

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

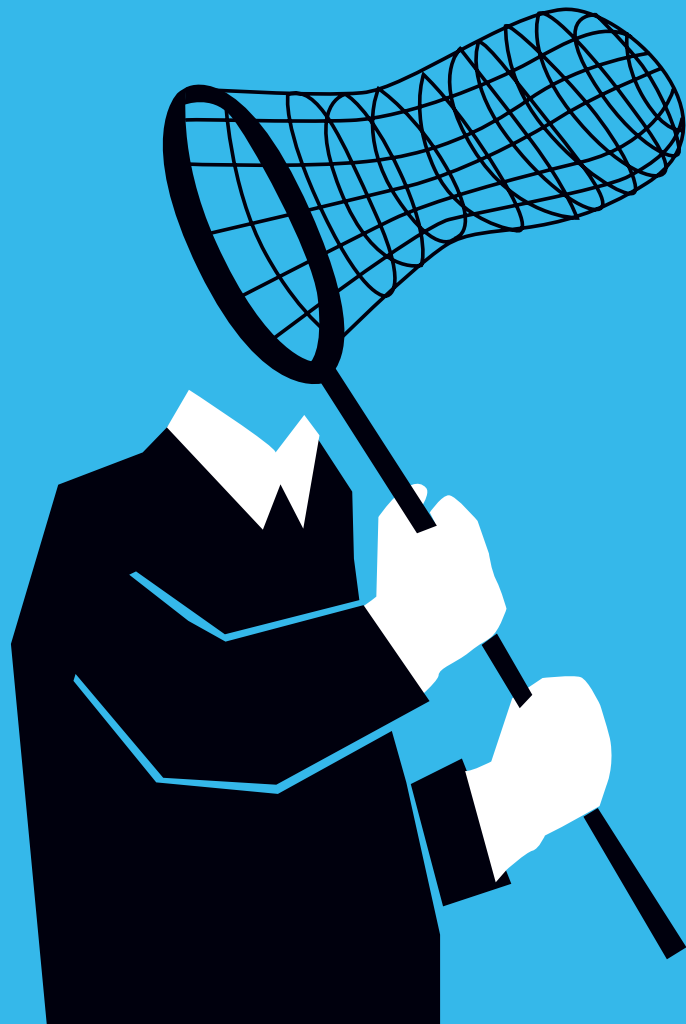


## **VLADIMIR NABOKOV AND THE FICTIONS OF MEMORY**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
22-23 SEPTEMBER 2016, WARSAW



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS





**Stephen Blackwell**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

## **Weaving in Time: Nabokov's Magic Carpet**

Nabokov's art figures a constant tension between abundance and loss, between imprisonment and freedom. We see these parallel antinomies play out in Cincinnatus's cell or between the bars of Humbert's real and metaphorical prisons, juxtaposed with escapes performed by Luzhin, Pnin, or Cincinnatus. In Nabokov's worlds, unidirectional time is a prison, but memory appears to offer an escape. Not only people, but also inanimate things have memory, and it was this crucial insight that allowed Nabokov to successfully plot the arrival and diversification of certain blue butterflies in the New World over the course of millions of years. Cincinnatus preserves the memory of the *ancients* (Pushkin, Gogol) in his confinement, and these figures provide the foundation for his liberation at the novel's end. In a different sense, remembering (re-collecting, reviving) old literature in *Lolita* is one of the ways for the *reader* to escape from Humbert's solipsistic narrative. Many of Nabokov's texts weave memory and time together – not just for the characters, but for the reader, too. His injunction to reread, to transform the linear into the planar, rests on the practice of memory and the labor of multiple artistic readings, in order to create the illusion of overcoming temporality. Nabokov's novels remember each other – even, sometimes, like Fyodor in *The Gift*, remembering future novels (just as Boris Shchyogolev outlines a prototype for *Lolita*). His magic carpet, which is also his time machine (and which appears in many guises throughout his works), allows him and his characters to weave through past and future. Soaring, and folding deceptively, the escape it offers provides only a fleeting ecstasy, a “relief from the itch of being,” as Nabokov calls it in the forward to *Glory*. This relief, or “palliative,” Nabokov suggests, may be the only inkling humans can achieve of an existence beyond the prison of time.

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**Stephen Blackwell**, Professor and Chair, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Russian Program. Stephen Blackwell teaches Russian literature and language. He is the author of *Zina's Paradox: The Figured Reader in Nabokov's Gift, The Quill and the Scalpel: Nabokov's Art and the Worlds of Science* and co-editor of *Fine Lines: Vladimir Nabokov's Scientific Art*.

**Leona Toker**

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

## **Nabokov's Factography**

Nabokov's fictional retrospective first-person narratives rely on the "perfect-memory" convention, which is, however, sometimes laid bare or even subverted. This convention makes no inroads in Nabokov's factographic narratives, such as *Speak, Memory* and "Abram Gannibal." This paper discusses the narrative techniques that replace the "perfect-memory" convention in the "childhood-adolescence-youth" part of *Speak, Memory*, and the way these techniques relate to Nabokov's view of the workings of memory, in the context of some of his literary and philosophical precursors.

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**Leona Toker**, Professor in the English Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures* (Cornell University Press, 1989), *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (University Press of Kentucky, 1993), *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Indiana University Press, 2000), *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission* (Ohio State University Press, 2010), and numerous articles on English, American, and Russian literature. She is the editor of *Commitment in Reflection: Essays in Literature and Moral Philosophy* (Garland, 1994) and co-editor of *Rereading Texts / Rethinking Critical Presuppositions: Essays in Honour of H. M. Daleski* (Peter Lang, 1996) as well as of *Knowledge and Pain* (Rodopi, 2012). She has founded and is editing *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, a semiannual academic periodical published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

# SPECIAL LECTURE







**Tatiana Ponomareva**

Vladimir Nabokov Museum, St. Petersburg State University, Russia

## **Memory Speaking in the Nabokov House**

The talk will focus on the experience of studying Nabokov in the Nabokov House which, according to Nabokov, blended the “spiritual grace of a Russian household with the very best treasures of European culture.” Nabokov only spent the first eighteen years of his life in Petersburg but these were his formative years that continued to inspire him both as a Russian and as an English-language writer well into the mature years of his writing career. After many years in the Nabokov Museum, my studies of the Nabokov family and their circle still bring new discoveries. The most rewarding discoveries are the ones that give a new dimension to a familiar Nabokovian image, as well as those that elucidate some of the themes or single passages in his memoir.

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**Tatiana Ponomareva**, Director of the Vladimir Nabokov Museum in St. Petersburg since 2002. She organizes and speaks at the annual “Nabokov Readings” international conference. In 2009 she created the concept and took part in the documentary “Nabokov. The Russian Roots” (directed by Olga Chekalina). She also gave many interviews and wrote articles for various Russian and foreign media, initiated and organized a number of art exhibitions (painting, graphic art, photography) on Nabokov themes. In 2009 she initiated the publication and has since edited and contributed to the *Nabokovsky Sbornik*, a bilingual journal of Nabokov studies. She currently teaches a course on Literary Petersburg for the students of the School of Russian and Asian Studies. Before joining the Nabokov Museum Tatiana Ponomareva was Senior Lecturer at the St. Petersburg State University. She also translated books for the St. Petersburg University Press. She is a member of the International Vladimir Nabokov Society and a member of the editorial board of the *Nabokov Online Journal*. Recently Tatiana edited selected works by V. D. Nabokov *До и после Временного правительства* (Симпозиум, 2016). She is now working on another biographical study of the Nabokov family that will include new material from private archives.



# PAPERS IN ENGLISH





**Georgi Abdushelishvili**

St. Petersburg State University, Russia

## **Orpheus Myth in “The Return of Chorb” and “The Visit to the Museum” as Nabokov’s Tragedy of Non-Return**

The present paper will deal with two short stories by Vladimir Nabokov: “The Return of Chorb” and “The Visit to the Museum.” Written in different decades and countries, both deal with the problem of the impossibility of return to homeland, so central for the émigré writer. The paper will follow the evolution of Nabokov’s tragedy seen through the prism of Orpheus and Eurydice myth which plays a fundamental role in both stories, discussing the aspect of self-parody (the mocking of one’s own hope) which is realized in “The Visit to the Museum” through the use of the unreliable narrator losing his mind in the process of the tale; while in “The Return of Chorb” a silent scene closing the story refers the reader to Gogol’s play *The Government Inspector*. One of the aims of the paper is to demonstrate that Nabokov’s attempts to solve the problem of his own remembrance through the use of fiction hinged on the device of the narrator’s insanity.

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**Georgi Abdushelishvili**, graduated from Smolny College in St.Petersburg where he was attending courses by Valery Timofeev and Olga Voronina. He plans to enter the ENS or Sorbonne in Paris next year. His interests include: Vladimir Nabokov (mostly his German and French periods and his short stories) and Maurice Blanchot. In his bachelor degree project he was comparing Nabokov’s *Invitation to a Beheading* and Blanchot’s *Idyll*, speaking about their relations to executioners, sacrifices and literature. Recently participated in *Nabokov Readings* at Nabokov Museum.

**Vyatcheslav Bart**

Tel Aviv University, Israel

## **Merging of the Objective, the Subjective and the Imaginary in Nabokov's Works**

I see Nabokov as part of a category of artists who confer on art a special epistemological and ontological status. My dissertation explores this aesthetic ideology with a focus on what I call „anti-criticism” – the belief that academic criticism at large is inadequate and even harmful. Beginning with Renaissance writers like Michel de Montaigne and Miguel de Cervantes, the phenomenon continues with writers like Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne, and reaches its most explicit and elaborate state with 19th- and 20th-century writers like Gustave Flaubert, Vladimir Nabokov, and Harold Pinter.

Because he confers on art a special epistemological and ontological status, memory in Nabokov is more than a function of the mind. He interprets consciousness, space and time as dimensions equivalent in nature and positions all three within another, „special Space,” a monist dimension where subjective perception, objective reality, and artistic imagination manifest themselves in complex simultaneity. Hence, in works such as *The Gift*, *Speak*, *Memory*, *Pale Fire*, and *Ada or Ardor*, protagonists do not merely recall the past, but also create and inhabit it.

This merging of the objective, the subjective and the imaginary lends postmodern characteristics to Nabokov's work. It results in the deconstruction of those discourses for which consciousness and art are not equivalent to space and time, undermining rationalist and materialist discourses, and making it difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction with regards to plot and character. But I would not categorize Nabokov's work as post-modern in the sense of a strictly late-20th-century phenomenon of texts which indulge in wanton deconstruction and pastiche at the expense of traditional values or consistent ideology.

Nabokov's ontological aestheticism is a very particular ideology which distinguishes between intentional artfulness as a higher, most humane form of communication and delusions which result in confusion and cruelty. His work exhibits a consistent set of values and is the 20th-century manifestation of a specific phenomenon with a centuries-long history.

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**Vyatcheslav Bart**, M.A., is an English-language Russian fiction writer, residing in Israel, and 3rd-year doctoral student in English Literature at TAU. In both fictional and academic work his main focus is on the artistic creative process and on art interpreted as an epistemological and ontological concept. His thesis focuses on „anti-criticism” – the refusal by a category of peculiarly anti-rationalist writers and artists to accept academic criticism as a valid approach to the interpretation of art. Academic publications include „Homely and Hostile Academia in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* and *Pale Fire*”, „Critical Illusions: Anti-Criticism in Vladimir Nabokov as a Practice which Originates in the Early Renaissance” and „Futurist, Decadent, and Pagan Influences in Transhumanism: The Dangers of Godlike Creativity.” Slava's fiction appears in Israeli and American print and online publications, the most recent being the short story „Closed Worlds” in *The Ilanot Review* (<http://www.ilanotreview.com/constraint/closed-worlds/>). He is working on his first novel.

**Carlo Comanducci**

Independent Scholar

## **Transparent Things, Invisible Men**

Memory and fiction work on the same ground, which is at once the surface of perceived things and the depths of their past existence. Transparency is the name Nabokov gives to this only apparently incongruent simultaneity of surface and depth within perception: as we gaze at things we sink through them towards their history, into their historicity, “transparent things through which the past shines!” While their regimes of truth may be constructed differently, memory and fiction operate in similar ways and, more importantly perhaps, inevitably compete for the same signifiers, the same objects, the same moments, the same people. One cannot remember without fictionalising the past – unless one idealises it, perhaps; and fiction itself cannot exist outside of a form of embodied aesthetic memory, which is the trace of the reader’s experience. The transparency of memory is thus very much a matter of the transparency of fiction (though these transparencies are not always the same): what appears as some thing’s or somebody’s natural and inevitable past is just the result of how seamlessly their fictionalisation has taken place, how unquestionably they, and their past, occupy their proper place within our fictions. By associating and then weaving together heterogeneous texts and perspectives, the paper explores the trope of transparency in its connections with memory and the immediacy of perception, the indexicality of the image and the issue of social invisibility. Its task is not to elucidate Nabokov’s rendition and understanding of memory, nor, in the first instance at least, to extend it; but rather to use this understanding to cast a critical look onto the pretence of immediacy that characterises the discourse of the media and their environment, and explore the place that, within that environment, both in reality and in fiction, is left to be occupied by the invisible and the unseen.

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**Carlo Comanducci**, recently doctored film studies scholar, MPhil and PhD in film studies at the University of Birmingham, UK. Specialises in the theory of spectatorship, psychoanalytic theory, phenomenology of perception and the politics of aesthetics.

Soelve I. Curdts

Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Germany

## “Supreme Indifference”: Some Fictions of Memory

The title of this paper is a variation on a sentence in Nabokov's introduction to *Bend Sinister*, where an enumeration of various historical events culminates in the assertion that they leave the author “supremely indifferent”. This paper traces fictions of memory in *The Gift* and *Pnin*. Starting with the latter novel, I argue that the representation of “delusions” of memory enable reflections on the meanings and layerings of remembering. Thus, Pnin vociferously disowns memories throughout the novel, especially those connected with “the famous Anglo-Russian writer” who, we suspect, has set up his plot all along. Conversely, the acute pain of memory is unfolded (almost as an aside) as the theme of the Belochkin family is woven throughout the novel, from the first unconscious glimpse of Mira (albeit in a vision) at the very beginning to the explicit connection with the Holocaust as Pnin learns of Mira's (and the Belochkin family's) fate. Memory's urgency, it would seem, can be retained, if at all, only by obliqueness, by intra-(as well as inter)-textual allusions.

In *The Gift* (*Дар*), Nabokov had set one of the most positivist articulators of “realism”, Chernyshevsky, against ostensibly “ornamental” prose by means of a parody of his biography. In retrospect, however, it seems that we are not dealing with a binary opposition of “more” and “less” realist prose, but rather with two already highly literary traditions, the calibration of which enables reflection in the first place – re-flection, a throwing back of thought upon itself and its possible pasts. This paper then concludes by showing how *Pnin* and *The Gift* are complementary as they probe the significance of literariness for memory and thought.

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**Soelve I. Curdts**, a Junior Professor in the Department of English and American Studies at Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf. Her research interests include Romanticism and its legacies, especially in modernist poetry and poetics; comparative con- and intertexts; aesthetics, literary theory, and philosophical as well as other interdisciplinary approaches to literature. She has published on Eliot, Baudelaire, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Wordsworth among others. She is currently at work on two books: a project on re-thinking “reading” in *The Waste Land* by way of its (unacknowledged) intertexts; and a book entitled *The Graveyard of Europe* on reading the past through the Dostoevskyan image of Europe as a graveyard. She is a regular participant at numerous conferences, and has presented at the MLA panel sponsored by the International Nabokov Society. She received her doctorate from Princeton University, where she was awarded the biennial prize for the best dissertation in Comparative Literature.



**Dana Dragunoiu**  
Carleton University, Canada

## **Time and Memory in Nabokov's *Lolita* and Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu***

*Speak, Memory* and *Lolita* begin where Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* ends. The last volume of Proust's great work ends with Marcel's being introduced by Gilberte to her daughter, "une jeune fille d'environ seize ans, dont la taille élevée mesurait cette distance que je n'avais pas voulu voir" (336). Marcel's veiled intimation that he will marry the much younger Mademoiselle de Saint-Loup makes it tempting to read *Speak, Memory* as a straight retelling of *À la recherche*. This claim is in keeping with Robert Alter's observation that *Speak, Memory* is the most Proustian of Nabokov's Proustian works ("Nabokov and Memory" 620). As a retelling of the past to an unnamed beloved (the anonymous "you" addressed in the memoir's final pages), *Speak, Memory* is similarly a tribute to the intricate paths that led the narrator to meet his beloved.

But if it is tempting to consider *Speak, Memory* as a straight retelling of *À la recherche*, it is even more tempting to consider *Lolita* as bending the trajectory of these two works towards the sinister. Though also a recovery of lost time, *Lolita* turns on their head key elements of *Speak, Memory* and *À la recherche*. The unnamed beloved addressed in the final pages of *Speak, Memory* is not only named in *Lolita's* famous opening lines, but named obsessively: "She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita" (7).

By reading *Lolita* through a Proustian lens, I will argue that Humbert is one of those "monstrous creatures" invoked by Proust's narrator in the very final lines of *À la recherche*. Like Marcel, Humbert discovers himself to occupy in Time a place far more considerable than he had been previously wont to admit. Humbert's memoir atones for the crimes against Time and Memory emblemized by his crimes against Dolly. The "distance" that Marcel determines to commemorate upon encountering the tall and stately Mademoiselle de Saint-Loup is the reverse of Dolly's widening thighs and increasing height that Humbert tries so vigorously to deny. By the time Humbert sets down his confession, however, he — too — has come to terms with this "distance" by finding a way to live in Time and cope with the pain caused by Memory.

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**Dana Dragunoiu**, an Associate Professor of English at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. She is the author of *Vladimir Nabokov and the Poetics of Liberalism* (Northwestern UP, 2011); her essays on Nabokov have appeared in *Nabokov Studies*, *Contemporary Literature*, and *Journal of Modern Literature*. She has also published scholarly articles on J.M. Coetzee, Ernest Hemingway, Stendhal, and contemporary film. She is currently writing a book on the subject of Nabokov's ethics.

**Piotr Graczyk**

Jagiellonian University, Poland

## **Nabokov's Ontoentomology**

In *The Gift*, the narrator's father is not only an entomologist, but he also himself displays certain butterfly properties. This process of becoming-butterfly is a key motive of Nabokov's ontoentomology. It is expressible only via literary ploys, that is, through seduction and deception, the devices of the moths (while it may be true that other theories are also literary expressions, yet they cannot fly). Butterflies are ontologically privileged in Nabokov's discourse, because they are not only mimetic (overcoded), but also the most delicate and ethereal in their mimetic quality. They even fly above the region of coercion, the sphere of factuality and utility subjugated to "the rough haste of evolution's unskilled forces" (*Gift* Chapter 2), that is, the dimension subject to Time-Chronos as the figure of death. The last is manifested in the stilted imagination, in convulsive obsession with one's self and one's own causes, in the lack of ironic or tolerant detachment from everything that is specific and transient, a detachment that would be characteristic of such canonical writers as Pushkin. In terms of form, moths (and Pushkin) are both disinterested and atemporal. Their mimetic nature is free from any instinctive ticks of self-preservation, and such is also the literary expression liberated from its utilitarian communicative function. Thus, expressions are butterflies, but this also works in reverse: moths and everything butterfly-like – rainbow puddles, chess, mirrors and other mimetic beings, that is, all beings in their "harlequin" aspect – become literature, poeto-existence, if seen from a certain perspective. Literary ontology of selfless poeto-existence that overcomes the gravitation of death is Nabokov's answer to the cumbersome in his opinion Marxist and Freudian discourses. These are the figures of graphomania (gravitation force), which endeavor to pull down, reducing to necessity, facts, utility and death – the human creative ability which is the art of turning into a butterfly. And yet, could not revolution and psychoanalysis also be seen as butterfly species?

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**Piotr Graczyk**, a philosopher, translator, essayist and editor of *Kronos*. He teaches at the Institute of Culture, Jagiellonian University. He has translated works by Schelling, Heidegger, Lukács, Schmitt, Adorno, Taubes and Benjamin, and has written numerous essays on Brzozowski, Marx, Orwell, Kubrick, Simone Weil and Kafka. His texts appeared in the most renowned Polish journals, such as *Kronos*, *Znak*, *Przegląd Polityczny* and *Teksty Drugie*. His main field of interest is the theological dialectics of European culture: the mutual tensions between philosophy, art, politics and religion. In 2015 he was awarded the Barbara Skarga Prize for the best Polish philosophical essay. Recent books: *Maska i oko* (2013), *Przyszłość pewnej przenośni* (2015).

**Małgorzata Hołda**

The Pontifical University of JP II in Cracow, Poland

## **“The Vane Sisters” by Vladimir Nabokov and the Hermeneutics of Memory and Death**

The narrative of Nabokov’s short story “Vane sisters” is saturated with the language of death and memory. It’s the knowledge of the sudden death of the other, the apprehensive living in the presence of the death of the other, the phantoms, but also the trivialities of life in which discourse of death surfaces. The narrative of the story revolves around the deaths of two sisters: Sybil and Cynthia and the narrator’s recollections of and musings on their deaths. The aim of this paper is to read the story through the lens of the hermeneutics of memory and death, with a special reference to Paul Ricoeur’s philosophical hermeneutics. This analysis also draws upon Jacques Derrida’s aporia of mourning, as well as Sigmund Freud’s and Emmanuel Levinas’s attempts at explicating the mechanisms of memory and mourning. The insufficiency of memory, its downcast substance, the recollection and contemplation of the dead other, the impossibility of mourning one stumbles against, the remembrance of the past as a volatile activity in which the poignancy of suffering needs to be mollified by meaningful evasions, the unfeasibility of nostalgia conveyed in dreams — all of these are constitutive of Vladimir Nabokov’s art in which the hermeneutics of memory and death is constantly at play.

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**Małgorzata Hołda**, affiliated at The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow, received her PhD in literature from Nicholas Copernicus University, Toruń. Her research interests include philosophical hermeneutics with special reference to Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, postmodernism, postmodern philosophy, literature and culture, American and British postmodern fiction, multiculturalism. She is the author of *Between Liberal Humanism and Postmodernist Fun: The Fiction of Malcolm Bradbury*; “Aporia of Time in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and ‘Kew Gardens’ in the Light of Paul Ricoeur’s Hermeneutics”; “Unreliable Stories, Vacillating Borders and Impossible Possibilities – An Attempt At a Deconstructive Reading of Graham Swift’s Short Story ‘Seraglio’”; “Whose Body Is This? Playing with the Body Politics in Malcolm Bradbury’s ‘Composition’ and ‘Miniature Golf’”; “The Hermeneutics of Conversation”; “Silence, Epiphany and the Irreducibility of Conversion” and numerous articles on postmodern fiction, postmodern philosophy and the philosophical hermeneutics.

**Katherina B. Kokinova**

Independent Scholar

## **Memory (Re)imagined: Nabokov and Gombrowicz**

When does the *process* of self-creation coincide with the *product* of self-legitimation? How does Memory speak and what does Mnemosyne remember? How are *memory and imagination* related to Nabokov and how that could be read with Paul Ricoeur's discussion of memory as an image of the past? How does memory reveal the past when directed by Gombrowicz? All these are aspects of the main research question: how Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* and Gombrowicz's *Diary* construct the figure of the Author. Employing Martin Conway's concept of "reconstructive autobiographical memory", I interpret these works as dependent on the (current) goals of the writing self. It appears that autobiographical memory can also serve as an instruction, interacting with the reader. Following Wolfgang Iser's view of memory, undergoing transformation in the act of reading, I argue that Nabokov's and Gombrowicz's (re)imagined memory demonstrates how memory should work for the reader as well.

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**Katherina B. Kokinova**, PhD, her doctoral dissertation in Slavic Literatures was entitled *The Self-reflection in V. Nabokov's and W. Gombrowicz's Works*. Research interests include V. Nabokov, W. Gombrowicz, comparative literature, metafiction, reception theories, cognitive approaches to literature, authorial instructions, the role of the reader in metafiction. She has published articles on Nabokov, Gombrowicz in books and journals, edited Bulgarian translation of Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark* (Colibri, Sofia, 2013) and a special issue of the literary newspaper *The NABOKOVian*. She was awarded the Fulbright scholarship in 2014/2015 (University of California, Berkeley and the New York Public Library, Berg Collection, Vladimir Nabokov Archive) and the Queen Jadwiga Foundation scholarship, UJ, 2012/2013.

**Irena Księżopolska**  
Vistula University, Poland

## **Biographer as an Imposter: Banville and Nabokov**

John Banville's *The Newton Letter* is usually read as a text about a disillusioned biographer, who is made to painfully realize his own limitations and – by transference – the limitations of the genre. His project of Newton's biography is abandoned, because real life appears to charm him away from it; when the novel closes, however, he is disenchanted with the real life and half-eager to return to his old project. Nabokov's doggedly abortive biographer in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* seems a Russian-born Doppelgänger of Banville's narrator. In fact, Banville appears to deliberately revisit Nabokovian model of miscarried biography, stitched together as a patchwork of fictions, by further minimizing the historical subject of the biographical project and elaborating the narrator's persona, who takes the center stage. If Nabokov's V is a poor shadow of the dead writer Sebastian Knight, telling the story of his futile search for historical truth of the past, Banville's nameless narrator most likely is, despite his assurances and pretenses, a fraud, an impostor, who has very little to do with history or truth. But then, is not V, ecstatically certain of having found the truth about Sebastian by becoming his double, an impostor in his own right? And is not any writer dealing with the past, plundering the deposits of his own and others' memories, a pretender, an impersonator, a fraud, staging an elaborate hoax of reality for the benefit of the credulous readers?

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**Irena Księżopolska**, Assistant Professor at Vistula University, teaching British literature and culture. She has published the monograph *The Web of Sense: Patterns of Involution in Selected Works of Virginia Woolf and Vladimir Nabokov* (Bern, 2012). She also authored many essays and articles on the 19th, 20th and 21st Century writers. She is currently working on a book on Ian McEwan's fictions.

**Andrzej Księżopolski**  
University of Warsaw, Poland

## **Time, History and Other Phantoms in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight***

*The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* is in many ways unique in Nabokov's oeuvre. It is his first novel written in English, it expressly introduces for the first time a peculiar metafictional puzzle that will become Nabokov's hallmark, and it features a particularly "un-Nabokovian" narrator: diffident and reticent, uncertain of his narrative power, painfully conscious of the gaps and missing links in his story, blundering through his pursuit of constructing a faithful image of the life of a recently deceased and apparently brilliant writer Sebastian Knight. This persona at once appeals to the reader's sympathy: V's vulnerability, modesty and self-depreciation are endearing and appear to bear the stamp of integrity of character. And yet, this blundering biographer puts together a rather peculiar account: even though he is dealing with quite recent past, he fails to get access to the memories of Sebastian's contemporaries, destroys historical evidence by burning important documents, makes inspired guesses that remain unverifiable. Most importantly, he refuses to treat seriously such constructs as time, history and reality, and ends up by claiming to actually *become* his subject. Many readers, however, pass over this audacity verging on insanity, accepting V's claim that Sebastian's real life resided in his works and not in the facts of his life, and treating the final preposterous claim as an exquisite epiphany, its truth confirmed by the beauty of its style. Yet, is Nabokov in this novel simply explicating the modernist idea of the impossibility of writing a biography, suggesting that history is merely one of the concepts "that have been shown (commercially) to attract mediocre minds," is he trying to undermine "the idea of time, which was made to look comic (...), curl up and fall asleep"? Does not the sophisticated narrative system demand the readers to reevaluate the relationship between the phantoms of fact, dates, documents, memories, and "real life", "real people"? What happens to memory when its human subject disappears?

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**Andrzej Księżopolski**, a graduate of the Institute of History, University of Warsaw, where he was researching the Russian emigration in the aftermath of World War I and the October Revolution. Currently, he is a doctoral student at the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw and his dissertation topic is *(Re)Definitions Of History in Julian Barnes' Fiction*. He is interested in artistic representation of the idea of history, particularly in contemporary British and American literature. He has published articles on Julian Barnes and Vladimir Nabokov in *Kronos*, and a book chapter on Ian McEwan's *Atonement* in *Spectrum of Emotions: From Love to Grief* (2016).

**Adam Lipszyc**

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology PAS, Poland

## **Memory, Image and Compassion: Nabokov and Benjamin on Childhood**

In his famous analysis of the Dora case, Sigmund Freud claimed that one of the key symptoms of mental illness is the patient's inability to present his/her life narrative in a linear, consistent and gapless way. Later, especially as a result of his analysis of the Wolf Man, Freud was forced to accept the fact that this ideal cannot be reached as our life narrative is essentially marked by gaps, breaks and loops. In this insight he would have been supported by otherwise very different writers-in-exile who devoted much of their effort to meditations on their childhood memories: Vladimir Nabokov and Walter Benjamin. In my paper, I would like to arrange a fruitful encounter (or mutual deconstruction) between Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* and Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood*, two consciously fragmentary and inconsistent books of memory. Focusing on the role of the image in both narratives, I shall point to certain striking analogies as well as to certain crucial differences between the two. I shall argue that (his praise of the fragmentary and the fleeting notwithstanding) Benjamin retains a notion of absolute truth about one's own childhood, whereas Nabokov – in many ways a truer (if inadvertent) follower of Benjamin's own insights on modern experience – does away with the idea of truth altogether. Nevertheless, his constructivist/deconstructive vision of one's life narrative does not yield to utter playfulness and aestheticism, as it is marked by an essential appeal to compassion (both for the lost ones and for the author himself), thus – surprisingly – encountering yet another Benjamin, as the author of the Arcades Project.

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**Adam Lipszyc**, dr. hab., prof. PAN, works in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science. He teaches in Collegium Civitas and at the Franz Kafka University of Muri. He has published five books and co-edited five others, mostly focusing on traces of Jewish theology in the 20th century thought and literature. His most recent publications include a study of Walter Benjamin's philosophy of language and justice (*Justice on the Tip of the Tongue*, 2012) and a study of Paul Celan's poetry (*The Time of the Poem*, 2015). He edited and co-translated into Polish two volumes of essays, one by Gershom Scholem and one by Walter Benjamin.

**Dorota Mieszek**

Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw, Poland

## **The Smell of Memory in Vladimir Nabokov's *Mary***

"[...] Memory can restore to life everything except smells, although nothing revives the past so completely as a smell that was once associated with it." (*Mary*)

In *Mary*, Nabokov's debut dedicated to his wife, memory smells of stale perfume, spring, oregano and sweat. In his first book, Nabokov puts the topos of memory, along with its symbolic background, in motion. From this time on, it will appear throughout his work, reaching its zenith in a volume of short stories, *Speak, Memory*, the book which he again dedicated to his wife.

In *Mary* the smell becomes the vehicle of memory, showing its twofold impact. On the one hand, it is a phantasm, the imaginary character of which underlines the writer's belief about the fleeting and ghostly nature of memory. This is accompanied by the defeat of memory in trying to revive a smell from the depths of memory's traces. The ephemeral nature of memory, according to Nabokov, cannot revive the fading nature of smell. On the other hand, the affective power of a smell makes it possible – with memory's help – to revive pictures/freeze-frames of the past.

With a focus on Nabokov's debut, I would like to present the constant fluctuations between scent and memory that unceasingly are carried throughout his entire oeuvre and try to describe the nostalgic somaesthetics developed by the writer.

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**Dorota Mieszek**, Ph.D. student, currently working on a dissertation devoted to representational strategies in the photographic works of Maya Deren, Aneta Grzeszykowska and Francesca Woodman. Author of numerous reviews of contemporary art and articles about theories of visual culture. She received fellowships from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the City of Warsaw Cultural Department, Goethe-Institut, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Her academic interests include theories of visual culture (theater and photography) and strategies of representation in contemporary culture. Her current research explores the development of the category of the Uncanny in visual culture.



**Jagoda Mytych**

Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University, Poland

## **In his Own Words – Vladimir Nabokov between Memory and Literature**

Vladimir Nabokov's first butterfly escaped from his home of Vyra in Russia and was overtaken and captured 40 years later on a butterfly hunt in Colorado. At least this is how he recounted it in *Speak, Memory* – “a systematically correlated assemblage of personal recollection ranging geographically from St. Petersburg to St. Nazaire, and covering thirty-seven years, from August 1903 to May 1940.” The book, considered to be one of the greatest among the writers' memoirs, is both a brilliant piece of literature and an honest look back at the author's life before *Lolita*.

The reference to Memory or Mnemosyne links Nabokov to Proust and to some extent we can find resemblances in the description of the Proustian childhood and Nabokov's recollections of his early days filled with love and wealth. Memory as a means for time travel is a common literary theme. But is it literature obediently supporting the efforts of memory or are they competitive in an attempt to seduce a narrator? The same butterfly found 40 years later, and its flight through time and space is a seductive vision indeed. What the reader can find in the chapter about butterflies is something in between imagination and knowledge, fiction and memory.

In my paper I want to raise a question: who is Nabokov, not only on the pages of his autobiographical book but also who is he as a creator of this particular piece? There are many roles Nabokov undertook while working on the final, English version of *Speak, Memory*:

A biographer of himself or a writer on himself? Is he a loyal servant of facts and memory or one that could never write a line that would not be meant as literary?

A translator. The task he referred to as: “re-Englishing of a Russian re-version of what had been an English re-telling of Russian memories in the first place.” What could have been lost in translation and what might be regained thanks to these constant reminiscent and linguistic revisions.

A lecturer and adviser on how to read. The feature known already from his *Lectures on Literature*. In *Speak, Memory* Nabokov repeatedly addresses his words to his wife (but never by name) or to us, his readers, to make sure that his point is not missed.

Although the autobiography is always a form of a monologue, it can be in dialogue with other biographies. So my final reflection is about the relation between Nabokov's autobiography and books written by his biographers (Field, Boyd). There are many ways in which we can read *Speak, Memory*, and many questions we want to ask this particular Mnemosyne (“which has shown herself to be a very careless girl”). In my presentation I want to propose reading Nabokov's autobiography as a meeting place of memory and literature.

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**Jagoda Mytych**, PhD candidate at the Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication of Jagiellonian University (Cracow). She earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Journalism and Social Communication, and has also a postgraduate diploma in Literary Translation. Her main research interests are literature, media studies and memory studies.

**Akiko Nakata**

Nanzan University, Japan

## **Memories Trick; Memories Mix: *Transparent Things***

I would like to discuss how memories function in *Transparent Things*, which can be called a novella about memories.

First, memories trick. Hugh Person, driven by his memories of Armande, his dead wife, revisits Switzerland for the fourth time. There, he is repeatedly deceived by his own memories. He is tricked mnemoptically by the colors of interiors and exteriors of buildings. He tries to follow the paths he used to walk with Armande in vain. In the past, as remembered or transparently seen by the narrator(s), Hugh continually fails to recognize the people he knows.

Second, memories even belong to places. The reader is shown what happened in a certain space in the past, that is, a place's memories, like a pentimento. In the hotel room where a prostitute takes Hugh, we see a Russian writer working on his manuscript nearly a century ago. In Hugh's flat in New York, Julia sees a figure of her dead boyfriend, who had lived there, moving around and the bowl of oranges he liked to devour. As for the bowl, Julia notices her mistake, caused by the folds of her blouse. As explained in an earlier chapter, evasive things disappear among the folds and furrows of space. In such folds, the dead seem hidden, and sometimes we find them emerging in a place's memories.

Third, memories evolve. We find allusions to Nabokov's earlier works, a typical experience for his readers. A few scenes of the novella remind us of those from *Lolita*. I will clarify how a couple of scenes, in which Humbert recognizes the true meaning of what he has done to Lolita while recalling his past, have inconspicuously developed in *Transparent Things*.

Finally, memories mix. We encounter in the novella fragments of memories whose origin cannot be specified. I will try to speculate about some of them. Like the dead, as the narrator says, who are good mixers, memories themselves are good mixers in their own way in this novella.

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**Akiko Nakata**, Akiko Nakata is Professor of English at Nanzan University in Japan. She is a founding member of The Nabokov Society of Japan and The Kyoto Reading Circle. She co-translated into Japanese, with Tadashi Wakashima, *Transparent Things* (2002). Her publications in English on Nabokov include "Rose and Aquamarine: Liza in *Pnin*," *The Nabokovian* 48 (2002), "Repetition and Ambiguity: Reconsidering Mary," *Zembla* (2005), "A Failed Reader Redeemed: 'Spring in Fialta' and *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*," *Nabokov Studies* 11 (2007/2008), "Some Spiritual Subtexts Hidden in *Transparent Things*," *Revising Nabokov Revising: The Proceedings of the International Nabokov Conference Kyoto* (2010), "The Last Muse Escapes the Text," *Nabokov Online Journal* V (2012) and "Narrating Her Own Absence: The Narrator and Protagonist of 'A Slice of Life'," *Women in Nabokov's Life and Art* (2016).

**Daniel Sirgeyev**

Saint Petersburg State University, Vladimir Nabokov Museum, Russia

## **Shuffling Pages of Nabokov's "Fame"**

The presentation is focused on some important details of Nabokov's poem "Fame" (1942) that in combination form the mechanism of recollecting the past. This mechanism is represented by an image of a book dispersed throughout the text. The image, once uncovered, appears to be so powerful that it can make the reader feel he is holding and flipping through the book of the author's past, present and supposed future.

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**Daniel Sirgeyev**, graduated from the Herzen Pedagogical State University in 2005, worked as a Researcher at St. Petersburg Vladimir Nabokov Museum from 2004 till 2008, from 2008 employed at the St. Petersburg State University Vladimir Nabokov Museum.

**Péter Tamás**

Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

## **Literary Memory in „A Forgotten Poet”**

The rarely discussed short story “A Forgotten Poet” is very relevant to a scrutiny of “the fictions of memory” in Nabokov’s works. The story is about a commemorative meeting in honor of a poet believed to be dead, where an old man, claiming to be the poet himself, unexpectedly shows up. The narrator, who was not there at the event, presents the story of the old man based on his interpretation of the accounts of the witnesses. Just like the narrator has to interpret the various accounts, the reader of the short story has to critically read the narrator’s reconstruction of the events – and this is the first point where literary reading and the workings of memory are connected. Since the old man is emphatically different from the image of the poet that the community keeps, the short story also poses questions about the tension between communal and personal remembrance. “A Forgotten Poet” demonstrates how the reception of literary works relies on extraliterary factors and, thus, challenges Nabokov’s belief in the independence of literature. In my presentation, I will focus on the way the workings of memory influence the concept of literature in “A Forgotten Poet” and compare this concept of literature to those emerging from Nabokov’s other works.

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**Péter Tamás**, a doctoral student in the Modern English and American Literature programme at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. The topic of his doctoral dissertation is *Ethical Criticism*, with a chapter devoted to Nabokov’s *Lolita*. In 2015, he was awarded the Fulbright scholarship and spent a semester researching this topic at Fordham University in New York City. His articles have appeared in various journals, including the *Nabokov Online Journal*.

**Ljuba Tarvi**

Helsinki University, Finland

## **Memory as Obsession: Is There a Suitable Wife for Nabokov's Humbert Humbert?**

Humbert Humbert, a European intellectual of sorts with, in his own words, a "movieland manhood" sex appeal, died of a heart failure at the age of forty-two (10). Not only his heart failed him but also his three wives left him a bitter and disappointed divorcee, widower and dupe. The paper analyzes Humbert's failed marriages that culminated in his female partners rejecting him. As is suggested, certain peculiarities of Humbert's sweetly painful memory of his first sexual experience seem to have irreparably crippled him, and in terms of morality he remained a teenager.

### 1. Humbert and Annabel: Desire Interrupted at its Peak

What happened between Humbert, who just turned thirteen, and Annabel Leigh, a few months his junior (9) was a forbidden love of "incomplete contacts" that drove their "healthy and inexperienced young bodies to ... a state of exasperation" (10). Moreover, their final and most intimate encounter was interrupted at the very moment when Humbert's "senses were suddenly filled to the brim" (12). Then Fate intervened – the girl died, and, as Humbert admits, her image haunted him "ever since – until at last, twenty-four years later, I broke the spell by incarnating her in another" (13).

As will be shown in the paper, Nabokov is scientifically exact in outlining both the roots and the symptoms of Humbert's obsessive "spell," which Humbert himself calls his "singularity" (11). Humbert's after-Annabel life, or rather existence, had a peculiar "rhythm": his bouts of insanity alternated with attempts to work and efforts to find suitable sexual partners.

### 2. Humbert and his Wives: Between Abuse and Being Abused:

#### 2.1 Wife One: Valechka, a "Substitute" for Annabel

Humbert never tried to conceal his contempt for Valechka, openly despising her and subjecting her not only to moral but also to physical abuse. Humbert did not even think of spying on Valechka, never doubting that she adored him. As a result, it was he who was cheated on and left behind as a divorcee.

#### 2.2 Wife Two: Charlotte, an "Anti-Annabel"

Humbert carefully concealed his contempt for his American wife Charlotte; instead, it was Charlotte who was abusive, and who openly (she broke the lock of his drawer) spied on him. Humbert had to fight for his rights but Charlotte always gained the upper hand and left him behind as a widower.

#### 2.3 "Wife" Three: Lolita, the "embodied" Annabel

Despite the fact that Humbert had no contempt for his "child wife" (240), she was subjected to both moral and physical abuse much more than Valechka because he cared for her so much. For the first time in his life Humbert was spying on his lover, and, despite all his efforts, he was

cheated on and left behind as neither a widower nor a divorcee but as a laughingstock.

### 3. Haunted by the Past: Is There a Suitable Wife for Humbert?

One might conclude that, having found the incarnation of Annabel, Humbert failed because he ignored their age difference. If Humbert, however, had been as mature as his age would suggest, he would have used his experience to get Lolita interested in him as a person and he would have been interested in Lolita as a person. Instead, he behaved exactly as he could have if he had consummated his relationship with Annabel – enjoying the sex and concealing this fact from the grown-ups as long as possible. Viewed from this angle, Humbert treated Valechka as a cute girl he invited to a prom and who appeared to be a “baba” (23), and Charlotte as “the obnoxious mamma” (89) whose opinion he had to consider. All Humbert’s marriages could not but collapse because, due to some “scarring” events in his early youth, in terms of moral growth he remained thirteen forever.

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**Ljuba Tarvi** got her BA degree in English philology in her native Russia, and her MA and PhD in comparative literature in Finland. The quantitative Token Equivalence Method elaborated in her PhD *Comparative Translation Assessment: Quantifying Quality* (2004) is based on a detailed filing of certain linguistic features followed by generalizations and triangulation with the findings by other methods. The TEM has been later used in computer linguistics and in studying such complex phenomena as metaphor and style. Tarvi has taught at the Universities of Novosibirsk (Russia), Tallinn (Estonia) and Helsinki (Finland). In literary studies, her papers have been devoted to Nabokov, Pushkin, Tolstoy and Bakhtin.

**Benjamin Taylor**

University of Nottingham, UK

## **Time and Space between Autobiography and Photographs in Vladimir Nabokov's *Speak, Memory***

As part of the final revision of his autobiography, *Speak, Memory* (1966) Nabokov inserted 18 photographic plates throughout the text, along with a foreword and an index. Described as the "most artistic of autobiographies" by Brian Boyd and as a "fairytale" by Nina Berberova, Nabokov's memoir transfigures remembered detail at the seeming expense of the conventions of realism and the genre of autobiography.

The addition of photographs to his authorial text might seem incoherent with this almost fictive approach that foregrounds artistic vision over documentary. Furthermore, his critical writing on the medium's mnemonic function is explicit: "The bad memoirist re-touches his past, and the result is a blue-tinted or pink-shaded photograph" (*Strong Opinions*, 186). Despite his strong aesthetic preference in his criticism, Nabokov nevertheless gives photography a powerful representative function in the final revision of his autobiography. This problematic role of photographs in Nabokov's memory representation will here be addressed in terms of the genre of the images, how they reflect the nature of Nabokov's text, and then how the two media interact in the representation of time and space.

Therefore, this paper will suggest a way to address the seeming disparity between Nabokov's criticism and his use of photographs. Their reading elsewhere has varied, being dismissed as uninformative or too literal (Berberova, Foster Jr.), or perceived as a paradox of postmodernist autobiography (Petit). Instead, this paper argues that their representative nature needs to be read with the same approach of artistic play and agency characteristic to all his work. As such, they become curated visual elements in a carefully constructed memoir text, and remain coherent when perceived as part of his innovative approach to autobiography.

This will be shown firstly by addressing aspects of pictorial genres unique to photography, including touristic, portraiture, scientific and journalistic, and indicating how these go beyond their thematic subjects, interacting with the time and space of the text's contents. Then the paper will examine how the photographic illustrations interact with the text's structure and chronology, and how Nabokov innovates with the paratext and the genre of autobiography. Through their own temporal and spatial representation, the photographs are thus incorporated into a new space for Nabokov's life story. They demonstrate the timelessness of autobiography, and yet the fragility of surviving history and exile, becoming a fundamental part of Nabokov's portrait of self and family.

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**Benjamin Taylor**, a PhD student in the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham, where he had previously read Russian and Serbian/Croatian as his BA (Hons). He completed his MA in The Photographic Image at the Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies, Durham University in 2011. He is now writing his PhD thesis on Vladimir Nabokov, Memory, and Photography.

**Valery Timofeev**

St. Petersburg State University, Russia

## **Memory as Fabulation in Nabokov's "Ultima Thule"**

The narrator of "Ultima Thule" is Sineusov, an artist who is heart-broken by the death of his wife. Sineusov imagines himself talking to his late beloved wife. The story seems, at least at the outset, to be a set of "voluntary memories" as contrasted with Marcel's involuntary memories in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Passed*. The first phrase of the story might be seen as a clear allusion to the "madeleine episode" in Proust. "Ultima Thule," though full of references and allusions to texts from all over the world, is quite subtle in its treatment of Proust's theme of achieving eternal life by turning *le temps perdu* into art in a much more concise yet more sophisticated way. The structure of the story can be described as a set of invertible *matrëškas* (Russian dolls) playing strange games when the smallest one turns inside out so as to envelope all the others, exhibiting a repeating self-similar pattern. Evolving fractal symmetry might be easily traced in a number of key phrases in the story: "the dream within a dream (when you dream you have awakened)"; or "If you don't remember, then I remember for you; the memory of you can pass [...] for your memory" (Nabokov 1973 [1940], 38). The same trick of evolving symmetry occurs with the idea of the Other World. Passing through several stages, it is transformed first into the Christian concepts of good and evil, then into Dante's version of hell mixed with paradise only to turn into eternal aesthetic reality while remaining an ironic parody of Plato's cave allegory. Other motifs and key ideas, including those of good and evil, to say nothing of other poetic commonplaces such as muses, mermaids, etc., reveal similar invertibility, playing a cat-and-mouse game with the readers of the story.

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**Valery Timofeev**, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences and in the Department of History of Foreign Literature, Philological Faculty, St. Petersburg State University. His list of publications includes 97 items, including Teaching Materials and Students Books on Literary History, Literary Theory, Narratology and English as a Foreign Language, academic publications in journals of Tartu University, Daugavpils (Latvia), Minsk (Belarus), Sichuan University (China), St. Petersburg State University, etc., and the monograph *John Fowles' Classes. Уроки Джона Фаулза* (St. Petersburg University Press, 2003).



**Gerard de Vries**

Independent Scholar

## **Caravelles Encircled by White Birds. *Speak, Memory*: Memoir or Fiction?**

In the revised edition of his autobiography Nabokov calls attention to the thematic patterns which design his life and which suggest the timelessness he believes in.

More conventional are the evocations of his childhood, which are presented as sources of indelible, eternal happy emotions. In this respect Nabokov has important precursors such as William Wordsworth and Marcel Proust, to whom he refers most positively.

In my paper I try to distinguish the parts played in *Speak, Memory* by memory and by imagination. Many parallels with Wordsworth "Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" and Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* are discussed, as are the childhood autobiographies by Sergei Aksakov and Alexander Herzen.

I conclude with the suggestion that the dominant role of the imagination justifies one to regard *Speak, Memory* as a novel about Nabokov's childhood memories.

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**Gerard de Vries**, published many articles on Nabokov's work in American, French and Russian academic journals since his first paper in *Russian Literature Triquarterly* in 1991. With D. Barton Johnson he wrote *Nabokov and the Art of Painting* (Amsterdam 2006) and recently his monograph *Silent Love. The Annotation and Interpretation of Nabokov's The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* has been published (Boston 2016).

**Mikołaj Wiśniewski**

University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland

## **Memory's Invisible Managers: The Case of Luzhin**

One of the most eerie aspects of *The Defense* is that the circumstances of the main protagonist's life bear such striking resemblance to Nabokov's own, but seem to be presented, photographically speaking, in negative. It is almost as if Nabokov was placing Luzhin in a reversed, hellish version of his own story. He not only gave Luzhin his "French governess, [his] pocket chess set, [and his] sweet temper", as he says in the Introduction to the English version of the novel, but actually included in many of the scenes details which are at the heart of some of *Speak, Memory's* most important meditations on the past and artistic remembrance. Again, however, these details acquire in *The Defense* inimical ambience. The most striking of these transformations of light into darkness, of the affirmative and jubilant into the oppressive and fateful, concerns the very concept of "good memory", of the artistic designing of life which, as Nabokov says in *Speak, Memory*, "should be (...) the true purpose of autobiography". The very same designing game, which in Nabokov's autobiography brings hope, is employed against Luzhin (and of course other characters later on) to oppress and destroy him. In my presentation I would like to consider the ambivalence of the figure of the memoirist in Nabokov's work – his tendency to transform into a Hyde-like, malevolent figure.

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**Mikołaj Wiśniewski**, teaches American literature at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw, Poland. He defended his PhD thesis at the University of Warsaw in 2007. In 2004/2005 he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2013 he was awarded the Kosciuszko Foundation Fellowship to do research at the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego. Dr Wiśniewski also holds an MA degree in philosophy from Warsaw University. He is the editor and co-founder of the renowned Polish philosophical quarterly *Kronos*. He has published essays on Nabokov in Polish and English (*Nabokov Online Journal*, vol. VIII, 2014).

# PAPERS IN RUSSIAN





**Борис Аверин / Boris Averin**

St. Petersburg State University, Russia

**Мария Виролайнен / Maria Virolainen**

Institute of Russian Literature  
(Pushkin House), Russian  
Academy of Sciences, Russia

## **Набоковская Мнемозина и концепт памяти в русской религиозной философии**

Доклад развивает предложенную в книге Б. В. Аверина «Дар Мнемозины: Романы Набокова в русской автобиографической традиции» концепцию, согласно которой для набоковского мнемозиниста важен не только добытый памятью факт, но и путь памяти навстречу этому факту. Концепту памяти как отпечатку прошлого в набоковском творчестве противопоставлено воспоминание как процесс. В докладе будет показано, каким образом эта особенность отвечает общим стремлениям философской мысли XX века к осознанию процессуальной природы реальности, в которой иллюзорной дискретности противостоят подлинная нераздельность мира, континуальность, «чистая длительность». Непростому согласованию подобного стремления с идеями всеединства, с одной стороны, и единственности – с другой были посвящены усилия таких мыслителей как Вл. Соловьев, П. Флоренский, Л. Карсавин. Этими усилиями определяется и разработанный в их трудах концепт памяти. Близкую проблему Набоков решал на протяжении всего творчества, от ранних стихов до поздних произведений.

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**Boris Averin**, born 11 March 1942, in 1962 graduated Arctic School and wintered on Franz Josef Land. In 1969 graduated Philology Department, Leningrad State University. Defended doctoral dissertation on Korolenko's memoirs, in 2000 – habilitation "Novels of Vladimir Nabokov in the Context of Russian Autobiographical Poetry and Prose." Teaches at St. Petersburg University since 1974. Scholarly interests include: Russian literature of the second half of 19th-20th Centuries. Key publications: monographs *Дар Мнемозины: Романы Набокова в контексте русской автобиографической традиции* [The Gift of Mnemosyne: Nabokov's Novels in the Context of Russian Autobiographical Tradition] (St. Petersburg, 2003); *От Толстого до Набокова: Из истории русской литературы* [From Tolstoy to Nabokov: From the History of Russian Literature] (St. Petersburg, 2014).

**Maria Virolainen**, born in Leningrad 19 April 1954. In 1981 defended doctoral dissertation "Gogol's Mirgorod: Problems of Style", in 2005 – habilitation "Four Types of Russian Verbal Culture: Historical Transformations." Starting from 1981 is employed at the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences, from 2004 holds the position of the Head of the Pushkin Studies Department. Starting from 2008 teaches at the St. Petersburg State University, lecturing on the Golden and Silver Age of Russian literature. Scholarly interests include: Russian literature of the 11-21st Centuries (historical, literary and cultural aspects, poetics), Pushkin studies (textual studies, historical and literary aspects). Key publications: monographs *Речь и молчание: сюжеты и мифы русской словесности* [Speech and Silence: Plots and Myths of the Russian Literature] (St. Petersburg, 2003); *Исторические метаморфозы русской словесности* [Historical Metamorphoses of the Russian Literature] (St. Petersburg, 2007).

## **Фюзеляж бабочки” или вокруг да около набокколо**

Я имею честь предложить участникам конференции свой, воистину свой НАБОКОВИАН — книгу в четыре с лишним сотню страниц сплошь составленную (мною) из цитат, выписок, анонимных очерков, стихотворных строк, веселых, причудливых, курьезных «горестных замет»

- взятых мною (навскидку, ибо это «окиян - море) на выбор из сонма газет, журналов и тому подобной печатной, эпистолярной и рукописной снеди (1890 – 1979).
- Вокруг да около Набокова (набокколо, это мое изобретение, корявая попытка метфоры; где-то встречается и у самого ВВ) — имея пред собой как партитуру на «колеблемом треножнике» (Ходасевич) раскрытые страницы «Table – talk»
- То бишь, его (Пушкина) записи о том и о сем «с чужих слов».
- Конечно, я больше расскажу о самой книге, кому она посвящена, о ее замысле и необходимости для нас, счастливо обитающих в необозримом пространстве и подчас трудно проходимых джунглях Владимира Набокова, героев его романов, повестей, рассказов эссе
- необходимых разве что для летописцев, будущих биографов писателя и хроникеров той, не так уж далеко ушедшей от нас, тут собравшихся, эпохи (шутка сказать, моя мама родилась всего-то на один год позже Владимира Набокова);
- затем я прочту несколько страниц из моего бесконечного «Набокковиана», относящегося к школьной, тенишевской юности Набокова – поэта в потоке времени и пространства.

«Фюзеляж бабочки»!!!???

Что за странных два слова, чьи они и зачем тут да еще в заглавье... Конечно – бабочки – это креатура Набокова, тут куда ни глянь – правда... А вот – Фюзеляж-то куда???

Что за «странное сближенье» (Пушкин). Заморская деталь самолета? Чужое слово, нечто жужжащее и причудливое и далекое для Высокого дома на Большой Морской, 47, с поварами, Милюковым, Бакстом, гаражом и «Волшебным фонарем» –игрушкой юного тенишевца..?

Но нет, все и тут правда (по моему мнению, не более того).

Ибо автор этого присловья, давшего заглавие для моей книги и задающего тон – Юрий Карлович Олеша, автор гениальных воспоминаний «Ни дня без строчки» – книги, идущей как говорила Анна Ахматова «ноздря в ноздрю» , один в один с бессмертным романом В.В. Набокова «Другие берега».

- И там и там есть строки и целые страницы схожие по стилю, по толстовской «энергии заблуждений» и даже по словам: причем оба – и Набоков и Олеша – жители обоих столиц Империи – Северной и Южной – театральной и гимназической – почти одинаково постигали

причуды взросления и очарования жизнью...

- оба превосходнейшие изобретатели метафор (третьим – или первым – по возрасту – здесь был конечно же – Александр Грин, но это для следующей конференции)...
- они зоркие свидетели одной неповторимой эпохи Уточкина, Пегу, братьев Люмьер, читатели Луи Буссенара, Майн Рида и Гончарова...

Недаром Набоков так гордился, что его давний друг и поэт Глеб Петрович Струве в одной из своих хрестоматий поставил его имя рядом с именами Пушкина, Чехова и Олеси.

«Мне выпала честь провести последним парадом старинные человеческие страсти».

КАВАЛЕРОВ. ОЛЕША «ЗАВИСТЬ».

„ ...Берёза действительно очень красивое дерево ... белый ствол, прозрачная, ясная листва. Чёрные поперечные взрезы на коре ствола, похожи на пароходы, топоры, на фигуры из диаграмм.

В листве сидят чижики, сами маленькие и зелёные, похожие на листья.

Одна, на пригорке, смотрела на меня, как женщина, раздвинувшая вокруг лица края шали ...”

ЮРИЙ ОЛЕША. 1956 г. «Ни дня без строчки»

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**Evgeny Belodubrovski**, writer, bibliographer, archeographer. A member of the St. Petersburg Writers' Union and of the St. Petersburg Scholars' Union. One of the editors and commentators of *Vladimir Nabokov: Pro et Contra*, a friend of the the Nabokov Museum in St. Petersburg. Participated in the editorial work on the Symposium editon of *Complete Works of Vladimir Nabokov* in Russian. One of the authors and editors of the 5 volume edition of the *Bibliographical Dictionary Russian Writers 1800-1917*.

**Ольга Дмитриенко / Olga Dmitrienko**

St. Petersburg State University of Technology and Design, Russia

## **Воспоминание и бессознательная родовая сакрализация. Жанры средневековой религиозной литературы как смысловые и стилистические ориентиры в создании образа отца Годунова-Чердынцева («Дар»)**

В частной истории каждого рода существуют свои «святые»: дед или отец, бабушка или другой близкий родственник, чья история жизни дает духовную опору для потомков. Часто мы не осознаем этого. Как и почему происходит бессознательная родовая сакрализация? Размышляя об этом, Набоков осуществляет родовую сакрализацию образа отца Константина Кирилловича Годунова-Чердынцева в воспоминании сына Федора.

Выстраивая нарратив воспоминаний, Набоков обращается к жанрам молитвенных песнопений (псалмов), восходящих к традиции древнееврейской и античной гимнографии; жанрам жития и паломничества как к источникам, содержащим сакральную систему значений. Таким образом, он позволяет своему герою Федору Годунову-Чердынцеву сакрализовать историю жизни отца как часть родовой истории.

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**Olga Dmitrienko**, philologist, specializes in Nabokov's studies. University courses taught by her include theory of literature and history of Russian literature *fin de siècle*. Major publications: monograph *Сквозь витражное окно. Поэтика русскоязычной прозы Набокова* [Through the Stained Glass: Poetics of Nabokov's Russian Novels] (St.Petersburg, 2014. 336p); article „Automatic Reading and Traditions of Glossolalia in the Novel *Invitation to a Beheading*” (St.Petersburg, 2013); “Ekphrasis of The Last Supper in Russian Prose of V. Nabokov” (St.Petersburg, 2015).



## Мицунори Сагае / Mitsunori Sagae

Soka University, Tokyo, Japan

# Россия как зрительная память: попытка прочтения нескольких стихов Владимира Набокова

Цель нашей работы заключается в прочтении стихотворений Владимира Набокова с точки зрения проблем постколониализма, и извлечении из них образов России как зрительной памяти. В «Культуре и Империализме» (1993) Эдуарда Саида подчёркнуто значение понимания литературного произведения с точки зрения «Othering» (Отличия другого от своего), с учетом бинарной оппозиции «Запад – Не-запад». В набокововедении редко встречается такой подход к анализу ранней поэзии писателя. Мы обращаемся к трем стихотворениям Владимира Набокова, написанным до эмиграции, в период пребывания молодого поэта в Крыму.

При решении вопроса зрительной памяти, репрезентированного произведениями В. Набокова, хотелось бы сопоставить его с проблемой остранения, которую В. Шкловский решал в статье «Искусство, как приём». По нашему мнению, в набоковских произведениях вопрос видения разделен на два вида: видение как остранение и видение как основа восстановления зрительной памяти. Например, в «Номере Гостиницы» (1919, Севастополь) лирическое «я» и его тень осматриваются с точки зрения поэта, вместе с тем, два стула осознаются и описываются как «не то кровать, не то скамья» из-за оптической иллюзии, связанной с отражением в зеркале. Можно анализировать с точки зрения остранения такое же описание оптической иллюзии в «Даре» и в других произведениях. Но эти стихотворения можно проанализировать ещё и с точки зрения контекстуального подхода, поскольку после пребывания в Крыму семья Набокова эмигрировала. Осознание самого «я» тенью можно истолковать как отличие позиции самого «я» (россиянина, живущего в своей стране) от позиции другого, того, кто уезжает за границу, и смотрит, как происходит гражданская война между красной и белой армиями на родине. В стихотворении «Россия» (1919, Крым), взгляд на свою страну с амбивалентным чувством также заметен. Это стихотворение написано амфибрахием, трехсложные стопы которого отрицают особенности мышления, основанного на бинарной оппозиции. А в «России» вопрос видения направлен не на остранение, а на восстановление России как образа зрительной памяти. В период гражданской войны, когда эти стихи были написаны, в России утвердилась точка зрения решения разных вопросов с бинарной оппозиции. А в набоковских стихотворениях, «я» и его тень («Номер в Гостинице»), и взгляд на родину («Россия», «Озеро», 1918, Крым), использовались для того, чтобы отличать само «я» (Россиянина в стране) от уезжающего за границу, осматривающего свою страну с точки зрения эмигранта.

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