The Proceedings of
the International Symposium

Vladimir Nabokov and Analytic Philosophy

Edited by
Akiko Nakata

The Nabokov Society of Japan

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Foreword

Hard, but Rewarding to Be a Nabokovian

Mitsuyoshi Numano

This volume of proceedings is the complete record of the "Cyber Conference" that took place in May 2021. In the midst of the seemingly endless new coronavirus pandemic, it is not unusual for various academic conferences to be held online, but most of them use a real-time video conferencing tool such as Zoom, Meet, Teams, or Webex. This conference, on the other hand, was held on a special website of the Nabokov Society of Japan, where the texts of the comments and all the discussions were posted after the files of the papers were emailed to the participants.

Compared to the real-time online method, it seems to be a snaillike way of doing things, but the results were unexpectedly remarkable: a very lively exchange of ideas and discussions developed over the course of about a month on our web pages. According to the estimate by Professor Akiko Nakata, the main organizer and moderator of the conference, the total of all the papers, comments, questions and answers posted on the web was equivalent to eleven hours of oral communication. This shows just how lively the conference was.

Unfortunately, I was not able to take part in this lively discussion and could only watch from the side, but after the conference Professor Akiko Nakata asked me to write a foreword to the proceedings, as I happen to be the president of the Nabokov Society of Japan. I was delighted to accept her offer, but it turned out to be both an honor and a great challenge. Although I have enjoyed reading Nabokov's literary works in Russian and English over the years, I am not at all familiar with entomology or analytic philosophy (I knew nothing about the philosopher G. E. Moore before this conference, for that matter), and I found it difficult to keep up with the discussions that took place at the conference. However, it was also a very rewarding intellectual pursuit to read all the texts. I would like to thank Professor Akiko Nakata for providing me with this unique opportunity.

The keynote of the conference was set by papers by Brian Boyd, Zoran Kuzmanovich and Akiko Nakata, to which Tora Koyama, an expert in analytic philosophy, provided detailed comments.

Professor Boyd, who is, needless to say, one of the foremost authorities on Nabokov in the world today, has always been a special mentor to us at the Nabokov Society of Japan. He has given much of his time and expertise to us over the years and has shared his expertise with us generously. This time he has contributed to the conference a brief, but comprehensive comparison of the two intellectual giants of the 20th century, namely Vladimir Nabokov and Karl Popper. They were contemporaries who spent a great deal of time parallelly, but they had very little personal contact. Nabokov, first and foremost an aesthetic artist and subjective idealist, and Popper, a philosopher of science who valued objectivity, were like water and oil.

Professor Boyd, however, devoted his energies to Popper as well as to Nabokov and succeeded in presenting the brilliant intellectual "*vitae parallela*" that paired Nabokov and Popper, who are not easy

to grasp in their entirety, even when taken individually. As a result, Professor Boyd makes a convincing case that, despite the many differences between them, they unexpectedly have much in common with each other in the realm of ideas. In coming to this conclusion, he touches on a number of universally important topics, such as human freedom and the openness of the future, creativity and critical thinking, time and death; it clearly demonstrates the enormous range of his paper which seems to have condensed so many ideas into a brief presentation. But what is more interesting to me is that the very idea of "comparing the incomparable" (a term by David Damrosch)—Nabokov and Popper—raises the question of what the act of comparison means in the first place. As we follow Boyd's arguments, we can better understand the specificities of these two great minds by seeing how they illuminate each other in spite of their fundamental differences. Isn't that the ultimate significance of the act of comparison?

Professor Zoran Kuzmanovich is also an eminent Nabokov scholar and an old friend of the Nabokov Society of Japan. We owe him much inspiration as well. His contribution for this conference is a fresh one, dealing with a totally unexpected theme. Contrasting Nabokov's early piece "Man and Things" with the British philosopher Gregory Currie's essay "Empathy for objects," he argues that both of them examine "the power of discrete objects to affect the sensibilities." Currie is a British scholar who began his career in Frege studies, but later became known mainly for his work on philosophical aesthetics and the philosophy of mind. Indeed, as Professor Kuzmanoivich's unique approach shows, the contrast of Currie with Nabokov provides a rich food for thought. If Professor Boyd's comparison of Nabokov and Popper is perhaps the first serious attempt in the history of Nabokov studies, Professor Kuzmanoivich's comparison of Nabokov and Currie offers an even more unexpected perspective.

Professor Kuzmanovich's essay is so brilliantly developed, with so many questions piled on top of each other that it was difficult for me, not being familiar with Currie's philosophy, to follow, but the comments of Professor Tora Koyama provide excellent guidance. Professor Koyama is a philosopher, specializing in analytic philosophy, affiliated with the Research Institute for Time Studies (Yamaguchi University), perhaps the only institute of its kind in Japan. From the standpoint of such a professional philosopher, he lucidly explains Professor Kuzmanovic's series of questions as a critique of Currie's theory of empathy and extends the discussion to a wider scope. Kuzmanovich's questions are then met with Koyama's counterquestion: *Is empathy for objects the only way to realize the* "*otherwise*" *worlds?*

This is not the place to insert personal digressions, but I can't resist the temptation to point one out from my own interest. It is a question about the relationship between man and things in the context of Russian literature of the late 1920s, which apparently has something to do with the question of empathy for objects, but which goes beyond its framework. In Nabokov's novel *King, Queen, Knave* (1928), written at almost the same time as "Man and Things," there is a striking phrase: "Things did not love Franz" (вещи не любили Франца).[1] A very similar expression can be found in Yury Olesha's novel *Envy* (1927) when its protagonist Kavalerov complains: "Things don't love me" (Меня не любят вещи).[2] We can presume that Nabokov was aware of Olesya's *Envy*, but what matters here is not that Nabokov is making a secret quotation from Olesha. Rather, the point may be that, in their clumsy inability to come to terms with the real world of things, Kavalerov and Franz have much in common and perhaps it refers to a rather hostile relationship between man and things

where imaginative creation of the aesthetic through empathy is forbidden.

The third paper, last but by no means least, "Ludwig Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore Hidden in *Transparent Things*" by Professor Akiko Nakata, one of the leading Nabokov scholars in Japan. Once Professor Nakata pioneered the theme of Wittgenstein in Nabokov with her groundbreaking article "Wittgenstein Echoes in *Transparent Things*" in 2000. This time, however, she takes it a step further, establishing from a variety of angles that not only Wittgenstein, but also the so called "Moore's Paradox" (as Wittgenstein called it) and eventually G. E. Moore himself cast a shadow over Nabokov's novel. This study is an exemplary combination of biographical inquiry and meticulous textual analysis that explores the subtle references to Shakespeare's plays in the novel and leads to the thrilling discovery that the relationship between Wittgenstein and Moore is parallel to that between Hamlet and Horatio. It clearly shows how reading Nabokov can be both a challenging and a delightful discipline.

In this conference, all the three papers by Boyd, Kuzmanovich, and Nakata have been accurately reviewed and critically commented on by the aforementioned Professor Tora Koyama with his expertise in analytic philosophy. He also brings in the historical context of philosophy and thus tries to contextualize the discussion. Professor Shoko Miura, another leading Nabokov scholar in Japan along with Professor Nakata, and Ryo Chonabayashi, an expert in philosophy and ethics, also joined the discussion. Thus, the symposium on the web page becomes a kind of chorus (true, not always harmonious) of creative debate with the participation of diverse specialists: literary scholars as well as philosophy researchers. In the course of these discussions there sometimes occur rare and illuminating moments. For example, when Professor Miura, in a comment on empathy, contrasts Nabokov with Chaplin in a rather striking way, Professor Kuzmanovich takes over the unexpected pair and readily begins to elaborate on the comparison of *Limelight* and *Lolita*.

Then, when Professor Miura asks a penetrating question about memory in Nabokov and Popper, Professor Boyd, explaining in response to it the striking difference between the two great minds' views of memory, comes up with the idea of writing a new book devoted to the topic "Nabokov and Popper: the two giants of 20th-century achievement." It is thrilling to witness such a moment.

When Professor Nakata asked me to write this foreword, the first thing that came to my mind was the phrase: "Hard to be a Nabokovian," which is my parody of the title of a novel by the Brothers Strugatsky "Hard to Be a God." In order to be a Nabokov scholar, it is not enough to be a literary scholar with a good knowledge of stylistics and poetics. You have to be at least fluent in Russian and English, a good chess player and a professional lepidopterist. And in addition, you must be an expert in analytic philosophy!?

Then I called to mind the defiant words of the Soviet semiotician Yury Lotman. In a debate with conservative ideological critics in the Soviet Union, Lotman argued that "literary study must be a science":

> A new kind of literary scholar is a researcher who needs to combine a broad mastery of independently gathered empirical material with the skills of deductive reasoning produced by the exact sciences. He must be a linguist (...), be skilled in working with other modeling systems, keep abreast of psychological science, and constantly sharpen his scientific method by reflecting on the general problems of semiotics and cybernetics. (...) He should

train himself to cooperate with mathematicians, and ideally to combine literary scholar, linguist, and mathematician in his person.

Yes, it is becoming difficult to be a literary scholar, and it will become immeasurably more difficult in the near future. And in this, perhaps, is the most encouraging result of the new developments in the humanities.[3]

To borrow Lotman's expression, it is indeed becoming more difficult to be a Nabokovian. But it is also the hope of a new development in literary studies. What this conference has shown is that those idyllic days are now a thing of the past when even such an erudite literary scholar as Harry Levin could say, laughing, "But he [Nabokov] doesn't have a philosophy!" (as quoted at the beginning of Professor Boyd's paper). Thanks to this conference, now we know that Nabokov had a philosophy and we have before us a fascinating *terra incognita* to explore.

Notes

1 Юрий Олеша, Избранное. М.: Книжный клуб 36.6, с. 18.

2 Владимир Набоков, Собрание сочинений русского периода в пяти томах. Том 2. СПб.: Симпозиум, 1999, с. 278.

3 Лотман, Ю. Литературоведение должно быть наукой / Ю. Лотман // Вопросы литературы. −1967 - № 1. −С. 100. The translation from Russian into English is mine. The Russian original is as follows: Литературовед нового типа - это исследователь, которому необходимо соединить широкое владение самостоятельно добытым эмпирическим материалом с навыками дедуктивного мышления, вырабатываемого точными науками. Он должен быть лингвистом (поскольку в настоящее время языкознание «вырвалось вперед» среди гуманитарных наук и именно здесь зачастую вырабатываются методы общенаучного характера), владеть навыком работы с другими моделирующими системами, быть в курсе психологической науки и постоянно оттачивать свой научный метод, размышляя над общими проблемами семиотики и кибернетики. Он должен приучать себя к сотрудничеству с математиками, а в идеале - совместить в себе литературоведа, лингвиста и математика. Он должен воспитывать в себе типологическое мышление, никогда не принимая привычной ему интерпретации за конечную истину. Да, быть литературоведом становится трудно и в ближайшее время станет еще неизмеримо труднее. И в этом, может быть, самый обнадеживающий результат новых веяний в гуманитарных науках.

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Symposium

Greetings

The Nabokov Society of Japan is pleased to present an online symposium called “Vladimir Nabokov and Analytic Philosophy” as a part of our annual NSJ Conference on May 15, 2021. Anyone interested is welcome to join us online.

The symposium will host Brian Boyd and Zoran Kuzmanovich, with Akiko Nakata as moderator. Our society has invited many leading Nabokovians from overseas, including Professors Boyd and Kuzmanovich, as speakers at our conferences, but thanks to the convenience of online communication, we are able to welcome these two legendary Nabokovians to our cyber-conference free from COVID−19.

This project is also an interdisciplinary collaboration. We invited as guest commentator, Dr. Tora Koyama, who specializes in analytic philosophy and has ample experience in interdisciplinary projects.

For this online symposium, you can read and refer to the speakers’ papers and comments, and the commentator’s comments as well as their biographies and abstracts on this webpage as materials.

I hope that many scholars and readers will join us and that this symposium will be an opportunity for all the participants to experience a new border-crossing *krug* [circle] of research. I am deeply grateful to our guest speakers and commentator, my colleague Nabokovians, and all the participants for their great support.

Akiko Nakata, Moderator
The Nabokov Society of Japan

* Uploaded April 26, 2021

Papers / Comments and Discussions / Questions and Answers

Brian Boyd

Paper

Nabokov and Popper: Convergences and Divergences

Vladimir Nabokov（1899−1977）and Karl Popper（1902−1994）overlapped for 75 years. In their last decades Nabokov was often called the greatest writer—and Popper the greatest thinker—of his time. Both published several times in the prominent highbrow journal *Encounter*, but neither showed any awareness of the other.[1] While I was working on Nabokov's biography, I gave a copy of Popper's autobiography to his widow, Véra, for Christmas 1984. She said that it was over her head, but that Popper was certainly *original*—perhaps the supreme compliment in the Nabokovs' vocabulary. And now I'm working on *Popper's* biography.

The distinguished literary critic Harry Levin, a close friend of Nabokov's, asked me, when I first interviewed him, what interested me most in Nabokov. Caught off guard—or I might have simply said "Everything"—I found myself answering, "I suppose—his philosophy." Levin laughed: "But he doesn't have a philosophy!" No critic familiar with Nabokov would make that mistake now. Nabokov made the heroes of his novels *Bend Sinister* and *Ada* philosophers; he invokes philosophers from Heraclitus and Parmenides, through Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine, to Descartes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, and more; his work has a philosophical—especially metaphysical and epistemological—cast from almost the first to the last, and from the first chapter of his autobiography to the last.

Both Nabokov and Popper straddled many disciplines. Nabokov was a world-class scientist—a lepidopterist—as well as a writer, scholar, translator, and chess problemist, and emphasized the value of combining the artistic and the scientific: "Does there not exist a high ridge where the mountainside of 'scientific' knowledge joins the opposite slope of 'artistic' imagination?"[2] Popper was even more diverse, ranging from the pre-Socratics to quantum physics, from probability and biology to ethics and from logic and epistemology to politics, and composed Bach-like fugues played by world-class organists, and *he* writes: "Science is not only, like art and literature, an adventure of the human spirit, but it is among the creative arts perhaps the most human."[3]

Both were fiercely individual and champions of the independence of the individual. Popper, much less known for his humor than Nabokov, jokes that almost his only exercise was "swimming against the tide"[4]—a comment Nabokov might have made if he weren't so well known as a sportsman and butterfly hunter.

Their two rich, curious, polymathic, and highly distinctive minds raise interesting philosophical questions in their convergences and divergences of attitudes.

First, their instruments and their disciplines. Nabokov likes words, often the rarer the better（*stillicide*, *ganch*, *kinbote*, *luciola*, *mollitude*）; "the one real treasure a true writer has";[5] he likes "to take a word and turn it over and to see its underside"[6] and claims he dislikes ideas and generalizations（by which he usually means *other people's* ideas）: "Big general ideas are in yesterday's newspaper."[7]

Popper likes ideas and powerful generalizations and dislikes both focusing on words or definitions,[8] common in the analytic tradition in twentieth-century philosophy, and piling on would-be impressive words, frequent in the continental tradition from Hegel on. Both Nabokov and Popper liked translating but had contrary views: Nabokov wanted his to be literal, to find the most exact equivalent for every word and image; Popper, who loved retranslating the pre-Socratics, especially Xenophanes and Parmenides, preferred bold imaginative reinterpretation and even asked for that, rather than flat-footed literalism, from translators of his own work.

I could spend the whole time just on their contrasting attitudes to words and ideas. But let's move to larger issues.

Both Nabokov and Popper emphasized human freedom and the openness of the future. Nabokov, who confessed to "an innate passion for independence,"[9] would have loved Popper's way of explaining his "idea of freedom": "that thought is essentially creative and contributes to the creation of a future in every single person's life"[10]—although Nabokov might not have been so sanguine about "*every single person's* life." Popper, after writing that "Science . . . is among the creative arts perhaps the most human," adds that it "shows those flashes of insight which open our eyes to the wonders of the world and of the human spirit. But this is not all. Science is the direct result of that most human of all human endeavours—to liberate ourselves."[11] Nabokov, in unusually serious mode, describes the purpose of learning, as he sees it, as "enriching one's individuality by enlarging one's spiritual horizons and thus becoming better adapted to serve the spiritual and cultural development of the world."[12] Both in their own ways were champions of freedom, attacking both communist and fascist totalitarianism in books they wrote during World War II: Nabokov in the novel *Bend Sinister*, begun in 1941, just after Hitler invaded his native Russia, and Popper in what he called his "war work," *The Open Society and its Enemies*, begun in 1939, if not even sooner after Hitler swallowed up his native Austria.

Both insist on the openness of the future. Nabokov goes so far as to deny that the future exists: [13] "nor do I believe that the future is transformed into a third panel of Time, even if we do anticipate something or other";[14] "Perhaps if the future existed, concretely and individually, as something that could be discerned by a better brain. . . . But the future has no such reality (as the pictured past and the perceived present possess); the future is but a figure of speech, a specter of thought."[15] Popper stressed the reality of time and that the future cannot be foreseen, not least because it "depends partly upon us,"[16] including our future inventions, which we cannot foresee or they would not be *future* inventions.[17] Popper insists on the arrow of time;[18] Nabokov denies it;[19] but actually, curiously, I think they mean the same thing.

Both believe in the endlessness of discovery. Nabokov describes scientific theories as "always the temporary gropings for truth of more or less gifted minds which gleam, fade, and are replaced by others,"[20] a conception almost exactly like Popper's, but quite independently arrived at. Or as he remarks more vividly at the end of his last finished novel: "the neat formula a physicist finds to keep people happy . . . until the next chap snatches the chalk."[21] Popper has his own image: "The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test, and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game."[22]

Both Nabokov and Popper stress the relationship between creativity and criticism in both artistic and scientific discovery. Nabokov declares that "Next to the right to create, the right to criticize is the

richest gift that liberty of thought and speech can offer."[23] He holds adamantly to his right to criticize anything or anybody, not just a Dostoevsky or a Stendhal, but even a Shakespeare or a Pushkin, however much he may admire them. And he thinks that art advances by knowing and challenging one's tradition, by criticizing and overcoming the conventions, the stale expressions and forms and feelings, of the past. He revised so heavily that he would write in pencil, rubbing out what was not good enough, and proudly declare that he wore out his erasers at the end of the pencil before he used up the lead. Criticism is even more central to Popper; indeed, he once defined it as the unifying factor in his thought.[24] He criticizes not only Plato, Marx, and Freud, but even Darwin and Einstein, whom he reveres. He stresses that science advances through a tradition of criticizing traditions, of challenging old answers, even if they are as apparently endlessly confirmed as Newton's laws of motion, or the chemical formula for water, H20.[25] He is known as the founder of critical rationalism, but I would call his philosophy "creatively critical rationalism," because for Popper rationalism is the ability to accept criticism and the challenge of contrary facts, and a spur to the creative invention of new hypotheses—which he stresses, are imaginative leaps. And he too revises his own work compulsively, changing his text before and after publication and adding twenty addenda to the ten revised editions of his breakthrough work, *Logik der Forschung*, the *Logic of Scientific Discovery*.

Nevertheless, Nabokov and Popper have two or three strong and central philosophical differences.

First, in their contrasting attitudes to the subjective and individual versus the objective and the social. Nabokov thinks individual consciousness primary, the source of all our knowledge. That has been a central position in the empiricist tradition, from Locke to Mach. Nabokov goes even further: he describes himself as "an indivisible monist."[26] Shadowing the philosopher Krug in *Bend Sinister*, he writes: "consciousness, which is the only real thing in the world and the greatest mystery of all."[27] Monism, especially a mind-first or mind-only monism, was philosophically dominant in the world in which he grew up. "Reality," he writes, "is a very subjective affair."[28]

But Popper—one of whose key books is *Objective Knowledge*—rejects the idea that our knowledge derives from subjective perception. He argues against what he calls "the bucket theory of the mind, which in the history of philosophy is well known as the theory of the *tabula rasa*, or the 'empty blackboard,' on which experience is to engrave its findings" on the grounds "that most of the dispositions which constitute our knowledge are inborn, or hereditary; that most of those which are not inborn are modifications of inborn dispositions; and that the remainder are taken over from objective knowledge, and are not subjective at all. So, actually, nothing remains of the 'bucket theory'—it is wrong on all counts."[29]

What Popper means by "objective knowledge" is the knowledge we have acquired through language and the theories that language allows to be intersubjectively proposed, criticized, and superseded: the identifications, for instance, of distinct species of tree, flower, butterfly, and bird that were so important to Nabokov. Nabokov had to learn these himself, but this does not make the knowledge subjective, since he learned it from prior cumulative proposals and revisions by others, from hard-won "objective knowledge."

Popper emphasizes that the psychological world (which he labels World 2) engages not only with the physical world (which he labels World 1) but also with and through the world of objective products of the human mind (World 3), like language, theories, and works of art. He does not minimize the subjective, as some think (for us, World 2 is always there), but he proposes that the

objective products of the human mind offer a unique and humanly central way for us to grasp the world, to criticize our grasp, to discover where we are inadequate and where we need to learn more.

Here I must say that think Popper has the better epistemological position, and a fairer apportionment of the relationship between the individual and the social.

Second, Nabokov extols the irrational, the inexplicable, the trans-rational, where Popper promotes and seeks to extend the rational: he is, after all, the proposer of "critical rationalism."

This needs unpacking. What do they mean by the irrational? First, the priceless particularity of individual things and moments and places. Popper sounds surprisingly like Nabokov when he writes that

> the unique individual and his unique actions and experiences and relations to other individuals can never be fully rationalized. And it appears to be just this irrational realm of unique individuality which makes human relations important. Most people would feel, for example, that what makes their lives worth living would largely be destroyed if they themselves, and their lives, were in no sense unique but in all and every respect typical of a class of people, so that they repeated exactly all the actions and experiences of all other men who belong to this class. It is the uniqueness of our experiences which, in this sense, makes our lives worth living, the unique experience of a landscape, of a sunset, of the expression of a human face.[30]

Or the flight of a particular swift: Nabokov expresses much the same thought in the language of poetry in what he calls his "favourite Russian poem"（it's much better in the original）, written by the hero of his greatest Russian novel, *The Gift*:

> One night between sunset and river
> On the old bridge we stood, you and I.
> Will you ever forget it, I queried,
> —That particular swift that went by?
> And you answered, so earnestly: Never!
>
> And what sobs made us suddenly shiver.
> What a cry life emitted in flight!
> Till we die, till tomorrow, for ever,
> You and I on the old bridge one night.[31]

Second, Nabokov and Popper agree on calling the irrational what is and must remain beyond human knowledge. Nabokov values the irrational—he writes of "the dreamworld of permanent and irrational art,"[32] he comments that "Steady Pushkin, matter-of-fact Tolstoy, restrained Chekhov have all had their moments of irrational insight which simultaneously blurred the sentence and disclosed a secret meaning worth the sudden focal shift."[33] But he values the irrational in his own way, without eschewing the rational, the right to discover, analyze, and criticize: "The creative work of the mind is based upon a happy agreement between the rational and the irrational. By rational I do not mean the linear logic of pedestrian thought; and by irrational I do not mean the vulgar vortex of more or less neolithic instincts."[34]

Nabokov extols "inspiration,"[35] the sense that creative ideas come from somewhere unknown and unknowable, somewhere irrational. In this he and Popper are surprisingly close. Popper too denies "the linear logic of pedestrian thought" as a way of arriving at scientific ideas (although it is necessary for *testing* them, as Nabokov would agree that cool, alert reason is necessary for testing artistic choices). Despite his breakthrough first book being called *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Popper maintains there that there are no logical steps we can take to arrive at hypotheses, which he sees as bold creative leaps: "there is no such thing as a logical method of having new ideas, or a logical reconstruction of this process. My view may be expressed by saying that every discovery contains 'an irrational element,' or 'a creative intuition,' in Bergson's sense."[36] Nabokov would have liked Popper's later formulation: "knowledge is an adventure of ideas."[37]

One of Nabokov's strongest objections to "logic" or "rationality" is to the "logic" of cause and effect, the supposed complete rational explicability of events, what he calls "the miserable idea of determinism, the prison regulation of cause and effect."[38] Against this, he asserts that "The highest achievement[s] in poetry, prose, painting, showmanship are characterized by the irrational and illogical, by that spirit of free will that snaps its rainbow fingers in the face of smug causality."[39] Popper agreed with Nabokov in rejecting determinism and the apparent logic of cause and effect. He began to argue in the 1950s that "Our universe is partly causal, partly probabilistic, and partly open: it is emergent."[40] He "completely reforms . . . the theory of causality,"[41] he considers, by introducing the notion of "propensity" rather than rigid causality. Propensities are "real dispositions" within a non-deterministic state of affairs: "although the fact that the state of affairs is not deterministic may well be said to indicate an incompleteness, this incompleteness may be not a fault of the theory—of the description—but a reflection of the indeterminateness of reality, of the state of affairs itself."[42] Nabokov would have liked the title of the book that first spelled out this proposal: *The Open Universe*.

Nabokov's advocacy of the irrational appears less in conflict with Popper's critical rationalism than might first seem the case. Both accept the irrationality, and the value, of the particular; and the irrationality, the creative surprise, the inexplicable inventiveness, of discovery; and the openness of a world less controlled by a tight logic of cause and effect than commonsense may suppose.

I was planning to write that there is one area in which Nabokov and Popper remain some distance apart. Both Nabokov and Popper emphasize the limits of human understanding, of human rationality, but for Nabokov transcending these limits is a metaphysical issue, whereas for Popper it is an epistemological one. But that contrast started to dissolve as I assembled the evidence.

Both are indeed very aware of the limits of human knowledge, once we ask ultimate hard questions. After talking once about the occult in the work of seventeenth-century archpriest Avvakum, the first Russian prose master, Nabokov added, musingly: "Electricity. Time. Space. We know *nothing* about these things."[43] In a discussion of religion, Popper says something strikingly similar: "An ideology-free religion would above all be one that is intellectually modest: for we know so little; even in physics we have no idea why (for example) all electrons have the same charge or all subelectrons ('quarks')."[44] Or more generally, Popper the fallibilist says: "I know how *very* little I know—much less than many others—and I know that *none* of us knows anything."[45]

Nabokov has strong, at times almost mystical, intuitions about states of being beyond the limits of human understanding, perhaps in the form of a transformation of human consciousness beyond human death, perhaps in some designing consciousness in the universe, some God. He builds into any hints

or hopes of these, however, a sense of how humanly unknowable these states would be, how "irrational" they are, since to rational thought they are indescribable, inexplicable. Take the hereafter:

> Van pointed out that here was the rub—one is free to imagine any type of hereafter, of course: the generalized paradise promised by Oriental prophets and poets, or an individual combination; but the work of fancy is handicapped—to a quite hopeless extent—by a logical ban: you cannot bring your friends along—or your enemies for that matter—to the party. The transposition of all our remembered relationships into an Elysian life inevitably turns it into a second-rate continuation of our marvelous mortality. Only a [fool] . . . can imagine being met, in that Next-Installment World, to the accompaniment of all sorts of tail-wagging and groveling of welcome, by the mosquito executed eighty years ago upon one's bare leg, which has been amputated since then and now, in the wake of the gesticulating mosquito, comes back, stomp, stomp, stomp, here I am, stick me on.[46]

Or take the idea of a God. When he was asked by an interviewer: "do you believe in God?" Nabokov answered: "To be quite candid—and what I am going to say now is something I never said before, and I hope it provokes a salutary little chill—I know more than I can express in words, and the little I can express would not have been expressed, had I not known more."[47] Asked by another interviewer about his attitude to religion, he replied: "it seems to me that every artist is in contact with something which he doesn't quite understand, and I have always had that sensation—that there's something so mysterious about everything when you start to think of it, you are just on the brink of insanity. For instance, I can't think for a long time about space being infinite. I've *tried* that and I've gone rather far out into space, and of course space is infinite."[48]

Curiously, this is all far less distant from Popper than one might expect. Nabokov's reflections on infinity in space resemble and could perhaps—although there is no evidence—owe something to Kant on the antinomies of reason at the beginning of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Popper writes: "I am a rationalist; but reason tells me that reason has its limits. In this, as in many other points, I am not far removed from Kant."[49] Elsewhere, he elaborates: "We may know how little we know, but this must not be turned or twisted into a positive knowledge of the existence of an unfathomable secret. There is a lot in the world that is in the nature of an unfathomable secret, but I do not think that it is admissible to make a theology out of a lack of knowledge nor turn our ignorance into anything like positive knowledge. . . . Any discussion of God somehow is in a sense unpleasant. When I look at what I call the gift of life, I feel a gratitude which is in tune with some religious ideas of God. However, the moment I even speak of it, I am embarrassed that I may do something wrong to God in talking about God."[50] He even writes: "I think that all theology is blasphemy"[51] and "My objection to organized religion is that it tends to use the name of God in vain."[52]

This is uncannily like not only Nabokov's "there's something so mysterious about everything when you start to think of it" and his "in my metaphysics, I am a confirmed non-unionist and have no use for organized tours through anthropomorphic paradises,"[53] but also like his sense of gratitude at the gift of life, and his sense of the unknowable source of that gift: his "thrill of gratitude to whom it may concern,"[54] as he puts it in his autobiography, or his hero Fyodor's "getting deeper, to the bottom of things: understand what is concealed behind all this, behind the play, the sparkle, the thick, green grease-paint of the foliage? For there really is something, there is something! And one wants to offer thanks but there is no one to thank. The list of donations already made: 10,000 days—from Person

Unknown."[55]

There is a difference between Nabokov and Popper here, but it is subtle. In the last chapter of his autobiography, Nabokov refers again to the limits of our knowledge and what may lie beyond: for instance, the disinclination of "professional physicists to discuss the outside of the inside, the whereabouts of the curvature; for every dimension presupposes a medium within which it can act, and if, in the spiral unwinding of things, space warps into something akin to time, and time, in its turn, warps into something akin to thought, then, surely, another dimension follows—a special Space maybe, not the old one, we trust, unless spirals become vicious circles again."[56] "A special Space, . . . we trust": despite the vagueness of the prospect Nabokov proposes, Popper would not even go this far. The spiral image here is one dear to Nabokov's heart, and connected for him with the so-called Hegelian triad.[57] In one place he even notes privately:

> From the point of view of evolutionary dialectics the hereafter finds its beautiful proof in the following series:
>
> 1. Time without consciousness (the lower animal world)
> 2. Time with consciousness (man = chelovek = Conscious Time)
> 3. Consciousness without Time (the future of the immortal soul)
>
> **NB**: The last term is really the thesis of a new series [58]

Here Nabokov shows his difference from Popper: a private quest for something beyond death, even a hunch, for at least a moment, that thought signposts the way there; and a readiness to say, publicly, that "surely, another dimension follows"—but, even here, a recognition that he cannot say more. Popper on the other hand emphasizes the mysterious and unknowable, and the reverence for mystery in the humility of scientists at their best: "And who shows greater reverence for mystery, the scientist who devotes himself to discovering it step by step, always ready to submit to facts, and always aware that even his boldest achievement will never be more than a stepping-stone for those who come after him, or the mystic who is free to maintain anything because he need not fear any test?"[59]

And finally, one area where Nabokov and Popper differ emphatically: their attitudes toward death. Nabokov's last philosopher, Van Veen, writes in his last chapter, about dying, that there are

> three facets to it (roughly corresponding to the popular tripartition of Time). There is, first, the wrench of relinquishing forever all one's memories—that's a commonplace, but what courage man must have had to go through that commonplace again and again and not give up the rigmarole of accumulating again and again the riches of consciousness that will be snatched away! Then we have the second facet—the hideous physical pain—for obvious reasons let us not dwell upon that. And finally, there is the featureless pseudo-future, blank and black, an everlasting nonlastingness, the crowning paradox of our boxed brain's eschatologies![60]

But for Popper individual death is final and not to be regretted—"I should think less of a Universe which makes of me an indestructible piece of furniture"[61]—but hopes that as a species we may be able to liberate ourselves, gradually, successively, from the limitations of our subjective perspectives, in a kind of social transcendence of the limitations of individual consciousness that Nabokov feels so acutely and would like to transcend in death.[62] All the same, Popper too knew that given how little he

knew he could exclude nothing. His secretary and confidante reports his saying: "If there is a God, I'll know about it in due course."[63]

Nabokov and Popper are not identical in their epistemology and metaphysics, but for two individuals so independent of mind, their very substantial similarity is surprising. How could we account for this degree of convergence, despite the difference between their fields and their mental dispositions—which I could detail if I had space? Because of a common derivation from Kant? But unlike Popper, Nabokov gives no sign that Kant occupied any particular place in his thinking. Because Nabokov, like Popper, understood the necessary modesty of the scientist, the difficulty of discovering more about the world? But few scientists share the common features of Nabokov's and Popper's epistemology and metaphysics. Because of the scientific revolutions of the twentieth century, starting with Einstein, whose results Nabokov did not accept but realized, as Popper did, that they confirmed how little we know for sure? Or just because of a rare convergence of genius?

And what does this comparison of Nabokov's and Popper's epistemologies and metaphysics show? Is it a simple tabulation of similarities and dissimilarities, without the space to argue for or evaluate any position? Nabokov has one of his most gifted characters say: "Resemblances are the shadows of differences. Different people see different similarities and similar differences"[64]— itself a remark rich in philosophical significance. Is this essay just an anthological showcase of original ideas and alternatives of some force and value, which can offer food for thought both in their convergences (how did two men with such differences come to agree so often?) and in their divergences (who has the better position, or how could one position challenge the other or complement it?)? Is it a demonstration of the range of options available in one historical era, even for people who agree in many unusual ways, and who both strongly resist the clichés of their time? Does it show the depth of Nabokov's thinking, and the creativity of Popper's? Or is it no more than a demonstration of what appeals to me: am I the lowest common denominator?

Let me conclude with a few final observations. Had I investigated Nabokov's and Popper's esthetics, we would have seen little but their divergences; had I investigated their ethics, I'm not sure what I would find, because both, for different reasons, tended to avoid talking about ethics directly. Had they known each other's work, Nabokov would have loved Popper's ideas, and Popper would have hated Nabokov's words. Had they met in person, Nabokov's playfulness would have recoiled from Popper's seriousness, and vice versa. But in the realm of ideas they embrace even more warmly than I expected.

Notes

1 With one small exception, which I discovered, to my great surprise, only after completing this essay. Nabokov took notes from G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961) for the essay on *The Texture of Time* composed by the hero and narrator of his 1969 novel, *Ada*, philosopher Van Veen. Among the notes, which include brief quotations from other philosophers, is this: "p. 288: . . . Popper: there is an inherent delay, which cannot be overcome, in deriving information from the environment about the environment." Unlike in many other cases, Nabokov makes no comment. Notes for the Texture of Time, Vladimir Nabokov Archive, Berg Collection, New York Public Library (henceforth VNA).

2 Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (henceforth *SO*) (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 330.

3 Popper, *Realism and the Aim of Science*, ed. W. W. Bartley, III（henceforth *RAS*）（London: Hutchinson, 1983）, 259.

4 Popper letter to Mario Bunge, 10 April 67, Karl Popper Archive, Hoover Institution, Stanford University（henceforth KPA）, Box 280, Fol. 25.

5 *Think, Write, Speak: Uncollected Essays, Reviews, Interviews, and Letters to the Editor*, ed. Brian Boyd and Anastasia Tolstoy（henceforth *TWS*）, New York: Knopf, 469.

6 *TWS* 469.

7 *TWS* 469.

8 Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography*（henceforth *UQ*）（1974; London: Routledge, 1992）, 18–31.

9 *TWS* 426.

10 Popper letter to Alain Boyer, 9 May 1990, KPA Box 530 Folder 17.

11 *RAS* 259.

12 Nabokov letter to *Mademoiselle* Magazine, 27 June 1947, VNA.

13 By this he means, I presume, that there is no concrete future our present has not yet reached, but merely an endless vapor of continually branching or dancing possibilities that have yet to condense.

14 Nabokov, *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*（New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969）, 550. Cf. also *Ada* 559–60: “Time is anything but the popular triptych: a no-longer existing Past, the durationless point of the Present, and a ‘not-yet’ that may never come. No. There are only two panels. The Past（ever-existing in my mind）and the Present（to which my mind gives duration and, therefore, reality）. If we make a third compartment of fulfilled expectation, the foreseen, the foreordained, the faculty of prevision, perfect forecast, we are still applying our mind to the Present. “If the Past is perceived as a storage of Time, and if the Present is the process of that perception, the future, on the other hand, is not an item of Time, has nothing to do with Time and with the dim gauze of its physical texture. The future is but a quack at the court of Chronos.”

15 Nabokov, *Transparent Things*（New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972）, 1.

16 Popper interview with Signore Carruba, *L’Opinione*, 24 July 1979, KPA Box 333 Folder 7.

17 Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*（1957; 2nd ed., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961）.

18 Popper, “The Arrow of Time,” *Nature* 177（17 March 1956）, 538; “Time’s Arrow and Entropy,” *Nature* 207（17 July 1965）, 233–34; “Time’s Arrow and Feeding on Negentropy,” *Nature* 213（21 January 1967）, 320; “Structural Information and the Arrow of Time,” *Nature*（15 April 1967）, 322.

19 See e.g. *Ada* 538: “The direction of Time, the ardis of Time, one-way Time, here is something that looks useful to me one moment, but dwindles the next to the level of an illusion obscurely related to the mysteries of growth and gravitation.”（As the novel notes, “ardis,” the key place-name of the action, means “point of an arrow” in Greek.）

20 *TWS* 327.

21 Nabokov, *Look at the Harlequins!*（New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974）, 253.

22 Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*（henceforth *LScD*）（1934; London: Hutchinson, 1959）, 53.

23 Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers（henceforth *LRL*）（New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/ Bruccoli Clark, 1981）, [ii], facing title page.

24 Popper, in Paul Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of Karl Popper*（La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1974）, vol. 2, 1053.

25 Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*（1972; Oxford: Clarendon, rev. ed. 1979）, 10.

26 *SO* 85. He elaborates at *SO* 124: “Monism, which implies a oneness of basic reality, is seen to be divisible when, say, ‘mind’ sneakily splits away from ‘matter’ in the reasoning of a muddled monist or half-hearted materialist.”

27 Nabokov, *Bend Sinister*（1947; New York: Vintage）, 188.

28 *SO* 10.

29 Popper, *Knowledge and the Body-Mind Problem: In Defence of Interaction*, ed. Mark Notturno（London: Routledge, 1994）, 24–25.

30 Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*（henceforth *OS*）（1945; 5th ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966）,

vol. 2, 245.

31 Nabokov, *The Gift*（1938; New York: Vintage, 1991）, 94.

32 *Lectures on Don Quixote*, ed. Fredson Bowers（New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Bruccoli Clark, 1983）, 68.

33 *LRL* 54.

34 *TWS* 191.

35 See for instance his essay “Inspiration,” *SO*.

36 *LScD* 32.

37 Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*（1963; rev. ed. London: Routledge, 1965）, 95.

38 Unpublished lectures on literature, Notebook 2, 16ff., VNA.

39 Nabokov, “The Tragedy of Tragedy,” in his *The Man from the USSR and Other Plays*, ed. Dmitri Nabokov（New York: Bruccoli Clark/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984）, 326.

40 Popper, *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism*（London: Hutchinson, 1982）, 130.

41 Popper letter to Antony Flew, 22 November 1989, KPA Box 537 Folder 5.

42 *UQ* 155.

43 Cited in Andrew Field, *Nabokov: His Life in Part*（New York: Viking, 1977）, 87）.

44 Popper letter to Thomas Häringer, 29 June 1982, KPA Box 304 Folder 10: “Eine ideologiefrei Religion wäre vor allem eine, die intellektuell bescheiden ist: wir wissen ja so wenig; sogar in der Physik haben wir keine Ahnung, warum（zum Beispiel）alle Elektronen gleiche Ladung haben oder alle Subelektronen（‚Quarks’）.”

45 Popper letter to Mark Notturno, 4 December 1982, KPA Box 332 Folder 7.

46 *Ada* 586.

47 *SO* 45.

48 Nabokov interview with Robert Hughes, 1965, from TS material not included in *SO*, 41, VNA.

49 Popper letter to Stephen Makin, n.d., KPA Box 550 Folder 5.

50 Popper interview with Edward Zerin, 1969, published as “Karl Popper on God,” *Skeptic*, 6: 2（1998）, 46–49.

51 Popper letter to Leslie Graves, 20 November 1992, KPA Box 540 Folder 10.

52 Popper, Zerin interview.

53 Nabokov, *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*（henceforth *SM*）（New York: Putnam, 1966）, 297.

54 *SM* 139.

55 *Gift* 328.

56 *SM* 301.

57 For the close connection between the image of the spiral, the idea of the “Hegelian” dialectical triad, and Nabokov’s metaphysics, see Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*（Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990）, 294–95: “Already as a schoolboy Nabokov had reinterpreted the Hegelian dialectic of history as an opening out of the closed circle into a spiral in which the first arc, the thesis, leads into the ampler arc of the antithesis, and that in turn into the synthesis, thesis of a new series. That image of the expanding spiral never ceased to unfurl in his mind. He applied it to the structure of his own life, to his scientific speculations about the evolution of butterfly wing markings, and above all to his metaphysics, to his sense of time as a progressive widening out—a sense that seems to stem from an almost innate yearning for freedom that precedes his exposure to either Hegel or Bergson: “every dimension presupposes a medium within which it can act, and if, in the spiral unwinding of things, space warps into something akin to time, and time, in its turn, warps into something akin to thought, then, surely, another dimension follows.” In a previous book [*Nabokov’s* Ada: *The Place of Consciousness*（1985; rev. ed. Christchurch: Cybereditions, 2001）] I have explained the structure of Nabokov's metaphysics as a double spiral in which his twin passions for independence and combination determine his attitude to each of the arcs of being he defines: space; time; thought, or human consciousness; and something further beyond.”

58 Nabokov notes in “Yearbook 1951,” 16 February 1951, VNA.

59 *OS* vol. 2, 245.

60 *Ada* 585

61 Popper letter to John Beloff, 29 September 1976, KPA Box 276 Folder 1.

62 The physicist David Deutsch even calls one of his books, strongly inspired by Popper, *The Beginnings of Infinity: Explanations that Transform the World*（London: Penguin, 2012）.

63 Brian Boyd interview with Melitta Mew, 20 July 1998.

64 Nabokov, *Pale Fire*（New York: Putnam, 1962）, 265.

Brian Boyd

Comments and Discussions

Comment on "Nabokov and Popper: Convergences and Divergences"

Tora Koyama, Commentator

Prof. Brian Boyd basically discusses the similarity and dissimilarity between Vladimir Nabokov and Karl Popper, a famed philosopher of science. For instance, both of them are polymathic and highly renowned in their fields. Nabokov is playful, while Popper is serious; Nabokov likes words, while Popper hates focusing on words, unlike orthodox analytic philosophers.

More importantly, both of them praise human freedom and the endless discovery by the human mind, according to Prof. Boyd. Creativity and criticism are also important to both. Their dissimilarities seems to me rather philosophical. For Nabokov, individual consciousness is everything: "Reality is a very subjective afffair" (Nabokov 1973, 10, as cited in Boyd 2021) Prof. Boyd depicts Nabokov as a subjective idealist George Berkeley, the 18th-century Irish philosopher, or John M. E. McTaggart, the neo-Hegelian idealist philosopher at Trinity College, Cambridge University, who taught Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, two founders of analytic philosophy.

For Popper, in contrast, objectivity through language and theories is what is to be pursued and acquired. Popper's "World 3" is neither physical ("World 1") nor psychological ("World 2") but an objective product of the human mind. Presumably, Popper would have rejected Navokov's view on the ground that the activities and the products of the human mind should be distinguished and the latter is not purely individual but social at least to some extent. Prof. Boyd sees Popper's view as better than Nabokov's.

Prof. Boyd finds another dissimilarity between Nabokov and Popper in (ir)rationality. Popper is a rationalist—he is known to advance critical rationalism, while Nabokov praises irrationality for creativity as a writer. Despite such an apparent opposition, however, given that Nabokov's appraisal of irrationality is for criticism (because creativity and criticism are closely related), this dissimilarity implies another similarity: acknowledgment of the limit of human knowledge. Because human knowledge is limited, for Popper, the scientific discovery is endless; because human knowledge is limited, for Nabokov, creative ideas come from somewhere unknowable and irrational. It is remarkable how Prof. Boyd explicates that their dissimilarity implies their similarity. Surely it cannot be denied that "their very substantial similarity is surprising" (Boyd 2021).

The surprising similarity between Nabokov and Popper leads us to ponder what could cause this commonality. But Prof. Boyd gives us no clear answer to this or to related questions. Rather he asks us just before concluding what could be accomplished by comparing these two great figures. No doubt he could have offered some explanation of the source of their similarities and dissimilarities. He suggests, it seems to me, that it is important to think about why we compare them, what is accomplished by the comparison, or what the comparison means.

I would like to think about these questions here. I think they are philosophically significant. We

cannot escape from these issues as researchers who are required to produce results, preferably results that are easily understandable to stakeholders. This requirement appears to be reasonable because research is the task of rendering unknowns known. The traditional definition of knowledge in philosophy is justified true belief; after all, we have to justify our findings. However, I believe we should not try to justify them fully. I agree with Popper and also Nabokov in that scientific discovery is endless and open to criticism. Justification may be a necessary part of scientific discovery, but it is only part of it. What is more important is room for human creativity. The similarities and dissimilarities between Nabokov and Popper as indicated by Prof. Boyd will stimulate our creativity, or perhaps "inspiration."

Admittedly, this is just what I thought. I would love to hear what Prof. Boyd thinks about it.

Let me show an inspiration. Is there a relevant connection between Nabokov and Popper?
Here is my speculation or imagination. Nabokov lived in Berlin from the 1920s to the 1930s. At that time Berlin was the center of the philosophy of science in Germany. There was a group of scientific philosophers led by Hans Reichenbach, who is a renowned philosopher of science. Reichenbach's group and the Vienna Circle organized international conferences on philosophy of science, participants of which came from various countries such as France, Italy, Poland, Denmark, let alone the US and the UK. Popper attended some of these conferences in the 1930s, after his studies at the University of Vienna in the 1920s. Although no conference was held at Berlin, supposedly Berlin intellectuals easily could learn of Reichenbach's group and their activities. For the group held regular meetings at Berlin and invited notable scientists as lecturers such as Einstein, who worked at Berlin University and supported Reichenbach's activity.

Interestingly, there are similarities and dissimilarities among Popper, Reichenbach, and the Vienna Circle, which presumably developed through their interactions. For instance, both Popper and Reichenbach worked on probability, though it is known that they had opposed each other personally (see, e.g. Milkov 2012, n. 9). Popper advanced fallibilism, opposing the verificationism of the Vienna Circle. Despite the fact that Reichenbach and the Vienna philosophers worked together, Reichenbach distances himself from the anti-metaphysical view of the Vienna Circle (Reichenbach 1936).

It may well be highly unlikely that Nabokov knew well these philosophers in Berlin. Still, it seems to me possible that he could have heard about them and become interested in their thoughts and activities. If so, probably he would have hated it and developed his own philosophy.
All that I said may sound silly. In that case, I would say it stems from my respect for irrationality, and I would like to welcome criticism.

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Boyd Comment on Koyama Comment on Boyd 2021

Brian Boyd

My thanks to Professor Koyama for his clear and perceptive summary of my paper. Just a few responses:

I think Nabokov derived his subjective idealism not from Berkeley (or McTaggart) but from the idealism rife in the late nineteenth century in the arts, in the anti-positivist mode of the Symbolists (such as the poets Mallarmé and Blok, and perhaps also the philosophers Schopenhauer and Bergson, in both of whom Nabokov, like many artists, had an interest) and from his own radical individualism. But he does mention Berkeley approvingly in a 1970 reply to Jeffrey Leonard's essay on the *Texture of Time* excursus in *Ada*. After dismissing the connection Leonard makes between *The Texture of Time* and Proust, he adds "And finally I owe no debt whatsoever (as Mr. Leonard seems to think) to the famous Argentine essayist [Borges] and his rather confused compilation 'A New Refutation of Time.' Mr. Leonard would have lost less of it [time, that is] had he gone straight to Berkeley and Bergson" (*Strong Opinions*, 289–90). I discuss the contrast between McTaggart's and Nabokov's views of time in *Nabokov's Ada* (1985; 2001 rev. ed.), 325n11.

I would not say that Nabokov's valuing the irrational in art reflects his esteem for the critical mind; it has much more to do with the feeling of mystery, gratitude, and wonder an artist has at the sudden surprise of a flash of inspiration, and with a hunch that in intuiting something previously quite unforeseen the artist reaches somehow beyond the limits of the purely rational. Certainly both Popper and Nabokov have a deep awareness of the limits of human knowledge, although their demarcations of those limits and their hopes for how they might be partially transcended are quite distinct. For Nabokov, the limits are those of individual human consciousness, in our confinement to the self, to the present moment of awareness, and to the terms of human understanding; for Popper, they are limits of human knowledge in the face of the infinity of a universe emergent in space and time. For Nabokov, the way beyond may involve some transformation of consciousness beyond death; for Popper, the way beyond our present ignorance will be collective scientific discovery, which can continue endlessly but which will still fall endlessly short of the vastness of the cosmos.

Professor Koyama suggests that "no doubt" I "could have offered some explanation of the source of their similarities and dissimilarities." I do not think I can, really, since as both Nabokov and Popper are highly independent of most of the prevailing trends of their times, I could explain the similarities only in terms of a chance coincidence of very distinct personalities (but an appeal to chance is no explanation) or a shared if uncommon insight into the human predicament (for those who accept that their ideas do indeed involve uncommon insights, as I do, but others may not). Popper was anti-positivistic, like Nabokov, but also anti-subjectivistic, unlike Nabokov. Perhaps the most relevant part of their shared intellectual background is their recognition of the uncertainty of even the best of our knowledge, science, in the wake of the Darwinian, Einsteinian, and quantum revolutions, none of which either accepted as final.

Professor Koyama writes: “The traditional philosophical definition of knowledge is justified true belief.” Popper rejected each of these terms. As his student and closest collaborator, David Miller, argued with characteristic firmness, for Popper our best knowledge, science, is neither justified, nor true, nor belief. Not justified, because a scientific hypothesis proposing a natural law must cover relevant future instances which it cannot possibly know, and which could contradict the proposed law. Not true, because although truth matters absolutely, we cannot be sure that we have attained it: we do not know what piece or class of evidence might sooner or later prove our explanation or description wrong. Not belief, because individual belief matters little in science, where it is the capacity of a hypothesis to withstand objectively all possible valid criticism, to survive public and objective testing, that can corroborate the hypothesis up to the present but cannot guarantee future validity.

I very much doubt that Nabokov was in any way influenced by the ideas of Reichenbach, even if both of them lived and worked in Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s. In those years Nabokov’s reading was almost exclusively in literature（and Lepidoptera and chess）, and in the Russian émigré press; he kept himself as hermetically sealed from German culture as he could. Popper was strongly opposed to the ideas of Reichenbach, especially to Reichenbach’s search for a probabilistic justification of scientific results. And to judge by such evidence as we have, Nabokov had developed the major contours of his philosophy by 1918, before he left Russia.

A Belated Response to Brian Boyd's "Nabokov and Popper: Convergences and Divergences"

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Brian, your lucidity about complex matters continues to impress me after 35 years of reading your work. I read your paper as a discussion of criteria necessary for a piece of writing to make it into Popper's World 3. My knowledge of Popper is very slight, but what I know I like: I share Popper's (and Nabokov's) opinion that belief in, and striving for scientific certainty without some professional self-reflection about the necessity of fallibility is erroneous. I am always initially horrified to have my repeated errors in the chemistry of perfumes pointed out, but time and further thought have always pushed me to recognize that I have learned less from my untested hypotheses and more from my falsified ones no matter how compelling I found my original imaginative insight. That is in part why I am enjoying this symposium.

The organization of your paper (intro to the potential embrace in the realm of ideas, similarities, differences, apparent differences, irreconcilable differences, moment of required self-reflection by you, and final observations on the "embrace") for some reason made it seem very easy to imagine that it was the right time for me to begin correcting my knowledge deficit regarding Popper.

And that is where the trouble (and the delays) began. My self-corrections so far have kept me spinning my thought wheels in Popper's World 3 and generating more questions than answers about Popper's real ideal objects and Nabokov's conceptions of language, thought, and time. Of Popper's two solutions to the lack of success I am experiencing (develop new organs, find the "feedback mechanism"), I am going to go with the second and pass those questions on to you for feedback, fully understanding that you will answer only those of interest to you. Or none at all.

My first step was to read "Epistemology Without a Knowing Subject" (to see why you find that "Popper has the better epistemological position" in relation to Nabokov). I then moved on to "On the Theory of the Objective Mind" to learn Popper's basis for seeing monism of the sort Nabokov used in self-description as "subjectivist blunder."

From your paper I assume that Popper's goal (in *Objective Knowledge*) is to replace "the bucket theory" of knowledge with "intersubjectively proposed, criticized, and superseded" knowledge. Presumably that kind of knowledge would be objective and thereby qualify for membership in his World 3.

1. When Popper says that in acquiring knowledge "the conscious problem need not be the objective problem," where do we locate the unconscious version of that problem? World 2 where the unconscious presumably operates? Or some Platonic world of ideas in which Kepler, Schrodinger, and Einstein solved the problems they actually set out to solve? Or is the Borges' Library of Babel version of World 3 where all formulable knowledge exist in a state of being potentially discoverable

through inspiration or through error and conjectural intersubjective correction? I am not trying to be funny here. I am asking the question seriously in light of failing to understand this passage from *The Self and its Brain*: "the World 3 object is a real ideal object which exists, but exists nowhere, and whose existence is somehow the potentiality of its being reinterpreted by human minds" (*SB* 450). How/Why "reinterpreted"?

2. Similar question: Nabokov says several times that he thinks in images. At one point, he suggests that images come to him in a "shapeless flash." Sometimes he speaks of words dissolving into images and sometimes he speaks of the problem of converting inspirational images to words. But in all cases the creative process is one necessary for the "dislocation of the given world and then re-creation of it through the connection of hitherto unconnected parts." (*Think, Speak, Write*). When an indivisible monist says this, it seems as if it is World 1 that is being "dislocated" which really cannot be because in such a case monism become dualism. Or is it just World 2 that is "given" to the monist? If it's World 2, by whom/what is it given within the subject's state of mind? Why is it given with parts that need reconnecting? Or is it given by cultural heritage of World 3? Or is it World 3 that has to be dislocated? If either World 2 or World 3 are "given" or "dislocated," then Nabokov cannot be an entirely happy monist. You quote Van's metaphor of the "boxed brain." In the expanded version of that image, Nabokov says: "The human mind is a box with no tangible lid, sides or bottom, and still it is a box, and there is no earthly method of getting out of it and remaining in it at the same time." While there may be some "unearthly" way of unboxing, Nabokov does not give us much to work with. To the question "What surprises you?" Nabokov gave the answer: "the mind's hopeless inability to cope with its own essence and sense." How do you read that answer in light of VN's adherence to monism?

3. In discussing Nabokov's difference from Popper regarding "another dimension" beyond death you suggest that for Nabokov "thought signposts the way." As you rightly point out, Nabokov was reluctant to talk at length about this topic. Or he may hedged his bets with statements like this one: "thought itself, as it shines its beam on the story of a man's life, cannot avoid deforming it. Thus, what our mind perceives turns out to seem true, but not to be true." Another ambiguous signpost worth visiting on this topic is in the margins of Nabokov's copy of the book *The Voices of Time*. In responding to Friedrich Kummel's essay "Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration," Nabokov annotated the phrase "the circular relation of past and future" with the following: "Pure time, time free from all content, tangible time Space paralizes time." In light of your magisterial annotations to *Ada*, is there any reason (from psychology or from physics) to connect "Space paralyzes time" with "A special space, maybe"? How exactly does such paralysis happen?

Comment on Zoran Kuzmanovich's Comment on Boyd's "Nabokov and Popper"

Brian Boyd

Popper would have been delighted at your opening sally, Zoran:

> I am always initially horrified to have my repeated errors in the chemistry of perfumes pointed out, but time and further thought have always pushed me to recognize that I have learned less from my untested hypotheses and more from my falsified ones no matter how compelling I found my original imaginative insight.

Popper's friend the neuroscientist John Eccles was sure synaptic transmission must be electrical, not chemical. Popper convinced him to formulate his electrical hypothesis sharply enough to allow him to look for an experiment that would decide between the electrical or chemical hypotheses. Eccles took his advice, predicted what time range would indicate electrical transmission and what would indicate chemical transmission, ran the experiment, and found this electrical prediction falsified. This both dashed his first hopes and sent him off with renewed energy to elaborate the chemical transmission hypothesis—work which won him his Nobel Prize.（Later it was discovered that *some* nerve transmission is electrical.）Wait for your call from Stockholm.

I am impressed, Zoran, by the zeal with which you have followed up my Popperian proddings.

Just before your question 1, you write:

> From your paper I assume that Popper's goal（in *Objective Knowledge*）is to replace "the bucket theory" of knowledge with "intersubjectively proposed, criticized, and superseded" knowledge. Presumably that kind of knowledge would be objective and thereby qualify for membership in his World 3.

I would say more generally that Popper's aim is（a）to reject the idea of knowledge as something filled up in us—demonstrably accumulated, as it were—by experience（the filling of the bucket）, and（b）to replace it with the idea of knowledge, especially in its best form, scientific knowledge, as our groping attempts to fathom a complicated world, with always tentative results（not necessarily "superseded," as you write, but certainly "supersedable"）. We don't know what might sooner or later show our hunches—yours on the chemistry of perfumes, Eccles's on the electrical nature of synaptic transmission—to be wrong.

But Popper's World 3 includes *all* the products of the human mind, including written or spoken utterances, and, among much else, problems, *wrong ideas*, and, say, banknotes（in so far as they are understood in terms of their monetary value and not merely as seen, say, by members of a previously uncontacted tribe, as mere colored scraps of some kind of thin flat crinkly substance）. To "qualify for membership in" World 3, as you write, doesn't mean to be valid, only to be somehow intersubjectively knowable（as the value of a banknote is recognized in a community that understands currency and the current purchasing power of a particular denomination, or the value of one of Mozart's "Haydn

quartets" is appreciated in a community that understands the conventions of Western music, and, preferably, also those of string quartets, Haydn quartets, and early Mozart quartets).

You write, citing Popper:

> "the World 3 object is a real ideal object which exists, but exists nowhere, and whose existence is somehow the potentiality of its being reinterpreted by human minds" (*SB* 450). How/Why "reinterpreted"?

Popper's example here is a symphony (but it could also be, say, *Lolita*, to take the focus of last night's Zoom seminar in St. Petersburg: a good week for Nabokov). The World 3 version of Beethoven's Fifth would not be the manuscript, or any particular edition or printing of the score, or any particular performance or recording of the symphony, which would all be World 1 phenomena; the World 3 version is the intellectual content of the symphony, if you like, which can be reinterpreted performatively by different orchestras, or analytically by different music critics, or appreciatively by different listeners. (If listeners form an interpretation as they listen, but do not articulate it, this remains a World 2, a purely psychological, phenomenon; but if they put it into words they utter or write, then it becomes a World 3 phenomenon, intersubjectively available and up for discussion.) In the same way *Lolita* is neither the destroyed manuscript, nor any particular edition or printing or electronic file or physical book, nor any public reading (all World 1 phenomena, all particular physical instantiations, whether types or tokens, but not the novel itself) nor any private reading (a World 2 phenomenon), but the novel's intellectual content (the words in the right order, in whatever physical instantiation), as discussable and engageable with and reinterpretable by any and all readers.

2: I think it's a little precarious to conflate Popper's Worlds 1 to 3 with Nabokov's monism, since neither knew the other's terms.

Nabokov's mind-first or mind-only monism would imply that all is somehow World 2, a phenomenon of consciousness, even the material world. Frankly, I do not understand such a mind-only monism, unless it means something like the idea that what seems to us Matter (more or less World 1, for Popper) is actually, ultimately, the imagining of some ultimate Mind, God "dancing not-dancing," in Zen philosopher Alan Watts's terms (in, I think, *Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship*, 1964), and that what seems to us our consciousnesses (our individual Worlds 2) is, within the concrete imagining of the ultimate Mind, God dancing now not completely not-dancing, but dancing some partial dance of Mind—if you follow Watts's terms!

I agree that, despite Nabokov calling himself an indivisible Monist, he doesn't behave like one (thank goodness, if you ask me): he accepts the reality of things, including the details of a lily or a lepidopteron, even if such details are not humanly identified until discovered by the botanist or the entomologist. As a writer, he accepts the features of a Kansas landscape, say, but has to take them apart (to select, to analyse, to verbalize them) and to resynthesize them, as in a sentence like this, from *Lolita*: "Or again, it might be a stern El Greco horizon, pregnant with inky rain, and a passing glimpse of some mummy-necked farmer, and all around alternating strips of quick-silverish water and

harsh green corn, the whole arrangement opening like a fan, somewhere in Kansas" (152–53). Here he brings together Midwest weather, El Greco, pregnancy, ink, mummies, Kansas farmers, Kansas landscapes, mercury (quicksilver), a synesthetic color association ("*harsh* green"), visual kinesis and more, elements he has "dislocated from the given world" and re-created "through the connection of hitherto unconnected parts" into a sentence describing the impression of motoring through Kansas that long-time Kansan Stephen Jan Parker thought almost unbelievably perfect.

You write:

> To the question "What surprises you?" Nabokov gave the answer: "the mind's hopeless inability to cope with its own essence and sense." How do you read that answer in light of VN's adherence to monism?

I think it perfectly possible to be a monist—to imagine, say, that the cosmos is the imagining of some ultimate Mind that wants to give all the independence it can to the things it imagines and thereby creates—and to have a strong sense of not knowing how this works or manifests itself in any detail at all.

I can't tell from Nabokov's annotation to Fraser's *Voices of Time* what he might have had in mind. I cannot figure out even some of my own marginal annotations when I see them years later, and Nabokov may have been the same (in Popperian terms: an unremembered and cryptic marginal annotation is a World 1 phenomenon that reflects World 2 processes whose intellectual content has been lost, because so incompletely worked out, and now hardly qualifies as part of World 3, as an objectively available idea). Nabokov may have meant that when we conceive of spatial simultaneity across an instant of time, it paralyzes the moment, or time, as it were, since it leaves out what in *Ada* Van thinks of as "pure time," experienced time, which always has duration and change. Or that, as in Zeno's paradoxes of movement, an ever-more-narrowly defined segment of the trajectory of an arrow or a tortoise makes it seem unmoving, paralyzed, at that locus. Hard to know. I don't think I would connect it with *Speak, Memory* 301's "a special Space, maybe" without more to link them.

Boyd on Kuzmanovich（Currie）and Kuzmanovich on Boyd（Popper）Final Round

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Tagline: Having finally made it through Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations* and *Unended Quest*, Kuzmanovich reluctantly agrees to make this the final rebound:

I fully accept your third point, Brian, and I stand corrected on Nabokov's possible factual uncles（though I still have a difficult time seeing Nabokov as being factually in love with a porcelain pig）.

I defer to your far greater knowledge of Popper. When I wrote that Popper "requires that the purpose of intellectual engagement be refutation," I was basing my claim on these two perhaps atypical but undeniably certain- sounding sentences. The certainty especially evident in Popper's use of "every," "always," "all," mistaken," and "false":

> For the test of a theory is, like every rigorous, always an attempt to show that the candidate is mistaken—that is, that the theory entails a false assertion. From a logical point of view, all empirical tests are therefore *attempted refutations*."（*CR* 192）

I think I understand the logic of the claim that a theory **T** can be refuted by a negative instance **p**（the failure of its predictive powers）, but that it cannot really be proved by positive instances since "theories cannot be logically derived from observations."（*CR* 260）. So I understand but am not enthused by the default "double not-" logic of falsification: **If T then p; Not-p; Therefore, not-T**. In the final paragraphs of my response to your comments I was not disputing Popper's theories of science but simply expressing a preference for learning more about what sets of conditions（personal, moral, scientific, technological, and cultural）made the theorist mistakenly link **T and p** as logically or empirically connected in the first place. While some of those conditions could be examined in a proper Popperian frame of refutation（"*falsifiability, or refutability, or testability*", *CR 48*）., a number of them cannot be. The sort of thing I have in mind here is the influence of conditions such as Joyce's failing eyesight or Nabokov's synaesthesia on what they said they saw and knew. Perhaps an example would help: I would have loved to have seen VN's promised "furious" refutation of natural selection theories based on his own observations of supervenient mimicry. From the Popper statements you quote I understand Popper to be saying that no theory/intuition/hypothesis can ever be proved but only provisionally confirmed. Still, it would have been fascinating to see what "criteria of refutation"（*CR* 49）Nabokov would have introduced for his claim that mimicry by an animal exceeds the noticing powers of its predators. At which point does Nabokov's synaesthesia affect his metric for estimating the predators' noticing power? And when asking such questions, I keep going back to Kant because in your essay you mentioned Kantian antinomies as linking Popper and Nabokov. There is indeed a family resemblance, especially in the First and the Third. I do find Kant's Third antinomy（causal determinism vs. causal spontaneity）the adopted grandmother of Popper's World 3 and the real grandmother of Nabokov's hypothesis that there is a "still more vivid means of knowing" than visual scientific observation. Given Nabokov's statement about reality's layers, I think the means Nabokov

has in mind is the feeling-suffused contemplation of nature's deceptions by the appreciative, possibly synaesthetic, and possibly memory-prompted re-combinative or juxtaposing "eye" of the artist, but writing such an eye's "subjective purposiveness" into the format **antecedent+ consequent=conclusion** would be difficult in not impossible since both **T** and **p** would be so intersubjectively variable.

Faced by that difficulty（the gap between human reason and the world of things, between the empirical and the intelligible self）, I am sent back to Kantian antinomies of space, time, causality, and his notion of respect. Popper gives credit to Tarski for solving or bypassing the problem of Kantian antinomies（*CR* 36）. I understand those antinomies to be problems that pure reason encounters when two proofs clash and thus reason contradicts itself or when reason ignores the input from the senses while deploying some correspondence theory of truth. Even though Popper states that he learned more from Tarski than from anyone else（*UQ* 99）, I cannot follow the logic of Tarski's proof after the point where the elimination of self-referentiality, the T-scheme, and the law of bivalence enter the discussion. But I can follow your recommendation that I see Popper as *inviting* me to refute rather than *challenging* me to do so out of some snobby sense of certainty. And if I ever do accept the invitation, I will begin with Popper's own metaphors for Kantian antinomies of space and time: "a system of pigeon-holes, or a filing system"（*CR* 242）and subsequent notions of causality: "Out of [our theories] we create a world: not the real world, but our own nets in which we try to catch the real world."（*CR* 65）Any philosopher willing to risk such metaphors or to describe a certain flavor of existentialism as "the utter boredom of the bore-in-himself bored by himself"（*CR* 262）is worth a far more leisurely visit than the one I can afford now.

Tests and Refutations

Brian Boyd

One final diminishing rebound, Zoran. Popper does not "require that the purpose of intellectual engagement be refutation," as you earlier wrote, but merely claims, in the passage you now quote (*Conjectures and Refutations* 192) and elsewhere, that the purpose of testing (only one of many possible kinds of intellectual engagement, after all) is testing. If a theory fails a test, we have learned we don't know as much as we thought, and need to think again to find a better theory; if a theory survives a severe test, an attempted refutation, then the test corroborates the theory, which is good news, but still does not prove the theory: it could still fail later tests. This is a very modest attitude, as far as one could wish from the "snobby sense of certainty" you previously suspected in Popper.

Since you appreciate Popper's imagery, as I do, may I offer one further example that puts the matter nicely:

> science has thus nothing "absolute" about it. Science does not rest upon rock-bottom. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp, but not down to any natural or "given" base; and when we cease our attempts to drive our piles into a deeper layer, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that they are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being. (*Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 11)

I too would have loved to have seen Nabokov's "furious" refutations of natural selection on the basis of mimicry. But I doubt they would have stood up. Nabokov suffered from the limitations of his time when he assumed that "the noticing powers" of non-human animals were much less than those of humans. In many cases they have been shown to be better (dogs can be trained, after all, to sniff out cancer or Covid-19 in humans). And the rigorous experimental testing of mimicry over the last fifty years has repeatedly refuted, at least in all the cases so far examined, Nabokov's claim that the sophistication of animals' mimetic devices exceeds the noticing powers of the relevant predators.

Comment on Brian Boyd, "Nabokov and Popper: Convergences and Divergences"

Akiko Nakta

I learned many important things from your comprehensive and illuminating paper on the similarities and differences between Nabokov and Popper. One point that impresses me is that their attitudes towards God were surprisingly close, but Nabokov's esoteric and mystical remarks are not found in Popper. .

Popper's remarks you cite, "Any discussion of God somehow is in a sense unpleasant. When I look at what I call the gift of life, I feel a gratitude which is in tune with some religious ideas of God. However, the moment I even speak of it, I am embarrassed that I may do something wrong to God in talking about God," "I think that all theology is blasphemy" and "My objection to organized religion is that it tends to use the name of God in vain" might have sounded offending to traditional believers in those days, but today many people with religious sensibilities would agree with him.

It is hard to imagine the same with Nabokov's remarks on God, answering to an interviewer's question if he believed in God, "To be quite candid—and what I am going to say now is something I never said before, and I hope it provokes a salutary little chill—I know more than I can express in words, and the little I can express would not have been expressed, had I not known more." Nabokov's idea of the hereafter is inaccessible to the readers. We can only imagine that Nabokov knew something about God and the hereafter no one else knew and that he hid the key to that something in his works, but even if we are aware of such keys in his works, we still do not know exactly about his idea.

I believe that Nabokov's awareness of death and the afterlife, given he originally had it since his childhood, was intensified by the loss of his homeland, of his father assassinated and brother killed in a concentration camp, and the separation with his mother and siblings. Many details of Nabokov's life are reflected in his works to be shared with the readers, but some of his thoughts remain exclusive.

On the other hand, Popper's thoughts on God and religion seem open to the others. Is it because he faced his belief in the same way as he explored theories in philosophy and science?

Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-Minute Argument Between Two Great Philosophers[1] explains the reason Popper was more highly estimated in continental Europe than in England, citing Ralf Dahrendorf, as follows:

> Popper was very happy in England because he felt safe. It was a country in which a man who was immune to the great passions of the century—notably communism and fascism—could feel that he wasn't challenged. But, precisely because England was such a country, Popper was too normal to be interesting. Now the Continent has the opposite story. The great passions threatened every single country. And there Popper stood, a tower of reason in the midst of turmoil. And that, over time, commanded enormous respect. More than that, it was regarded as

> the great answer to the destructive and disastrous consequences of the passionate policies from 1917 to Stalin's death, and that includes the whole of the Nazi period.（217）

I am convinced by this passage, which seems to give me the proper image of Popper for Europe in the middle of the 20th century. I would like to ask you whether you agree with the statement? And do you think that the book treats Popper fairly?

The book also mentions Popper's influence on the University of Canterbury, citing its official history reports, "Popper's impact on academic life was greater than that of any other"（218）. Did you feel that when you were a BA and MA student at the university?

Note

1 Edmonds, David, and John Eidinow. *Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-Minute Argument Between Two Great Philosophers.* Ecco, 2001.

Comment on Akiko Nakata's Comment on Boyd's "Nabokov and Popper"

Brian Boyd

Thank you for your kind and rich response to my paper, Akiko.

I interviewed Lord Dahrendorf, whose comment on Popper you cite (like many I interviewed, he has since died). Popper was in fact very well received at various moments in England and the English-speaking world: from the late 1940s to the end of the 1960s he was regarded by many (including Bertrand Russell) as the most exciting philosopher in Britain, or as "incomparably the greatest philosopher of science there has ever been" (Nobel Prizewinner for Medicine Sir Peter Medawar) and so on. In 1973 philosopher Bryan Magee, who was friends with both Popper and Russell and thought Popper the greater philosopher, published a book on Popper that became the biggest seller in the Fontana Modern Masters series, outselling volumes on Darwin, Marx, Freud, Chomsky and the like. But at that very time philosophers in the English-speaking world were coming to regard Popper as passé (partly because of the machinations of his former protégé Imre Lakatos), just as he was being taken up with enormous enthusiasm in European countries. That was indeed partly because of his politics, because his reformist liberalism offered an alternative—an open society—to the fruitless tug-of-war in many countries between communist and fascist ideologies.

No, I do not think *Wittgenstein's Poker* treats Popper fairly. He comes across there as rather colorless, unpleasant and uninteresting. In fact he galvanized, inspired, and was loved by many, while he also antagonized, repelled, and alarmed others with his intensity, not least his intensity in criticizing their positions. His sense of the endless adventure of discovery in science and society frightens some but thrills others, like physicist David Deutsch, who calls his book inspired by Popper *The Beginning of Infinity*.

I wasn't aware while a BA and MA student at the University of Canterbury of Popper's impact there and indeed throughout the whole New Zealand university system. I just took it for granted that academics researched as well as taught, not realizing that that ethos owed more to Popper than anyone else. But I was interested in Popper already, and went to a public lecture he was to give there in May 1973, on a visit back to New Zealand, but which he couldn't deliver because he had had a severe tachycardia attack a few days before. His lecture was read, unsympathetically, by a Canterbury philosopher, and I remember thinking of a series of objections to the ideas being aired. But now I find it hard to think of an idea of Popper's I don't like and feel excited by!

Brian Boyd

Questions and Answers

I

Ryo Chonabayashi

First Question（on Page 6）: It seems there are some intricate issues concerning whether John Locke would support the view “individual consciousness is the source of all our knowledge.” Locke thinks we can be directly aware of ideas, and these ideas are the source of all of our knowledge. But his reason for this claim is this: there are some causal relations between what he calls “the primary qualities of things themselves” and our ideas about these. Because there is such a causal（and mirroring）link between them, Locke thinks that we can reach（at least）some probable knowledge about the external world. Indeed, George Berkeley criticised this claim, and Berkeley reached a more radical idealist position. So I am not too sure if it is right to categorise Locke in the tradition of the view Professor Boyd discusses in the paper（Locke does not support monism Nabokov attributes to himself）.

Second Question（on Page 8）: I’m curious why Nabokov thinks irrational/illogical features of arts are the reason against causal determinism. I understand causal determinism as the thesis that all states are caused by prior states, and how one state causes another state is regulated by laws of nature. With this understanding of determinism, perhaps we can give deterministic causal explanations of why great artists produced their work while those explanations also appeal to the irrational/illogical aspects of work. I suppose I don’t see the link between being irrational & illogical and being free from causal determinism（well, this may be a question to Nabokov, not professor Boyd!）. Note how Popper argues against determinism is different from Nabokov: he rejects causal determinism by arguing that the world is not fully deterministic（in the sense presented above）but probabilistic.

Brian Boyd

Thanks so much for engaging so attentively with my paper, and keeping the discussion going, as philosophers do! Let me paste in your questions in case this circulates more widely:

Re your first question: I certainly did not mean to suggest that Locke was a monist, but only that he accepted that the source of knowledge was ideas（associations）in the mind or what we would call sense impressions of the world. This could and sometimes eventually did lead to a radical mind-first monism, as it did in some of Mach’s work, and as it did for Nabokov.

Re your second question: Nabokov did not think that only the arts argued against causal determinism

but that life allowed room for indeterminism. What he did think was that the rational mind was overreaching when it proposed that everything that happened could be explained by iron laws of determinism or cause and effect. He particularly disliked storytelling (drama especially) constructed on the basis of such rigid determinism and allowing no room for unpredictable chance.

In his critique of the determinism in so much of tragic drama, for instance, Nabokov writes: "we cling to the same old iron bars of determinism which have imprisoned the spirit of playwriting for years and years. And this is where lies the tragedy of tragedy" (*Man from the USSR*, 326). In his *Lectures on Russian Literature* he praises Chekhov: "his achievement was that he showed the right way to escape the dungeon of deterministic causation, of cause and effect, and burst the bars holding the art of drama captive" (285). The most explicit elaboration of his critique of what he also calls "the idea of logical fate" (*Man from the USSR* 328) is perhaps this: "The general and greatest danger which the drama faces and the source of incalculable mischief, which has already in our times thrust back the theatre to a secondary rank in artistic endeavour, and may, eventually, shrivel it up altogether, is the miserable idea of determinism, the prison regulation of cause and effect. It is assumed—and this notion has grown upon us and blinded us, with the development of the stage from antiquity—that the leading character in all drama is the devil of causation and that whatever happens on the stage as an interplay of cause and effect. We know from real life that however obediently we may follow the paths of causation, some queer and beautiful force, which we call free will from want of a better expression, allows or at least appears to allow us to escape again and again from the laws of cause and effect. And biologists who have tried to find corresponding rules to explain the evolution of life on this earth will tell you, that nothing is explainable if these rules are unswervingly followed and that everything is explained if the idea of the unexplicable freak, the mutation, the sudden jump or whim of the vital will is accepted as a factor." (This last quote is from an essay on Soviet Drama, which I don't think has been published, though I may be wrong; I transcribed it directly from Nabokov's archive over forty years ago).

Ryo Chonabayashi

Thank you very much for your detailed response. Your response to my first question clarifies the issue I raised. Thank you! Also, your answer to my second question is very interesting, and I feel I now have deepened my understanding of Nabokov's attitude toward determinism. It seems we can develop two lines of argument based on what Nabokov says. First, we may argue that we should not believe determinism because belief in determinism makes artistic work unenjoyable. Second, we may argue that causal laws assumed in real life are not strict enough (due to "queer and beautiful force"). Nabokov might say that such queer and beautiful forces are part of the explanations of various events, but those forces are not strict, and this is why determinism is false.

Brian Boyd

Reading your response, I suddenly thought of another similarity between Popper and Nabokov on indeterminism. Not only Nabokov but Popper too uses the unpredictability of art as an argument for indeterminism.

Popper advances as one of his arguments against indeterminism the reductio ad absurdum of a deaf physicist with a complete knowledge of the physical world, like Laplace's demon, being able, even with no knowledge of hearing or music, to predict at any point from the start of the universe what art would emerge on earth: the particular scores of works by Mozart and Beethoven, for instance:

> if physical determinism is right, then a physicist who is completely deaf and who has never heard any music could write all the symphonies and concertos written by Mozart or Beethoven, by the simple method of studying the precise physical states of their bodies and predicting where they would put down black marks on their lined paper. And our deaf physicist could do even more: by studying Mozart's or Beethoven's bodies with sufficient care he could write scores which were never actually written by Mozart or Beethoven, but which they would have written had certain external circumstances of their lives been different: if they had eaten lamb, say, instead of chicken, or drunk tea instead of coffee. // All this could be done by our deaf physicist if supplied with a sufficient knowledge of purely physical conditions. There would be no need for him to know anything about the theory of music—though he might be able to predict what answers Mozart or Beethoven would have written down under examination conditions if presented with questions on the theory of counterpoint. // I believe that all this is absurd; [35]
>
> [n35 My deaf physicist is of course closely similar to Laplace's demon（see note 15）; and I believe that his achievements are absurd, simply because non-physical aspects（aims, purposes, traditions, tastes, ingenuity）play a role in the development of the physical world; or in other words, I believe in *interactionism*（see notes 43 and 62）. Samuel Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, 1920, vol. ii, p. 328, says of what he calls the 'Laplacean calculator': 'Except in the limited sense described, the hypothesis of the calculator is absurd.' Yet the 'limited sense' *includes* the prediction of *all* purely physical events, and would thus *include* the prediction of the position of all the black marks written by Mozart and Beethoven.]（*Objective Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1972, p223）

II

Shoko Miura

Thank you, Brian, for your admirable paper on VN and Popper. Many congratulations for being nearly finished（already finished?）with your book on Popper.

I have three questions for you on your paper.

My first question concerns time, consciousness and the "soul."
You outline a triad to clarify Nabokov's evolutionary dialectics in which "the hereafter" can be proven, as follows:

1. Time without consciousness（the lower animal world）
2. Time with consciousness（man = chelovek = Conscious Time）
3. Consciousness without time（the future of the immortal soul）

And you add, "The last term is really the thesis of a new series." It was a mind-blowing statement. However, I find it hard to imagine what the "consciousness without time" is and what could come after it. Could you give us your idea of the "new series"? Would it be another triad about the "soul"?

My second question is about time and the motifs you found in *Ada*. Would you say that the threads linking these "motifs"—as you call them—throughout the book and in the lives of Van and Ada form an image of Nabokov's philosophical concept of Time? By linking them with the power of Van and Ada's memory, he seems to liberate Van and Ada from the limitations of chronological time and space. Is this why Van as narrator weaves them into the story?

My third question is on Popper. How does Popper conceptualize memory, which is for Nabokov the loyal, resourceful and trustworthy partner in the face of reality, death and loss?

Brian Boyd

Dear Shoko,

Thanks for your questions.

Question 1: That triad is Nabokov's not mine. So what *he* means by "Consciousness without time（the future of the immortal soul）" was known best only to him. But I suspect it's something along the lines of the passage from *The Gift*:

> I know that death in itself is in no way connected with the topography of the hereafter, for a door is merely the exit from the house and not a part of its surroundings, like a tree or a hill. One has to get out somehow, 'but I refuse to see in a door more than a hole, and a carpenter's job' (*Delalande, Discours sur les ombres*, p. 45). And then again: the unfortunate image of a 'road' to which the human mind has become accustomed (life as a kind of journey) is a stupid illusion: we are not going anywhere, we are sitting at home. The other world surrounds us always and is not at all at the end of some pilgrimage. In our earthly house, windows are replaced by mirrors; the door, until a given time, is closed; but air comes in through the cracks. 'For our stay-at-home senses the most accessible image of our future comprehension of those surroundings which are due to be revealed to us with the disintegration of the body is the liberation of the soul from the eyesockets of the flesh and our transformation into one complete and free eye, which can simultaneously see in all directions, or to put it differently: a supersensory insight into the world accompanied by our inner participation.' (Ibid. p. 64). (309–10)

Question 2: Yes, I think the motifs in *Ada* (and the whole structure of the novel) reflect aspects of Nabokov's sense of time. This passage

> The Past, then, is a constant accumulation of images. It can be easily contemplated and listened to, tested and tasted at random, so that it ceases to mean the orderly alternation of linked events that it does in the large theoretical sense. It is now a generous chaos out of which the genius of total recall, summoned on this summer morning in 1922, can pick anything he pleases: diamonds scattered all over the parquet in 1888; a russet black-hatted beauty at a Parisian bar in 1901; a humid red rose among artificial ones in 1883; the pensive half-smile of a young English governess, in 1880, neatly reclosing her charge's prepuce after the bedtime treat; a little girl, in 1884, licking the breakfast honey off the badly bitten nails of her spread fingers; the same, at thirty-three, confessing, rather late in the day, that she did not like flowers in vases; the awful pain striking him in the side while two children with a basket of mushrooms looked on in the merrily burning pine forest; and the startled quonk of a Belgian car, which he had overtaken and passed yesterday on a blind bend of the alpine highway. Such images tell us nothing about the texture of time into which they are woven--except, perhaps, in one matter which happens to be hard to settle. (545–46)

links both the element of succession (the chronological dates) and the resistance to succession (in memory, in collocating and multiplying references to the same element, as a motif does) in a way that makes Nabokov feel he's getting closer to, if not the texture of time, then to the texture of timelessness. Or that's my answer today!

In **Question 3**, you ask "How does Popper conceptualize memory, which is for Nabokov the loyal, resourceful and trustworthy partner in the face of reality, death and loss?" Here you've put your finger on a key difference between Nabokov and Popper: for Nabokov, memory is subjectively central, a measure of one's knowing one has lived (hence "Speak, Memory" as the title of his autobiography, "Conclusive Evidence," to use its earlier title, of his having lived). But Popper is not interested much in memory in that subjective sense, sustaining the self (although he had an excellent memory too); he's more interested in problems, in what we can resolve now or in the future, so, in the case of memory, explaining it as a scientific problem, as part of the brain or the self. So, in *The Self and Its Brain* (1977), which he co-wrote with neuropsychologist Sir John Eccles, he lists various kinds of

memory, including especially

> (7) The continuity-producing memory. In connection with this there exist several interesting theories. It is, or so it seems to me, related to what Henri Bergson [1896], [1911] calls "pure memory" (as opposed to "habits"), [142] a record of all our experiences in their proper temporal order. This record, however, is not according to Bergson recorded in the brain, or in any matter: it exists as a purely spiritual entity. (The function of the brain is to act as a filter for the pure memory, to prevent it from intruding on our attention.) It is interesting to compare this theory with the experimental results obtained by Penfield and Perot [1963] by stimulating selected regions of the exposed brains of conscious patients, described by Eccles in chapter E8: Bergson might perhaps have claimed that these experiments support his theory, since they prove the existence of a perfect record of (at least some) past experiences. However, as Eccles points out, we have no such reports from non-epileptic patients; besides, Penfield was stimulating the brain, rather than preventing it from acting as a Bergsonian filter. It still seems the most likely conjecture that the continuity-producing memory is not perfectly stored; neither in the mind nor in the brain, and that Penfield's amazing discoveries show only that certain splinters of it may be perfectly stored in some people—perhaps only in epileptics. The normal memory of past situations does not, of course, have the character of immediate re-experience, but rather of a dim "I remember that" or "I remember how". (141−42)

You can see how far from VN that is!

I joked with Akiko before writing my paper, seeing how much could go into it, that I might need to write a whole book on the topic! But now, thinking a little more about your question, I do have the idea for a new book—the seventh book project I have in line—on Nabokov and Popper as two giants of twentieth-century achievement, as I at least see them, sharing a belief in the endlessness of discovery, but also contrasting yet in complementary ways: one an artist, the other a thinker, one subjectivist, the other objectivist, one totally individualist, the other individualist but also recognizing the centrality of social interdependence.

Shoko Miura

Thank you, Brian, for your quick reply. I apologize for not being so quick with mine. Thinking of questions to ask Akiko and Zoran took a lot of reading and research. But this symposium gave me a chance to get back to serious studying and exposure to the unfamiliar field of analytic philosophy. I find it fascinating. I am very grateful for your very clear answers to my three questions. I have two questions to ask.

Your reply to my first question about the soul and the hereafter brought me back to *The Gift*, which I must reread again. I have another, broader question for you. As you remember, in Nabokov 101 in St. Petersburg, you and Sasha Dolinin exchanged exciting arguments on *Ada* and *The Gift*. There is a gap of 31 years and two languages between these novels. Rereading *The Gift* after rereading *Ada*, as you must have done many times, do you see changes in Nabokov's philosophical conjectures about time?

In your reply to my Question 2, you quoted Nabokov's delightful passage about the Past. I agree that Nabokov's *Ada* weaves "the texture of timelessness," as you brilliantly phrased it, through motifs occurring in memorable scenes of the past. I feel that by recurring throughout the book, like Wassily Kandinsky's colors and shapes in his abstract paintings, Nabokov's motifs rise out of chronological succession and resonate with each other outside time, forming another world of perception in the reader's mind. And this leads to my new second question, which is also linked to your reply to my previous Question 3.

According to Popper and Eccles, neuropsychological experiments proved that there exists "pure memory" in the human brain, but it is prevented from our awareness by what is called a "Bergsonian filter." Only a select few, if at all, can have a glimpse of memory which can be "re-experienced." (I hope this is an accurate summary of your citation from their book, *The Self and the Brain*, 1977.) If you agree that Nabokov's pursuit of truth about time involves creating another world of perception through recurring motifs, is there not a parallel between Popper and Eccles' assertion and Nabokov's writing of *Ada*? Nabokov died in 1977, so he could not have read the book, and I do not intend to see any influence, but as you said, "memory is subjectively central" for Nabokov. If so, can Terra, in short, be seen as "pure memory" for Van?

Brian Boyd

Thanks again, Shoko, for your responses and questions.

I think Nabokov's attitude to time was remarkably consistent from before *The Gift* to after *Ada*, indeed, all through his mature years (say, from 1925 on). There is the same sense of the inexhaustibility of the past, the bountiful immensity and yet the cruel confinement of the present, and the unpredictability and openness of the future; and simultaneously, an intuition that some richer mode of or access to time lies surrounding human consciousness, although unimaginable and even logically contradictory to human reason.

That said, *Ada* is different because Nabokov through Van is also trying here to express a philosophy of time in which the phenomenology of time, the subjective experience of time in the present, is central, and in which time is rigorously severed from space (perhaps this last part is a reflection of Nabokov's meditations on time and space for *Speak, Memory*, including that "triadic" series in 1951 that I quoted in my original paper).

I'm not sure I quite understand your second question-cluster. I think both Popper and Eccles are reluctant to suggest that experience is perfectly preserved, *even if* brain stimulation in epileptic patients seems to give them a sense of reliving a past experience.

In *Ada*, especially, Nabokov does try to show the infinitely rich patterns in experience, or in the personal past (the storehouse of experience), where it's the storing—and therefore the possible

collocation of—different parts of the past, rather than the succession between past moments, that matters more.

No, I wouldn't say that Terra is "pure memory" for Van. Terra seems objectively out there, even if dimly perceived through the vagaries and visions of the insane. Terra doesn't, for Van, contain his past with Ada, it's something quite different. I've been working hard on *Ada* for half a century（the rough distance in time between events in Terra and Antiterra, according to the novel!）and while I enjoy the discrepancies and the disjunctions between the two planets, I'm far from saying I *understand* what they mean.

Shoko Miura

Brian, thank you for your reply to my second batch of questions. I am sorry my questions were sometimes muddled. Philosophy of time was a difficult subject for me. As always, your comprehensive and accurate understanding of Nabokov and his works is amazing. I am learning so much from your replies. Though I have attended the Kyoto Reading Circle on *Ada* both in person and online for ten years or more（but far shorter than your half a century!）, Terra is still a bottomless mystery to me. Your comments this time on Popper and Nabokov, however, brought me closer to what life, death and time meant for Nabokov. Now I feel I can read with a more vibrant framework in which to read *Ada, Speak, Memory*, and other works.

Best wishes for your future writing projects. In the meantime, I might think up more questions to ask you. This is such a precious opportunity.

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Paper

"I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig": Nabokov and Currie on Empathy for Objects

> Beware of the man who works hard to learn something, learns it, and finds himself no wiser than before. He is full of murderous resentment of people who are ignorant, without having come by their ignorance the hard way.
>
> -*The Books of Bokonon*（Vonnegut, 1965, p. 187）

Why Currie and Nabokov? Several answers suggest themselves: both Currie's "Empathy for objects"（2011）and Nabokov's "Man and Things"（1928）[1] examine the power of discrete objects to affect the sensibilities of those who encounter them.

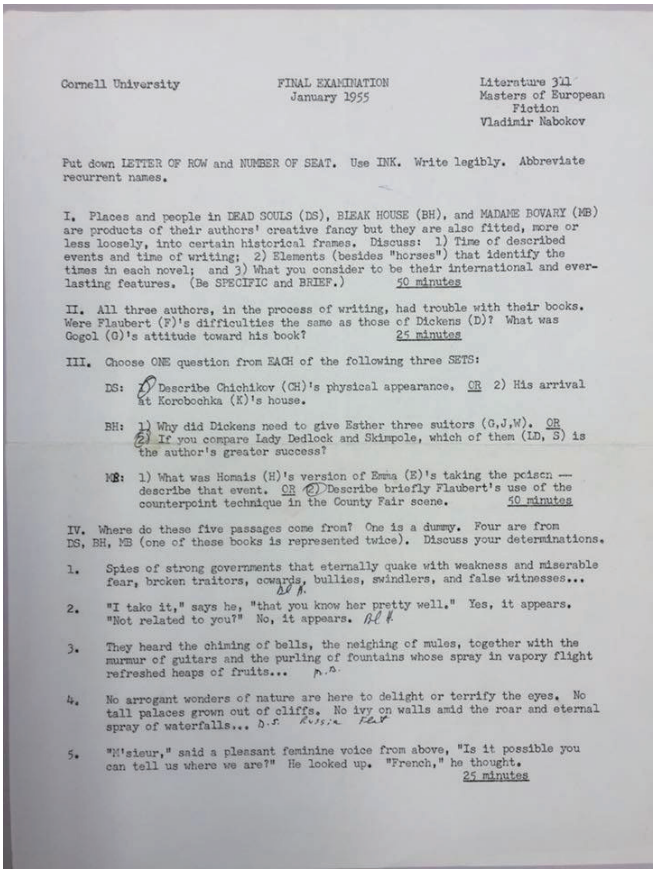
Currie also surveys possible evidence for the claim that empathic access to such objects may serve as the basis of aesthetic experience. Nabokov's essay meditates on the role of anthropomorphizing and personalizing of things[2] in our efforts to understand and accommodate the world of others, objects, and events. Finally, there is some similarity of their views regarding the author-reader relationship.

Currie insists that the value of literature is not to be found in learning about the human mind but in sharing and imitating the experience of others:

> I'm interested in the value of literature. One thing that people have said is valuable in literature is that we can learn about the human mind from it. But why wouldn't psychology lectures be a better way of learning that? I suggest we think about our relation to literature not in terms of learning but in terms of sharing an experience with the author [...]Writing great literature is a very good way of showing that you have the kinds of qualities that people will like and admire. So it's not at all surprising that people when they read great literature do so partly because it enables them to share the point of view of somebody who they admire and to partake of their way of seeing the world.
>
> Transcript of https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EthnpjW3lRA&t=48s

Nabokov, too, in "Good Readers and Good Writers" imagines a possible encounter between the author and the reader: "Up a trackless slope climbs the master artist, and at the top, on a windy ridge, whom do you think he meets?

The panting and happy reader, and there they spontaneously embrace and are linked forever if the book lasts forever." As this exam Nabokov administered to his Cornell students in 1955 shows, "climbing" involves imagining and remembering the details writers put into the fictional worlds they create.



Cornell University FINAL EXAMINATION January 1955 Literature 311 Masters of European Fiction Vladimir Nabokov

Put down LETTER OF ROW and NUMBER OF SEAT. Use INK. Write legibly. Abbreviate recurrent names.

I. Places and people in DEAD SOULS (DS), BLEAK HOUSE (BH), and MADAME BOVARY (MB) are products of their authors' creative fancy but they are also fitted, more or less loosely, into certain historical frames. Discuss: 1) Time of described events and time of writing; 2) Elements (besides "horses") that identify the times in each novel; and 3) What you consider to be their international and everlasting features. (Be SPECIFIC and BRIEF.) 50 minutes

II. All three authors, in the process of writing, had trouble with their books. Were Flaubert (F)'s difficulties the same as those of Dickens (D)? What was Gogol (G)'s attitude toward his book? 25 minutes

III. Choose ONE question from EACH of the following three SETS:

DS: 1) Describe Chichikov (CH)'s physical appearance, OR 2) His arrival at Korobochka (K)'s house.

BH: 1) Why did Dickens need to give Esther three suitors (G,J,W). OR 2) If you compare Lady Dedlock and Skimpole, which of them (LD, S) is the author's greater success?

MB: 1) What was Homais (H)'s version of Emma (E)'s taking the poison — describe that event. OR 2) Describe briefly Flaubert's use of the counterpoint technique in the County Fair scene. 50 minutes

IV. Where do these five passages come from? One is a dummy. Four are from DS, BH, MB (one of these books is represented twice). Discuss your determinations.

1. Spies of strong governments that eternally quake with weakness and miserable fear, broken traitors, cowards, bullies, swindlers, and false witnesses...

2. "I take it," says he, "that you know her pretty well." Yes, it appears. "Not related to you?" No, it appears.

3. They heard the chiming of bells, the neighing of mules, together with the murmur of guitars and the purling of fountains whose spray in vapory flight refreshed heaps of fruits...

4. No arrogant wonders of nature are here to delight or terrify the eyes. No tall palaces grown out of cliffs. No ivy on walls amid the roar and eternal spray of waterfalls...

5. "M'sieur," said a pleasant feminine voice from above, "Is it possible you can tell us where we are?" He looked up. "French," he thought. 25 minutes

Courtesy of the Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154361674888688&set=p.10154361674888688&type=3

Despite these commonalities, Nabokov’s and Currie’s respective essays arrive at very different conclusions about the nature of aesthetic experience. Juxtaposing their essays results in several questions about the assumptions behind, and consequences of, Currie’s aesthetic approach.

Currie strives to provoke by disabusing us of the ways we ordinarily think about the mind and the workings of film and fiction. Attentive to intellectual history and to developmental and experimental psychology, Currie consistently examines the role of imaging in our experience of art, and, since 1995,[3] consistently finds reason to oppose the claim that fiction can function as a source of knowledge—if by knowledge we mean “learning consistent with or supported by the best science” (*TLS*, 14). It is not surprising, then, to find him, in “Empathy for Objects,” grounding his discussion of empathy in both the history of the Empathists[4] and the simulative functioning of mirror neurons, experimentally confirmed in the early 1990s:

> While simulative processes underlie empathy for objects and for persons, a variety of other tasks involve simulation, including, apparently, language processing.... When people read action-related words, the motor

> homunculus is activated in appropriate ways, moving its feet at the sound of the word 'feet.'（86）

Currie posits the mirror neuron systems as the motor of embodied simulation, uncontrolled neurophysiological imitation that serves as the kinetic basis of intersubjectivity. In "The Moral Psychology of Fiction"（1995）Currie extends this kind of simulative activity even into the imaginative perception necessary to engage fictional characters: "Part of engaging with a fictional work consists of imagining those things which it makes fictional . . . imaginings about the story's characters and situations" ... "'I come to simulate the thoughts, feelings and attitudes I would have were I in that situation'（54−55）.[5]

In "Imagination and Simulation"（1995）Currie adds the stipulation that "fictions function to drive imagination, [and] they do so in ways of which the subject is sometimes unaware, and over which the subject rarely exerts conscious control." While this 1995 line of reasoning may sound as if Currie allows for the reader's or viewer's direct, automatic, and unconscious inner imitation of a Humbert's or an Iago's actions and feelings, such allowance is no longer the case. By 1997[6], Currie closed that loophole, arguing for a mediating factor he calls a "hypothetical reader of fact." His argument requires a summary: as readers of fiction, we experience simulated emotive contact with fictional characters even though we know that they do not exist and thus their intentions, events, and feelings cannot take place. That paradox forces us into imagining or simulating the mental states of a "hypothetical reader of fact," someone who does not experience the characters and their beliefs, desires, and actions as fictious but as factual and real:

> I simulate that hypothetical reader, and acquire off-line versions of his（relevant）beliefs and desires. But how do I also simulate his I-states - the off- line beliefs and desires he got as a result of simulating [a fictional character, zk] Easy: I do that by having exactly those I-states myself. Simulating someone's I-states is different from simulating his beliefs and desires. I simulate someone's belief that P by having belief that P; I simulate someone's belief that P by having exactly that state of belief that P.（*Emotion and the Arts,* 69）

Question #1. How do we select between off-line and online beliefs and desires?

If I understand Currie correctly, the I-states he posits as taking place within the hypothetical readers during their imaginative perception/simulation of a fiction are "off-line" in the sense that when I simulate the hypothetical reader's simulation of a fictional character's states of mind, my sensorimotor simulations do not motivate actions they would cause "online" were I empathetically simulating the mental states of someone I encounter in my non-make-believe directly perceived life. The conclusion Currie draws from this act of mirroring simulations is that fiction-generated emotions, even when productive of empathy, are not genuine since they are not action- prompting beliefs.

But if we now remember Currie's belief that we read fiction in order "to share the point of view of somebody who[m we, zk] admire and to partake of their way of seeing the world," we thus end up with a layer of imaginative perception that looks suspiciously like belief, a Holden Caulfield type of belief that it would be a good thing to have the real author as a "terrific friend" we could call on the phone whenever we felt like it. Caulfield's belief that an admirable story implies an admirable author strikes me as naïve. Novelists like Philip Roth have pointed out to their actual friends the flaw in this

conception of the implied author[7]: "I have chosen to make art out of my vices rather than what I take to be my virtues." Currie's belief in sharing the experience of admired authors also seems contradicted by his caution: "to the extent that creative writers are subject to the emotional distortions we associate with bipolar disorder, we can expect that they, on balance, will be more prone than the rest of us to misjudge the emotional impact of imagined scenarios."(*TLS, 15*)

Question #2: How do we choose the source of our empathy and yet experience immersion?

While it is easy to accept that what Currie calls "bodily imaginings" play a role in our engagement of others and of fictional characters, "bodily" empathy for objects requires a specific example. Currie chooses Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*(1612−1614)and provides a firsthand report:

> When I look at Rubens' *Descent from the Cross* with the right kind of attention I am made directly, non-inferentially aware of the heaviness of Christ's represented body, and of the sense of strain represented in the bodies of the mourners as they lower the body. I may, in addition, have experiences constituted by the coming to consciousness of motoric simulations of bodily strain, but I think we do well to distinguish these from perceptual states.(90)

Currie's sense of the heaviness and the strain is a result of his body's neurological mirroring of the actions depicted by the painting. But what tells him that the people in the painting are mourners? One has to guess inference, since Currie does not report neurological readiness to simulate crying, the act depicted in this detail from the painting and usually associated with grief and mourning.

Stripped of its background contextual implicature（Who are these people effecting Jesus's descent from the cross? Why is one woman looking away from the action and the only one crying? Why is this the central panel of the triptych? Etc.）, the ignored contextual implication makes it possible to posit that the kinetic response Currie describes could just as easily have come from another input, for example, this illustration from *Winnie the Pooh*.

It is not my intent here to caricature Currie's position or his feelings. I simply do not understand why

his model of human cognition foregoes any contextualization or any recognition of the differences in the cognitive environment. Part of me even believes that Currie would not object to this juxtaposition of works by Rubens and E. H. Shepard. Why? "Empathy for Objects" concludes with the claim that empathy for aesthetic objects does not differ from empathy for all other objects like chairs, trees, sculptures, and buildings:

> We need not be looking at a chair with aesthetic attention in order to activate a motor simulation of sitting on it. We might say that empathic responses are of special relevance to understanding our relations to the aesthetic, because these responses become particularly salient when we are in the presence of aesthetic things. But it is hard to see why this should be.

Currie seems to be invoking Wittgenstein of *Zetel* to explain the difficulty:

> § § 627. It is just because forming images is a voluntary activity that it does not instruct us about the external world. § § 629. "Seeing and imaging are different phenomena." —The words "seeing" and "imaging" have different meanings. [...]
> § § 632. When we form an image of something we are not observing. [8]

Wittgenstein reasons that because imagination, unlike perception, is controlled by our will, the imagery it provides can be only what we have put there, and therefore such imagery cannot be productive of new information about the world.[9] Of course, Currie (and Wittgenstein) are right: artworks are *objects* and they *represent* things, so our empathic responses to such objects are really responses to our own bodily- simulation-aided mental representations of such objects. We may not always be aware of our responses, but even if we were, Currie concludes that because they are "difficult to control, and with the potential to distract us from the work; I don't think we know much about the circumstances in which, or the ways in which, consciousness of these states will deepen our experience of the work rather than detracting from it." (91) Currie has not backed off this particular notion of empathy and has proclaimed elsewhere that "Anyone who thinks that empathy plays a role in literary engagement had better have a psychologically plausible account of what empathy is." (*Arts and Minds*, back cover)

However, if empathy is not the psychologically plausible mechanism of a reader's/viewer's absorption, we are left to our own devices to posit a better mechanism or process responsible for our becoming immersed in a fiction or transported out of our "online" cognitive environment to the point where engagement with the fictional is so intense and immediate that it generates emotions. Nor is it clear why our emotionally vivid sense of serious moral and psychological engagement with the thought-world of the fiction in the end must prove to be a false sense, without any special relevance.

Question #3: Who Owns Reality?

While it is not clear to me what Currie means by "the right kind of attention" in his description of his engagement with "Descent from the Cross," he does not see the kinetic empathy he reports as a perceptual state. Instead, he treats it as an irrelevant emotion:

> Emotions are good when it comes to forming and maintaining a relationship with your baby, but they are as easily triggered by sentimental ballads and horror movies. You might hope to find some special emotional reactions, highly sensitive to the truth about human psychology--let me know when you have found one.（*TLS*, 15）

Emotions a child learns through simulation of its parents are good, but emotions are not good in the context of empathically engaging aesthetic objects since they do not lend themselves to inferences, generate no propositions, and thus offer no "truth about human psychology." I intend to use Nabokov's essay to look for just such truth, and I would like to start where Currie stops: considering the mental states of people responding to paintings. Here are Nabokov's imaginings of possible responses to a framed painting of an unnamed woman:

> One person looks at it and, with the cold admiration of a connoisseur, analyzes the colors, the chiaroscuro, the background. Another, a craftsman, filled with a certain complex sensation, in which images of his craft mix—the glue, the yardstick, the decorative molding, the firmness of the wood, the gilding—looks at the frame with a professional eye. A third, a friend of thewoman depicted, discusses the likeness or, pierced for a moment by one of those faint recollections that are like the street urchins of memory, sees and hears with great clarity（albeit for a moment）that very woman put down her handbag and gloves on the table and say: "Tomorrow is the last sitting, thank God. The eyes have come out well." And, finally, a fourth looks at the painting with the thought that today the dentist will cause him a great deal of pain, so that each time he sees this painting, he will recall the buzzing of the drill and how the dentist's breath smelled.（"Man and Things"）

The responses Nabokov enumerates include admiration, analysis, sensation, comparison, involuntary synaesthetic memory or visual/auditory hallucination of a past event that may or may not be occasioned by empathy, and what Nabokov has called elsewhere "future recollection"（*Lolita* 86）Of these, only the second, the craftsman's "complex sensation" of the objects and processes necessary to make the frame resembles Currie's required response of "bodily simulation." All other responses involve more or less conscious cognitive activity. Nabokov does not seem to privilege any particular response to the painting but posits the responses as necessarily involving the absent past（"street urchins of memory"）and the possibly synaesthetic future（buzzing of the drill and the smell of the dentist's breath that will come to be associated with the painting）. When in 1962 Peter Duval Smith asked Nabokov[10] about the relation between art and reality, Nabokov's answer took very much the same form he used to describe the possible responses to the painting:

> Reality is a very subjective affair. I can only define it as a kind of gradual accumulation of information; and as specialization. If we take a lily, for instance, or any other kind of natural object, a lily is more real to a naturalist than it is to an ordinary person. But it is still more real to a botanist. And yet another stage of reality is reached with that botanist who is a specialist in lilies. You can get nearer and nearer, so to speak, to reality; but you never get near enough because reality is an infinite succession of steps, levels of perception, false bottoms, and hence unquenchable, unattainable.（*Strong Opinions,* 10−11）

While in the end, Nabokov does not claim that art provides us with full "access" to reality, he does suggest that there are cognitive gains: "gradual accumulation of information" accomplished through

"the precision of poetry and the excitement of pure science" (*Strong Opinions*) that allows us to "get nearer and nearer" to reality. That is, if reality is made up of matter, energy, and information. Nothing in Currie's arguments rules out information as a dimension of reality; in fact, his insistence that fiction produce new information about the world seem to posit information in just such a light. But nothing accounts for the fact that viewing the painting involves adopting a specific experiential point of view by the subjects of their respective experiences. It is a question of ownership: Currie's images of the painting's stress and weight are not mine. Neurophysiology cannot tell the whole story here without perspectival subjectivity of the sort Nabokov enumerates. If Currie is a sentient being, then what he feels consciously or subconsciously are his mental objects. He cannot be merely an unreflective fMRI-like witness to his experience of "Descent from the Cross." As Nabokov puts it, "not only is there no object without man, but there is no object without a definite relationship to it from the human side."

Question #4: What's the time?

In addition to the painting, Nabokov's other examples of emphatic "things" in "Man and Things" include a porcelain pig, a suicidal coin, old trousers, spent matches, ashtrays, ancient vending machines, childhood toys, and his neighbor's boots. If one asks what links those objects, one is forced to push precisely toward the conclusion Currie did not want to draw: as objects of human empathy, in combination, they seem to make a narrative and may even serve as the basis of aesthetic appreciation and offer knowledge of the world. Let's start with the porcelain pig:

> At a fair, in a remote little town, I won a cheap porcelain pig at target shooting. I abandoned it on the shelf at the hotel when I left town. And in doing so, I condemned myself to remember it. I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig. I am overcome by an unbearable, slightly silly tenderness when I think of it, won, and unappreciated, and abandoned.

The pig, now as remote as the little town, by its very remoteness generates "unbearable" tenderness. If tenderness or any other emotion or thought could be read by a cognitive neuroscientist, would she be able to read out of such a map a temporal and thus causal sequence? By failing to become a valued souvenir, the pig was betrayed and has in turn become a relic, a memory of something abandoned but repeatedly remembered, an instant of time that drags the history of the event back into the private time and consciousness of the first person narrator. Is the cognitive gain the awareness that our involuntary memory will not let us forget our betrayals? Nabokov's narrator confesses to not being able to erase the gap between the pig's absence in fact and its presence in his memory—the pig has become an extension of himself, a phantom limb provoking a mourning for some unappreciated, underdeveloped, and abandoned past facet of the narrator's formerly occurrent self.

The forgotten pitied porcelain pig thus radiates both desire and loss, memory and imagination. That is some pig! It may have been cheap, but there are no substitutes for it. We do not need souvenirs from an experience we can repeat or for which we can find ready substitutions. Yet the experience of losing/forgetting/betraying the pig is repeated because some mechanism of memory recorded the event, the memory of the event, and the emotional meaning of that memory. While it is possible that

the love for the porcelain pig emerges strictly out of chemicals within the nervous system, it may also be possible that art records events and their meanings in the language of emotions whose cognitive dimension will emerge only in due time.

Question #5: Why is the Qualia Problem a Problem?

Because Currie's theory of empathy has no room for either time or loss（those inevitable axes of the subtexts that make fiction into literature）, if we apply his theory of reading to Nabokov's story about the porcelain pig, we must posit a hypothetical reader of fact who must in turn conclude that Nabokov's narrator is either pretending to be in love with a porcelain pig or is simply deluded.[11] Since all fiction-making involves pretense, that is the less interesting alternative here.

Because Curry proposes that we deal with fictional objects as we do with actual ones, the delusion path is the far richer one, especially if we remember Nabokov's story "Signs and Symbols," where a young Jewish man's delusory relation to objects is diagnosed as "referential mania." He suffers from a condition where he perceives the non-human world, however random or irrelevant its objects may be, as connected to his personal situation in negative or even threatening ways. His world strikes him as "a hive of evil." The reader of "Signs and Symbols" would be a good candidate for an fMRI scan of her brain's pre-frontal and anterior cingulate regions, where the deluded young man would presumably be experiencing functional disconnections in his hyperdopaminergic activity.[12] While such a scan of neuronal firings would perhaps reveal that the reader is "seeing" something, the next required step, interpreting what is "seen," has so far not been taken or discussed in the literature of scientific experiments. As a result, the fMRI scan still cannot tell us what the reader was "seeing" nor name the steps in explaining how such seeing/imaging/simulating is occurring. And furthermore, it would not be possible to gauge scientifically what effect the experience of simulating the referential mania would be having on the reader. The subject/object and the mind/brain dichotomies would remain in place, and that of course would bring us to the qualia problem.

Guven Guzeldere defines qualia as "experiences [that, zk] have ... non-causal, nonrepresentational, non-functional and perhaps non-physical properties"（Guzeldere 37）. Michael Tye reduces the definition to the phenomenal character of the "immediate subjective 'feel' of experience"（Tye 619）. The "qualia problem," in the simplest possible terms, is a problem because the properties and activities of consciousness are not reducible to, and may not parallel, the properties or activities of the brain.[13] Explanations of the way our nerves act leave out many features of our mental lives. What exactly is the immediate feeling of love for an abandoned porcelain pig? The "qualia problem" does have a consequence: since utterances about one's one mental states are not subject to external validation, reported love for the porcelain pig would have the same degree of incorrigibility or certainty as the statement "I am sad at the loss of the porcelain pig souvenir," or "I am experiencing melancholy or nostalgia for a particular temporal slice of my life." And since the self is in one sense the organization of all the conscious and unconscious attitudes a human being can have towards all that is sensible, Karl Jaspers tells us that we cannot simply tell the narrator of "Man and Things" that he is mistaken.

> To say simply that a delusion is a mistaken idea [or belief] which is firmly held by the patient and which cannot be corrected gives only a superficial and incorrect answer to the problem [...] All experience of reality [...] has a root

> in the practice of living [...] Delusion proper [...] implies a transformation in our total awareness of reality（Jaspers 1913/1963, pp. 93−94）.

Nabokov was very interested in such transformations, and here he makes it clear that the total awareness of reality he is concerned with has to do with our "anthropomorphizing ardor":

> We have christened the parts of things, weapons, machines, with words we use for different parts of our bodies, making these diminutives as if we were talking of our children. "Toothlet, eyelet, earlet, hairlet, noselet, footlet, back, handle, head."

Susanne K. Langer explains our anthropomorphizing as an evolutionary device:

> Bodily feelings may be the first thing man projected and thus, all unwittingly, imputed to everything he objectified as material bodies in his world. The very existence of 'things' is modeled on his own inward expectation of strains, directions, and limitations of his felt actions; the wholeness and simplicity of molar objects is that of his own soma.（48）[1415]

Unlike Langer, Nabokov is also concerned with the consequences of consciously or unconsciously seeing the world as a human likeness: "In the lazy positioning of a woolen shawl draped over the back of a chair there's something moping: oh, how the shawl longs for someone's shoulders!"[16] But he also notes that the empathy generated by "lend[ing] things our feelings," that is, by projecting our own fears, hopes, desires, or griefs onto objects, also generates some risks:

> It is as though I am surrounded by little monsters, and it seems to me that the little teeth of the clock are gnawing away at time, that the "ear" of the needle stuck into the curtain is eavesdropping on me, that the teapot spout, with a little droplet poised on its tip, is about to sneeze like a man with a cold.

The sensation Nabokov describes here is certainly not the Wordsworthian capacity to "see into the life of things" activated by "the deep power of joy."[17] The life of things seen in this way generates anything but joy. Nabokov presents us with the case where we prefer not to be imagining but cannot help it. Why would we bother to simulate imaginatively frustration and anxiety, feelings we normally don't value? Why would we appreciate fiction that generates those feelings? In fact, why crave and imagine and simulate narratives at all? The answers Nabokov and Currie give to these questions make the differences in their approaches to art the most obvious.

One answer Currie gives in the co-authored "Art and Delusion"（2003）is that such imagining is a sign of unhealthy "mental economy" because while "narrative seems to be a significant feature of normal mental life, one implication of this paper is that the best example we have of a life pervasively experienced as narrative is the life of madness."（574）

Nabokov, who thought that for the writer, "the art of seeing" implied seeing the world "as the potentiality of fiction,"[18] saw such imaginings as affecting our knowledge of, and attitude towards, the world.

> We fear letting—not for anything do we want to let—our things return to the nature they came from. It is almost physically painful for me to part with old trousers. I keep letters I will never reread. A thing is a human likeness, and sensing this likeness, its death, its destruction, is unbearable for us.
>
> What do I care about a pair of boots left by my neighbor outside his door? But were my neighbor to die tonight, what human warmth, what pity, what live and tender beauty would these two old, shabby boots, with their eyelet flaps sticking out like little ears, left standing at the door, radiate over me.

Despite the eyed and eared boots, Nabokov stops short of joining Cézanne in saying "The landscape thinks itself in me, and I am its consciousness."[19] The boots do not transport themselves into the narrator, but they do in a sense occupy the narrator's consciousness by existing in two time frames and thus creating the story. As with the painting and the porcelain pig, Nabokov connects empathy with sensed changes in the flow of time. It is the interruptions in our customary sense of before and after that create radiant discontinuities. The radiance is at once a projection and a discovery.[20] The dead man's absence becomes an act of abandonment no different than the abandonment of the porcelain pig. Puppy-like, the boots exist in impossibility, waiting for the owner who is never coming back. Nabokov also points to a dimension in things that eludes us and thus frustrates human designs:

> And note, by the way, how eagerly and how adroitly the very slightest thing strives to slip away from man, and how inclined it is to suicide. A dropped coin, with the haste of a desperate fugitive, traces a wide arc on the floor and disappears into the farthest corner under the farthest sofa.

Final Question: Can cognitive pornography teach grief?

We've reached that point in the paper where I need to explore the implications of the differences between Nabokov's and Currie's approaches. The best way to do so is to consider the underlying structures of the two essays. Currie's leads us to a recognition (stated elsewhere) that we must accept his conclusion. We need to recognize that "when we engage seriously with great literature we do not come away with more knowledge, better abilities, clarified emotions or deeper human sympathies." The best outcome we can hope for is that we may get to "exercise capacities that let us explore a fascinating, demanding conception of what human beings are like." But since even that conception is "probably a wrong one," we should "make do" with "the pleasures of pretended learning," an acceptance that makes literature into a form of "cognitive pornography." (*TLS*, 15)

Extracting a compelling structure out of Nabokov's essay requires that we somehow imagine a world in which the "betray[al]" of a porcelain pig, the imaginary death of the boot-wearing neighbor, the real deaths of ancient kings and a diphtheria-infected uncle, the anticipated loss of a child's toys, and the suicide of a coin be seen as proper, formally justified, preparation for this passage:

> And, no matter how hard man tries, he, too, decays, and his things decay, too. And better than lying like a mummy in a painted sarcophagus in a museum draft, it is far more pleasant, and somehow more honest, to decay in the ground to which in their turn toys, and linotypes, and toothpicks, and automobiles will return.

The cognitive leap we need to make in order to avoid having to accept Currie's recommendation is based on two questions: "More pleasant and more honest for whom?" and "Why is this kind of decay more poetically right?" To get at one convincing answer to both questions, I will borrow a strategy out of Currie's book and invoke Wittgenstein's meditation on grief in *Philosophical Investigations*:

> "Grief" describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life. If a man's bodily expression of sorrow and of joy alternated, say with the ticking of a clock, here we should not have the characteristic formation of the pattern of sorrow or of the pattern of joy.(174)

Wittgenstein sees grief as a state not susceptible to the regimen of measurement. He then separates grief from pain by noticing that language already reflects the difference as the sensation and duration of pain may be measured:

> For a second he felt violent pain. "—Why does it sound queer to say: "For a second he felt deep grief"? Only because it so seldom happens?"(174)

Wittgenstein posits language as the instrument by which grief, something whose depths we cannot plan, something internal and unmeasurable, makes itself somewhat but not completely intelligible. In other words, Wittgenstein relies on the same mode of explanation Nabokov uses to explain eyelets and earlets. They may also agree that our language makes the world intelligible in the very act of our projecting ourselves into that world. Wittgenstein's insistence that the world is all that is the case[21] also suggests that to the degree it gives us access to other minds language functions as a form of empathy. If we now ask the reasons for Nabokov's linking his sequence of "things" with the sensation and comparative value of decay, "grief" suggests itself as a possible reason.[22]

The contemplation of death at the end of Nabokov's essay is not an outcry against Fate, the injustice of dying, or even the impermanence created by little teeth gnawing at the nipple of time. It is not a sudden epiphany about the value of life, not a conciliation, nor a restoration of some disturbed moral order. In fact, it seems merely an expression of preference. Death is but an unceremonious signature of completion. Yet, when looked at in the light of a string of empathy-provoking things, the corpse is the final object and state in the series, blurring and finally eliminating all distinctions between self and the objects of its empathy. We are left with the image of the artist as a corpse and the recognition that (1) we do not have bodies but are bodies, and (2) that in our empathy for things we have merely delayed or tried to evade the realization that the body, like that runaway coin, is the thing that runs away from us. Currie has identified "thinking that wherever I happen to be marks the centre of the universe" (*TLS*, 15) as a "crazy error" of the type that should warn us against seeking cognitive gains from literature. Yet, at the moment of our deaths, we are precisely that center. As the hundred billion neurons connected by a hundred trillion synapses go off-line permanently, a world centered on us disappears, and the suddenly articulate moaning ghost of the lovingly concealed porcelain pig reminds us that one psychological truth literature teaches us is that it requires acceptance of the magical and the paradoxical. If there is such a mental state as a hypothetical reader of fact, it may very well be the means by which during aesthetic experience we simultaneously trigger and repress our consciousness of our own death. And fiction may very well be a form of magic that ushers

death onstage while pretending that it is also possible to chase it off.

In *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov the butterfly collector speaks of "cherishing" nostalgia and of his "hypertrophied sense of lost childhood." Nabokov's essay discussed here collects and mourns lost objects, but it also mourns an object that has not been lost yet. The "moping" Nabokov refers to is melancholia, and Agamben, in a departure from Nabokov's *bête noire*, Freud, defines such an emotion as "withdrawal from a good that had **not** yet been lost" (44). Agamben also points out that melancholia is "**not** so much the regressive reaction to the loss of the love object as the imaginative capacity to make an unobtainable object appear as if lost" (45), a position compatible with Nabokov's notion of artistic perception as the ability to glimpse not just one's own extinction but other people's "future recollections." Literature often exists between Agamben's two "**not**'s (my emphasis, zk) and the paradoxical nature of our imaginative capacity when fueled by empathy requires that cognition and emotion, perception and imagination, belief and desire be porous and not easily separable, at least not to the degree Currie requires. Without such porousness, intercultural empathy as significant imaginative, intellectual, emotional, and political participation in another person's experience envisioned by President Obama may very well not be possible. Yet Obama invites us to imagine such a possibility. I trust Currie when he admits that "it is hard to see why" [...] these [emphatic, zk] responses become particularly salient when we are in the presence of aesthetic things." Here again, Wittgenstein may be helpful to both of us: "A philosophical problem has the form: 'I do not know my way about.'" (*Philosophical Investigations* § § 123) Like Aristotle who insisted that philosophy begins in wonder, Wittgenstein suggests that a sense of dislocation from the felt and believed certainties of our everyday world, its practical concerns, and possibly its learned delusions and profitable ignorance[23] must accompany our wondering about the worlds that are the case for others and their beliefs. A good start is admitting to the feeling that we do not know our way about. And since "One can mistrust one's own senses, but not one's own belief" (again Wittgenstein, *PI,* 190), empathy, as Obama defines it, is the beginning of questioning one's beliefs that the world is as it and cannot be otherwise. Reading fiction emphatically does not instantaneously revise our values, but it may just help us get much needed practice at imagining those "otherwise" worlds.

Greg Currie seems unwilling to engage in, and cautions against such a practice. While his wielding of lucid logic when addressing concepts is enviable, his treatment of aesthetic objects is not. In his thought they seem almost interchangeable and transparent and have somehow tasked themselves with the cognitive goals usually reserved for science. Currie also seems to need art only a source of examples necessary to test his theories of meaning, belief, and imaging.

Finally he seems to do such testing while striving for some kind of ahistorical objectivity, all the while avoiding self-reflection of the sort philosophers like Herder, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Feyerabend, and Rorty regard as a precondition of philosophical thought. In his 2009 book *Philosophy of Literature* Peter Lamarque proposes that philosophers of literature study "fundamental principles" and "conceptual connections" involved in the "phenomenon, common to most if not all cultures, of elevating certain kinds of linguistic activities—notably story-telling or poetry-making or drama to an art form issuing in products that are revered and of cultural significance." (8) Until Currie recognizes the differences between the tension of lowering oneself into a chair and the tension while looking at the Rubens painting of Christ's descent from the Cross, I fear we will not learn much from Currie about elevation.

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Endnotes

1 Note on “Man and Things” from *Think, Write, Speak*, Ed. Boyd and Tolstoy: V. Sirin, “Chelovek i veshchi,” night of Jan. 13−14, 1928. Holograph, VNA Berg. That night was the “Old New Year’s Eve”—when magical things might happen—of the Old Style calendar, which émigrés still kept in mind for festive occasions. This piece was presumably a talk for the Aykhenvald-Tatarinov circle. Published and edited by Alexander Dolinin, “Chelovek i veshchi,” *Zvezda* 4（1999）, 19−24.

2 Aggarwal, Pankaj; McGill, Ann L.（1 December 2007）. “Is That Car Smiling at Me? Schema Congruity as a Basis for Evaluating Anthropomorphized Products.” *Journal of Consumer Research*. 34（4）: 468−479.

3 In his 1995 paper “The Moral Psychology of Fiction,” Currie sees fiction as not only capable of generating cognitive gain but having that gain play a role in our ethics: “[A] really vivid fiction might get you to revise your values”（254）.

4 Currie lists the following empathists: Theodor Lipps, Vernon Lee（Violet Paget）, Herbert Lagerfeld, and Karl Groos.

5 “The Moral Psychology of Fiction” in *Art and Its Messages: Meaning, Morality, and Society* edited by Stephen Davies.

6 Currie, G. 1997. “The Paradox of Caring: Fiction and the Philosophy of Mind.” In M. Hjort and S. Laver（eds.）, *Emotion and the Arts*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. Currie’s skeptical vehemence has risen in tone over the following pieces: “Literature in the Psychology Lab,” *Times Literary Supplement*（31 August 2011）; “Creativity and Insight” in Elliot Samuel Paul and Scott Barry Kaufman（eds.）, *The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays*（Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014）; and “Does Great Literature Make us Better?” *New York Times* Opinionator（1 June 2013）, http://opinionator.blogsnytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/?_r=0

7 Philip Roth to Jack Miles, author of *God, A Biography*（1996）.

8 Wittgenstein, L.（1967）. *Zettel*.

9 In reading Currie on the shortfalls of aesthetic experience, I often wished he had spent more time reading Kant, especially *Critique of Judgment*, p. 212（344）: “[S]ince the reduction of a representation of the imagination to concepts is equivalent to giving its exponents, the aesthetic idea may be called an inexponible representation.” Kant’s positing of the aesthetic idea as too rich in thought and feeling to be captured by concept or language is a warning to all of us, including Currie.

10 *The Listener*, LXVIII（Nov. 22, 1962）.

11 See also *TLS,* 14−15.

12 （Kudos to my colleague Julio Ramirez for explaining this.）

13 In *Zette*l, 610, Wittgenstein delivered his version of this discrepancy in the form of a question: “I saw this man years ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there *in any form?* Why *must* a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a psychological regularity to which *no* physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concept of causality then it is high time it was upset.”

14 Susanne K. Langer, “Art is the objectification of feeling.”

15 Susanne K. Langer, in *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*（Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

16 Cf. Wittgenstein, *PI* 201: “A triangle can really be *standing up* in one picture, be hanging in another, and can in a third be something that has fallen over.—That is, I who am looking at it say, not “It may also be something that has fallen over,“ but “That glass has fallen over and is lying there in fragments.”

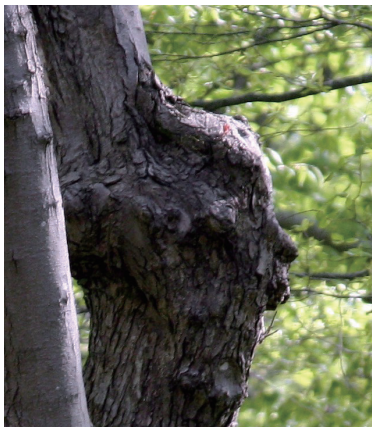
17 I should make it clear that “the life of things” Nabokov depicts is not a case of *mono no aware*. But it is related to pareidolia such as the Man in the Moon or the human profile visible in the photograph of tree below.

18 Cf. Nabokov’s 1948 lecture “Good Readers and Good Writers.”

19 In “Lives We Keep Wanting to Know,” *Acts of Mind: Conversations with Contemporary Poets*, ed. Richard Jackson（University of Alabama Press, 1984）.

20 As Heidegger will argue, eight years after Nabokov’s essay, in “The Origins of the Work of Art.” Heidegger too was contemplating footwear but in a Van Gogh painting.

21 “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is at it is, and everything happens as it does



happen: in it no value exists—and if it did exist, it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world”（*Tractatus*, §6.41）.

22 Wittgenstein on Grief, 29 June 1948: ‘*Lass dich die Trauer nicht verdriessen! Du solltest sie ins Herz einlassen und auch den Wahnsinn nicht fürchten! Er kommt vielleicht als Freund und nicht als Feind zu dir und nur dein* Wehren *ist das Übel. Lass die Trauer ins Herz ein, verschliess ihr nicht die Tür. Draussen vor der Tür im Verstand stehend ist sie furchtbar, aber im* Herzen *ist sie*’*s nicht*’: MS 137, 29.6.48. In MS 137, 11.7.48, roughly two weeks later, he would identify the cause of his grief and guilt as the death of Francis Skinner seven years before.

“Don’t let grief vex you! You should let it into your heart. Nor should you be afraid of madness. It comes to you perhaps as a friend and not as an enemy, and the only thing that is bad is your resistance. Let grief into your heart. Don’t lock the door on it. Standing outside the door, in the mind, it is frightening, but in the *heart* it is not.”

Grief is also one more possible impulse for the invention of language, a not quite sufficient tool to share and decode chronobiological and emotional disturbances caused by human attachments to that which is no longer present but feels as if it is. Even now, language does poorly with uncontrollable physical grief over the mourned objects still felt to be present. To convey the urgency of one’s grief in such cases seems to require that time and grammar be tenseless. And in turn, comforting the mourner meaningfully seems to require utterances that somehow always remain beyond language. That linguistically uncontainable and unintelligible dimension of grief is self-evident if you try to imagine the reaction of parents at the funeral of their child when they are ritually told “Your child is in a better place now.” But, however banal such a sentiment is when expressed, the expression of the platitude further cements the loss and makes it less deniable to the mourners. And it also reminds us of the incommensurability of what we perceive as true, good, and reasonable and what we are able to put into words. However well-meant our utterances may seem to us, language is rarely innocent: we can never speak so as not to be misunderstood. And not just at funerals.

23 I am still reluctant to count among samples of ignorance what McDermott calls “inescapable framework illusions（IFI’s）”: “a belief in free will, the persistence of the self through time, and, among humans, the universalizability of moral statements.”

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Comments and Discussions

Comment on *"I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig": Nabokov and Currie on Empathy for Objects*

Tora Koyama, Commentator

Prof. Kuzmanovich criticizes philosopher Gregory Currie's simulationist theory of empathy for objects comparing it to Vladimir Nabokov's view. His argument covers a broad range of subfields in philosophy such as philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and aesthetics. Admittedly, I may fail to see some of his important points, but I hope he generously finds my comment worth considering.

In any case, as Prof. Kuzmanovich poses a series of questions to Currie, let me consider them in order.

Q1: How do we select between off-line and online beliefs and desires?

As Prof. Kuzmanovich summarizes, one problem with the simulationist theory of empathy is that, although readers of fiction empathetically simulate a fictional character and have simulated mental states, such as sharing the character's beliefs, those states are not genuine, as they do not motivate the readers' actions as the character's mental states do in fiction. According to Currie, this problem can be solved as follows: Readers do not simulate a fictional character directly; rather a "hypothetical reader" simulates the character directly and has simulated mental states that motivate her actions as the character's states do. A reader's simulated mental states are generated through the hypothetical reader so that they do not motivate actions. The mental states of "hypothetical readers are "online" and those of (actual) readers are "off-line" in the sense that the latter do not motivate actions.

Prof. Kuzmanovich criticizes Currie's view, as far as I can understand, for naïvely considering that readers share the experience of the author (or someone closer than us to the author) and also for conflicting with his other view. I am afraid that I failed to see his point, as Currie maintains, it seems to me, that the person simulated is a fictional character rather than the author. I would be grateful to Prof. Kuzmanovich for kindly correcting my misunderstandings, if any.

By the way, the question posed here by Prof. Kuzmanovich here is interesting to me. Surely it must be explained how we select between online and off-line versions of simulated mental states. I believe Currie would answer that the distinction between online and off-line is gradual. A mental state can get more off-line in various ways, such as by being simulated iteratively, or by difficulty in simulating the character. Perhaps readers' awareness of fiction has the same result because we can suppress our impulse to action. That may involve what Currie means by "the right kind of attention" (Currie 2011, as cited in Kuzmanovich 2021).

Q2: How do we choose the source of our empathy and yet experience immersion?

Another criticism that Prof. Kuzmanovich levels at Currie regards his lack of contextualization, which may imply, or be implied by, the fact that empathy for aesthetic objects does not differ from empathy for all other objects. Prof. Kuzmanovich finds this unsatisfactory, as immersion in a fiction would be left with no explanation. If we can be immersed in a fiction, it is presumably through empathy. I think his concern is appropriate. Currie has to explain how immersion in a fiction can be possible even though empathy for aesthetic objects is irrelevant to it.

Currie could reply to this criticism. I suspect that he believes he is prepared for such an objection. The key is the notion of "the right kind of attention." Granted, the meaning of this phrase is unclear, as Prof. Kuzmanovich points out. However, it seems to be the only apparatus in Currie's framework that can distinguish between aesthetic experiences and other experiences. I speculate that, for Currie, what makes immersion in a fiction possible (and an experience truly aesthetic) is attention rather than empathy. This is consistent with his tendency to invoke neuroscientific findings, as attention is a hot topic in recent neuroscientific studies. I would like to hear what Prof. Kuzmanovich thinks of that.

Q3: Who owns reality?

Prof. Kuzmanovich also criticizes Currie for an inadequate inquiry into human psychology, citing Nabokov (2021)'s imagining various possible responses to a painting, including admiration, analysis, sensation, comparison, hallucination of a past event, and "future recollection" (Nabokov 1989, as cited in Kuzumanovich 2021). Prof. Kuzmanovich seems to find Currie's view narrow, focused on only specific kinds of responses.

I was perplexed, however, when Prof. Kuzmanovich described this as a matter of the ownership of reality. For Currie, there is no difference between empathy for aesthetic objects and empathy for other objects, so artworks give us information about the world or reality just as ordinary objects do. Accordingly, Currie should consider the broader kinds of information that Nabokov enumerates. I agree. But this is a matter of reality only when Nabokov's subjective idealism is assumed. (I take Nabokov's metaphysics to be a kind of subjective idealism, as suggested in Boyd (2021), the paper also presented at this symposium.) Currie would not see reality as Nabokov does.

Moreover, even an objective idealist who agrees with the idealistic part of Nabokov's philosophy but does not agree with the subjective part would not think it is a matter of ownership. The 19th-century British idealist philosopher F. H. Bradley stated that "Reality is one" (Bradley 1893), so, for Bradley, there is no question of the ownership of reality. Admittedly, Bradley's philosophy sounds odd, but it is unlikely that Nabokov knew nothing about it, as, around the turn of the 20th-century, idealism was the standard view in British philosophy and Bradley was its central figure.

Q4: What's the time?

The discussion of time may be the highlight of this paper. Prof. Kuzmanovich seems quite right that Nabokov's examples of empathetic things, especially a porcelain pig, show the limits of Currie's theory. These things evoke memories and narratives, that is, things other than the bodily sensations that Currie's theory supposes to be involved in empathy. The empathy invoked by the porcelain pig is more subtle and complex than the simple bodily empathy that Currie assumes.

I am very curious about the nature of that kind of empathy. Perhaps it is a different kind of

empathy that Curries has in mind. I suspect that the porcelain pig reveals a serious crack in the simulationist theory of empathy.

Q5: Why is the qualia problem a problem?

Subjectivity seems to be central in Prof. Kuzmanovich's criticism of Currie, which naturally leads to the qualia problem. However, I was perplexed when Prof. Kuzmanovich uses the qualia problem to justify the so-called first-person authority (see, e.g., Davidson 1984). Philosophers and neuroscientists of consciousness try to reveal the neural correlates of consciousness. Of course, they may simply be wrong; there may be no such correlates. However, the qualia problem itself does not entail their non-existence. According to the problem, the properties and activities of consciousness and the brain only *may* not parallel, as Prof. Kuzmanovich correctly puts it. If scientists reveal that they are parallel, fMRI scanning would be a powerful tool to explicate the subjectivity of delusion. For this reason, the problem of correlation between consciousness and the brain is called *the easy problem of consciousness*, which opposes *the hard problem of consciousness*, the problem of identity or metaphysical necessity between consciousness and the brain (Chalmers 1996). Importantly, the latter problem also does not justify the first-person authority by itself, as utterance about one's own conscious states has contents other than qualia.

Another perplexity I felt is that, although Prof. Kuzmanovich maintains that the difference in Nabokov's and Currie's approaches to art is made "the most obvious" through their answers to the question of why we simulate narratives at all, it seems to me that they are heading in the same direction. Currie's answer is to blur the distinction between healthy and unhealthy mental life. Even though narratives are an important part of our lives, a life pervasively experienced as narrative is an unhealthy one. Nabokov's answer is to blur the distinction between narrative and delusion, because what Prof. Kuzmanovich depicts recalls the young man of Nabokov's "Signs and Symbols."

Admittedly, there is a considerable difference between Nabokov's and Currie's answers. Nabokov sees the matter from a metaphysical point of view while Currie sees it from an epistemological/positivistic/realistic point of view. Perhaps that is what Prof. Kuzmanovich means. It seems to me, however, to be a rather surprising agreement between their different points of view.

Final Question: Can cognitive pornography teach grief?

The final objection Prof. Kuzmanovich poses to Currie is probably the most serious one. Citing Wittgenstein and ex-president Barack Obama, Prof. Kuzmanovich criticizes Currie's theory as being unable to explain the ordinary practice of the arts or the nature of aesthetic objects. According to Currie's theory of empathy, empathy for aesthetic objects does not teach us anything about how the world might be otherwise, which artworks are supposed to teach us, because there is no difference between empathy for aesthetic objects and empathy for ordinary objects that teaches us about the world as it is. Consequently, his theory ignores the significance of artworks.

Although I agree with Prof. Kuzmanovich in his criticism of Currie, I have one thing I would like to ask: Can only aesthetic objects help us to imagine such "otherwise" worlds? I suspect that scientific discoveries can also do the job. Surely, scientific discoveries reveal only how the world actually is, but that also is a beginning of questioning one's beliefs that the world cannot be otherwise. The history of science shows that scientific discoveries have repeatedly transformed our awareness of

reality. Even the possible responses that Nabokov enumerates could be provoked by scientific discoveries. There must be a difference between aesthetic objects and scientific discoveries, because empathy for scientific discoveries seems impossible.

Let me conclude my comment with the following question:

Q: Is empathy for objects the only way to realize the "otherwise" worlds?

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Empathising into "an otherwise" world: A Response to Professor Koyama

Zoran Kuzmanovich

I thank Prof. Koyama for his careful reading of my paper and for his suggested improvements. I also invite further communiaction. As with comments by Prof. Brian Boyd, Prof. Akiko. Nakata, and Prof. Shoko Miura, I will respond to specific concerns I have isolated as **"Comment x."** I also apologize for the delay in responding. Reading Chalmers on problems of consciousness required more time than I had at my disposal.

[Comment #1] "it seems to me, that the person simulated is a fictional character rather than the author. I would be grateful to Prof. Kuzmanovich for kindly correcting my misunderstandings, if any."

I regret not having been clearer on this point. Currie's concept of the "hypothetical reader of fact" is almost 25 years old, and Currie has not used it much lately. But to my knowledge neither has he backed away from it. That concept has always struck me as more suitable for describing the activity of a movie-goer rather than of a reader, but that is a subject for a different occasions. I am not eager to correct your understanding, Prof. Koyama, but I am happy to explain how I arrived at my interpretation and use of Currie's concept. In his most extensive treatment of the hypothetical reader of fact, "The Paradox of Caring"（1997）Currie both explicitly and implicitly makes it clear that the hypothetical reader of fact is not simulating characters but readers. Explicitly he states that "As a reader of fiction, I simulate . . . someone who is reading a factual account of whatever the work is about"（1997: 68）. So hypothetical reader of fact treats the fiction as a report or factual account, not as a fictional story. To such a reader, fictional character is a kind of a prop, a set of instructions for carrying out the author's vision of "whatever the work is about." Implicitly, Currie connects such a reader to the author again when he says that the "moral experience of fiction is primarily the product of our accepting or rejecting the invitation to become a certain kind of person: the person the novel seems to be intended for." Using C. P. Snow's novel *The Masters* as an example, Currie concludes, that "the intended reader seems very much to be someone who shares Lewis's outlook [the novel's narrator, zk], an outlook close to that of the "implied" author, and, very probably to that of the real author, C. P. Snow himself"（73）. However nested such intent may be（through levels of characters, narrators, implied authors, real authors）, in the end intent in novels is placed there by the author who collects the royalties. To me not merely the moral experience of fiction but every other experience fiction can generate has the author as the origin or as the final filter. Whether authors always succeed in carrying out the intentions they have for their works is a different question altogether, but Currie's notion of authorial intent suggests that authors hypothesize and to some degree create their readers.

[Comment #2] "I believe Currie would answer that the distinction between online and off-line is gradual. A mental state can get more off-line in various ways, such as by being simulated iteratively, or by difficulty in simulating the character. Perhaps readers' awareness of fiction has the same result because we can suppress our impulse to action. That may involve what

Currie means by "the right kind of attention."
That makes sense to me, and I would agree with you completely if reading of fictional narratives consisted only of the readers entertaining unasserted propositions and enacting hardwired simulations of the perceptual experience of a fictional character. But the moment the reader's memory or imagination that is not simulative (not imitative of a character's or an author's imagined perceptual experience) enters into the act of reading, or the reader becomes conscious of the act of reading and begins censoring her empathy and evaluating the mental states of the protagonist or the narrator, the reader becomes something between an onlooker and a participant/jury which to me seems a kind of simultaneous online and offline mental state. In fact, there are cases of narratives such as the "card shuffle novel" or "novel-in-a-box" where the reader is, in a sense, competing with the author to create a more engaging story. See, for example, B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969), Robeet Coover's *A Child Again*, and even Max Porter's *Grief is the Thing with Feathers* (2016; among other things, a contemporary rewriting of the most moving passages from Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe). So while I certainly accept the validity of the gradualness hypothesis, I suspect there may be a kind of a see-saw effect if iterations are involved. At least that is the pattern of response I encounter frequently when I teach a complex work like *Ulysses* or Nabokov's *The Gift*.

[Comment #3, Comment #5, Final question] "However, it seems to be the only apparatus in Currie's framework that can distinguish between aesthetic experiences and other experiences. I speculate that, for Currie, what makes immersion in a fiction possible (and an experience truly aesthetic) is attention rather than empathy."
I am glad you asked this question twice, Professor Koyama, since the answer to it cuts to the heart of the contributions philosophy of art and literary criticism can make to each other. As you have already indicated, the answer to this central question again has to do with "the right kind of attention." Had Currie explained which kinds of attention paid to the text by the hypothetical reader of fact he considers the right ones and what role empathy plays in such attention, I would not have felt the need to write the paper. It does not seem to me that by "the right kind of attention" Currie means the reader's attention and responsiveness to the narrative's style or other formal and aesthetic qualities, or even the ways in which its story and plot are constructed so as to invoke and transform a real-life events or another work of literary art. As in "Empathy for Objects," he seems to go out of his way to argue that aesthetic experience ought not to be really separable from other experiences. Following Moran[1], he points out that there is a class of cases where we respond with emotional feeling to situations that are not our own, current situation, such as when I recall an embarrassing moment or think about the **merely possible mishaps that confront my child** (1994). If our reactions to fictions are puzzling, these other reactions ought to seem puzzling for the same sorts of reasons. (64)

To me, the mishaps that may confront someone's non-fictional child include that child's death, a consideration which always takes that situation out of the realm of the merely possible and for reasons quite different from my fretting that Harry Potter will hurt himself during game of quidditch. I speculate that by using the phrase "merely possible" Currie, for the sake of his "off-line" argument, may wish to make the child's death situation both non-fictional and non-actual. But therein lies the biggest difference between Nabokov's and Currie's aesthetics. Because for Nabokov death is the

mother of beauty（and pity）, death is never “off-line” in Nabokov’s work even though many of his narratives（including “Man and Things”）deceive us into thinking during the act of reading that we live in “a grief-proof sphere”（*Lolita*）, that “there is nothing to fear” and that “death is but a question of style”（*Bend Sinister*）. In Nabokov’s work we never control the off-line/online switch, and our aesthetic（and sometimes moral）sense is the compensation for not having such control. The closest Currie seems to get to the idea of a narrative’s aesthetic dimensions is his mentioning of the readers’ “susceptibility to narratorial direction” and his description of C. P. Snow’s *The Masters* as working “by persuading me to engage in a certain piece of imaginative role-play, not by getting me to have false beliefs.” And “imaginative role play” seems to be confined to vicariously trying on “the views, values, and general outlook of others, to imitate, in a playful way, other perspectives on the world.” Such play is “functional” since “To be critical of our own outlooks and to be willing to see the advantages in the outlooks of others is a useful thing”（73）. Nabokov’s aethetics are a matter of coping with death; Currie’s（at least in this essay）seem to be about advantage building. Playfulness and advantage seeking also separate Currie’s notions of empathy from President Obama’s, though I agree with Currie’s notion that non-debilitating self-criticism is always a good idea.

[Comment 4] I was perplexed, however, when Prof. Kuzmanovich described this as a matter of the ownership of reality.... But this is a matter of reality only when Nabokov’s subjective idealism is assumed.（I take Nabokov’s metaphysics to be a kind of subjective idealism, as suggested in Boyd（2021）, the paper also presented at this symposium.） Currie would not see reality as Nabokov does.

I regret the perplexing, and I will not speak for Nabokov here. I was trying to point out that in even in neurophysiology, an evidentiary level of reality Currie seems to value over verbal reports of involuntary empathy, the pattern of neurons that “light up” during simulation studies is always someone’s psychophysical pattern and thus still hopelessly subjective. I also mean my reply to this comment to help resolve the possible confusion I may have created with my paragraphs on **qualia**. I do not have your familiarity with either Kripke’s conceivability argument or Chalmers’ double aspect theory in part because I tend to do very poorly when imagining brains in a vat or zombies, but on the face of it Nabokov’s hypothesis that reality is “unquenchable” infinite series of information layers where infinite consciousness and the finite brain can never be completely identical seems perfectly compatible with my admittedly very limited understanding of Chalmers’ proposed relation between informational and phenomenal states, systems, and mechanisms. I would be happy to take our discussion of this point off-line and profit from your much greater familiarity with the problems of consciousness. I am quite intrigued by Chalmers’ so-far underspecified notion of “physically realized information”（285−86）.

Q: Is empathy for objects the only way to realize the “otherwise” worlds?

Currie seems to think so:

> By treating our responses to fictional characters and situations as a matter of off-line simulation, we can unify our response to fiction with our empathetic responses to the situations of others, our earlier selves, or people of our own imagining. Sorrowing for Jago, worrying about my child’s future, and shuddering over the disaster that was

> my first date all get an explanation in terms of a single mental mechanism with respectable psychological credentials: simulation.（“The Paradox of Caring” 71）

I hope that Currie turns out to be wrong about this, in part because of your astute comment about the nature of scientific discoveries and because at some level our exchange here about Currie’s theory is an effort to make our respective intellectual worlds open to others even if we accept the fact that we can never speak or write so as not be misunderstood. Such openness is what makes them “otherwise” worlds, and the hope is that our observations and interpretations produce the text of a reality with an ever smaller number of situations that perplex. I confess I do not feel the need to make memory, judgment, fantasy, imagination, desire, regret, and empathy into a “single mental mechanism” either on- or off-line. I do not think or feel that I live in a world that is permanently observable and thus objective and universally accepted. Perhaps that is why I am unable to explain why such totalizing seems to matter so much to Currie, but thanks to Popper, specifically Prof. Boyd’s understanding of Popper, I now regard all single explanations as invitations to disagree.

Note

1 Moran, Richard. 1994. “The Expression of Feeling in Imagination.” *Philosophical Review* 103: 75−106.

A Response to Prof. Kuzmanovich's Comments

Tora Koyama

I am deeply grateful to Prof. Kuzmanovich for his warm response to me, which corrects my misunderstanding and helps me to understand his original intention that I was unable to see in my comment.

Especially, I failed to realize the compatibility of Nabokov's view of reality as a gradual accumulation of information and Chalmers' informational theory of consciousness. One of the reasons why I was perplexed is that I thought that there was no connection between Nabokov's and Chalmers' views. Nabokov's view is utterly idealistic—Prof. Boyd affirmed it in his reply to my comment, and Chalmers is not an idealist at all; he is the champion of contemporary mind/body dualism. However, the compatibility suggests a possible combination of idealism and dualism. I would like to thank Prof. Kuzmanovich for letting me realize this possibility.

Comment on Zoran Kuzmanovich, "'I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig': Nabokov and Currie on Empathy for Objects"

Brian Boyd

In responding to Akiko Nakata's paper, I thought I was expected to be more formal than was actually the case; after learning that from Akiko, I became a little less formal in responding to Tora Koyama's comment on my paper, although since I do not know Professor Koyama or the decorum of Japanese philosophical discussion, I couldn't unbend much; I will try to be still less formal now, because I have known Zoran Kuzmanovich, as I have known Akiko, for many years. But not informal enough, as I see today from Zoran's fascinating response to my own paper.

Zoran contrasts philosopher of art Gregory Currie's 2011 paper "Empathy for Objects" (and Currie's generally sceptical attitude to what we can learn from fiction) with writer Vladimir Nabokov's 1928 talk or essay "Man and Things" in order to examine their contrasting attitudes to the way objects can "affect the sensibilities of those who engage with them" (1). His sympathies in this contrast clearly lie with Nabokov rather than Currie. I grant that Nabokov on his feeling for objects is much more convincing than Currie on empathy, simulation, or emotional response to fiction or art in general; but I don't think Nabokov's subject is *empathy with* things but *feelings for* things, so to me his essay and his ideas seem not to relate closely to Currie's argument.

I will challenge Currie as Zoran presents him more than I question Zoran directly; but I will refer to Zoran as Kuzmanovich, to equalize the terms in which I refer to the philosopher, the critic, and the writer, Nabokov.

I apologize for the length of this comment, but there seems little in Currie as presented here that does not deserve robust challenge all along the way.

Kuzmanovich's first quotation from Currie includes this: "One thing that people have said is valuable in literature is that we can learn about the human mind from it. But why wouldn't psychology lectures be a better way of learning that? I suggest we think about our relation to literature not in terms of learning but in terms of sharing an experience with the author" (2).

There are many reasons why psychology lectures are not a better way than fiction of learning about the human mind. Unlike the best fiction, psychological findings are often not "ecologically valid": that is, appropriate to real-life situations, as when subjects in a psychology experiment are asked to indicate their preference for one of two individuals represented by two photographs and rather pointedly different prose character descriptions or histories of the individuals, rather than people met directly in person and discovered gradually through interaction. Psychological findings are often disconfirmed in later replication studies; they often focus on things like reaction times and peripheral vision, of less interest to readers of fiction than engaging with human social and ethical predicaments as fiction invites. In a recent essay I have offered many more arguments against Currie's latest claims that we cannot learn about human nature from fiction.[1]

After Currie's question above, he suggests that "we think about our relation to literature not in terms of learning but in terms of sharing an experience with the author" (2). This seems most

unhelpful. An author's experience in returning to her desk to continue a story, sharpening a quill or a pencil, inventing a new scene to develop the plot, finding the words needed, in a dictionary or thesaurus or the recesses of memory, revising them if they can be improved, and so on, has very little in common with a reader's experience of reading and inferring from an already-established written text. Imagining on cue is very different from inventing from scratch and refining cues to prompt imagination in others.

In Kuzmanovich's next inset quotation from Currie, Currie writes: "When people read action-related words, the motor homunculus is activated in appropriate ways, moving its feet at the sound of the word 'feet'" (4). If this were true, then my phrase "Currie writes" should have activated your motor homunculus either to move a pen or pencil or to type out words. Unlikely. If this were true, too, then when Austen's characters, whom she does not invite us to imagine with physical vividness, say something, prefaced or interrupted or followed by a verb of speech, the speech production region of our motor homunculi should be activated as we read, but not whenever in a dialogue mere quotation marks indicate a new speech, without a verb of speech. I find these implications so implausible I will not wait for replication studies to show them wrong.

In general, Currie is misled here by the over-enthusiasm in the 1990s for the implications of the discovery of mirror neurons at the end of the 1980s. There is now doubt among psychologists about whether humans (as opposed to the monkeys of the original experiments) have mirror neurons, about what role they play within human neural processing, about whether they are evolved mechanisms or develop through associative learning, and so on: a good illustration why we might prefer to learn about human nature from fiction rather than from the fashions and fallible hypotheses of psychology.

In 1997, Kuzmanovich notes, Currie introduced the "hypothetical reader of fact" (5) to explain how we respond to fiction. As readers of fiction, we know characters are unreal, so, Currie argues, we cannot respond to their unreal situations, actions, and reactions, and instead simulate the reactions of a hypothetical reader who does not know the text is a fiction. This is psychologically and philosophically muddled and aesthetically disastrous. As we encounter fictions, our knowing that characters do not exist as part of the history of the real world is less salient than our monitoring what the characters are doing and feeling, that's all. Even when we hear true reports about real others we do not know, we have to imagine them (as shown by philosopher Derek Matravers in the case of all factual as well as fictional narrative, and by linguist Daniel Dor in the case of all language referring beyond the here and now),[2] and we respond accordingly to the accounts of these others' predicaments (a cancer diagnosis, a discovery of infidelity, and so on).

We have default responses to the situations of those we hear or read about, and that includes fictional characters, even if we know they are fictional, particularly as expert storytellers are expert at stimulating our imaginations to envisage characters in their situations. But we have those default responses even when there is little attempt to appeal to our sensory imaginations. There is a famous 1944 psychological experiment by Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel, in which viewers are shown without cues an untitled 90-second silent black-and-white film of two triangles and one circle moving about a plane (have a look at it on YouTube now, before reading on).[3] Nearly all viewers construe this as a story about the smaller triangle and the circle, friends or more likely lovers, being cornered by the larger, bullying triangle, and viewers are pleased when the pair escape the frustrated bully. No viewer supposes these shapes are real individuals, nor do they suppose a "hypothetical reader of fact" or a

"hypothetical viewer of fact" who thinks the shapes are real 2−D individuals, yet almost all viewers feel empathy for the threatened pair and relief at their fortunate outcome.

Kuzmanovich adduces Currie's conclusion that "fiction-generated emotions, even when productive of empathy, are not genuine since they are not action-prompting beliefs" (5). But there are many cases where even true narrative generates emotions but does not prompt action: when a friend tells us, for instance, of another friend we do not know who has discovered their partner to be unfaithful. We may feel for the betrayed partner, but we do not act. The feeling of concern nevertheless remains real. On the other hand, we *can* have sensorimotor responses to fiction: we can laugh at an absurd situation, we can cry or gasp with emotion at an affecting outcome, we can tense up at a moment of risk for characters we care about.

Kuzmanovich then introduces, as a way of showing Currie's treatment of his response to objects in art, Currie's analysis of his reactions to Rubens's painting *Descent from the Cross*: "When I look at Rubens' *Descent from the Cross* with the right kind of attention I am made directly, non-inferentially aware of the heaviness of Christ's represented body, and of the sense of strain represented in the bodies of the mourners as they lower the body" (7). Currie seems to underestimate drastically the amount of inference, even if unconscious, the mind makes in interpreting sense data, a psychological fact well known from optical illusions (the Muller-Lyer illusion, the Ames room, and the like). To disambiguate visual arrays our minds have to interpret a scene as three-dimensional (or as a two-dimensional representation evoking a three-dimensional scene), even if the impacts on the retina are two-dimensional. Oddly, although Currie invokes psychology lectures or textbooks against fiction, he seems to forget what psychology textbooks actually say.

And to infer effort in the personages depicted in the Rubens painting we have to infer much more: the weight of Christ's body, the number of people supporting that weight, the likely proportion each of those figures takes of the total weight, to judge by their position, their physiques, and their degree of contact with the corpse and the shroud, and the stability of their support on the ladder or the cross. And, as Kuzmanovich notes, we also need to infer, from the cultural context of the story of Christ's crucifixion, and of its depiction in other paintings, that those present are mourning a particularly acute loss—a point he illustrates wonderfully by his example of the very different context of Winnie-the-Pooh's reaching up for the honeypot. Moreover, motoric simulation of the kind Currie appeals to simply does not work, since there are eight live figures handling or about to handle Christ's body, and in one simulatory system we cannot simulate eight bodies at once. Or do we sequentially simulate each mourner's effort as we focus on each? But that does not seem to be what Currie suggests, in his "I am made directly, non-inferentially aware . . . of the sense of strain represented in the bodies of the mourners as they lower the body."

Kuzmanovich notes that Currie's "'Empathy for Objects' concludes with the claim that empathy for aesthetic objects does not differ from empathy for all other objects like chairs, trees, sculptures, and buildings" (8), and quotes Currie: "We need not be looking at a chair with aesthetic attention in order to activate a motor simulation of sitting on it" (8). In fact although we can readily imagine ourselves or someone else sitting on a particular chair we see, we do not usually engage a motor simulation of sitting on it whenever we see a chair. If that were the case our simulation system would be wildly overloaded when we entered a furniture shop or an auditorium with hundreds or thousands of chairs. And when we see chairs we could also imagine kicking them over, or simply moving them

along the floor: if motor simulation were an automatic part of perception, why would these motions too not come into play? Once again Currie seems to be vastly overreaching with his appeal to mirror neurons and simulation.

Moreover I simply do not understand what Currie means when he writes of "empathy for objects." Empathy is a sharing of feeling with others: in the words of Suzanne Keen, in her tough-minded *Empathy in the Novel*, "a spontaneous sharing of feelings, including physical sensations in the body, provoked by witnessing or hearing about another's condition," "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect [that] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading."[4] Unless we are animists we will not assume that a chair or another inanimate object has any feelings to empathise with. We can, if not as a routine concomitant or instant element of perception, imagine ourselves, say, sitting down on or sitting in a chair, but we do not tend to imagine the chair's sensation on being sat on by ourselves, or a cat, or a sumo wrestler, because we assume the chair will feel nothing, although we can imagine that it may compress or creak differently under different sitters. We may feel something *about* a chair—its elegance, perhaps, in a museum of design, its inferred or experienced degree of comfort or discomfort for a sitter, its age and condition, in a second-hand shop. But that is not "empathy" in any normal usage, and to equate such attitudes with what we may feel about a frail old woman, or a cat, or a sumo wrestler seated or about to sit down on the chair can only confuse.

Kuzmanovich writes: "Currie seems to be invoking Wittgenstein of *Zettel* to explain the difficulty: '§§627. It is just because forming images is a voluntary activity that it does not instruct us about the external world'" (8). Wittgenstein is no help. Images often arrive not voluntarily but spontaneously, most strikingly in involuntary memory, but also in dreams or hypnagogia or reverie. Kuzmanovich adds: "Wittgenstein reasons that because imagination, unlike perception, is controlled by our will, the imagery it provides can be only what we have put there and therefore such imagery cannot be productive of new information about the world" (9). Wittgenstein's conclusion is wrong. If images do arrive voluntarily, that does not mean that we cannot learn from them, as Einstein's thought experiments enabled him to reason about light, time, and frames of reference. And chemist August Kekule could also learn about the structure of the benzene molecule, if the story is true, from the *in*voluntary image of his famous dream.

Kuzmanovich continues: "Of course, Currie (and Wittgenstein) are right: artworks are *objects* and they *represent* things, so our empathic responses to such objects are really responses to our own bodily-simulation-aided mental representations of such objects" (9). I challenge these claims. A Bach fugue or sonata may be an object, but it does not represent a thing or things. And I doubt that bodily simulation aids much our responses to many a static painting, like a Vermeer, with its exquisite balance and interaction of light, shade, gleam, and reflection, or a Caravaggio, Kalf, Liotard, or Matisse still life. I doubt that bodily simulation aids at all in responding to most of Austen, whose fiction mostly pays little attention to physical detail or movement. And our mental representations are not "of such objects," of the works of art, but of details and situations within them.

Midway through his essay, Kuzmanovich shifts to Nabokov's description of his feelings toward objects, including works of art, in "Man and Things." I feel an immediate release from Currie's confusions and untenable conclusions to Nabokov's clear understanding, of, for instance, the variety of reactions four different individuals could have to the one painting, according to their dispositions,

histories, and circumstances. As Kuzmanovich comments, "Neurophysiology cannot tell the whole story here without perspectival subjectivity of the sort Nabokov enumerates" (11).

Kuzmanovich reports Nabokov's other examples of objects, not works of art, for which he has or might have strong feelings. One technical aside, here: Kuzmanovich refers repeatedly to "Nabokov's narrator" (12, 13, 14, 16). Despite recent narratological dogma, there are strong grounds for not positing a narrator in fiction, unless the author has specifically created a narrator distinct from himself,[5] and nothing Nabokov reveals of the "I" referred to here distinguishes the writer from the sensitive, imaginative, reflective Nabokov. And "Man and Things" is not a fiction: it is an essay, a form that since its invention by Montaigne has foregrounded the author's individuality, feelings, and reflections. This makes irrelevant Kuzmanovich's claim that "if we apply [Currie's] theory of reading to Nabokov's story about the porcelain pig, we must posit a hypothetical reader of fact who must in turn conclude that Nabokov's narrator is either pretending to be in love with a porcelain pig or simply deluded" (13).

Nabokov's feeling for the porcelain pig he won and abandoned and now laments abandoning do involve a whole complex of experience, a narrative of gain and loss or neglect and regret that, as Kuzmanovich insists, cannot be reduced to the kind of neurophysiology Currie wishes to emphasize. Kuzmanovich writes: "While it is possible that the love for the porcelain pig emerges strictly out of chemicals within the nervous system, it may also be possible that art records events and their meanings in the language of emotions whose cognitive dimension will emerge in due time" (13). I would simply note that "emerges strictly out of chemicals within the nervous system" seems to me simply the wrong level of analysis: I do not doubt that brain activity accompanies the feelings Nabokov has for the porcelain pig, but would emphasize that the succession of feelings depends on Nabokov's dispositions and experiences, reflected in but not caused, in a bottom-up way, by the neurophysiological activity within his brain.

For reasons I do not quite understand, Kuzmanovich brings in the idea of delusion in the feeling of Nabokov (as I see it) or his narrator (as Kuzmanovich sees it) toward the porcelain pig, and compares it with the delusions of the young man in Nabokov's story "Signs and Symbols." He writes: "The reader of 'Signs and Symbols' would be a good candidate for an fMRI scan of her brain's prefrontal and anterior cingulate regions, where the deluded young man would presumably be experiencing functional disconnections in his hyperdopaminergic activity." I do not think introducing technology or technical terms from neuroscience helps here in the least. The reader of "Signs and Symbols" does not feel or simulate the son's delusions, and is not invited to feel or simulate them, but simply to understand them in a summary sense.

Kuzmanovich agrees with my attitude, I think. He writes: "Explanations of the way our nerves act leave out many features of our mental lives. What exactly is the immediate feeling of love for an abandoned porcelain pig?" (14). The "immediate feeling of love for an abandoned porcelain pig" is easy enough to imagine, simply in these very terms, especially as provided in the more detailed narrative in Nabokov's essay, and especially if one has some knowledge of Nabokov's sensitivity and sense of pity at loss. I don't think it would be problematic in principle to specify such an "immediate feeling of love for an abandoned porcelain pig" in neuroscientific detail, although no doubt it is technologically well beyond our current capacity. But it wouldn't be very interesting, in fact, except as proof of the progress of our understanding of brain circuitry: it would reveal a process way more

computationally complex than we could readily assimilate, with hundreds of excitatory and inhibitory flows and feedback loops, and wouldn't tell us as readers, empathizers, and imaginers of the experience of others much more than, or probably even nearly as much as, "the immediate feeling of love for an abandoned porcelain pig."

I must confess that I am mystified by Kuzmanovich's citations, without objection, from philosophers: from Currie, from Wittgenstein, and now from Jaspers and Langer. First, Karl Jaspers: "Delusion proper [...] implies a transformation in our total awareness of reality" (14). I do not know Jaspers's grounds for this improbable assertion. Kuzmanovich then quotes Suzanne K. Langer: "The very existence of 'things' is modeled on [man's] own inward expectation of strains, directions, and limitations of his felt actions; the wholeness and simplicity of molar objects is that of his own soma" (15). This seems highly implausible to me: it is much more likely that the ability to manipulate, for instance, a piece of stone (as a projectile or a handaxe, say) or a piece of fruit provides a first image of "the wholeness and simplicity of objects."

I am again with Kuzmanovich when he returns to Nabokov. He writes that Nabokov "also notes that the empathy generated by 'lend[ing] things our feelings,' that is, by projecting our own fears, hopes, desires, or griefs onto objects, also generates some risks" (15). Nabokov's description "lending things our feelings" seems much more accurate than the word "empathy" (a word he does not use at all in "Man and Things"), and Kuzmanovich's "projecting our own fears, hopes, desires, or griefs onto objects" (15) seems more accurate still. But when Nabokov writes "It is as though I am surrounded by little monsters, and it seems to me that the little teeth of the clock are gnawing away at time, that the 'ear' of the needle stuck into the curtain is eavesdropping on me, that the teapot spout, with a little droplet poised on its tip, is about to sneeze like a man with a cold" (15), it does not seem, as Kuzmanovich describes it, that "Nabokov presents us with the case where we prefer not to be imagining but cannot help it" (15), but rather that Nabokov is enjoying the challenge of deploying an anthropomorphization taken for granted in language as the basis for whimsical and deliberate imaginative, imagistic, extrapolation: not something we cannot help, but something that needs an especially fresh and alert imagination to activate, unlike the dulled common sense blandly accustomed to taking routine terms for granted.

Kuzmanovich offers a sharp contrast between Currie's and Nabokov's views of narrative. He cites Currie and Jon Jureidini's "one implication of this paper ["Art and Delusion," 2003] is that the best example we have of a life pervasively experienced as narrative is the life of madness" (15). Not knowing their argument, I cannot challenge it, but the conclusion seems preposterous, even if I do not believe experience is narrative in form.[6] Kuzmanovich proposes that Nabokov suggests that narrative allows experience continuity and emotional depth. Nabokov imagines a neighbor's boots, to which he is indifferent: "But were my neighbor to die tonight, what human warmth, what pity, what live and tender beauty would these two old, shabby boots, with their eyelet flaps sticking out like little ears, left standing at the door, radiate over me" (16). Kuzmanovich writes: "The dead man's absence becomes an act of abandonment no different than the abandonment of the porcelain pig" (16). I do not read Nabokov's paragraph this way. Rather, I would cite Nabokov's famous "*Beauty plus pity*—that is the closest we can get to a definition of art. Where there is beauty there is pity, for the simple reason that beauty must die: beauty always dies, the manner dies with the matter, the world dies with the individual."[7] Or, conversely, where there is pity, there is beauty, as in the boots of the now dead

owner.

Wittgenstein comes to the fore in the closing section of Kuzmanovich's paper, and to me, quite untenably. I simply do not understand what Wittgenstein attempts to imply in the conditional in his second sentence: "'Grief' describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life. If a man's bodily expression of sorrow and of joy alternated, say with the ticking of a clock, here we should not have the characteristic formation of the pattern of sorrow or of the pattern of joy" (17). Kuzmanovich then cites Wittgenstein's next fragment: "'For a second he felt violent pain.' — Why does it sound queer to say: 'For a second he felt deep grief'? Only because it so seldom happens?" (18) No, only for the reason that grief is a long process. "For a second he felt deep grief" is absurd for exactly the same reason as it would be absurd to say "For a second he grew up," "For a second she lost weight," or "For a second he aged." And I do not understand when Kuzmanovich writes "Wittgenstein's insistence that the world is all that is the case also suggests that to the degree it gives us access to other minds language functions as a form of empathy" (18): how does that famous assertion imply this? Kuzmanovich speculates in a note that "Grief is also one more possible impulse for the invention of language, a not quite sufficient tool to share and decode chronobiological and emotional disturbances caused by human attachments to that which is no longer present but feels as if it is. Even now, language does poorly with uncontrollable physical grief over the mourned objects still felt to be present" (n22, p. 25). The idea that grief is an impulse for the invention of language seems implausible. Intense emotions from wild laughter or gut-wrenching grief are never reducible to language. These emotional intensities predate the invention of language and are both experienced deeply and witnessed clearly enough to render language both inadequate and superfluous, and in the case of grief the emotion is particularly allayed by *physical* sympathy (hugs, touches) of a primal primate kind and, in the case of laughter, amplified by sociophysical contagion (again, as in primate choruses).

In his final significant move, Kuzmanovich, arguing against Currie's more positivistic reading of our response to art, writes "one psychological truth literature teaches us is that it requires acceptance of the magical and the paradoxical" (18–19). I am not sure that the idea that literature "requires acceptance of the magical" is a truth, and I am sure that it is not one of the things that some great literature, like Austen and Chekhov, for instance, teaches us. Kuzmanovich continues: "If there is such a mental state as a hypothetical reader of fact, it may very well be the means by which we simultaneously trigger and repress our consciousness of our own death" (19). I doubt not only that Currie's "hypothetical reader of fact" exists in readers' minds, but also that Currie himself thinks that it is a mental state. In discussing how we simultaneously trigger and repress our consciousness of our own death—certainly an issue in Nabokov—Kuzmanovich might have cited the so-called Terror Management Theorists, and perhaps physicist Brian Greene's *Until the End of Time*.[8] Kuzmanovich concludes the paragraph: "fiction may very well be a form of magic that ushers death onstage while pretending that it is also possible to chase it off." I prefer not to see literature as magic, although it can have extraordinary effects. And while some fiction (and indeed much poetry) ushers death onstage while pretending that it is also possible to chase it off (an elegant formulation), much does not, like Austen and Chekhov, again, or the Shakespeare of *King Lear* or the Beckett of *Malone Dies* or much else.

I sympathize with Zoran's doubts about the adequacy of Currie's account of artistic response,

although my own doubts would be much more frequent, at almost every formulation of Currie's cited here (but Currie has written work with much of value, especially, to my taste, *Narratives & Narrators*),[9] as well as at almost every formulation cited from other philosophers—all dubious assertions or pointless speculations, it seems to me. But I would not offer magic as a solution, even if Nabokov in particular has his magical side. Imaginative feeling-for, though, of the kind Nabokov showcases in "Man and Things," would seem much more promising, as I think Zoran agrees.

Notes

1 Brian Boyd, "Learning from Fiction?" (review essay focused around Gregory Currie, *Imagining and Knowing: The Shape of Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, 5: 1 (2021), 57–66. DOI: 10.26613/esic/5.1.210

2 Derek Matravers, *Fiction and Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Daniel Dor, *The Instruction of Imagination: Language as a Social Communication Technology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

3 Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel, "An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior," *American Journal of Psychology*, 1944 (57: 2), 243–259; see the film at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTNmLt7QX8E&t=22s. For more background, see Bart Keunen, "Plot, Morality, and Folk Psychology Research," in Lars Bernaerts, Dirk de Geest, Luc Herman, and Bart Vervaeck, *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 175–97, pp. 175–76.

4 Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xx, 4.

5 Brian Boyd, "Does Austen Need Narrators? Does Anyone?" *New Literary History*, 48: 2 (Spring 2017), 285–308 (see n2, p. 304, for a long list of similar critiques), and "Implied Authors and Imposed Narrators, or Actual Authors?," in Sylvie Patron, ed. *Optional-Narrator Theory: Principles, Perspectives, Proposals* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021, 53–71), and that volume as a whole.

6 Brian Boyd, "Prompting Monopods: Or, The Options and Costs of Narrative," *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, 3: 1 (2019), 33–35, doi: 10.26613/esic/3.1.114.

7 Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Bruccoli Clark, 1980), 251.

8 Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski, *The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life* (New York: Random House, 2015); Brian Greene, *Until the End of Time: Mind, Matter, and Our Search for Meaning in an Evolving Universe* (New York: Knopf, 2020).

9 Gregory Currie, *Narratives and Narrators: A Philosophy of Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Comments on Brian Boyd's Response to My Paper "'I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig': Nabokov and Currie on Empathy for Objects"

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Prefatory comment: I am very grateful for your detailed attention to my paper, Brian. There having been so few Nabokov conferences lately, Akiko's way of conducting this symposium is to be applauded for creating repeated opportunities to visit old friends and think out loud about those portion of Nabokov's work that remain enthralling for all of us who enjoy studying him seriously. If necessary, I will happily make these comments more formal when my health permits it, but it would be unprofessional for me to delay responding any longer.

I am also pleased to see that our papers and responses and responses to the responses have initiated what I hope Popper would have seen as the process of improving our guesses though "planned gropings into the unknown." (*SB* 133) I am also happy to have that phrase apply only to me in this case. Lest our gropings be too random or just too blind, I am proceeding on the assumption that your version of my Currie and my version of your Popper are also linked. At the same time I must confess that I am only really familiar (and that by way of not-too-recently visited dissertation I wrote 33 years ago) with the underlying Kantian substratum of the Popperian quest for objective knowledge, so forgive me for starting there. Popper sums up Kantian theory of pure reason as the process whereby "our intellect does not discover universal laws in nature, but it prescribes its own laws and imposes them upon nature" (*CR* 94). He goes on to characterize Kant's theory as "misconceived (*CR* 92) but at the same time concludes that is "a strange mixture of absurdity and truth" (*CR* 94). If I understand him correctly, he finds Kantian thinking in this vein absurd for the same reason you and I find Currie's thinking about art in his essay on empathy very unhelpful. Both my Currie and Popper's Kant make the mistake of seeing knowledge as "the necessary result of our mental outfit" (Popper's words): "we are not passive receptors of sense data, but their active digestors. By digesting and assimilating them we form and organize them into a Cosmos, the Universe of Nature. In this process we impose upon the material presented to our senses the mathematical laws which are part of our digestive and organizing mechanism." (*CR* 92)

Popper finds this idea absurd but at the same time recognizes the "truth" portion of Kant's "strange mixture." After "reducing [Kant's] problem to its proper dimensions," Popper sees Kant's Copernican revolution in thought as asking the same question his own philosophy asks "How are successful conjectures possible?" The answer, of course, is "Because we not only invent stories and theories, but try them out and see whether they work and how they work."

Comment #1 on "I don't think Nabokov's subject is *empathy with* things but *feelings for* things, so to me his essay and his ideas seem not to relate closely to Currie's argument.": I disagree, but I hope the following strikes the right note rather than a defensive, didactic, and time-wasting one. If for

Nabokov empathy is axiomatically a mental event that transpires only between humans, then of course there can be no empathy with things. However, although Nabokov does not use the word "empathy" in the essay, the word "and" of Nabokov's title, when coupled with the idea that "we lend our feelings" to things implies a certain kind of transaction or a two-way emotional investment to create a "feeling with" rather than merely a "feeling for." Consider this example: "In the lazy positioning of a woolen shawl draped over the back of a chair there's something moping: oh, how the shawl longs for someone's shoulders!" If the shawl provokes an "oh" from us, and if we see the shawl as "moping," we cannot avoid the conclusion that there has been an attribution of human feelings *to* things not merely an expression of feeling *for* things, and since it has to be our feelings（who else is seeing the shawl as "moping"?）, the process of sensing our moping in the spatial disposition of the shaw strikes me as an almost dictionary example of Herder's *Einfühlung*: "The sensing human being feels his way into everything, feels everything from out of himself and imprints it with his image. . . . Hence, *Newton* in his system of the world became a poet contrary to his wishes." I think Herder is referring to Newton's comparison of gravitational attraction and repulsion to love and hate. I suspect that Currie started his discussion of empathy only with the late 19th and early 20th centuries to avoid accounting for Herder's original notion of empathy since for Herder, empathy is a *par excellence* demonstration of the continuity between sensation and cognition, a continuity Currie for some reason seems to find especially annoying. Says Herder: "*Cognition* and *sensation* are with us mixed creatures intertwined; we have cognition only through sensation, our sensation is always accompanied with a sort of cognition." [Herder's emphasis in Herder, "On Cognition and Sensation, the Two Main Forces of the Human Soul"（1775）]

Comment #2 on "As we encounter fictions, our knowing that characters do not exist as part of the history of the real world is less salient than our monitoring what the characters are doing and feeling, that's all.": Unless our reading also includes mortality salience for the very reasons you suggest when your write that "Kuzmanovich might have cited the so-called Terror Management Theorists." Nabokov "monitors" those who may die or have died more attentively, so I suspect that there is more mortality salience in this creative non-fiction Nabokov piece than initially meets the eye.

Comment #3 on "Wittgenstein's conclusion is wrong. .... I challenge these claims.": Wittgenstein as summoned by Currie may very well be guilty as charged regarding images, but I seem to have done him a disservice. When revising the essay, I cut out too much here. What I cut pertained to Nabokov's seeing the imagination as a form of memory that is not under the control of our but Mnemosyne's mysterious will. While I recognize that your subsequent challenge is to Currie, Kuzmanovich, and Kuzmanovich's Wittgenstein, what was also cut out is the simple explanation that by this point I was using "simulation" to designate any reception/mental representation/registration of sense data.

Comment #4 on "'Man and Things' is not a fiction: it is an essay, a form that since its invention by Montaigne has foregrounded the author's individuality, feelings, and reflections. This makes irrelevant Kuzmanovich's claim that ...": I admit to trying to read as Currie suggests he does, though my way of doing it may not be proper Popperian conjectural testing of Currie's claims. But

there are other reasons for not seeing "Man and Things" as strictly an essay. If "Man and Things" is an essay, it seems to me to be of the creative non-fiction sort which admits narrators, poses, playful masks, performances. If you read the piece as a factual talk, do the facts not oblige you to see either Nabokov's Uncle Ruka or his Uncle Konstantin Vladimirovich Nabokov as having died from "diphtheria"? I do not know what was the cause of KVN's death. In your biography you give the cause of Uncle Ruka's death as "angina." Did the Nabokov family prefer the cause of Uncle Ruka's death to have been diphtheria or are diphtheria and angina really the same in medical terms? Or were they so in 1916?

Comment #5 on "I do not doubt that brain activity accompanies the feelings Nabokov has for the porcelain pig, but would emphasize that the succession of feelings depends on Nabokov's dispositions and experiences, reflected in but not caused, in a bottom-up way, by the neurophysiological activity within his brain.": I completely agree that mapping "chemicals only" is if not the wrong at least the not-yet-ready-for-prime-time approach. When it comes to literary empathy, the explanatory power of current brain mapping techniques does seem to not move us much beyond phrenology in the field in which Currie is citing it as relevant. There may very well be a meaningful correspondence among the brain's functional domains, the language of fiction, and motor-simulated empathy, but our current models are simply not sophisticated enough unless we are willing to claim that among the studies of macaques time is spent on telling and listening to stories of the complexity of *Pride and Prejudice*. So far, even David Perrett and Giacomo Rizzolatti, the pioneers of STS（superior temporal sulcus）studies among the macaques have not been willing to make that claim.

Comment #6 on "The reader of "Signs and Symbols" does not feel or simulate the son's delusions, and is not invited to feel or simulate them, but simply to understand them in a summary sense. Kuzmanovich agrees with my attitude, I think.": We agree only partially. To the degree that the reader recognizes that she has been in the mother's mind for much of the story, the "identification" with the mother, specifically the mother's empathy with "beautiful weeds," is precisely such an invitation to sense the approach of "monstrous darkness" even in the seemingly innocent farming process of harvesting fields.

Comment #7 on "I must confess that I am mystified by Kuzmanovich's citations, without objection, from philosophers: from Currie, from Wittgenstein, and now from Jaspers and Langer.": Let me try to dispel the mystery or the fog of my deference to these philosophers. Once again, it starts with Kant. Even Popper gives Kant credit for the idea Popper was expanding on, the notion that our theories are "the *free* creations of our own minds, the result of an almost poetic intuition, of an attempt to understand intuitively the laws of nature. But we no longer try to force our creations upon nature. On the contrary, we question nature, as Kant taught us to do; and we try to elicit from her *negative* answers concerning the truth of our theories: we do not try to prove or to *verify* them, but we test them by trying to *disprove* or to falsify them, to *refute* them."

What Kant said was: "A philosophy of any subject（a system of rational cognition from concepts）

requires a system of pure rational concepts independent of any conditions of intuition, that is, a metaphysics" (MS, 6: 375).

I felt that at a certain level, Popper had "reduced" Kantian metaphysics too much and thus had, despite his emphasis on free creations of our minds and the presence of poetic intuition, left out or de-emphasized what Wittgenstein, Jaspers, and Langer bring to the table when to comes to certainty of confirmation and refutation. For Wittgenstein that is the "forms of life" theory that requires us to hear an "echo of thought in sight" (1945: § 212); for Jaspers it is informational encapsulation, now known as the "frame problem" in artificial intelligence, and for Langer it is the idea that our language anthropomorphizes but (unlike music) still gets in the way of the intuitive organizing and form-giving functions of the senses. In *The Gift* Nabokov has Fyodor's father use a metaphor to alert us to the possibility that our understanding of the conditions of possibility (of either truth or refutation) is not entirely free: "beware of letting our reason—that garrulous dragoman who always runs ahead—prompt us with explanations which then begin imperceptibly to influence the very course of observation and distort it: thus the shadow of the instrument falls upon the truth." Conditions of intuition that may invalidate empirical testing and thus a metaphysics seem to have been on Nabokov's mind as much as on the minds of the philosophers I invoked.

Comment #8 on "It does not seem, as Kuzmanovich describes it, that "Nabokov presents us with the case where we prefer not to be imagining but cannot help it" (15), but rather that Nabokov is enjoying the challenge of deploying an anthropomorphization taken for granted in language as the basis for whimsical and deliberate imaginative, imagistic, extrapolation.": With your emphasis on the originality of Nabokov's time- and death-cancelling robust joy, I suspect we will continue to disagree on this matter. Nabokov's "thrill of gratitude to whom it may concern—to the contrapuntal genius of human fate or to tender ghosts humoring a lucky mortal" is a thrill I would gladly seek and share. But that thrill in this essay seems outbalanced by things in the human environment seeking to commit suicide. That thought, when coupled with Nabokov's thoughts of our minds as boxes and our sense of time as a prison, has a cumulative effect on me countering the happiness and joy of being. I do think that the joyous Nabokov celebrating human consciousness outexamples the grieving Nabokov, but not by much, in part because I think Nabokov recognizes the sophism of the claim that "Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death." The claim, by the way, is Wittgenstein's (1921: § 6.4311). I also think that for Nabokov the trauma of grief is precisely the loss of the deceased's empathy.

Comment #9 on "Or, conversely, where there is pity, there is beauty, as in the boots of the now dead owner.": Would not the neighbour to whom/to whose boots you find VN (or his narrator) indifferent still have to be the source of the dying beauty and/or the object of pity? If the boots are the object of pity, then you may need to revisit your objections to seeing Nabokov's essay as being about empathy (feeling "with" rather than "for" things).

Comment #10 on "Wittgenstein's insistence that the world is all that is the case also suggests that to the degree it gives us access to other minds language functions as a form of empathy"

(18): how does that famous assertion imply this?": The general answer comes by way of Kant, Husserl, and Searle when they see language as that which gives us the only access to what is otherwise epistemically off-limits, the otherness of others. The specific answer is that when Wittgenstein's famous comment is combined with Wittgenstein's comment on grief cited in my essay, it implies that even though emotions/sensations are brute forces, beyond the will, immeasurable, and independent of reason it is the case that we still differentiate them. In the recognition of that difference as normative lies the possibility of our empathic and not merely vicarious receptivity to the world as it is experienced by others.

Comment #11 on "emotional intensities predate the invention of language and are both experienced deeply and witnessed clearly enough to render language both inadequate and superfluous, and in the case of grief the emotion is particularly allayed by *physical* sympathy (hugs, touches) of a primal primate kind...": While I agree with you that language postdates grief and may not be adequate to representing the emotions of grief, language still seems to me a pretty useful tool for engaging and keeping the no-longer-here-and-now virtually present. My other point (borrowed from Wittgenstein) is that the "grammar" of grief forces our language into different language games/speech acts—self-repression, self-repugnance for remaining alive, denial, evasion, commiseration, commemoration, etc. But I won't insist on this. In the form of life I exist in perhaps I have heard the virtualizing words *Вечная Память!* one too many times.

Comment #12 on "I am not sure that the idea that literature "requires acceptance of the magical" is a truth, and I am sure that it is not one of the things that some great literature, like Austen and Chekhov...": There is plenty of paradoxical magic even in Jane Austen, starting with the opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." That categorical and universal "must" premised of *the single man* is not only paradoxical because it is a statement about the social expectations for, and powerlessness of most *women* during the Austen era; within the larger narrative the sentence itself is the magician's patter necessary to disguise the trick of introducing the much maligned Mrs. Bennet's and retrospectively identifying this ironic view as hers. As a mother of five daughters in danger of going destitute if they remain single, whether she recognizes the irony or not, she cannot help but express this view and pathetically hope for its universality And I certainly take as paradoxical Chekhov's positing fictionally that in times of great grief a horse is much better equipped to express what you call "physical sympathy" than any human beings my poor namesake encounters in that story.

Coda: Reading just under 2000 pages of Currie made me frustrated much of the time until I copied this into my notes and remembered it every time Currie seemed to make a provocative statement and then back off his initial position: "[W]*orks* of the *poets peacefully pasture side* by *side like lambs*, *those* of the *philosophers* are *born voracious beasts*, and *their longing* to *destroy* is *even like scorpions*, *spiders*, and s*ome insects*, *chiefly directed towards their own species.*"

I would not end on this quotation from Schopenhauer had you and I not known each other for well

nigh three decades and not shared certain philosophical presuppositions about possible conceptions of objective knowledge and certain readings of Nabokov by folks who had not read much Nabokov beyond *Lolita*.（Not to mention some first-hand knowledge of some voracious poets.）But I think our disagreements stem from my remaining more Kantian and less Popperian than you. Popper's way of thinking about knowledge requires that the purpose of intellectual engagement be refutation. So as to avoid feeling the full bite of Schopenhauer's figure, I prefer learning to knowledge, curiosity to certainty, and（these days）quest for survival to quest for truth. But whatever happens to be my intellectual starting point or destination regarding Nabokov, I prefer your companionship above all others, and I appreciate Akiko's giving me this opportunity to say so.

As for the really significant difference between Currie and Nabokov, it seems to me easily inferred from these two statements:

Currie in "Empathy for objects"（2011）: "But motoric responses of this kind are not irrelevant to art and the aesthetic, **any more than sight is.** And if aestheticians had somehow forgotten or never noticed that colour, and the perception of colour, are relevant to painting, it would be an urgent obligation to point out their relevance. That is what I am doing with respect to motoric responses."

Nabokov in "PROF. WOODBRIDGE IN AN ESSAY ON NATURE POSTULATES THE REALITY OF THE WORLD"（1940）: "But is visibility really as dominant as that in all imaginable knowledge of Nature? Though I personally would be satisfied to spend the whole of eternity gazing at a blue hill or a butterfly, I would feel the poorer if I accepted the idea of there not existing still more vivid means of knowing butterflies and hills."

For Currie who（to make himself convincing）must imagine a "nor irrelevant" double negative world in which furthermore he must appoint himself with the task of urgently reminding aestheticians that color is important to painting; empathy, including bodily simulation, seems at best a subset of, or a parallel to sight but still does not amount to knowledge of that world. For Nabokov, empathy（sensed and shared vulnerability）of the world of people and things around us offers us a far more vivid sense of knowing that world.

Boyd on Kuzmanovich on Boyd on Nabokov and Currie

Brian Boyd

This discussion should not rebound endlessly, Zoran, but let me just pick up three points: one on Nabokov, one on Popper, since you generously include him in the discussion, and one on Currie.

First, Nabokov did not have only two uncles, but twelve by my count（several of his aunts remarried）; but "uncle" can be a loose designation, and he may have called "uncle" Alexander Alexandrovitch Nabokov, the grandson of VN's great-grandfather Nikolay's brother Peter, who died in 1911. I doubt "Man and Things" was meant to be fictional: Nabokov read it as a talk among a group of friends, referring to an "I" he knew they knew, as he had in other nonfictional essays he read to them.

Second, Popper. You write "Popper's way of thinking about knowledge requires that the purpose of intellectual engagement be refutation. . . . I prefer learning to knowledge, curiosity to certainty, and（these days）quest for survival to quest for truth." No, for Popper the purpose of intellectual engagement is not refutation but learning or discovery（refutation is a way of discovering that what we thought we knew is wrong and we need to learn more）. Describing his critical rationalism, he wrote that it depends on "an attitude of admitting that '*I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer the truth*"（*Open Society and its Enemies*, II, 225）. He opposed the quest for certainty all his life, at least from the *Logic of Scientific Discovery* onwards（"The old scientific ideal of *epistēmē*—of absolutely certain, demonstrable knowledge—has proved to be an idol. The demand for scientific objectivity makes it inevitable that every scientific statement must remain *tentative for ever*," *LScD* 280）. And I do not see how the quest for survival and the quest for truth are at odds. For Popper, knowledge—tentative knowledge—starts with problems, problems of survival（which way should I move to eat? to avoid being eaten?）. We cannot cope with climate change or a pandemic unless we find out what causes it and what will work to stop its advance.

Third, Currie. I did not know of Currie's ambition to point out that "motoric responses" in the brain have been overlooked in responses to art, which, he says, is absurd as not noticing color as a feature of painting. But we do have well-known motoric responses to art, in dance, and in music（tribal dance and chant, Black American church singing, moshpits at rock concerts, swaying and clapping）. Different arts appeal to different senses（and one, literature, not primarily to any sense）: music, black-and-white drawing, photography, film and East Asian（but not Islamic or Christian）calligraphy not much to color; and literature, textile arts, pottery and much other visual art（most architecture, still-life, landscape and much abstract painting）not much to movement. Forcing movement, and especially motoric mirror-neuron simulation, on arts where it is not relevant is a puzzling overreach.

A Much Belated Response to Zoran Kuzmanovich, "'I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig': Nabokov and Currie on Empathy for Objects"

Akiko Nakata

I have to confess that I am not a good reader of Currie at all. I cannot assume what kind of reader he implies and what he expects of his reader. He often sounds provoking and challenging, and I am provoked and challenged to some degree, but I have never thought of any new idea or a new paradigm, which might be what Currie expects of his readers. However, this time, thanks to Zoran's critical and amusing discussion, I had the best experience of reading Currie. Zoran's insightful paper led me to consider Nabokov's empathy, sympathy, and feelings to things.

It seems to me that one of the reasons of Nabokov's affection to the porcelain pig is because he lost it. Unlike in the case of his childhood, homeland, and loved ones, in this case, he freely just abandoned it, not dreaming he would never forget it in the future. I think that his attachment to the pig is because of its triflingness, its absence and its unchangeability. As Brian cites in his lucid comment on Zoran's paper, Nabokov defines art as "beauty plus pity," for "beauty must die: beauty always dies. . . . " (*Lectures on Literature*, 251). Indeed, it would be difficult for us to love something durable like plain plastic even if it is a trifle. On the other hand, Nabokov cherishes the things in his memory, for they are lost (absent) from his world and, at the same time, they are in his memory unchangeable for good, like his schoolroom in Vyra.

> A sense of security, of well-being, of summer warmth pervades my memory. That robust reality makes a ghost of the present. The mirror brims with brightness; a bumblebee has entered the room and bumps against the ceiling. Everything is as it should be, nothing will ever change, nobody will ever die. (*Speak, Memory*, 77)

It seems to me that Nabokov's feelings—both empathy and sympathy—and everything in the room could not be separated from each other. If Nabokov had not lost Vyra, he would not have kept the schoolroom as it is in the passage. Even if he had kept it, he would not have felt what he felt while he was writing it.

I was surprised to read Brian write in his comment on your paper, "The reader of 'Signs and Symbols' does not feel or simulate the son's delusions, and is not invited to feel or simulate them, but simply to understand them in a summary sense" (Boyd 6), and you reply that you partially agree (Kuzmanovich, "Comment #6"). That is not my reaction to the passage describing the son's referential mania. Though I do not understand the son's delusions, I partially experience his fear of them. Moreover, when I read, "Phenomenal nature shadows him wherever he goes. Clouds in the staring sky transmit to one another, by means of slow signs, incredibly detailed information regarding him. His inmost thoughts are discussed at nightfall, in manual alphabet, by darkly gesticulating trees" ("Signs and Symbols," 599), I remember how I felt watching the tall trees in my grandfather's garden when I was a small child. In windy evenings, they looked to be violently moving their boughs and

branches, as if trying to walk leaving the ground they rooted on. Though I was scared of them as they looked totally different from what they were in the calm daylight, I was also a little fascinated. What I felt is far from the son's fear, which is towards the natural elements sharing the information about him and revealing his magnified secrets to the world.

Leona Toker indicates that his madness takes shape in the Holocaust era:

> when the "dark gesticulation" transmitted awful messages, when nations, armies, classes, and societies conspired against the Jewish population, predatory spies watched its moves, and organized insanity conducted its destruction with such a scientific thoroughness that the very air it breathed seemed to be "indexed and filed away."
>
> (Toker 213−14)

We could relate his fear to that of the spies and denouncement threatening them in the era.

On the other hand, I have sympathy and empathy for the son's terror, remembering the complex feelings I had for the trees. Like the son, I, as a child, personified the trees I watched. But by such personification, the trees in the story do not become understandable like humans. On the contrary, they gain a kind of otherness or alienness beyond my comprehension.

I would like to ask about another example: "Now 'happy' is something extremely subjective. One of our sillier Zemblan proverbs says: *the lost glove is happy*" (*Pale Fire*, 17). What do you think the Zemblan proverb introduced by Kinbote causes in yourself for the personified glove? Empathy or sympathy, or we just enjoy the joke with no feelings? It seems to me to be another case of personification that makes it harder for us to analyze our feelings about the object.

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Response to Prof. Nakata's comments on "I am hopelessly in love with this porcelain pig"

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Thank you for your comments on my paper, Akiko. I will respond to them quickly, off the top of my head since I am now finally at the beach and far away from most of my library and roughly 50 years' worth of comments and notes on Nabokov's work less than half of which have been converted to easily portable electronic form. And I will use the same method I used in my response to Brian.

First let me start by agreeing with you about the process of reading Currie. You write:

[Comment #1] "I have never thought of any new idea or a new paradigm, which might be what Currie expects of his readers."

I had a similar impression. I have not offered an evaluation of Currie's process, but, as Rafe McGregor puts it in his review of Currie's *Imagining and Knowing*, Currie's work "is exemplary of analytic philosophy at both its best and worst" since despite "rigorous evidence" and "impeccable logic" Currie's "findings are, on a charitable reading, a limited advance in the subject area." *Philosophy in Review* Vol. 40 no. 3 (August 2020): 104. The "new paradigm" often does not seem new or fully justified. Brian Boyd's critique of my paper Points out several examples of Currie's thought when it is not at its nimblest.

[Comment #2] "Indeed, it would be difficult for us to love something durable like plain plastic even if it is a trifle. On the other hand, Nabokov cherishes the things in his memory, for they are lost (absent) from his world and, at the same time, they are in his memory unchangeable for good."

You and I certainly agree on that point. In fact, my main interest in the pig started when I noticed that Nabokov uses the indexical of presence "this" rather than the more semantically proper "that" to mark the pig's absence. So, the plastic pig, absent in fact, nonetheless seems to be present enough. Your phrase "unchangeable for good" seems a good way of describing the fact that the long-gone pig is still affecting the nature of the narrator's belief, emotion, self-knowledge, and perspective.

[Comment #3] "I was surprised to read Brian write in his comment on your paper, "The reader of 'Signs and Symbols' does not feel or simulate the son's delusions, and is not invited to feel or simulate them, but simply to understand them in a summary sense" (Boyd 6), and you reply that you partially agree (Kuzmanovich 'Comment #6')."

The partial agreement stems from the first part of the story where we are given facts about the son, but the attitude to those facts is not foregrounded. And then, we arrive at this passage after which it is no longer possible for me not to empathize with the mother.

> And then came a time in his life, coinciding with a long convalescence after pneumonia, when those little phobias of his which his parents had stubbornly regarded as the eccentricities of a prodigiously gifted child hardened as it were into a dense tangle of logically interacting illusions, making him totally inaccessible to normal minds.

> This, and much more, she accepted—for after all living did mean accepting the loss of one joy after another, not even joys in her case—mere possibilities of improvement.

The switch from "his parents had stubbornly regarded" to "This, and much more, she accepted—for after all living did mean accepting the loss of one joy after another, not even joys in her case—mere possibilities of improvement" is Nabokov's application of what in Joyce studies Hugh Kenner calls the "Uncle Charles Principle," an empathic "gravitation" of the narrator's voice into the perspective and feelings of another character within the story. Initially we are told that the son's mind is "totally inaccessible to normal minds." But then it turns out that his mind is somewhat accessible to the empathic mind of his mother. Prior to that point, we are receiving information about each member of the family in what Brian calls "summary sense." Hence my partial agreement with Brian. But once the Uncle Charles Principle delivers us into the mind of the mother sharing her son's referential mania and thereby his sense of being persecuted, we cannot exit her mind and her sense of her family's vulnerabilities. Prof. Toker sums up ways in which the family's vulnerabilities are occasioned by their ethnicity at that historical moment, even though common ethnicity does not let the mother have full access to some aspects of her son's suffering. For example, she clearly does not understand what is scaring her son in this figure (a detail of Peter Breughel the Elder's painting The *Triumph of Death* (1522?): "afraid of the wallpaper in the passage, afraid of a certain picture in a book which merely showed an idyllic landscape with rocks on a hillside and an old cart wheel hanging from the branch of a leafless tree." I thank Don Johnson for first pointing this detail out to me).

[Comment #4] What I felt is far from the son's fear, which is towards the natural elements sharing the information about him and revealing his magnified secrets to the world.

Is it possible that instead of the son's fear we share the mother's understanding of, or feelings about her son's sense of the world as an alien and evil menace?

[Comment # 5] "*the lost glove is happy*" (*Pale Fire***, 17).... It seems to me to be another case of personification that makes it harder for us to analyze our feelings about the object.**

I confess to never being quite happy with my understanding of that Zemblan proverb. There are mateless or single gloves across Nabokov's work, but their sense of happiness often escapes me, so please read what follows with a great deal of skepticism. My observations are meant to be merely suggestive: Margot glove opens and closed *LID*, Krug drops one into the river after losing its mate, and if my memory serves, there are several lost or forgotten gloves in *Invitation*. However, the two places where the matelessness of the gloves does the most work to bring up questions of empathy and sympathy are *The Gift* and *Speak, Memory*. In *The Gift*, Zina plays with one during a tryst, Yasha's father wears one for the eczema he gets after Yasha's suicide, and a man on a moving train deliberately drops his other glove after accidentally dropping the first one because he wants to make the finder of the accidentally dropped glove happy to have found a pair of gloves. In *Speak, Memory* Miss Norcott loses a white kid glove, and young Nabokov's inability to find the glove makes him unhappy, an unhappiness that would soon become "inconsolable" when Miss Norcott is summarily dismissed for lesbianism (Boyd, *Russian Years* 52). If the glove had been found (or kept) by Miss Nortcott's lesbian partner, the older Nabokov, intent on seeing chance as choice and accident as a part of a

pattern, could very well imagine it as a happy glove, in the same way Kinbote's loss of one publisher secures him another one, the "touchingly carefree and chummy," "good old Frank" whom Kinbote would like to see as a "permanent fixture" in his life. The white glove (this time the footman's) is linked in *Speak, Memory* with the light brought into Nabokov's life by another switch in governesses since it accompanies the departure of Miss Robinson and the arrival of the unwanted Mademoiselle. So there may very well be a private pattern of single gloves linking the finding and losing of mates, trysts, and change, but at the moment I am unable to account for such a pattern in a way I find fully convincing.

Zoran Kuamanovich

Questions and Answers

I

Ryo Chonabayashi

(Question on Page 43): Would Currie agree with the view "our emotionally vivid sense of serious moral and psychological engagement with the thought-world of the fiction prove to be a false sense"? Wouldn't Currie simply says that empathy toward artistic objects on its own may be not very reliable given its nature? The latter claim is more modest. It seems Currie is not committed to the view that empathy never reveals any truth about human psychology. What he is committed to is the view that psychology can better reveal truths about human psychology.

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Thank you for that question, Prof. Chonabayashi. It is a fundamental one since it goes to the heart of one of Currie's main projects, dissemination of skepticism about empathy as a form of cognition that builds ontological bridges between ourselves and others.

In the earliest versions of my paper, I had given some thought to not using the term "false sense" but in the end decided to stay with it and with the "immodest" Currie, primarily because of Part 4 of his essay under discussion and the comments on empathy (and fiction) he has made in his other publications and which are reproduced in my paper. I think you and I disagree only over the breadth of Currie's claims in this essay in part because you emphasize the claims and I emphasize the tone of those claims. In fact, I see tone as a feature of one's claims. As a result I think we agree on Currie's claims in Parts 1−3 but disagree not on the philosophical import of Part 4.

During the first three parts of the essay, Currie (1) limits the study of the truths of human psychology to empathy, specifically the claim that empathy is of special relevance to aesthetic experience; (2) dismisses as too precarious the idea of simulational empathy as a mind-reading mechanism among humans, and then turns to (3) the role of empathy for objects as the basis (salience) for aesthetics. I understand your reading of Currie's "modest" claims for, and conclusions about (3) to run something like this:

On its own, empathy for objects is an unreliable process for claiming bodily simulation as the basis of aesthetic experience because (in its nature) bodily simulation is

a. Non-specific (thanks to our canonical neurons, we react to actual chairs as we do to ones depicted in great paintings);

b. Somewhat unstable（our simulational empathy could be caused by either the content of the painting or by the artistic activity necessary to produce such content）;
c. Difficult to control（as an emotion-inducing sensation, it is not merely pre-rational but often unconscious）
d. Potentially distracting（even when we are conscius of it）, and as a result of（a）–（d） it is also
e. Rule defying.

If Currie had ended the essay at（d）, I would happily endorse your reading of the "modest" claim. But he does not. Having argued against empathy as the foundational center of aesthetic responses, he seems intent on removing it from the periphery as well. Having made the argument that bodily simulation processes should not be the basis of aesthetic responses, he declares, modestly, I admit, that these processes "are not irrelevant to art and the aesthetic." However, I cannot see the statement "these processes play an aesthetic role when they play a role in the generation of a response which is an aesthetic one" as modest. Even Currie calls formation "unhelpful." Why would a philosopher write a deliberately unhelpful statement when he is clearly not providing it as an example of a particular type of statements? Is it because Currie cannot imagine what Novalis calls "feeling oneself into" things?（83）Possibly. In fact, at the beginning of Part 4 Currie confesses that "it is hard to see" why anyone should posit "special relevance" of empathy to aesthetic experience. Without the near-tautology at the end of the penultimate paragraph, one could see such a statement as a simple speech act designed to express confusion. But when that statement is added to "these processes play an aesthetic role when they play a role in the generation of a response which is an aesthetic one," we are no longer playing the language game of self-scrutiny. The speech act here is provocation by dismissal. The near-tautology invites the reader who disagrees with Currie to play Euthyphro to Currie's Socrates. I prefer not to do that. Nor do I wish to imagine the flow of meaning from aesthetics to empathy as taking place in only one direction. Since empathy exists in ordee to give "us" access to "the non-us" and vice versa, why not imagine empathy and existing in the same mutually modifying relationship Gods and piousness exist in "Euthyphro"?

But Currie does not wish to consider that possibility since he does not supply his analysis of arguments made by the proponents of the idea of empathy-based aesthetics that preceded the Empathists. They are dismissed without being represented. Within this essay Currie does not even supply arguments for psychological processes that do a better job of revealing truths about human psychology than empathy does. He does name mirror neurons as one possible process, but using mirror neurons as the basis of aesthetic responses is also not very helpful. In fact, it is a little like answering the question "Does the tree that falls in the forest without anyone being present make a sound?" with "Yes, just interview the disturbed molecules in the air."

II

Shoko Miura

Thank you, Zoran, for an inspiring paper on the philosophical aspects of empathy. It sent me reading in many interesting directions. I heard from Akiko about your illness and I am grateful that you persevered heroically in writing your paper under extremely difficult circumstances.

My question for you is about the emotive effect of empathy. The rejection of impressionism's misconception of "affective fallacy" by the New Critics is well known and I do not mean empathy in that way. If, as you paraphrased Currie, empathy has to do with "sharing and imitating the experience of others," who is imitating whom? Whose emotion does the empathetic expression reflect? And what is the motive for sharing the emotion?

When I read your paper, I became interested in Humbert's phrase, "the smiling surface of Hourglass Lake" when he fantasizes that he succeeded in drowning Charlotte. The lake's surface is smiling to reflect Humbert's satisfaction in killing his wife. It is the lake which "imitates" Humbert's emotion—or, rather, Humbert as narrator imposes his emotion on the lake surface. There is an opposite instance of empathy in a skit by Charlie Chaplin in *Limelight* imitating various "things" such as a rose and a "Japanese tree" which are used to change the viewpoint of another character. Chaplin imitates a Japanese bonsai tree（I suppose it is a living miniature tree from his small gesture）for the benefit of the woman he had saved from suicide. He says to her that a Japanese tree "grows sideways" and both his hands and his eyes point energetically upward and to his left. His hands are the branches "growing" from his face. Indeed, many Japanese bonsai trees are sculptured to grow out of balance to one side. Chaplin's gesture expresses the tree's will to grow in one kinetic direction. It seems merely a comic routine but when we think of why Chaplin chooses a bonsai tree to make this gesture, we become aware of his intent to convince the woman that everything in this world is individually different and yet shares the common drive to live and survive. Chaplin imitates the bonsai tree in order to change the woman's despair into courage to start over. We are moved by Chaplin's tree but alienated by Humbert's smiling lake. Both are therefore successful in creating the intended effect. However, Chaplin uses empathy not to impose his emotion but to evoke an emotion in his listener.

There is a difference in the existence or nonexistence of subjectivity of the person making the empathetic expression. Chaplin somehow avoids subjectivity in making that gesture. He does not think of himself. The emotion he finds from the tree and imitates does not originate from a self-centered viewpoint as Humbert's does. Why one "shares" an experience seems to be critical in creating an ethical effect through empathy.

So, my question is, how would an analytic philosopher view this difference?
Also, would anyone like to comment on a comparison of Nabokov and Chaplin since they lived only ten years apart and died in the same year?

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Dear Shoko, thank you for finding something of value in my paper. I am happier now with it knowing that it has elicited the kind of reactions from you, Akiko, Brian, and Professor Ryo Chonabayahsi. The four interlinked questions you pose are, as Americans say, a real doozy in the good sense of that word. But the combination of your questions is an inspiring one, too. I cannot speak for analytic philosophers, having read（with any seriousness of purpose）roughly a third each of the philosophical output by Currie, Wittgenstein, and Popper. And I am a rather poor historian, so I will leave the task of discussing the intersections between Chaplin's and Nabokov's life to someone with a better library, better eyesight, and more interest in visa troubles, transportation of minors across state lines, preference for life in Switzerland, attitudes to Senator McCarthy, and body-snatching. I do feel（as I think you do）that someone should do such a project, especially given Chaplin's notions about beauty residing in life's "smiling sadness" in the everpresence of death and Nabokov's idea about art being based in "beauty plus pity" over beauty's dying. So I will have to concentrate on empathy, *Limelight*, and *Lolita*. I will do so informally. Since you made it possible for me to experience my first Noh play and patiently answered all of my questions about the masks, sparse sets, fixed lighting, and the haunting drums, I find that I cannot really be formal in my response to you. I have studied and taught *Limelight* paired with *Lolita*（book and the 1962 film）because Kubrick knew Chaplin's work very well and admired it greatly. I believe the still in Figure 2 is Kubrik's winking tribute to both Nabokov's lepidoptery and Chaplin's*Limelight*.

Limelight itself is as precise as a Japanese watch, and its marvelous symmetries make it a joy to teach its form with or without the New Critics and their insistence that whatever is there must be there for more than a single reason. I hope you have taught *Limelight* or will teach it at some point. I will quote generously from the film since few people seem to know it well（one consequence of its having

Figure 1: Still from *Limelight*（1952）

Figure 2: Still from *Lolita*（1962）

been banned in the US）. Many events in the film are repeated with variations, and the similarities and differences among those incomplete repetitions generate the film's tone and thus theme. Now to your question about the differences in empathic response and motivation, where several problems quickly present themselves. The first is the problem of medium, the second of genre, and the third of tone. I need to think out loud about the first two before actually addressing the third which is where the thread of your questions leads me.

Medium: Seeing a sideways-growing small tree imitated to help a suicidally depressed young woman find the desire to live, and trying to imagine a lake smiling in approval of the cleverly concealed murder one has just imagined committing present us with very different stimuli. As film watchers who have suspended disbelief we see in shared time and space Calvero's conscious effort to imitate a flower or a tree and we see and hear the effect of such imitations on Terry. We cannot see but must only imagine Humbert's projection of his self-satisfaction onto the murky（?）, glistening（?）, wavy（?）, cloud-reflecting（?）surface of the lake. Humbert tells us three things that complicate our image-making in the spatio-temporal and causal dimensions and thus the effect of "smiling surface":

（1）I was not yet at that stage; I merely want to convey the ease of the act, the nicety of the setting!
（2）I watched, with the stark lucidity of a future recollection（you know—trying to see things as you will remember having seen them）.
（3）[P]oor Mrs. Humbert Humbert, the victim of a cramp or coronary occlusion, or both, would be standing on her head in the inky ooze, some thirty feet below the smiling surface of Hourglass Lake.

By the end of this passage from *Lolita* we have to imagine the "smiling surface" of a lake named after the device from which the sands invariably run out. In light of Humbert's sentence（#2）, on our first reading we briefly even fear that Humbert is actually remembering rather than planning the murder.

Thus when we imagine the "smiling surface," the most damning images are those of Humbert's own current or future smile, a smile of complete indifference to Charlotte's psychological and physical pain made all the worse if we further imagine (as we are invited to do) that the smile also emerges from Humbert's sense of his own cleverness and/or from his image of nature as a willing and approving accomplice in his murderous plans.

Genre: You say that **"Chaplin somehow avoids subjectivity in making that gesture. He does not think of himself. [...]Why one 'shares' an experience seems to be critical in creating an ethical effect through empathy."**

I agree that motivation plays an important in our empathic responses and their link to ethics.. Humbert, for example, emphasizes the ways in which he intends to take advantage of Charlotte's weaknesses. Calvero senses Terry's weakness and attempts to help her overcome it. The empathic link between them is based on Terry's paralysis over life's futility that has led her sister into prostitution and driven her to suicide and Calvero's paralysis as a has-been comedian who became box office poison after discovering his wife's infidelity and then needing to be drunk in order to be funny. But since empathy is supposed to be immediate and unfiltered by reflection, there is a problem of sharing in comedic empathy, especially physical or slapstick comedy of the Chaplin type. So I read your "somehow" as being rightly a cautionary one.

Where empathy is usually a result of our unconscious mirroring of the mental/emotional state of others, Calvero's humor is based on his conscious decision to hide rather than share the pain he feels. He hides his pain both from the audience and at the end from Terry as well. And the drinking can be seen as the effort to hide the pain from himself. I know your question was not about the ending, but please bear with me while we address the "somehow" and the idea of sharing within the film's genre. So Calvero rejects mass empathy by hiding his feelings and even his heart attack. After the heart attack, he also diverts what more likely would have been Terry's pity and gratitude rather than empathy by pretending to imagine a future for himself and Terry now that they are both successful. Humbert, however, shares the glee of his imagined freedom-from-Charotte only with nature since he must not share it with anyone else (while of course sharing it with us, "*hypocrite lecteurs*"). It is also possible to read Calvero at the end as dying from both heart attack and a broken heart in the sense of Humbert's "coronary thrombosis." It is possible but not advised. In the case of a broken heart, we would be empathizing with Calvero's desire not to live without Terry. But we could think of self-sacrifice as not necessarily involving a broken heart as I think you do by putting emphasis on "sacrifice" rather than "self." At least that is how I read your separation or even opposition of "subjectivity" and self-centeredness. Calvero knows that both Terry's career and her erotic desire for Neville (played by Chaplin's son) would be sacrificed if Calvero were to give in and marry Terry whose desire for such a marriage is driven mainly by idealistic gratitude. So, instead, Calvero sacrifices himself for Terry, and the sacrifice gives him back the dignity he has sought ever since his headliner days. Paradoxically that dignity he has regained from his staged self-humiliation: he has again gotten "up on his feet" and he "goes out on top" having sacrificed himself not just for Terry but for his art. We understand the poetically just/formally required nature of such an ending, we applaud the performance, and we admire the dignity of the way he camouflages his pain, but I am not sure that

most of us could really empathise with, that is share and imitate, such a pain and such a feeling. (Historically, Chaplin's lack of self-sacrifice on behalf of his British compatriots during WWII galled a number of his former fans, in London and elsewhere. But that part we will leave to the future historian.)

Tone. Your questions are specifically about the rose and the Japanese tree: **"If ... empathy has to do with "sharing and imitating the experience of others," who is imitating whom? Whose emotion does the empathetic expression reflect? And what is the motive for sharing the emotion?**

The scene you are analysing comes about when Terry confesses she attempted suicide because she finds life "without meaning," and because even in music and flowers" she finds only "utter futilty." To that Calvero responds with

> Calvero: What do you want a meaning for?
> Life is a desire, not a meaning.
> Desire is the theme of all life!
> It makes a rose want to be a rose,|and want to grow like that.
> Ever seen a Japanese tree? |They're lopsided, they grow this way.
> Of course pansies grow this way.
> The dark ones frown and go like that.
> However, the meaning of anything
> is merely other words|for the same thing.
> After all, a rose is a rose.|Not bad, should be quoted.

I will leave off picking the low lying fruit of the allusions to Shakespeare and Gertrude Stein and move on to your analysis of this scene. Your analysis is outstanding:

> **Chaplin's gesture expresses the tree's will to grow in one kinetic direction. It seems merely a comic routine but when we think of why Chaplin chooses a bonsai tree to make this gesture, we become aware of his intent to convince the woman that everything in this world is individually different and yet shares the common drive to live and survive. Chaplin imitates the bonsai tree in order to change the woman's despair into courage to start over.**

As you point out, in this initial mention of flowers and trees, Calvero is imitating the rose's/pansy's and tree's shape and desire for growth, hoping that Terry will mirror such desire and abandon her desire to die. He is also subtly recapitulating his insistence that human consciousness is a wonderful toy that has taken billions of years to be grown and should not be destroyed so carelessly. Consciousness as a wonderful toy is of course a very Nabokovian thought. In planning Charlotte's murder, Humbert has no such thoughts about Charlotte's consciousness as something rare and precious, though after Lolita abandons him, he posits just such a possibility not for Charlotte's but for Lolita's consciousness:

> my Lolita remarked: “You know, what’s so dreadful about dying is that you are completely on your own”; and it struck me, as my automaton knees went up and down, that I simply did not know a thing about my darling’s mind and that quite possibly, behind the awful juvenile cliches, there was in her a garden and a twilight, and a palace gate—dim and adorable regions which happened to be lucidly and absolutely forbidden to me, in my polluted rags and miserable convulsions...”

What prevents Humbert from positing the richness of Lolita’s consciousness is the almost mechanical nature of his sexual desire for Lolita. For Calvero, sex is not a concern except in his dreams. And even in those dreams the memory of his wife’s infidelity still affects him: when he reaches for Terry’s waist, she picks his pocket. In his waking life, he soberly tells Terry “I’ve arrived at the age where platonic friendship can be sustained on the highest moral plane.” That sentence strikes me as a polite ananouncment that for physiological reasons sex between them is no longer on the table.

I introduced the problems of medium and genre because I wish to be very cautious about my answers regarding trees and flowers. The images of the flower and the tree will return during Calvero’s song about reincarnation and the life of a sardine. He sings this song at the Empire Ballet at the gala performance given in his honour at the end of the film and arranged for him by Terry and Neville.

> It makes my heart feel warm
> To know that I’ll return
> In some other form
> But **I don’t want to be a tree**
> Sticking in the ground
> I’d sooner be a flea
> **I don’t want to be a flower**
> Waiting by the hour
> Hoping for a pollen to alight on me

Please note that the images of the flowers and the tree he imitated for Terry were meant to mime growth and thus change. But in the “Sardine Song” the flower and the tree are rejected because they are stationary. The tone here changes completely: what was good for motivating Terry out of her hypochondriac paralysis and depression is openly rejected as not being good enough for Calvero. We could argue perhaps that sardines are a few evolutionary levels up from flowers and trees, but I do not think such an argument from evolutionary climbing is sufficient to account for Calvero’s desire here since the refrain is “So when I cease to be/I want to go back, I want to go back,/I want to go back to the sea.”

The audience reaction is different as well. The first time Calvero（under a different name）sang that song, the Middlesex audience fell asleep or walked out. Fearing such an outcome again, and believing that such an outcome would “kill” Calvero, Terry has gone so far as to bribe a group of her sycophants to laugh and applaude after every joke. But the complete Empire Ballet audience greets Calvero’s jokes with loud laughter and even tears. And the same audience gets to see him carried off-stage in a

drum as if he were a sardine in a round can. So, looked at as a parallel to the empathy scene you analyzed, the "Sardine Song" in some ways suspends or questions that initial empathy.

Despite that, your intuition that Calvero's notion of selfhood differs from Humbert's is one I share, in part because the "Sardine Song" does not end the film. After the doctor has diagnosed him as having suffered a heart attack and not a broken back, Calvero asks to be carried to the wings so he can see Terry dance. To understand the importance of this gesture, and to understand the subtitle --"the glamour of limelight from which age must pass as youth enters"--we need to look at the intersection of three motifs, all of which have to do with the relation between life and art: feet, windows, and Columbine's death.

Feet: The feet come in by way of this exchange:

Calvero to Terry (after she has begun walking again): Don't be discouraged. You'll get on your feet again.

Terry: On my what again?

While this exchange sounds as if Terry does not understand idiomatic or figurative English, since she is already walking with Calvero by the riverside, Calvero must be talking about her artistic feet, that is, a more desirable step in her career. Whatever the case, the phrase "on your feet again," in the language of Russian Formalists, is being foregrounded. Yet when Calvero and Griffith (Chaplin and Keaton) perform their musical number as Calvero's final encore at the grand gala, Calvero's feet repeatedly keep disappearing into his pant legs suggesting the degree of anxiety Calvero feels during this (drunkennes-unaided) performance, but the routine also explains why Calvero so quickly recognized and understood Terry's psychosomatic paralysis.

Windows/Columbine's Death: The Stage Director of *Harlequinnade* explains the action to his actors:

Harlequin, who is the lover, and the clowns, are at her [Columbine's] bedside. She asks to be carried to the window. She wants to look upon the rooftops one last time. The clowns weep. She smiles. "Their clothes are not for sorrow but for laughter." She wants them to perform, do their tricks. The clowns can do their comedy.

Calvero: While she's dying?

Director: Yes.

The window comes up again in connection with dying when during their make-up session Griffith (another washed-up clown hired to replace the poorly performing Calvero in the Harlequinade) gruffly announces "If anybody else says "it's like old times," I'll jump out the window! First the doorman, then the call boy, now the stage manager." When the Empire Ballet owner enters, he too makes just such a comment: "It's like old times seeing you here again putting on your war paint." Given the "if-then" nature of Griffith's announcement, the theatre owner's comment, by being foregrounded, suggests that we should expect something connected with windows and/or jumping to follow. And our expectations are justified when Calvero pretends to stumble off the stage, a routing that requires him to jump out of the audience's view into the orchestra pit. But where the younger Calvero could carry off such a trick, the older Calvero suffers a heart attack during the pratfall. Though the audience does not notice, it is not at all like old times. Yet Calvero had insisted on having

that trick be his final encore number. While he is unlikely to be planning that his leap be the leap of death, in retrospect we see that where before death was a prentese for entertaining others, here it is a supreme expression of concern for another human being.

And just as Columbine in her dying moments asks to be taken to the window, the dying Calvero asks to be taken into the wings（the theater's doors/windows）to see Terry dance. And of course he dies while watching her perform her desire for life by dancing to Neville's music. She is in fact imitating his miming of the tree's and flower's growth and putting into practice his ideas about life as a desire for more life.

Humbert who very much regrets not taking pictures of Lolita, concludes his narrative by seeing it as the "only immortality" he and Lolita may ever have. Calvero's career, forgotten by all but his earliest audiences, suggests that immortality is not guaranteed by one's art. Rather it is Terry and Neville, both beneficiaries of empathy（Terry of Calvero's, Neville of Terry's）, who recreate the best of Calvero's career by creating the conditions for a gala sending off, conditions under which Calvero can go out with dignity even if that dignity is secured by stumbling off the stage into a drum. Because the gala sendoff is definitely not like old times, Calvero carries out Griffith's threat and in essence jumps out the window by jumping off the stage. He kills himself despite convincing Terry that there are too many reasons for not doing so. While in legal and medical terms, Calvero's death is the result of an accident, the film's form and themes suggest otherwise. Formally, *Limelight* thus begins and ends with the act of suicide. But as you, Shoko, have already concluded, **Calvero "does not think of himself**," so paradoxically Calvero's suicide is not about Calvero. He does not kill himself because he does not wish to live without Terry or because he did not get his way. He kills himself because that is the only way for Terry to become the artist and person she with Calvero's help now wants to become. Now that is some empathy! Imagine Humbert doing that for Charlotte or Lolita.（3264 words）

Shoko Miura

Dear Zoran,

Thank you for your amazing reply. It looks like I hit upon a gold mine when I was just scratching the ground!

I had no idea you knew so much about Chaplin's movies. I love them, too, but never went deeply into them. Your citing of the "Sardine Song" especially was a delight. Now that you have focused on the stationary "tree" and the "flower," in contrast to the animate "sardine" and the "flea"（Calvero's flea routine earlier）, I can see that Chaplin was as masterful at weaving recurrent motifs and underlying themes as Nabokov was. As you pointed out, this contrast recurs in Terry's psychosomatic paralysis and Calvero's re-animation of Terry in the ballet. How Nabokovian!

Another point you made which made me see the work of empathy in comparing Chaplin and Nabokov

is your interpretation of Columbine looking out of the window in the *Harlequinnade*. It reminded me of the waxwing killed "by the azure of the windowpane" in *Pale Fire*. Both windows are the border between two worlds—of the living and the dead (or the dying), but also between the "real world" and the world of art. Where does Calvero die? Between curtains dividing the stage where Terry dances and backstage where the clowns return to their normal lives. Kinbote escapes death in his kingdom by creeping through green curtains. Windows and curtains seem to suggest for both artists the line between Time (a succession of minutes) and No Time (where such a succession does not exist). So long as we are alive, we are not allowed to cross this border. The work of empathy, it seems to me, enables one to cross it. Empathy works by using imagination, the essential medium of art. When you empathize, rather than sympathize, you cross the border between yourself and another thing or person. Sympathy is merely "feeling with" another but empathy enables you to share your selfhood with another's selfhood. You quoted a passage of Humbert's uncharacteristically honest admission:

> ...behind the awful juvenile cliches, there was in her a garden and a twilight, and a palace gate - dim and adorable regions which happened to be lucidly and absolutely forbidden to me....

Here Humbert faces an invisible border because he cannot share his selfhood. However, as you discussed, Calvero can because his love is capable of the nobility of self-sacrifice. What is impressive in the ending is that the curtains between which Calvero dies serves both as entry and exit. Reality and fiction of the stage can merge, like the work of empathy. Calvero's death opens the border for Terry who inherits his world of art.

Your reply led me to clarify my thoughts and a thread (about Nabokov's border motifs) I myself have been following for a dozen years. I know that your eyes have made it difficult to write and concentrate. I also have a problem with my eyes since a tiny clot lodged in my brain three years ago. So, I sincerely appreciate your generosity.

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Dear Shoko, I am glad you were able to find something worthwhile in my musings about *Limelight*. You are quite correct about Chaplin's clever interweaving of motifs, especially the flea one:

[Comment #1] "flea" (Calvero's flea routine earlier). The interesting part about this routine is that it contains some bawdy jokes and some historical homage. The flea that Calvero discovers fighting with Henry and that may or may not be the one that repeatedly bites Calvero is named Phyllis (syphilis). At the same time, the routine is a tribute to Marcelino, a great auguste (clown who does not wear the traditional oversized costuming of the clown) whom Chaplin highly respected. Chaplin worked with Marcelino (whose wife "left" him for another). At the same time, *Limelight's* story structure is an allusion to (or perhaps a tribute to) *Laugh, Clown, Laugh* (1928).[1] Either way, the stories are very similar.

[Comment #2] **Windows and curtains seem to suggest for both artists the line between Time（a succession of minutes）and No Time（where such a succession does not exist）** Absolutely, where we find Calvero at the end is the border between the not quite over yet and the not quite yet, especially if you look closely at the final scene where Calvero says: “I believe I’m dying, Doctor. But then, I don’t know. I’ve died so many times.”

[Comment #3] **I sincerely appreciate your generosity.** Ditto. The drum from the Noh play you took me to still resonated in my head. I am sorry about the clot. My doctor has mentioned that as a likely scenario for me.

I am very grateful to Akiko who behind the scenes connected us all just as she did the last time I was in Japan.（This time she also took on the task of quietly correcting the errors my compromised eyes left in.）

Note

1 From *Laugh, Clown, Laugh*（1928）, with Lon Chaney, Bernard Siegel, Loretta Young: <https://ok.ru/video/988772960948>. A clown named Tito Beppi（Lon Chaney）adopts orphaned Simonetta（Loretta Young）, and they begin to travel and perform in the circus together. As Simonetta grows into a beautiful young woman, Tito eventually falls in love with her. Though the girl actually has eyes for the young and noble Count Ravelli（Nils Asther）, she pretends to want the kindly clown because she is unwilling to break his heart. When Tito realizes that he stands in the way of her happiness, things turn tragic.

Akiko Nakata

Paper

Ludwig Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore Hidden in *Transparent Things*

This paper[1] discusses how Ludwig Wittgenstein（1889−1951）and G. E. Moore（1873−1958）can be found hidden in *Transparent Things*（1972, *TT*）. Vladimir Nabokov（1899−1977）and these two analytic philosophers graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, but in different years and in different fields.

Nabokov majored in modern and medieval languages from October 1919 to June 1922.[2]

Wittgenstein studied mathematics and philosophy in 1912 and 1913, first as an undergraduate, then as an "advanced student." He did not return to Cambridge until 1929, when he received his Ph. D. and became a Fellow in the following year. In 1949, they both were in Ithaca during September and early October,（Boyd, *The American Years*, 141-43; Malcolm 84）,[3] but there is no record or likelihood that they met.

Moore spent most of his academic life at Trinity after 1892, when he entered as an undergraduate. When Nabokov was studying French and Russian as a Tripos student, Moore was a Lecturer who taught Psychology—he writes that his lecture was on Philosophy of Mind rather than Psychology—and Metaphysics for the Tripos, as well as the Philosophy of Nature（Moore, *Autobiography*, 28−30）. Nabokov definitely responded to a question by Alfred Appel, Jr., in an interview held in 1966 that he had no contact whatsoever with the philosophy faculty at Cambridge（*Strong Opinions*, 70）. Additionally, there are no records of Nabokov attending Moore"s lectures. In his first year, Nabokov abandoned Zoology to devote energy to writing poetry, playing football on the Trinity team, and other engagements. Brian Boyd remarks, "Of course there is a possibility that Nabokov could have attended a lecture or several by Moore, but I would think it a vanishingly small possibility. While at Cambridge he was interested in writing poetry, in chasing women, in playing football, and in letting off steam with his friends, to judge by all the evidence（including his letters to his parents）, not in maximizing his intellectual range."[4]

Nabokov's only published comment on Wittgenstein was in answer to the same interview question by Appel, when he confessed complete ignorance of the philosopher's works. He also said that the first time he heard the philosopher's name must have been in the 1950s. That tends to sound unnatural to our ears. For general readers today, Wittgenstein seems to have been one of the most famous and admired philosophers, probably since the time he published *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*（1921, *TLP*）. However, Wittgenstein was mostly unknown to general readers during his lifetime. I think that Nabokov must have read Wittgenstein's books sometime between the interview and his writing of *TT*.

There is no record of Nabokov ever directly referencing to Moore. In contrast to our reaction to the case of Wittgenstein, we may regard it as not unnatural. As a matter of fact, in contrast to Wittgenstein, Moore's popularity and prominence have been drastically decreasing. Most general readers are ignorant of the philosopher, who was the superstar of elite intellectuals of Trinity and of

the Bloomsbury Group, and highly admired since his early twenties.[5] Moore, a freshman, made Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), a third-year student, worship him "as if he were a god" and feel "an extravagant admiration [he had] never felt for anybody" (Russell 163). Leonard Woolf, a Bloomsbury member, who had admiration and respect for Moore throughout his life, praises him indiscriminately also in his autobiography: "George Moore was . . . the only great man whom I have ever met or known. . . . There was in him an element which can, I think, be accurately called greatness, a combination of mind and character and behaviour, of thought and feeling which made him qualitatively different from anyone else I have ever known" (Woolf 131). In addition to Moore's philosophy and virtuosity, his childlike innocence, purity, good looks, and talent in music attracted select people to him. Considering his singular popularity at Trinity, it would be imaginable that Nabokov, who read Wittgenstein and found Moore's name there, recalled a brilliant Lecturer of the name at Trinity about half a century ago. Moore was a member of the Cambridge Apostles, the legendary intellectual discussion club for select students and young scholars, but there is no record of Nabokov's connection to the club. In his autobiography, Nabokov discusses Lenin and his despotism with a socialist student whom the author calls Nesbit, using a pseudonym (*Speak, Memory*, 199–203). Nesbit seems a student who could have been related to the Apostles and possibly he told Nabokov something about Moore.

Two decades ago, I wrote a note entitled "Wittgenstein Echoes in *Transparent Things*"[6] for *The Nabokovian*, which presumed that Nabokov had read Wittgenstein's works after the 1966 interview. The note indicates similarities between the text of *TT* and some of the lines in Wittgenstein's *TLP*, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953, *PI*), and *On Certainty* (1969) regarding several themes, including the inexplicable; survival after death; the recurrent misremembering of colors and the interest in delicate differences of shades; and the use of rain for the problem of information. I also pointed out in another note "Shi to Inpei—*Transparent Things* o Chûshin ni" [Death and Concealment in *Transparent Things* and Other Works] [7] that ***Tra****nsparent Things*, ***Tra****latitions*, the title of a voluminous novel written by a major character in *TT*, and ***Tra****ctatus Logico-Philosophicus* alliterate revealing their close relationship. Moreover, we can add to the titles the triple "tra" from Nabokov's poem "*Slava* [Fame]": "That main secret **tra**-tá-ta, **tra**-tá-ta, **tra**-tá-/and I must be overexplicit" cited by Véra Nabokov, after her husband's death, as the lines where Nabokov defined the theme of the otherworldliness, the hereafter, as "a secret that he carries within his soul and that *must not* and *cannot* be revealed" (Dmitri 175).

In this paper, following the note, I will add some details related to Wittgenstein and indicate how Moore can also be found in the text without being referred to as a philosopher, unlike in the case of Wittgenstein. I will clarify that the obscure joke, including the name "Wittgenstein" in Chapter 23 and the paragraph that includes it, present a unique, multi-layered design for the novella, and how these two philosophers play key roles in the design. In addition, I would like to consider the possibility that these philosophers, hidden in the wholly spiritual novella narrated by ghosts from the hereafter, should have had an interest in spiritualism in their real lives.

"Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein"

Throughout the novella, Wittgenstein is referred to only once in the obscure joke "Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein" cited from Mr. R.'s last novel, *Tralatitions*. The joke and its

source conclude both the chapter and its last paragraph:

> Days like this give sight a rest and allow other senses to function more freely. Earth and sky were drained of all color. It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain in a sense that only certain old Northern dialects can either express verbally or not express, but *versionize*, as it were, through the ghost of a sound produced by a drizzle in a haze of grateful rose shrubs. "Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein." An obscure joke in *Tralatitions*.（91）

As I introduced in my note, David Rampton relates the joke as the problem of how others understand the author's creation, quoting from *PL*, "Can I say 'bududu' and mean 'if it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk'?"（Rampton 172−73）. Brian Boyd annotates it quoting passages on the problem of information with "either raining or not raining" from *TLP*（4. 461）: "For example, I know nothing about the weather when I know that it is either raining or not raining" and *PI*（para. 356）:

> "One is inclined to say: 'Either it is raining, or it isn't—how I know, how the information has reached me, is another matter.' But then let us put the question like this: What do I call 'information that it is raining'?（Or have I only information of this information too?）."
>
> （Boyd, Notes to *LOA*, n. 814−15）

I would like to propose that not only Wittgenstein but also G. E. Moore who proposed a famous paradox should be found in the sentence. The paradox is as follows: "It's perfectly absurd or nonsensical to say such things 'I don't believe it's raining, yet as a matter of fact it really is raining'" though the sentence itself is not nonsensical only if it is not asserted in the present tense by the first-person（Moore, "Moore's Paradox," 207）. The paradoxical statement was introduced in a lecture by Moore, but he did not publish any paper on it. Wittgenstein, who attended the lecture and became keenly interested in the paradox, named it Moore's paradox and developed arguments in *PI*（II.x, 190）. Contrasting that it is possible to say, "He seems to believe," and that it is impossible to say, "I seem to believe," Wittgenstein comes to a revelation: "My own relation to my words is wholly different from other people's"（192^{e}）. It would not be difficult to hear, "It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain in a sense" as a Nabokovian literary paraphrase of Moore's paradox and Wittgenstein's extensive argument.

If we look closely at the rest of the sentence, "[It was . . .] yet still appearing to rain in a sense that only certain old Northern dialects can either express verbally, or not express, but *versionize*, as it were, through the ghost of a sound produced by a drizzle in a haze of grateful rose shrubs," what could we find there?

First, it may be natural to apply "*versionize*" to Wittgenstein's further discussion of Moore's paradox. Second, we can find an alternative to "certain old Northern dialects" other than certain old Russian dialects Nabokov knew or plainly some old New England dialects Hugh Person, the protagonist, is familiar with. Moreover, the adjectives to the dialects remind us of Skjolden, an isolated place at the longest fjord in Norway, where Wittgenstein sometimes stayed and worked in a small hut, mostly by himself. According to Georg Henrik von Wright, "He liked the people and the country very much. Eventually he learned to speak Norwegian fairly well"（6）.[8] We could assume

the possible "old Northern dialects" to be an old Norwegian dialect spoken around Skjolden.

If we take "the obscure joke" into account, another alternative to "certain old Northern dialects" will be in our sight. Needless to say, Wittenberg has a historic university founded in the early 16th century, where Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, studied before the beginning of the play. In the play, Hamlet seems to the audience either insane or pretending to be insane or not insane at all. An old Dane dialect naturally appears in the list of possible old Northern dialects. Some Shakespearean motifs, such as those of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, are obvious in some chapters of *TT*, but those from *Hamlet* are rather obscure except for the reference to Wittenberg in the joke. However, by the joke that involves Wittenberg and Wittgenstein together, we can see that the theme of *Hamlet* and that of Wittgenstein are entangled as a hidden design of *TT*.

How should we versionize the obscure joke for ourselves, comparing Hamlet and Wittgenstein side by side in it? At first, we could find a character to pair with Hamlet as Moore is with Wittgenstein: Horatio, Hamlet's best friend at Wittenberg University. He accompanies the prince after they return to Elsinore until the death of the latter. His age and background are not certain, but his character is elucidated as Hamlet catalogues his beautiful points:

> for thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
> Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
> That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
> That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
> In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
> As I do thee.（III.2 1944−1953）

Hamlet praises Horatio's calmness, modesty, gratitude, and well-balanced passion and reason. Very few scenes are prepared in the play for Horatio to make a spectacular showing, but he mostly follows Hamlet, gives him advice when necessary, and puts what Hamlet asks him to do into practice without fail. His personality and role in the play somewhat suggest what Moore was to Wittgenstein. It seems that Moore was not as practical and tough as Horatio, but he was calm, modest, and even commonsensical enough—in the sense of daily use of the word—compared with Wittgenstein. Horatio's age is not certain, but he sometimes advises Hamlet like his senior, and obeys him as his attendant and friend. Moore was seven years older than Wittgenstein, and they met as professor and student at Trinity. Later, Moore was the only professor who regularly came to Wittgenstein's class and took notes of his lectures, most of which were posthumously published. This reminds us of Horatio asked by dying Hamlet to survive his own death to tell the prince's story. Sometimes sensitive Moore was so offended or shocked by Wittgenstein's unhesitating words and outbursts of indignation or resentment that their relations were sometimes broken off for a while. It never happens between Hamlet and Horatio, but Hamlet's eccentric statements and behavior, as well as his outbursts of rage and sorrow, could be associated with Wittgenstein.

Hamlet himself "versionizes" a letter from the King of Denmark so that the King of England will kill the couriers Rosenkrantz and Gildenstern in place of Hamlet as originally intrigued by his uncle and stepfather, the King of Denmark. Thinking that the name Rosenkrantz is rosary in German, originated in rose, we could see in "grateful rose shrubs" Rosenkrantz flattering hyper-gratefully at the castle of the King of England, not knowing about his sudden end, which is whispered by "the ghost of drizzle sound" on the rosary of his name.

Here are presented the condensed entangled themes of analytic philosophers and Shakespeare, which are hidden as various appearances and in various places of the text, functioning as a major framework of the novella.

Witt, a resort in Switzerland

From the name Wittgenstein is supplied a fictional Swiss place name, Witt, the setting of 11 chapters out of 26. In Witt, Hugh Person, the protagonist, courts and engages Armande, revisits the places of their memories after her death, and dies in fire at the end of the last chapter. In every page, as always in this novella, his behavior and feelings, inside and outside of his body, as well as his life history are all watched transparently, beyond time and space, and reported by the ghosts who knew him in their lives. The place name Witt suggests those witnesses as well.

In Chapter 15, Hugh finally succeeds in touching Armande's heart and they kiss experiencing a minor miracle: ". . . yet that brief vibration in which she dissolved with the sun, the cherry trees, the forgiven landscape, set the tone for his new existence with its sense of 'all-is-well' . . ." (55). He impresses her by confessing his despair towards life because he is discouraged by their distant relationship, especially by their unsatisfactory sexual intercourse just before. He expresses despair as his hatred to Witt and himself, "'I hate Witt,' said Hugh. 'I hate life. I hate myself. I hate that beastly old bench'." (ibid.) Apparently, Witt or Wittgenstein seems to help Hugh and lead the couple to a minor miracle.

On the other hand, their miraculous kiss is disturbed by a group of boy scouts:

> She disengaged herself without a word. A long file of little boys followed by a scoutmaster climbed toward them along the steep path. One of them hoisted himself on an adjacent round rock and jumped down with a cheerful squeal. "*Grüss Gott*," said their teacher in passing by Armande and Hugh. "Hello, there," responded Hugh. (55)

Elated Hugh's lively greeting is smile-provoking, but we should note that the teacher's greeting is used in Southern Germany and all through Austria.[9]

Now, we could assume the reason the teacher and his boys disturb the new lovers' miraculous kiss—it seems for the reason Hugh cries that he hates Witt just before the kiss. Mysteriously, Wittgenstein, aka Witt, greatly supports and then disturbs Hugh.

The Moores

Moore also appears in the novella as some characters' names. Two characters of the name appear in person and another is referred to: Julia Moore, Jack Moore, and Marion (probably) Moore. Julia Moore is a major character, who is once Hugh's date before he meets Armande and the ex-stepdaughter of Mr. R. Marion is his ex-wife and Julia's mother, whose first name is referred to only

twice: once by the narrator (Ch. 10) and once in a letter written by Mr. R. just before his death (Ch. 21). Mr. R. is the author whose last novel is taken care of by Hugh as the editor. Jack Moore is Hugh's roommate at college and shakes Hugh awake in the middle of a nightmare. He is a minor character who never appears again, but he has some importance. The narrator draws the readers' attention using "a fellow student, Jack Moore (no relation)" (20), to the who-is-narrating problem. In addition to it, Jack introduces the spiritual theme by saving Hugh from a nightmare regarding a séance.

Julia Moore has another importance besides playing a major character. She is the center of the chimeric *Romeo and Juliet* names. Juliet is a nickname of Julia, and Romeo is an anagram of Moore; Giulia Romeo appears in another nightmare as an amalgam of Julia Moore, Armande, and a prostitute young Hugh met in Geneva. In the nightmare, Hugh means to save Julia/Giulia from a burning house, but actually he strangles Armande. His murder of Armande is related to another Shakespearean play, *Othello*. As its original title, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice*, indicates, the drama is a tragedy of Armande, aka Giulia Romeo, in the dream, and Hugh, who is suspected of choking his wife out of jealousy.

Other Moore derivatives can also be found. Jimmy Major—major is a synonymous of, in terms of amount, "more," and more's archaic spelling is moore—is Julia's dead boyfriend, whose image disturbs her feelings during the date with Hugh. The hotel in Stresa, whose room Hugh tries to book from Witt in vain, is also related to Moore. The hotel must be Grand Hotel des Iles Borromées at Lake Maggiore [more, in Italian], but Hugh wrongly memorizes it as something that "sounded like 'Beau Romeo'" (95). All the Moores and their subspecies are related to death and/or spiritualism, and the hotel at the Moorean lake leaves Hugh to his fate of death by not answering to the call for booking.

In the notes for his introductory remarks to his students at Cornell, Nabokov defines, "[O]ne cannot *read* a book; one can only reread it" (Nabokov, "Good Readers," 3). As a beginner in a game needs to learn the rules in detail while playing it, a reader as a novice begins to read a book and tries to know how to read it and what to read in it—the rules of the book—while reading it. That can be said about any literary work, but particularly true with Nabokov's works. They have plural layers in the texts and numerous things hidden between the layers, which could change the whole picture of a work to the eyes of the reader who found them out. *TT* is an extreme example, where a re^{n}-reader still finds a hidden rule and experiences a dramatic change in the whole picture. I have presented above a possible new picture of *TT* with Wittgenstein and Moore, but much more rules must be hidden unnoticed in the text.

Were Wittgenstein and Moore related to spiritualism?

TT is narrated by ghosts watching Hugh's life from the other world. The whole novella can be regarded as a huge séance. Were Wittgenstein and Moore related to spiritualism in their lives? When Nabokov was an undergraduate, and Moore was a student and a young scholar at Trinity, spiritualism was unprecedentedly popular among people who were suffering grief for their family members killed in WWI. Many of them sincerely wanted to communicate in séances with their dead loved ones. Nabokov vaguely mentions in his autobiography attending séances where he had to "mentally endure accompanying" old spiritualists (20). Trinity was strongly connected to the Society of Psychical

Research（SPR）. In 1882, the society was founded, and Henry Sidgwick, Professor of Philosophy at Trinity, was elected the first president（in office, 1882−84）and later as the third（1888−92）.

Moore entered Trinity in 1892 and after two years he attended the lecture of Sidgwick, but he recalls, "His [Sidgwick's] personality did not attract me, and I found his lectures rather dull" and "gained least from personal contact with him"（*Autobiography*, 16）. According to his autobiography, Moore in childhood was a type that can be called "'ultra-evangelical'"（10）, and long before he came to Trinity, he became "a complete Agnostic"（11）. Moore wrote nothing about the SPR or spiritualism in his autobiography. When he discusses a future life in academic writings, he seems to carefully evade such expressions as to sound spiritual and focuses on the problem of recognition（e. g., "What is Philosophy," 17−18）.

Wittgenstein lost his three brothers by suicide. His close friend and collaborator, David Pinsent, was killed in a flying accident during WWI. It would be natural if he had tried to communicate with them in séances or he had committed to some psychical research by the SPR, but no record of the kind is found in his published writings or his biographies by Norman Malcolm, Georg Henrik von Wright, Brian McGuiness, and Ray Monk. Wittgenstein's belief in Christianity may seem surprisingly simple and pious to those who expect, even in his religious belief, something extremely original as found both in his life and philosophy. In the diary he kept in code while serving with the Austrian Army during WWI repeatedly appears the sentence, "Man, the son of God, is weak in the flesh but free in the Spirit."[10] The statement was cited from Lev Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief*, his constant companion（*Wittogenshutain*, n.30）. In the diary, he repeatedly prays, "May the Spirit be in myself!"（e. g., September 12, 1914）and complains of the difficulty of being with the Spirit as "With empty stomach and lack of sleep, it is hard to serve the Spirit"（September 14, 1914）and "I am certainly free in the Spirit, but the Spirit has left me"（September 21, 1914）. It would not be difficult to assume that such belief could neither go together with the rigidly objective experimentation of the SPR nor with dubious mundane spiritualism.

Based on what I have read so far, I should say that the possibility that these two analytic philosophers should be related to spiritualism seems very slight. However, I am going to visit Cambridge University to research the documents from the SPR stocked in the library when it is possible to do so after Covid−19.

Notes

1 I am deeply grateful to Brian Boyd for useful comments and suggestions he generously gave to the earlier stage of this paper. I am also sincerely grateful to Shoko Miura for improving my English.

2 Unless otherwise noted, Nabokov's biographical facts are based on Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* and *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years*.

3 Wittgenstein was visiting Norman Malcolm, who taught at Cornell University. Unless otherwise noted, Wittgenstein's biographical facts are based on Ray Monk's Ludwig *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*.

4 By a personal correspondence, which I greatly appreciate.

5 Two articles published last year enlightened me on Moore's "splendor and decline": Ray Monk, "He Was the Most Revered Philosopher of His Era. So Why Did G E Moore Disappear from History?" *Prospect*, April 3, 2020. www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/ge-moore-philosophy- books-analytic-ray-monk-biography; Thomas Baldwin, "G. E. Moore: A Great

Philosopher?: The Realist Who Championed Simplicity and Common sense, and Who Discovered 'Moore's Paradox'." *TLS*, September 25, 2020. www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/g-e-moore-a-great-philosopher/.

6 The note is available at: www10.plala.or.jp/transparentt/shiryou3.html.

7 The original Japanese version is available at: www10.plala.or.jp/transparentt/ttseinen.pdf.

8 Wittgenstein appreciated its quietness and scenery, which were helpful for his work. Sometimes he urgently invited Moore to stay and discuss with him there (Wittgenstein, *Letters*, 145−48). In the spring of 1914, Moore visited Wittgenstein for two weeks and discussed the host's work in progress—the early version of *TLP*—and took a lot of notes by dictation (Monk 101−02).

9 Among Ray Monk's descriptions of Wittgenstein who taught at a small school in Otterthal, a rural area in Lower Austria, we found: "They [a special group of boys who became Wittgenstein's favorites] were taken by Wittgenstein on an outing to Vienna and on walks through the local countryside . . ." (Monk 228). We know that Nabokov did not have an opportunity to read Monk's biography, but the teacher seems to us like Wittgenstein with his pupils.

10 "Spirit" is "*Geist*" in the original German, and "*rei*" [霊] in the Japanese translation. The Japanese translator notes that he chose "spirit" [rei] from possible several meanings of the term because it obviously has a religious role in the diary, in which Wittgenstein prays and addresses to *Geist* as he does to God (n.30). The book is the complete Japanese translation of the photo version of the original diary. The English translation of the citations is mine.

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Akiko Nakata

Comments and Discussions

Comment on *Ludwig Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore Hidden in* Transparent Things

Tora Koyama, Commentator

Prof. Akiko Nakata argues in her paper that L. Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore, two of the founders of analytic philosophy, are hidden in Vladimir Nabokov's novella *Transparent Things*（hereafter TT）. Let me summarize her points. There is an intriguing common ground between Nabokov and the two philosophers in that all three studied at Trinity College, Cambridge Univerisity, although there seems to be only a faint relationship between Nabokov and the other two. Interestingly, however, the two philosophers still appear in the novella. What connects Nabokov to the philosophers is, surprisingly to me, Shakespeare.

Let us begin with *Hamlet*. In TT, Wittgenstein appears alongside Hamlet in the phrase "Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein"（91, as cited in Nakata 2021）. Wittenberg is the university where Hamlet studies. Hamlet famously says "To be, or not to be, that is the question."

Wittgenstein popularized a comparable paradox, which he named *Moore's Paradox*: Moore claimed that it is not contradictory but instead absurd to say that it is raining and I do not believe it is raining（Wittgenstein 1953, Sec. II. x）. We can find the Nabokovian paraphrase of this idea in TT: "It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain in a sense"（91, as cited in Nakata 2021）.

Moore also appears in TT with Shakespeare's *Romero and Juliet*. Julia Moore's name acts as a pseudonym for the play. Juliet is a nickname of Julia and Romeo is an anagram of Moore.（Julia is not the only Moore in TT, by the way.）Furthermore, Armande's tragedy can be likened to *Othello*, whose original title is *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice*. Thus the name of Moore prevails in the novella. These instances make it tempting to imagine that when Nabokov had the name of Moore in mind while writing TT and someday happened to come across the name of philosopher G. E. Moore while reading Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. That's quite amusing to me.

More connections of Wittgenstein and Moore to TT are pointed out. For instance, Moore is an older friend of Wittgenstein. Hamlet also has an older friend, Horatio. We can liken the former pair to the latter. The teacher who leads a Boy Scout group who gives an Austrian greeting may have been modeled after Wittgenstein, who possibly sometimes dressed like a Boy Scout.

Let me focus on Moore. Moore's position in the history of analytic philosophy is rather complex. Moore is usually counted as one of the four founders of analytic philosophy along with G. Frege, B. Russell, and Wittgenstein. Especially, he is the first who opposed Idealism, which dominated philosophy in the English-speaking world at that time, and Russell immediately followed. This marked the beginning of analytic philosophy in the textbook; Young Moore and Russel are not called analytic philosophers, as the first philosophers with that designation are Moore's disciples.

These disciples insisted that analysis is the primary philosophical method, and founded a

philosophical journal *Analysis*, which remains one of the top journals. Some may speculate from these facts that analytic philosophy would not exist without Moore.

However, his name is much less well-known than those of the other three. Even Frege, who is the second-least popular figure among them, is now studied intensely. Most of Frege's works are translated into Japanese, just like Russell's and Wittgenstein's. In contrast, few philosophers study Moore, and although some of Moore's works are also translated into Japanese, most of them are currently out of print. I don't know exactly why Moore is so unpopulated now. Maybe the reason is quite complicated. In any case, his fame is limited even among philosophers, despite his contribution to the beginnings of analytic philosophy.

How did Nabokov get to know of Moore, especially Moore's relationship with Wittgenstein? Prof. Nakata suggests that Nabokov might have recalled a lecturer from his student days at Trinity or that a fellow student might have told him about Moore. Both scenarios are plausible. However, it seems to me unlikely that Nabokov would know of the personal relationship between Wittgenstein and Moore, which mirrored that of Hamlet and Horatio.

I would like to suggest another possibility. Both Nabokov and Wittgenstein were in Ithaca in 1949. Although there is no record of their encounter according to Prof. Nakata, still there remains the possibility of a connection. I think it would have been easy for Nabokov to gather information about Wittgenstein in Ithaca. Many people met Wittgenstein during his legendary visit. In fact, Cornell University at Ithaca was the center of Wittgenstein studies in the 1950s, mostly due to this visit. Wittgenstein is known to have been influential to those around him. In Trinity College, Cambridge, philosophers, especially young graduate students, were heavily influenced by Wittgenstein after meeting him. Even his mannerism was imitated and traveled to other colleges and universities. This happened again at Cornell University（Pitch and Swedberg 2012）.

Supposedly, Nabokov could have found a student who knew someone who had actually met the philosopher in person. Wittgenstein often met various people inside and outside of the philosophy department during his stay. Perhaps such a student was so impressed by the legendary philosopher that he imitated Wittgenstein's mannerism. Perhaps he introduced Nabokov to Norman Malcolm, the philosopher who invited Wittgenstein to Ithaca. Malcolm liked to talk about Wittgenstein. If Nabokov talked with Malcolm, he might have become interested in Moore.

Perhaps Prof. Nakata has already examined this possibility. In any case, I would love to hear her thoughts on it.

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A Reply to Professor Koyama's Comment on My Paper

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much for your generous, valuable comment on my paper.

It is not easy to decide which came earlier to Nabokov's mind, to use a name of Moore in *Transparent Things*（*TT*）or to make these two philosophers, Wittgenstein and Moore, prevail in it as characters' names and a place name as the setting for various scenes, but my imagination is rather of the latter.

I think that Nabokov planned to use the two philosophers as a kind of hub of some subtexts, images, and motifs. Let me explain that by the case of Amilcar that appears in a sentence in Chapter 26, "The little spitz dog is asleep on the back seat of an Amilcar being driven by the kennelman's wife back to Trux"（101）, for example.

First, Amilcar is the brand name of French sports cars that were very popular before WWII.

Second, "the lady with the little dog"（99）in an Amilcar reminds the readers of a famous story entitled "The Lady with a Little Dog"（1889）by Anton Chekov, one of the authors whom Nabokov admired and lectured on at Cornell, and in addition, of "Spring in Fialta"（1936）, Nabokovian version of the story.

Third, Amilcar is a Carthaginian military commander who is the protagonist of *Salammbô*（1862）, a historical novel by Gustave Flaubert, who is also highly esteemed and lectured on by Nabokov. Amilcar's/Hamilcar's son, Hannibal, can be considered associated with Hugh's climbing of the Alps and his father's agonized clambering over huge blocks in his nightmare. By the meaning of his name, "Grace of Baal," —Baal is a god of fire and patron deity of Carthage—Hannibal is also related to the theme of fire in the novella.

Finally—the list could be longer, though—Hannibal is Gannibal in Russian, and Abram Gannibal is Alexandre Pushkin's great-grandfather, on whom Nabokov wrote an essay. Pushkin is the greatest Russian poet and Nabokov translated and annotated his masterpiece, *Evgeny Onegin*（1833）.

This is the way Amilcar centers some subtexts on various fields and levels of the work. I think that every name in *TT* is given such function, to some degree, by the author.

The sentence in which Amilcar appears is very simple, but the long sentence followed by the obscure joke is complex, and we could find various images and subtexts entangled in it. I tried to disentangle them to see what are hidden there, but I could see only very little.

G. E. Moore seems really inconspicuous to the eyes of general readers like me, who do not know well the history of analytic philosophy in the early 20th century that Professor Koyama kindly explained. Moore is rarely discussed these days. This symposium is supported by a Kaken grant, and until last year I was the only researcher who was supported for a project whose major theme is concerning Moore. This year I found the other Kaken supported project on Moore—just two in all. In contrast, more than 60 projects on Wittgenstein have been granted by Kaken. In average, three books, academic or non-academic, on Wittgenstein are published in Japan every year, but publications on Moore are very rare. Some months ago, Professor Koyama kindly suggested to me a possibility

that certain Cambridge students around Nabokov might have told him about Moore, but it was not easy for me to imagine that until I happened to read two articles written on brightly shining young Moore. Then I remembered a student called "Nesbit," who could be related to the Apostles, and added a paragraph on him, compensating my ignorance.

I also learned that we could miss something important when we do not have the exact whole picture. I read how Wittgenstein was respected at Cornell University in his biographies: For example, when he appeared in a hall and was introduced as the speaker, the students in the audience gasped as if Plato had been introduced (Monk 558). However, I was not aware of the fact that in the 1950s Cornell was the center of Wittgenstein studies mostly because of his visit, until Professor Koyama mentioned it. Probably Nabokov saw piled books by Wittgenstein at bookshops on campus and perhaps he read articles on the great visiting philosopher in the college bulletin. I think it is most possible that Nabokov heard the name of Wittgenstein in the early 1950s at Cornell, and read *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and/or *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*) after the interview given in 1966. He knew a little about the relationship between Wittgenstein and Moore, as well as Moore's paradox, from *PI* and the biographies by Norman Malcolm and Georg Henrik von Wright published in 1958. Malcolm described how Wittgenstein could be self-centered—or rather philosophy-centered for him—when he was with Moore: In a meeting of philosophers, Wittgenstein talked on at least for two hours arguing back against Moore, without allowing him to talk or answer (Malcolm 33); Wittgenstein was not willing to leave Moore after 90 minutes of philosophical discussion though he knew that Moore had suffered a stroke and was advised by the doctor to avoid excitement and fatigue (Ibid. 67). As Nabokov answered to the interviewer that he had no contact with the faculty of philosophy at Cornell, I think that probably he had no opportunity to talk with Malcolm about Wittgenstein.

Another possibility how Nabokov became interested in Wittgenstein and Moore could be found in related to Bertrand Russell. In *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* (1969), a novel written before *TT*, is a character called Professor Rattner, who seems to model Bertrand Russell. Professor Rattner rarely appears in person and he is only referred to several times. His nephew, Bernard Rattner, is a close friend of the protagonist, Van Veen, at high school, and finally Van is elected to the Rattner Chair of Philosophy in the University of Kingston (*Ada*, 506). Nabokov's interest in Russell seems rather complicated. He was critical of Russell as activist, for the philosopher was against the Vietnam War, which meant to Nabokov that he should be classified with "the Reds" (*Strong Opinions*, 98).

Finally, I would like to add a note to "the scoutmaster." The earlier version of my paper included a passage regarding the scoutmaster as Wittgenstein:

In the summer vacation, Wittgenstein went from Otterthal to Manchester to visit William Eccles:

> When he [Wittgenstein] went to Manchester, both Eccles and his wife were surprised at the great change in him. They . . . found in the place of the immaculately dressed young man, the 'favourite of the ladies' they had known before the war, a rather shabby figure dressed in what appeared to them to be a Boy Scout

uniform.（Monk 231）

Now, we could assume the reason the leader of the group is called both scoutmaster and teacher. . . .

The citation is from Monk's biography published more than ten years after Nabokov's death so that I deleted it from the final version of my paper. However, according to Professor Koyama, Wittgenstein's dressing like a boy scout uniform was well known among the people who knew him. Then it might be possible for Nabokov to hear about it somewhere.

Many thanks for reading this long, rambling reply.

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Comment on Akiko Nakata, "Ludwig Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore Hidden in *Transparent Things*"

Brian Boyd

In a 2000 paper, Professor Nakata has already done a thorough job of attempting to explain the explicit and riddling allusion to Wittgenstein in Nabokov's 1972 novel, *Transparent Things*.[1] That was no easy task, since, as she shows there, nowhere else does Nabokov reveal any knowledge of Wittgenstein's work, and indeed in 1966 he only attests to his then ignorance of Wittgenstein's ideas. Moreover the Wittgenstein allusion in *TT* is highly specific, playfully and puzzlingly linked to Wittenberg, and of unclear relevance to the larger designs of the novel. In that earlier paper, Professor Nakata rightly and aptly links the "raining or . . . not raining" (*TT* 91) to a key passage with clear metaphysical implications in *The Gift*, Nabokov's last Russian novel (published 1937–38, 1952), even if there is almost certainly no causal connection between Wittgenstein on "raining or not raining" in the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (1921) and *The Gift*'s emblematic scene of not raining mistaken for raining.[2]

In her new paper, Professor Nakata tries to show the likelihood of an additional allusion in *Transparent Things* to George Moore, Wittgenstein's distinguished colleague in philosophy at Cambridge, through Wittgenstein's interest in what he called "Moore's paradox" ("It's perfectly absurd or nonsensical to say such things as 'I don't believe it's raining, yet as a matter of fact it really is raining'").[3] Unlike the Wittgenstein allusion, the possible reference to Moore is anything but explicit in *TT*, and given the "raining or not raining" passages in both the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, could be seen as superfluous.

Yet as Professor Nakata shows *TT* also has an insistent pattern of play on the words and letters of the name "Moore," in the character Julia Moore, and other Moores, and in patterns connected with Romeo (including Giulia Romeo), and, she also suggests, another Shakespeare love-tragedy, *Othello, The Moore of Venice*, a play in which the strangling of Desdemona bears a relationship (obvious once Professor Nakata has pointed it out) to the strangling of Armande by Hugh Person at the center of *Transparent Things*. In the chapter of *TT* ending with the passage "either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all. . . . 'Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein'" (*TT* 91), there is another pointedly featured and foregrounded "more": recalling his earlier humiliating hike in the wake of Armande and three other young men, which he is now trying to relive, Hugh recollects that "he rested on a rock, and, looking down, seemed to see through the moving mists the making of the very mountains that his tormentors trod, the crystalline crust heaving up with his heart from the bottom of an immemorial *more* (sea)" (*TT* 89). *More* is the Russian word for "sea," and Russian is Armande's native language, not Hugh's, so that both the echo of "immemorial" and the strangeness of the Russian "*more*" in this context bring the "Moore"-more pattern particularly close to the passage that *could* contain an echo of Moore's paradox. And the two paragraphs that follow "'Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein.' An obscure joke in *Tralatitions*," at the start of the next chapter, again return to the highly unusual "tralatitious" and to Julia Moore (92).

Given the prominence of the "Moore" pattern in the novel, and the relationship of Moore's paradox to the "raining or not raining" options in *TT*, an allusion to Moore's paradox could well be part of Nabokov's design. Yet it remains unlike the undoubted Wittgenstein allusion, which stands out within the rather spare style of *TT*, so much less allusive than Nabokov's two previous novels, *Pale Fire* and *Ada*. But this prominent and provocative allusive riddle has not yet yielded the precise literary payoff that most of Nabokov's allusions have, even in its Wittgenstein portion, let alone with the possible but much less distinct shadow of Moore.

In her 2000 paper, Professor Nakata refers to Nabokov scholar David Rampton's adducing another Wittgenstein passage related to rain: "Can I say 'bububu' and mean 'If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk'?" (*PI* 18e). I wonder if at the end of Chapter 23 of *TT* Nabokov has this passage in mind, *as well as* the later passage from *PI* that Professor Nakata cites ("One is inclined to say: 'Either it is raining, or it isn't—how I know, how the information has reached me, is another matter.' But then let us put the question like this: What do I call 'information that it is raining'? (Or have I only information of this information too?)" (*PI* 356)). For in the chapter that ends with the Wittgenstein allusion, Hugh hikes the mountainside above Witt in the hope of rediscovering the trail where he had walked with Armande, only to be deterred as "The grayness of rain would soon engulf everything. He felt a first kiss on his bald spot and walked back to the woods and widowhood. . . . It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain" (91). Partly because it is raining (and because his feet are causing him agony, and because he is not sure of the way or of the chances of retrieving anything of his past with Armande by means of the climb), Hugh turns back from his walk. Both Wittgenstein's conditional "If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk" and his disjunction "Either it is raining or it isn't" seem conflated here in Nabokov's retentive and combinative memory—although even if that is the case, it is not clear what the consequences would be for the novel.

Professor Nakata has the frankness and courage to admit she does not have a clear explanation for Moore's possible implication in *TT*, and the tenacity to try to discover more. My hunch is that the answer is more likely to be found in internal connections within what Nabokov has already supplied in *TT* than through research in the archive of the Society for Psychical Research at Cambridge. The passage under our attention, after all, describes the uncertainty about raining, or pretending to rain, or not raining at all, in terms that

> certain old Northern dialects can either express verbally or not express, but *versionize*, as it were, through the ghost of a sound produced by a drizzle in a haze of grateful rose shrubs. "Raining in Wittenberg, but not in Wittgenstein." An obscure joke in *Tralatitions*.

This incorporates the *word* "ghost"; a strong suggestion, via the *Hamlet* connection with Wittenberg, of the ghost in *Hamlet*; and it purportedly comes from a novel by R., whose ghost, we know from other inferences, is the main narrator of *Transparent Things*. The italics for "*versionize*," too, seem connected with the second paragraph in the next chapter, where, on behalf of the ghosts interested in Hugh's fate, the narrator writes:

> The most we can do when steering a favorite in the best direction, in circumstances not involving injury to others, is to act as a breath of wind and to apply the lightest, the most indirect pressure such as *trying* to induce a dream that we *hope* our favorite will recall as prophetic if a likely event does actually happen. On the printed page the words "likely" and "actually" should be italicized too, at least *slightly*, to indicate a *slight* breath of wind inclining those characters（in the sense of both signs and personae）.（92）

But what to make of these provoking internal connections remains obscure.

One final comment. Moore and Wittgenstein both use the contrast between raining or not raining. Perhaps this has a long tradition in philosophy—perhaps all the way from Plato or Aristotle: does Professor Koyama know? In his autobiography Karl Popper, for instance, reports saying, in the discussion after Bertrand Russell presented a paper at the Aristotelian Society in 1936, that part of the problem in Russell's attempt to find a principle of induction "was due to the mistaken assumption that *scientific knowledge* was a species of *knowledge*—knowledge in the ordinary sense in which if I know that it is raining it must be *true* that it is raining, so that knowledge implies truth".[4] Is this a tradition, a "meme" as it were, in philosophy, or is it that raining or not raining merely supplies a stark contingent disjunction that philosophers independently find useful?

Notes

1 "Wittgenstein Echoes in *Transparent Things*." *The Nabokovian*, no. 45, Fall 2000, 48−53.

2 Nabokov, *The Gift* 312.

3 "Moore's Paradox." *G. E. Moore: Selected Writings*. Edited by Thomas Baldwin. Routledge, 1993, pp. 207−12.

4 Popper, *Unended Quest*, 110.

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A Reply to Professor Boyd's Comment on My Paper

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much for your generous comment that illuminated some important points.

I had missed the connection between Hugh's decision to return to the hotel caused by the raindrop on his head and Wittgenstein's "If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk." Indeed, the sentence, together with his "Either it is raining or it isn't," sounds in Nabokov's long, entangled sentence about the obscure raining.

I had not related "*more*" to Armande. I thought that it was one of the pointers to Nabokov himself, but to regard it as a sign to Armande's appearance is better.

"The first kiss, he felt on his bald spot" sounds like Armande's-she might love to kiss his bald spot when she is in a good mood, except—which leads Hugh back to the hotel and his death. She seems to wish his death, as we find her among the flames coming up "humming happily" towards Hugh in the last scene（103）. The raindrop also has an association with "a raindrop fell on Charlotte's grave" in *Lolita*（118）, but unlike the mother in despair—the sentence has a twist, though—the raindrop that falls on Hugh cannot be a teardrop of Armande. She may not be in the group of ghosts trying to influence Hugh to evade the catastrophe in the paragraph you cited.

I had thought of the ghost in *Hamlet*, but did not mention it because I did and do not have a clear picture including the ghost. The ghost of *Hamlet* appears to his son, and tells the story of his death and his being suffered in the limbo so that the son swears revenge on the murderer. The ghost prepares the plot of the drama. On the other hand, we do not see the ghost of Hugh's father or we have no idea what he wants. In the midnight just after his death, Hugh feels as if his father were inviting him to join him in the hereafter. We do not understand why his father wants his son to die, but we only imagine that Hugh must feel guilty because he did not love his father so much. I cannot identify the ghost of his father anywhere. In place of his real father, Mr. R. takes a role of godfather to Hugh.

The italics for "*versionize*" seem connected with the italics of the passage you cited. According to the ghosts, they can influence the living only by "a breath of wind" "the lightest, the most indirect pressure" just like "the ghost of sound produced by a drizzle."

As researching the documents of the SPR at the Cambridge Library is involved in this Kaken project, I will do it if possible. At least, I will be certain that neither Wittgenstein nor Moore had anything to do with the society.

For the participants who may not know this, I would like to add that the letters in the picture book, *The Vege-men's Revenge,* are also italicized, imitating the legs of the vegetables in the pictures. The

book by Florence Kate Upton seems to be referred to at the end of Hugh's life.

The Vege-men's Revenge (pp. 28-29) from the Abebooks.com website: https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=30853670021&cm_sp=SEARCHREC-_-WIDGET-L-_-BDP-R&searchurl=sortby%3D17%26tn%3Dvege%2Bmen%2527s%2Brevenge%23&gid=1&pid=1

Moreover, also analytic philosophers seem to me to depend on italics. Wittgenstein sometimes uses Italics, and Moore often uses them, almost on every page, for all the parts of speech, not only for nouns, verbs and adjectives. For example, I quote from "The Conception of Intrinsic Value":

> A kind of value is intrinsic if and only if, when anything possesses it, that same thing or anything exactly like it would *necessarily* or *must* always, under all circumstances, possess it in exactly the same degree. （290）

> But *what* the difference is, if we suppose, as I suppose, that goodness and beauty are *not* subjective, and that they do share with "yellowness" and "containing pleasure," the property of depending *solely* on the intrinsic nature of what possesses the in a sense in which predicates of value never do.（297）

I am not certain if I can say that Moore depends on italics much more than the other analytic philosophers, but I think that we can see the ghosts, the picture book, and probably Moore—or Moore and Wittgenstein, or analytic philosophers in general—are related to italics, a hub of the novella.

It is stimulating that "raining or not raining" may be the long tradition in philosophy. If it is the case, did Nabokov know that? In this novella, we see a lot references on rain. Some of them show the narrator's interest in, or memory of, raining, like this: "He expects his friend Kandidatov, the painter,

to join him here any moment for the outing, one of those lighthearted hikes that romantics would undertake even during a drizzly spell in August; it rained even more in those uncomfortable times" (*TT*, 18).

I look forward to Professor Koyama's comment on this topic.

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A Reply to Prof. Boyd's Question on the Phrase of Raining and Not-Raining

Tora Koyama

First of all, I would like to thank Prof. Boyd and Prof. Nakata for their kind replies to my comments on their papers. I would be grateful if my comments could be of some help to them.

Prof. Boyd mentions me in his comment on Prof. Nakata's paper concerning the phrase of raining and not-raining. It does seem to stem from Aristotle because it is an example of the principle of excluded middle (or the principle of non-contradiction). It also seems to stem from Kant because it is an example of tautology. (The notion of tautology as analytic truth, a truth in virtue of its meaning, was originated by Kant.) However, the examples that Aristotle and Kant use are not about raining.

Perhaps it is Wittgenstein who popularized the phrase because he is the first philosopher who claims that a logical truth is a tautology, as I learned it only a few days ago. Presumably, the combination of raining and not-raining is intended to insignificant. For Aristotle, however, the principle of excluded middle is not insignificant because it is an important logical principle. For Kant, similarly, tautology is not insignificant because it is an analytic truth (a truth in virtue of its meaning). For Wittgenstein, in contrast, the principle of excluded middle (and a tautology) is insignificant (or "sinnlos") because, according to his notion of tautology, a logical truth is a tautology it the sense that it does not represent any possible states of affairs. Before Wittgenstein, accordingly, philosophers did not need such an insignificant example of tautology or the principle of excluded middle.

By the way, I think that raining alone (without combining not-raining) is a paradigmatic example of knowledge for empiricism: we know that it is raining simply by looking out of the window. Popper seems to me to use the example in this vein.

Random Late-Night Thoughts on Prof. Nakata's Paper

Zoran Kuzmanovich

Akiko, you have written a richly suggestive paper explicating one of the most complex passages in *Transparent Things*. In doing so, you have argued convincingly for Nabokov's "versioning" of Moore's Paradox . Since the explication was merely a first step, and since your will undertake further research into the connections among Moore, Wittgenstein, Nabokov, and spiritualism, a possible method for expansion would involve linking some of the paths you have already taken.

One way to connect the materials from the final third of the paper to the argument developed so far would be to continue examining the differences between Moore's notion of the paradox named after him and what you call Wittgenstein's "developed arguments" regarding Moore's Paradox. To me, Moore seems interested in implications of first person present indicative for making assertions, expressing a belief, and reporting a state of mind. These are basically situations in which what one asserts conjunctively contradicts what one implies.（210）

The developments you mention take Wittgenstein in a somewhat different direction:

> Moore's paradox can be put like this: the expression "I believe that this is the case" is used like the assertion "This is the case"; and yet the *hypothesis* that I believe that this is the case is not used like the hypothesis that this is the case.（*PI* 190）

I remember having conversations with my colleague Irv Goldstein about Wittgenstein's use of Moore's Paradox. Prof. Goldstein mentioned that Wittgenstein imagined three cases in which Moore's Paradox is neither a contradiction nor an absurdity theoretically or practically. In one case a station master announces the arrival of a train but then says he does not believe it will arrive at the announced time. In another, a soldier writes military communiques but adds that he believes they are incorrect. I have forgotten the third, but I think all three are discussed in Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, *1980*.

Wittgenstein's way of thinking about Moore's Paradox prepares us for trans-gendered students who on the first day of class introduced themselves and utter sentences of the 'p & I don't believe that p' variety, for example, "I am female, but I don't believe that I am female."

On the other hand, Moore's way of thinking about the paradox opens up the opportunity for fictional "versionizing" of the slowly revealed difference between belief and assertion:

> （1）A proposition itself does not imply belief: the proposition "it is raining" does not imply that I believe it is raining. "It is raining" ought to be asserted by someone.
> （2）A proposition asserted by S does not imply belief. S may say it is raining and be lying.（210）

Moore, G. E. "Moore's Paradox." *G. E. Moore: Selected Writings*. Ed. Baldwin, Thomas. New York: Routledge, 1993.

If S is lying, S is violating Grice's Cooperation Principle of Meaning, specifically the maxim of quality, and Nabokov's narrators are often experts at such violations.

Since you bought up the presence of *Othello* in *Transparent Things*, if you need more evidence that Nabokov used Moore's Paradox, consider another *Othello*-animated story, "That In Aleppo Once" (1958). The story uses a narrator who offers several varieties of "p & I don't believe that p" utterances:

> Although I can produce documentary proofs of matrimony, I am positive now that my wife never existed.
> Once, however, quite suddenly she started to sob in a sympathetic railway carriage. "The dog," she said, "the dog we left. I cannot forget the poor dog." The honesty of her grief shocked me, as we had never had any dog. "I know," she said, "but I tried to imagine we had actually bought that setter. And just think, he would be now whining behind a locked door." There had never been any talk of buying a setter.

Having confessed to adultery, the narrator's wife takes back her confession:

> "You will think me crazy," she said with a vehemence that, for a second, almost made a real person of her, "but I didn't—I swear that I didn't. Perhaps I live several lives at once. Perhaps I wanted to test you. Perhaps this bench is a dream and we are in Saratov or on some star.

In *Zettel, Paragraph* 717 Wittgenstein says: "'You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed.' --That is a grammatical remark." If the goal of your research is a longer discussion of the link between Moore and Wittgenstein's non-raining rain and Nabokov's capacity for spiritualism, a good place to start is this passage from *The Gift*, detailing Alexander Chernyshevsky's final words:

> The following day he died, but before that he had a moment of lucidity, complaining of pains and then saying (it was darkish in the room because of the lowered blinds): "What nonsense. Of course there is nothing afterwards." He sighed, listened to the trickling and drumming outside the window and repeated with extreme distinctness: "There is nothing. It is as clear as the fact that it is raining."
>
> And meanwhile outside the spring sun was playing on the roof tiles, the sky was dreamy and cloudless, the tenant upstairs was watering the flowers on the edge of her balcony, and the water trickled down with a drumming sound.

Chernyshevsky's final words about rain ask readers of *The Gift* to complete yet another Nabokov version of Moore's Paradox: "I believe that the afterlife does not exist, but it may."

By the way, *The Gift* is Nabokov's rainiest book, and it offers moments when it seems that it is both raining and not raining:

> Stray arrows of rain that had lost both rhythm and weight and the ability to make any sound, flashed at random, this way and that, in the sun.

To your already impressive count of Moore's, you may wish to add the implied subtitle of *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, a tragedy brought about because Iago believes and does not believe his wife Emilia is involved sexually with Othello.

A Response to Professor Kuzmanovich's Random Late-Night Thoughts

Akiko Nakata

Zoran, thank you very much for your illuminating comment. I am deeply grateful to you for generously sharing your thoughts though you were not in good condition.

Your comprehensible explanations so helpfully make up for deficiencies in my discussion that all the participants, including those who might not be familiar with Moore's Paradox and Wittgenstein's arguments regarding the paradox, will be able to grasp the points of them. "I am female, but I don't believe that I am female" is the best variation of "p and I don't believe that p" I have ever seen!

The fictional "versioning" of the slowly revealed the difference between belief and assertion, which you indicated as a possibility that Moore's paradox opens up and its examples you found in "That In Aleppo Once" are really amazing. I have never thought about that. And Iago's belief and disbelief of Emilia's betrayal is a telling example of Moore's Paradox.

I only thought about the doubling of the characters in the last line of Othello:

> And say besides that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcisèd dog,
> And smote him, thus. [He stabs himself]（5.2.354−358）

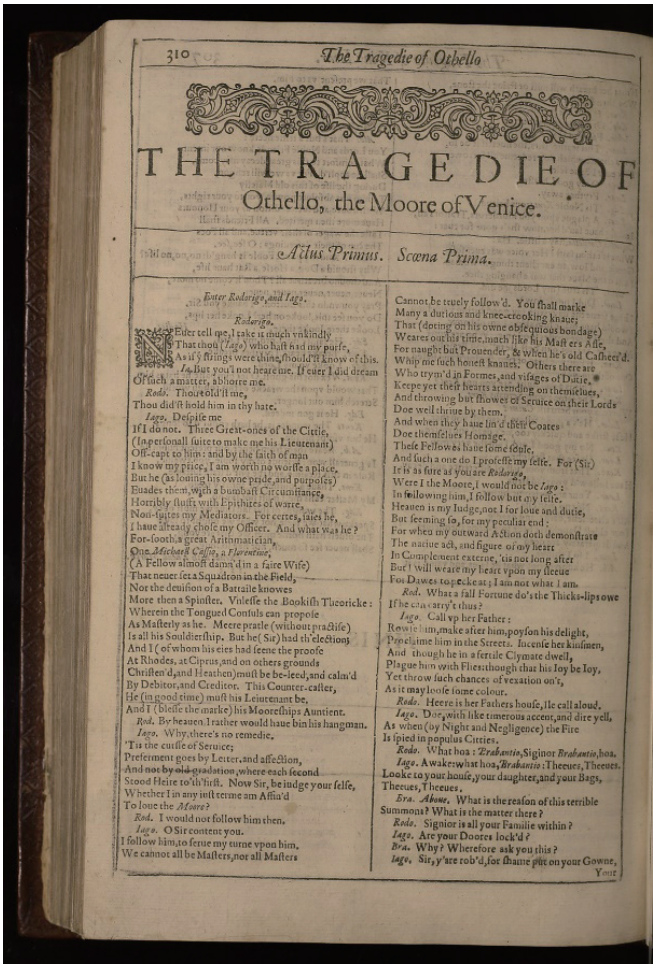
In the scene in Aleppo are a Turk, a Venetian and Othello involved, and Othello helps the Venetian by killing the Turk who has beaten the Venetian. In the last scene, Othello commits suicide to punish himself for murdering Desdemona, where Othello is himself and the Turk he punished in Aleppo. Desdemona is the Venetian beaten by the Turk [Othello], and also the Turk who was strangled by Othello in Aleppo. It did not occur to me that I could relate these doublings or amalgams to Moore's paradox.

As for Alexander Chernyshevsky's last words, I compared it with Wittgenstein's last words in my note[1] and discussed it as an example of the hereafter paradoxically revealed in a Japanese essay "Death and Concealment: *Transparent Things* and Other Works."[2] However, I did not discuss his words as related to Moore's Paradox.

Thank you very much for reminding me of another Nabokov version of Moore's Paradox in *The Gift*. I had completely forgotten it. What Fyodor's father experiences at the base of a rainbow, which follows the description, seems to have pushed it aside in my memory.

For your information, I add an image of the first folio of *Othello*. The page shows *The Tragedie of*

Othello, *the Moore of Venice*.



310 *The Tragedie of Othello*

THE TRAGEDIE OF
Othello, the Moore of Venice.

Actus Primus. Scœna Prima.

Enter Rodorigo, and Iago.

Rodorigo.

Euer tell me, I take it much vnkindly
That thou (*Iago*) who hast had my purse,
As if y^e strings were thine, should'st know of this.
Iag. But you'l not heare me. If euer I did dream
Of such a matter, abhorre me.
Rod. Thou told'st me,
Thou did'st hold him in thy hate.
Iago. Despise me
If I do not. Three Great-ones of the Citie,
(In personall suite to make me his Lieutenant)
Off-capt to him: and by the faith of man
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.
But he (as louing his owne pride, and purposes)
Evades them, with a bumbast Circumstance,
Horribly stuft with Epithites of warre,
Non-suites my Mediators. For certes, saies he,
I haue already chose my Officer. And what was he?
For-sooth, a great Arithmatician,
One *Michaell Cassio*, a *Florentine*,
(A Fellow almost damn'd in a faire Wife)
That neuer set a Squadron in the Field,
Nor the deuision of a Battaile knowes
More then a Spinster. Vnlesse the Bookish Theorick:
Wherein the Tongued Consuls can propole
As Masterly as he. Meere prattle (without practise)
Is all his Souldiership. But he (Sir) had th'election:
And I (of whom his eies had seene the proofe
At Rhodes, at Cipres, and on others grounds
Christen'd, and Heathen) must be-leed, and calm'd
By Debitor, and Creditor. This Counter-caster,
He (in good time) must his Lieutenant be,
And I (blesse the marke) his Moorelhips Auntient.
Rod. By heauen, I rather would haue bin his hangman.
Iago. Why, there's no remedie.
'Tis the curse of Seruice;
Preferment goes by Letter, and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood Heire to'th'first. Now Sir, be iudge your selfe,
Whether I in any iust terme am Affin'd
To loue the *Moore*?
Rod. I would not follow him then.
Iago. O Sir content you.
I follow him, to serue my turne vpon him.
We cannot all be Masters, nor all Masters
Cannot be truely follow'd. You shall marke
Many a dutious and knee-crooking knaue;
That (doting on his owne obsequious bondage)
Weares out his time, much like his Master's Asse,
For naught but Prouender, & when he's old Cashee'd.
Whip me such honest knaues. Others there are
Who trym'd in Formes, and visages of Duties,
Keepe yet their hearts attending on themselues,
And throwing but shewes of Seruice on their Lords
Doe well thriue by them.
And when they haue lin'd their Coates
Doe themselues Homage.
These Fellowes haue some soule,
And such a one do I professe my selfe. For (Sir)
It is as sure as you are *Rodorigo*,
Were I the Moore, I would not be *Iago*:
In following him, I follow but my selfe.
Heauen is my Iudge, not I for loue and dutie,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
For when my outward Action doth demonstrate
The native act, and figure of my heart
In Complement externe, 'tis not long after
But I will weare my heart vpon my sleeue
For Dawes to peck at; I am not what I am.
Rod. What a full Fortune do'st the Thicks-lips owe
If he can carry't thus?
Iago. Call vp her Father:
Rowse him, make after him, poyson his delight,
Proclaime him in the Streets. Incense her kinsmen,
And though he in a fertile Clymate dwell,
Plague him with Flies: though that his Ioy be Ioy,
Yet throw such chances of vexation on't,
As it may loose some colour.
Rodo. Heere is her Fathers house, Ile call aloud.
Iago. Do, with like timerous accent, and dire yell,
As when (by Night and Negligence) the Fire
Is spied in populus Cities.
Rodo. What hoa: *Brabantio*, Signior *Brabantio*, hoa.
Iago. Awake: what hoa, *Brabantio*: Theeues, Theeues.
Looke to your house, your daughter, and your Bags,
Theeues, Theeues.
Bra. Above. What is the reason of this terrible
Summons? What is the matter there?
Rodo. Signior is all your Familie within?
Iago. Are your Doores lock'd?
Bra. Why? Wherefore ask you this?
Iago. Sir, y'are rob'd, for shame put on your Gowne,
Your

Courtesy of the Miami University Library[3]
https://www.flickr.com/photos/muohio_digital_collections/22483847107/

Thank you very much again for your really helpful comment and please accept my apologies for this belated and meager reply.

Notes

1 “Lastly, I would like to cite Wittgenstein’s last sentences, which could suggest another example of similarity between Nabokov and Wittgenstein in treating rain in the matter of recognition. Two days before his death, Wittgenstein wrote his last note: ‘Someone who, dreaming, says ‘I am dreaming,’ even if he speaks audibly in doing so, is no more right than if he said in his dream ‘it is raining,’ while it was in fact raining. Even if his dream were actually connected with the noise of the rain’（*On Certainty* 1969; trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe, para 676）. Wittgenstein of course wrote it

long after *The Gift*, and there is no record that he had read Nabokov at all. We know that this is nothing but a coincidence; however, it still allures us to read it as if it paraphrased the last paradoxical words by Alexander Chernyshevsky, who, on his deathbed, is deceived by the sound of dropping water from the flower pots on the upstairs balcony under the cloudless sky. 'Of course there is nothing afterwards.' He sighed, listened to the trickling and drumming outside the window and repeated with extreme distinctness: 'There is nothing. It is as clear as the fact that it is raining' (*The Gift*, 312)." Akiko Nakata, "Wittgenstein Echoes in *Transparent Things*," *The Nabokovian* 45 (2000): 48–53.

2 Akiko, Nakata. "Shi to Inpei—*Transparent Things* o Chûshin ni" [Death and Concealment in *Transparent Things* and Other Works], *The Rising Generation*, vol. 145, no. 8, November 1999, 20–22.

3 *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice*, First Folio, p.1.
ID 22483847107, Set 72157660800287162, Digital Collections, Miami University Libraries.

A Quick Response to Prof. Nakata Response to My First Response to Her Paper

Zoran Kuzmanovich

I must start by apologizing for not reading your *Nabokovian* article on *TT* and Wittgenstein. For some reason, most likely my carelessness, I assumed that both your articles on the subject were in Japanese.

I think you are on solid footing in treating Othello's suicide as an example of character doubling. But such doubling can also be paradoxical, when for example, Othello is and is not Othello.

Paradox requires that an assertion/situation be absurd or contradictory but nonetheless true either literally or figuratively, and situations where people kill themselves are often paradoxical, with identities（or what Foucault called "subject positions"）far more fluid than they are in situations not involving dying.

Shakespeare prepares for the Othello as Turk or Othello as both friend and enemy of Venetian state by having Othello give the long speech in Act I, scene iii, lines 127−168 and then by having Othello confuse the voice of dead Desdemona with that of live Emilia so that he smothers again an already smothered Desdemona yet fails to kill her since she lives long enough to tell Emilia first that she was murdered and then that she was not murdered but committed suicide.

It is no surprise then that when Lodovico asks for Othello "Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?" Othello answers "That's he that was Othello: here I am." The final paradox has to do with the kiss Othello gives dead Desdemona: "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this; /Killing myself, to die upon a kiss." The phrasing allows the reader to read "Killing myself" as "I killed myself when I summoned enough cruelty to smother you" or even "When I smothered you I was acting as God does when He takes the lives of those he loves."

This is the passage that to me suggests such a reading:

> Ah balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
> **Justice** to break her sword! One more, one more.
> Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
> And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
> So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
> But they are cruel tears: **this sorrow's heavenly;**
> **It strikes where it doth love.**（5.2.16-22）

So in the end Othello is Othello that was, Othello that is, the Turk, Desdemona, and God. These are not examples of Moore's paradox, but they are significant in that these unstable identities alter Desdemona's murder as well, so that it is also "sacrifice," "sweet revenge," a rash mistake, an act of cruelty, Desdemona's suicide, Othello's figurative suicide before his real one, etc.

Akiko Nakata

Questions and Answers

I

Ryo Chonabayashi

Question（On Page 98−99）: I would like to hear more on the discussion on Moore's paradox. I am not sure how uttering（or, more precisely, asserting）“It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain in a sense” can be the Nabokovian paraphrase of Moore's paradox. A mere appearance does not entail truth, so I find it is perfectly intelligible to assert the Nabokovian paraphrase（well, it is not very clear what it means by saying “pretending to rain”）. So, it is not clear whether the Nabokovian paraphrase represents a paradox（because this paraphrase seemts to be intelligible）. On the other hand, I do find there is something wrong in asserting the sentence “it is raining, but I don't believe it is raining”. Given this difference, it seems to me the Nabokovian paraphrase is not a version of Moorean sentences. Or, is the idea here that for Nabokovians uttering a Moorean sentence can be understood as making a joke, not asserting the two propositions expressed by the sentence?

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much for the good question. It is not easy for me to explain my intention clearly, but I will try.

The sentence, “it is raining but I don't believe it is raining,” an example of Moore’s paradox, consists of two clauses. Alone, both clauses are completely intelligible and natural, but when they are united in a sentence asserted by the first person in the present tense, the sentence becomes illogical. Nabokov’s sentence in question does not fulfill the conditions.

So, how can I relate the sentence from *TT* to Moore’s paradox? As the two clauses cannot be together in a sentence in the case of Moore’s paradox, I assume that they do not belong to the same dimension or the same world—from now on, we leave logic for narrative. Looking back at “It was either raining or pretending to rain or not raining at all, yet still appearing to rain in a sense . . . ,” we are aware of “pretending to rain” and “in a sense” that sound unnatural, unlike the rest of the clause, which would be totally natural in an everyday conversation. “Pretending to rain” is the personification of rain, and “in a sense” is an unnecessary adverbial phrase. These phrases puzzle us, as we cannot be sure why they are put in the clause together with the other, very ordinary expressions.

Moreover, the latter part of the sentence is also confusing and mysterious. “. . . in a sense that only

certain old Northern dialects can either express verbally or not express, but *versionize*, as it were, through the ghost of a sound produced by a drizzle in a haze of grateful rose shrubs." We sometimes observe that it appears to rain and do not need any special dialects (and which dialects are meant here?) to express the phenomenon. But the narrator goes further or slides in another direction. We could summarize it as "it appears to rain, and that is expressed by a sound of drizzle in a rose shrubs," but in the sentence, the sound is doubly faded; it is not the sound but the ghost of it, and the drizzle falls not on the shrub but in the haze of it. By *versionizing*, the appearing raining loses its substance and fades into the sphere of ghosts.

One of the purposes of this complicated sentence is to attract the readers' attention to the beings behind the world of the living characters. Moreover, the sentence represents the world with two, essentially incompatible, dimensions; in this way, it is similar to the sentence that exemplifies Moore's paradox.

I do not think this explanation completely clarifies this topic, but I hope it would be of some help.

II

Shoko Miura

Thank you, Akiko, for your fascinating study of *Transparent Things*（*TT*）relating it to Wittgenstein's philosophical arguments on time. I must also thank Dr. Chonabayashi's questions and Brian Boyd's answers for focusing on Nabokov's opposition to determinism. The exchange gave me a rich source for contemplating the expressions of time in Nabokov's novels and short stories.

My question for Akiko（and, for that matter, Brian, Zoran or anyone following this symposium）is about the terms "simultaneity" and "coincidence" in Nabokov's works such as, for example, "The Vane Sisters" and *Ada* regarding Nabokov's anti-deterministic idea of death. I assumed from the Boyd-Chonabayashi exchange that these two terms would reflect Nabokov's refutation of determinism as well as his affirmation of the power of the imagination to transcend the prison-like limits of time. In my understanding of determinism, the past is a sequence of causes that determine the future. Therefore, the present in which we live and think we are making our free choices to form the future is an illusion and we are powerless to change or create the future.

It was therefore intriguing for me that Akiko pointed out in Moore's lecture the use of the present tense for what we would normally use in the past tense, and how Wittgenstein responded to what he called "Moore's paradox": "I don't believe it's raining, yet as a matter of fact it really is raining." As Akiko suggests, Nabokov makes clear his knowledge of this paradox by mentioning a joke including raining and Wittgenstein, and Hugh's subjective thoughts of whether the rain is falling toward the end of Chapter 23 of *TT*. Wittgenstein's point is, of course, that it is a paradox only if the first person is used as the subject, but the paradox depends also on the use of the present tense in the two statements: "I don't believe" and "it is raining." If the first statement was "I didn't believe," there is nothing paradoxical in the sentence. Moore's paradox therefore necessitates the subjective viewpoint existing in the present. This seems essential to Nabokov's concept of "simultaneity" and "coincidence"（an unpredictable occurrence, without predetermination by a cause）. If the present tense can be used for what happened in the past, we regain our freedom from the deterministic concept of time. If a narrator could freely exist in both time present and time past of the story, this is possible.

Then, what does Nabokov's idea of death have to do with his negation of deterministic causes? In *Ada* and*TT*, do the characters' deaths occur without a predetermining cause? Lucette drowns because of what Van and Ada had done to her. In contrast, Hugh Person's death apparently is not related to what he did to Armande. I'm merely guessing that, since Nabokov allows for the possibility of ghosts—who are presumably free of time—narrating stories like "The Vane Sisters," there must be a reason for the difference. Could anyone enlighten me?

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much, Shoko, for the inspiring question regarding[1] deterministic causes in relation to the tense problem that Moore's paradox aroused. I will try to think about the problem of determinism and free will in *TT*.

In the beginning of Ch. 24, Mr. R., a ghost narrator, denies determinism and causal relation:

> Direct interference in a person's life does not enter our scope of activity, nor, on the other, tralatitiously speaking, hand, is his destiny a chain of predeterminate links: some "future" events may be likelier than others, O.K., but all are chimeric, and every cause-and-effect sequence is always a hit-and-miss affair, even if the lunette has actually closed around your neck, and the cretinous crowd holds its breath.（92）

As you say, Hugh's death apparently is not related to what he did to Armande while Lucette dies as the result of her suffering what Van and Ada did to her. Indeed, the cause and effect is not so obvious in *TT* as in *Ada*, but we could think that possibly Armande causes Hugh's death.

First, one of the reasons Hugh decides to revisit Switzerland for the last time—not knowing it would be the last, though—is that Armande has appeared repetitively in his dreams, whose settings are Swiss mountains and Italian lakes, not in an American winter. Armande seems to behave in the way that the ghost narrator explains how they（ghosts）can influence their favorites. He insists they can only indirectly lead their favorites to go in the best direction "by a breath of wind" or by "*trying* to induce a dream that we *hope* our favorite will recall as prophetic if a likely event does actually happen"（92）.

Second, we can find Armande among the flames in the lethal fire, and moreover, she finally pushes Hugh to death in fire and smoke.[2]

> Now flames were mounting the stairs, in pairs, in trios, in redskin file, hand in hand, tongue after tongue, conversing and humming happily. It was not, though, the heat of their flicker, but the acid dark smoke that caused Person to retreat back into the room; excuse me, said a polite flamelet holding open the door he was vainly trying to close. . . . and he realized before choking to death that a storm outside was aiding the inside fire.（103）

The flames happily mounting the stairs remind the reader of Armande and her athlete fellows. The flamelet seems Armande, the only woman in a party of sportsmen, who is once called "the little one" by a member（50）. "Excuse me" also relates the flamelet to Armande, who once absents herself with the polite apology during the first date with Hugh（54）. The other character who uses the apology in the novella is Tamworth, Mr. R.'s secretary, but we do not know whether he is dead at the time of the fire, and even if he is dead, he cannot be called "flamelet."

There is no description in the text illuminating that Armande feels resentment at her death and wants to revenge herself on Hugh. However, if we remember that most women around her criticize "her rather pathetic little tricks of attack and retort," her aiding with the death wind may be understandable

for the reader（64）. For Hugh, it is a tragedy that he strangles his loved wife while he is dreaming a nightmare, never in purpose, but for Armande, it is nothing but a violent, cruel murder, and she could think that the perpetrator must be punished. From the viewpoint, Hugh's death can be also the effect of a cause.

On the other hand, it is not easy to say how much Hugh's death is deterministic. As we have seen above, the ghosts seem to be able to indirectly influence their favorites, and Armande succeeds in leading Hugh to return to Switzerland by appearing in his dreams. Hugh is conscious of something or someone warning him to leave Witt for somewhere else, but he disregards the warning and dies during the night. As the narrator says, "after all it was for him to decide, for him to die, if he wished"（99）.

The ghosts can see freely through the spaces and existing time—present and past—but they can see future only partially, as the ghost narrator admits at the beginning of the novella, "the future is but a figure of speech, a spector of thought."（1）

Could anyone enlighten us?

Shoko Miura

Thank you, Akiko, for a thorough and detailed reply on *TT* to my comments and questions. I now see that Hugh Person's death can be seen as indirectly caused by the ghosts in the imagistic form of flames and a "flamelet" suggesting Armande. I also think that without this interpretation, the story will lose its thematic unity（begun on page 1 which you quoted at the end of your reply）. The "specter" in the sentence on the first page of *TT* is a key statement in that it speaks of the future as a mere "specter." If you turn the sentence around, we see that specters are equated with the future, which we mortals are not permitted to know. This is consistent with VN's view of time and its three parts—the past, imprisoned unless freed by memories, the present, a flash of "reality," and the dark, unknowable future. This view, according to Brian Boyd in his reply to my second batch of questions in this symposium, basically stayed the same throughout his life. Thus, your argument based on *TT* reinforces the view that VN was opposed to the idea of predeterminism. Ghosts, or imaginative suggestions of their presence, are VN's essential expression of his concept of time.

This symposium has been stimulating and enlightening, especially since I lacked knowledge of analytic philosophy, Popper and Wittgenstein and Currie. Thank you so much, Akiko, for your hard work in making it possible. I am also grateful to Brian Boyd, Zoran Kuzmanovich and Professor Tora Koyama for their generous contributions.

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much, Shoko, for your stimulating response. As you interpret, we can consider that

the ghost narrator allude—not only who they are but also—that they, specters, are equated with the future, and that is related to Nabokov's opposition to the idea of predeterminism.

Shoko, I deeply appreciate your generous contributions, too. Thanks to your energetic lead, we had spirited discussions.

Brian Boyd

In response to Shoko's comments on Akiko's paper, and Akiko's reply, and since both of them ask for more:

I think Moore's paradox does not have much to do with time, nor to me (*pace* Moore and Wittgenstein) is it really very interesting. "I don't believe it is raining and yet it is raining" is much the same as "I believe I am five feet tall and yet I am six feet tall"; the "yet is raining" or the "yet I am six feet tall" can be expressed as "it is true that it is raining" or "it is true that I am six feet tall," or in a subjective mode "I believe that it is raining" or "I believe that I am six feet tall," since "I believe *p*" as usually understood means "I think (or know) it is true that *p*." Whereas someone else saying *p*, or that *p* is true, or that she believes that *p*, we acknowledge, may be wrong: if Jane Bloggs thinks the moon is made of green cheese, she may assert that it is true, yet (we think) it is false. But if Jane Bloggs says "I don't believe the moon is made of green cheese, and yet it is made of green cheese," she's simply contradicting herself; not much of a paradox.

Nor would I agree with Shoko's definition of coincidence. "An unpredictable occurrence, without predetermination by a cause" might be a surprise, or a mystery, but it is not a coincidence until two things come together whose conjunction is not to be expected. Two people meeting by chance and introducing themselves truthfully to the other as "John Smith" is a mild coincidence, and surely happens from time to time; two people meeting by chance and introducing themselves truthfully to the other as "Jedediah Warrington-Pimbly" would be highly coincidental, since the name itself is improbable and the conjunction of their improbabilities meeting must have astronomical odds against it.

I would not agree with Akiko that there is evidence that Armande has helped cause Hugh's death, or that she is in some sense there among the flames.

I think it is crucial for Nabokov that the transparent things of the novel, the ghosts, have a richer, more flexible relation to time than human consciousness does (VN often expresses his sense that the present, for all its bounty, is a prison for human consciousness, and that there is surely some freer access to time outside it), but that nevertheless they cannot see the future, because this would require the future to be predetermined—for humans, and, for that matter, for transparent things, for ghosts: they too would be able to do nothing freely, which wouldn't make for a very interesting eternity (if that's where they are); and nor would humans, so there would be no point in trying to influence Hugh.

Nabokov has a very strong sense of the riches of the past, and the possibilities of discovering patterns within it, once it is past; but even if such patterns do seem to converge on or indicate some apparent likelihood ahead, that might not in fact happen, and if it does not, a different set of past events may then be illuminated by what *does* happen instead.

I recall one of Maurice Couturier's conferences in Nice, where Vladimir Alexandrov was puzzled by what he saw as a contradiction between Nabokov's interest in freedom in time and his interest in fate, in patterns in time. He felt that the more patterns there are in time, the less freedom, the more fate there must be. Robert Scholes refuted that brilliantly by pointing to Joyce's *Ulysses*: there are few novels more patterned than *Ulysses*, and few novels more genuinely open about what happens in the course of the day and about what might happen after the day is over, and the novel finished, than *Ulysses*. You can imagine the transparent things of VN's novel, if they inhabited Dublin on Bloomsday, to have a sense of the patterns in the course of that day, as events are unfolding, as good as or better than the best re-rereader of the novel; they might predict some outcomes on the bases of the patterns they can see, yet they too might turn out to be wrong, since this world is open.

Shoko Miura

Thank you so much, Brian, for a succinct and forceful reply to my comments on Akiko's paper. As Zoran wrote, your clarity of expression is amazing. Here are my thoughts, not really questions, to your reply.

In your first paragraph, do you mean that Moore's paradox, "I don't believe it is raining, and yet, it is raining," is not a paradox but a contradiction? I think you are right, but one point bothers me--why did Wittgenstein take it as a paradox? I thought I understood it but now I am not sure. Perhaps Akiko can help me, too.

In your second paragraph, I admit my definition of coincidence was incomplete. I asked my question about coincidence because VN seems fascinated by coincidences and near-miss coincidences in his works and even in his past life. The essential part of coincidence, as you pointed out, is that it is an unexpected "conjunction" of at least two events. When a coincidence happens, one can take it either as an occurrence of fate or sheer chance, depending on whether you see time as "fixed" (predetermined) or "open." If time is open, there are degrees of "improbability" of the occurrence, so we call an event a coincidence when it is improbable to a certain degree. If time is fixed, coincidences cannot occur since there is no question of "probability." The occurrence is predetermined. Am I right in following your argument so far? To avoid dialectic thinking, I should say that when we call an event as coincidental, each of us differs in the actual degree of believing or disbelieving in predetermination. When VN creates ghosts in his stories, we are never sure if he believes in predetermined events. He leaves the question open since, as you say, "the world is open." I see now that his ghosts reveal his emphasis on ambiguity as a necessary consequence of his concept of time.

Thank you again for your wonderful thoughts and your patience with my questions. I learned so much from you again.

Tora Koyama

Comment and Response

Ryo Chonabayashi

Question（On Page 105）: It may be fair to say that Moore is the name of the philosopher every student of contemporary ethics hears in their first metaethics lecture. He is the author of *Principica Ethica*, a work regarded as the starting point of contemporary metaethics. The scholars and students of ethics/moral philosophy cannot miss Moore, especially as a very important figure in the tradition of non-naturalistic moral realism.

Tora Koyama

Prof. Chonabayashi is perfectly right. Moore is fairly known among philosophers. I might overemphasize his comparative unpopularity. What I meant is that because he is less popular than other founders of analytic philosophy, especially Wittgenstein, Nabokov would have trouble if he tried to learn about Moore.

Acknowledgments

Akiko Nakata, Editor

The international symposium, “Vladimir Nabokov and Analytic Philosophy,” supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP19K00410, was held online initially from May 15th to May 31st, then extended to June 20th, as part of the 2021 annual conference of the Nabokov Society of Japan. Three speakers’ papers were emailed to the society members and registered participants, and all the comments and discussions as well as the questions and answers were uploaded on the society’s website. The symposium was unprecedented, both in theme and format, not only for the society but also for Nabokov studies in the world. There were 43 files uploaded in all, which would be roughly calculated as talk sessions for around 11 hours and 20 minutes, without a break. It may be the longest symposium ever held which featured only three speakers and one commentator, with two questioners from the floor. I would first like to extend my deepest gratitude to our guest speakers, Brian Boyd and Zoran Kuzmanovich. Professor Boyd generously gave, in addition to his brilliant paper and contributions, valuable advice on the symposium project and the earlier stage of my paper. Professor Kuzmanovich, though facing serious health issues until just before the symposium, energetically enriched the event with his inspiring paper and contributions. I owe the highest gratitude to our guest commentator, Tora Koyama. As analytic philosopher, Professor Koyama made this symposium worthy of its title by stimulating discussions and providing clarifications about philosophy. I am genuinely appreciative of our two questioners, Ryo Chonabayashi and Shoko Miura. Professor Chonabayashi asked all the speakers and the commentator pertinent questions from the perspective of a metaethicist, academically heightening the discussions. Professor Miura, ex-president of the Nabokov Society of Japan, asked challenging questions, led the discussions, and raised issues for future consideration. My sincere thanks go to Mitsuyoshi Numano, current president of the society, who took over the office on the first day of the symposium, for writing an excellent foreword for this volume. Finally, I am grateful to the audience of the symposium and the readers of this volume. If any aspect of the symposium can lead to future studies on Nabokov—and possibly on analytic philosophy—there would be no greater reward for me.

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