

THE NABOKOVIAN

Published semi-annually  
at the University of Kansas  
by the Vladimir Nabokov Society

Editor: Stephen Jan Parker

*The Nabokovian* serves to report and stimulate Nabokov scholarship and to create a link between Nabokov scholars, both in the USA and abroad.

Subscriptions: individuals, \$11.00 per year; institutions, \$14.00 per year. For surface postage outside the USA add \$4.00. For airmail postage to Europe, add \$8.00; to Australia, India, Israel, New Zealand, Japan add \$9.00. Back issues: #31 with 15-year index is \$9.00 for individuals and \$11.00 for institutions; other issues are \$7.00 each for individuals and \$9.00 each for institutions; add \$4.50 for airmail. (Number 1, 2 and 14 are available only in xerox copy.) Checks should be made payable to the Vladimir Nabokov Society.

Address all inquiries, submission of items, and subscription requests to:

*The Nabokovian*  
Slavic Languages & Literatures  
The University of Kansas  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045

THE NABOKOVIAN

Number 33

Fall 1994

---

CONTENTS

News by Stephen Jan Parker	3
"Two Nabokovs" in Moscow by Richard Borden	11
Annotations & Queries by Gennady Barabtarlo <i>Contributors:</i> A. Bouazza, Alexander Dolinin, Gavriel Shapiro, Suellen Stringer-Hye, Dieter Zimmer	15
Rowohlt's Nabokov Edition by Dieter E. Zimmer	31
Annotations to <i>Ada</i> : 3. Part I. Chapter 3 (continued) by Brian Boyd	42
1993 Nabokov Bibliography by Stephen Jan Parker	70

## NEWS

by Stephen Jan Parker

### Nabokov Society and Conference News

The Nabokov Society meetings will be held this year in San Diego in conjunction with the MLA and AATSEEL national meetings. At AATSEEL (Thursday, December 29, 3:15 - 5:15 pm) the Nabokov session will be chaired by Maxim Shrayner (Yale), with Julian Connolly (Virginia) as Secretary. Papers will be read by Marina Kostalevsky (Yale), Stephen Blackwell (Indiana), Gavriel Shapiro (Cornell), and Alexander Dunkel (Arizona). Two other papers on VN will be read at other sessions: Christine Rydel (Grand Valley State) at the session "The Child in Russian Literature," (8:00-10:00 am, December 29) and Maxim Shrayner at the session "Russian Literature: Elective Affinities," (1:00-3:00 pm, December 29).

The first session at the MLA meetings, chaired by D. Barton Johnson (U of California, Santa Barbara), will be held December 27, 3:30-5:30 pm. Papers will be read by James English (Pennsylvania), Suellen Stringer-Hye (Texas A&M), Jodi Kilcup (Alaska, Anchorage), and D. Barton Johnson. The second session, under the title "Regarding Aesthetic Bliss" and chaired by John Lavagnino (Brandeis), is scheduled for December 29, 8:30-9:45 am. Papers will be read by John Lavagnino, Zoran Kuzmanovich (Davidson), and Brian Walter (Washington).

A Nabokov session is on the program of the V International Council for Central and East European Studies World Congress to be held in Warsaw, Poland on 11 August 1995. Entitled "Vladimir Nabokov Revisited," the session will be chaired by Gavriel Shapiro (Cornell). Papers will be read by Nora Buhks (Sorbonne), David Rampton (Ottawa), and Gavriel

Shapiro. The discussant will be Arnold McMilan (London).

\*

Several persons have written concerning the "Nabokov Days in Petersburg" held 20-24 April 1994. The event, coinciding with the 95th anniversary of VN's birth, was sponsored by the Nabokov Fund and several other organizations and held in part at the Nabokov residence at 47 Bol'shaia Morskaia. We are particularly grateful to Jane Grayson for sending along a copy of the program and some commentary. Festivities began on April 20 with the opening of a Nabokov book exhibit and an evening of chess sponsored by the local chess club and featuring talks on VN and chess. On April 21 there was an excursion through the city to view Nabokov-related sites; the opening of a photo exhibit; and a Nabokov evening with a roundtable discussion on "The Myth of Nabokov." On April 22 a series of papers were delivered by A. Blok (France), T.N. Belova (Moscow), I.N. Tolstoi (St. Petersburg), T.F. Verizhnikov (St. Petersburg), Jesse Lokrantz (USA), S.A. Fomichev (St. Petersburg), E.B. Belodubrovskii (St. Petersburg), N.I. Tolstaia and M.B. Meilakh (St. Petersburg), V.A. Gavrilov (Crimea), Isakhaia IUiiti and Numano Mitsuesi (Japan), Vimala Ramarao (India). On April 23 papers were delivered by: Nora Buhks (France), N.K. Teletova (St. Petersburg), Zdenek Pekhal (Czech Republic), M.V. Chernitskaia (St. Petersburg), T.A. Boborykina (St. Petersburg), B.V. Averin (St. Petersburg), Jane Grayson (Great Britain; paper read in her absence), S.V. Vernadskii (St. Petersburg), S.S. Shul'ts (St. Petersburg), V. Linetskii (St. Petersburg), and a round-table on Nabokov and film. On April 24 there was an excursion, with commentary, to the Nabokov estate at Rozhdestveno.

The Nabokov Fund has also prepared and distributed a handsome twelve-page publication, in 8 1/2" x 12 1/2" format, entitled *Dom Nabokovykh* (The

Nabokovs' House), compiled by L.I. Broitman, E. Krasnova, and A.L. Petrov. It presents a copiously illustrated history of the 47 Bol'shaia Morskaia house and its various residents up to the young VN.

\*

#### Odds and Ends

-- Dmitri Nabokov writes: "I am often asked which editions of my father's works are definitive. Probably none, since, in spite of everyone's best efforts, old lapses and typos survive and new ones creep in. But the best answer, for English, would be: the current Vintage International and Penguin versions. Although the fact was never mentioned in any prefatory or promotional material, I think readers ought to be made aware that most of the texts of these editions were meticulously rechecked and gingerly touched up on the basis of VN's notes, DN's and VÉN's notes approved by VN, and, in certain very rare instances, what DN judged to be obvious lapses and for the correction of which he takes full responsibility."

-- On December 5, BBC-TV's show, "Horizon," will air a program on noteworthy cases of synesthesia, including those of Vladimir, Véra, and Dmitri Nabokov.

-- The world premiere of an operatic version of *Lolita*, music and libretto by Shchedrin, conducted by Rostropovich, will be given in Stockholm on December 14, 1994.

-- The second Nice, France conference -- "Nabokov, at the Crossroads of Modernism and Postmodernism" -- under the direction of Professor Maurice Couturier, will be held June 22-24, 1995.

-- Remakes of film versions of *Lolita* and *Laughter in the Dark* are in the works; details to follow.

-- Nabokovians will be pleased to know that the collected short stories of VN, in one volume, will be published by Alfred Knopf in fall 1995. The collection will include thirteen Russian stories never previously translated into English.

-- In Germany, the Rowohlt collected works of VN is appearing at a good pace. In France, the Pleiade edition, announced several years ago, is proceeding very slowly, with no set date for the first volume. In Italy, Adelphi publishers have taken over from Bompiani and have been putting out a collected works of VN. The next volume in the series, *Intransigenze* [Strong Opinions], is scheduled for publication in late November or early December. In the USA, an American Pleiade-style collection of VN's collected works is scheduled for publication by the Library of America under license from Random House, to coincide with VN's 100th birthday in 1999.

-- The Arion Press (460 Bryant St., San Francisco, CA 94107), Andrew Hoyem publisher, has recently published a special edition of *Pale Fire* in two volumes. The second volume is an extra copy of the poem that conforms to the scale and lineation of index cards, the ostensible form of the manuscript poem as described within the novel. As the publisher writes, "in printing two volumes, we took up Professor Kinbote's suggestion to have at hand a separate copy of the poem to allow easy reference between his commentary and the numbered lines of verse." Handsomely printed, bound, and slipcased, the two-volume edition is limited to 200 numbered copies for sale at \$600.00 plus shipping costs.

--Brian Boyd would like to thank Michiyo Maruyama, whose address he has misplaced, for the information sent in response to the *Ada* notes on 1.2.

\*

The second number of *Nabokov Studies*, to appear in 1995, will offer two special features. The first is a pair of articles on Nabokov's use of fictional time. The second is a set of articles examining the work of prize-winning French writer Jean Lahougue (b. 1945), who engages in the "re-writing" of the works of other authors, especially writers of mysteries. Lahougue has "re-written" two Nabokov works: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* transformed into *Non-lieu dans un paysage* and *Despair* transformed into "La Ressemblance," a long short story. The issue will also include articles by Brian Boyd, Jeff Edmunds, Brian Oles, Svetlana Polsky, Gerard de Vries, Chris Ackerly, and others.

*Nabokov Studies* is an annual journal devoted to the writings of Vladimir Nabokov. Sponsored by the International Nabokov Society, *Nabokov Studies* is a refereed, scholarly publication that welcomes submissions dealing with any aspect of Nabokov's work or that involves Nabokov in any substantive way. The journal places no restrictions upon the length, theoretical orientation, or language of submitted manuscripts. Graphic materials are welcome. *Nabokov Studies* also includes reviews and extended review-articles on current (and older) Nabokov scholarship. Submissions should be sent to: D. Barton Johnson, Editor, Dept of Germanic and Slavic Studies, Phelps Hall, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

Individual subscription -- \$21.-- domestic; \$22.50 overseas

Institution subscription -- \$31.00 domestic; \$32.50 overseas

Payment (in American funds drawn upon an American bank) should be made to "Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher" at the following address: CMTS, Kerckhoff Hall, University of Southern California, 734 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089-7724, USA.

\*

Mrs. Jacqueline Callier has provided the following list of VN works received in Montreux, May-October 1994:

- May - "A Visit to the Museum," in *Amerikanische Erzähler des 20 Jahrhunderts*, tr. Gunther Fetzer. Munich: Wilhelm Heyne.
- *Lolita*, revisions by Dieter Zimmer. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- *Lolita*, tr. Enrique Tejedor. Barcelona: Narrativa Actual.
- *Maszenka* [Mary], tr. Eugenia Siemazkiewicz. Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- June - *Glory*. London: Penguin reprint.
- *Mary*. London: Penguin reprint.
- *Pale Fire*. San Francisco: Arion Press, with Alfred A. Knopf; special edition with separate little volume of the 4-canto poem.
- July - *Details of a Sunset and Other Stories*. London: Penguin reprint.
- *Transparent Things*. London: Penguin reprint.
- August - *Vorbeste, Memorie*, tr. Sanda Aronescu. Dalsi, Romania: Editura Universal.
- *A Pessoa Em Questao* [Speak, Memory], tr. Sergio Flaksman. Sao Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras.

- *Pnin*, tr. Dieter E. Zimmer. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- September - *Lolita*, tr. Jorio Dauster. Sao Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras.
- *Autres Rivages* [Speak, Memory], tr. Yvonne Davet and Mirese Akar. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.
- October - *Ada or l'ardeur*, tr. Gilles Chahine and Jean-Bernard Blandenier. Paris: Gallimard Folio reprint.
- *Lushins Verteidigung* [The Defense], tr. Dieter Zimmer and Dietmar Schulte. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Rororo reprint.
- *Blady Ogien* [Pale Fire], tr. Robert Stiller. Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut.
- *Pnin*, tr. Enrique Murillo. Barcelona: Anagrama reprint
- *Mashenka*, tr. Andres Bosch. Barcelona: Anagrama reprint.
- *Habla, Memoria*, tr. Enrique Murillo. Barcelona: Anagrama reprint.

\*

REMINDER: As announced in the last issue, subscription rates have gone up slightly for 1995. Please check the inside cover for details. Renewals are now due.

\*

Our thanks, as always, to Ms. Paula Courtney for her irreplaceable assistance in the preparation of this and every issue of *The Nabokovian*.

## "TWO NABOKOV'S" IN MOSCOW

by Richard Borden

The Russian stage these days is crowded with adaptations of prose classics, from Tolstoy's "Story of a Horse" to Lidiia Ginzburg's *Journey into the Whirlwind*. "Dva Nabokova" ("Two Nabokovs"), a June 1994 Premiere at Mark Rozovsky's Teatr u Nikitskikh vorot (Theater at the Nikita Gates) in Moscow, illustrates some of the tactical pros and cons of stage adaptations, a difficult matter under most circumstances. It presents a particular challenge when it involves an author whose unique shimmer radiates as much from the magic of his narratives' texture as from the stories they tell. In this case, the stories are Nabokov's "A Dashing Fellow" (Khvat) and "The Potato Elf" (Kartofel'nyj El'f), and, while combined here as "Parts One and Two" of an ostensibly integral dramatic entity, they remain two distinct works which reach the stage along quite different paths.

The first revises Rozovsky's staging of "A Dashing Fellow," which premiered several years ago. Rozovsky basically follows the psychological and dramatic curve of Nabokov's anecdote: the seamy misadventure of an unsavory commercial traveller who, bursting with sexual desire, sets about bedding the first available woman. The result, by and large, is an actors' showcase. The characters rehearse much of Nabokov's original text, but beyond this, pursue dialogues and inner monologues that Nabokov's creations might well have spoken if given free rein by their creator (something we know he never would have allowed), but which were written by Rozovsky. Further distinguishing it from Nabokov's original, this adaptation permits us nearly as much internal access to the woman, Zonya, as it does to the "dashing fellow," Kostya, an adjustment which is certainly justified by the requirements of the stage.

But just as Nabokov's story is sordid and slight (aside from its language and glittering detail, neither of which translate well in this sort of adaptation), so is the production. As drama it is partially rescued by its dark, often off-color humor (some not originating in Nabokov's text) and fine acting. As played by Aleksandr Lukash, Kostya is vulgarity itself: unctuous, sweaty, spiritually and morally barren, and so oppressed by sexual need he can't sit still. The performance is funny, though perhaps too much a caricature to be psychologically and dramatically compelling. Galina Borisova's Zonya, however, is superb, especially in how she keeps you guessing what her motives and feelings in this whole business might be (she seems to be more than a bit randy herself, or is she only lonely? or might this even be a sort of business transaction for her?). The show's best moments include the slapstick of Kostya's sexual impatience and Zonya's impatience to eat, which evolves into an awkward dance of conflicting animal drives, and their struggle's anticlimactic "climax," where both actors face the audience at the crucial moment, registering the precipitous descent from unachieved ecstasy to sticky revulsion.

Perhaps the most interesting moment, however (only partly taken from Nabokov's text), finds Kostya, having abandoned Zonya, toting up his financial losses (the beer, the taxi, the food), while Zonya totes up her takings (the beer, the taxi, the food). He then recalls the whole affair once again and laughs, while she, moments later, does the same. Here lurks a suspicion. While Zonya had been out gathering a meal for the unlikely couple, a messenger had come to inform her that her father is dying, a communication Kostya fails to relate upon her return. Could this messenger have been her own ruse, designed to rid herself of a pesky mark now that she has her roast beef and cognac? In that case, the whole affair would prove to have been a tit-for-tat by two characters so sleazy that they deserve one another, and only one another. But then Zonya's laughter collapses into tears at the

pain of again being alone, aging and poor, and she becomes, whatever her original motives, the victim.

On the whole, this "Dashing Fellow" plays very much as a staged short story. It lacks intrinsic stage logic, and finally is dependent on its acting to rescue what is, without enough aesthetic sustenance from Nabokov's own words, a smallish comic sketch.

"The Potato Elf," on the other hand, is quite differently translated into the language of stagecraft. As adapted and directed by 23 year-old Karen Nersisian, it rests (aside from some entertaining circus show interpolations) almost exclusively on Nabokov's text, which is read on tape as the actors mime along. Thus, if nothing else, the audience is treated to a lot of sparkling Nabokov prose, read superbly by actors Galina Borisova and Sergei Desnitsky. But it is also a most surreal spectacle. First of all, Frederic Dobson, the potato elf, is played, compellingly, by the balding, bearded Vladimir Fedorov, himself a "little person," barely more than a meter tall. As Nora, Natal'ia Sedykh is eerily excellent. She appears the very embodiment of chain-smoking, irritable depression, but is best in the little scenario where she performs Fred's fantasy of a lovely ballerina, fluttering swan-like in a lacy white tutu. The reading of this character, however, struck me as sentimentally distorted: she is granted far more compassion and warmth than the malevolent, spiritually dessicated original, who mentally dismisses the dwarf as a "nasty little worm." Shock, as played by Ernest Marchukov, seems on the surface to be a very mediocre magician, whose only masterful deception is his faked suicide. In fact, while the acrobatics, dancing and general tom-foolery by the circus extras are colorful and fun, Shock's magic tricks are disappointing. Otherwise, however, this Shock creates an otherworldly presence: he is ethereal, a "mirage," "immersed in astral fancies," drifting abstractedly about the stage. The miming and taped reading end abruptly when Nora comes to Drowse to inform Fred that she has had a son from him. The actress on stage delivers this line herself,

and Fred's ecstatic response to fatherhood brings his voice alive for the first time as well. It's a nice touch, and draws the audience closer to Fred personally, thus endowing his final moments, especially his frantic, fatal dash after Nora, with all the more pathos.

Hearing Nabokov's own words read well is a pleasure. And the dreamy, fairy-tale quality of the miming is almost entrancing. Best of all, as in "A Dashing Fellow," is the sexual climax, the consummation of Fred's and Nor's brief affair: it comprises an odd pas de deux, with the ballerina-swan lying on her back, arching, pushing her hips up and down sensually, her legs wrapped around Fred, who is standing erect--but upside down, on his head. It is, on the whole, a magical little show. One regrets, of course, the loss of so many Nabokovian details (there is, for example, no mention of Fred's little boy masquerade during his solitary walks in Drowse), and the paring of his full text. And I was sorry to find in this "reading" no clear sense that this is more than a strange, sad dwarf anecdote; that it is Nabokovian legerdemain, in which, like the author for whom he stands in, the conjuror shapes the world around him with his prestidigitations; that in this fable the conjuror, Shock, subtly and consciously--even to his own disadvantage--orchestrates affairs for his wife and small friend such that they both actually get the best that could be expected for them given their limiting circumstances and personal resources: for Fred, his day in the sun and liberation from a humiliating profession; for Nora, the child she so desires (and which the incorporeal Shock himself cannot give her). It's not that this production precludes such a reading, it's just that it fails to underscore it, rendering the figurfe of Shock an almost incidental sideshow, rather than Punch and Judy's puppeteer.

## ANNOTATIONS & QUERIES

by Gennady Barabtarlo

[Submissions should be forwarded to Gennady Barabtarlo at 451 GCB University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211, U.S.A., or by fax at (314) 445-3404, or by e-mail at [gragb@mizzoul.missouri.edu](mailto:gragb@mizzoul.missouri.edu) • Deadlines are April 1 and October 1 respectively for the Spring and Fall issues. • Most notes will be sent, anonymously, to at least one reader for review. • If accepted for publication, the piece may be subjected to slight technical corrections. Editorial interpolations are within brackets. • Authors who desire to read proof ought to state so at the time of submission. • Kindly refrain from footnotes; all citations and remarks should be put within the text, or if necessary, as endnotes. • References to Nabokov's English or Englished works should be made either to the first American (or British) edition or to the Vintage collected series. • All Russian quotations must be transliterated and translated.]

### LORD BYRON'S PACK

In the *Annotated Lolita* (1970), Alfred Appel, Jr., annotates the names of the Farlows' dogs as follows:

"Cavall" comes from *cavallo* (a horse), and "Melampus" from the seer in Greek mythology who understood the tongue of dogs and introduced the worship of Dionysus. . . . [Nabokov] thinks it was Lord Byron, who had many bizarrely named dogs. (369) [It's on p.373 in the 3rd ed., 1991. GB]

Melampus (meaning "black-foot" in Greek) is the name of one of Acteon's dogs. Ovid mentions it by name the first in *Metamorphoses*, Book iii, 206-225, when, after spying on Diana bathing with her nymphs,



Actaeon, metamorphosed into a stag by the goddess, is attacked by his own dogs. Ovid names thirty-six dogs.

Melampus is also mentioned by C. Julius Hyginus in his *Fabellae* (CLXXXI. *Diana*). In addition to those listed by Ovid, he names forty-seven dogs, which leaves us with a total of eighty-three nominated dogs.

The amusing coincidence is that Jean Farlow mentions Cavallo and Melampus after spying "artistically" on Humbert Humbert and Charlotte lake-bathing.

Finally, I would not be surprised if Lord Byron's "bizarrely named dogs" had names like Nape, Alce, Borax, Obrimus, Kanache, Ocypete, Vrania, and so forth.

--A. Bouazza, Arked, The Netherlands

[Mr Bouazza is a student of English at the University of Utrecht, working on a thesis devoted to the Arabic version of *Lolita* (Beirut, 1988). GB]

#### TWO NOTES ON THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF NABOKOV'S RUSSIAN NOVELS

Intricate and cunning intertextual games are usually considered to be a distinct trait of Nabokov's English novels. As for his earlier Russian works, the critics tend to read them in a more straightforward way and to limit their search for subtexts by the writer's relatively explicit allusions to the classical canon (e.g. Dostoevsky in *Despair* or Pushkin in *The Gift*). A closer look at Sirin's art, however, can sometimes discover a number of unmarked--and untrivial--intertextual parallels and hints concealed in the most unexpected places which seem to be free of any literary connotations. Two examples, I think, will suffice.

1.

After his reincarnation as "Smurov" (the name itself has very strong intertextual overtones since it had been used by Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* and, with a nod to the latter, by Mikhail Kuzmin in his erotic novella *The Wings* concerned with homosexual love), the protagonist and narrator of *The Eye* suffers a humiliating defeat when he tries to impress a girl with whom he is falling in love and tells a romantic tall story about his heroic escape from the Red soldiers in Yalta. An engineer Mukhin, Smurov's victorious rival, immediately discerns the lie because the protagonist has inadvertently chosen a nonexistent railway station in Yalta as the setting of his fictitious macho exploits. Mukhin's quiet remark "**K sozhaleniiu, <...> v Yalte vokzala net**" (Nabokov V. *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis, 1991, 26; cf. "Unfortunately <...> Yalta does not have a railroad station." *The Eye*, 50) pricks the balloon of Smurov's vanity and crushes his inflated self-image.

The embarrassing situation of Smurov and the very unmasking of his lie at the end of the episode have close parallels in a comic story "Poezdka v teatr" ("On the Way to the Theater," 1909) by Arkadii Averchenko, an extremely popular write often named "the King of Russian humorists." The protagonist of the story--a young weakling--is trying to impress a girl he is in love with by his valiant behaviour in the streetcar but instead finds himself bullied, insulted, and humiliated by a stranger in front of his beloved. Desperately trying to save face, he starts bragging of his heroic quarrel with another bully abroad a streetcar in Yalta, but a passenger, a retired officer, cuts him short at once with a devastating comment similar to Mukhin's: "**Zhal' tol'ko, chto v Yalte net tramvaia**" ("What a pity that Yalta does not have a streetcar line." A. Averchenko, *Britva v kisele. Izbrannye proizvedeniia*. Moskva: 1990, 49).

Since in the 1920-1930s a vast majority of Russian émigré readers still remembered and relished Averchenko's pre-revolutionary stories, the apparent echo of his oft-reprinted "Poezdka v teatr" in *The Eye* could hardly be just a coincidence or an insignificant literary "theft." Rather, it serves as an important clue, a signal indicating connections of *The Eye* with various *topoi* exploited by Russian humoristic literature of the 1900-1910s. The misfortunes of tutoring, the rage of the cuckolded husband with the comically meaningful name Kashmarin, the love affair with a maidservant, the hilarious séances, the funny mistakes of identification and perception, the satiric unmasking of artificial pretensions--all these incidents and themes that form the plot of *The Eye* have numerous analogues in short stories, poems, pastiches, sketches, and parodies of such humorists as Arkadii Averchenko, Nadezhda Teffi, Sasha Chernyi, Georgii Landau, Nabokov seems to have constructed the plot of *The Eye* directly out of these easily recognizable motifs, situations and stock characters paradigmatical for pre-revolutionary humoristic literature, but he subtly reworked and defamiliarized these clichés, adding new dimensions to his amusing but rather trite models. It is the echo of Averchenko's story that makes the reader aware of complex intertextual discourse in *The Eye* and, therefore, suggests, new, unexplored possibilities for rereading the text.

2.

The reader of *Zashchita Luzhina* (*The Defense*) would hardly forget a very powerful description of Luzhin's incessant, frantic movements (or, better, moves) in the final scene of the novel--the movements that come to a halt when Luzhin suddenly stops and begins to take things out of his pockets:

...sperva samopishushchuiu ruchku, potom smiatyi platok, eshche platok, akkuratno slozhennyi, vydannyi emu utrom; posle etogo on

vynul portsigar s troikoi na kryshke, podarok teshchi, zatem pustuiu krasnuiu korobochku iz-pod papiros, dve ot-del'nykh papirosy, slegka podshiblennykh; bumazhnik i zoloty chasy--podarok testia--byli vynuty osobenno berezhno. Krome vsego etogo, okazalas' eshche krupnaia persikovaia kostochka. Vse eti predmety on polozhil na grammofonnyi shkapchik, proveril, net li eshche chego-nibud'. (*Zashchite Luzhina*, Paris, 1967, pp. 263-64) [...first a fountain pen, then a crumpled handkerchief, then another handkerchief, neatly folded, which she had given him that morning; after this he took out a cigarette case with a troika on the lid (a present from his mother-in-law), then an empty, red cigarette pack and two separate cigarettes, slightly damaged; his wallet and a gold watch (a present from his father-in-law) were removed with particular care. Besides all this there turned up a large peach stone. All these objects were placed on the phonograph cabinet and he checked if there were anything he had forgotten. (*The Defense*, 251-52)]

It is curious that this highly charged catalogue of Luzhin's personal possessions, emblems of his severed ties with the personal and physical world, brings forth an association with a passage in Leo Tolstoy's experimental unfinished tale (*Net v mire vinovatykh* (*There Are No Guilty Ones in the World*), first published in 1911--a record of the protagonist's mechanical actions before going to bed:

...vylozhlil na pokrytyi sal'fetochnoi stolik zoloty chasy, serebrianyi portsigar, portfel', bol'shoi zamshevyi koshelek, shchetochku i grebenku.. [...on a small table covered with a napkin [he] placed a gold watch, a silver cigarette case, a wallet, a large suede purse, a little brush and a comb...] L. N. Tolstoy, *Sobrainie sochinenii v dvadtsati tomakh*, vol. 14. Moscow: 1964, 501)

In the morning the protagonist repeats the ritual in reverse, and the list of things he is putting into his pockets, besides a purse and a silver cigarette case, now includes two handkerchiefs (*ibid.*, 502), which makes it even closer to the catalogue in *The Defense*.

Yet I wouldn't dare to surmise an intertextual game on such precarious grounds (after all, things that men carry in their pockets are always more or less the same, and Nabokov could make use of cataloguing insignificant objects as a defamiliarizing device without any connection with Tolstoy), if it were not for another, quite striking correspondence: the name of Tolstoy's protagonist, an epitome of socially accepted but morally repugnant, spurious existence, is Aleksandr Ivanovich, exactly like Luzhin's name, revealed only in the most ambiguous final phrases of the novel, after his fatal jump out of the window into eternity:

The door was burst in. "Aleksandr Ivanovich, Aleksandr Ivanovich," roared several voices.

But there was no Aleksandr Ivanovich. (*The Defense*, 256)

Moreover, the namesakes have phonetically and semantically similar surnames: Luzhin and Volzhin. Both are derived from the names of Russian rivers (Luga and Volga, respectively) in the classical tradition of Onegin-Lensky-Pechorin, and at the same time play upon the Russian word *lozh'*, i.e. falsehood, deception, illusion, fiction (Tolstoy's Volzhin, in fact, can be read as a pun on a set phrase "pogriaznut' **vol lzhi**," "to be bogged down in lies"; cf. Nabokov's remark that Luzhin's name rhymes with "illusion," *Defense*, 7). If one takes into consideration several overt allusions to Tolstoy in the central parts of the novel (e.g. Luzhin's mother-in-law has "vague and distorted reminiscences from *War and Piece*" [104]; Luzhin's wife discovers that "he's never read Tolstoy" [166] and introduces him to *Anna Karenin* that he actually likes [167]; later she reads *War and Peace* aloud to him after dinner [190], then Luzhin's name and the catalogue of

his things make one suspect an authorial, deliberately "distorted" Tolstoyian reminiscence here, the last and the most important element of the series.

Nabokov's oblique allusion to *Net v mire vinovatykh* might be interpreted as an ironic inversion of its moralistic stance: whereas Tolstoy's Aleksandr Ivanovich is a moral monster who thoughtlessly enjoys all the comforts and luxuries of material well-being disregarding the poverty around him, his namesake in *Defense* is guilty of disregarding his talent and his destiny (the esthetical) for the sake of the family life (the personal). Most of the things Luzhin is taking out of his pockets actually do not belong to him. They have been give to "Aleksandr Ivanovich," a non-existent personal self of the artist "Luzhin"--the creator of immortal compositions, as substitutes for his genuine gift, and when he repudiates them and chooses physical death his artistic self will be reborn to the eternal life of its creations.

However, I think that echoes of Tolstoy's unfinished last story (cf. Luzhin's unfinished last game against Turati) in *Defense* hint at something more important--at Tolstoy's biography as a cultural archetype underlying Luzhin's life story. The writer's notorious crisis; his conclusion, in Nabokov's words, "that art was ungodly because it was founded on imagination, on deceit, on fancy-forgery" and his sudden decision to stop writing altogether taken "when he had just reached the uppermost peaks of creative perfection with *Anna Karenin*" (*Lectures on Russian Literature*, 140); his efforts to find haven in family life; his succumbing once in a while to "gigantic creative need of his" (*ibidem*); and his final flight from home to death--all these well known acts of Tolstoy's drama seem to shine through Luzhin's struggle against life in chess and against chess in life and thus help to encode it as a myth of a self-denying creator torn apart by two opposite forces: in Nabokov's terms again, the yearning for "creative solitude" and "the urge to associate."

--Alexander A. Dolinin, University of Wisconsin-Madison

#### CINCINNATUS AS SOLUS REX

Nabokov considered *Invitation to a Beheading* as one of the "absolutely final indictments of Russian and German totalitarianism" (*Strong Opinions*, 156) [the other being *Bend Sinister* G.B.]. Here, I would like to show that the novel also contains allusions to the French Revolution whose political terror Nabokov apparently viewed as preceding that of "a Communazist state" (*Conclusive Evidence*, 217).

Nabokov's attitude to the terror of the French Revolution, especially in light of the Red Terror in his native Russia at the time, is evidenced in his early poem "In What Paradise They First Murmured" ("V kakom raiu v pervye prozhurchali," 1923). In this poem, Nabokov imagines his lyrical "I" as the terror's prey: "And again in the stupefied Thermidor, / While in prison my soul was blooming with you, / And the jailer was marking my door with chalk" ("I snova v Termidore odurelom, / poka v tiur'me dusha toboi tsvela, / a dver' moiu tiuremshchik metil melom" (*Stikhi*, 78.) And the peculiar connection between the victim and his executioner, not unlike the one in *Invitation to a Beheading*, is the subject of Nabokov's play of the same year, *The Grand-dad* (*Dedushka*), set during the French Revolution and its aftermath.

In *Invitation to a Beheading*, we come across covert references to this period of French history in the last chapter of the novel. Thus, before being taken to the place of execution, Cincinnatus asks, as his last wish, for "a three-minute intermission" (209). Cincinnatus's last wish evokes the following similar event in the life of Louis XVI: when the commissioners came to take him to the scaffold, he requested three minutes to get ready. (See Saul K. Padover, *The Life and Death of Louis XVI*, 1963, 331.)

Nabokov refers to the last hours in the life of the French king already in his earlier story "An Affair of Honor" ("Podlets," ca. 1928). There, its protagonist, Anton Petrovich, who regards his prospective duel as the execution because of his absolute incompetence in the matter and his opponent's outstanding marksmanship, "suddenly stamped his foot, as Louis XVI stamped his when told it was time, Your Majesty, to go to the scaffold" (*Nabokov's Quartet*, 31). (The accounts of eyewitnesses, such as the royal confessor Edgeworth de Firmont, do not mention the king stamping his foot, but rather expressing his readiness to go in a firm tone. See l'Abbé Edgeworth de Firmont, "The Last Hours of Louis XVI" in Jean Baptiste Cant-Hanet, called Cléry, *The Royal Family in the Temple Prison*, 1909, 194.)

While linking Cincinnatus to the decapitated French king, Nabokov may be suggesting an affinity between his executioner, M'sieur Pierre, and Maximilien Robespierre (note the phonetic affinity!), the Jacobinic leader, a fervent proponent of bloody terror and executions.

Another, more intricate allusion to the French Revolution in the novel is made perhaps through the city deputy director's reminder that after the execution, "there will be given with sensational success the new comic opera *Socrates Must Decrease*" (220). This title evokes a well-known painting *Death of Socrates* (1787) by the French artist Jacques-Louis David. With Socrates's tragic death turned into a comic opera, Nabokov, aside from demonstrating the obvious disregard for human life in the world of the novel, also seems to poke fun at the theatricality bordering on the comic in David's painting. It is worth noting that in 1793, only several years after painting this dramatic canvas, David, a member of the Convention, cast his vote for the king's death.

At the time of writing *Invitation to a Beheading* (1934), Nabokov could have recalled this ominous incident by way of *A nous la liberté* (1931). In this film by René Clair, whose work was much to Nabokov's liking, the imprisoned Louis, a namesake of the king,

and a toymaker like Cincinnatus, is led to the place of execution by the guards wearing the eighteenth-century-like garments. (See Appel, *Nabokov's Dark Cinema*, 170-71.)

This historical episode evidently kept its fascination for Nabokov in the years to come. Long after writing *Invitation to a Beheading*, in the 1965 interview with Robert P. Hughes, Nabokov mentions among the "scenes one would like to have filmed" "The beheading of Louis the Sixteenth, the drums drowning his speech on the scaffold" (*Strong Opinions*, 60-61).

--Gavriel Shapiro, Cornell University

#### ABSTRACT CAST IN CONCRETE: A HISTORY OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN ADA

"Eric's grandfather's range was wide—from dodo to dada, from Low Gothic to Hoch Modern. In his parodies of paradise he even permitted himself, just a few times, to express the rectilinear chaos of Cubism (with "abstract" cast in "concrete") by imitating—in the sense described so well in Vulner's paperback *History of English Architecture* given me by good Dr. Lagosse—such ultra-utilitarian boxes of brick as the *maisons closes* of El Freud in Lubetkin, Austria, or the great-necessity houses of Dudok in Friesland."(350)

Kidson, Peter, Murray, Pete and Thompson. *A History of English Architecture*. rev. ed. Middlesex England: Penguin Books, 1967.

A Pelican Paperback (from the Latin *vulner*, to wound, *vuln* is used in Heraldry and applies to the pelican), this book outlines the history of English architecture from Anglo-Saxon times through 1965. In it, several of the themes Nabokov explores in *Ada* are footnoted and expanded.

"He began with rural England and coastal America, and was engaged in a Robert Adam-like composition (cruelly referred to by local wags as the Madam-I'm Adam House), not far from Newport, Rodos Island, in a somewhat senile style, with marble columns dredged from classical seas and still encrusted with Etruscan oyster shells--when he died from a stroke while helping to prop up a propylon..." (349)

Robert Adam was one of the dominant figures in 18th century architecture. His style, deriving from ancient Greece and featuring propylon and portico, was the British expression of the neo-Classic movement which dominated the architecture of the whole of Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, and was embodied in the design and decoration of several "Etruscan Rooms," very much in vogue during the 1770s.

"...they were called Etruscan because they were based on the colour schemes of early Greek vases, which were then thought to be the work of the Etruscan forerunners of Roman civilizations..."(243)

Greek and Roman history and culture and the evolution in art forms from painting to literature are dominant motifs in *Ada*. Architecture from the Doric temple to the...

"...ultra-utilitarian boxes of brick as the *maisons closes* of El Freud in Lubetkin, Austria, or the great-necessity houses of Dudok in Friesland,"

is an important part of the textual weave of *Ada*. In the above quotations it is easy to see that Nabokov is comparing modern architecture with Freudian analysis and finding both equally uninhabitable. Less apparent is the fact that an architect by the name of E.L. Freud, whose "close of houses" was built during

the late 1930s, actually existed and is described in *A History of English Architecture*:<sup>1</sup>

These last houses by E.L. Freud were in brick, which makes the boxy cubic mannerisms of the period especially obvious. The brick pitched baths ...are similar in character, but benefit from their larger scale. They show the influence of the brick buildings of Dudok in Holland..."(312)

The "abstract cast in concrete" is well described in this, and only this, edition of the book--Part III was specially written for the Pelican paperback to replace Chapter 7 of the original Harrap edition published in 1962. Nabokov was very specific with this reference.

"The new architecture was in general remarkably consistent. It was characterized by white concrete or rendered walls, flat roofs, thin white projecting balconies with concrete parapet panels, concrete staircase ramps, and strips of horizontal metal windows often carried round a corner. The shapes were always cubic, the façades, dependent on rectilinear geometry and the contrast of black and white, of solid and void. It was an abstract, formal architecture closely related to cubism." (310)

Nabokov noticed inspiration and poetry in all writing, and *A History of English Architecture* is more than a pedestrian account of architecture through the ages; it conveys the progression of British architectural styles through civilization with intelligence and wit. Excellent and artful photographs accompany the text. With delight we discover a source for many of the fabulous buildings constructed from the blueprints of Eric Veen's dream. But Nabokov means more than the intentional planting of an obscured clue to a compositional source. In *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden*, Priscilla Meyer comments on the way in which "Nabokov points us outward from his art to the real documented world" in order that we may reassemble the landmarks of his "own

literary-historical coordinates." (64) Pointed outward, yes, but also looped back into the fictional world imagined by Nabokov. In the above passage the contrasting colours black and white constitute key elements in the overall design and coloration of *Ada*. Upon finding oneself directed from the text of *Ada* to a source existing in the "real world", one cannot help but "read" meaning derived from the black and white, solid and void of the above passage back into one's open-ended interpretation of meaning for the same colors in *Ada*. This technique, seen here in miniature, but employed throughout *Ada*, establishes a unique "feedback system" between text and "reality", daubing the fantastic with the authority of existence and the mundane with the magic of art.

--Suellen Stringer-Hye, Texas A&M University, College Station

#### THREE ENDNOTES TO *PNIN*

I. - "**Mandala . . . Dr. Jung. . . (p. 92) . . . [applied to] any doodle with a more or less fourfold structure, such as a halved mangosteen, or a cross, or the wheel on which egos are broken like Morphos**": The Swiss depth psychologist *C(arl) G(ustav) Jung* (1875-1961) wrote time and time again about the mandala, mainly in *The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious* (Collected Works, volume 9.1, Olten 1976) and in *Psychology and Alchemy* (Collected Works, volume 12, Olten 1972). He defines it as the "ritual or magic circle, which is particularly used in Lamaism and tantric yoga as a yantra, an instrument of contemplation." More often than not, a fourfold structure is depicted in the circle of the mandala. The complete symbol is thus a kind of "squaring of the circle".

*The mangosteen* is the apple-sized fruit of the far-eastern tropical mango tree. *The butterflies*, found only in the tropical South American genus *Morpho Fabricus* are very large insects whose upper wing surface in many species displays a luminous and

unfading metallic blue. In Brazil, the wings are often made into decorative craft objects (plates, trays). Since in nature they fly above the tops of the tropical forests and are difficult to catch, and since catching them for commercial purposes is forbidden, they are bred (especially *Morpho aega* Hübner) on Morpho farms. The phrase "egos are broken like Morphos" probably refers to the handicraft dissection of these butterflies.

**II. "A score of small butterflies, all of one kind, were settled on a damp patch of sand, their wings erect and closed, showing their pale undersides with dark dots and tiny orange rimmed peacock spots along the hind wing margins" (p. 128):** Nabokov confirmed that this refers to a subspecies of the Orange Margined Blue, that is the Karner Blue, a Northeast American Lycaenide whose scientific name is *Lycaeides melissa samuelis* Nabokov 1943. Twenty-seven butterfly genera, species and subspecies bear Nabokov's name, but for him, the *samuelis* was probably the most important entomological discovery. While his description is based on the seventy-year-old specimen which he came across in the collections of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, where he worked from 1942 until 1948 as a lepidopterist, he succeeded in 1950, a few years before Pnin was written, in catching live specimens in Karner, north of Albany. Today Nabokov's Karner Blue is endangered, and that sandy, hilly ground on Karner road, overgrown with pines and cripple oaks, on which it still thrives, is a nature reserve. When Pnin says that N.'s entomology is "merely a pose," he is mistaken. This is one of many indications that he is not always right concerning the narrator. (See also Dieter E. Zimmer: *Nabokov's Lepidoptera*, Lausanne, 1993.)

**III. Lake Dunmore. . . . (p. 158):** Barabtarlo is not certain whether it refers to an Irish or American glass vessel and mentions a "Dunmore" near Scranton, Pennsylvania, which is unknown for its glass production. On the other hand, the color (aquamarine)

and especially the ornamentation point to early American glass-making. The lily pads, which are mentioned on page 153, are a typical decorative element of American glass-making during the first half of the 19th century. The finished blown vessel is placed during production on a thick socle of the same colored glass melt, from which lateral "stems" are drawn to half of their size. The tips are then flattened out into foliar shapes. The swirls are formed by twisting a still malleable, vertically waved glass vessel on its longitudinal axis, so that the waves on the relief become slanted. Indeed, one need not go to great lengths to establish that there were such glassworks in Vermont. In the first half of the last century, there were several short-lived glassworks there, all situated in the middle of the state near Lake Dunmore (now a holiday resort), in particular the Vermont Glass Factory (1812-1817) and the Lake Dunmore Glass Company in Salisbury. They produced mainly window glass, in addition to vessels for everyday use. The glass production in Vermont is documented in the Sheldon Art Museum, in the college town of Middlebury. Nabokov gave a guest lecture there in the summer of 1955, at the time when he was writing this chapter. Pnin's vessel is probably not what is called in Germany a "Bowl" (punchbowl), a specially named rounded vessel with a lid, made for the drink that gives it its name, not only because it seems that no such Vermont vessel existed but also because it would not have been in keeping with the rustic glass-making, popular at the time in this farming state: bottles, pitchers, jars, and bowls of all sizes. Rather, it is probably a large, hemispherical aquamarine glass bowl with swirls and a waterlily relief. In any case, there is no mention that Pnin's vessel actually comes from Vermont. Even an expert would have had a hard time proving this. It says only that it was finer than the glass pitcher from Lake Dunmore. As far as Victor is concerned, this comment implies simply this: It was not one of the very valuable, early American collector's items, for example one from South Jersey, which would have been far beyond Victor's financial

means. It was the product of a less famous, rural glassworks and probably a lucky find which had caught his artistic eye at some junk dealers. (See also Thomas H. Olmsbee, and Florence Cragin Allen, "Glassmaking at Lake Dunmore, Vermont", *American Collector*, August 1937, pp. 6-7; and September 1937, 1p. 6-7, 19; as well as: Phoebe Phillips (ed): *The Encyclopedia of Glass*. New York: Crown, 1981.)

--Dieter E. Zimmer, Hamburg. From Volume 9 of *Gesammelte Werke*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994. Translated from German by Miss Áine Francis, University of Missouri.

## ROWOHLT'S NABOKOV EDITION

By Dieter E. Zimmer

In 1989, the Rowohlt Verlag (a major German publishing house based in Reinbek, a suburb of Hamburg) began a new edition of Nabokov's works in German. It is intended to be a uniform set of 24 or 25 numbered volumes. Twelve have appeared so far. The rest will follow during the next decade.

The edition has earned much praise for its old-fashioned craftsmanship. The volumes are bound in grey cloth with the contours of a silver butterfly stamped into it (it is *Lycaeides melissa samuelis* NABOKOV, the Karner Blue). Their dustjackets are maroon-and-black with author and title in silver characters and nothing more. The typography is careful and ample; the publisher even took care to ensure that paper of the same quality and color will remain available throughout the long period of production.

The appendices—and in some measure the text itself—have greatly profited from the work of Nabokov scholars, most of them American. They all are given due credit. In some instances, however, I believe the Rowohlt edition has been able to add one or the other scholarly detail. Yet until recently it was practically unknown among Nabokov scholars, German obviously being a kind of Lethean or Fenugreek. There has been at least one case of an American commentator re-inventing the wheel: laboriously finding out anew what the Rowohlt edition had found out years ago.

As the person in charge of it, I for that reason gladly accepted Don Barton Johnson's invitation to diffuse a few words about the Rowohlt set via NABOKV-L. I explained the idea of it all and gave the general outline. This is what I said.

Before I can begin, I have to say a few words about Nabokov in Germany. Whether the Rowohlt



undertaking makes sense can only be judged in the context of the German situation.

VN's first translation (or one of the very first translations he himself made) were Heine poems for a Russian singer, and the first translations of Nabokov novels were into German. In 1928, *Mashenka* was translated as *Sie kommt —kommt sie?* (She comes -- will she come?). In 1930, *Korol, dama, valet* came out as *König, Dame, Bube*. In both cases, the publisher was the Ullstein-Verlag in Berlin, a media giant of the time which in one of its branches also published the émigré Russian language daily *Rul'*—which is how the connection will have come about. Before they appeared in book form, both novels were serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung*, another of Ullstein's enterprises and a liberal newspaper of much renown which the Nazis extinguished in 1934. The former novel appeared in the rather trashy series of the *Gelbe Bücher* (Yellow Books); none of them made a noticeable impression on German letters. However, the rather generous fee Ullstein advanced for the latter volume was highly welcome at the time and payed for VN's butterfly collecting trip to Southern France in the summer of 1930. Today both books are extremely rare and not to be had at any price.

Then there was a long pause, Germany choosing to absent itself from the civilized world until it was shelled to pieces.

Early in 1948, the United States Government acquired an "option on the German-Austrian translation and publication rights" of *Bend Sinister* (Selected Letters, p.80). It was meant to supplement some re-education program, and though VN did not believe Germans could be re-educated he gave his permission. The condition, however, was that he be given a chance to have a look at the translation. In August, 1948 the U.S. Government did submit a manuscript, and VN was absolutely horrified by what he saw. He refused to go on reading it, let alone to revise it. The shock even made him suggest that the U.S. Government ask Thomas Mann, one of the writers he strongly disliked, if he didn't know some

other German translator who would be up to the task. To be sure, nothing came of the plan. (That appalling manuscript with VN's notes in the margin, which I would very much like to see, appears to be lost.)

German readers thus did not get a chance to discover (or rediscover) Nabokov before everybody else did. Rowohlt (i.e., its then proprietor and director, Heinrich-Maria Ledig-Rowohlt, 1908-1992) was one of the international publishers who acquired the *Lolita* rights before (!) it became a bestseller in the United States. He remained a personal friend of the Nabokovs to the very end, spending the last years of his life not far away on the boards of Lake Geneva. All of Nabokov's books that have been translated into German have been published by Rowohlt, with the exception of the *Lectures* which Ledig let go to S. Fischer because he loved literature (the poetry in the original German *Lolita* was translated by him personally) but cared little for criticism. (Eventually they will be incorporated into the *Werkausgabe*.) Rowohlt has kept all of them available throughout all these decades, most of them in a hardcover as well as in a pocketbook edition. You still can buy the first and only printing of the clothbound 1960 *Das wahre Leben des Sebastian Knight*.

In spite of Rowohlt's continued activities there was a long lull. Germany was particularly hard hit by the spirit of cultural revolution that came out of the student rebellion of 1968. There was a widespread aversion to all books considered bourgeois. One of the movement's influential manifestoes pronounced all literature dead and allowed it to continue only if it propagated the future socialist state. Authors like Nabokov were considered *vieux jeu* at best—or representatives of a despicable outdated culture that everybody was called upon to combat. Recovery from that collective fit was slow.

It is probably because of that slump in interest that there is still hardly any Nabokov scholarship to speak of in Germany. The only books on Nabokov in German are Donald E. Morton's brief monograph and Zinaida Shakhovskoy's vengeful recollections. (But now

Rowohlt is going to have Brian Boyd's biography translated, though that will take several years.) To be sure, there are a few Ph. D. theses, and they have been published as books: *Erfundene Biographien* (1975) by Herbert Grabes (now at the University of Giessen), Jürgen Bodenstern's *The Excitement of Verbal Adventure* (1977), Renate Hof's *Das Spiel des unrelia- ble narrator: Aspekte unglau- benswürdigen Erzählens im Werk von Vladimir Nabokov* (1982), Maria-Regina Kecht's *Das Grot- eske im Prosa- werk von Vladimir Nabokov* (1983), Christopher Hüllen's *Der Tod im Werk Vladimir Nabokovs: Terra Incognita* (1990). Once in a while a course on some aspect of Nabokov's oeuvre is held at some English or Slavic Department, for instance by Annelore Engel-Braunschmidt in Hamburg (who also translated *The Gift* for the Rowohlt edition and contributed most of the commentary) -- but there is not a single professor in the three German speaking countries who has come forth with a scholarly work on Nabokov and who would come to your mind as a Nabokov authority. Not even Nabokov's fifteen years in Berlin which could still be researched have prompted any interest in academe. As a matter of fact, there barely has been any research on Russian émigrés in Berlin, though around 1923 their colony numbered more than 300,000 and culturally Berlin at that time probably was the liveliest of "Russian" cities. The only book on that era is a copious and colorful 600 page reader compiled by Fritz Mierau (*Russen in Berlin 1918-1933*, Leipzig 1987). Since it appeared in Eastern Germany, where Nabokov remained taboo to the very end, he is conspicuously absent from it, except for nine lines in Mierau's preface. Though they merely state the innocent fact that Nabokov wrote his first novels in Berlin, even mentioning his name at the time probably demanded some courage. Currently preparations are underway for a major exhibit entitled *Moscow-Berlin 1900-1950*, a joint venture by the Berlinische Galerie and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. It is to be shown at the Martin-Gropius-Building in Berlin from September

1995 to January 1996 and will include some aspects of VN's long stay in Berlin.

There is only one German library that has made any attempt at systematically collecting books by and about Nabokov: the University Library in Constance where it happened at the instigation of Renate Lachmann, Professor of Slavic Literatures, who is currently realizing a research project on fantasy literature that will include Nabokov. Quite a bit has accumulated at the wonderfully plentiful Kennedy Institute in Berlin, but their holdings are strictly limited to the American Nabokov, to the point that they have bought only Brian Boyd's second volume, and in 1991 they seem to have lost interest altogether (or perhaps they ran out of funds). If you do find a book or journal at some other library it usually happened to get there by accident.

This then was the situation we were faced with in 1988. There was a minor but persistent interest in Nabokov on the part of the reading public. Book reviewers—usually the same ones—had for the most part acknowledged occasional new titles briefly and politely and without much enthusiasm. Most of Nabokov's books had been translated at one point or the other, and they were still in print. Some had not, for no special reason except for the general lull—translators not getting their manuscripts ready and nobody urging them, copyright negotiations not being concluded and the like. Fifteen different translators had been at work in this case, and some of the old translations obviously were in a sorry state. We—that is Rowohlt and I—decided the time had come for a Nabokov revival. I drew up several plans for a *Werkausgabe*, very unrealistically hoping to be able to complete everything by 1995. One of them was adopted by Rowohlt and submitted to Véra Nabokov and Nikki Smith who approved of the project. The first three volumes came out in the fall of 1989: (a) *Lolita* (volume 8) in a revised translation and with 120 pages of commentary mostly in the form of notes, (b) two volumes (no. 13 and 14) of all of Nabokov's stories in chronological order. Included were *The Enchanter* and

the early ones for which this was a world premiere in book form. These two volumes had no commentary but a complete bibliography at the end. The most recent title to be published was a new translation of *Pnin* (vol.9) with an appendix of 60 pages (August 1994).

These were and are our aims:

(1) We wanted to fill the gaps that had remained for one reason or the other. So far we have produced German versions of all the untranslated short stories (some 43 out of 66), *Gogol*, *Strong Opinions* and *Dar/The Gift*. Next year we still hope to get the Nabokov-Wilson letters ready, in Simon Karlinsky's new updated and expanded edition; if we succeed, it will be another world premiere and the edition everybody will have to refer to. A volume with all plays plus the *Lolita* screenplay (none of which have been translated so far) is in preparation and may be out by 1996. As for the poetry, we still are undecided, for obvious reasons.

(2) We wanted to offer the German speaking reader a reliable text. That meant that some of the old translations had to be thoroughly reworked (notably *Lolita* and *The Defense*) and two had to be discarded altogether, as being beyond repair (*King, Queen, Knave* and *Pnin*). One of the unexpected problems that has taken much of my time and slowed the whole procedure considerably was that some of the new translations commissioned by Rowohlt turned out to be failures and needed at least as much repair as the worst of the old ones. (I have ceased to be diplomatic about this point, spending my evenings and weekends and holidays struggling with howlers of all varieties. On the other hand I know only too well that translating is a very approximative business and that absolutely nobody is exempt from committing all kinds of blunders.)

(3) Though the edition makes no pretension at being "wissenschaftlich" but instead is aiming to please the general reader we wanted to supply him with additional material that might facilitate his understanding, and that meant drawing on the international Nabokov research. All the works have

afterwords by the editor detailing their genesis while refraining from interpretation. Where necessary they have notes. These sometimes do little more than list the discrepancies between the Russian original and the English version (or vice versa) which we had compared word by word for our purposes. In other cases --no volume is exactly like the others—they give copious but matter-of-fact explications. The volume with the most annotations so far has been *The Gift*, with an apparatus of about 200 pages. Some reviewers have found the commentary too ample. It is a problem that I am afraid cannot be avoided. The reader will find superfluous whatever he knows already or what he does not care to know, but every reader knows and wants to know something else. A work of reference cannot be custom-tailored for a particular user's needs. Still the appendices are not obtrusive in any way. They are hidden at the back of the volumes, with no cross-references in the text proper, and nobody is forced to heed them.

Publishing ventures of this scope and kind have become very rare in this country. Rowohlt's Nabokov set has in general received a warm welcome by reviewers and readers. A new generation of critics has emerged, with very perceptive and intelligent readers among them (*pars pro toto* I mention Gustav Seibt's essay on *Die Gabe* in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 15, 1993). There turned out to be highly knowledgeable Nabokov readers of long standing who keep sending us queries, complaints, and suggestions. The initial printing is four to six thousand copies. Some of the volumes already had to be reprinted. The paperback editions are gradually employing the new text, though mostly without the appendices. So I think it is not venting personal vanity but stating an objective fact if I say that during the five years since it began the Rowohlt edition has sort of accomplished the Nabokov revival in the German speaking countries which we had been hoping for at the outset.

What follows is the plan of the edition, with the publication dates attached.

- 1 *Maschenka, König Dame Bube* (1991)
- 2 *Lushins Verteidigung, Der Späher, Die Mutprobe* (1992)
- 3 *Gelächter im Dunkel, Verzweiflung*
- 4 *Einladung zur Enthauptung* (1990)
- 5 *Die Gabe* (1993)
- 6 *Das wahre Leben des Sebastian Knight*
- 7 *Das Bastardzeichen* (1990)
- 8 *Lolita* (1989)
- 9 *Pnin* (1994)
- 10 *Fahles Feuer*
- 11 *Ada*
- 12 *Durchsichtige Dinge, Sieh doch die Harlekine!*
- 13 *Erzählungen 1921—1934* (1989)
- 14 *Erzählungen 1935—1951* (1989)
- 15 *Dramatische Texte, Lolita-Drehbuch*
- 16 *Nikolaj Gogol* (1990)
- 17 *Vorlesungen über russische Literatur*
- 18 *Vorlesungen über europäische Literatur*
- 19 *Vorlesungen über Don Quijote*
- 20 *Deutliche Worte* (1993)
- 21 (Uncollected interviews and essays)?
- 22 *Erinnerung, sprich* (1991)
- 23 *Lieber Bunny, lieber Volodya* (1995?)
- 24 (Letters)?
- [25 (Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*)?]

At this point it may be appropriate to add a few words about myself. I was born in Berlin in 1934 where I lived during the pre-war, war and post-war period. One of the first breaks I got was when in 1950 I received an AFS scholarship to spend a year at a high school in the United States, with a wonderful family in Evanston, Illinois. Back in Berlin, I eventually began to study German and English literature at the Free University, then got a fellowship to do graduate work at Northwestern where I had the great pleasure to study with Dick Ellmann and to become friends with him. After an interlude as a language tutor in France and Geneva, I joined the weekly *Die Zeit* in 1959 and have been a writer on its staff ever since, in the last fifteen

years specializing in science journalism and writing a handful of books on the side, one of them a slashing farewell to psychoanalysis which Véra Nabokov read and liked and found as funny as—among other things—it was meant to be.

And this is how my Nabokov connection came about. As a student and tutor in Geneva, one bright day I happened to peruse the *Time* magazine review of *Lolita* and immediately decided that this was an author I would care to read. I even sat down and wrote a letter to Rowohlt—where I didn't know a person—asking whether they would consider buying the German language rights. They answered they had already bought them. One of my first journalistic assignments was to review the German *Lolita* in 1959. VN saw that juvenile article and seems to have liked it for some reason (perhaps he had been expecting only the very worst from Germany), for he suggested to Heinz Ledig-Rowohlt that he try the young fellow out as a translator. So I was commissioned by Rowohlt to translate *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, and though I had tremendous qualms at the time and often wanted to give up and destroy the whole thing, I still like that old translation, even if I am glad that now I will have a chance to submit it to one of my pitiless revisions. Since then I have been one of Nabokov's ardent promoters in Germany, if that's the word; there were years when I thought I was more or less the only one. I translated about ten of his books for Rowohlt, most of which were thoroughly checked by Véra Nabokov from whom I learned what this author expected from his translators (I have also translated texts by Bierce, Borges, Joyce, Nathanael West and others). In 1962 I compiled the first VN bibliography, with stern and constructive criticism from Véra Nabokov as well. Actually it was only meant as a list Rowohlt could consult to get the dates and the titles in their imprints right, and it was Heinz Ledig-Rowohlt who, seeing how much work had gone into it, decided to have it printed and distributed free of charge as a Christmas gift to his friends. In some American publication I read that Nabokovians unfortunately

had to "put up with the Zimmer bibliography", presumably till the happy day when Andrew Field's came along, and that was a remark I resented. Now that Nabokov has become a classic and communication with experts and institutions all over the world has become easy it is hard to imagine the difficulties that a guy in Germany, young and penniless, had to cope with at that time. German libraries, disrupted and severely damaged during the war, were recovering only slowly. Interlibrary loan was still in its infancy and handicapped by the fact that the war damages had been to the catalogues as well. There were no xerox machines. The few people I approached at American universities seemed to consider me plain crazy, wasting my time on an author of pornography. The stout lady in charge of the library at the Slavic Department in Hamburg, where they miraculously had a complete set of *Sovremennye zapiski*, refused to climb up to the shelf where it had been reposing for decades just to please the whim of an intruder who of course was not allowed to go near their shelves himself, and the director of the institute soon kicked me out for good because he suspected I wanted to defile their library by what he strangely considered my "commercial" purposes. I knew very well that the thing was incomplete and hoped that one day somebody would come along to do the job professionally, as Michael Juliar has, though in 1962 it was by no means clear that this would ever happen. But considering the circumstances I had amassed quite a collection of data for the first time, most of them correct.

In 1987, Michael Naumann, since 1986 Rowohlt's new director who was a former colleague at *Die Zeit* and a personal friend of mine, had the idea of a high quality Nabokov *Werkausgabe* and persuaded the people in charge of the company's funds to finance it even though they could not expect it to become a commercial success. (As a matter of fact it has not been doing so badly.) He approached me to ask whether I would do it, and I accepted—though I knew it would be a load of work that for many years would require every

minute I could spare from my job at *Die Zeit* and would prevent me from ever writing a book of my own again. My biggest personal problem as a Nabokov editor is that I have no Russian, though I have become quite apt at finding any particular sentence in the Russian versions; for that reason I have to enlist expert help and advice all the time, and Rowohlt is supporting me in this.

Editing the *Gesammelte Werke* now is a kind of hobby which will keep me busy to the very end. The demanding four last novels I will not be able to tackle before my retirement in 1999. I expect there will be a fax machine at my disposal in hell (or in heaven, where a recent reviewer graciously placed me) so I can keep on sending instructions on which commas ought and which ought not to be italicized to Rowohlt's production department. Revising doubtful translations will be an appropriate occupation in that place.

To end on a cheerful note, I want to express my deepfelt gratitude to various personal computers without which the job would have taken at least twice as long. They never complained!