published in Russian in 1937), better known by its English title, *Cloud, Castle, Lake* (below, *CCL*; first published in English in 1941), mentions, in the same sentence, two non-butterfly insects that inhabit the fragile and cruel world of this short story. First is the "mature bedbug" (the Russian text uses a folksy adjective *materoi*) that pre-tortures Vasili Ivanovich, the hero of *CCL*. An infamous bloodsucking, flightless bedbug (Russ. *klop*, Lat. *Cimex lectularius*, Order Heteroptera) inhabits many pages of Russian literature. Its bedbug lore stretches from Pushkin's roadside hotels where *klopy da blohi zasnut' minuty ne daiut* ("bedbugs and fleas don't give one a minute's sleep") (*Eugene Onegin*, 7, XXXIV, Nabokov's translation) to Mayakovsky's 1929 satirical play *Klop* [*The Bedbug*]. Some "blood motif" places in Antiterra (the shooting gallery in Ardis) "crawled with bedbugs" (*Ada* 1.34: 212.11) long before this Old World pest became a true trouble in North America in the 21st century.

The same sentence that mentions the "mature bedbug" in *CCL* contrasts it with another animal, not so well known. In the Russian text of *CCL* that is currently widely reprinted (*Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda*… vol 4, Simpozium, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 586) it reads: "*no est' izvestnaia gratsiia v dvizhenii shelkovistoi lepizmy* [but there is a certain grace in the motions of a silky lepisma]." What is this creature?

Lepisma is a Latin genus name for a primitive, wingless but fast-moving insect, commonly found in human habitations, that belongs to the Order Thysanura, "bristletails" (in zoological Russian, *shchetinokhvostye*). It is known in English as *silverfish*; other less common names include silver louse, silver witch, and sugarfish. The currently reprinted English translation of *CCL* ("by Peter Pertzov and the author" says "*there is a certain grace in the motions of silky silverfish*" (*Nabokov's Congeries*, Viking, 1968, p. 104).

Unlike bedbugs, silverfish are harmless and do not bite. They are, however, "one of the most troublesome enemies of books, papers, card labels in the museums" (C. L. Marlatt. The silverfish: an injurious household insect. *US Dept. Agric. Farmer's Bulletin*, 1915, 681: 1-4). *Lepisma* is listed in any course of general entomology such as the four-

volume Russian one by N.A. Kholodkovsky (1912) that Nabokov used as a child. In Russian, silverfish is called *cheshuinitsa* (literally, "scaled"): wingless bodies of thysanurans are covered with minute silvery scales just like moth wings, and leave powder when touched. The Greek "lepis-" root of *Lepisma* is the same as in Lepidoptera (scale-winged, Russ. *cheshuekrylye*). I am tempted to suggest that this is a wingless, crawling substitute of a butterfly, the best one can get in the warped world of *CCL* (and also *LATH*, see below). Nabokov's sentence also reflects an important evolutionary contrast, well-known to entomologists, between *primitively* wingless insects such as silverfish (relicts of early Palaeozoic insect groups that did not yet have wings)—and *secondarily* wingless ones such as bedbugs, lice, or fleas that lost precious wings and flight evolved by their ancestors and relatives (such as butterflies), often due to a parasitic way of life.

Silverfish is notably mentioned at least once again by Nabokov, in English, in *Look at the Harlequins!* (below, *LATH*) (1974, Ch. 7) as a "silver louse," a less common English name of this insect. Vadim, the anti-Nabokov protagonist, makes a clear, very ironic connection to butterflies, and especially silver-scaled moths: "*I know nothing about butterflies, and indeed do not care for the fluffier night-flying ones, and would hate any of them to touch me: even the prettiest gives me a nasty shiver like some floating spider web or that bathroom pest on the Riviera, the silver louse*."

Sergei Ilyin, in his Russian translation of *LATH*, back-translates "silver louse" as "sakharnaya cheshuinitsa" (sugarfish), technically a correct Russian entomological name of a common European *Lepisma* species; however, unnecessary sweetness is introduced, which Nabokov's text lacks. They indeed inhabit the Riviera, along with others of the less pleasant (and often parasitic) characters in Nabokov's books.

Interestingly, in the first English translation of *CCL* (*Atlantic Monthly*, June 1941, available online) we find not a silverfish but quite a different animal: "*there is a certain grace in the motions of silky wood lice.*" A "wood louse" is not an equivalent of a silverfish, but a very distant taxonomic choice. Woodlice are not insects at all but terrestrial crustaceans (Order Isopoda). In the U.S., woodlice are more commonly known as pillbugs or sawbugs; children also call them roly-polies or doodlebugs. Woodlice are abundant in moist environments, in rotten wood or under stones on your lawn, but not inside houses with normal humidity. Their Russian name, *mokritsa*, means "moisture-loving." Like silverfish, they are harmless to humans.

The 1941 translation of *CCL*, in fact, was true to the original Russian journal version (*Russkie zapiski*, 1937, No 2, p. 38). As Yuri Leving noted in his Comments (*Sobranie sochinenii…, op. cit.,* vol. 4, p. 778), the 1937 Russian journal had "*v dvizhenii shelkovykh mokrits*" [motion of silky wood lice]."

The first version where we find the animal changed into a "*silky silver-fish*" is the first *book* publication of *CCL* in English, in a 1947 collection *Nine Stories* (New Directions, NY, p. 39). When the Russian version was first published in a book (*Vesna v Fial'te*, 1956, Izd. im. Chekhova, NY), Nabokov changed the Russian *mokritsa* to a much more exotic *lepizma* – hardly recognizable even by an educated Russian reader. The next book publication in English, in *Nabokov's Dozen* (Doubleday, 1958), has "*silky silverfish*" (p. 118). Brian Boyd (pers. comm.) suggests that, in the six years between 1941 and 1947, when Nabokov was a professional lepidopterist at the MCZ, "that must have been what made the decisive difference: working among other entomologists, thinking about entomology scientifically himself most of every day. The translation of *CCL* was finished by March 5, 1941, and Nabokov didn't begin offering his services at the MCZ until October."

I am sure the animal was changed intentionally. The change strengthens "*certain grace*": a silverfish moves much faster than a bulky wood louse. More importantly, *silkiness* in silverfish is due to their scales as it is in moths (the motif that later appeared in *LATH*), while woodlice have no scales—they may look silky but do not leave powder. The Russian adjective was also slightly changed to be more precise, *shelkovistaya* (silky to the touch) instead of *shelkovaya* (silk-like, made of silk). All this may not be important for an average reader who cares not about either woodlice or silverfish—but not for Nabokov, with his constant attention to naturalistic detail.

I thank Brian Boyd for his kind comments on this note.

—Victor Fet, Department of Biological Sciences, Marshall University

MARTHA'S AND IRENE'S LAST DANCE

Possible links between the works of Vladimir Nabokov and those of Stefan Zweig have so far been ignored, probably due to the fact that Nabokov never mentioned the Austrian writer in interviews or correspondence. The translator Corinna Gepner tried to draw a chess

parallel between Luzhin in *Zashchita Luzhina* (*The Defense*) (1930), and Zweig's characters M. B. and Czentovic in *Schachnovelle* (*The Royal Game*) (1943, posthumously) (*Le Joueur d'échecs*, Paris: Bréal, 2000, pp. 113-118). However, Nabokov could have read some works of Zweig during his long stay in Berlin, and other connections can be found, not only in plot and character, but also in some narrative techniques.

Zweig's short story *Angst* (*Fear*), published in August-September 1913 in the review *Wiener Neue Presse*, because of its subject, could be a sub-text of Nabokov's second novel, *Korol, dama, valet* (*King, Queen, Knave*) (1928) – along with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Chekhov's *Dama s sobachkoj* (*The Lady with the Dog*), which Nabokov discusses in his *Lectures on (Russian) Literature*. Just as Zweig tells the story of Irene, who deceives her husband, Fritz Wagner, with a young pianist, Eduard, Nabokov deals with Martha's story, who takes Franz for lover, i.e. the "nephew" of her spouse, Kurt Dreyer. By making use of the banal and melodramatic topic of adultery in a bourgeois background, both writers denounce the "*poshlust*" or "*poshlism*" (*Lectures on Russian Literature*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981, p. 313) of conservative middle-class society. As Yves Iehl points out, although Zweig was born into a rich Viennese family, he "condemns the reality and the falseness of a world where social relations seem to be corrupted by the disappearance of any genuine feelings. He brings out the cynicism, the coldness, the mean self-importance of his Viennese figures and endeavors to make us share his disapproval" ("Stefan Zweig et Arthur Schnitzler," *Austriaca*, no. 34 [1992], p. 111, my translation). Nabokov similarly characterizes the middle-class person as "a philistine," "a full-grown person whose interests are of a material and commonplace nature, and whose mentality is formed of the stock ideas and conventional ideals of his group and time" (*Lectures on Russian Literature*, p. 309).

It is not surprising that Nabokov and Zweig set forth two female characters that belong to the middle class and whose way of life is nearly the same. Zweig's Irene lives a quiet and idle existence in Vienna, surrounded with her two children, her maids and her husband, a lawyer, who secures her material comfort. Nabokov's Martha, although childless, is married to a rich department store owner and lives in the capital (undoubtedly Berlin) in a gilded cage, consisting of *Biedermeier* furniture, a harmonious garden, a maid and a gardener that suit the bourgeois standards. Irene and Martha meet the middle-class code of the

conservative society which reduces the wealthy married woman to taking care of her household and its relationships.

Nonetheless, both young women scorn this code when they decide to take a lover in order to break with their daily life and to lead a more adventurous and hectic one, although they seem satisfied with their rather empty existence. Still, in his novel Nabokov deprecates this rebellious act, ironically suggesting that adultery is part of the philistine way of life: "With a vague resentment, she recalled that her sister had already had at least four or five lovers in succession, and that Willy Wald's young wife had had two simultaneously. And yet Martha was already past thirty-four. It was high time" (*King, Queen, Knave*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968, p. 84). Moreover, Irene and Martha are caught up in their materialism when they are overwhelmed by a feeling of anxiety at the thought of losing their comfort. Thus, Irene, whose adultery is denounced by a "vulgar" woman of the people, seems more affected by the fear of being rejected by the society in which she has always moved, than of losing her husband. She is implicitly scared at the idea of getting out of her social status when she remembers the encounter with the tormentor, most often characterized by pejorative terms as "Weib" ("female"), "Person" ("person") and "Proletarierin" ("proletarian"): "She would have liked to scream, or lash out with her fists, free herself from the horror of the memory, which was firmly fixed in her mind like a fish hook–that coarse face and scornful laughter, the unpleasant odour of the vulgar woman's bad breath, the coarse mouth spitting hatred and vile abuse at her, the raised red fist that the creature had shaken menacingly") (*Fear*, London: Pushkin Press, 2013, p. 14). Similarly, Martha in the café scene is suddenly frightened at the thought that she could look like the regulars of the plebeian café where she is sitting if she leaves Dreyer for Franz, without protecting her own interests:

> "I love him but he is poor," she said jokingly. And suddenly her expression changed. She imagined that she, too, was penniless, and that here, in this shabby little tavern, among befuddled workmen and cheap floozies, in this deafening silence with only that clock clucking, a sticky wine glass before each, the two of them were whiling away their Saturday night. She fancied with horror that this tender pauper really was her husband, her young husband, whom she would never, never give up. Darned stockings, two modest dresses, a broken comb,

> one room with a bloated mirror, her hands coarse from washing and cooking, this tavern where for one reichsmark you could get royally drunk… she felt so terrified that she dug her nails into his hand" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 111-112).

The failure of the rebellion of both characters, who do not manage to get rid of their materialist ambitions, is emphasized in the dance scene. The scene, common to both novel and short story and whose vocabulary is nearly the same, does not only represent a habit of the German and Viennese bourgeois who regularly go to balls. It is also a metaphor of the disease from which Irene and Marta are suffering. When she goes to the party organized by acquaintances, Zweig's protagonist had been prostrate for three days at home, paralyzed with fright of meeting again the «demon», i.e. the tormentor whom she gave some money in exchange for her silence. Her state is due to anxiety attacks, characteristic of an advanced psychological disorder. So Irene has to force herself to go out with her husband. Nevertheless, once she enters the house, she feels so secure that she rushes into a furious dance. But this dance is a physical illustration of her mental troubles more than a liberating dance. Zweig uses several times expressions linked to somatic (dizzy spells, hot flushes, cold sweats) and behavior disorders (complete loss of inhibitions), symptomatic of Irene's panic attacks, as the following passage significantly shows: "The circling eddies of the dance cast all her melancholy out of her, the rhythm infected her limbs, breathing ardent movement into her body. If the music stopped she felt that the silence was painful […] and she flung herself back into the eddies as if into a bath of cool, soothing water that bore her up") (*Fear*, p. 42). Even the wish of the young woman, consisting in stripping off to better enjoy her sudden freedom actually implies a feeling of suffocation: "her whole body was tense, so tense that the clothes on her back were burning, and she would have liked to tear them all off spontaneously, so that she could dance naked and sense this intoxicating frenzy even deeper inside her"(*Fear*, p. 42). Accordingly, Irene's trance does not embody her transformation into an emancipated woman. On the contrary it shows that the character suffers from a split personality and is entering into madness.

In his novel Nabokov too uses the metaphor of dance as disease to describe the «pneumonia cruposa» (*Izbrannye proizvedeniya*, p. 179) that Martha has contracted in the morning after sea bathing and sailing. Thus, when Martha, making great efforts on herself, goes to the party

organized by the hotel, “she felt a stranger to the icy noise around” (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 251). This feeling perfectly represents her physical troubles, such as shivers due to her fever, intense headaches and sensory disturbances (hearing and touch) which are suggested by an unpleasantness in her clothes that she cannot bear any more on her skin: “The black petals of her vaporous dress did not seem right, as if they would come apart at any moment. The tight touch of silk on her calves and the strip of garter along her bare thigh were infernal contacts” (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 251). As a result, she does not manage to get carried away by the lightness of a dance whose whirling becomes confused and painful to her and lays emphasis on her physical suffering: “The dance rhythm […] traced an angular line, the graph of her fever, along the surface of her skin. With every movement of her head, a compact pain rolled like a bowling ball from temple to temple” (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 251-252). Her disease leads her to turn into a double of herself, too. The use of the personal pronoun “ona” (“she”) shows that Martha sees herself from the outside, as following examples indicate: “She heard Martha Dreyer ask questions, supply answers; With an invisible hand she took Martha by the left wrist and felt her pulse; She noticed that Martha was dancing also, holding high a green world” (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 252). It seems that Martha no longer has a bodily envelope and sees herself as a ghost, hence the term “boginya” (*Izbrannye proizvedeniya*, p. 172) (“goddess”) (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 254) to refer to her so as to stress that she does not belong to the human world any more. All the same, she tries to dance in order to warm herself up and to get better, especially in the arms of Franz, who allowed her to become an independent woman: "’Closer, closer,’ she murmured. ‘Make me feel warm.’” (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 253). But at this moment the young man rejects her and refuses to take care of her, leaving her alone in her fight against illness.

The dance, which should have symbolized Irene’s and Marta’s last attempt to get out of their idle existence and affections, actually represents a dance of death (“danse macabre”), i.e. a dance with the death that originally depicts the vanity of social distinctions death ignores, carrying off all classes. Moreover, at the beginning of the 20th century the dance of death embodies a new form of eroticism that the German playwright Frank Wedekind stages in several dramas, especially in *Totentanz* (*Dance of Death*) (1905). Thus, this last dance leads the female characters to death. Death, foreshadowed by the split personality and progressive detachment from real existence, is the only

thing that can relieve both women of their troubles: Irene, not knowing any more how to get out of the situation with her tormentor and refusing to confess her sin to her husband, decides to commit suicide by taking some poison (at the end of the short story she is saved *in extremis*), while Martha dies some days later as the result of her pneumonia which was not treated on time. Moreover, this reality, which catches the characters up, is foreshadowed by their abrupt awakening, caused by the intervention of their spouse – with whom they do not dance once – and which compels them to go back to their torpor. Irene is scared by the severe and cold glance of Wagner who asks her suddenly: « Irene, was hast du? » (*Angst*, p. 22) ("Irene, what's the matter?") (*Fear*, p. 43), having seen her dancing ardently. As for Martha, when Dreyer, a mediocre dancer, asks her to dance with him when she has already danced with all the men sitting at her table, she refuses and says: « - Pojdyom domoj […]. – Mne kak-to nekhorosho... » (*Izbrannye proizvedeniya*, p. 172) ("'Get me out of there' […] 'I'm not feeling well.'" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 255). Furthermore, both deaths are forecasted by a nightmare following the party and the dance, in which both young women are confronted with their vanity and tensions of their respective illnesses.

Nabokov, however, takes up Zweig's devices in a more prosaic way; he does not use a psychological disorder, but a physical illness. Thus the writer not only refers to the disturbance of Martha's mechanism after her transformation into an automaton (as for instance Alfred Appel Jr. and Vera Polishchuk have stated), but he also makes a fool of his bourgeois female character, led to death by her extreme materialism. Furthermore, he uses his favorite device, i.e. parody which he characterized as a "grotesque imitation" and a "lighthearted, delicate, mockingbird game" (*Strong Opinions*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973, pp. 75-76). Nabokov, as a cinema lover, is also parodying the melodrama, a very fashionable and popular genre of early cinema at the beginning of the 20th century, describing the life of the middle class and the difficult existence of the individual, dominated by money and influence. In his early years the author probably saw the Russian films of Yevgeni Bauer, for example, *Nemye svideteli* (*Silent Witnesses*) (1914) and *Koroleva ekrana* (*The Queen of the Screen*) (1916), and some German movies with Asta Nielsen, such as Urban Gad's *Der Totentanz* (*The Dance of Death*) (1912), or chamber plays and films (Kammerspiel), written by Max Reinhard or Carl Mayer. Thus, Nabokov transforms the tragic into the grotesque. That's why he also

makes Dreyer blind to his wife's deception, whereas Wagner knows about Irene's adultery and engages an actress to play the blackmailer role so that his wife would confess her guilt. In this way, it is Nabokov who is the tyrant, not the protagonist, as in Zweig: he does not save his character; on the contrary he punishes Martha for her *poshlust*.

—Alexia Gassin, Paris

NABOKOV'S RE-TRANSLATION OF SOUTHEY'S BALLAD IN ZHUKOVSKY'S RENDITION

In the summer of 1998, a colleague of mine, who taught a course at Cornell Adult University, invited me to lecture on Nabokov before her students. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the students in that class were Cornell alumni. Among them, there were some who not only had been at Cornell during the Nabokov decade but who had taken classes with him. One such student was Mrs. Jean Schultheis Brechter who had studied with Nabokov in the Fall of 1948, her last and Nabokov's first semester at Cornell. Mrs. Schultheis Brechter informed me that she had kept the class handouts and promised to send me their copies.

Indeed, several weeks later I received the handouts. They belonged to Nabokov's Russian literature survey course in translation. The handouts contained English translations of the works by Archpriest Avvakum, Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Karamzin, Griboedov, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Tiutchev—the last three by Nabokov himself and taken from his *Three Poets* collection (1944). The handouts also contained Nabokov's re-translation from Russian into English of two ballads, *God's Judgment on a Wicked Bishop* (1799) by Robert Southey and *Lord Ullin's Daughter* by Thomas Campbell (1804). The handout states: "Two poems translated by Zhukovsky (1783–1855) [an obvious typo: Zhukovsky died in 1852], from the English. The following is a literal re-translation into English from the Russian text and should be compared to the originals by Robert Southey (1774–1843) and Thomas Campbell (1777–1844). Zhukovsky also translated the English poets Gray, Thompson, Pope, Goldsmith, Walter Scott and Byron."

The text of Zhukovsky's Russian rendition of Campbell's poem and Nabokov's re-translation of it into English may be found in *Verses and Versions. Three Centuries of Russian Poetry*, ed. Brian Boyd and Stanislav Shvabrin (Orlando: Harcourt, 2008), 54–57.

Nabokov's re-translation of Zhukovsky's rendition of Southey's ballad, however, is not included in the collection. I reproduce it here as it appears in the handout, side by side with Zhukovsky's text:

	The Judgment of God. A ballad (a German legend) By Zhukovsky from Southey
1 Были и лето и осень дождливы; Были потоплены пажити, нивы; Хлеб на полях не созрел и пропал; Сделался голод, народ умирал.	1 Summer and autumn had been rainy; pastures and cornfields had been drowned; the corn did not ripen and was lost; there was famine, the people died.
2 Но у епископа милостью неба Полны амбары огромные хлеба; Жито сберег прошлогоднее он: Был осторожен епископ Гаттон.	2 But by the grace of Providence the bishop's enormous barns were full of grain; he had kept last year's harvest, he was a careful man, was the bishop.
3 Рвутся толпой и голодный и нищий В двери епископа, требуя пищи; Скуп и жесток был епископ Гаттон: Общей бедою не тронулся он.	3 A swarm of hungry and destitute people hurled itself at the bishop's door, demanding bread; the bishop was a miserly and cruel man, the general misfortune did not touch him.
4 Слушать их вопли ему надоело; Вот он решился на страшное дело: Бедных из ближних и	4 In fact, he grew tired of hearing the wailing; and so he decided to commit a terrible deed; the word went round that

дальних сторон, Слышно, скликает епископ Гаттон.	the bishop was calling the poor from near and far. *The handout contains a typo: "drew" instead of "grew"*
5 «Дожили мы до нежданного чуда: Вынул епископ добро из-под спуда; Бедных к себе на пирушку зовет»,– Так говорил изумленный народ.	5 "We have lived to see an unexpected marvel: the bishop has unlocked his storehouse; he is inviting the poor to a feast," thus said the amazed people.
6 К сроку собралися званые гости, Бледные, чахлые, кожа да кости; Старый, огромный сарай отворен, В нем угостит их епископ Гаттон.	6 In due time the guests assembled, they were pale and sickly, nothing but skin and bones. The enormous ancient granary stood open, it was there that the bishop meant to entertain his guests.
7 Вот уж столпились под кровлей сарая Все пришлецы из окружного края... Как же их принял епископ Гаттон? Был им сарай и с гостями сожжен.	7 So they all crowded into the barn, visitors from the region around. How did the bishop receive them? He burnt barn and guests.
8 Глядя епископ на пепел пожарный, Думает: «Будут мне все благодарны; Разом избавил я шуткой моей	8 As he contemplated the ashes left by the fire, the bishop told to himself, "Everybody will be grateful to me; thanks to my little joke the

Край наш голодный от жадных мышей».	famished country has been forthwith delivered of avid mice." The quotation marks are omitted in the handout.
9 В замок епископ к себе возвратился, Ужинать сел, пировал, веселился, Спал, как невинный, и снов не видал... Правда! но боле с тех пор он не спал.	9 The bishop went back to his castle, sat down to supper, feasted, was merry, slept like an innocent man and did not have any dreams. True—but that was the last time he slept.
10 Утром он входит в покой, где висели Предков портреты, и видит, что съели Мыши его живописный портрет, Так, что холстины и признака нет.	10 Next morning he entered a chamber wherein hung family portraits and saw that mice had eaten his own picture, and done it so thoroughly that no trace was left of the canvas.
11 Он обомлел; он от страха чуть дышит... Вдруг он чудесную ведомость слышит: «Наша округа мышами полна, В житницах съеден весь хлеб до зерна».	11 He stood there aghast; he could hardly breathe for fear. All of a sudden a wondrous rumor reached him: "Our province is overrun by mice, the grain in the barns has been all eaten up!"
12 Вот и другое в ушах загремело: «Бог на тебя за вчерашнее дело! Крепкий твой замок, епископ Гаттон, Мыши со всех осаждают сторон».	12 Then something else thundered in his ears: "God rises against you for yesterday's business: your strong castle, o bishop, is besieged by mice on all sides."

13 Ход был до Рейна от замка подземной; В страхе епископ дорогою темной К берегу выйти из замка спешит: «В Реинской башне спасусь» (говорит).	13 There was an underground passage from the castle to the river Rhine. The terrified bishop took this dark path in his hurry to get out of the castle onto the riverbank: “I shall find safety,” he said, “in the Tower of the Rhine.”
14 Башня из Реинских вод подымалась; Издали острым утесом казалась, Грозно из пены торчащим, она; Стены кругом ограждала волна.	14 This was a tower that rose out of the waters. From a distance it looked like a pointed rock grimly jutting out of the foam; the surrounding waves protected its walls.
15 В легкую лодку епископ садится; К башне причалил, дверь запер и мчится Вверх по гранитным, крутым ступеням; В страхе один затворился он там.	15 The bishop stepped into a bobbing boat, reached the tower, slammed the door behind him and rushed up the steep granite steps. There the frightened man locked himself up.
16 Стены из стали казалися слиты, Были решетками окна забиты, Ставни чугунные, каменный свод, Дверью железною запертый вход.	16 The walls of the tower were as strong as steel, the windows had bars upon them; there were shutters of iron, a ceiling of stone and a locked iron door.
17 Узник не знает, куда приютиться; На пол, зажмурив глаза, он ложится... Вдруг он испуган стенаньем глухим:	17 The prisoner could not find rest. At last he lay down on the floor and closed his eyes. Suddenly a kind of dull moan made him startle.

Вспыхнули ярко два глаза над ним.	Two eyes gleamed brightly over him. *The handout contains a typo: "start" instead of "startle."*
18 Смотрит он... кошка сидит и мяучит; Голос тот грешника давит и мучит; Мечется кошка; невесело ей: Чует она приближенье мышей.	18 He looked—and it was a cat sitting there and miaowing. The sound oppressed and tormented the sinner. The cat began to dash this way and that, there was no pleasure in her awareness of the advancing mice. *The handout contains a typo: "o" is omitted in "miaowing," the British spelling of the cat's crying sound.*
19 Пал на колени епископ и криком Бога зовет в исступлении диком. Воет преступник... а мыши плывут... Ближе и ближе... доплыли... ползут.	19 The bishop fell on his knees and cried out to his God in a frenzy of fear. The criminal wailed… and the mice swam nearer and nearer…they had crossed the river…they were crawling up.
20 Вот уж ему в расстоянии близком Слышно, как лезут с роптаньем и писком; Слышно, как стену их лапки скребут; Слышно, как камень их зубы грызут.	20 And now quite near they could be heard swarming up with soughing and sibilant sounds, their little paws scraping against the walls, their teeth nibbling at the stone.

21 Вдруг ворвались неизбежные звери; Сыплются градом сквозь окна, сквозь двери, Спереди, сзади, с боков, с высоты... Что тут, епископ, почувствовал ты?	21 Suddenly they broke in, the unavoidable beasts; they stumbled in through window and door, from all sides, from above, from below. O bishop, what did you feel then?
22 Зубы об камни они навострили, Грешнику в кости их жадно впустили, Весь по суставам раздернут был он... Так был наказан епископ Гаттон. Russian text: V. A. Zhukovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 20 vols. (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul´tur, 1999-), 3: 176–78.	22 The teeth they had sharpened against the stones now avidly sank into the flesh of the sinner. He was dismembered bone by bone, so was he punished, the bishop.

Although Nabokov calls his re-translation literal, it cannot be fully qualified as such. Lack of space does not allow for a line-by-line comparison of Zhukovsky's translation and Nabokov's re-translation of Southey's poem, so I shall limit myself to certain examples.

To begin with, Nabokov changed Zhukovsky's title, *Sud Bozhii nad episkopom* (*God's Judgment on the Bishop*) to *The Judgment of God*. He also omitted the bishop's name—Gatton in Zhukovsky's adaptation. In addition, the re-translation contains a number of inaccuracies that may be divided into three principal categories: 1. imprecision of translation, 2. padding, and 3. omissions. I shall point out the most noticeable among them.

1. At the end of the first stanza, the phrase "narod umiral[,]" that is, "the people were dying[,]" is translated as "the people died." In the last line of the sixth stanza, Zhukovsky's "ugostit[,]" that is "will entertain," is translated as "meant to entertain[.]" In the

second line of the eighth stanza, Zhukovsky's "dumaet," literally "thinks," or possibly "muses," is translated as "told to himself." In the first line of the fifteenth stanza, Zhukovsky's "V legkuiu lodku episkop saditsia," that is, "The bishop sits down into a light boat," is translated as "The bishop stepped into a bobbing boat[.]" Although not rendered literally, the adjective "bobbing" masterfully expresses the up-and-down motion of the boat and preserves the alliteration, "b-b-b" as a substitution for Zhukovsky's "l-l." In the next line of the same stanza "k bashne prichalil," that is "he moored to the tower," is translated as "reached the tower[.]" The last line of this same stanza, "V strakhe odin zatvorilsia on tam[,]" that is "In fear he locked himself alone in there[,]" is translated as "There the frightened man locked himself up"; although not entirely accurate, the phrase conveys the notion of the bishop's self-imprisonment in the tower. In the second line of the twentieth stanza, Zhukovsky's "s roptan´em i piskom[,]" that is "with murmur and squeak[,]" is translated as "with soughing and sibilant sounds[.]" Once again, although not entirely accurate, the phrase in question as well as the entire stanza alliteratively express the sound of the approaching mice. In the second line of the penultimate, twenty-first, stanza, in the phrase "skvoz´ okna, skvoz´ dveri," that is "through windows, through doors," the nouns are singularized, and the second "through" is replaced with "and": "through window and door [.]" In the second line of the last stanza, the locution "kosti" ("bones") is translated as "flesh" which is semantically more correct; in the next and penultimate line of the poem, the phrase "po sustavam," that is "joint by joint," is translated as "bone by bone."

2. In the beginning of the fourth and seventeenth stanzas, the respective phrases "In fact," and "At last," are added in the re-translation. The second line of the sixth stanza, "blednye, chakhlye, kozha da kosti[,]" that is, "pale, sickly, skin and bones[,]" is translated as "they were pale and sickly, nothing but skin and bones." In the last line of the ninth stanza, Zhukovsky's "Pravda! no bole s tekh por on ne spal." ("True! But since then he had slept no more.") is translated as "True—but that was the last time he slept." The concluding line of the tenth stanza in Zhukovsky's rendition "Tak, chto kholstiny i priznaka net." ("So

that there is no sign of the canvas.") is translated as "and done it so thoroughly that no trace was left of the canvas." In the first two lines of the nineteenth stanza, Zhukovsky's "krikom Boga zovyot[,]" that is "cries out to God[,]" is translated as "cried out to his God[.]"

3. In the first line of the fourteenth stanza, the phrase "reinskikh vod[,]" that is "Rhine waters[,]" is translated as "the waters[.]" The thrice-repeated anaphora in the twentieth stanza, "Slyshno," that is "One can hear," is omitted.

This re-Englished ballad of Southey's demonstrates that as late as 1948 Nabokov began developing a new method of translation. He abandoned the traditional practice of verse paraphrase, as exemplified by *The Three Poets* collection, which was inevitably fraught with both padding and omission. Instead, Nabokov strove for semantic precision and adopted the principle of prosaic equilinearity, or as he put it many years later, "limited my efforts to a plain, prosy, and rhymeless translation" (*SO* 231). Nevertheless, this re-translation of Zhukovsky's rendition of Southey's ballad reveals that Nabokov's approach was still in the making, as he had not yet quite developed the method of total and strict literality. It took Nabokov several more years to perfect this method which he employed in his translation of *Eugene Onegin.*

I am indebted to Mrs. Jean Schultheis Brechter, Cornell University alumna, class of 1949, for placing the handouts at my disposal. I am also most grateful to Slava Paperno, my Cornell colleague, for his invaluable help in formatting the translations of the ballad.

—Gavriel Shapiro, Ithaca, New York

VICTOR WIND'S MORE PLAUSIBLE FATHER

Victor Wind, the young artist to whom the narrator of *Pnin* devotes most of its central chapter, is linked at various points to three different fathers: there's Eric Wind, his legal and, one assumes, biological parent;

there's Pnin, the boy's "water father" according to Eric (55), who before Victor is born plans to adopt him; and there's "the King," Victor's "more plausible father" (85)—a creation of his own imagination about whom he regularly fantasizes.

The suggestion I'm advancing here concerns a fourth potential father: the narrator himself. The narrator strictly avoids divulging details about his affair with Victor's mother (to realize that it occurred at all, one has to connect two sentences separated by more than a hundred pages), but let me point out the few crumbs of evidence that might lead one to wonder whether that affair was rekindled around the time Victor was conceived (the summer of 1940, during Liza's sixteen-month separation from Pnin).

1. Near the end of the novel, the narrator tells us about a letter Pnin has written him, the big news of which is his refusal to join the new Russian Division at Waindell. It would be easy to overlook the small talk that follows: "Then he turned to other subjects. Victor (about whom I had politely inquired) was in Rome with his mother; she had divorced her third husband and married an Italian art dealer" (186).

That parenthetical aside is puzzling to me, and—in a book that buries so much treasure between parentheses ("O Careless Reader!")—it seems worth digging into. Why would the narrator "politely inquire" about Victor Wind? It's true that Pnin and Victor have struck up a charming relationship, but would Pnin expect the narrator to know about it? Pnin's last recorded interaction with the narrator was on the hundredth anniversary of Gogol's death (March 4, 1952). It's hard to believe that at that point Pnin would have expressed much interest in or attachment to Victor: he would not yet have been visited by or even exchanged his first letters with the boy. All that begins some time after Liza's visit, which occurs in the middle of the spring semester of 1952 (probably around Easter, the holiday that links several of the main events and ruling images of Chapter 2).

The narrator says he inquires "politely," as if this were an obligatory matter of manners, but that adjective seems suspiciously defensive, and patently false: there's nothing polite about a question that touches on two of Pnin's greatest humiliations—two times he imagined himself loved by Liza, only to find that she was using him to solve a problem with another man. The narrator might, I suppose, ask Pnin, "How are Liza and her boy?" But the sentence here reads, "Victor was in Rome with his mother," not "Liza was in Rome with her

son." Especially when one considers the number of pages the narrator devotes to Victor, his interest in the boy seems much more than polite.

2. When we first learn about Victor's artistic talent, the narrator tells us that his parents, Eric and Liza "used to worry gloomily about its genetic cause." This might seem at first just another blind conformity of Eric and Liza's ("morbidly concerned with heredity," with the ways Victor ought to resemble his forebears), they fail to enjoy the beauty in his unique genius). But what follows is a rather painstaking paragraph that appears to take these questions seriously: Is Victor's sense of color like that of Eric's grandfather, a stained glass artist? Is his exactness like that of Liza's great grandfather, a celebrated mathematician? "One wonders," the narrator admits in the very brief final line of the paragraph, as though he, too, wonders, or worries, gloomily (89).

Wouldn't the gloomiest worry about Victor's genes be that none of them come from Eric—that Liza, attached to so many different men over the course the chapters she appears in, conceived him while cheating with someone else? And if this is the case, isn't the likeliest suspect the one who shares Victor's exquisite gift for perceiving and depicting colors, shadows, and reflective surfaces?

Is the narrator Victor Wind's father? I think we're meant to wonder, and to think that the narrator wonders, too. And that wondering, that ghost of a possibility, can enrich our understanding of the narrator's choices: of his making such a secret of his affair with Liza, of his depiction of Eric Wind as abandoning all interest in Victor, of his giving the boy such a central role in the book and turning him into its most sensitive observer.

I've been talking about the narrator here mostly as a character who dwells in the world of the story, but in another sense, as its writer and creator, he of course "fathers" all its characters. And in Victor, he seems to create a perfect child, an artist endowed with supreme vision, unerring taste, immunity to fads and conventions. When Victor Wind tries to fall asleep, he indulges in daydreams about an ideal parent. Perhaps, in Victor, the narrator does the same, daydreaming about an ideal son.

—David Khoury, Brooklyn, New York

PLAUSIBLE, POSSIBLE, PROBABLE

The art of telling a likely and fruitful literary source from an accidental and fatuous one often depends less on erudition than on acquired intuition. The never-ending hunt for a true antecedent, often pointless, is a natural product of learned reading, with attendant flashes of a déjà lu every once in a while. A sense of what is plausible and what isn't often can and should be explained rationally. Thus, Michael Maar's proposition that *Lolita* could be traced back to Heinz von Lichberg's 1916 short story so titled could serve as a case study of what a Russian saying calls "a finger in the sky." Had Nabokov known of the story, professional conventions and authorial self-respect surely would have turned Lolita into Lilitha or Beljana or Juanita (the name he had actually tried on the girl at first). The argument for a sort of Platonic cryptomnesia (knew, forgot, stored subconsciously, used unwittingly) that is usually advanced in these cases is inherently weak because it's beyond meaningful validation.

Here are three chance samples of reasonably close thematic and even textual associations, as tempting as they are inconsequential. The first two come from Zamiatin, whose 1920s prose Nabokov must have read.

> Marthe [*Marfin'ka* in the original] began deceiving him during the very first year of their marriage; anywhere and with anybody. <…> Sometimes, to justify herself, she would explain to him,"You know what a kind creature [*dobren'kaia*] I am: it's such a small thing, and it's such a relief to a man."

This is from Chapter Two of *Invitation to a Beheading*. Compare:

> "Oh you, my poor darling, what am I to do with you? Oh well, then, come on, honey [*milen'kii*], come over here to me!" She would say this to the Socialist-Revolutionary Perepechko ("the poor thing [*bednen'kii*], he's been jailed once"), and to Khaskin of the Communist cell ("the poor dear, such a scrawny neck, just like a chicken!"), and to the telegraph clerk Alyoshka ("the poor dear—sits there and scribbles away the livelong day!"), and to—
>
> And it was then that the accursed legacy of capitalism made itself evident in the deacon: the private property instinct. And

> the deacon said: "But I want you to be mine alone, so that no one else can… You know what I mean?"—"Ah, my poor dear! Of course I know, I kno-w! But then what can I do when they beg me so?.. I ain't got made of stone, I feel so sorry for them!" (*Yevgeny Zamyatin,* The Dragon. Fifteen Stories. *Translated by Mirra Ginsburg's [revised by me, here and in the example below]. New York: Random House, 1967, p. 225).*

The situation, the grotesquery, the wording, including the knack for infantile diminutives in both pieces, are alike to a striking degree, and Zamiatin's story precedes Nabokov's by about eight years. Are these two certainties enough to establish indebtedness? Not for me: the fact that the two women are namesakes (Zamiatin's is also Martha) not only does not increase the probability of a witting reference but brushes it away, for, again, I think that had Nabokov had Zamiatin's story in mind or memory, he would have assigned another suitable name to Cincinnatus's far-embracing wife.

The next example is culled from another, even more famous, Zamiatin story:

> She bends lower and lower, and lightly strokes the back of the Rhopalocera [throughout that loose story Zamiatin is under the doubly odd impression that (1) this is a singular noun, and (2) that it is the name not of the whole diurnal class of lepidoptera but of a specific butterfly, whose caterpillar he identifies only as a "silken-yellow worm"] <...> When I was little, I used to raise them into butterflies. One hatched in winter, at Christmastime, the windows were covered with ice, and it kept flying round and round…" *(ibid., p. 176).*

Unlike the previous, "A Story About the Most Important Thing" antedates Nabokov's "Christmas" (published in two 1924 Christmas issues of *The Rudder*) by less than a year. It was moreover published in the sort of fellow-traveller, private, short-lived (shut down by the time "Christmas" came out) Petrograd magazine (*Russkii Sovremennik*) that Nabokov might well have spotted and glanced over in a Berlin Russian bookstore. He could have chanced upon that "worm Rhopalocera" howler, then skimmed the whole dawdling story. In this light, it is not improbable that the sentence about a butterfly (a *heteroceron* in VN's

story) appearing from its chrysalid on a Christmas night might steer Nabokov's fancy towards hatching the plot of his story.

My last example is "Potato Elf," yet another story of 1924 (not 1929, as Nabokov erroneously states in his introduction to the English version), an annus mirabilis for his prose, its quality jumping, in a number of short stories published that year, from green to ripe without a perceptible transition. Did he know of the "celebrated dwarf" Joseph Boruwlaski, who entertained at various courts in the 18th c., resided in London, retired to Durham, lived almost to a hundred and died the same year as Pushkin (when, in an unrelated but curious coincidence, Lord Durham was the British Ambassador in St Petersburg)? He was about the same height as Fred Dobson, was a "plaything" for Countess Anna Humiecka, his benevolist of questionable philanthropy, who could be in turn generous and cruel and who dismissed him when he married, at forty, a lady-in-waiting (not a midget). After they divorced, he lived in London, then moved north, to Durham (Dobson withdraws to "Drowse, a tiny town in the north of England"). Like Dobson, Boruwlaski was comfortable in his retirement, and in possession of a natural talent. He published interesting memoirs that went through four editions, all during his lifetime, whose master motto, "Mysterious Nature! Who thy works shall scan? / Behold a child in size, in sense a man," would be at home in Shade's (or Pope's) pentameters.

Are all those parallels accidental? Impossible to say with any confidence. Homotextuality is a tricky matter.

—Robert Aldwinckle, Tiptree, Essex, U.K.

NOTES ON NABOKOV'S "NOTES ON MY FATHER"

by Shun'ichiro Akikusa, The University of Tokyo

Recently, I have found a clipping of an unfamiliar article "Notes on my Father" by Nabokov in Houghton Library at Harvard University. It appeared in New York's "a political and cultural magazine"—as Wikipedia said—*The New Leader* (9 May 1966). *The New Leader* published this essay as "Spring Books" with Stanly Edgar Hyman's article "Nabokov's Distorting Mirrors."

The text, however, is a verbatim excerpt of the first part of Chapter 9 of *Speak, Memory*. On the other hand, as far as I know, Nabokov scholarship has overlooked this tiny piece for a long time. Michael Juliar's *Vladimir Nabokov: A Descriptive Bibliography* (1986) reads:

> C603 Memoir in English: My Russian Education. New York: The New Leader, 9May66, pp.8-10. note: Revision of part of Chap.6 of A26.1, which appeared in A26.6; with drawing of Nabokov (527)

Juliar confirms that this was slip of the pen. It is not a part of Chapter 6 but Chapter 9. In this vein, this verbatim reproduction sheds dim light on the creative process of Nabokov's autobiography; Chapter 9 of *Conclusive Evidence* (1951) consists of "My Russian Education," which firstly appeared in *The New Yorker* (18 September 1948). When revising the memoir into an autobiography in 1966, he also wrote the first part of the chapter separately (the Russian memoir *Drugie berega* [1954] also does not include this part). Nabokov named and sold the piece as "Notes on my Father" to *The New Leader* as a kind of announcement of his revised autobiography. The article was illustrated with two drawings—a profile of the author and Soviet citizens in a book store.

TRANSLATED ANNOTATIONS

A NEW LOOK AT NABOKOV'S *HARLEQUINS*

Andrei Babikov

The following marginal notes appeared in the course of my Russian annotated translation of the Nabokov's last novel, published in 2012 by S.-Petersburg publishing house "Azbuka" (second corrected and expanded edition, 2014), and their purpose is confined to practical significance: to find the right point of view on this complicated quasi-biography for its proper translation.

LATH! as a novel about novels and romances. The heroine of Nabokov's last Russian novel, as he mentions in his foreword to its English translation as *The Gift*, was "Russian literature" itself; his last completed work in English turned out to be a novel about novels and romances, which are closely related to one another. According to the rules of Nabokov's symmetry (something not yet described or even broached in the scholarship), these two books, separated by almost forty years, bear more than thematic similarities. Is it not remarkable that the title *The Gift* contains a palindrome (in Russian, *Dar*, which reads backwards as "rad"—glad, pleased, happy), while there is an acronym (*LATH*) in English title of *Look at the Harlequins!*; and that *The Gift* was followed by one more unfinished Russian novel, *Solus Rex*, just as the unfinished *The Original of Laura* trailed after *Look at the Harlequins!*? Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev's love for Zina Mertz reveals to him a pattern of events in his life, a secret "work of fate," and inspires him to write a novel about it (in effect *The Gift* itself). Similarly, the narrator of *Look at the Harlequins!*, writes his first real poem (*Vlyublyonnost'*—being in love) upon falling in love with Iris, and his love for her continues to nourish his art even after her tragic death, up until he meets Annette. His love for the unnamed character "You" gives him an opportunity to finish *Ardis* and then write the very novel "about love and prose" which we read as *Look at the Harlequins!*. Conversely, when left by Annette, his second wife, V.V. finds himself unable to write his intended *The Invisible Lath* (the prototype of *Look at the Harlequins!*), and for sixteen years, from 1946, when Annette left him, to 1962, when he was already married to Louise, he did not compose a single novel, publishing only a collection of stories he had written previously. "In this memoir," V.V. writes, "my wives and my

books are interlaced monogrammatically like some sort of watermark or *ex libris* design." Throughout this "oblique autobiography," he cannot escape the hideous suspicion that the people and situations in it are taken by somebody *ex libris* ("from books"), that "even Ardis, my most private book, soaked in reality... might be an unconscious imitation of another's unearthly art." Even this fatal suspicion, however, retreats when he finds in "You" the most complete expression of his love.

At this point love and art become one, and You in the novel becomes the most true personification of our narrator's art, his transformed reflection, because You, and Iris, and Bella, as well as Lolita, and Ada, and giddy Nina from *Spring in Fialta*, and prim Anna Blagovo (Anna "vo blago"—for good), and fragile Flora Wild, and cruel Nina Lecerf (who by the way is mentioned in the novel), all of them represent allegories of art, its personification, the very brittle flesh of it.

Understatement and reticence. Nabokov's established methods, apparent in many of his more or less transparent things, reappear in the last novel as a harmonious system of implicit narrative. A number of hints, indications and omens are left without any explanation. Why, at the end of the first part, does the narrator call Ivor and a taximan "two palm readers"? (They counted small change on a palm.) To whom does he say in Ch. 3, p. II: "Oh, how things and people tortured me, my dear heart, I could not tell you!" (To his bride, You, whom he will meet only in the sixth part, and of whom the reader is still unaware.) Why does he call the name of his American travel companion (in Ch. 3, p. V) *Havemeyer* (a well-known American family) "rather incredible"? What is so incredible about it? (Because it personifies an image of a "lilac lady," which occurs in the novel more than once, and one of the varieties of lilac, created in America in 1922—the same year the story in *Look at the Harlequins!* begins—was named "Katherine Havemeyer.") What is the point of Ivor's joke (Ch. 8, p. I), saying that French reporters pronounce the name of Madge Titheridge as "si c'est riche"—"is this really a rich person?" (Her last name is formed from the English word *tithe*, which means among other things a minor portion, a small part). And who is she, this Madge, as well as another unknown quantity mentioned there and then—a certain Vivian?

More complex examples of intentional reticence or concealing of logical connections also have greater interaction with other elements of the book—its subjects, characters, images, literary sources. Thus, in Ch. 7, p. I, when Iris hears on a hillside "a roar of unearthly ecstasy" (later it

becomes clear that it was the famous pianist and entomologist Kanner who has cried out, because he caught a rare butterfly), she exclaims: "Goodness … I do hope that's not a happy escapee from Kanner's Circus." What Iris means by "Kanner's Circus" is not explained, and only the comparison of multiple details from various parts of the book provides a clear and witty answer. In Ch. 3, p. II, after Iris' death, hearing the name *Oksman*, a character calls him an *oxman* and immediately notices in parentheses: "what a shiver my Iris derived from Dr. Moreau's island zoo—especially from such bits as the 'screaming shape,' still half-bandaged, escaping out of the lab!" This remark brings us back to Ch. 5, p. I, in which Iris admits that she "adores Wells," and to the place in Ch. 7 p. I, where she calls Kanner "The brute": "She brooded over the thousand little creatures he had tortured."

Only now does the sense of her allegory about the "escapee from Kanner's Circus" become clear as a comparison with the vivisectionist Dr. Moreau from the Wells novel. However, a dark sense of her words emerges more fully if we compare them with the tragic fate of Oksman, described at the end of Ch. 4, p. II, and with the terrible fate of Vladimir Blagidze about which we learn at the end of the first part. Leaving it to the reader to collect the shreds he has scattered, the narrator says that the same "oxman" Oksman "was to die when attempting an intrepid escape—when almost having escaped— barefoot, in bloodstained underwear, from the 'experimental hospital' of a Nazi concentration camp." At the end of the first part we learn that Blagidze, who shot Iris, was placed "at the very special hospital of the renowned Dr. Lazareff, a very round, mercilessly round, building on the top of a hill". Thus it turns out that the phrase about the "escapee from Kanner's Circus" (circus—circle) is not just a random fantasy of well-read Iris, but an eerie prediction, one ray of which leads to the publisher Oksman and another—to her own murderer.

Poetry in the novel serves compositional purposes just as effective as the techniques of aposiopesis. Additionally, it points to the immobility of time in the novel. V.V.'s last verses near the novel's end—

> Along a slanting ray, like this
> I slipped out of paralysis.

—bring us back to Ch. 4, p. I, which describes the character's night insanity ("The hideous pang in my brain was triggered by some hint of

faint light in the line of my sight, for no matter how carefully I might have topped the well-meaning efforts of a servant by my own struggles with blinds and purblinds, there always remained some damned slit, some atom or dimmet of artificial streetlight or natural moonlight that signaled inexpressible peril when I raised my head with a gasp above the level of a choking dream"); the line from Bella's poem "and the intelligent trail" (Ch. 3, p. IV)—links back to the path that brought the young character out of Soviet Russia at the beginning of the novel; the "striped scarf" of Odas' revelatory poem (Ch. 4, p. IV) recalls the narrator's Cambridge scarf and the episode with Oksman, when the idea comes to V.V. that his life is "an inferior variant of another man's life... other writer" (Ch. 3, p. II). But most of all the subjects and motifs of the novel are covered by the poem *Vlyublyonnost*, representing nothing less than a summary of its entire conception: reticence ("reticence is better..."), which we have already reviewed, and "panic in the night," and a drowning swimmer (as well as the vision of V.V. after his collapse: "...the raft on which I lay, a naked old man [. . .] gliding supine into a full moon whose snaky reflections rippled among the water lilies"), and the repeated dream of a young sweetheart that a character has every time he is in love ("While the dreaming is good [. . .] do keep appearing to us in our dreams, vlyublyonnost"), and "hereafter" ("...I definitely felt my family name began with an N and bore an odious resemblance to the surname or pseudonym of a presumably notorious [. . .] Bulgarian, or Babylonian, or, maybe, Betelgeusian writer with whom scatterbrained émigrés from some other galaxy constantly confused me"), and "that moonbeam," and "waking up."

Macnab, Naborcroft, Nablidze and so on.—Like the cryptograms of the name of our narrator (and the titles of his books), the names of many (or, most likely, all without exception) Russian and American writer-characters (poets, critics) can be deciphered, often in both languages. Through this technique a Russian name, as the late Omry Ronen noted,[1] can refer to an American author (for example, Suknovalov —to Roy Fuller, Russian *suknoval*—fuller) and vice versa (e.g., Alden Landover—to Mark Aldanov, whose real last name is Landau). Aside from the actual degree of mystery of this or that name (who are implied

[1] Omry Ronen. "Emulation, anti-parody, intertextuality, and annotation," *Facta Universitatis*, Series: Linguistics and Literature, Vol. 3, № 2 (2005) p. 163.

by Oksman, Reich, Boris Nyet?), the difficulty here is also that several characters can refer to one real person (for example, Demian Basilevski, Hristofor Boyarski, Adam Atropovich all refer to Georgy Adamovich), or they can refer to two different people drawn together due to the similarity of their attitude to Nabokov, for example, Gerard Adamson indicates that "faithful zoilus" Adamovich, and also Edmund Wilson, who both died in 1972, the year before Nabokov started to write this novel. Principles of decoding (semantic, phonetic, analytical, anagrammatical) as in a classical novel *à clef* are proposed by the narrator himself, through the Russian and English titles of his books (for example, *The Dare—Dar - the Gift*), his transparent pen-name (V.Irisin—V.Sirin) and constantly turning the reader's attention to the various kinds of symmetry, mirror reflections, and to facts of his biography, turned inside out.

Turning point. D. B. Johnson noticed[2] the possible source of our narrator's main concern—his inability to perform a speculative turn, changing right to left—in the *The Plattner Story* by H. G. Wells (1896), which is not mentioned in the novel. A school teacher, Plattner, due to an accidental explosion during a chemical experiment, finds himself in "another world," one which has four dimensions. When he returns to reality, it turns out that the right and left sides of his body are reversed: for example, he can only write from right to left with his left hand, his heart beats on the right side and so on. Wells' reasoning about right- and left-side in space resonates with Iris' words in Ch. 8, p. I: "...to solve a stupid philosophical riddle—on the lines of what does 'right' and 'left' mean in our absence, when nobody is looking, in pure space...." Another possible source of this subject noted by Johnson is Martin Gardner, who undertook to answer this question in his popular science book *The Ambidextrous Universe* (1964), which Nabokov demonstrably knew.

"Patterns of transposed time and twisted space" (Ch. 3, p. IV).— Apparently, there is no other explanation for a number of inconsistencies in the novel. For example, it may be understood from one passage (ch.1, p. II) that V.V. sold the Riviera villa *Iris* after Iris' death; but another passage suggests that, already living in America, he turned the villa into something like a nursing home for his old relatives

[2] D. Barton Johnson, *Words in Regression: Some Novels of Vladimir Nabokov*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985, p 176.

and friends (ch. 2, p. III: "…moved to a comfortable home for the old into which I had recently turned my villa at Carnavaux…"). In the fifth part we are informed that going to Leningrad to find his daughter, he stayed there only for a couple of days; however from a passing reference in the third part to "...Cerberean bitches in the hotels of Soviet Siberia which I was to stop at a couple of decades later" it follows that he did not just have conversation at the Pushkin monument with Dora, who informed him that his daughter had disappeared, but went to search for her in Siberia, where Bella's husband had probably taken her.

Three or four wives. Our narrator, echoed by scholars writing about the novel, devotes a lot of space to the presentation of his relationships with his wives, his family successes and failures; however, the very first sentence of *LATH* implies the conventionality of these figures. How else can we explain the strange author's neglect in failing to specify the exact number of his wives (at the end of the book You accepts V.V.'s proposal and, therefore, becomes his fourth wife)? Unfaithful Iris and cold Annette die, giddy Louise leaves V.V. for the sake of a "count's son" (this indication is not accidental, since V.V. himself, just like Iris' killer Vladimir Blagidze, could be a son of count Starov), and only nameless You, the same age as his daughter Bella, promises the twice-widowed character maybe not a long life, but a happy one. The first meeting with each new wife; V.V's confession in one way or another of his mental defect prior to the marriage proposal; marriage; and the loss of the wife constitutes the outline of the novel, which amounts to a simple scheme. But what if this scheme only represents the unreal world that V. V. is trying to transcend: what if in the nonlinear time of the novel the wife was one and the same from the very beginning, only You, who passed through four stages of metamorphosis? Then the neglect of the narrator, unable to say how many times he has been married, turns out to be either a consequence of V.V.'s vague guess about the insignificance of the exact number, or the author's hint to the reader, who needs to know that unlike his character, the author was an expert in butterflies. The character, who believes that *ozimaya sovka* (*Agrotis segetum*) is a bird, is unaware that the very names of his three wives are taken from taxonomic names of butterflies: Iris—*Nympfialidae Apatura iris* (English name: Purple Emperor); Annette—*Lycaena annetta* of the Blue family (in 1943 Nabokov complied a detailed description of this

butterfly[3]); Louise—*Stichophthalma louise* of the *Nympfialidae* family. Also pointing to the connection between the narrator's wives and butterflies are a box on a wall in a Parisian restaurant called *Paon d'Or*, in which are displayed *four Morphidae* butterflies, and You's first Russian word about the flying butterfly in the scene where she first meets V.V.—"*metamorphoza.*"[4] The elegant solution to which the author leads us, and which we can now very cautiously suggest, is that the "three or four wives" of V.V. correlate with four stages of a butterfly's life cycle (egg, larva, pupa and imago) and thus represent (maybe in that different world, which our narrator dreams of so poignantly), the original one and only *You*, who personified love and happiness in their entirety.

[3] *Nabokov's Butterflies: Unpublished and Uncollected Writings*, ed. by B. Boyd and R. M. Pyle, Boston: Beacon Press, 2000, pp. 293-296

[4]In the course of discussing with Gennady Barabtarlo my conjecture that names of wives in the novel descend from the taxonomic names of butterflies, he concluded with his characteristic perspicacity that, if so, then the unnamed "You," as the last one in the series, refers to the butterfly *Morpho verae*. In the copy of *Drugie berega* that Nabokov presented to Véra in 1955, he inscribed a drawing of the invented butterfly "Véra's Morpho" with the inscription: "very, very rare." In the chapter about *LATH!* in *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* Brian Boyd has a keen eye for the link between "You" in the novel and "you" in Nabokov's autobiography; but, as Stephen Blackwell rightly noticed, "Aside from a few passing anticipatory references to 'You' and a handful of other upcoming life elements, Vadim holds strictly to his life's spatio-temporal trajectory" (*The Quill and the Scalpel: Nabokov's Art and the Worlds of Science*, Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009, p. 137).

ANNOTATIONS TO *ADA*, 39:
PART I CHAPTER 39

by Brian Boyd, University of Auckland

Forenote

In deciding to revisit Ardis in the summer of 1888, Van has wanted to recapture the magic and relive the thrill of his first summer with Ada in 1884. Nothing else that happens at Ardis in 1888 offers a more complete revival of the past than the picnic for Ada's birthday. Not only are the occasion and location the same, and many of the personnel, but another chance combination of departures means that Van has once again to sit with a sister on his lap on the little carriage taking them back to the manor. Even if this time it is Lucette rather than Ada perched on his lap, Van can relive in memory the first picnic ride, and the thrill of his first prolonged contact with Ada.

But despite the replay of the past, time has also marched on. Van and Ada are lovers, and slip off to make love while the picnic is being readied in the glade. Lucette has become an insatiably curious spy, and secretly observes them *in flagrante*. Greg Erminin again turns up, still hopelessly and meekly infatuated with Ada, but a more dangerous new rival to Van gatecrashes the party, the burly, drunken Percy de Prey, ready to challenge Van in a fight and perhaps even in a duel. Van oscillates between anxious antagonism toward Percy and security in his power over Percy's body and Ada's heart.

Annotations

266.01-282.32 Although fairly eclectic . . . out of the carriage: Cf. the picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday, in 1884, Pt. 1 Ch. 13. MOTIF: *replay*.

266.03: her birthday: July 21, 1888.

266.04: maize-yellow: The "maize" anticipates Ada's referring to her "husking" her trousers off, 267.02-6. Cf. 281.08-09: "husked-corn (laughing) trousers."

266.06: country comfort: Possibly echoes Hamlet's famous and obscene quip, just before the performance of the play-within-the-play:

> HAMLET: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
> OPHELIA: No, my lord.
> HAMLET: I mean, my head upon your lap?
> OPHELIA: Ay, my lord.
> HAMLET: Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA: I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs. (*Hamlet*, 3.2.112-19)

Cf. also *Mansfield Park*, ch. 48: "country pleasures."

266.10: "creepers": Sneakers (because "sneak up" and "creep up" can be synonymous?). W2 lists *creepers* (sense 6d) as an equivalent of "sneakers."

266.12: sun gouts: Cf. 86.20: "Hot gouts of sun." MOTIF: *gouts*.

266.12: the traditional pine glade: Traditional for Ada's birthday, since it occurs in high summer (cf. 79.08-09: "the picnic site, a picturesque glade in an old pinewood"); traditional also in novels, perhaps (there is a frequent tone of parodic narrative complacency in this chapter); and traditional for the Nabokov family. In a written interview with Andrew Field (1970), Nabokov notes that "the festive picnics" in his family's Russian past "are depicted in ADA (with some incrustations, of course)." Although VN's father had the same birthday as Ada, the closest of the festive occasions was the namesday on July 15 (Old Style) of three Sergeys (VN's uncle, cousin and brother) and two Vladimirs (his father and himself).

At 392.34, the glade is named for the first and only time as "Pinedale."

266.12: the wild girl: Cf. 393.29: "Two unrelated gypsy courtesans, a wild girl in a gaudy lolita . . . "; 416.14-15: "I am only a pale wild girl with gipsy hair in a deathless ballad."

266.13-14: a few moments of ravenous ardor in a ferny ravine: Note not only the play on *ravenous . . . ravine*, but also the hint of Demon ("*Raven*") *Veen*, and of *Ada Veen* in *ardour . . . ravine*. Cf. 79.08-09: "a picturesque glade in an old pinewood cut by ravishingly lovely ravines." Note how the sound-play in each introduction to the picnic, in 1884 and 1888, closely echoes yet also pointedly varies in ways that mark the change in Van and Ada's relations. Cf. also 286.21-22: "sly demon smile of remembered or promised ardour." MOTIF: *Ada, the ardors and arbors of Ardis*; *Veen*.

266.14-15: a rill . . . tall burnberry bushes: Cf. 83.32-33: "the Redmont rill (running just below the glade from a hill above Ardis)." The location is later identified (by retrospecting Van at least) as "Burnberry Brook" (286.24).

266.15: burnberry bushes: Cf. 85.03-04: "angry burnberry bush." MOTIF: *burnberry*.

266.16: cicada: With another play on "Ada," coming so soon after "a few moments of ravenous ardour" (266.13-14)? MOTIF: *Ada*.
266.17: Speaking as a character in an old novel: MOTIF: *novel*.
266.18-20: since I used to play word-games here with Grace and two other lovely girls: As the Kyoto Reading Circle notes, in I.13, "on her twelfth birthday picnic, there were only three girls. Ada played the word-game with Lucette and Grace. The fourth girl in her memory is Greg: the latter then 'put on his sister's blue skirt, hat and glasses, all of which transformed him into a very sick, mentally retarded Grace' (81.15-16)." MOTIF: *games*.
266.19-20: Insect, incest, nicest: Cf. 85.08-19. MOTIF: *incest*.
267.01: Speaking as a botanist and a mad woman: Cf. 266.16 above. Cf. also *Lolita* 17: "You have to be an artist and a madman." Decoding the 1886 telegram from Ada to their Manhattan house, in July 21, Ada's fourteenth birthday, Van intentionally misleads his father by deciphering "dadaist impatient patient . . . call doris" as referring to "a mad girl artist called Doris or Odris" (178.20-179.01). MOTIF: *as an X and a Y*.
267.02-06: "husked," . . . stood for opposite things, covered and uncovered, tightly husked but easily husked. . . . "Carefully husked brute": Cf. Ada's "maize-yellow slacks," 266.04. W2: "**husked** *adj*. Covered with a husk; also, stripped of its husk; deprived of husks." MOTIF: *husked*.
267.08: this adored creature: MOTIF: *adore*.
267.08-09: whose haunches had grown more lyrate: Cf., in a scene pointedly recalling this (see next note), 392.28: "he steadied her lovely lyre."
267.11-19: As they crouched . . . Van, at the last throb . . . little Lucette: Cf. 392.31-34: "and Van emitted a long groan of deliverance, and now their four eyes were looking again into the azure brook of Pinedale, and Lucette pushed the door open." MOTIF: *Lucette-eavesdropper/spy*.
267.11-14: on the brink of one of the brook's crystal shelves . . . the reflection of Ada's gaze: Cf. 274.16-17: "Van found himself standing on the brink of the brook (which had reflected two pairs of superposed eyes. . .). " MOTIF: *behind*; *brook-brink*.
267.11-13: brook's crystal shelves, where, before falling, it stopped to have its picture taken and take pictures itself: Cf. 304.04-05: "or a romantic stream running down a cliff and reflecting her brief bright affair." Cf. also: *SM* 119: "the sight of a sullen day sitting for its picture in a puddle."

267.14-15: Something of the sort had happened somewhere before: Cf. 190.18-19, 212.14-18. And something uncannily like it will happen again (and will clarify just how much Lucette sees here): 392.24-393.01.
267.19: little Lucette: MOTIF: *little Lucette*.
267.20: Flushed and flustered: Cf. Marina on the night Demon first possesses her, 12.04: "as she ran, flushed and flustered, in a pink dress into the orchard."
267.24-25: she husked out of her sweat shirt: MOTIF: *husked*.
267.25-26: green shorts . . . . russet ground: Cf. 509.24-26: "Mont Roux, our little rousse is dead. . . . Mount Russet." MOTIF: *green-Lucette*; *red-green*.
267.27-28: Ada had declined to invite anybody except the Erminin twins: In 1884, not only the Erminin twins but also "their young pregnant aunt (narrationally a great burden), and a governess" appear (79.13-14), and Uncle Dan, Colonel Erminin and Dr. Krolik are expected but do not show (79.18-21).
267.28-29: the brother without the sister: Greg and Grace Erminin.
267.30: New Cranton: Invented; perhaps echoes the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania, near the border with New York state, and not far from Ithaca, New York, where Nabokov lived from 1948 to 1959?
267.30-31: see a young drummer, her first boy friend: Is this the Wellington she later marries (392.04-05)? It will be Bill Fraser, of Wellington (319.13), who reports on the death of that other volunteer heading off to war, Percy de Prey. If this young drummer is the person Grace eventually marries, note the ironic association with the soldier and statesman, the Duke of Wellington (Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington, 1769-1852), who calls to mind another famous duke-general, the Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, 1650-1722), associated with the "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre" motif (see 299.13 and n.), itself associated with Percy de Prey's death in war.
267.31: sail off into the sunrise: *Ada* 1968: "sail off into the sunset." Play on the cliché "sail off into the sunset," referring especially to a happy new beginning promised for hero and/or heroine at the end of a story.
267.33-34: bringing a "talisman" from his very sick father: Cf. 242.02-3: "Poor Lord Erminin is practically insane," according to Demon. The "talisman" has not helped him (although Lord Erminin does not die until about 1901, 455.10). We can suspect that Greg, who had eagerly offered Ada his black pony, the day after her twelfth

birthday, "for a ride any time. For any amount of time" (92.25-26), has used the talisman as a pretext to have himself invited to Ada's birthday, when no invitation has been forthcoming.

268.01-02: a little camel of yellow ivory carved in Kiev, five centuries ago, in the days of Timur and Nabok: Timur (1336?-1405), also known as Tamerlane, the Turko-Mongol warrior and ruler, and Nabok, a forebear of the Nabokov clan (*SM* 52: "the founder of our family was Nabok Murza, (*floreat* 1380), a Russian Tatar prince in Muscovy"). There seems to be some link with Baron Klim Avidov (an anagram of "Vladimir Nabokov"), who gave Marina's children a Flavita game, named after the game's golden-yellow squares on the board (and not after its tiles, which are ebony): see 223.27-224.05.

268.03-04: Van did not err in believing that Ada remained unaffected by Greg's devotion: In 1901 Greg will tell Van that he "was *absolyutno bezumno* (madly) in love with your cousin! . . . You were her cousin, almost a brother, you can't understand that obsession. Ah, those picnics! And Percy de Prey who boasted to me about her, and drove me crazy with envy and pity" (454.17-34).

268.04-07: He now met him again with pleasure—the kind of pleasure, immoral in its very purity, which adds its icy tang to the friendly feelings a successful rival bears toward a thoroughly decent fellow: An echo of Van's gloating at the end of I.14, when he has seen the first signs of Greg's devotion to Ada and seen her pointed rebuff (92-93), and a sharp contrast to the rage Van will feel shortly when drunken Percy de Prey, completely uninvited, arrives and treats Van as a rival for Ada.

268.09-10: Greg, who had left his splendid new black Silentium in the forest ride: Cf. Greg, arriving on the day after Ada's twelfth birthday on his "black pony . . . 'Greg's beautiful new pony'" (89. 18-19). Cf. also Van to his father, 257.04-05: "I tried to find a Silentium with a side car and could not"; and Van's recollection to Greg, in 1901: "I last saw you thirteen years ago, riding a black pony—no, a black Silentium. *Bozhe moy!*" (454.14-15). Van on his tryst with Ada in 1886, after a telegram from her on her fourteenth birthday, heads to meet her at Forest Fork: "He rented a motorcycle, a venerable machine . . . and drove, bouncing on tree roots along a narrow 'forest ride'" (179.26-29).

For the immediate irony of the name Silentium for a motorcycle, cf. Van "groaned, on the tympanic rack . . . when a subhuman young moron let loose the thunder of an infernal motorcycle" (571. 11-13).

Behind the comic immediate irony is a deeper and poignant irony. The word *silentium* is famous in Russian literature as the name of the most famous poem, "Silentium" (c. 1825-29), of one of Nabokov's favorite Russian poets, Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev (1803-73). It opens, in Nabokov's translation: "Speak not, lie hidden, and conceal / the way you dream, the things you feel. //. . . How can a heart expression find? / How should another know your mind? / Will he discern what quickens you?" ("Molchi, skryvaysya i tai/ I chuvtsva i mechty svoi!// . . . . Kak serdtsu vyskazat' sebya? / Drugomu kak ponyat' tebya? / Poymyot li on, chem ty zhivyosh'?"; trans. first published 1944; *Verses and Versions* 237). Greg Erminin is silently in love with Ada, and his heart cannot "expression find" (he voices his feelings explicitly for the first time to Van, many years later: see 268.03-04n above, or 454.17-34), although his behavior, including his offering Ada the black pony the day after her twelfth birthday, and his managing to secure an invitation to her sixteenth birthday, and offering Ada every service while two cockier rivals contend for Ada, speaks silent volumes.

268.10-277. 02: "We have company." . . . reverently . . . . a dozen elderly townsmen, in dark clothes, shabby and uncouth . . . sat down there to a modest *colazione* of cheese, buns, salami, sardines and Chianti. . . . ritually . . . . sad apostolic hands. . . . receded like a fishing boat . . . a most melancholy and meaningful picture—but meaning what, what? . . . convertible . . . . was surrounded by the same group of townsmen . . . collation of shepherds. . . A canvas from Cardinal Carlo de Medici's collection, author unknown. . . . the mysterious pastors . . . stiff collar and reptilian tie left hanging from a locust branch: An elaborate riddle, not easily solved, despite and even because of the abundance of resonant clues.

268.13: Raincoated, unpainted, morose, Marina: She is actually wearing a "pale raincoat or rather 'dustcoat' she had put on for the picnic" (269.30). She is unpainted and morose because she has not heard from her Pedro, and feels herself an old lady (269.33), and soon changes mood completely when she receives an aerogram from him (272.31-273.06).

268.15-25: reverently . . . . a dozen elderly townsmen, in dark clothes, shabby and uncouth . . . sat down there to a modest *colazione* of cheese, buns, salami, sardines and Chianti. . . . ritually . . . . . sad apostolic hands . . . victuals: A continuation of the riddle. Note the Italianate air, and the religious air, and the antique air.

268.18: *colazione*: In North Italy, "lunch." Cf. 274.02-03, Dan's misunderstanding: "It was, he understood, a collation of shepherds."
268.19: buns, sardines: Perhaps, given the hints of the twelve apostles ("a dozen elderly townsmen . . . . apostolic hands") surrounding these strangers, a whiff of the miracle of the loaves and fishes (in the Christian gospels, Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:5-15), in which Christ feeds a multitude of five thousand with five loaves and two fish.
268.19: buns . . . and Chianti: Perhaps, given the apostolic hints, a suggestion of Christ's Last Supper, his meal with his disciples shortly before the Crucifixion, in which he asked that the bread be remembered as his body and the wine as his blood (1 Corinthians 11:23-24), the beginning of the ritual of the Mass, or Communion. At the Last Supper, Christ predicted that one of the disciples present would betray him.
268.20: no mechanical music boxes: *Ardeur* 225: "boîtes à musique du type 'transistor.'" MOTIF: *music-box.*
268.23-25: crumpling brown paper . . . and discarding the crumpled bit: Cf. 269. 24: "politely removed the crumpled wrappings."
268.27-29: in the noble shade of the pines, in the humble shade of the false acacias: False acacias: probably *Robinia pseudoacacia*: cf. Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*, trans. VN with DN (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), 208: "not the true acacia but the American Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia* of Linnaeus, introduced into Europe by the French herbalist Robin in the Seventeenth century"; "the sweetly perfumed American *Robinia pseudoacacia* Linn., cultivated in the Ukraine and sung by hundreds of Odessa rhymesters" (*EO* 3:12). A tree native to the southeastern United States, "with pinnate leaves and drooping racemes of fragrant white flowers" (W2, s.v. *locust* 3a), it can grow up to 50 meters tall. Cf. 412.09-11: "a green bench existed where the composer [Glinka] was said to have sat under the pseudoacacias."
268.27-28: in the noble shade of the pines: Cf. *Gift* 343: "the pines become nobler."
268.30: scratching her sunlit bald patch: Cf. 270.02-05: "Van kept reverting to that poor old patch on [Marina's] poor old head, to the scalp burnished by her hairdye an awful pine rust color much shinier than her dead hair."
268.32-274.03: Gipsy politicians, or Calabrian laborers. . . . townsmen . . . a collation of shepherds: Perhaps (VN knew Jonson's work) an allusion to the masque *Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1622), by Ben Jonson (1572-1637). Gary Taylor summarizes that the masque

contains "(a) a troupe of 'gypsies' that does not contain a single genuine gypsy, but is entirely composed of aristocrats in disguise, (b) a series of ironic prophecies, given by the fake gypsies to various real aristocrats" ("Thomas Middleton, *The Spanish Gypsy*, and Collaborative Authorship," in Brian Boyd, ed., *Words That Count: Essays on Early Modern Authorship in Honor of MacDonald P. Jackson*, Wilmington, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2004, 241-73, p. 262). *Ada*'s troupe of "gipsies" who may not be gipsies seems also to be prophetic, but, as Van writes at 269.27, "meaning what, what?"

268.32: Gipsy politicians: MOTIF: *gipsy*.

268.32: Calabrian laborers: Calabria, a region of Italy, the "toe" of Italy's boot- shaped peninsula. Cf. 284.06-07: "to join the gambaders in the country dance after Calabro's aria."

268.32-34: Squire Veen would be *furious* if he discovered trespassers camping in his woods: When he arrives at the picnic glade, Squire Veen (Uncle Dan), who finds it hard to retain conversational companions, in fact proves delighted to talk to the "exquisitely polite group" (274.01-02), even though neither party can understand much of what the other says.

268.33-34: if he discovered trespassers camping in his woods: Cf. VN, in *SM* 135-36, Ch. 6 ("Butterflies"), describing his family's Russian country estate, Vyra: "Other more elusive trespassers—lost picnickers or merry villagers—would drive our hoary gamekeeper Ivan crazy by scrawling ribald words on the benches and gates."

269.03: this is private property: Cf. *Mary* 56, Ganin to Mary: " 'This is private property,' he said in a low, hoarse voice."

269.03-05: Vulgar Latin, French, Canadian French, Russian, Yukonian Russian, very low Latin again: Vulgar Latin and very low Latin are presumably precursors of Italian (in which "private property" is indeed "*proprieta privata*"), the likeliest language of these people drinking Chianti with their *colazione* (and Dan at 274.02 boasts of having "recognized at least a dozen Italian words" in their conversation with him). The other languages are those of the Ladore region (and, with English, which the mysterious strangers do not understand, of the great nineteenth-century novels), and their northern (Canadian, Yukonian) neighbors. Cf. *Pale Fire*, note to l. 615 ("two tongues"): "English and Zemblan, English and Russian, English and Lettish, English and Estonian, English and Lithuanian, English and Russian, English and Ukrainian, English and Polish, English and Czech, English and Russian, English and Hungarian, English and Rumanian, English and Albanian,

English and Bulgarian, English and Serbo-Croatian, English and Russian, American and European."

269.04: Yukonian Russian: Puns on Antiterran and earthly chronogeographies, Antiterra's Russophone Yukon, and earth's Ukrainian Russians.

269.12: burdocks: W2: "Any plant of the genus *Arctium*, the species of which are coarse biennials with burlike flower heads. *A. lappa* is the common burdock."

269.21: *à reculons*: French, "backwards."

269. 24: politely removed the crumpled wrappings: Cf. 268.23-25: "crumpling brown paper . . . and discarding the crumpled bit."

269.26-27: a most melancholy and meaningful picture—but meaning what, what?: See 268.10.-277.02n and Afternote to this chapter.

269.32: fichu: W2, *fichu*: "A kind of ornamental three-cornered cape, usually of lace, muslin or silk, worn by women for the head, shoulders, or neck."

269.34-270.03: the Green Grass aria: "Replenish, replenish the glasses with wine! Here's a toast to love! To the rapture of love!" . . . Traverdiata's poor old head: Alludes to the famous *brindisi*, or drinking song, "Libiamo, libiamo ne'lieti calici," sung by Alfredo Germont, Violetta Valéry, and the chorus, during a late-night party in Violetta's house, in the first act of the opera *La Traviata* (1853), by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) and librettist Francesco Maria Piave (1810-1876). The opera was based on the novel *La Dame aux Camélias* (1848) and its stage version (1852), both by Alexandre Dumas the younger (1824-1895). Alfredo's opening lines are:

> Libiamo, libiamo ne'lieti calici
> che la bellezza infiora.
> E la fuggevol, fuggevol ora
> s'inebrii a voluttà
> Libiam ne'dolci fremiti
> che suscita l'amore,
> poiché quell'occhio al core onnipotente va.
> Libiamo, amore, amor fra i calici
> più caldi baci avrà.
>
> Let's drink, let's drink from the joyous wine-cups
> that beauty enhances.

And may the brief moment
be inebriated with voluptuousness.
Let's drink for the ecstatic feeling
that love arouses.
Because this eye aims at the heart, omnipotently.
Let's drink, my love, and the love among the chalices
will make the kisses warmer.

The nonce name "Traverdiata" that Van assigns his mother as she sings the song combines *La Traviata* and Verdi; the "Green Grass aria" links, as Alexey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 16 August 2012), the Italian word for "green," *verde*, and the Russian for "grass," *trava*, within *La Traviata* (with, perhaps, a weird echo of "green grass area"). *La Traviata* (from *traviare*, "go astray") means "The Fallen Woman"; Marina is both crestfallen, without Pedro, though trying to buck herself up, and fallen low in Van's sympathies.

Note that a *brindisi* takes its name from Brindisi, the city and province at the "heel" of Italy's boot, as Calabria is the "toe" of the boot, and the mysterious strangers intruding on the party are said to be "Gipsy politicians, or Calabrian laborers" (268.32). When a pretty messenger boy or girl comes to Van the next day with Percy de Prey's challenge to a duel, he or she waits for the answer "with one hand on the hip and one knee turned out like an extra, waiting for the signal to join the gambaders in the country dance after Calabro's aria" (284.05-07).

Perhaps this links with the veiled evocation of Verdi's opera *Nabucco* detected in 158.03-15 (see especially 158.13-15n).

In *Mary*, Mary quotes in a letter Ganin receives:

Let me get rid of the shackles of love
And let me try to stop thinking!
Replenish, replenish the glasses with wine—
Let me keep drinking and drinking! (92)

269.34: the Green Grass aria: *Ardeur* 226, "l'aria de Vert-Vert."
269.34-270.01: "Replenish, replenish the glasses with wine!: Cf. 270.13-14: "replenishing, replenishing Mlle Larivière's wineglass."
270.05-07: attempted . . . to squeeze out some fondness for her but as usual failed and as usual told himself that Ada did not love her mother either: A rare almost explicit affirmation that Marina is Van's real mother. MOTIF: *family relationship*; *Van's distaste for Marina*.

270.11: her mauve jacket: Cf. 198.05-06: "our distinguished lady novelist resplendent in mauve flounces, mauve hat, mauve shoes."
270.13-14: replenishing, replenishing Mlle Larivière's wineglass: Cf. Marina's "Replenish, replenish the glasses with wine!" (269.34-270.01).
270.15-16: even more than the Tartars or the, well, Assyrians: Alexey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokov-L, 12 March 2013): "(Greg Erminin is a Jew, and Mlle Larivière an antisemite.) According to a Russian saying, '*nezvanyi gost' khuzhe tatarina*' ('the uninvited guest is worse than a Tartar'). Chapter VIII of Pushkin's short novel *The Captain's Daughter* (1836), '*Nezvanyi gost''* ('The Unexpected Visitor'), has this saying for epigraph."
270.18: *sales petits bourgeois*: *Darkbloom*: "dirty little Philistine[s]." Defending her story "La Parure" ("The Necklace") against Van's and Ada's criticism that it is a fairy tale, Mlle Larivière at the picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday argues that "every detail is realistic. We have here the drama of the petty bourgeois . . . " (87.21-22).
270.19: England dares ape France!: Mlle Larivière is happy for France to ape (or surpass?) the English: "I read to her [Lucette] twice Ségur's adaptation in fable form of Shakespeare's play about the wicked usurer" (91.34-92.02).
270.19-20: in that hamper there an English novel of high repute: Cf. 274.08-10: "a hamper that contained . . . an English novel by Quigley."
270.20-26: English novel of high repute. . . . '*je regrette*'*!*": MOTIF: *translation*.
270.21: a perfume . . . called '*Ombre Chevalier*,' which is really nothing but a fish: W2, *ombre chevalier*, "= SAIBLING." W2, *saibling*: "A char [Any trout of the genus *Salvelinus*] (*Salvelinus alpinus*) of mountain streams of Europe. b. The Sunapee trout."

The English novelist had clearly intended "nightshade" or rather "knight" (*chevalier*) "shade" (*ombre*). Nightshade is (W2): "**a** Any of various species of *Solanum*; esp., the cosmopolitan weed *S. nigrum*, commonly distinguished as black nightshade (called also *African nightshade*), and *S. dulcamara*, the bittersweet. **b** The belladonna. **c** The henbane."

"Deadly nightshade" or belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*) is the famous poisonous nightshade, once used cosmetically by women to dilate the pupils (but now rarely used this way because of its side-effects), but never as a perfume. Cf. 428.32-33: "harrowingly resembled Ada Ardis as photographed with her mother in *Belladonna*."

Cf., for the "fish"-"perfume" combination, 368.03-04: "her Degrasse, smart, though decidedly 'paphish,' perfume."

Cf. also, perhaps, "the gloomy cavalier" (488.26).

270.024-25: a soi-disant philosopher mentions '*une acte gratuite*' as if all acts were feminine: The French noun *acte*, "act," is masculine, not feminine, as here wrongly indicated in the feminine adjectival ending (the final *e*) on *gratuite*. (The correct French would be *un acte gratuit*.) VN refers here to the poet Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973). In a letter to Jacob Epstein of Doubleday, on 22 April 1957, Nabokov comments on the second issue of *Anchor Review*, in which his "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*" had just appeared: "the rest of the material in the review is excellent (except Auden's piece: incidentally, somebody ought to have told him that *monde* in French is masculine so that no French poet could ever have said 'Le monde est ronde.' It is the same nonsense as his famous slip in an earlier essay 'acte gratuite' instead of 'acte gratuit'. Moreover, the slogan 'highbrows and lowbrows, unite!,' which he had spouted already, is all wrong since true highbrows are highbrows because they do *not* unite)." Auden's essay was "The Dyer's Hand: Poetry and the Poetic Process," pp. 255-301; the slogan formed the closing paragraph of the essay.

Auden writes about the "acte gratuit" (the spelling was corrected in later editions) in an essay on *Othello*, "The Joker in the Pack," in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (1962). An "acte gratuit" is "a gratuitous or inconsequent action performed on impulse, possibly to gratify a desire for sensation. The term occurs in the writings of André Gide . . . , part of whose doctrine is that in order to learn how to keep our desires in check we should first yield to them without inhibition" (*Oxford Companion to French Literature*, ed. Sir Paul Harvey and J.E. Heseltine, Oxford: Clarendon, 1959, 5). A famous example occurs in the novel *Les Caves du Vatican* (1914), by André Gide (1869-1951); it is also discussed in the novels *La Nausée* (*Nausea*, 1938), by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and *L'Étranger* (*The Stranger*, 1942) by Albert Camus (1913-1960), where it becomes part of an existentialist outlook. In 1949 VN reviewed very negatively the English translation of *La Nausée* ("Sartre's First Try," *New York Times Book Review*, 24 April 1949, pp. 3, 19; rept. in *SO*, 228-30). VN wrote to Epstein in the letter quoted above that "The piece about Sartre" in *Anchor Review* (Herbert Lüthy, "The Void of Jean-Paul Sartre," 241-54) "is simply marvellous. I chuckled all the way, especially as I was probably the first writer in America to debunk him."

"Soi-disant philosopher" may therefore aim at Sartre as well as Auden.

270.26: '*je me regrette*' for '*je regrette*': "I am sorry for myself" for "I'm sorry."

270.27: *D'accord*: *Darkbloom:* "Okay" (French).

270.27-29: such atrocious bloomers in French translations from the English as for example—: Cf. Ada's discussion of the mistranslation of *souci d'eau* (marsh marigold) into "the care of the water" (63.34-65.05), and Van's quip, during her diatribe, "Flowers into bloomers," 64.02. At 65.06-08 Van responds to Ada's attack on an English translation from the French: "On the other hand . . . one can well imagine a similarly bilingual Miss Rivers checking a French version of, say, Marvell's *Garden*—." Like the matching 1888 example, Van's 1884 counterexample breaks off before he can complete it.

270.32-271.04: steel-grey convertible glided into the glade . . . Marina's deckchair: Whereas Greg will also "glide" away from the glade (278.03: "He adjusted his goggles and glided away"), Percy will depart thunderously (277.19-20: "Click-click went the motor, then broke into thunder"). Cf. Van at the hospital in Kalugano: "He was on the point of returning to the deckchair when a smart, pale-gray four-door salon glided in and stopped before him" (318.12-14). The gliding "grey" convertible brings Percy de Prey to Marina and especially Ada; the gliding "gray" sedan brings Cordula de Prey to Van.

270.32-271.01: surrounded by the same group of townsmen, who now seemed to have multiplied in strange consequence of having shed coats and waistcoats: Given the echoes of the Gospels surrounding these mysterious strangers, there seems an echo of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, itself possibly evoked in their connection in 268.18.

270.33-34: the same group of townsmen: *Ardeur* 227: "les mystérieux voisins."

271.03: frilled-shirt: Cf. Percy's "casually ruffled shirt" (276.11-12) after his fight with Van.

271.11-12: a bouquet of longstemmed roses stored in the boot: Cf. Van's "last visit to one last Villa Venus": "next to the guitar-shaped paper-wrapped bunch of long roses for which nobody had troubled to find, or could have found, a vase" (356.29-33).

271.13: What a shame that I should loathe roses: Cf. "Roses she never liked anyway" (554.14). Cf. also Ada's brusque displeasure with another birthday offering in 1884: "You should tell him to take a pair of

tongs and carry the whole business to the surgical dump" (84.28-29). She also refuses Greg's offer of the loan of his new black pony, the day after her twelfth birthday (92.28-29), a move Van correctly interrupts as her rejection of Greg's interest in her, in favour of Van, as he can also interpret Ada's brusque rejection of Percy's roses here in 1888.

271.15-21: muscat wine . . . through his raised lunel at the honeyed sun: Muscat de Lunel is a sweet white wine, since 1957 an Appellation d'origine contrôlée, a specialty of the area around Lunel, near Montpellier, in the département of Hérault (see 273.11). *Ardeur* 227: "le muscat de Lunel."

271.15: Ada's and Ida's healths: Cf., in 1884, "the big picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday and Ida's forty-second *jour de fête*" (77.01-02).

271.16: The conversation became general: Cf. 68.11-12: "the conversation became general and loud." MOTIF: *conversation . . . general*

271.16: Monparnasse: MOTIF: *Monparnasse*.

271.18: Ivan Demianovich Veen: In the Family Tree, Demon's name is recorded as "Dementiy (Demon)" (ix); Van, accordingly, addresses a photo of himself, "*Zdraste*, Ivan Dementievich" (399.22). Why the patronymic here should be Demianovich is unclear, unless it reflects Percy's misapprehension. MOTIF: *Ivan Dem—vich*.

271.19: I'm told you like abnormal positions?: Ostensibly (see 271.23) a reference to Van's topsy-turvy role as Mascodagama, privately a thrust at reports of his liking rear-entry sex with Ada, reports of which Percy has received via Blanche and her sister (and also Percy's occasional sexual partner) Madelon. The first glimpse of Van as handwalker had been at Ada's twelfth-birthday picnic, when he blinked "in the odd bilboquet fashion peculiar to eyelids in his abnormal position" (82.13-14).

271.21: lunel: W2: "A variety of muscatel wine." See 271.15-21 for Muscat de Lunel as an appellation d'origine contrôlée.

271.23: that walking-on-your-hands trick: see 81-82 (the first instance, at the 1884 picnic) and the Mascodagama chapter, I.30 (181-86).

271.23-24: One of your aunt's servants is the sister of one of our servants: Marina's servant Blanche is the sister of Countess de Prey's servant Madelon, who has also been a sexual partner of Percy's, 299.08-10: "as he had also crushed—many times!—Madelon."

271.24: two pretty gossips: Blanche by 1888 "had become wonderfully pretty" (191.10-11); "Pretty Blanche" (226.05); Ada calls Madelon

"Blanche's lovely sister" (277.05). Both are indeed gossips, Blanche especially in passing on to Van Madelon's warning (see 287.21-33, 293.10-12), and as recorded parodically in 409.05-19.

271.31: the mouse-and-cat: I.e. the muscat wine, but hinting at "playing cat-and-mouse," with a pun on *mus*, Latin for "mouse," and cat. Cf. also *PF* 93: "A muscat grape. . . . I do not know if it is relevant or not but there is a cat-and-mouse game in the second line."

271.32-33: who was listening with delight to the handsome young men's vivacious and carefree prattle: The style mimics the obtuse imperceptiveness of Marina, who fails to notice the men's immediate verbal jostling.

271.33-34: tell him about your success in London: In his role as Mascodagama; see I.31.

271.34: *Zhe tampri* (please)!: *Darkbloom*, "Russ., distortion of *je t'en prie*" ("please," "I beg you"). Marina's Russianness repeatedly inflects her English and French.

272.01: a rag, you know, up at Chose: W2: *rag*, "*n. Slang.* . . . **b** An outbreak of boisterous, mischievous merrymaking, orig. of students at English universities; a jollification, rumpus."

272.5-10: Dorn (flipping through a literary review, to Trigorin): " . . . I wanted to ask you, incidentally. . . . in that question. . . . ": *Darkbloom*: "Trigorin, etc: a reference to a scene in *The Seagull*." Chekhov's *Chayka* (*The Seagull*, 1895), Act IV. Proffer 267: "An exact quotation from Dorn's last speech in Chekhov's *The Seagull*, just before he tells Trigorin that Treplev has shot himself." The parallel is immediately to Ada's calling Van aside to tell him something others are not to overhear; but the ominousness of Chekhov's conclusion also seeps in.

272.05: Dorn (flipping through a literary review . . .): Cf. 139.10: "Van, flipping through a magazine."

272.11-12: Ada stood with her back against the trunk of a tree, like a beautiful spy who has just rejected the blindfold: Cf. 297.07-08: "There was the time she stood with her back against a tree trunk, facing a traitor's doom"; 308.22-25: "He wondered if the other girl still stood, arrow straight, adored and abhorred, heartless and heartbroken, against the trunk of a murmuring tree." MOTIF: *against trunk*.

272.15: drunk as a welt: While the general sense is clear, Ada's word choice is not, since the ordinary senses of "welt" do not seem relevant. Obsolete senses of the *verb* "welt" include, used intransitively, "to sway or be unsteady," or, used transitively, "to throw to the ground" (OED),

both of which are appropriate to Percy's state and fate. Cf. 273.20: "royally drunk after some earlier festivity."

272.16: the arrival of Uncle Dan: Dan never reaches the party for Ada's twelfth birthday, and his present arrives late (84.15-16).

272.19-20: the little red runabout: In which Marina had arrived at the party on Ada's twelfth birthday: "Marina came in a red motorcar of an early 'runabout' type" (79.03).

272.22-25: an aerogram . . . . for her mother: Cf. the letter for Marina from Dan brought to her at the 1884 picnic (82.12-25). Both messages precipitate her early departure from the picnic (84.22-85.04, 274.10-13).

272.24-25: not for her from dismal Kalugano, as she had feared: Ada had feared, in other words, that it might be from her ex-lover Philip Rack, who lives there (202.10). Cf. 202.12: "He hated Kalugano"; 303.14-15: "'Kalugano.' 'That's a gruesome place.'"

272.28-29: Larivière-Monparnasse: MOTIF: *Monparnasse*.

272.31: cried (gurgled, rippled) Marina: Recalls the phone bubbling and palpitating when Marina thinks it is Pedro calling, 260.33-261.02.

272.32: her calm daughter: Van registers Ada's calmness at the communication from Pedro, just to be sure: Pedro had, after all, been flirting with her at the poolside, 200.18-31.

272.34-273.01: sat down with Greg and Lucette, for a game of Snap: Cf. the displays and games at Ada's party in 1884, with Greg, Grace, Lucette, and Van, 81.11-85.19.

273.04: Houssaie, *Gollivud-tozh*: *Darkbloom:* "French[,] a 'holly wood.' *Gollivud-tozh* means in Russian 'known also as Hollywood.'" (The "hollywood" in the early versions was corrected by DN to "holly wood" in the Vintage edition.) VN notes on his copy of the first printing of Proffer's notes, "*Ada* as Wonderland: A Glossary of Allusions to Russian Literature," *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 3 (1972), 399-430: "added to villages means that the village is also known by this name."

273.07: I wish but I can't: He wishes because Marina has suggested Ada will go with her; he can't because he has enlisted.

273.08-09: Uncle Dan, very dapper in cherry-striped blazer and variety-comic straw hat: Cf. Dan at 124.26-30: "a candy-striped suit over a mauve flannel shirt and piqué waistcoat . . . (all his trim stripes were a little displaced, though, in the process of comic strip printing, because it was Sunday)."

273.11: Hero wine: Hérault, as pronounced in careless Anglophone French, with the *h* sounded, becomes a homophone of "Hero." Hérault, in the Languedoc-Roussillon region of the south of France, is the

biggest wine-producing *département* in France. "Hero" is an ironic wine for the unheroic Dan, but perhaps the pointed misspelling leads into the foreshadowing of Percy's death a few lines below: he too has "a sticky glass in [his] strong blond-haired hand" (273.21).

273.13: The Accursed Children: Percy has asked the name of the film to be made from Mlle Larivière's novel *Les Enfants Maudits*. "The Accursed Children" is a straight translation of the original from Mlle Larivière's language into the language of Hollywood, which she deplores. MOTIF: *adaptation*; *Enfants Maudits*.

273.15-19: Percy, you were to die very soon . . . you were to die very soon, Percy: Van learns of Percy's death from Cordula de Prey within a fortnight, 319.06-320.12. The chiastic repetition indicates Van's gloatingly lingering insistence. As the Kyoto Reading Circle notes, "Van as narrator here deliberately announces Percy's death with a gloating rancor as part of his attempt to portray his imminent fight with Percy as a substitute for the duel that Percy's death made impossible." Cf. Boyd 1985/2001: 171.

273.15-16: not from that pellet in your fat leg: Cf. 319.18-19: "Percy had been shot in the thigh."

273.16: on the turf of a Crimean ravine: Cf. 275.08-09: "The grunting Count toured the turf in a hunched-up stagger." The verbal link emphasizes that Van's counterattack is a prefiguration of Percy's death described here, or that the advance introduction of Percy's death offers a kind of fulfilment of Van's punishment of him, had he known at the time of their attack and counterattack that Percy had been Ada's lover. Wet "turf" in Russian can be *torfyanaya* (peat, bog, turf)*;* in French it can be *tourbière*, the home town of Blanche, who informs Van about Percy's relations with Ada; in Dutch it can be *veen*, as if to confirm that "no sooner did all the fond . . . come into close contact with [Van] . . . than they were bound to know anguish and calamity, unless strengthened by a strain of his father's demon blood" (20.15-18). The wound in Percy's leg seems to have echoes of the death of Adonis, gored in the leg by a boar, for Aphrodite's, or in Shakespeare's version, Venus's (*Venus and Adonis*, 1593), love for him. MOTIF: *Veen.*

273.17-18: but a couple of minutes later when you opened your eyes and felt relieved: Cf. 319.22-28: "He had immediately assured himself, with the odd relief of the doomed, that he had got away with a flesh wound. . . . When a couple of minutes later, Percy . . . regained consciousness. . . . " Percy's false relief in the Crimean battle seems to

be prefigured by his relief after Van's fierce response to Percy's attack by the brook, at 275.12-16, before Van's even fiercer second reponse.

273.18: in the shelter of the macchie: W3, "**Macchia** . . . , pl. **macchie** [It—more at MAQUIS]." W3, *maquis*: "**1 a:** thick scrubby underbrush profuse along the shores of the Mediterranean and esp. profuse in the island of Corsica **b:** an area or zone marked by such underbrush **2** *often cap* **a:** a member of an underground movement or organization; *esp*: a French guerrilla fighter in World War II **b:** a band or unit of maquis." VN may have deployed the Italian (which he could have learned from DN, who was fluent in Italian, or from his own 1963 trip to Corsica) rather than the more familiar French spelling in order to avoid confusion with the well-known sense of *maquis* as French resistance fighters. Or the Italian spelling could be another way of connecting the picnic scene and Percy's death, if we take the Chianti-drinking strangers, perhaps "Calabrian laborers" (268.32), as something like a misplaced maquis band.

273.21: a sticky glass in your strong blond-haired hand: Cf. 188.31-33: "the raised glass of the stout blond fellow (Percy de Prey? . . .)" The visual image reminds Van of the first minutes of his return to Ardis, and his jealousy of Percy then; but he seems also to be staring now at Percy's hateful hands with all the intensity of his detestation.

273.24: old sport: As if a hearty address from one male to another known from a shared male milieu. Percy's cousin is a sport in another sense: "She was a good sport—little Cordula de Prey" (318.27).

273.24: chin-chin: W3: "used to express greeting or farewell."

273.25-26: a crack Rugger player, a cracker of country girls: Cf. another Riverlane pupil, "Cheshire, the rugby ace" (32.30) who leads the sexual romps at Riverlane (32.30, 33.14). The "Rugger" adds to the English private school tone (Rugby School itself, for instance, founded 1567) of the North American Riverlane.

273.28: handsome moon face: W2, *moon face*: "A round face like a full moon,—regarded by Orientals as beautiful."

273.29-30: the easy shaver. *I* had to begun to bleed every time, and was going to do so for seven decades: Cf. 204.26-28: Lucette "pitying his tender skin for the inflamed blotches and prickles between neck and jaw where shaving caused the most trouble"; and cf. also 547.09-22 for Van, reporting from his 80s and 90s, on his shaving. The contrast between Percy's shaving here in I.39 and Van's reinforces the contrast that Percy dies soon, Van lives long.

273.31-32: "In a birdhouse fixed to that pine trunk," said Marina to her young admirer, "there was once a 'telephone'": Cf., at the picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday, in the same spot, Marina "showed Van and Lucette (the others knew all about it) the exact pine and the exact spot on its rugged red trunk where in old, very old days a magnetic telephone nested" **(**83.24-27). As the parenthesis on the earlier occasion and the repetition now both indicate, Marina repeatedly enjoys disclosing this to newcomers to the glade. MOTIF: *replay*; *technology*; *telephone*.
273.32-33: How I'd welcome its presence right now: In order to call Pedro in California: cf. 274.10-12: "Marina explained, however, that professional obligations demanded she call up California without delay."
273.34-274.08 Her husband . . . strolled back bringing wonderful news. They were an "exquisitely polite group." . . . the little man said he insisted the servants take viands and wine to his excellent new friends: Versus 268.32-33: "Squire Veen would be *furious* . . . . "
274.02: He had recognized at least a dozen Italian words: Cf. Dan's limitations as a linguist at 69.01-03.
274.03-04: a collation of shepherds. They thought, he thought, he was a shepherd too: Presumably the key word is the Italian *pastore* (shepherd, pastor, minister), which may also evoke the Renaissance literary tradition of pastoral, as in the tragicomedy *Il Pastor Fido* (1590) by Giovanni Batisti Guarini (1538-1612), and echoes of it such as in Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It* (1599).
274.03: a collation of shepherds: Cf. W2, *collation*: "1. *Obs*. A conference or consultation, esp. one held informally. . . . . 4. A light meal or repast." Cf. also their *colazione*, 268.18.
274.05: Carlo de Medici's collection: Carlo de' Medici (1596-1666) was made a cardinal in 1615 and became Dean of the College of Cardinals in 1652. He employed the painter Matteo Rosselli (1578-1650) and other artists to fresco some of the rooms of the Palazzo del Buontalenti (Casino di San Marco), which he filled with pictures (Janet Ross, *Florentine Palaces and their Stories*, London: J. M. Dent, 1905, p. 61). Carlo di Cosimo de' Medici (also known as simply Carlo de' Medici, c. 1420-1492) became an abbot, a papal tax collector and nuncio. He collected medallions, but is not known as a collector of paintings. The Medici family, especially from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, included major patrons of architecture and art in Florence and beyond.

The mention of a Renaissance art collection certainly strengthens the hints of the Last Supper surrounding the mysterious strangers. Among the many Renaissance paintings of the Last Supper were works by Duccio (in 1308-11), Fra Angelico (in 1442), Domenico Ghirlandaio (in 1480), Perugino (in 1493-46), Tintoretto (in 1594) and Rubens (in 1632). Van cannot be referring specifically to the most famous of such paintings, *Il Cenacolo* (*The Last Supper*), painted 1495-98, by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), since that painting is tempera and oil on plaster, and not a canvas, and was painted on the refectory wall of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan. Gerard de Vries notes that "No other painting has been admired as much and as enduringly by Nabokov as Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* and references and allusions to this painting . . . are numerous. His attachment to Leonardo's masterpiece dates from an early age. In 1918 he composed a poem entitled, 'The Last Supper'" (Gerard de Vries and D. Barton Johnson, *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Painting*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p. 87).

274.08-10: seizing an empty bottle . . . Quigley and a roll of toilet paper: With his unflappable knack for defeating his own purposes, Dan arms himself with an *empty* bottle, a hamper without food and a novel in a language the "shepherds" do not understand. The toilet paper adds to the grotesquerie—and its absence could have caused trouble for his own family's party.

274.09-10: hamper that contained . . . an English novel by Quigley: The "English novel of high repute" that Mlle Larivière has in the picnic hamper, 270.19-20. Nabokov may have fused a fictional and a real Quigl(e)y. Miss Quigley is a governess (like Mlle Larivière) in the novel *The Newcomes* (1853-55), by the English writer William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863). For Lucette, and often for Marina—see 91.02, 155.19—Mlle Larivière's first name, although officially Ida, is Belle, often a derivative of "Isabel." The real Isabel Quigly, born in Spain, is an author, a novelist (*The Eye of Heaven*, 1955), translator (most prominently, in 1965, of the 1962 novel *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* by Giorgio Bassani, 1916-2000), and film critic for the *Spectator* (which VN often read). Bassani won the prestigious Viareggio Prize for *Il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, and was considered a kind of Proustian specialist in decadence and nostalgia, not inappropriate to evoke in *Ada*. DN, living in Italy at the time of *Ada*'s composition and later an award-winning translator of his father's work into Italian, may

have brought to his parents' attention bloomers in Quigley's translation that lie behind Mlle Larivière's denunciation in 270.19-26.

274.10: Marina explained: To Dan.

274.11-12: professional obligations demanded she call up California: Her sense of obligation clearly has little to do with her *professional* relationship with Pedro.

274.11: she call up: *Ardeur* 229: "qu'elle dorophonât" ("she dorophone").

274.16-17: on the brink of the brook: MOTIF: *brook-brink*.

274.16-18: the brook (which had reflected two pairs of superposed eyes earlier in the afternoon): Van's and Ada's: see 267.13-14. MOTIF: *behind*.

274.17: pairs: a correction from 1969, "pair," to "pairs" is signaled in A1.

274.18-20: chucking pebbles with Percy and Greg at the remnants of an old, rusty, indecipherable signboard on the other side: An echo of Van throwing a cone (which Ada mistakes for a stone) "at a woman of marble bending over a stamnos" (50.10-18), which itself prefigures Percy de Prey's death (for the details of the connection, see I.8 Afternote). The signboard, although not the same one, recalls 216.31-33: "a notice-board calmly proclaimed that 'trespassers might get shot by sportsmen from Ardis Hall.'" Van has asked Marina "did she want him to use force" on the mysterious strangers (269.18) whom he has told: "Please go away, this is private property" (269.03). Percy himself, as an uninvited guest, is from Van's point of view trespassing on the party, and he will soon use force on him.

274.21-22: *passati* . . . the Slavic slang he affected: *Darkbloom*: "pseudo-Russian pun on 'pass water.'" *Nado pisat'* (stress on the first syllable of *pisat'*) would be "I have to piss." Note that Mlle Larivière is described pissing (though more discreetly) at the picnic at Ada's twelfth birthday, 80.17-22. MOTIF: *patois*.

274.26: *coeur de boeuf*: *Darkbloom*: "bull's heart (in shape)" (French). Here the expression refers to the shape of Percy's glans, with some of the image source's size and high color also carrying over to the image's target. Cf. *PF* 208, "a phenomenally endowed young brute . . . Curdy Buff."

274.27-28: its sustained, strongly arched, practically everlasting stream: Percy has been drinking enough to be "royally drunk" (273.20); Van too will pee in a "sustained stream" (414.21) after drinking heavily.

Cf. the "Crimean girl doomed to offer an everlasting draught of marble water to a dying marine" (399.25-26).

Presumably Percy's pissing display is meant to evoke the idea of a pissing contest, defined in the OED Online as "a competition to see who can urinate the furthest or highest; (in extended use) any contest which is futile or purposeless, *esp.* one pursued in a conspicuously aggressive manner." The OED's first record of the term dates to 1943, but there is an example of the contest, if not the term, in *The Dunciad* (1728, 1729, 1743) by Alexander Pope (1688-1744); the practice is presumably an immemorial reflection of male competitive display.

274.29: repacked: Cf. *Lolita*, when Humbert visits Lolita, thinking her husband must be the one who whisked her away from him: "In my pocket my fingers gently let go and repacked a little at the tip, within the handkerchief it was nested in, my unused weapon" (272).

274.30-33: How did the scuffle start? . . . A wrist gripped and freed?: For question or question-and-answer lists, see 82.32-83.05 (at the picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday, and just after Van has applied the King Wing techniques he is about to apply now), 237.23-30, 258.01-05, and 475.23-26.

275.02: plus-fours: Used for sporting attire, especially golf, since the 1860s, although for a few years after 1924 a popular fashion in other situations.

275.03-04: on the brink of the brook: MOTIF: *brook-brink*.

275.05: Percy was three years older: Cf. 200.06-08, at Riverlane: "and, God, how he [Van] had beaten him up, though that Vere de Vere was three years older than he."

275.05-07: a score of kilograms heavier than Van, but the latter had handled even burlier brutes than he: Cf. 190.10-11: "he [Percy] had grown swine-stout"; 273.24-25: "Burly, handsome, indolent, and ferocious . . . . "

275.08: The grunting Count toured the turf: Cf. 273.15-16: "Percy, you were to die very soon . . . on the turf of a Crimean ravine."

275.10-11: who instantly put him "on his omoplates": W2, *omoplate*: "The scapula. *Rare*." Cf. *Madame Bovary*, Part 1 Chapter 2: "entre les omoplates" ("between the shoulderblades").

275.12-13: as King Wing used to say: Cf., at the picnic on Ada's twelfth birthday, "Accordingly, after a conference with Demon, King Wing, the latter's wrestling master, taught the strong lad to walk on his hands by means of a special play of the shoulder muscles" (81.23-26).

275.11-12: in his carpet jargon: Versus the normal "mat" when referring to wrestling. This is a plusher, if not necessarily more merciful, version of the sport.

275.12: like a dying gladiator: Cf. W2, *Dying Gaul*, or *Dying Gladiator*: "A marble statue of the Pergamene school in the Capitoline Museum at Rome, representing a fallen Gaul, dying from a spear-wound." Wikipedia, accessed 22 October 2014: "an ancient Roman marble copy of a lost Hellenistic sculpture thought to have been executed in bronze. The original may have been commissioned some time between 230 and 220 BC by Attalus I of Pergamon to celebrate his victory over the Galatians, the Celtic or Gaulish people of parts of Anatolia (modern Turkey). The identity of the sculptor of the original is unknown, but it has been suggested that Epigonus, court sculptor of the Attalid dynasty of Pergamon, may have been the creator. The celebrated copy was most commonly known as *The Dying Gladiator* until the 20th century on the assumption that it depicted a wounded gladiator in a Roman amphitheatre. Scholars had identified it as a Gaul or Galatian by the mid-19th century, but it took many decades for the new title to achieve popular acceptance."

275.15-16: Percy with a sudden bellow of pain intimated he had had enough: Cf. Greg Erminin in 1901: " 'Ah, those picnics! And Percy de Prey who boasted to me about her. . . . ' ' . . . it was a great pleasure to make your chum howl' " (454.31-455.04).

275.18-19: the third person interpretative: Parody of the grammatical term "third person indicative."

275.21: around his husky torso and asking Greg in a husky voice: These two senses of *husky* as an adjective ("burly" and "hoarse"), though quite different from *husked* as a past participle (and therefore adjectival), call to mind the two contrasting senses of *husked* (267.02-06), also "on the brink of the brook" (275.03-04; cf. 267.11).

275.21-22: asking Greg in a husky voice to find a missing cufflink: Cf. 276.14-16.

275.22-26: missing cufflink . . . transparent, tubular thing . . . caught in its downstream course in a fringe of forget-me-nots, good name, too: Greg will find Percy's missing cufflink (276), but the condom forgotten and washed a little downstream recalls Van on "the bank of a brook" "searching for his wristwatch that he thought he had dropped among the forget-me-nots (but which Ada, he forgot, was wearing" (142.15-143.02), while Lucette plays with a rubber doll that gets "swept away by the current" (143.08), causing Van to shed his pants to swim

after it, only for Ada, roused by his lack of attire, to suggest they tie Lucette up under a pretext, in order to make love out of her sight—only for her, then, to untie herself and spy on them for the first time (143.02-22 and I.23 Afternote). Sea-squirt, watch and doll are ironically fused in *Ada*'s final paragraph: "a pretty plaything stranded among the forget-me-nots of a brook" (589.04-05).

275.24-26: recognized . . . the transparent, tubular thing . . . that had got caught in its downstream course: A condom. Cf. 230.18-20: Van "had lately acquired the sheath-like contraceptive device that in Ladore county only barber-shops, for some odd but ancient reason, were allowed to sell."

275.25: not unlike a sea-squirt: A sea-squirt indeed looks strikingly like a condom. W2, *sea squirt*: "A simple ascidian." W2, *ascidian*: "Any simple or compound tunicate of the order Ascidiacea; a sea squirt. A typical ascidian is saclike in form, with an anterior branchial or oral opening, and a dorsal atrial one. Entering at the former, the water passes into the branchial sac, whose perforated walls function as gills, and through them into the surrounding atrial chamber, then out at the atrial orifice. . . . " Given the plays on the names *Van* and *Ada* throughout the novel, in phrases like "the Vaniada divan" (373.28-29), and the hints of their being almost one, and the likelihood of a further play, in the background conception of the novel, as it were, on the name of the chemical element *vanadium*, it may be of interest to note that sea-squirts concentrate in their bodies the very rare vanadium in the water around them, so that they contain ten million times more vanadium than the concentration in the surrounding sea (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Macropaedia, s.v. Elements, Physiological Concentration of.)

Cf. the book title *Squirt* (459.09).

275.26: in a fringe of forget-me-nots, good name, too: MOTIF: *forget-me-nots*.

275.27-28: He had started to walk back to the picnic glade when a mountain fell upon him from behind: Not mentioned here, but as a result of this attack Van hurts his knee: "Van felt a faint twinge in his knee where he had hit it against a stone when attacked from behind a week ago" (310.14-15). MOTIF: *knee*.

275.32: special device of exotic torture: Cf. 276.30-31: "a most bracing exhibition of Oriental Skrotomoff or whatever the name may be."

276.02-03: young devil: MOTIF: *devil*.

276.09-10: he caught himself limping and correcting the limp: MOTIF: *knee*.

276.11-12: casually ruffled shirt: Cf. 271.03: “frilled-shirted.”
276.14-15: bringing the cufflink—a little triumph of meticulous detection: Cf. 275.21-22. Greg eagerly accepts his subordinate position in the contest between the two much more virile youths.
276.19-20: two stipple-stemmed red boletes in one hand and three in the other: As Edelnant 142 notes: "The first thing to which Ada compared Van's penis was a red bolete”: “The cap of the Red Bolete is not half as plushy” (119. 25-26). The numbers of boletes may suggest, teasingly, Van and Percy in one hand, and Van, Percy and Greg in the other, or perhaps Van and Percy in one hand, Van, Percy and Philip Rack in the other? MOTIF: *boletes*.
276.21-24: the sound of his thudding hooves . . . Sir Greg . . . the young knight: As if he is performing knightly service, rushing in to inform his lady or his queen. “Sir Greg” may suggest Sir Galahad of Arthurian legend, who in the course of his pursuit of the Holy Grail saves Sir Percival from twenty knights; Greg merely finds Percy’s cufflink. Aleksey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 20 November 2012): “Greg’s noble surname, *Erminin*, comes from ‘ermine.’ Ermines do not have hooves, but horses certainly do. In Turgenev's story *Lebedyan'* (included in *A Hunter’s Notes*, 1852), *Gornostay* (Russ., ‘ermine’) is a horse.”
276.23: Miss Veen: As Van will coldly—jealously—refer to Ada after Greg, in 1901, discloses that he has been “‘*absolyutno bezumno* (madly) in love with your cousin!’ ‘You mean Miss Veen?’” (454.17-19).
276.23-27: “He’s all right!” . . . the beau and the beast. “Indeed I am,” said the former: Percy’s affirmation assumes he must be the “he” whose fate Ada would have worried about. “The former” also casts him as the beau. On Van’s first afternoon back at Ardis in 1888, after witnessing Percy holding Ada’s hand while he continues to kiss it, Van asks: “Was he her new beau?” Ada replies indignantly: “I had and have and shall always have only one beau, only one beast” (190.11-14).
276.26: between the beau and the beast: MOTIF: *beauty and the beast*.
276.28: her toadstools, the girl’s favorite delicacy: Given Ada’s seeing the glans penis as akin to the plushy cap of the red bolete (119.25-26), this detail becomes almost Boschean.
276.30: Oriental Skrotomoff or whatever the name may be: “Karate,” as an Oriental form of martial arts, plus “scrotum off,” with a Russian tang.

276.32-277.03: He called for wine—but the remaining bottles had been given to the mysterious pastors. . . . Gone also was the bouquet of roses: Possibly a suggestion of the famous phrase "the days of wine and roses," from a poem by Ernest Dowson (1867-1930), whom VN quotes (from another poem, "Non Sum Qualis eram Bonae Sub Regno Cynarae") in *Bend Sinister*:

> They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
> Out of a misty dream
> Our path emerges for a while, then closes
> Within a dream.

(The second and final stanza of "Vitae Summa Brevis Spem Nos Vetat Incohare Longam," 1896.)

277.01-02: if the stiff collar and reptilian tie left hanging from a locust branch were his: In view of the apostolic overtones of the twelve "mysterious pastors" (276.32), and the "hanging," the locust branch recalls the Judas tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*, popularly supposed to be the species of tree from which Judas Iscariot hanged himself after betraying Jesus (Matthew 27:3-10). Although not actually a locust tree, the Judas tree, like many trees bearing pods, can be popularly termed thus. Botanically, the tree here is probably one of the "false acacias" (268.28-29) or Black Locusts encountered earlier at the glade.

277.04-05: better than waste them on her, let him give them, she said, to Blanche's lovely sister: Madelon. Ada appears to have noted, with a stab of jealousy, Percy's "One of your aunt's servants is the sister of one of our servants and two pretty gossips form a dangerous team" (271.23-25). Blanche's sister Madelon has indeed been one focus of Percy's sexual energy: the sisters have secretly witnessed him crushing Ada "like a grunting bear as he had also crushed—many times!—Madelon"(299.09-10).

277.07: Trofim: First mention of Trofim Fartukov, who has replaced Ben Wright, their coachman in 1884.

277.08-09: Ada reclenched her boletes and all Percy could find for his *Handkuss* was a cold fist: Van's last glimpse of Ada with Percy, his attempting to kiss her hand but connecting only with a cold fist, echoes his first glimpse of them, at the beginning of Ardis the Second, where Percy holds Ada's hand after kissing it once, before kissing it again (189.27-30), and Van, watching, tears apart the necklace he has bought for Ada. MOTIF: *boletes*.

277.10-11: tapping Van lightly on the shoulder, a forbidden gesture in their milieu: Cf. 189.28-30: "He held the hand he kissed while she spoke and then kissed it again, and that was not done, that was dreadful, that could not be endured."
277.12-23: " . . . I wonder," he added in a lower voice, "if you shoot as straight as you wrestle." . . . "Is that a challenge, *me faites-vous un duel*?" . . . using the terrible second person singular of duelists in old France: MOTIF: *duel*.
277.20: then broke into thunder: In contrast to the silence in the name of Greg's Silentium motorcycle, 268.08, and Percy's own arrival at the picnic site: "a steel-gray convertible glided into the glade" (270.31-32).
277.29-30: a clean match of Korotom wrestling: Echoes the *karate* in "Skrotomoff," 276.31.
277.30: as used in Teristan and Sorokat: Invented place-names, the first apparently on the model of Turkestan, Central Asia, maybe with a dash of Terinam Tso, "lake in central Tibet" (Columbia-Lippincott Gazetteer), the second modelled perhaps on the White Sea village of Soroka (until 1933), now integrated into Belomorsk, in the Karelian Republic, Russia. The Kyoto Reading Circle notes that *Teristan* and *Sorokat* resemble the Russian word *tridtsat'* ("thirty") and *sorok* ("forty").
277.31: my father, I'm sure, could tell you all about it: Why? Unclear.
277.32-33: I don't think your brain works too well: Cf. the 1884 picnic, where "Greg put on his sister's blue skirt, hat and glasses, all of which transformed him into a very sick, mentally retarded Grace" (81.15-16)
278.01: mounted his black silent steed: His Silentium motorcycle, in fact, but echoes "the sound of his thudding hooves . . . good Sir Greg . . . the young knight" (276.21-24). The switch from motorcycle to "black silent steed" recalls in reverse Van's arriving at Forest Fork in 1884 by the Veen family motorcar, and departing on "Morio, his favourite black horse" (159.09), and his arrival at Forest Fork for another tryst with Ada in 1886 on a rented motorcycle, 179.26. Van recalls in 1901: "I last saw you thirteen years ago, riding a black pony—no, a black Silentium" (454.14-15).
278.03: glided away: Cf. Percy's arrival as his "steel-gray convertible glided into the glade" (270.32).
278.04: gig: W2, *gig*: "A light carriage with one pair of wheels, drawn by one horse; a kind of chaise."

278.13: her mushroom basket: MOTIF: *boletes*.
278.19: a carefree-looking young trio: Van and Ada are certainly no more carefree than Van and Percy in what Marina thinks "the handsome young men's vivacious and carefree prattle" (271.33).
278.20: victoria: W2, *victoria*: "A kind of low four-wheeled pleasure carriage, with a calash top, designed for two passengers, with a raised seat in front for the driver."
278.20-282.32: Slapping his thighs in dismay . . . . to hand Ada out of the carriage: A replay of the confusion of the return from the 1884 picnic, where Ada had to sit on Van's lap, as now Lucette does. MOTIF: *replay*.
278.21: the coachman: Trofim.
278.23: *Tattersalia*: W2, *Tattersall's*, "A famous horse market in London, established in 1706 by Richard Tattersall, also used as the headquarters of credit betting on English horse races; hence, a large horse market elsewhere." Cf., perhaps, *Tales of the Turf and Ring*, by "A Member of Tattersall's" (London: Kingswood, 1936). 'Tattersall's" has also been the name of horse-racing magazines, including *Tattersall's Club Magazine* (Sydney, Australia) and *City Tattersall's Club* magazine (also Sydney). In *Tattersalia* is there a hint also of Saturnalia, W2, "A period of general license, as in excesses of vice of crime"?
278.23-24: with pictures of tremendous, fabulously elongated race horses: This was certainly a norm of equestrian art in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as in the work of John Wootton (c. 1682-1764; see for instance his "Bumper"), James Seymour (1702-52), and even Edgar Degas (1843-1917; see his "Le Faux Départ," 1869-71). Is there any connection with the fabulous elongation of the horse Drongo's penis, 112.23-33?
278.27-29: He climbed onto the box . . . while Lucette considered with darkening green eyes the occupation of her habitual perch: Cf. 86.10, on the return from Ada's 1884 birthday picnic: "Lucette refused to give up her perch."
278.29: with darkening green eyes: Playing on green as the conventional hue of jealousy. Cf. 213.30-31: "the keyhole turned an angry green" as Lucette looked through it at Van and Ada *in flagrante.* MOTIF: *green [Lucette]*.
278.30: on your half-brotherly knee: MOTIF: *family relationship*.
278.31: aparte: Aside (Latin, current in French).

278.32: *La maudite rivière*: "The cursed river," i.e. Mlle Larivière, author of *Les Enfants maudits*, who is very wary of the dangers of Lucette's infatuation with Van (see 232.14-30), and who has written about accursed families, and who was on the victoria in 1884 when Ada was on Van's lap. MOTIF: *Enfants maudits*.

279.01-02: "Larivière can go and" (and Ada's sweet pale lips repeated Gavronski's crude crack): Cf. " 'If she protests,' said Vronsky, 'she can go and stick a telegraph pole—where it belongs'" (201.22-23). The initial joke is said to have been "salty" because of the "indecent 'telegraph'" (201.24-25); this joke too has extra salt because of the interplay between "crack" (in a physiological sense) and "go and stick it . . . where it belongs."

279.04: *Vos 'vyragences' sont assez lestes*: *Darkbloom:* "Franco-Russ., your expressions are rather free." The Russian for "expressions" is *vyrazhenia*.

279.04: *assez*: corrected from 1969, "*asssez*."

279.07-08: Older than grandmother at the time of her first divorce: Dolly Zemski "married in 1840, at the tender and wayward age of fifteen, General Ivan Durmanov" (3.14-15). According to the Family Tree (p. [viii]), however, she continued having children by him until 1844, when she was 19.

279.09-10: You love me. Greg loves me. Everybody loves me: Ada pointedly does not mention Percy de Prey or Philip Rack. Cf. Greg's declaration that "I was *absolyutno bezumno* (madly) in love with your cousin!"—which is followed by his elaboration that "Neither did she" (know this) (454.17-20).

279.10-11: or she'll pull that cock off: The "cock" being ostensibly the boy on the box seat Lucette prefers. Cf. W3, *cock*, "3a : one occupying a position of success and control." More obviously a play on *cock* as "penis" and therefore "pull oneself off" meaning "masturbate" (common low slang in the nineteenth as well as twentieth centuries, according to Partridge, 7th ed., 1970).

279.131-4: "Ouch!" grunted Van as he received the rounded load—explaining wrily that he had hit his right patella against a rock: Has she in fact sat her "rounded load" too heavily on his private parts? Or is it the "little pencil in your back pocket" (282.16-17)? Cf. 275.27-28 for the rock incident (which does not mention the knee, explicit at 310.14-15). MOTIF: *knee*.

279.13-282.28: the rounded load . . . "You're awfully fidgety": MOTIF: *behind*.

279.13: the rounded load: Cf. 280.01-02: "Her remarkably well-filled green shorts."
279.15: Of course, if one goes in for horseplay: With an unintended echo of the footboy with the "tattered copy of *Tattersalia*" (278.23)? Ada, reminded of Van's fight with Percy, opens her book to snub him. This will allow Van to sink almost uninterrupted into his memories of the 1884 ride home, as he sat under Ada.
279.16-17: opened, at its emerald ribbon, the small brown, gold-tooled book: Identified at 280.22-23 as "*Ombres et couleurs*, an 1820 edition of Chateaubriand's short stories." The "emerald"—Lucette's hallmark green—may indicate here too Lucette's central role in *Ada*'s Chateaubriand allusions (see Boyd 1985/2001: 125-28). MOTIF: *Chateaubriand*.
279.17: the passing sun flecks: Cf. 367.01: "sun-flecked Ardis."
279.21-23: "I saw you—horseplaying," said Lucette, turning her head. "Sh-sh," uttered Van. "I mean you and him": Van, "riding" Ada from behind, has noticed Lucette noticing them at the brink of the brook, and tries to silence her; he has not noticed Lucette noticing his tussle with Percy.
279.25: carriage-sick: Versus the usual "car-sick."
279.27: *Jean qui tâchait de lui tourner la tête*: *Darkbloom*: "who was trying to turn her head." Jean (Ivan, Van: to his distaste, like everything else she does, Dorothy Vinelander addresses Van as "Jean" at 519.33) is indeed turning Lucette's head, even without trying.
279.29-30: —when the road 'runs out of you': This image of time receding from one's position in the present prefigures the image of time in terms of a journey, in Part 4, *The Texture of Time*. On their transatlantic journey, Lucette recalls: "Yes, it's always *I* in your lap and the receding road. Roads move?" "Roads move" (482.15-17).
279.32-33: She had been prevailed upon to clothe her honey-brown body: Cf. 278.08-09: "don't forget your jersey, you can't go naked."
280.01: Her remarkably well-filled green shorts: Cf. 279.13: "the rounded load." MOTIF: *green-[Lucette]*.
280.01-02: stained with burnberry purple: As a consequence of her stumble and slip "on a granite slab in a tangle of [burnberry] bushes" (267.17-20) while being too preoccupied with watching Van and Ada's lovemaking. MOTIF: *burnberry*.
280.02: . . . burnberry purple. Her ember-bright hair: The "burn" in the berries seems to have set alight the "ember" in Lucette's glowing red hair.

280.03: smelt of a past summer: Cf. Van's "inhaling her hair" (86.24)—Ada's, that is, as *she* sits on his lap on the way back from the 1884 picnic.
280.08: if the mushrooms had been taken: MOTIF: *boletes*.
280.12-15: Ada . . . more somberly ardent: MOTIF: *ardor*.
280.18: in two different color prints: In one sense, Lucette's honey-brown and Ada's milk-white skins. But Van may also be thinking of his theories of time and memory: cf., in *The Texture of Time*, 546.10-33: "Does the coloration of a recollected object (or anything else about its visual effect) differ from date to date? Could I tell by its tint if it comes earlier or later, lower or higher, in the stratigraphy of my past? Is there any mental uranium whose dream-delta decay might be used to measure the age of a recollection? The main difficulty, I hasten to explain, consists in the experimenter not being able to use the *same* object at different times (say, the Dutch stove with its little blue sailing boats in the nursery of Ardis Manor in 1884 and 1888) because of the two or more impressions borrowing from one another and forming a compound image in the mind; but if different objects are to be chosen (say, the faces of two memorable coachmen: Ben Wright, 1884, and Trofim Fartukov, 1888), it is impossible, insofar as my own research goes, to avoid the intrusion not only of different characteristics but of different emotional circumstances, that do not allow the two objects to be considered essentially equal before, so to speak, their being exposed to the action of Time. . . . how tantalizing, then, the discovery of certain exact levels of decreasing saturation or deepening brilliance—so exact that the 'something' which I vaguely perceive in the image of a remembered but unidentifiable person, and which assigns it 'somehow' to my early boyhood rather than to my adolescence."
280.19: Through strands of coppery silk: MOTIF: *copper*.
280.22-33: her vellum-bound little volume, *Ombres et couleurs*, an 1820 edition of Chateaubriand's short stories: Invented. The closest Chateaubriand came to short stories would be in the novellas *Atala* (1801), *René* (1802), and *Les Aventures du dernier Abencérage* (1826). MOTIF: *Chateaubriand*.
280.22-23: *Ombres et couleurs*: *Darkbloom*: "shadows and colors." Cf. 280.33-34: "thoughts are much more faintly remembered than shadows or colors." Cf. also, perhaps, another literary title, 302.26, the play *Fast Colors*.
280.24-25: with hand-painted vignettes and the flat mummy of a pressed anemone: Cf. Marina's herbarium, with its drawings or

deletions, and its flat-pressed flowers (7-8); and Marina is Van and Ada's "mummy." Note also the anemone in Ada's 1884 nosegay, 38.01.

280.25: The gouts and glooms: Cf., on the 1884 picnic ride home, 86.20: "Hot gouts of sun moved fast across her zebra stripes and the backs of her bare arms."

280.26-28: Lucette's right arm, on which he could not help kissing a mosquito bite in pure tribute to the duplication: Cf., just before the 1884 picnic ride home: "the glow of the afternoon had entered its most oppressive phase, and the first bad mosquito of the season was resonantly slain on Ada's shin by Lucette" (85.20-21).

280.28: Poor Lucette: MOTIF: *poor L*.

280.29-30: of that other coachman who for several months had haunted her dreams: Cf. Ben Wright, on the 1884 picnic ride home: "her drunken boxfellow who was seen to touch her bare knees with a good-natured paw" (86.11-12).

280.34: shadows or colors: Cf. 280.22-23: "*Ombres et couleurs*."

281.01: a green snake in a dark paradise: MOTIF: *green [Ardis]*; *paradise*; *snake*.

281.03: his Ada: MOTIF: *his Ada*.

281.04: (and all three in me, adds Ada): MOTIF: *Composition—Ada*.

281.04: adds Ada: MOTIF: *Ada*.

281.08-09: Ada, husked-corn (laughing) trousers: Cf. 267.01-06. MOTIF: *husk*.

281.09-13: In the fatal course of the most painful ailments . . . slipped us the drug: Readers have by this time seen enough of the circumstances of Van writing *Ada* (at 70.04-10, 73.02-04, 121.23-25, 122.04-05, 220.22-26) to recognize that Van's generalization closely reflects his present state at the time of his writing, in the 1960s. MOTIF: *Composition—Van*.

281.15: golden flood of swelling joy: Cf., on the 1884 picnic, "Hot gouts of sun . . . . " (86.20) and "the boiling and brimming lad" (87.01).

281.18: the piercing and preying ache: The ache of jealous suspicion of Percy de Prey.

281.22: her full lips, parted in profile: Cf., on the 1884 picnic ride home: "the boiling and brimming lad relished her weight as he felt it responding to every bump of the road by softly parting in two" (87.01-03). Cf. Lucette, in Paris, in Ovenman's bar in 1901: "The glossy red lips are parted . . . . all this in profile, we softly repeat" (460.25-30).

281.27-28: threatened to touch off a private crisis under the solemn load of another child: Cf. 87.04-05: "lest a possible seep perplex her innocence."
281.31-32: A twinge in his kneecap also came to the rescue: Cf., on the 1884 picnic ride home, when Van had also been approaching ejaculation: "He would have yielded and melted in animal laxity had not the girl's governess saved the situation by addressing him" (87.05-07). MOTIF: *knee*.
281.32-34: Van chided himself for having attempted to use a little pauper instead of the princess in the fairy tale: Disparities of rank, especially if magically transcended, are a commonplace in fairy tale (Cinderella and her Prince, for instance), but Van plays here especially on *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881) by Mark Twain (1835-1910), where the title characters change places. Lucette, regularly associated with Cinderella, is no pauper (indeed, she will inherit Ardis), except in terms of emotional fulfillment; but Ada is Van's princess or queen. Perhaps there is also an echo of the fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea" (1835), by Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75): the fact that the princess cannot sleep on a bed with a pea placed on it, despite twenty mattresses and twenty featherbeds being piled on top of the pea, *proves* she is a princess and deserves to marry the prince. Sensitive Lucette certainly seems more alert to Van under her than Ada had been in 1884. MOTIF: *Cinderella*; *fairy tale*.
281.34-282.01: the princess in the fairy tale—"whose precious flesh must not blush with the impression of a chastising hand": In part an echo of "The Princess and the Pea" (see note above), in part Nabokov's invention. He liked to claim that great novels were fairy tales (*LL* 2: "The truth is that great novels are great fairy tales—and the novels in this series are supreme fairy tales"; *DQ* 1), and in his own greatest novels he liked to insert invented fairy tales; cf. for instance *Lolita* 173, II.3: "that gift would be snatched away like that palace on the mountain top in the Oriental tale which vanished whenever a prospective owner asked its custodian how come a strip of sunset sky was clearly visible from afar between black rock and foundation."
282.01-02: says Pierrot in Peterson's version: Evokes Perrault (a near-homophone of Pierrot): Charles Perrault (1628-1703), French recorder and teller of fairy-tales, in *Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (*Stories or Tales of the Past: Tales of Mother Goose*, 1697). "Pierrot," a baby-talk version of "Pierre" (Peter),

became a stock character in pantomime and the Commedia dell'Arte, the sad clown pining for Columbine.

282. 05-07: They were now about to enter Gamlet, the little Russian village, from which a birch-lined road lead quickly to Ardis: Cf. 35.10-12: "Gamlet, a half-Russian village. . . . Birches separated to let them pass. . . . " As they return from the 1884 picnic, Van, in "the mournful dullness of unconsummated desire . . . watched a row of izbas straggle by as the *calèche* drove through Gamlet, a hamlet" (87.10-11). MOTIF: *Gamlet*.

282.07-11: A small procession of kerchiefed peasant nymphs . . . walked past through a coppice: Familiar from Russian life and literature, not least from the serf-girls' berry-picking dance in *EO*, Chapter 3 (between stanzas 39 and 40). Cf. VN's translation of *EO* III.xxxix.07-09: "Girl servants, in the garden, on the beds, / were picking berries in the bushes / and singing by decree in chorus." Cf. *SM* 80: "kerchiefed peasant girls."

282.08-10: peasant nymphs . . . with . . . high-divided plump breasts: Cf. 299.19-20: "a beautiful chestnut-curled little maiden with lewd eyes and bobbing breasts."

282.08-09: adorably pretty: MOTIF: *adore*.

282.12-15: *Thorns and nettles / For silly girls: / Ah, torn the petals, / Ah spilled the pearls!*: The maidens' ditty has overtones of something endangering, tearing, perhaps, at the maidenheads, pricks (of thorns or nettles) deflowering them ("torn the petals"). Blanche, on her first appearance, stresses (unconvincingly) her virginity and talks of breaking things, and confusing flowers (49.05-06).

282.16: You have a little pencil in your back pocket: No wonder Van "ouched" when she sat down on him, 279.13.

282.19: reached for Ada's book and wrote on the fly leaf: MOTIF: *Chateaubriand*.

282.21-23: I don't wish to see him again. . . . Tell M. not to receive him: Him: Percy; M.: Marina.

282.28: You're awfully fidgety: Cf. "Stop fidgeting, please" (also in a coach), in the story "A Bad Day" (*SoVN* 264).

282.31: the tiny blue-coated reader: the tousled footboy with the "tattered copy of *Tattersalia*" (278.23).

Afternote

Van structures the whole first part of *Ada* around his two summers with Ada at Ardis. He returns to Ardis in 1888, hoping to repeat the magic of his first summer with her. He certainly does, in terms of sexual ardor. The most magical of the repetitions, repeating a moment that had seemed magical in itself the first time around, is the picnic on Ada's birthday, and especially the return from the picnic, where Van in 1884 had almost reached orgasm as he sat under Ada. In 1888, Van finds himself again sitting with a sister on his lap, and again comes near to orgasm. Yet as with the whole of Ardis the Second, almost everything is subtly and worryingly different, and never more concentratedly so than here.

Nabokov provides a naturalistic explanation for the overall repetition within Part 1 (Van wants to spend a second summer of freedom with Ada at Ardis) and within the two picnics (an annual birthday rite). Indeed, he has placed Ada's birthday on July 21, the day of his own father's birthday, and has commemorated, as well as stylized, "the festive picnics" of his country summers before the family fled St. Petersburg at the end of 1917 (interview with Andrew Field, 1970).

Although both picnic rides end with either Van's twelve-year-old sister (in 1884) or his twelve-year-old half-sister (in 1888), sitting on his lap, Nabokov makes the repetition seem comic, both times, and unforcedly natural. (These rearrangements also parodically echo the role of the pointed assignment of carriage companions for plot purposes in nineteenth-century novels, perhaps most famously, in Mr Elton's proposal to Emma in the carriage returning from a party in Chapter 15 of Austen's *Emma*, 1815.) Marina leaves early both times, in response to a message brought to her, Dan's letter in 1884 (his absurd cry for her help with the directions for the grotesque doll he has bought Ada), Pedro's aerogram in 1888 (flipping Marina from sad old lady to giggly girl), thus disordering the apportionment of people to vehicles on the way *to* the picnic site. Chance further compounds the disrupted travel arrangements. In 1884 Ada's bicycle, left in the sun, bursts a tire, and she has to sit on Van's lap on the calèche. In 1888 the discovery of an overlooked footboy, engrossed in his horseracing guide and therefore not taken back with the rest of the servants, means Lucette has to sit on Van's lap on the victoria. Nabokov creates his designs in time through the artful interplay of contingencies.

During each of the picnics Van displays his prowess under the tutelage of King Wing, Demon's wrestling master: his sublime brachiambulation, in 1884 (81-83), and his expert disposal of the aggressive and heavier Percy de Prey at wrestling, in 1888 (275-76). As a grace note on the repetitions, we witness Mlle Larivière almost discreetly urinating in 1884, and Percy spectacularly pissing in 1888.

But the contrasts between the two picnic scenes outweigh the similarities. Time revolves (the years and the birthdays they bring; the seasons) but marches on. In 1884, Van had had no prolonged physical contact with Ada at the time of the return picnic ride. In 1888, they are experienced lovers, quick to seize the opportunity to make love, even with Ada's husked-corn trousers. By now, too, Lucette is an experienced spy, ogling them on the brink of a brook, before slipping into the burnberry bush and giving away her presence.

That contrast between the early innocence of Ardis the First and the immediate resumption of ardor in Ardis the Second has become familiar by now, of course. More specifically salient in this chapter is the contrast between Greg, a low-key and hopelessly outclassed rival in 1884, on Ada's birthday and the following day, and Greg, much the same in 1888 (after having contrived to be invited) but hopelessly outclassed as Ada's would-be suitor by Percy, who thrusts his way into the occasion and repeatedly challenges Van. Greg's "splendid new" black Silentium motorcycle in 1888 updates the black pony he was ready to offer Ada in 1884, but its implicit silence and elegance barely resonate in comparison with Percy's "steel-grey convertible" that glides into the glade (270) but leaves with a burst of thunder, after Percy has all but offered Van a duel (277). The motorcycle and the car surrounded by the reverent admiration of the possibly "gipsy politicians" (268) have been prefigured by the motorcycle Van takes to his first near-Ardis reunion with Ada, their swift tryst at Forest Fork in 1886, and feverish Ada's near-delirious remark "about gipsies stealing their jeeps" (180), which in anticipating the 1888 picnic anticipates the dangers hanging over their full reunion then, another two years after their last love-making (see I.29 Afternote).

Van does not have to challenge Greg in 1884, for Ada herself rudely dismisses her neighbor's puppy-like devotion. But drunkenly boorish Percy challenges Van in 1888: first by the cat-and-mouse game of "I'm told you like abnormal positions" (271), ostensibly referring to Van's handwalking, but threateningly intimating that *he* knows, and others know, of Van's preferred rear-entry lovemaking with Ada; then by the

pissing display; then by the direct grapple—the sequence almost a summary of male-male rivalry for females in the biological world: vocal challenge, ritualized displaced aggression (the pebble-throwing, 274), bodily display, bodily assault. Van easily overcomes him, only for Percy to assail him from behind—and once again be overcome by Van.

Percy hints at a duel, as he is about to leave, and when Van asks "Is that a challenge, *me faites-vous un duel*?" the older youth merely smiles and drives away, Van offering to accept whenever he is ready (277). Nevertheless when an official challenge arrives the next day, he dismisses it, reassured that Ada is his. But as narrator of the picnic scene, now knowing beyond doubt that Percy had already possessed Ada and would do so again even after the picnic, Van exacts the revenge he forfeited by declining a duel. He gleefully flashes forward to Percy's imminent death, as if, at least narratively, causing it himself, his direct address, contemptuous tone and overt animosity compounding the fatal injury: "Percy, you were to die very soon—and not from that pellet in your fat leg, on the turf of a Crimean ravine, but a couple of minutes later when you . . . felt relieved and secure. . . . I think what I hated most about your handsome moon face . . . " (273). Van's two-fold defeat of Percy, first when he traps Percy "panting like a dying gladiator" (275), then minutes later when he swings him over his head and contemplates inflicting "a certain special device of exotic torture" itself seems to anticipate Percy's sense that he has escaped the worst, in the Crimea, before death takes him by surprise.

When Van and Percy throw stones "at the remnants of an old, rusty, indecipherable signboard" (274), just before they face off directly, the action both expresses their overflowing male testiness and displaces the real threat of their hostility, resurrects a harmless past moment that Van uses, as narrator, to prefigure Percy's death, and touches on the role of the "mysterious pastors" who intrude in the picnic glade. Earlier in Ardis the Second Van has encountered a notice-board bluntly warning that "trespassers might get shot by sportsmen from Ardis Hall" (216—this just after a hint that Van as narrator knows by now that Ada herself has been trespassed on: she has "a deep scratch caused last August by an erratic hatpin—or rather by a thorny twig in the inviting hay"). Percy himself, whom Van as narrator calls "old sport" in his advance disclosure of Percy's *actually* being shot in the Crimea (273), is all but a trespasser, an uninvited guest at Ada's party—Ada, of course, wanting to keep her two current rivals far apart.

Percy and Van's throwing pebbles at the signboard also harks back to a much earlier but *then* oblique anticipation of Percy's death: Van's throwing a cone (which Ada does not see properly and calls a stone) "at a woman of marble bending over a stamnos" (50). Van later characterizes a photograph of the incident as recording himself "aiming a conical missile at the marble fore-image of a Crimean girl doomed to offer an everlasting draught of marble water to a dying marine from her bullet-chipped jar" (399), thereby recalling the details of Percy's being shot by a smiling old Tatar, with perhaps a "daughter with pitcher" (320) offering to quench his thirst just before her father pulls the fatal trigger. The "everlasting draught" of the description of the 1884 photograph seen in 1892 recalls also the "practically everlasting stream" of Percy's urine, mentioned on the page between Van's "Percy, you were to die very soon . . . on the turf of a Crimean ravine" and Van having Percy pinned to the ground "like a dying gladiator" (274, 273, 275).

The fact that the boys throw pebbles at what is presumably a trespass notice links them with the "mysterious pastors" (276) to whom Van issues the notice, "Please go away, this is private property," in as many languages and dialects as he can muster (269). They cannot understand, and do not respond. Van loads the challenge of interpreting the significance of these strangers—perhaps his own addition, as narrator, to the events of the scene. For ten pages he describes them in teasing fashion: "a dozen elderly townsmen, in dark clothes, shabby and uncouth . . . sat down there to a modest *colazione* of cheese, buns, salami, sardines and Chianti. . . . ritually . . . . sad apostolic hands. . . . receded like a fishing boat . . . a most melancholy and meaningful picture—but meaning what, what? . . . convertible . . . . was surrounded by the same group of townsmen . . . collation of shepherds. . . A canvas from Cardinal Carlo de Medici's collection, author unknown. . . . the mysterious pastors . . . stiff collar and reptilian tie left hanging from a locust branch" (268-77). The strong suggestion that these dozen men somehow echo Christ's disciples (apostolic, fishermen, shepherds, pastors) or a painting of them, and the terms of their meal, suggest the Last Supper—a favorite theme for Renaissance painting—where Christ announced to the disciples that one of them would betray him. An echo of Judas Iscariot's hanging himself after his betrayal seems present in "stiff collar and reptilian tie left hanging from a locust branch" (277). The final part of the puzzle is surely Judas's kissing Christ in the garden to identify him to the mob who swoop in to arrest him (Matthew 26:47-

56; Mark 14:43-50), which, like the Last Supper, was often represented in Renaissance art, from Giotto (in 1304-06) to Caravaggio (in 1602). The strangers arrive just as Greg does, and "reverently" inspect his motorbike (268); when Percy's car arrives, "No sooner had it stopped than it was surrounded by the same group of townsmen" (270) They have just left, with the emblem evocative of Judas's suicide as the last detail, as Percy is about to leave and tries to kiss Ada's hand, only to be given her cold fist. The strangers seem indeed to evoke the disciples, surrounding Judas the betrayer, as an analogy to Percy, kissing Ada in the glade, and anticipating, perhaps, Van's sense that he is about to be crucified?

After Percy leaves, and then Greg, Van, Ada and Lucette discover the young footboy who will also have to be accommodated on the waiting victoria, meaning that Lucette will have to be seated on Van's knee. In the afterword to the Penguin *Ada* edition of 1999, I quoted the core of the account of the 1888 picnic ride home (280-81), and commented:

> Van's usual third-person narration slides easily to first-person, to a "We" that Ada soon joins: "We do not care to follow the thoughts troubling Ada." He does not follow her thoughts, not because of the perfectly plausible generalization about memories that he advances, but because—as we discover on a rereading, if we cannot yet guess—she is all apprehension that Van will find out about her recent relationship with Percy de Prey and challenge him to a duel. Van as narrator does not yet want to disclose what Van as character, despite all his rankling unease, does not yet know.
>
> The overlay of novelty and repetition, reminiscence and anticipation so striking in this scene is characteristic of *Ada*—and in fact of all our experience. Van recalls Ada on his knees four years before, the differences as well as the similarities: her loose skirt then, Lucette's tight shorts now, and Ada's "husked-corn" trousers. A sudden side-swerve ("In the fatal course of the most painful ailments . . . . ") discloses a glimpse of Van in what he calls his "dot-dot-dotage," thinking up an image for the momentary reprieve his 18-year-old self has won from his ultimately unallayable misgivings.
>
> Van on the victoria closes his eyes to concentrate on the bliss of the recollection and the magical recapitulation, only

for Van the narrator to glide ahead again to his recollecting this moment still later, a glide whose rhetoric ("Many, oh many, many years later . . . ") augments rather than diminishes the bliss. On the picnic ride he experiences the "complete eclipse of the piercing and preying ache," the dismissal of his qualms about Percy de Prey, but since these qualms will soon prove well-founded, his later self tries to think back into that surge of confidence, which had it been justified would have spared him years of bitterness.

As so often in *Ada* the passage basks in bliss yet seethes with tension as it overlays time upon time. In 1888 Van recollects the bliss of 1884 as he relives something like it, consciously willing himself back into the past, in a triumphant reversal of time, even as he registers the difference between then and now. But Van as narrator, eight decades later, recalls this 1888 triumph *and* the dire disclosure ahead that he keeps half-hidden from the first-time reader as it was hidden from his young self, the bitter discovery that as it were pointedly insists that time's direction can never be reversed.

Even before Percy de Prey's affair with Ada darkens the picture, Van's sense in 1888 that the repeated picnic ride is a kind of magical replay of the past, a triumph over time, already depends on his awareness of the complex tension between past and present. Part of the bliss of the original 1884 experience had been the thrill of enforced contact with Ada in a protracted present, and the sudden promise of future intimacy. *Now* in 1888 his intimacy with Ada seems an immemorial, ever-renewable fact, as in that brisk throb on the brink of the brook earlier in the afternoon. *Then* Ada at twelve had seemed innocent and unattainable; *now* Lucette, herself twelve, is even more innocent and untouchable. *Now* Ada is his; *then* he could not imagine an Ada so blissfully familiar; but it is the very distance he must keep from Lucette, the very resistance to lapsing back into that earlier temptation to melt "in animal laxity," the very change from Ada to Lucette, that re-animates the thrill of the past.

But here once again comes a different kind of tension, a further complexity in the overlay of time. When in 1901 Van breaks away from Lucette in the cinema that fatal night on the *Tobakoff* and retreats to his cabin, he again projects "upon the

> screen of his paroxysm" not the Lucette he has been sitting with, but the Ada he has seen on the cinema screen, "a perfect compendium of her 1884 and 1888 and 1892 looks," just as here he sits beneath Lucette but projects onto his private screen the image of Ada in 1884. The overlapping and interlacing of images of Ada and Lucette on the picnic ride point forward to the tragic entanglement of the two Veen girls that reaches its climax on the night of Lucette's death. The moment of past bliss, the moment of the present bliss of recollection and apparent triumph over time, the moment of the dire discovery about Percy that three days later will refute this bliss, the moment of the future paroxysm that will seal Lucette's doom—all meet here as *Ada* explores how the present overlaps and builds on the past and yet leads to the multiple surprises of the future. (Boyd 1985/2001: 314-15)

For the more expert audience of these annotations, I will add a few more details. Lucette sees Van and Ada at the brook making love from behind. She then slips and falls into a burnberry bush, so that the crupper she settles onto Van's crutch is "stained with burnberry purple" (280). She is now virtually in the same position relative to Van, her buttock pressed to his crotch, as she has seen Ada and Van adopt on the many occasions during Ardis the First when she has spied on them *in flagrante*. In Boyd 1985/2001, especially 134-44, I discuss the "behind" motif, Van and Ada's love-making from behind, and the two picnic rides with first Ada in Van's lap in 1884, then Lucette in 1888. Here the motif reaches something of a climax as far as Lucette is concerned: no wonder she asks in the next chapter "could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower *through* something, through his gaiters or woolies or whatever he wore?" (289). That seems delightfully comic at the time, but changes in tone when we discover Lucette sexually damaged, and even driven to suicide, by her too-early initiation into sex, and her entanglement in Van and Ada's lovemaking. The burnberry stain adds an additional note: the invented "burnberry" itself evokes the night of the Burning Barn, when the fires of Van and Ada's ardor first set each other fully sexually alight (cf. in I.40: "All their passionate pump-joy exertions, from Burning Barn to Burnberry Brook," 286). The berry surely suggests also the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, in both Genesis and in *Ada*, in the shattal tree where Lucette for the first time overhears Van and Ada in sexual, even if accidental, contact, in that Fortunate Fall (see I.15 Afternote). In

Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, the constant pictorial subtext of *Ada*, the berries dominant in the Garden of Earthly Delights in the central panel give way to images of hellfire in the right-hand panel, Hell. Nabokov's ironies and ambiguities are perhaps lighter than Bosch's, but Lucette's half-sister's name does mean in Russian "of hell," and her half-brother, like her half-sister, is the child of Demon.

The scene at Burnberry Brook and Lucette's fall into the burnberry bush form part of another pattern that also has Boschean overtones. The "burn" so striking here (and so closely associated with the "ardor" of *Ada*'s subtitle) joins all the other anticipations of the impending disclosure that Percy has been having an affair with Ada. In the next chapter, a page after what Van thinks a sweetness in Ada's smile that made all "their passionate pump-joy exertions, from the Burning Barn to Burnberry Brook, . . . nothing in comparison to this *zaychik*, this 'sun blick' of the smiling spirit" (286), Van finds a note in the heart pocket of his dinner jacket, "One must not berne you," and immediately recognizes that "Only a French-speaking person would use that word for 'dupe'" (287), and that he cannot interrogate all the fifteen or more servants of French descent at Ardis. Only later that night does Blanche, who had left the note, penned in her sister's hand, disclose enough to Van that he knows of Ada's affairs with both Rack and Percy by the next morning. The burning associated with desire—the "passionate pump-joy exertions," the ardor of Ada and Ardis—and also associated with Lucette through the burnberry stain, as if she were scorched by Van and Ada's ardor, also links with the searing pain of Van's jealousy. Lucette spies secretly at the picnic site not only on Van and Ada making love, but also on Van and Percy making all but war, and Lucette will in many other ways be linked with Van's rivals (see Boyd 1985/2001: 168-74). Echoing Bosch's juxtaposition of berries and flames, Nabokov juxtaposes the berry in the Burnberry Brook with the repeated pleasures of Van and Ada's repeated love-makings, and the hell-flames associated with the pains of love, as felt by Lucette, in her skewed sexuality, and by Van and his rivals, in their experience of the jealousy and despair that shadow the triumph of love.

Ada's Chateaubriand allusions also appear lighter and more playful than Bosch's darker ironies—at first. Van and Ada seem merely to toy, with parodic glee, with the incestuous notes in the French writer's novellas and his life. But the allusions change in tone in view of Lucette's suicide and the fact that Chateaubriand's sister Lucile, with whom he seems to have been virtually enamoured, herself committed

suicide. Nabokov has good reason to have Ada read "*Ombres et couleurs*, an 1820 edition of Chateaubriand's short stories" (280), as she rides home from the picnic, with Lucette beside her on Van's lap, in the first major confusion of sister and sister. The same entanglement, the same confusion, the same projection of an image of Ada in Van's mind, will occur on the night of Lucette's suicide. Then, while Van and Lucette watch the film *Don Juan's Last Fling*, Ada will step into the picture, in the part of "Dolores, a dancing girl (lifted from Osberg's novella . . .)" (488), disrupting the mood Lucette has aroused in Van. In the 1884 picnic, Ada wore her "lolita (thus dubbed after the little Andalusian gipsy of that name in Osberg's novel . . . ") (77), while *she* sat on Van's lap on the return picnic ride. In the 1888 picnic ride, Lucette sits on Van's lap, with her burnberry-stained shorts, while Van evokes Ada on his lap in her lolita in 1884. In the 1901 shipboard movie theater, Lucette sits beside Van, having aroused in him the excitement of *her* presence, only for Ada to appear on screen as Osberg's Dolores, in "a perfect compendium of her 1884 and 1888 and 1892 looks" (489), and at once turn Lucette's last chance to win Van into no chance at all.

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