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Back issues are no longer available, but gradually will become part of the upcoming Society web site.

Payment by credit card or prepaid card is preferred; membership information is at the Society web site. Those outside the US can also pay via Western Union. Checks in US dollars, drawn on US banks, are still accepted. They should be made payable to the Vladimir Nabokov Society.

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FROM THE EDITOR
by Stephen Blackwell

This issue marks the final edition of *The Nabokovian* to appear primarily in print, in accordance with the vote of the membership upon the recent proposals on the Society's future. In short order, the web site should become very active, and as things currently stand, a printed version of certain items from the site will be produced twice a year (subject to space limitations), and sold at cost to those wishing to pay for it.

As many society members know, *The Nabokovian* was created in 1978 by Stephen Jan Parker as the *Vladimir Nabokov Research Newsletter*. It transformed into its current format in 1985. The "Notes and Brief Annotations" section began its life as "Annotations and Queries" and has been edited over the years by Charles Nicol, Gennady Barabtarlo, and of course its current master of ceremonies, Priscilla Meyer. The checklist of criticsm (later, "Bibliography") was added in the third number, and for many years was produced by Steve Parker, alone or in collaboration with his graduate students. He was succeeded in this endeavor by his former student Sidney Dement. Brian Boyd's popular "Annotations to Ada" began to appear in Spring 1993, and have been a mainstay of the journal ever since. Throughout Steve Parker's years as Editor and Publisher of the journal, he was assisted by Ms. Paula Courtney, and the two of them produced 71 issues with admirable regularity.

In recent years, many of the original functions of *The Nabokovian* were taken over or supplemented by Nabokv-L, founded by D. Barton Johnson for the Society, or by other web-based resources such as ZEMBLA, created by Jeff Edmunds on the Penn State University's library servers. Throughout all that time, *The Nabokovian* continued to be relevant to the Society's members, serving as an ideal place to publish brief "note"-style discoveries that could not be submitted to regular scholarly journals. As a result of this openness, many Nabokov scholars (professional and otherwise) saw their first publications appear on these pages.

It seems only fitting that the name *The Nabokovian* will now adorn the Society's web space, which will be home to the sections previously housed in the printed journal, and also new departments that may be launched by intrepid colleagues. Brian Boyd will continue to publish his "Annotations" here first, six months before

making them accessible at his AdaOnline site. The new site will be more flexible than the print publication; it will certainly grow to contain many new features, and who knows what interesting forms and variations it will evolve into during the coming years. All Society members are encouraged to contribute to the life of the new *Nabokovian* web site.

SOCIETY NEWS

Not only was the first round of bylaws changes approved by the membership in January 2016, but Thomas Karshan was elected the new Vice President, with Zoran Kuzomanovich moving up to the presidency and Leland de la Durantaye assuming his post on the Board.

Jeff Edmunds announced in November, 2015, on ZEMBLA's 20th anniversary, that his Kinbotean web site would become a static archive, no longer accepting any submissions or corrections of any material. Jeff's generous and inspiring contributions to the world of Nabokov enthusiasts will (let's hope) remain as a monument in perpetuity, its contents permanently available to all seeking them out to stimulate and advance their own research or their understanding of Nabokov's art. Special thanks and tribute are due to Jeff and to everyone who helped him make ZEMBLA a key fixture of Nabokov life for the past two decades.

Susan Elizabeth Sweeney and I recently announced the end of our tenure at the helm of Nabokv-L, and the accession of Dana Dragunoiu and Stanislav Shvabrin as the new co-editors. We are grateful to them, and confident and excited about the future of the List in their able hands.

Future print editions of *The Nabokovian* will require a new Editor to oversee the process of selecting contents from the web site, light editing, formatting, printing, and mailing to the subset of members who choose to purchase this optional edition. Ideally, said Editor will come from the ranks of those wishing to see a print edition continue (about 30-35% of the membership, last year). I will be most willing to help the next Editor with all technical details of such a venture for as long as necessary. The new Editor will be

selected by the Society's Board of Directors, but those interested are invited to write to me (sblackwe@utk.edu) putting their names forward.

Nabokov Studies biennial prize winners were announced:

The Donald Barton Johnson Prize for the best essay published in *Nabokov Studies*: Deborah Anne Martinsen, for "*Lolita* as a St. Petersburg Text." **The Samuel Schuman Prize** for the best first book on Nabokov: Julia Trubikhina, for *The Trans-lator's Doubts: Vladimir Nabokov and the Ambiguity of Translation.* **The Kuzmanovich Family Prize** for the best dissertation on Nabokov: Constantine Muravnik for *Nabokov's Philosophy of Art*.

Beginning this year, *Nabokov Studies*, now electronic, will be an official benefit of Society membership. Those who have access through their institutional affiliations will continue to make use of those channels. Members lacking such access can receive a rights-managed PDF of the journal by writing to its editor, Zoran Kuzmanovich, at zokuzmanovich@davidson.edu.

Zoran is also organizing a conference for September 2016, to take place in either Key West, Florida, or Honolulu, Hawaii. Look for announcements and details on Nabokv-L, on the web site (www.nabokovsociety.org), and in your email.

As of this writing, the Society has eighty-five individual members, a slight decline from last year. As the new Web Site expands its content and reputation, the Board expects to see significant growth in membership.

As my last word on this last print-only *Nabokovian*, I'd like to express my thanks to all contributors to the journal during my time here, as well as to everyone who has uttered or sent me kind and supportive words for my small efforts on behalf of the Society. It has been a real pleasure being a part of the team that keeps the IVNS ticking, and it will be an even greater pleasure to watch the next generation of Nabokovians propel our industrious guild to new heights.

ANOTHER ADELAIDA: DOSTOEVSKY'S *THE IDIOT* IN NABOKOV'S *ADA*

Ada (full name Adelaida) Veen is the main female character in Nabokov's *Ada* (1969). Multiple origins of the name, uncommon in Russia, are possible. Russian "ad" (hell) is an obvious component. Hence the well-studied duality of Ardis, and the entire planet of Antiterra (Demonia), as both heaven and hell. "Adah, in the verse tragedy *Cain: A Mystery* (1821), by Lord Byron, is both wife and twin sister of Cain" (Boyd, B. AdaOnline, http://www.ada.auckland.ac.nz/).

Ada Veen's proficiency in science brings to mind a relevant, real female scholar, Ada Lovelace (1815-1852), the daughter of the same Lord Byron. This Ada famously worked with Charles Babbage on developing his Analytical Machine, a prototype of modern computers (never built), and is considered the first computer programmer. Babbage called her "The Enchantress of Numbers." Ada Lovelace, also interested in phrenology and mesmerism, described her approach as "poetical science." Her father, Lord Byron, of course, is the most important literary influence in Russian literature in relation to Pushkin; Nabokov himself discussed Byron many times, particularly in his *Eugene Onegin* commentary.

The name Ada, amazingly, appears in one of the earliest of Nabokov's works: his translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (*Anya v strane chudes*, Berlin: Gamaiun, 1923). The young translator deployed the "Anya–Ada–Asya" word sequence (Doublets game, or world golf, invented by Lewis Carroll himself) to emphasize his Anya's transformations (for more detail, see: Fet, V. "Beheading First: On Nabokov's Translation of Lewis Carroll. *The Nabokovian*, 2009, 63, 52–63).

It appears, however, that *Ada* scholars have overlooked the only Adelaida existing in major Russian literature. It is Adelaida Yepanchina, the middle daughter of General Yepanchin in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1868). All three daughters have names starting with "A": Alexandra, Adelaida, Aglaya (compare this to Nabokov's Anya–Ada–Asya).

Ada famously starts with a mockery of Tolstoy novel's very first sentence. "In inverting Anna Karenin's opening sentence, Van tries to claim that, unlike Tolstoy's novel, *Ada* is no tragedy but the happy story of a unique family" (Boyd, B. *Nabokov's* Ada*: The Place of Consciousness*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1985, 103). It appears that this important beginning might also refer to *The Idiot*, another opposite of a happy family chronicle. The Yepanchins, to whom we are introduced in the very first paragraphs of *The Idiot*, are indeed a very unhappy family. The novel's protagonist Prince Myshkin, a Christ-like figure, is mentally unstable and his attempts at family life are disastrous. Myshkin is given Tolstoy's first name and patronymic, Lev Nikolaevich—a sign of Dostoevsky's constant argument with Tolstoy (the two never met).

Like Nabokov's Ada, Dostoevsky's Adelaida is an artist. She paints nothing but landscapes and portraits that she never can finish, according to Mrs. Yepanchina, her mother. This is how Dostoevsky has Adelaida introduce herself: "For two years, I cannot find an idea for my new painting. Prince, give me an idea." So it is to her that Prince Myshkin makes a remarkable suggestion, to paint an "invitation to a beheading": "…indeed, I had a thought… to paint the face of a sentenced man, one minute before the guillotine would fall, when he is already standing on the scaffold, just before he would lie on that block."

Adelaida does not speak much but when her opinion is needed she ignores her family's ironical attitude toward the Prince. She is the only female character in *The Idiot* who is genuinely interested in Myshkin and in his words. All others take him for a fool, she takes him for a philosopher; all others mock him, she asks him to teach her and give her an idea for a painting. Adelaida is the first, and the only one, to defend Myshkin in front of her mother and Aglaya. One can see an inner connection between her and Myshkin: while everyone is making fun of him, Adelaida says thoughtfully: "You are a philosopher and came to teach us… teach us, please." This is the most exact characteristic of Myshkin, and the highest praise that he will ever hear. "…You have the face of a kind sister," says Myshkin to Adelaida, who clearly has a special place in Dostoevsky's heart—and is rewarded with a happy ending: she happily marries one "Prince Shch."

Let us now turn to the real-life prototypes of the Yepanchin family in *The Idiot*. This, unexpectedly, will bring us to the Ada

Lovelace connection again. Her younger Russian counterpart, indeed another "Enchantress of Numbers," is the famous, precocious mathematician Sofia Kovalevskaya (1850-1891). In the best tradition of Nabokovian puzzles or chess problems, we discover that Sofia's *older sister* Anna was a prototype of Adelaida Yepanchina's *younger sister*, Aglaya.

It is commonly believed that the Yepanchins are loosely based on the family of the General Vasily Korvin-Krukovsky. Dostoevsky was a frequent guest of this family after his return from Siberian exile. The general had two daughters, Anna (the older) and Sofia (the younger). Anna's first attempts at writing prose were encouraged by Dostoyevsky. Both girls were rebellious, knew and read Chernyshevsky, and both later married untraditionally.

In 1865, Dostoevsky (then 44) proposed to 21 year-old Anna Korvin-Krukovskaya (1843-1887), and was rejected. Anna is considered to be a prototype of a beautiful and cruel "nihilist," the 20 year-old Aglaya Yepanchina in *The Idiot*. In the novel, Aglaya is the youngest of three sisters who, in the end, marries a Polish count and revolutionary, and converts to Catholicism (a great sin for Dostoevsky, and a reference to the Krukovsky family's Polish roots). As if following the novelist's prophecy, the real Anna Korvin-Krukovskaya married in 1870 a French army colonel, and a revolutionary, Victor Jaclard. Together with Sofia and her husband, the Jaclards were active in the Paris Commune in 1871. Later, Anna Jaclard became a well-known writer in Russia. She maintained her friendship with Dostoevsky.

The Idiot's first chapter appeared in 1868. The same year, 18 year-old Sofia Korvin-Krukovskaya married Vladimir Kovalevsky, in a "fictitious marriage" (exactly as recommended in Chernyshevsky's *What To Be Done*, 1862-1863), in order to be able to be educated in Europe. At some point, the marriage was consummated, and in 1878 they had a daughter. Vladimir, who became a famous paleontologist and a personal friend of Charles Darwin, committed suicide in 1883. Sofia Kovalevskaya became the first female Professor of Mathematics in history (Stockholm University, 1884). Her discoveries in mathematics continued the work of Leonhard Euler (see *Ada* about Van Veen who "could solve an Euler-type problem or learn by heart Pushkin's *Headless Horseman* poem in less than twenty minutes").

In her 1890 autobiography (Kovalevskaya, S.V. *Vospominaniya. Povesti.* Nauka: Moscow, 1974), Sofia remembers in great detail Dostoevsky's courting Anna. Sofia was 15 years old, and fell in love with the famous writer herself. "I was sitting close, without interrupting the conversation, looking at Fyodor Mikhaylovich, and listened with great attention to everything he was saying. He seemed to me now an absolutely different man, very young, sincere, kind, and intelligent. "Is it true that he is 43 years old?" I thought. "Is it possible that he is three times older than me?"

Sofia's genuine interest in Dostoevsky certainly reminds us of Adelaida's attention to Myshkin: while her parents are suspicious and skeptical about Dostoevsky ("What do we know about him? Only that he is a journalist and a former inmate. A good recommendation!"), Sofia knows that he is a great writer. "He was like a friend"; the 15-year old girl "immediately felt that Dostoevsky was very kind and close" to her.

We might see Sofia Kovalevskaya reflected also in Princess Sofia Temnosiny, the ancestral female in the Veen line in *Ada*. (Temnosinys were a real ancient princely family, which expired only in the 19th century). "Princess Sofia" is reminiscent of real Russian female rulers: Princess Sofia Romanova, sister of Peter the Great; or even Princess Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg, better known as Empress Catherine the Great. However, the name also refers to Sophia as an ancient symbol of Wisdom—Judaic, Gnostic, and Christian, as the martyr mother of Saints Faith, Hope, and Charity (three Christian virtues; 1 Corinthians 13:13). In the Russian tradition, Charity becomes Love, and the triple saints are *Vera, Nadezhda, Liubov'*. This Sophia was also the most important symbol for Russian Symbolists of the Silver Age (Vladimir Solovyov, Blok, Bely, etc.). The Latin equivalent of Sophia is Sapientia, which directly connects us to the Linnaean name of our species.

The complex, mocking biography of Chernyshevsky in Chapter 4 of Nabokov's *Dar* (*The Gift*, 1938) is "based" on an imaginary work of one Strannolyubsky ("Strangelove"), "his best biographer." The real Alexander Nikolaevich Strannolyubsky (1839-1903) was a St. Petersburg mathematician who tutored Chernyshevsky's son, and is in fact playfully mentioned in *The Gift* as "the critic's father?" (Strannolyubsky's name appears in a letter to Chernyshevsky from his wife Olga Sokratovna dated 4 August 1888). Twenty years earlier

(1866-68), this real Strannolyubsky was also the first tutor of young Sofia Korvin-Krukovskaya, just before she married Vladimir Kovalevsky and moved to Europe (Vorontsova, L.A. *Sofya Kovalevskaya*, Molodaya Gvardiya: Moscow, 1957). It was Sofia Kovalevskaya who suggested that Sasha Chernyshevsky should study mathematics (A. Sklyarenko, NABOKOV-L, 8 June 2013). Sofia's tutor in Berlin in 1870-1874 was the famous German mathematician, Karl Weierstrass (1815-1897), who also taught Nikolai Bugaev, father of the poet Andrey Bely.

In *Ada*, the Korvin-Krukovsky family could also provide one of the sources of "Raven"—the nickname of Ada Veen's father, Demon Veen. The name "Korvin" (Korwin, Corvin) is common in Poland and Hungary, and derives from Corvinus (Lat., raven). Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490), the Renaissance "raven king" of Hungary, who had the largest library in Europe, was part of Korvin-Krukovsky's family legend. In fact, "Korvin" was formally added to the Krukovsky surname only in 1858, when the vain General proved his aristocratic family connections (V. P. Rumyantseva, *Rodoslovnaya Korvin-Krukovskikh* [*Genealogy of Korvin-Krukovskys*]. *Nevelsky sbornik*, St. Petersburg, 1997, 2, 146–157.) The Polish version of the name, known from the 13th century, is Slepowron (Blind Raven); their coat-of-arms featured a raven holding a golden ring in its beak. An ardent *Ada* scholar would be tempted to decode "Corvin" as "Cor Vin" (Lat., "heart of Veen").

The timeline in *Ada*'s Part 1 is 1863-1888. Scholars have not really explained why. This blissful time in Amerussia, however, corresponds to some particularly tumultuous years in real Russia: from the hope of the Great Reforms of Alexander II (1861) to his assassination by "the possessed" terrorists of the People's Will in 1881, two months after Dostoevsky's death. In the literary context, these decades were the formative time of the greatest Russian prose. We know that Nabokov admired Tolstoy and denied Dostoevsky the rank of a great writer. On Antiterra, Tolstoy is much more visible, and references to Dostoevsky are hidden, but in real history, both were most important figures who exerted immense influence on all future writers on Earth.

—Victor Fet and Slav N. Gratchev, Huntington, WV

In support of the reading of *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* that postulates a spectral Sebastian guiding V. from beyond the grave, there is previously unnoticed material in Chapter Five. Some, such as Michael Dirda in his introduction to the New Directions edition of the text (1998), draw attention to the very mysterious (most likely Russian Blue) cat who, while Sebastian is being discussed, strangely "does not seem to know milk all of a sudden" (Nabokov 50), and who casts a shadowy presence throughout the chapter. There are various textual indices of chapter five's extra-ordinary qualities, not the least of which is the literal evocation of "Sebastian's spirit," which "seemed to hover about us with the flicker of the fire reflected in the brass knobs of the hearth" (45-46). But perhaps the most compelling evidence is disguised within the parenthetical detail given by V. that "it was a bleak day in February," and in Sebastian's unnamed friend's insistence that V. "[c]ome along and visit the crocuses, Sebastian used to call them 'the poet's mushrooms,' if you see what he meant" (51).

In 1922, Cambridge University Press (Sebastian's alma mater) published an anthology of poetry called *The Poets' Year*, which uses the days and months of the year as its structural framework. Under February fourth is found the following poem by Coventry Patmore (*The Poets' Year*, Reprint. Ed. Ada Sharpley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 34, italics mine):

> The *crocus*, while the days are dark,
> Unfolds its saffron sheen;
> At April's touch, the crudest bark
> Discovers gems of green.
>
> Then sleep the seasons, full of might;
> While slowly swells the pod
> And rounds the peach, and in the night
> The *mushroom* bursts the sod
>
> The Winter falls; the frozen rut
> Is bound with silver bars;
> The snow-drift heaps against the hut;
> And night is pierc'd with stars.

This is the source of Sebastian's poetical equation of the crocus and the mushroom; one blooms in the dark days of early spring, the other in the night. That it falls under the section of poems for February is equally telling, but that its author is Coventry Patmore is the crowning detail, because the work he is most famous for is a book-length narrative poem entitled "The Angel in the House." The cumulative impact of these details leads to the conclusion that the angel in that house is none other than Sebastian Knight himself — exerting what limited influence he has from the domain of his spectral "other world." If it seems like a lot to ask for a poem to signify the title of another poem, it should be noted that "The Angel in the House" is significant even beyond the bounds of *The Real Life*. It bears a structural resemblance to *Pale Fire*, of which *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* is a clear prototype. It consists of two main parts —the first, a single coherent poem, and the second, a series of poems written between characters, which collectively forms an epistolary novel.

ON SHAMOES

Chapter 24 in *Ada* begins with the statement that "Lettrocalamity...was banned all over the world" (147). As Vivian Darkbloom notes in the novel's index, the word is a play on the Italian word for electromagnet, elettrocalamita (596). The reader is given to understand that electricity is altogether banned on Demonia, but what does this detail have to do with "shamoes," a word that appears in a parenthetical aside two pages later, and which is not an actual English word? Here is the phrase from the text:

> He also recalled hearing a cummerbunded Dutchman in the hotel hall telling another that Van's father, who had just passed whistling one of his three tunes, was a famous "camler" (camel driver —shamoes having been imported recently? No, "gambler"). (149)

As others have pointed out, the word when pronounced sounds like *chameau*, which is the French word for camel. There is a game of words being played: shamo sounds like chameau, which is camel,

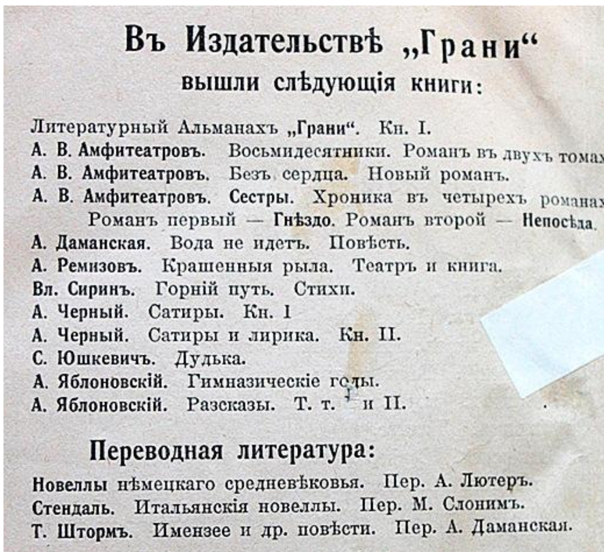
and "gambler" would sound like "camler" in Dutch-English; it is not too great an interpretive leap to associate the root word "sham" with Demon Veen. But that he was "whistling one of his three tunes" is the significant point for the present purpose.

In 1889, George Gilbert Aimé Murray wrote a novel called *Gobi or Shamo: A Story of Three Songs* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1890). Shamo, evidently, is a regional equivalent of Gobi. But more importantly, Murray's novel has striking parallels to *Ada*. It is a Lost Race novel; the protagonists, Mavrones and Baj, are seeking a lost colony of Greeks known as the Hellenes. *Ada*, of course, is a Lost World novel: the hunt for Terra. In *Gobi or Shamo*, the Hellenes' most significant accomplishment is the harnessing of electricity, or what they call "Dynamitis," whose primary function is to transmit messages (a procedure taken over by water in *Ada*). However, due to the constant threat of invasion by neighboring colonies, the energy is used as a kind of protective force field. "'Algernon says you have found out a little about it in Europe," says one Hellene to Mavrones and his companion, "'you call it some name like Electro...'" (Murray 163-64). Baj finishes the word for him: "'Electricity no doubt'" (164). Thus, an entire intricately woven theme in *Ada* —"the electricity theme," as Nabokov might have said, is disguised beneath the veil of a single word taken from a little-known 19th century novel about another world.

—Steven Mihalik, New Paltz, NY

On 12 January 1924 VN wrote to Véra Slonim, “Do you know that on the cover of the first issue of ‘Grani’ our surnames are side by side? A symbol?” (*Letters to Véra*, Translated and edited by Olga Voronina and Brian Boyd, London: Penguin, 2014, 21). In their note to this passage the editors write, “It is unclear what VN refers to: ‘Slonim’ does not feature on the cover” (*Letters to Véra*, 555-556).

Yet there is a juxtaposition of surnames in *Grani* which, while not precisely meeting the conditions of the 12 January 1924 letter, is almost surely related to VN’s “symbol.” In the second issue, from 1923, the last printed page [264] is a page of advertisements for books appearing under the Grani imprint. The list includes “Vl. Sirin. The Empyrean Path. Poems,” and, a few inches down in a section devoted to literature in translation, “Stendahl. *Italian Novella*. Tr. M. Slonim.” So VN’s pen name did appear on the same page of *Grani* as the name of Mark Slonim, who was “remotely related” (Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991, 85) to Véra. Admittedly the names do not appear on the cover of the first issue and are not in the strictest sense “side by side,” but unless a better candidate can be found, it would seem that this proximity was close enough to excite VN’s imagination.



Въ Издательствѣ „Грани“
вышли слѣдующія книги:

Литературный Альманахъ „Грани“. Кн. I.
А. В. Амфитеатровъ. Восьмидесятники. Романъ въ двухъ томах
А. В. Амфитеатровъ. Безъ сердца. Новый романъ.
А. В. Амфитеатровъ. **Сестры.** Хроника въ четырехъ романах
Романъ первый — **Гнѣздо.** Романъ второй — **Непосѣда.**
А. Даманская. Вода не идетъ. Повѣсть.
А. Ремизовъ. Крашенныя рыла. Театръ и книга.
Вл. Сиринъ. Горній путь. Стихи.
А. Черный. Сатиры. Кн. I
А. Черный. Сатиры и лирика. **Кн. II.**
С. Юшкевичъ. Дудька.
А. Яблоновскій. Гимназическіе годы.
А. Яблоновскій. Разсказы. Т. т. I и II.

Переводная литература:

Новеллы нѣмецкаго средневѣковья. Пер. А. Лютеръ.
Стендаль. Итальянскія новеллы. Пер. М. Слонимъ.
Т. Штормъ. Имензее и др. повѣсти. Пер. А. Даманская.

Finally, I must note that the only copies of *Grani* that I have seen were rebound without the original wrappers. It is not uncommon for periodicals to print advertising copy on the inside of the wrappers. Is there a chance that the true source of the symbol is hidden on the inside cover of the first issue of *Grani*?

—John Hoffnagle, San Jose, California

SCENT OF A WOMAN: OLFACTION METAPHORS IN VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S NOVELS

This paper is devoted to the way Nabokov describes smells, topically limited here to the female protagonists in his eighteen novels. The analytical method is rooted in Cognitive Metaphor Theory (G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, 2005 [1980], *Metaphors We Live By*, New York: Basic Books), which treats metaphors as interrelating the cognitive conceptual items of discourse with its participants and contexts. Within the schema of a cognitive metaphor, the smell impressions (source concepts) mapped onto Nabokov's female protagonists (target concepts) by their male co-protagonists (the mapping minds) may be regarded as powerful characteristics of the latter, since "A metaphor is the result of the search for a precise epithet" in the process of "ransacking heaven and earth for a similitude" (J. Middleton Murray, *The Problem of Style,* London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1936 [1922], p. 83). This method might not only reveal the peculiarities of Nabokov's descriptive techniques but also provide insight into his masterful use of stylistic details to ensure a seamless image of his protagonists.

In female-related descriptions, Nabokov's male characters often use natural flower smells as a source concept: VIOLETS: e.g., Luzhin's chess board was "bathed in fragrance," smelling, depending upon what flowers the old chess-playing gentleman brought to his aunt, "at times of violets and at times of lilies of the valley" (*The Luzhin Defense*, p. 55; all references refer to the Penguin series); "a whiff of violets" associated by Albinus with Margot (*Laughter in the Dark*, p. 32); Sonya's "black, violet-scented hair" (*Glory*, p. 109); VANILLA: e.g., Emmie's hair "smelled of vanilla" (*Invitation to a Beheading*, p. 65); CHESTNUT (e.g., Mariette's hair "had a strong chestnutty smell" (*Bend Sinister*, p. 120) and she "had a chestnutty-

smelling bare arms" (ibid. p. 164); LAVENDER: e.g., Iris' "lavender-scented bedroom" (*Look at the Harlequins!* p. 31); GRAPEFRUIT: e.g., the "grapefruit fragrance of her [Liza's] neck" (*Pnin*, p. 44); HONEY: e.g., for Van, the memory of falling in love with Ada is forever linked with her eating a "*tartine au miel* … the classical beauty of clover honey, smooth, pale, translucent" (*Ada or Ardor*, p. 64); Lolita "was all rose and honey" (*Lolita*, p. 111); ORCHIDS: e.g. "that rapt orchideous air" in Mrs. Z.'s living room (*Pale Fire*, poem, lines 771-772), Van calls Ada "my phantom orchid" (*Ada or Ardor*, p. 155), Humbert is in awe of Lolita's "dear dirty blue jeans, smelling of orchards in nymphetland" (*Lolita*, p. 91); HELOTROPE: e.g., Fyodor's memory links his first woman with a "Turgenevian odour of heliotrope" (*The Gift*, p. 140). Sometimes other natural smells, those of unkempt femininity, are mentioned: e.g., when recalling his first sex partner, Van remembers "the kitchen odor of her arms" (*Ada or Ardor*, p. 33), and Franz recalls his sister's "empty-stomach smell" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 1) or the "depressing, depressingly familiar odor of her [his mother's] skin and clothes" (ibid. p. 94).

Some of Nabokov's male protagonists seem to be knowledgeable about certain perfume labels. For instance, CHANEL, e.g., Martha's "Chanel-scented handkerchief" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 61), TAGORE, "a cheep, sweet perfume" used by Mary (*Mary*, p. 63); SANGLOT, "a cheep musky perfume" worn by Mariette (*Bend Sinister*, p. 136); ADORATION, "a quite respectable perfume" of Ljuba Savich (*Look at the Harlequins!* p. 72), KRASNAYA MOSKVA or RED MOSCOW, "an insidious perfume which imbued even the hard candy" on board the Aeroflot plane (ibid. p. 162). Sometimes, perfumes are not labeled but negatively perceived, e.g. Lyudmila's perfume is "something sleazy, stale and old" (*Mary*, p. 21); Margot's "cheap sweet scent" (*Laughter in the Dark*, 30); "the sweet vulgar tang" of Lydia's perfume (*Despair*, p. 30). Sometimes, the olfactory impression can be positive, e.g., Klara's room "smelled of good perfume" (*Mary*, 42); Claire used "a nice cool perfume" (*The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, p. 61), while Fyodor is pursued by "the smell of that certain scent which somehow was always used by the very women who liked him, although to him this dullish, sweetish-brown smell was unbearable" (*The Gift*, p. 153).

Nabokov often describes complex odors, of which perfume is but a constituent. For instance, Humbert writes that Lolita's bed

"smelled of chestnut and roses, and peppermint, and the very delicate, very special French perfume I lately allowed her to use" (*Lolita*, p. 239). Annabel's scent is described as combining the odor of "some kind of toilet powder" and "a sweetish, lowly, musky perfume … mingled with her own biscuity odour" (ibid. p. 15). Mona Dahl's skin scent that Humbert "made out through lotions and creams" is called "uninteresting" (ibid. p. 189), while Ganin admires Mary's "blur of cool fragrance, a blend of perfume and damp serge, that fragrance of hers" (*Mary*, p. 69). Among Nabokov's characters there are highly temperature-sensitive male protagonists, e.g. Cincinnatus describes Emmie's "cold fingers and hot elbows" (*Invitation to a Beheading*, p. 126), while Van writes about Ada, "Her hands were cold, her neck was hot" (*Ada or Ardor*, p. 103).

More than once Nabokov's male protagonists are disgusted by what the writer describes as "a smell of scent and sweat" (*Laughter in the Dark*, p. 187). The description can be brief, e.g. "His secretary, Dora Wittgenstein […] smelling of carrion through her cheap eau de cologne" (*The Gift*, p. 176), or finely detailed, as, for instance, in VV's reaction to Ljuba Savich's composite smell:

> I began to notice with growing irritation such pathetic things as her odor, a quite respectable perfume (*Adoration*, I think) precariously overlaying the natural smell of a Russian maiden's seldom bathed body: for an hour or so *Adoration* still held, but after that the underground would start to conduct more and more frequent forays, and when she raised her arms to put on her hat—but never mind … (*Look at the Harlequins!* p. 72).

In the same novel, the protagonist starts his trip to Russia with the following observation: "It was a very warm day in June and the farcical air-conditioning system failed to outvie the whiffs of sweat and the sprayings of *Krasnaya Moskva*" (ibid. p. 162) emanating from a stewardess; that air servant was replaced by "a still fatter stewardess, in a still stronger aura of onion and sweat" (ibid. p. 163), and the unfortunate protagonist was pursued by the "mixed odors of dour hostess and 'Red Moscow,' with a gradual prevalence of the first ingredient" (ibid. p. 164) throughout his trip. Sometimes such "mixed odors" may, however, be irresistibly attractive for a male

protagonist, e.g. the smell of Lolita's unwashed hair is "intoxicating" for Humbert (*Lolita*, p. 43).

The sense of smell can be combined with that of taste, e.g., Cincinnatus recalls Marthe's "rosy kisses tasting of wild strawberries" (*Invitation to a Beheading*, p. 25), or Humbert's sharp Lolita-attuned senses make him write that in a kiss they "shared the peppermint taste of her saliva" (*Lolita*, p. 113), or "her brown rose tasted of blood," and "her breath was bittersweet" (ibid. p. 238). The sense of smell can also be combined with that of thermoception, e.g., Martin could feel the warmth of Sonia's hair and "a waft of delicate warmth [that] emanated from her" (*Glory*, p. 91), Humbert mentions "that singular warmth emanating from her [Lolita]" (*Lolita*, p. 213) and that he could feel "the aura of her bare shoulder like a warm breath upon my cheek" (ibid. p. 130); Matilda's body "exuded a generous warmth" (*The Eye*, p. 14), while Martha's lips were "fragrant, warm-looking" *(King, Queen, Knave*, p. 59).

Nabokov's metaphors of smell are often inventive: they may use an imaginary source concept, e.g., Martha's coat lining "smelled of heaven" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 95); they can employ unorthodox associations, e.g., Lolita's kiss was "sweet wetness and trembling fire" (*Lolita*, p. 112), or Franz sees Martha as "coldly radiant" (*King, Queen, Knave*, p. 105); they can be exact to the level of subtle undertones, e.g., "she [Lolita] smelt almost exactly like Annabel but more intensely so, with rougher overtones" (*Lolita*, p. 42) or "Dolly-smell, with a faint fried addition" (ibid. p. 268); they can be colored, e.g., for Humbert Lolita's smell is "brown fragrance" (*Lolita*, p. 43) or for Cincinnatus Marthe's kisses are "rosy" (*Invitation to a Beheading*, p. 25); they can be overtly sexual, e.g., Lolita's "wenchy smell" (*Lolita*, p. 202).

The repetitive olfactory metaphors in Nabokov's novels are always character-related. As has been shown above, negative olfactory impressions may manifest the protagonists' dislike, sometimes subconscious, of the bearers of the smell, e.g. Ganin's for Lyudmila, VV's for Ljuba, or Hermann's for Lydia. Albinus is fully aware of Elizabeth's merits but his fatal attraction to Margot leads him to prefer her "cheap sweet scent" (*Laughter in the Dark*, p. 30) to the exquisite "faint scent of his wife's eau-de-Cologne" (ibid. p. 78). Or, for instance, after Maria, the seventeen-year old servant girl, left the room, Martin's mother "sniffed the air, made a face, and hurriedly opened all the windows" (*Glory*, p. 51), which immediately

dispelled Martin's fascination with the girl, thus attesting to his suggestibility; Gruzinov also immediately opened the windows after his heavily perfumed wife left their hotel room (ibid. p. 162), which reveals his diplomatic skills later confirmed by the instructions for border crossing he gave to Martin. Cincinnatus claims that his "sense of smell [is] like a deer's" (*Invitation to a Beheading*, p. 45), but in addition to his wife's "rosy kisses" (ibid. p. 25) he mentions just one more female smell: Emmie's hair that "smelled of vanilla" (ibid. p. 65), which adds to the surrealism of the novel's "invented habitus" (ibid. p. 32). A close look at even one stylistic detail of the majestic gestalt tapestry of Nabokov's writing technique substantiates the organic unity of his style.

— Ljuba Tarvi, Helsinki

DESPAIR DISASSOCIATED

1

In *The New Yorker* (December 4 2014) John Colapinto described his visit to the "frigid reading room" of the New York Public Library's Berg Collection, where he examined Vladimir Nabokov's personal copy of *Camera Obscura*. The novel was the sixth that Nabokov wrote in his "infinitely docile Russian tongue," and in 1936, scornful of its English translation, he retranslated it himself and renamed it *Laughter in the Dark*. Readers have long detected the dim figures of a more canonical couple morphing from the shadows of Albert Albinus and Margot Peter, its focal duo: he, a middle-aged art critic, she, his sixteen year-old seductress. The copy Colapinto read is the copy in which Nabokov made his significant revisions of the text. They amount to an unusual case study for genetic criticism, and provide, Colapinto writes, "an unmediated look at the Master at work, removing dead and dull passages, fixing inept or lame plot developments, eradicating longueurs, and seeking out opportunities to sharpen imagery or provide deeper insight into a character's motivation"(http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/nabokov-retranslated-laughter-dark).

Nabokov's personal copy of *Despair* (originally *Otchayanie*), the novel that preceeds *Camera Obscura*, is housed in the Berg Collection too, and possesses a back-story parallel, in various ways, to *Laughter in the Dark*'s. The trans-national genesis of the English-language text now in print involves not only serialization, public readings, translation and revision, but Nazis, bombs, and a rise from penury to fame. Here is a summary.

At the end of August 1932 Vladimir and Véra Nabokov took two rooms in a third floor flat at 22 Nestorstrasse in Berlin's Wilmersdorf district. It was there, on September 10th, after only forty-two days of writing, that Nabokov finished the first draft of *Otchayanie*. The story of Hermann Hermann, who during a trip to Prague meets a tramp called Felix whom he believes to be his exact likeness and so hatches a doomed plan to buy life insurance, dress his double in his clothes, shoot him, and meet his wife and the insurance money in France, is a treatment of the perennial Nabokovian theme of art and life's intersections, as well as a Dostoevskian parody with a protagonist whose criminal-artistry is an *ignis fatuus* and whose spiritual redemption never arrives.

After completing the first Russian draft, Nabokov travelled to Paris to conduct a reading tour that would provide *Otchayanie* with its first audience. He was a great hit in Russian émigré circles, having ascended in estimations to the top of their literature. Between social calls he revised *Otchayanie*. Brian Boyd richly narrates these episodes in *The Russian Years*. He tells of the motherly Amalia Fondaminsky with whom Nabokov roomed in November, who "typed up the thirty odd pages of *Despair*—its revision just completed—that he planned to read," and of the novel's first public airing on November 14th at the Musée Sociale, 5 rue Las Cases, where Nabokov recited its first two chapters to a crowd he described as "a great, kind, sensitive, pulsing beast that grunted and guffawed at the places I needed it, and again obediently fell silent," and which congratulated him extensively and ordered advance copies in a café once the reading had finished.

When he returned to Berlin, Véra transcribed the text. The novel was serialized throughout 1934 in the émigré review *Sovremennye Zapiski*. The German publishers *Petropolis* published the book in 1936. Money was a continual difficulty for the Nabokovs in Berlin and translations of Vladimir's Russian novels assured valuable income. After suffering the disappointment of the "loose, shapeless,

sloppy" translation of *Camera Obscura*, Nabokov decided to translate *Otchayanie* himself. In his introduction to the 1965 edition he explained,

> At the end of 1936, while I was still living in Berlin…I translated *Otchayanie* for a London publisher. Although I had been scribbling in English all my literary life in the margin, so to say, of my Russian writings, this was my first serious attempt to use English for what may be loosely termed an artistic purpose. The result seemed to me stylistically clumsy, so I asked a rather clumsy Englishman…to read the stuff; he found a few solecisms in the first chapter, but then refused to continue, saying he disapproved of the book. (vii)

Nabokov found the task trying, writing to a friend that "to translate oneself is a frightful business, looking over one's insides and trying them on like a glove." And then, after the exertion, in 1936,

> John Long Limited, of London, brought out *Despair*…the book sold badly, and a few years later a German bomb destroyed the entire stock. The only copy extant is, as far as I know, the one I own —but two or three may still be lurking amidst abandoned reading matter on the dark shelves of seaside boarding houses from Bournemouth to Tweedmouth. (vii)

Nabokov's extant copy did well for itself, and has settled on 5th Avenue, in the Berg Collection. Yet before arriving in the archive it acquired new significance.

Having fled St. Petersburg and the Bolsheviks in 1917, Nabokov, with the extant copy of *Despair* in his luggage, fled Paris and Hitler in 1940. After arriving in America, Nabokov took pains to become an American author, abandoning his Russian tongue ("my private tragedy") for his new marketplace. The apex of his success came with *Lolita* in 1958, and with burgeoning public interest his oeuvre expanded backwards. Often with the assistance of his son Dmitri, he translated his Russian works. Yet *Despair* stood peculiarly among

them. With *Laughter in the Dark,* it was the only member of his Russian period to have been translated by its author and published in book form. Yet in this form it was all but extinct.

The compositional approach Nabokov took to the republication of the English *Despair* marks an uncommon genetic event. Nabokov used his 1936 edition as a sort of typescript and made two hundred and eighty-seven pencil alterations in the margins of the book. Neatly parenthesizing the sections of text he wished to be removed and linking them with thin lines to the additions, his minor alterations (usually substitutions) tend to be made in either the margins (usually horizontally, occasionally vertically) or within the text, while longer additions often occupy the space at the bottom of the page, or in the case of an especially long paragraph to which we'll return, on blank sheets at the beginning of the book. His changes marked a major revision, made in maturity, of a text thirty years old.

2

Many of Nabokov's revisions for his 1965 edition of *Despair* are of a literal-minded nature. That is, many update certain words and phrases to align with American idioms ("bathing pants" becomes "swimming trunks," for instance) and into these we can read a self that altered over time and produced fiction in vastly different milieux. It is adequate to interpret other revisions as simple improvements of expression ("kind of Scotch-looking" becomes "pseudo-Scotch," "bristly-shaded" becomes "bristle-shaded") and others, as formal alterations, which Jane Grayson, in her 1977 study *Nabokov Translated: A Comparison of Nabokov's Russian and English Prose* (still the authority on Nabokovian revision) helpfully elucidated. In that book Grayson stresses that the first English version of *Despair* "makes only minor alterations to the Russian," while in the 1965 version there are a number of "significant additions to the original text" that "affect structure, character and style" (26). Those revisions offer considerable scope for interpretation beyond the insights of *Nabokov Translated*; an ideal starting point for that is a passage of text that was written for, though excluded from, the original novel, and that Nabokov re-inserted in 1965.

In his ludic introduction of 1965 Nabokov explains: "lucky students who may be able to compare the three texts will note the

addition of an important passage which had been stupidly omitted in more timid times" (vii). It can be deduced that the passage to which Nabokov refers is the description of "dissociation" that he inserted into page forty of his 1936 copy. Pivotal, and a thematic guide to a range of other revisions, it is by far the longest (Nabokov filled the blank pages 5, 6 and 7 of the book with it, and linked it to its place with an asterisk) and by far the bluest. Hermann describes a psychological phenomenon he has been experiencing while in bed with his wife, Lydia, that he names "dissociation." While his face, Hermann says, was "buried in the folds of [Lydia's] neck, her legs had started to clamp me…but at the same time, incomprehensibly and delightfully, I was standing naked in the middle of the room." The sensation of "being in two places at once" allows him to admire his own "muscular back" in the "laboratorial light" of his "magical point of vantage." He refers to himself as "the audience," and comes to realize that "the greater the interval between my two selves the more I was ecstasied," so retreats further each night until he finds himself "sitting in the parlour—while making love in the bedroom," longing to distend from the "lighted stage where I performed."

This "important" paragraph reveals an important dichotomy, the presence of which alters the texture of the edition we now read. Hermann's sensation is one of physical and cerebral separation. While his body acts, his mind watches. He is present in the situation, yet his perspective on it is removed, a room away. And, Nabokov hints, his perspective is not merely removed, but inaccurate and self-deceiving. After bragging of the ease with which he could "bundle Lydia to bed," the only time we sight his wife, among the mist of Hermann's self-admiration, she yawns and asks to be brought a book.

John Colapinto describes how, when revising *Camera Obscura*, Nabokov "seized on a single phrase on page fifteen…an aside about Albinus's idle musings about financing a film of a picture by Rembrandt or Goya," moved it to the beginning of the book, and expanded it into a "long, strikingly visual paragraph about an animated Bruegel that sweeps the reader into the story." Nabokov reignited the novel with that passage. And in *Despair* it is a single substantial amendment that again proved the catalyst of a major revision. The vignette of sexual dissociation, of a mind askance of its body, became crucial to Nabokov's portrait of Hermann's insanity, and many of the 1965 revisions mimic its premise. In her 2013 book

The Work of Revision, Hannah Sullivan chronicles "Bloom's expanding mind"—the cognitive amplitude that Joyce's revisions of *Ulysses* piled onto his hero. In the case of *Despair* we have Hermann's distorting mind, becoming not "more scattered and curious," like Bloom's, but more detached. Nabokov's re-insertion of the "dissociation" passage provided his revisions with their emblem.

The revisions have a twin purpose: they intensify dramatic irony and they develop Hermann's psychology. For instance, Nabokov inserts a number of allusions to the affair between Hermann's wife and Ardalion. Take the addition, "[H]er lipstick strayed to incomprehensible places such as her cousin's shirt pocket." This sentence demonstrates, in miniature, the dynamic initiated by the important passage. It is a discreet expression of dissociation. Nabokov shows us that Hermann is physically present yet mentally removed. The adjective "incomprehensible" is trenchant, conveying that the world in which Hermann abides does not align with that which he sees (this is the comedy of one word, rather than Joyce's "One Word More," to which Sullivan gestures). Hermann's psychology, the addition suggests, disallows any sort of cognitive mastery of objective visual evidence. Rather than comprehending its semiotic import he distances himself, just as he did on hearing Lydia's bored request for a book. This technique is evident again when Hermann longs for a hot bath, before "wryly correcting anticipation with the thought that Ardalion had probably used the tub as his kind cousin had already allowed him to do." The revision stretches a comic distance between knowledge and acceptance.

Copious examples conform to this pattern. Into the 1965 edition, for instance, Nabokov inserted the following line as Hermann's justification for shaking Felix's hand: "I grasped it only because it provided me with the curious sensation of Narcissus fooling Nemesis by helping his image out of the brook." In the Ovidian myth, Nemesis leads Narcissus to his reflection in a pool, which Narcissus falls in love with and cannot leave, so dies. The story offers an image of the split self and an allegory of self-deception. Consistent with the motifs of dissociation with which Nabokov besets him, Hermann revises the story so that the self is in fact duplicated, and exists, as in those coital migrations, in mutually adoring doubleness.

Nabokov gave *Despair* a new dénouement, a final paragraph that Hermann shouts from the window of the house in which he's hiding,

surrounded by policemen. The speech demonstrates Hermann's final act of dissociation. He recasts himself as a film star:

> This is a rehearsal. Hold those policemen. A famous actor will presently come running out of this house. He is an arch criminal but must escape. You are asked to prevent them getting him. This is part of the plot…Attention! I want a clean getaway. That's all. Thank you. I'm coming out now. (163)

Hermann retreats into celluloid fantasia. Where, in his "furious dissociations" with Lydia, he had imagined himself as audience to himself, when his evasion of the authorities reaches its conclusion he dissociates himself with the reality to the extent that his captors become his audience and his film crew, and his charge from the house a stunt, an element of plot. This revision, the final image of Hermann's insanity, depicts his division, and its conceptual basis finds its clearest expression, indeed its definition, in the reinserted passage of page forty—in 1936 excised, but from 1965 instrumental to the novel that we read today.

—Luke Maxted, London

ANNOTATIONS TO *ADA*, 40:
PART 1 CHAPTER 40

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Forenote

After Van's confrontation with Percy de Prey at the picnic, the tension does not let up. As Van nurses the knee damaged when Percy assaulted him from behind, he receives Percy's offer either to duel or to confirm that there is no grudge. He burns the letter, but as narrator offers explicit forewarnings of an irrevocably impending doom: "When lightning struck two days later (an old image that is meant to intimate a flash-back to an old barn)," at the start of one paragraph, and "On the morning of the day preceding the most miserable one in his life," at the start of the next. Yet after Ada returns from another "bramble," their love seems as tender and triumphant as ever, only for Van to find, as he changes for dinner with movie guests, a warning note by a French hand: "One must not berne [dupe] you." Looking for Ada, he finds her helping Lucette copy flowers, like an image out of Ardis the First. When he can corner Ada alone, she—dressed in ways that portentously recall her appearance just as Van arrived at Ardis the Second, when he first saw Percy kissing and holding her hand—merely dismisses the note: "Destroy and forget." For the moment, despite the warning signals, doom is postponed.

Annotations

283.01-02: Van was lying . . . reading Antiterrenus on Rattner: In other words reading something by the scholar Antiterrenus (not otherwise known) in response to something the scholar Rattner has written on Terra. Note the close echo of 230.04-05: "Van lay reading Rattner on Terra, a difficult and depressing work." Rattner (see 230.04n) is an anagram of "N.T. Terra," which in its turn is a homonym of Antiterra; this scholar, firmly associated with Antiterra, has a negative attitude to the existence of Terra, even though his name contains it (see also 231.02-04: he "halfheartedly denied any objective existence to the sibling planet in his text, but grudgingly accepted it in obscure notes (inconveniently placed between chapters)." Antiterrenus in turn is presumably hostile to Rattner. When Lucette visits Van in Kingston University, in 1892, he has become a colleague of "Rattner, resident pessimist of genius, for

whom life was only a ‘disturbance’ in the rattnerterological order of things—from ‘*nerteros*,’ not ‘*terra*’)” (365.06-08), and when Van tells Lucette he has an appointment with Rattner, she “ejaculates”: “‘Rattner on Terra! . . . Van is reading Rattner on Terra. Pet must never, never, disturb him and me when we are reading Rattner!’” (370.06-08).

Ardeur 237: “*Suspendu dans le réseau de son reposoir. . . .* ” (“Hanging in the net of his resting-place . . . ”).

MOTIF: *Rattner*; *Rattner on Terra*; *Terra*.

283.01-02: in his netted nest under the liriodendrons, reading Antiterrenus on Rattner: Note the sound play (“*ne*tted *ne*st” and “Ratt*ne*r”; “*nes*t” and “Antiterre*nus*”; “*nett*ed *nest*” in “A*nti*terre*n*us” and “Ra*ttn*er,” compounding the N.T. Terra-Antiterra in Rattner’s name and its echo in Antiterrenus.

283.01: under the liriodendrons: Liriodendrons (mentioned at 68.11) are (W2) “A genus of North American and Asiatic trees of the magnolia family (Magnoliaceae) having only two species *L. chinense* and the common North American *L. tulipifera*, known as the tulip tree.” Here, tulip trees, between two of which Van’s hammock is slung (see 52.33-53.03: “she showed him two sturdy hooks passed into iron rings on two tulip-tree trunks between which . . . another boy, also Ivan, her mother’s brother, used to sling a hammock”). MOTIF: *under tree*.

283.02-03: His knee had troubled him all night: Damaged when Percy lunged at him from the rear at the picnic, 275.27-28 (“a mountain fell upon him from behind”). Although no mention of his injury occurs in that scene, we hear of it as Lucette plumps into his lap on the carriage home: “‘Ouch!’ grunted Van as he received the rounded load—explaining wrily hat he had hit his right patella against a rock” (279.13-14). “A twinge in his kneecap”(281.31-32) on his way back from the picnic, with Lucette still on his lap, calls him back from the almost orgasmic thoughts triggered by the repetition of the return home from the 1884 picnic, with Ada on his lap. The action in this first scene in 1.40 takes place, then, the next day, July 22, 1888. MOTIF: *knee*.

283.03-04: Ada had gone on horseback to Ladore: To see Percy de Prey before he leaves for the Crimean War. Cf. Van on Ada and Percy: “Both like horses, and races, but that’s all. There is no et cetera, that’s out of the question” (242.13-14). Percy’s challenge-cum-conciliation presumably comes from Ladore, anticipating the

challenge Van issues to Captain Tapper in three days' time, when he is in pursuit of Philip Rack and Percy de Prey: "The Captain was a first-rate shot, Johnny said, and member of the Do-Re-La country club" (306.14-15).

Note that Van's ineffectual rival Greg Erminin had come on pony-back to Ardis the day after the 1884 picnic for Ada's birthday (89.01-18), and offers the pony to her "any time. For any amount of time" (92.25-26); here, the day after the 1888 picnic on her birthday, Ada rides on horseback, as it proves, to the successful rival and unwanted picnic guest whom Van has very good reason to fear.

283.05: the messy turpentine oil Marina had told her to bring him: For Van's knee.

283.06: His valet: Bout.

283.07-08: a messenger, a slender youth clad in black leather from neck to ankle, chestnut curls escaping: "Youth" is the closest specification of the sex of this ambiguous messenger (cf. 284.04-05: "the pretty messenger"). The messenger proves to be Blanche's younger sister: two days later Van sees "The youngest of the three sisters, a beautiful chestnut-curled little maiden with lewd eyes and bobbing breasts (where had he seen her before?—recently, but where?)" (299.18-21). As D. Barton Johnson ("*Ada*'s 'Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre," in Lisa Zunshine, ed., *Nabokov at the Limits: Redrawing Critical Boundaries* (New York: Garland, 1999), 3-20: 6) and the Kyoto Reading Circle note, the sexual ambiguity of the messenger sent by Percy echoes that of the "lass disguised as a lad" (168.17) found in Percy's room at Riverlane, which leads to his expulsion from the school (190.09).

Johnson also notes (1999: 9) that the "slender youth clad in black leather from neck to ankle" recalls the song "Malbrough," which Blanche will absent-mindedly (but from our point of view, pointedly) sing a few hours later, at 288.15-16 (see 288.14-16n):

Elle voit venir son Page,
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,
Elle voit venir son Page,
Tout de noir habillé

Beau Page, ah mon beau Page!
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,

Beau Page, ah mon beau Page!
Quelles nouvelles apportez?

("She sees her Page coming, / Mironton, mironton, mirontaine / She sees her Page coming /All dressed in black. // My Page, oh my pretty Page! / Mironton, mironton, mirontaine/ My Page, oh my pretty Page! / What news are you bringing?") In the song, the Page will inform his mistress that Monsieur Malbrough is dead in battle, as Van will soon hear (and as we readers already know) that Percy de Prey is dead in the Second Crimean War.

283.08: chestnut curls: Cf. not only 299.19-20, "a beautiful chestnut-curled little maiden," a clearer glimpse of Madelon, but also the equally sexually ambiguous "Cherry, the only lad in our next (American) floramor . . . looked so amusing with his copper curls" (355.03-05). Cf. also: "Mount Russet . . . curly chestnut trees" (509.26-28). MOTIF: *chestnut curls*.

283.10-284.03: a letter . . . Percy de Prey: MOTIF: *letters*.

283.14-17: *I shall be glad to entertain you (and any other gentleman . . .) at dawn . . . Tourbière Lane*: The language of courtesy avoids any explicit reference to a duel but makes the meaning obvious, especially after the near-challenge at 277.12-23. Percy has in fact "been shooting a pistol at a scarecrow all morning" (299.14-15). MOTIF: *duel*.

283.16-17: *where the Maidenhair road crosses Tourbière Lane*: Cf. Van's thoughts as he leaves Ardis for the last time, two days later: "'The express does not stop at Torfyanka, does it, Trofim?' 'I'll take you five versts across the bog," said Trofim, 'the nearest is Volosyanka.' His vulgar Russian word for Maidenhair; a whistle stop; train probably crowded.// Maidenhair. Idiot! Percy boy might have been buried by now! Maidenhair. Thus named because of the huge spreading Chinese tree at the end of the platform" (299.26-32). ("Maidenhair," for maidenhair tree, or ginkgo, see 299.29-300.8 and n.; Torfyanka is the Russian for Tourbière, as Ada explains at 228.08.) Note that Percy has been a lover of Blanche's sister, Madelon (see 299.10), who lives at La Tourbière. MOTIF: *ginkgo*; *Torfyanaya*; *Tourbière*; *Veen-bog*.

284.02: *your obedient servant*: Like the whole of this last sentence, in the style of eighteenth-century epistolary courtesy. Cf. Van's mocking echo, 290.10, "Your obedient servant" (a phrase Ada presumably does not recognize).

284.06-07: like an extra, waiting for the signal to join the gambaders in the country dance after Calabro's aria: Echoes the mysterious dozen of the previous chapter, who could be "Gipsy politicians, or Calabrian laborers" (268.32); as they drew deeper into the trees, Marina raised an empty glass and sang "the Green Grass aria" (269.34), which prompted Van to call her "Traverdiata" (270.03). See 269.34-270.03 and n. The mysterious dozen are obscure extras in the picnic scene, almost like an operatic chorus, as the messenger seems like an extra here. The superfluous dozen circle around first Greg's Silentium then Percy's steel-gray convertible, as if in support of Van's sense that these rivals too are or should be utterly extraneous to Ada's picnic; now another operatic extra comes from Percy, bearing a cartel.

"Calabro's aria": an invented aria from a Verdi-like opera, probably an echo of the "Brindisi" (Calabria and Brindisi being the provinces at, respectively, the toe and heel of Italy's boot), referred to as the "Green Grass aria," sung by Traverdiata-Marina at the picnic (269.34-270.03 and n.).

284:06-07: an extra, waiting for the signal to join the gambaders in the country dance after Calabro's aria: A gambade or gambado is (W2, *gambado*, 2) "A fantastic movement as in dancing; hence, an antic." The mix of country dance and opera calls to mind the parodic "longish intermezzo staged by a ballet company . . . merry young gardeners . . . At an invisible sign of Dionysiac origin, they all plunged into the violent dance. . . . '' in the *Eugene Onegin* travesty at 11.22-33.

284.07: country dance: Cf. 401.27: "peasant prance."

284.14-21: that clumsy and pretentious missive . . . burnt the letter: MOTIF: *duel*; *letter*.

284.17-18: or whether its conciliatory gist had been demanded from Percy by somebody—perhaps a woman (for instance his mother . . .): Despite the "for instance," the phrasing clearly implicates Ada, who would have arrived in Ladore to find Percy preparing for a duel with Van, and who has feared this possibility at least since the previous day's confrontation (see her attempt to separate Van and Percy at 277.15-16).

284.19: his mother, born Praskovia Lanskoy: Cf. Marina's reference to her as Praskovia, at 257.16; "Prascovie de Prey" (242.16) has told Demon that "her boy and Ada see a lot of each other, et cetera" (242.10-11). Demon refers to her as "a woman I

preyed upon years ago, oh long before Moses de Vere cuckolded her husband in my absence and shot him dead in my presence" (242.03-06). The infidelity between a de Prey and a Veen prefigures the "infidelity" of Ada Veen (unfaithful to Van, that is, even if not married to him) and Percy de Prey, while Percy's mother's having lost her husband in a duel over infidelity would explain why she might want her son to send a note of conciliation rather than challenge to Van—if indeed she is the woman who prompted the "conciliatory gist" of the note. But the only woman who knows of the near-duel between the two men, and its cause, is Ada.

No other reference to "Lanskoy"; perhaps the name here teasingly half-hints at Lensky, whom Onegin kills in a duel in Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, over Onegin's dancing with Lensky's fiancée, Olga Larin, whose mother is Praskovia (*EO* II.xxxiii.3); Praskovia Larin's name seems to have blended with Vladimir Lensky's. Another Pushkinian reference, also involving a death by dueling spurred by sexual rivalry, may be even more pertinent: as Alexey Skylarenko points out, Pushkin's widow Natalia, seven years after Pushkin died in a duel provoked by Baron d'Anthès's attentions to his wife, Natalia, Natalia married a Peter Lanskoy (Nabokov-L, 8 December 2012 and 31 October 2013).

284.20-24: Van's honor remained unaffected. . . . merely noting that now, at least, Ada would cease to be pestered by the fellow's attentions: This is the only reason that Van does not accept the duel: that despite his unease he does not think Ada has responded to Percy's obvious interest.

284.20: He limped: the knee continues to bother Van. MOTIF: *knee*.

284.21-22: the letter with its crested blue envelope: "Crests" in *Ada* are associated with cuckoldry; the former Cordula de Prey, by then Cordula Tobak, happily cuckolds her husband with Van's help, and scribbles a secret address on "a card with her husband's crest" (458.13-14) for Van to arrange further assignations with her; the passenger list on the *Admiral Tobakoff* is "pleasingly surmounted by the same crest that adorned Cordula's notepaper" (475.17-18). MOTIF: *crest*.

284.25: without the embrocation: The "messy turpentine oil" (283.05) Marina has asked her to obtain for Van's knee; she returns without it because, presumably, she has been too preoccupied with farewelling Percy.

284.31: When lightning struck two days later: When Blanche begins to clarify, two days hence (293), the import of the note that Van finds one day hence (287) but that Ada tells him (290) to destroy and forget.

284.31-32: (an old image that is meant to intimate a flash-back to an old barn): Ironically, this reference to a flash-back occurs within a flash-forward. The Burning Barn of I.19 was set on fire by lightning. As if the ardor of Ardis that ignited the barn, and Van and Ada's active sexual life, is about to strike again, disastrously, because Percy too has combusted at Ada's touch? Note the pun on "flash-back" (and lightning flash), and the anticipation of the inadvertent pun in the fatal note, "One must not berne you," at 287.26-27.

But the word "flashback" itself offers a clue to how the lightning will strike: it occurs four times in an earlier scene. As Marina reads the screenplay of *Les Enfants Maudits* early in Ardis the Second, she queries it: "'Because if it is a flashback—and it is a flashback, I suppose' (she pronounced it *fleshbeck*), 'Renny, or what's his name, René, should not know what he seems to know.' // 'He does not,' cried G.A. [Vronsky], 'it's only a half-hearted flashback. Anyway, this Renny, this lover number one, does not know, of course, that she is trying to get rid of lover number two, while she's wondering all the time if she can dare go on dating number three, the gentleman farmer, see?'" (201.04-11).

MOTIF: *Burning Barn*.

284.33-285.07: two secret witnesses . . . . One had been murmuring with averted gaze . . . the other had kept insinuating . . . mistress: Cf. two other instances of Van's duality of thought, the first at 188.11-19 ("Excluding each other, private swoons split him in two: the devastating certainty that . . . she would join him there in her new smooth long beauty; and, on the shade side, the pang and panic of finding her changed. . . . "), at the very hour of Van's return to Ardis, and the start of these two witnesses' murmurs and insinuations described here; the second at 369.33-370.02: "Two ideas were locked up in a slow dance, a mechanical menuet, with bows and curtseys: one was 'We-have-so-much-to-say'; the other was 'We have absolutely nothing to say.'" Cf. this with VN's criticism of Joyce's stream of consciousness as offering "too much verbal body to thoughts" (*SO* 30; and see *LL* 363, "obviously we do not think

continuously in words—we think also in images. . . . some of our reflections come and go, others stay”).

285.05-07: insinuating, with spectral insistence, that some nameless trouble was threatening the very sanity of Van’s pale, faithless mistress: Ada herself, during their first night of Ardis the Second, has indicated the threat to her sanity: “Yes, she was sad, she replied, she was in dreadful trouble, her quandary might drive her insane if she did not know that her heart was pure. She could explain it best by a parable. She was like the girl in a film he would see soon, who is in the triple throes of a tragedy which she must conceal lest she lose her only true love, the head of the arrow, the point of the pain . . . ” (192.20-30), where in fact she is all but explicit about her relations with Percy de Prey, Philip Rack and Van. During this night “Blanche glided in like an imprudent ghost” (191.04-05), perhaps explaining the “spectral” here; a “pale wavering figure” (292.17) in the night, she will deliver the final clarification of the nightmare and the note within another two days.

285.08-09: On the morning of the day preceding the most miserable one of his life: The intimation of impending disaster at the start of the preceding paragraph becomes even more explicit at the start of this. The challenge-and-conciliation comes from Percy on July 22; this morning must be July 23. The sequence of datable days itself adds to the portentousness of the chapter.

285.09-13: he found he could bend his leg without wincing, but . . . walked home with difficulty. A swim in the pool and a soak in the sun helped . . . and the pain had practically gone: The painful knee dogs him as an insistent reminder of Percy (just as the sentence introduces Ada returning from Percy); the pain Percy has caused him, becoming so insistent after the anticipations of doom (“When lightning struck . . . On the morning of the day preceding the most miserable one of his life”), invites an alert first-time reader to anticipate Percy will cause Van further pain. MOTIF: *knee*.

285.11: a long-neglected croquet lawn: Cf. 53.14-17: “a long green box where croquet implements were kept; but the balls had been rolled down the hill by some rowdy children, the little Erminins, who were now Van’s age and had grown very nice and quiet.” If the lost balls are the reason the croquet lawn has been neglected, it must be at least six years or so since croquet has been played here. Cf. the story “The Admiralty Spire”: “croquet on a ridiculously overgrown lawn with a dandelion in front of every hoop” (*SoVN* 348).

285.15: "brambles" as she called her botanical rambles: Cf. 312.28-31: "the stick . . . perhaps, helping a lady to go 'brambling' in Oregon").

285.16: florula: W2: "A flora of a small, restricted area."

285.16-17: had ceased to yield much beyond the familiar favorites: Because Ada is actually devoting her brambling time to Percy rather than to plants.

285.21-25: Monsieur Violette of Lyon and Ladore . . . as a duelist steadies his hand by walking about with a poker: Invoking the stereotype of male hairdressers as homosexual, as indicated here by the "pansy" (homonym of "violet" and slang for "male homosexual") surname in a French feminine form. Anticipates the imminent duel with "Captain Tapper, of Wild Violet Lodge" (304.32-33) who is a "member of the Do-Re-La country club" (306.14-15) and whose seconds for himself and Van have violet names (Arwin Birdfoot and Johnny Rafin, Esq., see 306.07-09 and n.). The Kyoto Reading Circle notes that Violet Knox, Van and Ada's secretary in old age, is lesbian, as Monsieur Violette is gay.

Alexey Sklyarenko notes (Nabokv-L, 6 June 2014) that *Monsieur Violet* is the title of an 1843 novel by Captain Frederick Maryatt (1792-1848), but this novel in which the younger Monsieur Violet is accepted as a chief of the Shoshone Indians seems to have nothing beyond its title to connect it, apparently unintentionally, to the hairdresser.

VN writes in his *EO* commentary: "Pushkin carried an iron club to strengthen and steady his pistol hand in view of a duel he intended to have with Fyodor Tolstoy. . . . the club weighed about eighteen pounds. Another source gives eight pounds as the weight of the club he carried in Mihaylovskoe" (*EO* 2, 458).

MOTIF: *duel*.

285.23: *qu'on la coiffe au grand air*: *Darkbloom*: "to have her hair done in the open."

285.26: our best performer: Presumably Marina means in the role of Mascodagama?

285.26-27: indicating Van to Violette who mistook him for Pedro: Monsieur Violette, thinking Van is Pedro, who has been in a sexual relationship with Marina, mistakes what is actually a mother-son link for a sexual association—ironic, given Marina's alarms about incest (see 39.31-40.03, Van and Ada; 232.14-33, Van and Lucette).

285.27-28: *un air entendu*: *Darkbloom*: “a knowing look.”
285.29-30: a little walk of convalescence: For his knee. MOTIF: *knee*.
285.31: exhausted and filthy: She does not explain the cause: from lovemaking with Percy de Prey.
285.32: the ordeal of helping her mother entertain the movie people who were expected later in the evening: G.A. Vronsky and Adorno, the star of *Hate*, and his new wife, Marianne, but not Pedro (291.01-04).
286.01: I’ve seen him in *Sexico*: Pedro is sexy (“repulsively handsome,” 197.07-08), highly sexed (witness his pursuit of Ada in 1.32), a co-star of Marina’s, and sexy company (Sexy Co.) for her, and hails from Mexico, 197.09. Perhaps with a dash of the Rosy Crucifixion trilogy by American novelist Henry Miller (1891-1980), *Sexus* (1949), *Plexus* (1953), and *Nexus* (1959). For Miller, see 261.16-29n.; his short novel *Quiet Days in Clichy* (1956) lies behind *Ada*’s *Clichy Clichés*, 371.15.
286.08-10: unaccountably and marvelously her dazed look melted into one of gentle glee, as if in sudden perception of new-found release: Presumably because she knows Percy is on his way to war, and he and Van will no longer pose a danger to each other.
286.13: one can paddle with impunity in thawed sky: In puddles of meltwater reflecting the sky.
286.16-18: the park alley where she had once demonstrated to him her sun-and-shade games: See 50.04-52.30. This earlier scene contains a prominent foreshadowing of Percy’s death in the Second Crimean War: see 50.16n. and I.8 Afternote, and Boyd (1985) 2001: 170-71. MOTIF: *sun-Ardis*.
286.18-19: as if she had returned from a long and perilous journey: In a sense, she has: from her involvement with Percy de Prey, who is just setting off on a long and for him not only perilous but fatal journey, to war in the Crimea.
286.21-22: not the sly demon smile of remembered or promised ardor: Cf. 266.13-14: “a few moments of ravenous ardor” (recall that Demon is also Raven Veen). MOTIF: *ardor*; *demon*.
286.23-24: from Burning Barn to Burnberry Brook: Rather ironic, in light of the “berne” warning at 287.27. MOTIF: *burn*; *Burning Barn*; *burnberry*.
286.24-25: this *zaychik*, this “sun blick” of the smiling spirit: *zaychik*, Russ. “reflection of a sun ray”; *blik*, Russ., “patch of light”;

English, *blick* (W2): "[G., flash, glance.] *Assaying* = FULGURATION, 2" and *fulguration* (W2), "2. *Assaying*. Sudden brightening of a fused globule of gold or silver when the last film of oxide of lead or copper leaves its surface;—called also *blick*, *brightening*." Peter Lubin writes: "*sun blick* (in *Ada*), which Anglicizes and sublimes its source—not Russian *solnečnij blik*, but rather their common stirps, German *Sonnenblick*. And here we are immediately offered an additional gift of *zajchik* for the same sun-bunny ray of reflected light" ("Kickshaws and Motley," in Alfred Appel, Jr. and Charles Newman, eds., *Nabokov: Criticism, Reminiscences, Translations, and Tributes*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970, 187-208, p. 191). Lubin's last remark alludes to the fact that Russian *zaychik* can mean not only the reflection of a sun ray, but can also be an affectionate diminutive for *zayats*, "hare."

286.25-27: Her black jumper and black skirt . . . lost its "in-mourning-for-a-lost flower" meaning: Her black outfit as if in mourning for Percy's departure? With a hint of defloration, Marina not knowing how long Ada has been deflowered? MOTIF: *deflower*.

286.30: Lyaskan: MOTIF: *Lyaska*.

286.31-32: stood brow to brow, brown to white, black to black: Van's brown skin against Ada's white, his black hair and eyebrows to hers. With an odd cross-echo of "stood . . . back to back"? MOTIF: *black-white*.

286.33-287.02: how he "ladored," he said, the dark aroma of her hair blending with crushed lily stalks, Turkish cigarettes and the lassitude that comes from "lass": Retrospectively ironic, since (1) in meeting Percy in Ladore, Ada has presumably crushed lily stalks under her while Percy crushed her (Blanche and her sister Madelon "watched Monsieur le Comte courting the young lady [Ada] on the moss, crushing her like a grunting bear as he had also crushed—many times!—Madelon" (299.08-10), and cf. also Ada's suspicious insistence on her aloneness on botanical walks at the start of Ardis the Second: "I shall always adore orchids and mushrooms and violets, and you will still see me going out alone, to wander alone in the woods and return alone with a little lone lily," 193.12-14); (2) Turkish cigarettes or tobacco have been associated with the post-coital smoke (121.01-02), with Ada's infidelity ("She smelled of tobacco, either because (as she said) . . . or else because (and this she did not say) her unknown lover was a heavy smoker, his open red mouth full of rolling blue fog," 234.28-33), and with her brambling:

"Turkish cigarettes. . . 'I think I'll take an Alibi—I mean an Albany—myself.' 'Please note, everybody,' said Ada, 'how *voulu* that slip was! I like a smoke when I go mushrooming, but when I'm back, this horrid tease insists I smell of some romantic Turk or Albanian met in the woods'" (260.02-17); and (3) "'the lassitude that comes from 'lass'" would seem to mean her tiredness after female exertions. MOTIF: *Turkish tobacco*.

286.33: "ladored": Cf. 420. 28: "After a while he adored [*sic!* Ed.] the pancakes." MOTIF: *adore*; *Ladore*.

287.02-03: "No, no, don't" she said, I must wash quick-quick, Ada must wash: Ada is usually unkempt, and does not wash as often as Van feels she should (78.09-11: "Neither hygiene, nor sophistication of taste, were . . . typical of the Ardis household"; 198.32-199.01). MOTIF: *quick-quick*.

287.06: at the end of never-ending fairy tales: MOTIF: *fairy tale*.

287.07-08: That's a beautiful passage, Van. I shall cry all night (late interpolation): MOTIF: *Composition: Ada*.

287.11-13: they must really part . . . and they really parted: The light colloquialism of "must really part" takes on a strange weight with its bitter echo in the narration, "and they really parted," especially in view of Van and Ada's imminent and increasingly foreshadowed and seemingly final parting. This will be the last time they are "really together" until 1892.

287.14: One common orchid, a Lady's Slipper: W2, *lady's slipper*: "a Any orchid of the genera *Cypropedium* and *Fissipes*, the pouch-shaped labellum, or lip, of which somewhat resembles a slipper. b Any of certain orchids having flowers somewhat resembling a slipper, as *Cytherea bulbosa* and *Peramium giganteum*." Note the hint of Venus in the generic names *Cypropedium* (Venus is often referred to as "Cyprian," because of Aphrodite's supposed birthplace, Cyprus) and *Cytherea* (an adjective associated with Aphrodite or Venus) and in the French common name, *sabot de Vénus* (Venus slipper). *Ardeur* 240: "un sabot de Vénus." MOTIF: *Cinderella*; *orchid*; *Venus*.

287.20: I wonder . . . if I haven't just seen a tadpole: Significance unknown.

287.21-22: The novelistic theme of written communications has now really got into its stride: MOTIF: *novel*.

287.22: with a shock of grim premonition: The note of doom resounds.

287.23: a slip of paper: The Kyoto Reading Circle nicely notes: "Nicely links with Cinderella-like Blanche and her 'Lady's Slipper.' The slip of paper was 'slipped' into his pocket by Blanche." MOTIF: *Cinderella*.
287.24: the heart pocket of his dinner jacket: Comically loaded in symbolic significance. Cf. Demon dining at Ardis, "handkerchief lodged in the heart pocket of his dinner jacket," 239.04-05.
287.24-25: Penciled in a large hand: The hand will prove to be that of Blanche's sister Madelon, 299.15-16.
287.26: whiffled: W2, *whiffle*: " . . . *Transitive* . . . 2. To wave or shake quickly, *Rare*. 3. *Rare* To cause to whiffle, or vacillate. b To treat with evasions; to utter or answer evasively."
287.26-27: "One must not berne you." Only a French-speaking person would use that word for "dupe.": The Frenchness of the writer is indicated also by the "One must not" construction ("On ne doit pas"). W2 notes that *berne* can mean "plaid," thereby recalling the "tartan lap robe" (115.08) or "plaid" (120.23) Van is wearing and discards to reveal to Ada his erection on the Night of the Burning Barn. MOTIF: *burn*.
287.30-31: after England had annexed their beautiful and unfortunate country in 1815: Antiterran history. On Earth, 1815 marked the year of the final defeat of the French army under Napoleon's leadership at the battle of Waterloo.
287.31-33: To interview them all—torture the males, rape the females—would be, of course, absurd and degrading: A Demonic confusion of values.
287.31-32: torture the males: MOTIF: *torture*.
287.33-288.01: he broke his best black butterfly on the wheel of his exasperation: His black bow tie, in shape like a butterfly (OED: *butterfly*, 4b: "In full ***butterfly bow***, a bow made up or tied with the loop and end on each side spread apart like the expanded wings of a butterfly. So ***butterfly tie***"). The expression "to break a butterfly on a wheel" has been proverbial for "to use unnecessary force in destroying something fragile" (OED *butterfly*, 2c) since the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" (1735) of Alexander Pope (1688-1744), ll. 307-08: "Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel? / Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?" (The wheel is the instrument of torture: OED *break*, 7b: "to bind a criminal to a wheel, or similar frame, and break his limbs, or beat him to death.")

288.01-02: The pain from the fang bite was now reaching his heart: *Ardeur* 240: *"Le venin de la vipère*" ("The viper's venom"). MOTIF: *snake*.

288.06-07: Pembroke table: W2: "A style of small, square, four-legged table, often profusely ornamental, having on either side a narrow leaf sustained by a swinging bracket. It was much in vogue in the latter half of the 18th century."

288.07-08: reading with mixed feelings and furious annotations the third shooting script of *Les Enfants Maudits*: The script has been updated, as it were, to emphasize the rift about to happen between Van and Ada? MOTIF: *adaptation*; *Enfants Maudits*.

288.09-11: Lucette under Ada's direction was trying to learn to draw flowers; several botanical atlases . . . : Cf. the scene of Ada expertly drawing and recombining flowers, 99.11-26: "Ada liked to sit on a cool piano stool of ivoried wood at a white oil-cloth'd table in the sunny music room, her favorite botanical atlas open before her, and copy out in color on creamy paper some singular flower. . . . " MOTIF: *flower*.

288.12-17: Everything appeared as it always used to be . . . and the two lovely heads, bronze-black and copper-red, inclined over the table: The first statement seems to carry the implication "and yet all had changed"; and the closing phrase, with Ada and Lucette inclined over the table, certainly marks one kind of difference: not Van and Ada inclined over the table, but Ada and Lucette.

288.12-13: as it always used to be: the little nymphs and goats on the painted ceiling: Cf. the Ardis hall "famous for its painted ceilings" (36.08), and "Ardis Manor and its painted dining room" (251.14), but there has been no previous mention of a painted ceiling in a nursery parlor. Cf. also "the Boucher plafond" of the breakfast room in Demon's Manhattan home (178.16-17), and, in the novel's closing paragraph, with its summary of the book's "delicacy of pictorial detail": "a painted ceiling" (589.03-04). MOTIF: *painted ceiling*.

288.14-16: Blanche's "linen-folding" voice humming "Malbrough" (. . . *ne sait quand reviendra, ne sait quand reviendra*): *Darkbloom*: "*ne sait quand* etc: knows not when he'll come back." Blanche knows full well that Percy de Prey, the lover of both Ada and her own sister Madelon, has just left for the Second Crimean War; indeed it is Blanche who has left Madelon's warning note (287.26-27) in the breast pocket of Van's dinner jacket. And

Madelon has written the note "because she was a wee bit jealous but she also said—for she had a good heart—better put it off until 'Malbrook' *s'en va-t-en guerre*, otherwise they would fight" (299.11-14). Blanche here, recalling Madelon's allusion to the song, naturally sings it herself; the fact that it is a French song, and her singing it follows in the next paragraph after Van wonders which French servant has left the warning note and recognizes the absurdity of raping all the female French servants to find out (287.32), hints that it is Blanche who has left the note.

The anonymous, extremely popular and much-imitated song "Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre" has been thoroughly analyzed in relation to *Ada* and Percy de Prey by D. Barton Johnson, first in "*Ada*'s Percy de Prey as the Marlborough Man," *The Nabokovian* 27 (Fall 1991), 45-52, then in Johnson 1999 (see 283.07-08n.). Johnson notes the strong connections between Percy, a heavy smoker whose Turkish tobacco smell lingers on Ada on key occasions (see above, 286.33-287.02n and cross references), and Marlboro cigarettes, with their "super macho image" in advertising from 1954 (Johnson 1999: 17-18), and his departure to fight in the Second Crimean War by way of "some Greek or Turkish port" (296.15) that he leaves for on the day that the note is slipped to Van and that Blanche sings "Malbrough."

As Johnson writes, "Nabokov chose 'Malbrough' for Percy de Prey's motif for obvious reasons: its theme of the death of a lover in foreign battle" (1999: 9). I follow Johnson in giving the first verse in full and then all verses 1-16 and 19 of the song with only the first and last lines, omitting the repeated (and meaningless) refrain and the first line repeated as line 3:

Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre,
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine,
Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre,
Ne sait quand reviendra.

1. Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre, / Ne sait quand reviendra.
2. Il reviendra-t-à Pâques, /Où à la Trinité.
3. La Trinité se passe, Malbrouk ne revient pas.
4. Madam à sa tour monte, / Si haut qu'elle peut monter.
5. Elle voit venir son Page, / De noir habillé.

6. Beau Page, ah mon beau Page! / Quelles nouvelles apportez?
7. Aux nouvelles que j'apporte, / Vos beaux yeux vont pleurer.
8. Quittez vos habits roses, / Et vos sattins brochés.
9. Mr. d'Malbrouk est mort, / Est mort et enterré.
10. Je l'ai vu porter en terre /Par quatre officiers.
11 L'un portoit sa cuirasse, / L'autre son bouclier.
12. L'un portoit son grand sabre, / L'autre ne portoit rien.
13. A l'entour de sa tombe, / Rosmarins l'on planta.
14. Sur la plus haute branche / Le rossignol chanta.
15. La cérémonie faite, / Chacun s'en fut coucher.
19. Ainsi finit l'histoire, / De Malbrouk renommé.

1. Malbrouk goes off to war, / Knows not when he will come back.
2. He will come back at Easter, / Or on Trinity Sunday.
3. Trinity Sunday goes by, / Malbrouk does not return.
4. Madam climbs her tower, / As high as she can climb.
5. She sees her Page coming, / Dressed in black.
6. Fair Page, oh my fair Page! / What news do you bring?
7. At the news I bring, / Your fair eyes will weep.
8. Leave your pink dresses, / And your brocaded satin.
9. Mr. d'Malbrouk is dead, / Is dead and buried.
10. I saw him carried to the earth, / By four officers.
11. One carried his breast-plate, / Another his shield.
12. One carried his great sabre, / Another carried nothing.
13. Around his tomb / They planted rosemary.
14. On the highest branch, / A nightingale sang.
15. The ceremony over, / Everyone went off to bed.
19. Thus ends the story / Of the famous Malbrouk.

Johnson summarizes the obscure origins and cultural spread of the song: "Most commonly, the Marlbrough of the title is assumed to be . . .the Duke of Marlborough, warrior and diplomat, who defeated the forces of Louis XIV at Malplaquet in Flanders in 1709. Although the Duke was unscathed and died in his bed in 1722, a French soldier is supposed to have made up the song of Marlborough's death the night following the battle" (Johnson 1999: 10). "The earliest version of the melody . . . is thought to date from

between 1710 and 1720" (Johnson 1999: 11). The tune spread in life and art into English, German and Russian. The "most famous occurrence of the Marlbrough song in Russian literature is in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* when Prince Andrei visits his old father before leaving for the Napoleonic wars. As Andrei discusses the coming campaign, the old prince, distracted, begins to sing 'Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre. Dieu sait quand reviendra' (Book I, chapter 15). Tolstoy places the song in Prince Bolkonsky's mouth to foreshadow the death of his son. Similarly, Nabokov has Blanche sing 'Marlborough' to foreshadow Percy de Prey's death" (Johnson 1999: 15). VN's allusion is even more Tolstoyan, since Percy's death carries strong echoes of Tolstoy's 1872 story "Kavkazskiy plennik" ("Prisoner of the Caucasus"): see Brian Boyd's note, in the Library of America edition of *Ada* (Vladimir Nabokov, *Novels 1969-1974: Ada or Ardor, Transparent Things, Look at the Harlequins!*, ed. Brian Boyd, New York: Library of America, 1996), p. 798, and forthcoming "Annotations to *Ada*/AdaOnline" note on 319.13-320.20. As Johnson notes, "Malbrough Went off to War" also sounds from a barrel organ in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, ch. 4. MOTIF: *Malbrook*.

288.17: bronze-black and copper-red: MOTIF: *black-red*; *copper*; *red hair*.

288.19-20: gay: Ada has no Percy to worry about for the first time since Van's return to Ardis.

288.20: she was wearing his diamonds for the first time: Van destroyed the necklace in his rage at seeing Percy hold Ada's hand after kissing it and before kissing it again (189.28-34). While it seems appropriate that she can celebrate Percy's departure by wearing the mended necklace for the first time, she does not know Van's jealousy will soon have fresh and fiercer grounds for rage. MOTIF: *diamonds*; *necklace*; *La Parure*.

288.20-22: wearing his diamonds for the first time . . . new evening dress . . . and—also for the first time—transparent silk stockings: Cf. the novelties in Ada's appearance and attire on Van's first evening at Ardis the Second: "Ada's new long figure was profiled in black—the black of her smart silk dress with no sleeves, no ornaments, no memories" (187.14-16).

288.22: for the first time—transparent silk stockings: Cf. on Van's first night at Ardis the Second: "She wore, unmodishly, no stockings" (188.05).

288.25-27: gross orchids . . . " . . . tomcat": MOTIF: *flower*, *orchid.*
288.26-27: whose popularity with bees depended, said the text, "on various attractive odors ranging from the smell of dead workers to that of a tomcat": A1, beside "tomcat": "musk." Orchids of the genus *Bulbophyllum* attract flies and beetles by imitating the stench of rotting meat or dung (although it would be unlikely that *bees* would be attracted to such pungent orchids). Some "orchids smell like the musk glands of animals (some individuals of *Coelogyne ochracea*), or even the treats your dog leaves for you in the backyard, like *Bulbophyllum echinolabium*. . . . Some orchids smell like the skin of a fish or pond scum—like *Ancistrochilus rothschildianus* or *Bulbophyllum psychoon* or *Gastrochilus calceolaris*. *Bulbophyllum carunculatum* and *Masdevallia caesia* both smell like rotten brie" (Christopher Croom, **"**The Good, The Bad and The Stinky: A Profile of Orchids and Their Myriad Fragrances," San Diego Floral Association, http://www.sdfloral.org/floral-2.htm, accessed 14 December 2015).
288.27: dead workers: Dead worker bees, presumably.
288.27-28: Dead soldiers might smell even better: Van takes the "workers" as referring to humans and vents his hostility on Lieutenant de Prey, even before he knows for sure that the note in his breast pocket refers to Percy.
288.29-289.07: In the meantime . . . pogonia . . . another orchid . . . Lady's Slipper . . . how the organs of orchids work: MOTIF: *flower*; *orchids.*
288.29-33: Lucette . . . easiest way to draw a flower . . . indecent details of structure . . . trace the outline of the thing: Cf. Lucette's "copying beautiful erotic pictures from an album of Forbidden Masterpieces" (376.04-05).
288.31-32: a red-bearded pogonia, with indecent details of structure: W2, *Pogonia* "[NL. fr. Gr. *pōgōn* beard] . . . a. A small genus of terrestrial orchids of the North Temperate Zone. There are two American species, *P. ophioglossoides*, the snakemouth, and *P. divaricata*." The type species, *P. ophioglossoides*, looks rather vulval.
289.01: Patient Ada: Cf. Ada's telegram to Van in 1886: "dadaist impatient patient," 178.08-09.
289.03-06: another orchid that had a brown wrinkled pouch and purple sepals . . . the Lady's Slipper she had picked: The "One

common orchid, a Lady's Slipper" (287.14) that Ada had brought back from her botanical ramble-cum-farewell tryst with Percy. MOTIF: *Cinderella*.

289.05-06: the crystal vaselet holding the Lady's Slipper she had picked: Cf. in the *débauche à trois* scene, 419.27-28: "a Lurid Oncidium Orchid in an amethystine vaselet."

289.07-10: could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower *through* something, through his gaiters or woolies or whatever he wore?: A worry fired by Lucette's sitting on Van's knee on the carriage on the way back from the picnic two days earlier, as Ada realizes at 289.13-15. Note that Van nearly *did* come to orgasm under Lucette ("threatened to touch off a private crisis under the solemn load of another child," 281.27-28); and that this scene of orchid-drawing echoes the scenes where Ada would draw orchids such as *Ophrys veenae*, with their pseudo-copulation by bees, while Van took the simulacrum of Ada off to his room to masturbate (as, thirteen years later, he will masturbate to the image of Ada while he tries to keep Lucette's ardor for him at bay, 490). Note also that the Lady's Slipper orchid *is* pollinated by bees.

289.08-09: impregnate a girl flower *through* something, through his gaiters or woolies: Cf. 64.02: "Flowers into bloomers." MOTIF: *flower*.

289.14: the Larivière bosom: Cf. 77.17-18: "Ida Larivière, a bosomy woman of great and repulsive beauty"; 194.17-18: "Larivière blossoming forth, bosoming forth as a great writer!"

289.14-15: and complain she has been pollinated by sitting on your knee: See 279.13-282.02. MOTIF: *knee*.

289.16-17: "But I can't speak to Belle about dirty things," said Lucette quite gently and reasonably: Cf. another innocent girl speaking "very reasonably" of a sexual matter she doesn't understand: "Irma knew perfectly well that it was not he [not her father whistling four notes in the street below], but a man who had for the last fortnight been visiting the lady on the fourth floor—the porter's little daughter had told her as much, and had put out her tongue when Irma observed, very reasonably, that it was stupid to come so late" (*Laughter in the Dark*, New York: New Directions, 1960, 159).

289: 22: those horrible flowers: "Horrible" presumably not only because of his impatience but also because of what he has read and seen in the orchid volume at 288.24-27. MOTIF: *flower*.

289.26-28: *Mon page, mon beau page . . .* : *Darkbloom*: "*mon beau page*: My pretty page." More lines from the song "Malbrough" (see 288.14-16n.) which Van presumably hears Blanche still singing as he descends the stairs. The next line, *Mironton-mironton-mirontaine*, is a meaningless refrain in the song. The line that follows what Blanche sings is "*Quelles nouvelles apportez?*" ("What news do you bring?"), as if to confirm again in advance that it is Blanche who has brought the note.
290.06: "Well, I'm telling you": an interesting example of normally eloquent Van's sudden inarticulacy at this moment of urgency.
290.09: Destroy and forget: MOTIF: *destroy and forget*.
290.10: Your obedient servant: An ironic echo, although Ada may not know it, of Percy's farewell flourish in his note to Van, offering a duel and its withdrawal, 284.02. Van may also be suggesting that he would like to destroy and forget Percy, the man who described himself as "your obedient servant" (as if "your obedient servant," that is, were the object of "Destroy and forget"); he certainly dashes after his rivals for Ada with murderous intent at the end of the next chapter and the beginning of the next but one.

Afternote

In I.40 we are just one chapter from Van's fleeing Ardis forever. He returned to Ardis in the summer of 1888 hoping to recapture the magic of the summer of 1884. But from the first, from his arrival unannounced, from his seeing Percy de Prey kiss Ada's hand, hold it, and kiss it again, things have irrevocably changed. Nevertheless, the magic of Ardis the First seems from time to time to return or to attain an unprecedented new force. The 1888 picnic on Ada's birthday appears to typify the change from 1884, with not only the pathetic would-be rival Greg Erminin present, but drunk, hefty, leering Percy de Prey challenging Van and, though beaten once, assaulting him with full force from behind, a wounding encounter that sums up all the unpleasantness and threat of Ardis the Second so far. Nevertheless a combination of chances means that Van once again rides in the front of the carriage heading homeward, with a sister having to perch on his knees, allowing him to relive the enchantment of this almost perfect repetition of the return from the 1884 picnic: "that moment of total happiness, the complete eclipse of the piercing and preying ache, the logic of intoxication, the circular

argument to the effect that the most eccentric girl cannot help being faithful if she loves as one loves her" (281).

But in fact, as I.40 shows, all has changed. The "piercing and preying ache" caused by Percy de Prey has not ended. The note of challenge and concession revives the threat in a way Van thinks he can dismiss ("now, at least, Ada would cease to be pestered by the fellow's attentions," 284). But Ada returns from her horseback ride, which even first-time readers may already think suspect, only for Van to announce promptly: "When lightning struck two days later" (284).

The chapter continues to ratchet up the tension as the end of Ardis the Second nears. Yet despite the ardis, the direction, of time ("When lightning struck," and, the next paragraph, "On the morning of the day preceding the most miserable one in his life," 285), the chapter yields surprises, some pleasant, as well as the advancing rumble of foreboding. Although already wounded by Percy, Van will *not* duel him, after all. Although Van meets Ada in the park alley after she has returned from Percy (as we can later confirm), they experience one of their most poignantly tender moments of communion together—even if this feels much less radiant in retrospect, in light of the very recent sex with Percy that Ada is concealing here. Although Van finds a warning note, Ada can dismiss it—for now. And in the next chapter, when Blanche begins to explain Ada's infidelity, other surprises await: she will tell of Ada's affair not with the expected Percy but with *Rack*, before Van confronts Ada with the knowledge of her infidelity, and she will reply, disclosing not the now expected Rack but her more recent affair with *Percy*. Van and Nabokov stress not only the patterns built into past and present that seem to point ominously toward what is to come, but simultaneously, the unpredictability of the future.

I.40 recapitulates Ardis themes with a consciousness that they cannot continue or that they will soon be seen only through the lens of loss. The fatidic flashforward to "When lightning struck two days later (an old image that is meant to intimate a flash-back to an old barn)" (284) recalls the flashbacks in *Les Enfants Maudits* discussed in I.32, which themselves seem like disclosures of the dilemmas Ada's multiple lovers cause her (see 284.31-32n), and therefore like virtual flashforwards to what Van will discover about her infidelity. "When lightning struck" also leads into a discussion of Van's dual consciousness "since the first day of his fateful return to

Ardis" (285): that on the one hand Percy poses no threat, and that on the other "some nameless trouble was threatening the very sanity of Van's pale, faithless mistress" (285). This in turn echoes Ada's near-disclosure on their first morning at Ardis the Second: "her quandary might drive her insane if she did not know that her heart was pure. . . She was like the girl in a film he would see soon, who is in the triple throes of a tragedy" (192).

A film theme sounds repeatedly through the start of Ardis the Second: Van's sense on arriving back at Ardis that he has entered "a scene out of some new life being rehearsed for an unknown picture, without him, not for him" (187); Ada's description in the same chapter of her trilemma in terms of "the girl in a film he would see soon" (192); and the *Les Enfants Maudits* rewrites in I.32, with their flashbacks (201) that seem to be what Ada was referring forward to in the previous chapter. The film theme returns here in I.40, at the end of Ardis the Second, in the film-party dinner for which Van and Ada dress at the end of the chapter, and Mlle Larivière "reading with mixed feelings and furious annotations the third shooting script of *Les Enfants Maudits*" (288), between Van's finding the "One must not berne you" note and seeing Ada in the diamond necklace that he broke when he first flared with jealousy at Percy.

In other ways, I. 40 both recapitulates Ardis and looks forward to what will end Van's time there. Ardis has seemed a paradise for Van and Ada, and here in this chapter the alley where she once showed him her sun-and-shade games, and the scene of orchid-drawing, and the recollection of the night of the Burning Barn echo the pleasures of Ardis the First, while the pool, the Burnberry Brook, and the movie theme revive colorful aspects of Ardis the Second. Nothing is uniformly negative, but even the positives—like Van's assertion that "All their passionate pump-joy exertions, from Burning Barn to Burnberry Brook, were nothing in comparison to this *zaychik*, this 'sun blick' of the smiling spirit" (286)—have their shade side. Ada, after all, we will discover, has just returned from her farewell tryst with Percy, and it is that that lifts her spirits and therefore Van's. And the Burning Barn and Burnberry Brook will be echoed barely a page later with the warning "One must not berne you" (287): suddenly, the "burn" theme seems closer to the hell fire of Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights than to the paradisiac ardors of Ardis the First.

A duel seems to have just been averted in the confrontation of Van and Percy in the previous chapter ("Is that a challenge, *me faites-vous un duel?*" 277), and in the challenge-cum-peace treaty at the beginning of this chapter. But Percy's death, already signaled in the previous chapter by vindictive Van ("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," 273), looms again over this chapter, especially in the multiple echoes of the song "Malbrough s'en va-t'en guerre," from the pretty page in black bringing Percy's challenge (and even Ada's dressing in black on the day of her farewelling Percy), to Blanche's repeated song and refrain. The narrative seems to challenge alert first-time readers: How does the foreknowledge of Percy's death in the Crimea square with the duel theme, so closely and naturally associated with Percy, and pointedly resounded here again by way of the hairdresser "Monsieur Violette of Lyon and Ladore" who coifs Marina out of doors "so as to forestall the zephyrs (as a duelist steadies his hand by walking about with a poker)" (285). Two chapters hence we will discover that this "Monsieur Violette" prefigures the "pansies," the homosexual characters with violet names and associations, who become, utterly unexpectedly, Van's dueling opponent and the seconds in the duel that displaces Van's rage at Percy and Philip Rack. The present foreshadows the future, once again, but the future still takes us by surprise. Only when it materializes does it disclose exactly how the past might be seen to have foreshadowed it.

The same with the "One must not berne you" note. It seems to suggest immediately that Van is being warned about his being duped by Ada and Percy. When Van seeks out Ada to confront her with the note, she is wearing both new clothes and the diamond necklace Van had brought to her at Ardis the Second, only to tear it apart when Ada, in unfamiliar new clothes, allowed Percy to kiss her hand, hold it, and kiss it again. This new clothes-new necklace echo of the start of Ardis the Second, and of the initial sudden flare of jealousy toward Percy, seems to bode ill of the note Van now thrusts before her, as if the preannounced finish of Ardis the Second is about to arrive. But Ada deflects the note, and when Blanche begins to explain it in the next chapter, she tells only of Ada's affair with Rack, surprising us as much as Van.

When Van takes the warning note to thrust before Ada, he finds her with Lucette: “Lucette under Ada’s direction was trying to learn to draw flowers; several botanical atlases, large and small, were lying about. Everything appeared as it always used to be” (288). Once again, Van has a sense that Ardis the First is being replayed. But once again, everything has changed.

This will be the last time that Lucette appears in Ardis the Second, the last time she sees Van before she comes to visit him at Kingston, at sixteen, having already, by letter, declared her passionate love for him. Nabokov makes Lucette’s last scene at Ardis count, even though on a first reading it seems as light as other scenes involving Lucette have also feigned to be. Lucette, reluctant to draw live flowers, preferring to trace flower pictures from books, offers a comic contrast to Ada at the same age in 1884, the gifted botanist masterfully copying, recombining and inventing orchids. The gulf between precocious Ada and normal Lucette never seems wider. Then the scene becomes still more comic:

> Casually, lightly, she went on to explain how the organs of orchids work—but all Lucette wanted to know, after her whimsical fashion, was: could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower *through* something, through his gaiters or woolies or whatever he wore?
>
> “You know,” said Ada in a comic nasal voice, turning to Van, “you know, that child has the dirtiest mind imaginable and now she is going to be mad at me for saying this and sob on the Larivière bosom, and complain she has been pollinated by sitting on your knee.”
>
> “But I can’t speak to Belle about dirty things,” said Lucette quite gently and reasonably. (289)

Once again the contrast between Ada, richly sexually experienced at twelve, and Lucette, still naively innocent but fearing she has lost her innocence, could not be starker or more amusing—at first.

Lucette’s fears provide a delightful comic echo of the second picnic ride. But her concern about her innocence, her possible impregnation by Van, point forward, as rereaders know, to the irony that she will take her own life precisely because she has never been able to win the sexual favors of the man she loves, sexually promiscuous though he is; and because, ultimately, her introduction

to sex, especially through seeing Van and Ada in action even in 1884, at eight, and through being involved as an amatory decoy, at twelve, has skewed her healthy sexual and emotional development. In Ardis the Second Van and Ada have taken advantage of her "always playing her part of the clinging, affectionately fussy lassy" (204-05) and follow Ada's scheme "to have Van fool Lucette by petting her in Ada's presence, while kissing Ada at the same time, and by caressing and kissing Lucette when Ada was away in the woods ('in the woods,' 'botanizing')" (213).

In the final scene of I.40, Lucette insists that "the easiest way to draw a flower was to place a sheet of transparent paper over the picture (in the present case a red-bearded pogonia, with indecent details of structure, a plant peculiar to the Ladoga bogs)" (288). That rather vulval plant (see 288.31-32n. above) foreshadows red-haired Lucette's *krestik*: the next time Lucette sees Van, at Kingston in 1891, she will report how Ada initiated her into lesbian sex ("She kissed my *krestik* while I kissed hers," 375). The copying of the "indecent" plant foreshadows another part of her Kingston report to Van: she "cop[ies] beautiful erotic pictures from an album of Forbidden Masterpieces" (376) in between her romps with Ada, as if unable not to fixate on sex.

The scene of Lucette's copying flowers at Ardis also pointedly anticipates the most disturbing scene of the three Veen children engaged in sexual play, itself described as if it were "reproduced (in 'Forbidden Masterpieces')" (418). In the flower-copying scene in I.40 Ada is "wearing his diamonds for the first time" (288): she has a dinner party ahead but also wears the gems as if to celebrate the fact that Percy, whose attentions at the start of Ardis the Second caused Van to tear apart the necklace, has safely sailed out of her life. Ada tries to persuade Lucette not to trace flowers from a book but to copy "the Lady's Slipper she had picked" and has placed in a "crystal vaselet" (289). In the *débauche à trois* scene, where Ada in 1892 pulls Lucette into bed with herself and Van and leads Van's hand across her own body to fondle Lucette's "firebird" (418), Ada, although otherwise naked, is "wearing, for ritual and fatidic reasons, his river of diamonds" (417), and on the bedside table stands "a Lurid Oncidium Orchid in an amethystine vaselet" (419). In both scenes, Ada wears Van's diamonds and an orchid stands in a "vaselet," as if to emphasize the distance between Lucette's naively puzzled sense of compromised innocence in the

flower-copying scene ("could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower," 289) and her brief and unsettling entanglement in Van and Ada's decadent romps four years later.

In the flower-copying scene Lucette as copyist seems cast as only a poor copy of Ada. At twelve, she cannot paint flowers as Ada could at that age, with deep botanical knowledge and the imagination even to invent plausible new orchids; she can only trace or copy. Lucette worries that "a boy bee" could "impregnate a girl flower," as she recalls the ride back from the picnic where she sat on Van's knee, an almost exact copy of Ada sitting on his knee exactly four years earlier on the first picnic ride. Van nearly swells to orgasm under Lucette, not because of *her*, but because he can almost replay the ecstasy of his first sustained contact with Ada four years earlier. And when Van hovered over Ada four years earlier, as she painted flowers, including flowers that invite pseudo-copulation by bees, he would slink to his room to bring himself all the way to orgasm as he called forth "the image he had just left behind" (100). Lucette as flower-copyist, by contrast, merely annoys him: he wants her away so he can challenge Ada with the warning note.

When Lucette visits Van next, at Kinston in 1892, she tries to rouse Van's desire by copying Ada, but she fails: "'I knew it was hopeless,' she said, looking away. 'I did my best. I imitated all her *shtuchki* (little stunts). I'm a better actress than she but that's not enough, I know.'" (386) When she makes her last attempt to arouse Van, aboard the *Tobakoff*, she succeeds, until as they watch a pre-release film they see Ada step on the screen in *Don Juan's Last Fling*. Lucette tries to pull Van away from the image of Ada: "Let's go, please, let's go. You must not see her *debasing* herself. She's terribly made up, every gesture is childish and wrong—" (489). But Van pleads "Just another minute" and comments, in narrational restrospect:

> Terrible? Wrong? She was absolutely perfect, and strange, and poignantly familiar. By some stroke of art, by some enchantment of chance, the few brief scenes she was given formed a perfect compendium of her 1884 and 1888 and 1892 looks.
>
> The *gitanilla* bends her head over the live table of Leporello's servile back to trace on a scrap of parchment a rough map of the way to the castle. Her neck shows white

> through her long black hair separated by the motion of her shoulder. It is no longer another man's Dolores, but a little girl twisting an aquarelle brush in the paint of Van's blood, and Donna Anna's castle is now a bog flower. (489)

Watching the film, Van is engulfed in Ada's ambience, and when "old bores of the family" (475) move to sit right next to them, Lucette turns to them with staunch courtesy while Van makes "a humorous bad-sailor excuse" (490) and leaves the shipboard cinema. To douse the flames Lucette has stoked, he masturbates, for the first time since he masturbated over Ada painting flowers, and calls up onto "the screen of his paroxysm" "not the recent and pertinent image of Lucette, but the indelible vision of a bent bare neck and a divided flow of black hair and a purple-tipped paint brush" (490).

Lucette imitates her big sister's love for Van; a chain of contingencies after the picnic place her on Van's knees, in accidental imitation of Ada; she now copies her sister as copyist, while showing only how far short of her brilliant sister she falls; she will imitate Ada, she will even succeed at last in arousing Van's desire, only for the image of *Ada*, not her, as flower-painter to focus all his thoughts back on Ada and to end Lucette's hopes of Van and of life itself. The comic scene of Lucette asking, instead of copying a flower, "could a boy bee impregnate a girl flower" (289), her last scene in Ardis, embodies the tragic ironies of her intact virginity: her entanglement too early in her siblings' love, her inability to free herself from the role of Ada's shadow, her dying still a virgin.

In I.40 Van seems fixated on Percy de Prey, on the note he sends, on the signals of Ada's engagement with Percy that he suppresses, on the note that warns him. But as "the piercing and preying ache" (281) returns to haunt Van and threaten the end of Ardis, Nabokov signals another kind of damage the Veens have inflicted during Ardis the Second, on the Lucette who seems a mere obstacle to their private intensities. Indeed, she has been interwoven with Percy de Prey from her first appearance at Ardis the Second to the last. A moment after Van witnesses Percy impermissibly kissing Ada, and tears the diamond necklace into glittering hailstones, Ada rushes into the room, answers Van's challenge ("was that Percy de Prey? . . . Was he her new beau?") by affirming that she "had and have and shall always have only one beau, only on beast, only one sorrow, only one joy." As they kiss, as he draws up her dress,

> she flinched with a murmur of reluctant denial, because the door had come alive: two small fists could be heard drumming upon it from the outside, in a rhythm both knew well.
>
> "Hi, Lucette!" cried Van: "I'm changing, go away."
>
> "Hi, Van! They want Ada, not you. They want you downstairs, Ada!" (190)

Lucette as comic obstacle returns with a rush in Ardis the Second, and she remains a comic obstacle to Van's intensity—of jealousy against Percy, once more—as Ardis the Second draws to a close. But precisely because she has been embroiled in their kisses and caresses, "to have Van fool her by petting her in Ada's presence, while kissing Ada at the same time, and by caressing and kissing Lucette when Ada was away in the woods ('in the woods,' 'botanizing')" (213)—her compromised innocence will prove much more tragic than Van's mounting sense of himself as a man injured and betrayed.

Throughout I.40, indeed, Van's injury at Percy's hands, his sore knee, runs as an insistent motif. Lucette does not enter the chapter until its last quarter, yet the knee motif is covertly but very pointedly aligned with her. The injury is not mentioned at the time of Percy's attack from behind, at 275. It earns its first mention only at the very moment Lucette sits down on Van's knees for the carriage ride home: "'Ouch!' grunted Van as he received the rounded load—explaining wrily that he had hit his right patella against a rock" (279). Indulging in his sense of the magic retrieval of the past, as he sits under Lucette, he almost brings himself to orgasm, only for the twinge in his kneecap to save him:

> Van closed his eyes in order better to concentrate on the golden flood of swelling joy. Many, oh many, many years later he recollected with wonder (how could one have endured such rapture?) that moment of total happiness, the complete eclipse of the piercing and preying ache. . . . He opened his eyes: the bracelet was indeed flashing but her lips had lost all trace of rouge, and the certainty that in another moment he would touch their hot pale pulp threatened to touch off a private crisis under the solemn load of another

> child. But the little proxy's neck, glistening with sweat, was pathetic, her trustful immobility, sobering, and after all no furtive friction could compete with what awaited him in Ada's bower. A twinge in his kneecap also came to the rescue, and honest Van chided himself for having attempted to use a little pauper instead of the princess in the fairy tale—"whose precious flesh must not blush with the impression of a chastising hand," says Pierrot in Peterson's version. (281-82)

The knee motif then sounds through I.40 from its opening paragraph ("His knee had troubled him all night," 283), but the last time the word "knee" occurs in the chapter it seems at first purely comic, Ada's comment on Lucette's going to "sob on the Larivière bosom, and complain she has been pollinated by sitting on your knee" (289). That takes us back in a sense to the first mention of Van's injured knee, as Lucette sits on him, and to the next mention, as the twinge in his kneecap helps call him back from orgasm under Lucette, from "having attempted to use a little pauper instead of the princess in the fairy tale" (281). Van, like the first-time reader, focuses the whole chapter on the injury and threat from Percy and the note. Nabokov also focuses the whole chapter on the much more lasting injury done to Lucette, through the seemingly only comic complaint about her loss of innocence.