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NEWS

by Stephen Jan Parker

Nabokov Society News

The Vladimir Nabokov Society recorded its largest membership in the year 2000 — 260 individuals and 94 libraries — as a result of the worldwide focus on Nabokov during the centennial celebrations. But as this issue goes to press, one-third of last year's individual members have thus far failed to renew in 2001. On the positive side, despite cutbacks in serial acquisitions at libraries in the USA and abroad, all of our institutional subscribers have renewed.

The potential loss of $1,500 in revenues from non-renewals by individuals is a serious matter. The Nabokov Society's sole source of income is memberships/subscriptions, and all monies received are used exclusively for the publication of *The Nabokovian.* In 2000, Society income was $6,592, with expenses of $6,207 (printing, $5,312; postage $681; miscellaneous [supplies, phone], $214). The Society pays no salaries, honoraria, travel or entertainment expenses. It is hoped that new memberships in 2001, along with tardy renewals, will fill the gap.

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Brian Boyd has been awarded the Einhard Prize for Biography for 2001 for his two-volume biography of Nabokov. The only international prize in biography, it is awarded every second year to a biography in print in Germany. The prize is named in honor of Einhard, a courtier in the court of Charlemagne, who when he retired to the town that would become Seligenstadt, after Charlemagne's death, wrote the first biography of the

emperor, which is generally regarded as Europe's finest biography in the thousand years following Suetonius. The selection panel consisted of Dr. Gustav Seibt, a writer in Berlin, Professor Roberto Zapperi, of Rome, and Jean Favier, of the Sorbonne. Boyd and his wife were flown to Seligenstadt for the award ceremony on March 17. The lauditio, by Dr. Joachim Kalka, will be published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and Boyd's acceptance speech in *Literaturen.*

*****

On August 2-12, the Nabokov Museum in St. Petersburg will hold its second International Summer School for Nabokov students. The purpose of the School is to provide students from around the world the opportunity to study various aspects of Nabokov's art with internationally known Nabokov scholars and to participate in guided tours to Nabokov-related sites in and around St. Petersburg. English is the main language of the program. This summer the seminars will be conducted by the eminent scholars D. Barton Johnson and Alexander Dolinin. The general theme of Professor Johnson's seminar will be "How to Read Nabokov." Professor Dolinin's seminar will focus on close reading of Nabokov's Russian novels (in English translation). For further information (costs, housing, etc.) contact Ms. Tatiana Ponomaryova by email [vnabokov@mail.wplus.net]; tel/fax [7(812)315-47-12]; or mail [Nabokov Museum, 47 Bolshaya Morskaya St., St. Petersburg, 190000, Russia].

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Odd and Ends

— *Dear Bunny, Dear Volodya: The Nabokov-Wilson Letters, 1940-1971*, edited and annotated by Simon Karlinsky and released this past April (University of California Press), is a substantially revised and expanded edition

which includes 59 letters discovered after the original publication in 1979. It reflects important new scholarship on Nabokov and Wilson and includes a superb introductory essay by Professor Karlinsky.

— The St. Petersburg publisher, Symposium, has now completed the five volume set of Nabokov's Russian writings. It is the most complete Russian language edition, with extensive annotations and introductory essays by Alexander Dolinin. Symposium also has available a five volume set of Nabokov's English works translated into Russian, also with annotations and introductory essays. For more information contact Mr. James Brown, 23346 Maple Street, Santa Clarita, CA 91321; or email [symposium@online.ru]; or fax 7 (812) 314 4613.

— Recent Books

Stephen Blackwell. *Zina's Paradox: The Figured Reader in Nabokov's* Gift. Middlebury Studies in Russian Language and Literature, Vol. 23: Peter Lang.

Steven Kellman and Irving Malin, eds. *Torpid Smoke: The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov.* Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi.

Thomas Lehr. *Nabokovs Katze.* Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag

G. G. Martynov. V. *V. Nabokov: Bibliographicheskii ukazatel'.* St. Petersburg: Folio-Press.

Maxim Shrayer. *Nabokov: Temy i variatsii.* St. Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt.

— *Nabokov's Butterfly's*, edited and annotated by Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle, has been very well re-

ceived. Its editors do wish to warn readers that the book's index is considerably less complete than they would have liked. The index was prepared by a professional indexer secured by Beacon Press, who proved to be not up to the task. While readers should certainly use the index, they should not presume that if something is unlisted there it is absent from the book.

*****

Readers should note the new membership/subscription rates that are given on the inside cover of this issue. The changes reflect the recent increases in U.S. postal rates, particularly as regards mailings abroad, both surface and airmail. Please also note the updated listing of the availability of back issues.

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As always, we are indebted to Ms. Paula Courtney for her assistance in the production of this publication.

NABOKOV'S TEXTS

by Brian Boyd

It has become apparent in Nabokv-L discussions that some good readers of Nabokov are uncertain about which versions of his works offer the best available English-language texts. Might I therefore make a few observations and suggestions?

In summary: where available, the Library of America texts are the best to date. Where they are not available, the Vintage editions are also carefully corrected, and retain the pages of the first edition (or the first translation, first American version, or first revision), and are hence the best to cite from. Where neither is available, the first editions are the least likely to suffer from accumulated errors of transmission, and therefore are best for citation.

Existing Texts

The Library of America editions of the English-language fiction, *Speak, Memory* and the *Lolita* screenplay are the most reliable textually. They have been prepared after extensive collation with other substantive editions, and list in the textual notes both Nabokov's corrections and any introduced in the Library of America texts. Nabokov's own changes were usually made in pencil (sometimes in ball pen) in his own designated "author's copy," and often transferred by him to other copies, and were sometimes incorporated in subsequent printings—although since he would not usually correct reprints, more errors could be introduced there along with his corrections.

Because the Library of America has a distinctive house style and typeface, and offers a number of works together in each volume, the texts are always reset, and

although meticulously proofread, not guaranteed to be free of new errors.

The Vintage editions, on the other hand, have almost all been reproduced photographically from the first (English-language) editions, but have incorporated corrections noted or recorded over the years by Vladimir, Véra and Dmitri Nabokov, Elena Sikorski and myself (and by others who may have passed corrections on to the Nabokovs). The Vintage editions are therefore the most accurate for the English translations of the Russian fiction, and *Strong Opinions*, and even for the English-language novels and autobiography—although these are also available in the Library of America versions—are the most practicable to use for citations, since the page numbers correspond to the editions that have rightly been most often used in the past for citing English-language texts: the first editions, for most English-language novels, the first American edition, in the case of *Lolita*, the first English-language translations, for the Russian novels, the first revision of *Speak, Memory*.

Unfortunately the pagination has sometimes been altered in the Vintage editions, as in *The Gift* and *Lolita* (both annotated and unannotated), although in such cases the pages, though not the page numbers, remain the same. The text of the first English-language edition of *The Gift*, for instance, begins (with April 1) at p. 15, and the Vintage edition at p. 3, and there is a constant difference throughout of 12 pages; the first American edition of *Lolita* begins (with John Ray, Jr.) at p. 5, and the Vintage at p. 3, with a constant difference of 2 throughout. In the case of *Lolita*, citations should probably be to both first American (the same as first Annotated) *and* Vintage editions, or should at least in a note explain how to compute one from the other. In *The Gift*, since most serious scholars will want to cite from both Russian and English editions, it would probably suffice to cite the Vintage edition and point out that the first English edition page numbers will be 12 pages less.

In the case of *Bend Sinister*, the Vintage edition has been photographed from the McGraw-Hill edition of 1974, rather than from the first edition (Holt, 1947) or the first with Nabokov's introduction (Time, 1964), but since these editions are both now relatively rare, the Vintage/McGraw-Hill pagination again seems best.

In the special case of *Speak, Memory*, those wishing to quote from "Chapter 16" will need to cite the 1999 Knopf/Everyman edition, while in the case of the Nabokov-Wilson correspondence all future citations should be to Simon Karlinsky's revised 2001 edition (University of California Press), *Dear Bunny/Dear Volodya*.

Ideal Texts

Unlike late Joyce, most English-language Nabokov texts contain very few errors for work of such complexity, and certainly very few substantive errors.

However, none of the existing editions is perfect, sometimes as a consequence of Nabokov's own failure to regularize italicization, punctuation, numeration, spelling or even prepositional usage.

No edition of any of Nabokov's works has yet been prepared collating the published texts against manuscripts, typescripts, proofs and serial publications, which would be needed to ensure editions as close to definitive as possible—which in the case of Nabokov, unlike Shakespeare or Joyce, should be very close indeed.

A bibliography that lists the manuscripts and other pre-publication versions, and the serial and book versions, and compares them textually, would be a necessary precursor to any such definitive edition. It will be difficult enough to compile such a bibliography for English-language texts, and very challenging indeed for Russian (although in these cases most versions will have no authorial input and only rarely even editorial authority).

Before a definitive or at least variorum Nabokov is prepared (bi- or tri-lingual where necessary), or before even a bibliography on the scale needed to lay the

foundation for such an edition, there are other priorities:
1) the publication of the remaining unpublished and uncollected Nabokov texts:

a) untranslated Russian texts, especially *Tragediya Gospodina Morna* and the untranslated poems in *Stikhi* 1979, both of which Dmitri Nabokov is working on;

b) texts VN prepared or acquiesced in for publication: uncollected reviews, talks and interviews, which I hope to edit next year;

c) texts for public delivery: unpublished lectures, mostly on Russian poetry;

d) texts written for a private audience: letters, several times the bulk of the letters published to date;

e) working notes and the like;

2) annotations to existing literary texts. The *Annotated Lolita* began the process, but in English, other works are annotated only in Gennady Barabtarlo's annotations to *Pnin*, in the restricted format of my annotations to the Library of America editions or in the perhaps equally problematic unrestricted format of my annotations to *Ada* in the *Nabokovian*. Fuller but manageable notes are available in the German collected works, published in over twenty volumes by Rowohlt under the general editorship of Dieter E. Zimmer, in Russia's ten-volume Symposium edition, whose annotations are mostly under the general editorship of Alexander Dolinin, and in the Pléiade edition (one volume so far available, all the novels through *Invitation to a Beheading*), under the general editorship of Maurice Couturier.

Interim Texts

But since a textually definitive edition still seems a long way off, I suggest that in the meantime readers should send in to the *Nabokovian* proposed corrections to at least Nabokov's major works, first for Nabokov's English-language texts, and then perhaps for Russian. As I have worked particularly on *Pale Fire* since editing the Library of America texts, and as it's not a bad novel, I will kick off with that. Here is a list of emendations I would

make to the Library of America text (which lists both VN's emendations on pp. 871-72 and its own on p. 872), keyed to page and line number (or page and poem line number) of the first and Vintage editions. Some have been noted by other readers, including Tony Fazio and Charles Nicol. Asterisks mark possible deliberate "errors." Readers who wish to emend their texts will therefore want to combine those of the Library of America changes and the following, where they think them justified:

21.12: salad,] salad
42, poem 270: blest] blest,
*46, poem 370: *chtonic*] *chthonic*
46, poem 381: tryptich] triptych
58.poem 667: caterpillar] caterpillar,
*105.26: loosing] losing
187.03: confusely] confusedly
*194.06: Litt] Lit
204.07: 440] 445
231.2: 664] 662
237.23: boys] boys,
244.17: 747] 741
275.08: $11,000,000] "$11,000,000
301.06: principles] principals
308.13: S] *S* <italics>
308.15: S] *S* <italics>
314.07: *K* <italics>] K.
315.09: S] *S* <italics>

As can be seen, these proposed emendations are very slight, the kind of microscopic bump that will pass unnoticed, or be automatically smoothed over, and will almost never effect sense ("loosing" versus "losing" is the only one which might make a minuscule dent in the local sense).

Nevertheless, since the aim is a perfect text, some proposed emendations need justification. In relation to the last four emendations, VN has been inconsistent throughout the Index, or has at best adopted two or three

principles, but in fluctuating fashion. "K." is thus (without italics) through most entries (s.v, for example, Conmal, Mandevil, Odon, Oleg) but is "*K*" (italicized), as Gradus is "*G*" and Shade "*S*" (both italicized) in the long entries on Gradus, Kinbote and Shade. But there are further exceptions ("K." becomes "*K*" italicized consistently after all the "*K*" italicized in the Shade note).

Despite the index entry "*K* <italics>, see Charles II and Kinbote," the romanized "K." / italicized "*K*" distinction might be explicable as reflecting a distinction between "K[ing Charles II]" and "Kinbote." Since everywhere except s.v. "Thurgus the Third" Charles II seems to be referred to in abbreviation as "K.", I propose emending the "Thurgus" reference (314.07) to "K." It may be, however, that there is no consistent distinction: certainly it would be a mistake to emend, s.v. "Shade," "*K*'s <italics> spectacular arrival in the USA, *691*" to "K.'s": the seamless flow of "K" as Kinbote and as King needs to be retained.

I suggest that in the next issue of the *Nabokovian*, readers add emendations to *Pale Fire* that I have missed, and also send in proposed emendations to the Library of America text of *Lolita*, but using the Vintage pagination. Since in the course of preparing the *Annotated Lolita* Alfred Appel, Jr., indicated a fair number of emendations to Nabokov, who accepted them, there should not be too many left.

NOTES AND BRIEF COMMENTARIES

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 (573) 884-8456, or by e-mail at **gragb@showme.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. • 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.]

SOME NOTES ON THE VARIATIONS IN *PALE FIRE*, PART II

8. I like my name: Shade, Ombre, almost "man"
In Spanish... (p. 174)

My first reaction was that the bi-lingual pun, though clever, is not quite perfect. "Hombre" is man in Spanish; thus, removing the "h" leaves "ombre", almost man. But the pun is a very near miss because "ombre" is not itself a common noun meaning "shade." "Sombra" is shade, as is the more latinate and less common "umbra." It turns out that "Ombre", however, was a fashionable card game, of Spanish origin, in Queen Anne's day, and recourse to Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* reveals the significance of Shade's variant:

Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And, tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after death survive. (I, 51-56)

[cf. VN's commentary to EO, 2-537, and also the epigraph to *Invitation to a Beheading*, as well as the corresponding place in *The Gift*'s last chapter. GB]

Not only is Shade linked to the Ombre of Pope's poem, but compare the context of a woman whose consciousness transcends death and the "alive/survive" rhyme with lines 977-978 of "Pale Fire": "I'm reasonably sure that we survive/And that my darling somewhere is alive." The maddening thing about *Pale Fire*, once we begin to discover its intricate patterning, is trying to resolve who was responsible for which patterns and to what degree the responsible parties were authors in the know or unknowing agents. Shade, as a Pope scholar, obviously knew *The Rape of the Lock*; indeed, he quite clearly incorporated a portion of its first Canto into "Pale Fire" (see Boyd, Ch. 12). Therefore, the tempting suggestion that the Ombre variant was the unconscious result of prompting by Hazel's ghost "o'erlooking" Shade's index cards may be opposed by Occam's injunction against the multiplication of entities. It is the same constraint noted in the discussion of variant #3 above.

The argument for Hazel's influence on both Kinbote's fantasy and Shade's poem is buttressed, however, by a second verbal coincidence occurring along with a mention of Ombre:

O had I rather unadorned remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea
(Ibid, II, 153-156)

In this lament by the tress-ravished Belinda, the phrase "distant northern land" fairly leaps off the page. Not only is it a phrase used by Kinbote to close his Note to Line 62, these are the final words of his last, despairing, nostalgic, index entry, "Zembla." It is becoming increasingly difficult to dismiss the accumulating signs of influence of the late Shades, John included, on Kinbote's fantasy and subsequent commentary.

9. In woods Virginia Whites occurred in May
(p. 184)

See Boyd, Ch. 9, for his implication of Hazel.

10. ....the Head
Of our Department deemed... (p. 194)

This variant appears in the Note to Lines 376-377 and serves to contrast Shade's circumspection with Kinbote's vindictiveness. By settling instead on the less specific "...was said/In English Lit to be...", Shade has avoided singling out for embarrassment the former Head of the Department. Kinbote, on the other hand, finds the discarded variant "more tuneful" because he delights in imagining it to indicate the current Department Head, Paul Hurley, whom he despises.

11. 413 A nymphet pirouetted (p. 202)

"Nymphet" is obviously associated, via *Lolita*, with Nabokov. Boyd (Ch. 12 & 14) traces this variant and the final draft ("a nymph came pirouetting") to *The Rape of the Lock* and to Nabokov's Wood Nymph, a butterfly discovered by V.N. In fact, the Nabokov connection is deeper yet; his presence itself as integral to the structure of the novel is shown more subtly in the next variant, which follows immediately in the text.

12. 417 I fled upstairs at the first quawk of jazz

And read a galley proof: "Such verses as
'See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
The sot a hero, lunatic a king'
Smack of their heartless age." Then came your
call. (p. 202-203)

Nabokov gave the following rhyme as an aid to the pronunciation of his name:

The querulous gawk of
A heron at night
Prompts Nabokov
To write (SO, p. 302)

The similarity of the variant's "the ...quawk of" to the rhyme's "The ...gawk of" prompts the reader to spot the author's godlike presence in his very creation, while Shade cannot possibly detect it, even as his variants are influenced by, and serve to convey that selfsame presence. A third bit of substantiation occurs in the Note to Line 681: Lolita. This note is indexed under K as "his sense of humor", presumably for his crack about the feminine names of hurricanes: "The feminine gender is suggested not so much by the sex of furies and harridans..."(p. 243) Every reader will have associated Hurricane Lolita with Nabokov, but it would be simplistic to assume this association to be the sole purpose of the note and the index entry. After all, calling attention to what already stands out in the poem —i.e., the name, Lolita— would demonstrate an uncharacteristic lack of subtlety on Nabokov's part, and devoting a separate note in the Commentary to that end would be an unacceptable compromise of the novel's aesthetic. Rather, the occurrence of "pale" and "fire" in Kinbote's explanation ("Thus any machine is a she to its fond user, and any fire (even a 'pale' one!) is she to the fireman...") is consistent with Nabokov's pervasiveness as the controlling intelligence in his universe, unseen by those who are searching for him. With this in mind, it is now possible to see the secondary significance of "his sense of humor"; it refers to Nabokov in a way that recognizes not just the obvious fact of his authorship of Lolita, but his organic participa-

tion in *Pale Fire.*

Variant #12, like Variant #7, is indexed as "possible allusion to K." Pope's technique and Shade's judgment are here once again discussed: "One knows not what to wonder at more: Pope's not finding a monosyllable to replace 'hero' (for example, 'man') so as to accommodate the definite article before the next word, or Shade's replacing an admirable passage by the much flabbier final text."(p. 203) Again Kinbote's desire to imagine himself a part of Shade's poem is so great that he allows an implication of his lunacy, just as he attributes again, in the Index, Shade's rejection of the variant to "his prudence, or considerateness."

Shade's galley proof criticizes lines from "An Essay on Man", Epistle II, promoting the vapid position that each man is content with his assigned lot. (Samuel Johnson said of Pope's poem, "Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised.") Here is the conclusion of the passage: "See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,/The sot a hero, lunatic a king, The starving chymist in his golden views/Supremely bless'd, the poet in his Muse."(lines 267-270) Not only do we see here the source of the title of Shade's book on Pope [and, perhaps, also a reference, by proxy, to *King Lear,* Rex delirus and solus, with various possible implications for the plot of *Pale Fire*? GB], but the prescient applicability of the final verse as revealed in a later exchange between Kinbote and Shade upon the poem's completion. "'Well,' I said, 'has the muse been kind to you?' 'Very kind,' he replied..." (p. 288)

13. Should the dead murderer try to embrace
His outraged victim whom he now must face?
Do objects have a soul? Or perish must
Alike great temples and Tanagra dust?
(p. 231)

This variant is indexed as "a remarkable case of foreknowledge" because, as Kinbote points out in his Note to Line 596, "The last syllable of 'Tanagra' and the

first three letters of 'dust' form the name of the murderer whose *shargar* (puny ghost) the radiant spirit of our poet was soon to face."(p. 231)

The final lines of *The Rape of the Lock* are significant for their (figurative) image of murder and for the conspicuous "must/dust" rhyme:

> For after all the murders of your eye,
> When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
> When these fair suns shall set, as set they must,
> And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
> This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
> And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.
> (V, 145-150)

That Shade's knowledge of Pope's poem may explain his echoing of theme and rhyme as deliberate, or conscious, still cannot be resolved. But the subsequent relevance of his variant to his own life *is* a "remarkable case of foreknowledge." Also, the fact that Gradus is woven into the very rhyme repeated from Pope (remember that Kinbote had pressed on Shade the fantasy of escape only, not the persecution by Gradus) indicates that the variant may have been written under supernatural oversight. As Boyd notes, Shade himself, after his murder, seems to have propagated in Kinbote's Commentary the contrapuntal treatment of Gradus's pursuit. (Boyd, Ch. 13) (Boyd also credits Hazel's ghost with inspiring Kinbote's fantasy, a part of which involves deriving the name of Queen Blenda from Pope's Belinda.)

(This may be a good place to interpose a certain metaphysical reservation. While one is willing to accept the unhindered view of the past enjoyed by Nabokov's characters in the afterlife as well as their not quite successful attempts to communicate with the living, their foreknowledge and warnings, as exemplified by the scrabbled message in the Haunted Barn episode, run counter to Nabokov's denial of the existence of the future. How can he include a warning which implies a knowledge of what is to come? I know, I know, it will be said that the

higher states of consciousness can't actually see the future, but rather sense the direction it might take, based on their ability to discern patterns in the past. That they may then be wrong in their predictions, or imperfectly astute in their perception of those patterns is certainly logical and allowable in the Nabokovian universe. But if we do grant them great acuity, we should be enjoined not merely to find in *Pale Fire* the patterns they encourage us to see, but also to search for the reason that they indicate danger. What, after all, is fatally ominous, or ominously fatal, about the Atalanta pattern? How would Maud's shade have inferred the threat? Once again we are confronted with the question that remains valid on every level of the novel: Who is responsible for the patterning we observe, and who is aware of it? One is also troubled by the "rule of a supernal game" and the "immutable fable of fate"(p.244) that seem implied by the intricate patternings; they are difficult to reconcile with one's own (and VN's) belief in independence and freedom, and the rejection of determinism.)

> 14. 609 Nor can one help the exile caught by death
> In a chance inn exposed to the hot breath
> Of this America, this humid night:
> Through slatted blinds the stripes of colored light
> Grope for his bed — and life is ebbing fast.
> (p. 234)

This variant is difficult if for no other reason than that there is so little to choose between it and the final draft; they are scarcely different. What then is its purpose? Just as curious is the inclusion of the passage in either form, where it seems rather out of place, in Shade's poem. Is there a deeper, undetected significance?

[Perhaps, one could compare it profitably with VN's 1950 poem "The Room" ("The room a dying poet took / at nightfall in a dead hotel"), one of his best, in my opinion. GB].

15. The madman's fate (p. 237)

This variant serves as the point of departure for the Note to Line 629, begun by Kinbote with a discussion of the destiny of madmen's souls as viewed by Zemblan theologians. He then says, "Personally, I have not known any lunatics..."(p. 237),. before relating the events of a party at which he almost hears himself referred to as a "loony." The speaker, Mrs. Hurley, salvages the moment, after he approaches her from behind, by saying she was talking to Shade about an old man at the Exton railway station: "John calls him a fellow poet." Kinhote indexes this note under Shade as "his denial of a stationmaster's insanity", but the gloss, as well as the inclusion of the anecdote show that Kinbote is only whistling past the graveyard of his insanity.

Kinbote concludes the note by calling the variant "trivial" and dismissing the "pedestrian verse" of the passage in which it occurs. These same lines 627-630 were called "weak" once before by Kinbote (in the Note to Line 596, containing variant #13) just after he referred to skeptical readers as "pedestrian." Is there a deeper connection between the two notes? Is there something hidden behind Kinbote's reiterated dismissal of the passage?

16. 895 I have a certain liking, I admit,
For Parody, that last resort of wit:
"In nature's strife when fortitude prevails
The victim falters and the victor fails."
899 Yes, reader, Pope (p. 269)

First things first. Alfred Appel asks in an interview, "Why in *Pale Fire* do you call parody 'the last resort of wit'?", and Nabokov responds, "It is Kinbote speaking. There are people whom parody upsets."(SO p.. 77) The implications of this answer would be tremendous: If Kinbote is the author of this variant, he could be the author of all of them. A broad array of internal contradictions would arise, and the novel's intricate structure

would be undermined. But how can Nabokov be doubted? His method of conducting interviews in writing was intended to promote clarity and avoid misquotations. Nevertheless, it does appear to have been an error on Nabokov's part, an opinion expressed by Brian Boyd when I questioned him on the matter.

The variant is indexed as a "parody of Pope". Is there something in Pope to which Shade's parody can be traced? In *The Rape of the Lock* there is this instance of the same end rhyme: "And trust me, dear, good humor can prevail,/When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail" (V, 31-32). It seems to bear as little thematic relation as does this second occurrence, found in "An Essay on Criticism": "Thus in the soul while Memory prevails,/The solid power of Understanding fails" (Part I, lines 56-57).

The variant (along with #11, #12, and #14, it carries actual line numbers; does this greater precision indicate something?) is given in the Note to Lines 895-899. These lines in the final draft deal with Shade's shaving in the bathtub; the next note (to Line 920) continues the shaving theme as related to the thrilling effect on Shade's whiskers of unexpected poetic inspiration received while barbering, and the mention of Gillette is a reminder of the zhiletka blades seen in the discussion of variant #3; a third consecutive note (to Line 922) is also introduced by the shaving theme and involves Pope by way of variant #17, consisting of two verses.

17. All artists have been born in what they call
A sorry age; mine is the worst of all:
An age that thinks spacebombs and spaceships take
A genius with a foreign name to make,
When any jackass can rig up the stuff;
An age in which a pack of rogues can bluff
The selenographer; a comic age
That sees in Dr. Schweitzer a great sage.

England where poets flew the highest, now

Wants them to plod and Pegasus to plough;
Now the prosemongers of the Grubby Group,
The Message Man, the owlish Nincompoop
And all the Social Novels of our age
Leave but a pinch of coal dust on the page.
(p. 270)

The first octet, like the lines 922-930 which were ultimately chosen, is transparently Nabokovian in sentiment. The variant's final sextet is an echo of Pope's *The Dunciad*, the original frontispiece of whose 1728 first edition, an owl, was replaced in the next year's edition by a vignette of a donkey (jackass) bearing a pile of books (buchmann?) upon which an owl perched. The Grub-Street Journal was established in January 1730, and carried on for eight years by Pope and his friends in answer to the attacks provoked by *The Dunciad*. The poem itself was a satire against the misapplication of human reason and learning. In addition to the thematic parallel with Shade's variant, Pope's work mentions owls, Britain, Grub-Street, Pegasus, "this bless'd age", "Zany of thy age", and "thy doting age". (Other pertinent words also found in *Pale Fire* include: Rabelais, Zembla, Sibyl (Sybil in PF), scholiast (scholium in PF) The most striking correspondence occurs in the lines spoken by a suppliant to the Queen of Dulness of his pursuit of "this peerless butterfly": "It fled, I follow'd; now in hope, now pain;/It stopt, I stopt; it mov'd, I mov'd again" (Book III, 427-428). This "pain/again" rhyme appears in "Pale Fire" where Shade relates the brief heart stoppages of his youth: "...A thread of subtle pain,/Tugged at by playful death, released again" (l. 139-140) After these brief swoons, he and his heart resume their movement. This is the first of three instances in "Pale Fire" in which "again" must be given the British, rather than the American, pronunciation. Although the latter two instances, critically important, are treated in Boyd (Ch. 12), this first occurrence is not definitively explained).

So Pope is quite clearly and repeatedly associated with the material having to do with shaving, just as he was connected to earlier variants dealing with lunacy—which Kinbote thought could be allusions to him. Then, in his Note to Line 937, Kinbote mentions Shade's marginal note, "At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where", drawn from Pope's "Essay on Man" (II, 224), and concludes, "So this is all treacherous old Shade could say about Zembla—*my* Zembla? While shaving his stubble off? Strange, strange..." (p. 272)

Strange, indeed; certainly provocative. It is time to return now to the anecdote mentioned in the discussion of variant #3—namely, Kinbote's irruption into Shade's bath—as recounted in the Note to Lines 887-888. Kinbote had pressed on Shade the story of his escape from Zembla with such persistence and had been so disappointed in Shade's indifference to his theme, that it would be the height of Nabokovian irony to discover that Kinbote did, in fact, serve as the agent of inspiration, and that both he and Shade were unaware of it. Barging into Shade's bathroom would be in keeping with his deranged personality, as would his deluded perception of Shade's blithe reaction. ("...John's raucous roar coming from the bathroom: "Let him in Sybil, he won't rape me!"-p.264). In that moment, look at the prodigious convergence of elements: (zhiletka)Gillette/Pope/Zembla/lunatic/mysterious poetic inspiration/shaving/ ploughing Zembla's fields/ man's life as commentary to abstruse, unfinished poem. If, as Boyd suggests, Hazel inspired Kinbote, and through him, her father; and if, as I suggested in my previous article, Maud was involved in the scheme even earlier; then it appears that the efficient cause was Kinbote's rude intrusion. In spite of his later despair at having failed to inspire Shade, he actually succeeded in ways that Shade tried to signal to him as he worked through the Commentary and the variants Shade left behind, the variants whose import even Shade could not grasp until after his death.

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THREE NOTES ON *MARY*

*Pages refer to the Vintage collected series, 1989.

P24 "What were you in those days, Aleksey Ivanovich?" Ganin inquired without curiosity.
Alfyorov shook his head. "I don't remember. How can one remember what one was in a past life an oyster maybe, or a bird, let's say, or perhaps a teacher of mathematics?"

This dialogue is reminiscent of the caterpillar scene in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* "Who are *You?*" asks the Caterpillar in Chapter Five. Alice shyly replies, " I hardly know, Sir, just at present at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."

Alice encounters both oysters and birds in her adventures. Oysters appear in Tweedledee's wonderful poem entitled "The Walrus and The Carpenter" in *Through the Looking-Glass.* The most prominent of birds, of course, is Dodo, or Charles Lutwidge Dodgson himself, who was a Mathematical Lecturer at Oxford in 1862.

P38 Podtyagin was regaling him with Maggi's bouillon when Ganin entered.

Maggi is a Swiss brand of food products known best for its dried bouillon cubes – the invention of which was claimed by the company's founder, Julius Maggi, in 1883. The brand name is now owned by Nestlé, and is still distributed in European and Russian markets. These advertisements for the Maggi bouillon, which could be seen on the streets of Moscow and Berlin in the early

20th century, were later "immortalized" in the lines of V. Mayakovsky's poem, "*Vyveskam*" ("To Shop Signs").

"A esli veselost'iu pes'ei / zakruzhat ***soz****vezdiia 'Maggi' / biuro pokhoronnykh protsessii / svoi provedut sarkofagi."*

(And if constellations of "Maggi" begin to spin in a dog-like frenzy, the agency of funeral processions will parade its sarcophagi).

P110 It occurred to him that Podtyagin nevertheless had bequeathed something, even if nothing more than the two pallid verses which had blossomed into such warm, undying life for him, Ganin, in the same way as a cheap perfume or the street signs [*vyveski* in the Russian original] in a familiar street become dear to us.

Together with the previous reference, a comparison between an old poet's verses and street signs suggests, in a rather facetious way, Mayakovsky's poem cited above. An allusion to another poem by Mayakovsky, "A Cloud in Trousers," appears on page 84. Explicitly identified in the English translation, it is a less-than-flattering self-evocation of the poet Podtyagin: "Great big clouded cretin, that's what I am," exclaims Podtyagin. (In the Russian original, the quotation reads "*Poeticheskaia vol'nost' Zapropastit' passport. Oblako v shtanakh, nechego skazat'. Idiotina.*" [Poetic license to lose one's passport like that. "The Trousered Cloud" indeed. Great big cretin, that's what I am.] The understated sarcasm or malice implied in all of these references somehow seems to be directed at Mayakovsky the poet as well.

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NABOKOV(S) IN *PALE FIRE*

Brian Boyd's recent book, Nabo*kov's* Pale Fire*: the Magic of Artistic Discovery*, devotes a substantial section of chapter 14 (234-42) to allusions that Nabokov makes to himself in the novel. Somewhat in the way, as Boyd argues, that Hazel influences from the otherworld her father's poem, and Shade in turn after his death influences Kinbote's commentary, so does Nabokov from *his* otherworld — the "real life" in which we all live — put his signature, to use Boyd's term, into the texture of the novel (see 236). Thus the allusions to "Hurricane Lolita" (ll. 679-80) and to the pirouetting "nymphet" (Vintage paperback edition, 202), to the numerous butterflies — Nabokov's "lifelong personal mark" (Boyd 241)— to the uncanny echoing in the waxwing's mortal flight into a window of the celebrated passage in *Speak Memory*, describing Nabokov's father being tossed by the peasants on his estate, an image that becomes an anticipation of his father's death (Boyd 237) — all of these weave Nabokov himself into the texture of Shade's and Kinbote's texts, although, as Boyd says, nothing indicates that either character has any awareness of the existence of a Vladimir Nabokov or his most famous book.

I want to add two further examples of Nabokov's textural signature in the novel. At the end of the poem, surrounded by other valedictory images (the setting sun's reflection in "the last two windowpanes" [ll. 985-6], the "dark Vanessa" [l. 993], the "flowing shade" [l. 996], the wheelbarrow in the lane [l. 999]), is placed a reference to an off-stage horseshoe game:

> Somewhere horseshoes are being tossed. Click. Clunk.
> (Leaning against its lamppost like a drunk.)
> (ll. 991-2)

The reference is curious because, unlike the other images I have mentioned, it does not seem to fit into any textural

pattern in the rest of the poem, or the commentary. Kinbote indeed does annotate the reference to the horseshoes:

> Neither Shade nor I had ever been able to ascertain whence precisely those ringing sounds came — which of the five families dwelling across the road on the lower slope of our woody hill played horseshoe quoits every other evening; but the tantalizing tingles and jingles contributed a pleasant melancholy note to the rest of Dulwich Hill's evening sonorities . . . . (287)

Kinbote recognizes the "melancholy note" associated with these sounds and their connection with sunset ("the evening sonorities"), thus linking them with the other death images at the end of the poem. He does not recognize, however, how the "five families dwelling across the road" brings up the image of the liminal space between this world and the otherworld, more usually texturally indicated by the word "lane" (see my "Thomas Flatman in Pale Fire," *Nabokovian* no. 44), nor how the same five dwellings, overlooking the scene of Shade's immanent death, echo the "five cabins of which this motor court consists" (261), which somewhere near Cedarn, Utana, oversee the scene of Kinbote's death. Nor does he recognize how, as has been pointed out, the upstanding horseshoe leaning against the post mirrors the form of the Greek letter Omega, another signal of the end of this life. Furthermore Kinbote connects the sounds to a place of mysterious, unknowable origin, contributing to what he calls their "tantalizing" nature. I suggest that the sounds come not from Dulwich Hill neighbors across the road but from the otherworld, and from specifically Vladimir and Vera Nabokov. In the second volume of his biography, Boyd, describing the Nabokovs' lives in Ithaca, New York in 1957, tells us that "in the evening light, he [VN] and Vera would throw horseshoes at a pin-oak tree, and neighbors could hear

the sound of their laughter ringing through the air" (*Vladimir Nabokov: the American Years* 313-4). The sounds that both Shade and Kinbote hear, but whose origin they can never identify, mark another signature of the novel's author, and also the author's wife, standing outside the novel's world of Appalachia in what we so unsatisfactorily call "reality."

And clearly there is not just one player in this otherworldly horseshoe game: the gently feminine "click" and the more manly "clunk" help us identify two players. And this connects to one of the more curious details in the poem's most crucial passage. In Canto 3's description of the texturally patterned world in which Shade perceives himself as existing, *there is more than one constructor* — the weaving of the patterns of his life is done by a *they*, not an *it* (see ll.815-8, for the constant use of the third person plural pronoun), a they who play a game like chess that requires two and only two players. And play the tantalizingly tingly horseshoe game on the threshold of Shade's demise. It is worth noting the implication that the construction of the fictional world of both John Shade and Charles Kinbote, a world that they take as "real," is brought about not just by Nabokov alone, but also his wife. Beyond her suggesting certain aspects of Sybil Shade's character (the love for Donne's poetry, for example -- see Stacy Schiff, *Vera*, NY, 1999, p.99), Vera Nabokov's role as presiding muse over her husband's writings, contributing not the words on the index cards but an intangible presence behind them — as well as a good deal of the research that preceded the words (see Schiff 269 for some of the "arcane research assignments" she undertook for her husband in his writing of the novel) — is obscurely confirmed by the *they* who play of game of words and worlds, of chesspieces and horseshoes. And how appropriate that the pattern of Vera Nabokov's creative contributions to *Pale Fire* should be extended after her husband's death – in her translation of the book into Russian (see Boyd *AY* 662 and Schiff 364).

Moreover, "the horseshoe music from Mystery Lodge," as Kinbote refers to it (289), not only interpenetrates from the otherworld into Kinbote's/Shade's "reality" in New Wye, it seeps down into another level, that of Gradus's reality, at least as imagined by Kinbote (with perhaps Shade's otherworldly help – see Boyd pass*im*). As he is leaving Lavender's villa, Gradus is vaguely aware of a sound: "from far below mounted the *clink* and tinkle of distant masonry work" (202). This strange sound, I submit, is that of the Nabokovian horseshoes which Gradus's dim consciousness can only process as the sound of building something (which in a sense it is – the construction of the edifice of *Pale Fire* itself). Note that the "clink" combines the poem's "click" and "clunk," while the doubleness of the sounds, indicating the two players, is reflected in the "clink" and "tinkle," the latter indicative of the far distance, in every sense, between Gradus's consciousness and that of his ultimate creator(s).

If this first example of Nabokov's infiltration into the text of Pale *Fire* is teasingly sly, depending as it does on private biographical information that he could have no certainty would be provided to his public, as Boyd in fact has done, the second Nabokov reference should be available to any canny reader of *Lolita*. Considering how much is made in that book of the recurrence of the number 342 in relation to the heroine's places of residence (*Annotated Lolita* 35, 118) and considering that in his next book, Nabokov presents us with the most relentless counting of things in any of his works (the numbering of the lines of the poem), the canny reader of *Pale Fire* really should look to see what resides in line 342 of "Pale Fire."

[As an addendum to Boyd's reading of *Pale Fire* as a series of otherworldly communications — from Aunt Maud to Hazel, Hazel to Shade, Shade to Kinbote — a kind of linkage that has a ghostly resemblance to Word Golf —

one wonders if the series doesn't continue. Kinbote dies after the book is complete, as most critics agree, so what ghostly influence upon a text does he contribute? Clearly as he dies outside the book, any influence would occur outside it as well — perhaps in the next book in the series, i.e. *Ada*. And indeed in that family chronicle there are a number of allusions to *Pale Fire*, ones which I sometime hope to follow up on in a note of their own. But meanwhile I will leave it to the Russianist Nabokovians to examine the passage where such otherworldly Kinbotian touches would most likely be found — in the translation into Russian of John Shade's "famous poem" "Pale Fire" (*Ada*, Vintage paperback, 577),an anti-terranean transmutation of a terrean poem, undertaken jointly by Adelaida Vinelander and Ivan Veen (585-6).]

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MACBETH IN *PALE FIRE*

Of the many parallels between John Shade and Vladimir Nabokov, the most striking concern their opinions on literature. Shade's dismissal of "`simple' and `sincere' in a commendatory sense" in relation to literary works (Vintage paperback edition 156), for example, echoes exactly a passage in the *Eugene Onegin* commentary where Nabokov decries how "`simplicity' and `sincerity' are constantly employed *"in a commendatory sense"* — and explains his objection: "true art is never simple, being always an elaborate, magical deception. . . . as all nature is magic and deception" (2nd edition, III, 498; my italics). Literature's deceptiveness lies, of course, within the texture, rather than the text, of the work, leading to Shade's formulations on the proper teaching of Shakespeare:

"First of all, dismiss ideas, and social background [text], rain the freshman to shiver, to get drunk on the poetry of *Hamlet* or *Lear* [texture], to read with his spine and not with his skull." (155)

Nabokov's 1966 interview with Alfred Appel provides an exactly parallel passage to this:

> The verbal poetical *texture* of Shakespeare is the greatest the world has known, and is immensely superior to the structure of his plays as plays. With Shakespeare it is the metaphor that is the thing, not the play.
> (*SO* 89-90; my italics)

And Shade's and Nabokov's privileging of "poetical texture" over "structure" is exactly the opposite of what the prototypical bad translator, Kinbote's Uncle Conmal, advocates:

> I am not slave! Let be my critic slave.
> I cannot be. And Shakespeare would not want thus.
> Let drawing students copy the acanthus,
> I work with Master on the architrave! (286)

Conmal's uncertainties with English idiom are accompanied by an entirely false certainty about what "Shakespeare would . . .want" a privileging of the dramatic structure, the story, the literal sense, what Conmal terms the "architrave" [in classical architecture, the lowest portion of the entablature supporting the roof, resting directly on the columns] over what he calls the acanthus [leafy decorations on the capitals of the columns of Greek buildings], which here stands for what he considers purely decorative and inessential — the poetic texture itself. Conmal's sonnet, ironically written in the rhyme scheme not of the Shakespearean sonnet (abab) as one would expect from this Shakespeare expert but in the older Petrarchan form (abba) — thus getting even the sonnet structure wrong — comes down to essentially "not texture, but text," the antithesis of everything that both Shade and Nabokov value in literature. Conmal, of

course, has more than enough real-life counterparts. In the *Onegin* commentary, Nabokov describes Vasiliy Zhukovski's Russian translations (or "talented adaptations") of English poetry as simplifying and delocalizing the texts, consistent with French translating practice of the time, which manage to "replace with a pious generalization every rough and rare peculiarity" (III, 145), and he goes on to give an example of Zhukovski's version of a Scott poem where the specific details are "consistently neutralized" (III, 146). Conmal thus stands with Gradus in their common hatred of deception (and hence, since "all art is deception and so is nature" (*SO* 11), their hatred of both art and nature) and their mutual worship of general ideas (see 152), Zhukovski's "pious generalizations."

Kinbote in contrast stands with Shade (and their common creator) on the other side: in the Foreword he articulates his "utterly overwhelming" love for a literary "masterpiece" ("Pale Fire") in terms of "the underside of the weave that entrances the beholder and only begetter" (17). Kinbote here combines images from Shade's poem expressive of "texture" ("web," "plexed artistry" [63, ll. 810, 814), images which Kinbote picks up later in his commentary ("the main rich thread of its [the poem's] weave" (91)), with phrases from the obscure dedicatory note to the 1609 first edition of Shakespeare's sonnets ("To the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets. . ."). Kinbote conceives of "Pale Fire" as essentially dedicated to himself by its author, paralleling Shakespeare's sonnets dedicated to their only begetter, in Kinbote's terms surely the young man for whom the author in many of the poems seems to express a homosexual love. Kinbote's implication is that in his poem Shade expresses (or should express) in the "underside of the weave" a hidden homosexual love for himself comparable to what Shakespeare expresses for the dedicatee of his Sonnets, "Mr. W. H." The connection of homosexuality with the Sonnets, which Nabokov draws on here, also applies to Conmal, for even though Kinbote accuses him of living

"too little among boys and youths" (285), he in fact begins his translation of Shakespeare with the Sonnets, implying at least latent homosexual inclinations. Interestingly, Conmal begins his translation of the plays with *The Tempest*, traditionally Shakespeare's *last* play, characteristically starting off at the wrong end of things as it were, presumably because *The Tempest* is the *first* play in the First Folio, the implication being that Conmal works his way through the First Folio's ordering of the plays in a purely mechanical manner, entirely consistent with his principles of translation.

Nabokov in his novel refers directly or alludes distantly to quite a number of Shakespeare's plays. The three most prominent are *Timon of Athens*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. The first two have been much discussed in the critical literature, the third much less so. In the Faculty Club conversation, Shade himself, supplying one of the novel's main clues as to why Shade is shot by Jack Grey, points out his physical resemblance to four people, among whom are "two local characters, one being the slapdash disheveled hag who ladles out the mash in the Levin Hall cafeteria" (267). The other unnamed "local character" is of course Judge Goldworth, Jack Grey's intended victim, who many pages earlier had been described by Kinbote himself as a "Medusa-locked "*hag*" (83; my italics). Kinbote, in response to Shade, "precised quaintly": "'The third in witch row'" (267), bringing in the allusion to the three witches in *Macbeth*, apparently a favorite play — or at least well known to him — for he recalls his tutor, Mr. Campbell, being able to "reel off *Macbeth* from beginning to end during hikes" (104). Campbell, a Scotsman, appropriately favors the "Scots play," which fits nicely into the textur-al pattern of "northern" references which so proliferate through the novel (see Part I of Priscilla Meyer's *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden* (Weslyan University Press, 1988); she discusses *Macbeth* briefly on pp. 111-2). Kinbote thus shifts the more general term "hag" to the more precise term "witch" and particularly to the weird sisters of the play.

Other references in the novel carry on this connection. Kinbote himself says that Shade "looked like an old tipsy witch" (287), while Hazel's spirit messenger warns "pada . . . not ogo old wart" (188), where the name Goldsworth is shown to contain "old wart," one of the more prominent physical characteristics of witches. Both Shade and Goldsworth are not merely like "hags" but rather witches, and particularly the witches that confront Macbeth.

The allusions to *Macbeth* here are teasingly suggestive. The three women in the Levin Hall cafeteria may easily enough be compared to Shakespeare's witches, not just in terms of their appearance, but because of their job — ladling out the mash — which wonderfully echoes the weird sisters' cooking scene in the play (IV, i) wherein they mash together a set of ingredients that would form the college student's worst dorm food nightmare. But why connect Goldsworth and Shade with *Macbeth*'s witches? For one thing, just as the three sisters prophesy the destinies of Macbeth and Banquo, Goldsworth in a sense does the same for the "people he had sent to prison or condemned to death" (83). But if so, how does Shade fit? and what significance is there, if any, to his being specifically linked to the third witch? These questions may be connected, for in the play the third witch is the one who for both Banquo and Macbeth delivers the most specific and climactic prophesy — that Banquo "shalt get kings, though [he] be none" himself and that Macbeth "shalt be King hereafter" (I, iii, 67, 50). It is the third witch in other words who proclaims kingship, or its lack. And it is exactly this role that Kinbote expects Shade to perform for him — to proclaim, by making public through "Pale Fire," Kinbote's occupation of the throne of Zembla, his being King Charles II. Just as the witches both prophesy a destiny already in the cards and at the same time cause that destiny to be brought about by planting within Macbeth the seeds of ambition, Shade in his poem is expected both to articulate the reality of Kinbote's phantasy existence and simultaneously create that existence for him. As Kinbote says to his poet, "'Once transmuted by you into poetry, the stuff [of Zembla] *will* be true, and the people will come alive'" (214). Shade, of course, does not do this, since the poem is not about Zembla or its king at all. But he does unintentionally prophesy Kinbote's/King Charles's death in the lines about "the exile, the old man/Dying in a motel" (55, ll. 609-10) amid his own pale fires, the "bits of colored light/ Reaching his bed like dark hands from the past/Offering gems" [the Crown Jewels] (56, ll. 612-3), a passage which applies in a number of ways to what would seem to be the scene of Kinbote's demise. Thus like Goldsworth, and the third witch of the play, he "prophesies" Kinbote's death, if not his kingship. Kinbote is thus a kind of Macbeth, expecting the proclamation of his royalty, but getting unexpectedly, just as Macbeth does, a proclamation of his doom. And it is worth noting in this regard that Kinbote also explicitly associates himself with the tragic heroes of the other two prominent Shakespearean plays in the novel – Timon and Hamlet.

The question remains, if Goldsworth and Shade are two of the three witches, who in the novel is the remaining witch? Sybil? Certainly Kinbote might think so (see his reference to the "brocken of [poets'] wives" (183)), and her name certainly suggests a strongly prophetic role, although her actions or words do not seem to bear this out particularly. Kinbote himself? He is connected to magic twice: he himself speaks of his imagination in terms of "my demons [filling] my goetic mirror to overflow" (183) and of his "long dabbling in blue magic" (289). But Kinbote is more closely linked to the object of the witches' prophecies, Macbeth himself.

No, the solution to the pretty problem of the remaining witch lies with the "clue" that connects Shade to Goldsworth in the first place, their physical resemblance to each other and thus their common resemblance to the cafeteria "hag." The remaining witch figure in *Pale Fire* must then bear a physical resemblance to Shade/ Goldsworth. The poem provides the answer:

She might have been you, me, or some quaint blend:
Nature chose me so as to wrench and rend
Your heart and mine. (43, ll. 293-5)

Shade's claim in the faculty commonroom conversation that he is said to resemble "two local characters" (267) is thus not quite accurate; he omits a third "local character" that resembles him, unable to state publicly what the poem itself admits to -- he and his daughter, Hazel, physically resemble each other. Hazel, then, is the remaining member of the trio of witches in the novel that mirrors Shakespeare's trio. And indeed Hazel is much more than either her father or Judge Goldsworth actually connected to "supernatural" phenomena: the "appalling 'psychokinetic' manifestations" that she in some sense brings about in 1950 when she is sixteen (164-5) and the "phenomena" of the "roundlet of pale light" (187-8) in Hentzner's barn six years later, and six months before her death. Other lines from the poem add to the Hazel/witch connection. Shade remembers Hazel's appearance in the school pantomime:

. . . while children of her age
Were cast as elves and fairies on the stage
. . .
My gentle girl appeared as Mother Time,
A bent charwoman with slop pail and *broom.*
(44, ll. 309-10, 312-3; my italics)

Hazel enacts the role, not of relatively benign (and pretty) supernaturals as the other children do, but a witch-like figure, hunched over and bearing the witch's best-known accouterment, a broom. Moreover, her "*slop* pail" distantly echoes the description of the "*slap*dash disheveled hag who ladles out the *mash* [a near synonym of "slop"]" (267; my italics), fixing the cafeteria hag/witch/Shade/Goldsworth/Hazel connection even more firmly. Even her name connects her to the witch "theme", as witch hazel, the common name for an American shrub, derives

its name from the use of its twigs as divining rods. Finally, to these examples one could add her influence on the composition of her father's poem from "beyond the veil," as Brian Boyd argues in his recent book.

[As an addendum:

In regard to Shakespeare as homosexual, *Ada* contains an interesting relevant passage. Ada explains her aesthetic of acting, according to which the actor should focus on the drama's texture, the "subjective and unique poetry of the author," in the course of which the performer enters into a subjective embrace, a oneness, with the author. "'I feel authored,'" she says, "'I feel cuddled in the embrace of puzzled Will (he thought I [Ada] was you [Van]) or in that of the *much more normal* Anton Pavlovich [Chekhov]" (*Ada* 426; my italics). Since whatever her faults, Ada, like Van, is acutely one with *her* author in her judgments about both those twin deceivers, art and nature, her assumption here of Shakespeare's homosexuality (and its "abnormality") might well reflect Nabokov's own views of the playwright. It is noteworthy that in *Bend Sinister*, one of Ember's engravings above his bed shows "a humble fellow who holds a spear . . . in his left hand." The latter is specifically emphasized by the narrator: "Note the sinistral detail" (Vintage paperback edition 105). And it is not just in Kinbote that Nabokov associates left-handedness with homosexuality. Smurov in *The Eye* is a sexual lefty (Vintage paperback edition 94) and Nabokov in *Speak, Memory* describes his brother Sergey and himself playing tennis in England: "We played a lot of it together . . . on a good clay court in Cambridge. He was left handed. He had a bad stammer that hampered discussions of doubtful points" (Vintage paperback edition 258). Note the sinistral detail which is marked off in a single short sentence without any accompanying comment, just as in *Bend Sinister*.]

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NABOKOV AND THE GULAG: A FEW ANNOTATIONS

Whereas Nabokov may have remained indifferent to the minutiae of contemporary politics, he was not insensitive to the central features of the socio-political conditions in Russia and Nazi Germany, on the one hand, and in Western Democracies, on the other. Just as in his Berlin days he saw that the return of émigrées to the Soviet Union was a tragedy of errors, so during his years in the USA he never succumbed to the influence of those American intellectuals whose attitude to the "torture house" (*Pnin* 113) of Stalinist Russia was a mixture of cover-up, apologetics, and self-imposed blindness (attitudes thoroughly surveyed in William L. O'Neill's *A Better World*). Nabokov's concern with politics and its reflections in his texts have been discussed by, among others, Robert Alter, Brian Boyd, Mikhail Geller, Simon Karlinsky, and Charles Nicol. Here I shall annotate some of the less obvious specific references to the Soviet terror regime in Nabokov's works.

In Chapter 4 of *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov recollects "kerchiefed peasant girls weeding a garden path on their hands and knees or gently raking the sun-mottled sand" as seen through the window of his schoolroom in Vyra. In the Russian version, *Drugie berega*, instead of the local-color pastoral "kerchiefed peasant girls," we find the more neutral "female day laborers" (*podenshchitsy*). In both versions, however, this is followed by a note that prëempts or parries his readers' potential resentment of his family's leisure-class "exploiter" status: Nabokov reminds us, in parentheses, that "the happy days when [these girls] would be cleaning streets and digging canals for the State were still beyond the horizon" (*SM* 80). Here the reference is to forced labor which, since the late twenties, was associated with practically lethal imprisonment, in, for instance, the region of the White-Sea Baltic Canal constructed in 1931-33 and later on the sites of the Moscow-Volga and Volga-Don canals. In the Russian version, the reference takes a briefer word-to-the-wise shape: "the

digging of state canals is still far away" ("do rytia gosudarstvennykh kanalov esche daleko," *DB* 47). Some of the Nabokovs' paid day laborers were, no doubt, destined to turn into convict-slaves (especially since the construction of the first of the canals by convict labor began soon after the start of the forced collectivization of agriculture).

The first section of Chapter 6 of *Speak, Memory* contains the famous passage about a rare Swallowtail, who survived "domestic naphthalene" overnight in the wardrobe yet, "with a mighty rustle" flew out of the imprisoning wardrobe when its door was opened in the morning,

> Then made for the open window, and presently was but a golden fleck dipping and dodging and soaring eastward, over timber and tundra, to Vologda, Viatka and Perm, and beyond the gaunt Ural range to Yakutsk and Verkhne Kolymsk, and from Verkhne Kolymsk, where it lost a tail, to the fair Island of St. Lawrence, and across Alaska to Dawson to be finally overtaken and captured, after a forty-year race, on an immigrant dandelion under an endemic aspen near Boulder. (*SM* 120)

All the Soviet locations mentioned in this passage would eventually become centers of the concentration-camp empire, where Nabokov might have followed the Swallowtail had he failed to emigrate. Not accidentally, it is in Kolyma, the region of the grimmest of those camp clusters, that Nabokov imagines the butterfly to have lost a tail. One of the reasons why the island of St. Lawrence is imagined as "fair" may be that it is beyond the borders of the Soviet empire.

In Nabokov's earlier work, *Invitation to a Beheading*, the demand by the authorities that the prisoner collaborate with his executioners is clearly reminiscent of Stalin's Grand Charades—the show trials where the accused

were made to "confess," heap accusations on themselves and their associates, and express the willingness to suffer the consequences or make pleas for mercy. Cincinnatus's prison is described as "hastily assembled" (*Invitation* 51). This is most usually read as a self-reflexive remark: the author's imagination is unwilling to compete with that of the more thorough prison-builders in the extratextual world. Yet the metadescriptive epithet may also reflect Nabokov's awareness of the deceptively make-shift appearance of the early Soviet concentration camps. The cheapness and ramshackle character of the barrack-type facilities at first seemed to signal that the camps were but a temporary measure of the transitional period. However, as Mikhael Jakobson has shown in his 1993 study, the very same features—the cheapness and the neglect of the prisoners' physical needs—actually turned out to be conducive to the proliferation of the camps and to their harshness as punitive institutions.

In Nabokov's *Bend Sinister*, often viewed as a companion-piece to *Invitation to a Beheading*, Krug's painter neighbors have been deported (as befits artists in a dystopian state ever since Plato's Republic) to a remote prison camp—a collective allusion to both the Nazi *Lagers* and the Soviet forced-labor facilities. Yet Ember's complaint about prison latrines (*BS*, p. 239) echoes the records of the similar indignity in memoirs of sundry veterans of Soviet prisons and camps—in a memoir printed by the Chekhov Publishing House in New York several years later, I. V. Ivanov-Razumnik insists on the necessity of discussing such matters as the Soviet prison hygiene because it is a symptom of what he ironically refers to as the "profound respect" of the authorities (157) for the prisoners.

The erstwhile Ministry of Justice (cf. "The Ministry of Love" in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) has been transformed into a hotel (*BS* 177). This is not only a sign of the absence of justice in Paduk's state but also a satirical mirror-reversal of the transformation of a comfortable hotel that an insurance agency used to run on Moscow's

Lubianskaya square into the central torture prison of the Soviet secret police, the notorious "Lubianka."

Nabokov could have had numerous sources of information about Soviet concentration camps. He was personally acquainted with people who had left Russia in the twenties. The Berlin periodical *Rul'* and the Parisian *Poslednie novosti* and *Sovremennye zapiski*, with which he was associated, occasionally printed first-hand accounts of the imprisonment in the Soviet Union. A number of pre-World-War II fugitives from the camps published their memoirs in France, England, Bulgaria, China, and elsewhere; the multiple deportations, migrations, repatriations, and escapes of the Word-War II and early post-war period likewise allowed the publication of another wave of memoirs by former prisoners of Soviet prisons and camps (a survey is presented in my *Return from the Archipelago*, pp. 28-72). Nabokov was likewise well aware that the terror regime did not quite end either with Stalin's death in 1953 nor with Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of 1956 and 1961. He made it a rule not to write to individuals in the Soviet Union in order not to endanger them; he knew that association with him might lead recipients of his letters to the remote locations into which the protagonist's daughter disappears in *Look at the Harlequins!*. Yet in 1974, when fame beyond the borders of the Soviet Union had become an asset, almost a safe-passage, for victims of political persecution, Nabokov contributed to public-opinion protests against the imprisonment of the dissident Vladimir Bukovsky and the writer Vladimir Maramzin (see *Selected Letters* 531, 540).

As is well known, in the seventies Nabokov was familiar with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's works. The missed personal encounter of the two writers remains one of the most regrettable episodes in the corpus of literary biography (cf. Boyd 648-49 and Scammell 906-907). It is likewise regrettable that Nabokov, whose praise of Sasha Sokolov's *The School for Fools* (see D. B. Johnson's note in vol. 15 of *The Nabokovian*) has practically paved the

young writer's way into canon, does not seem to have been familiar with the stories of Varlam Shalamov, the finest and most powerful annalist of the very region where the butterfly netted near Boulder had lost its tail.

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ANNOTATIONS TO *ADA*
17: Part I Chapter 17

Brian Boyd

A general note on the Annotations. In a few cases, Motifs and cross-references to previous notes will be to details that were not included at the time a particular set of annotations was originally published, and that I have discovered only since, and have therefore recently incorporated into my computer files. I hope to make these updated versions of the older sets of annotations available on Jeff Edmunds' excellent Nabokov website, Zembla (http://www.libraries.psu.edu/iasweb/nabokov/nsintro.htm), but other research priorities have to date made it difficult to find time for the regularizing and new writing involved.

If you do happen to follow a cross-reference to an earlier annotation, and find nothing there, or not enough, or if you notice what seems to be a newly-noted Motif and realize there are apparently unnoted examples occurring earlier in *Ada*, the explanation could therefore be that I have revised the material since publication. Of course, it could also be error, and if you find any errors of omission or comission, I am, as ever, eager to hear of them.

In the current chapter, I would particularly welcome suggestions about "The procuress in Wicklow, on that satanic night of black sleet, at the most tragic, and almost fatal, point of my life" (103-04: *what* point, and when?), about Ada's "as he'd better" (106: what does she mean?), and about Pushkin's "*Sladko!*" (107).

Forenote:

Ardis the First has been a series of steady steps up to the sunshot terrace of Van and Ada's love. They are now just one step below the top, after Ada's unexpected