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Weighing Nabokov's Gift on Pushkin's Scales

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Pushkin departed without establishing a literary school, without leaving behind a single direct disciple. His poetic message, if it was understood at all, was soon distorted by foes and friends alike (cf., Zhukovskii's: "Chto prelest'iu zhivoi stikhov ia byl polezen"). Pushkin's aesthetic creed of pure art did not endear him to the Russian intelligentsia of the decades to come. His journal *Sovremennik* changed hands and its new editors made several attempts to dethrone the aristocratic poet and to write off his poetic legacy. After Pushkin, Russian literature took an altogether different course—it became a tool for the promotion of civic, social, moral, religious, and political causes—a change that numbed the aesthetic sensitivity of several generations of Russian readers and critics.

Not finding a worthy *sobesednik* in his own century, Pushkin had to wait for a *dalekii potomok* in the next. It is the poets of the Silver Age who should be credited with bringing the first genuine reflection of Pushkin's sun buried in the black January night of 1837:

Стояло солнце Александра,
Сто лет назад, сияло всем. . .
(Mandel'shtam, 1917)
Человек умирает, песок остывает согретый,
И вчерашнее солнце на черных носилках несут.
(Mandel'shtam, 1920)

Merezhkovskii, Solov'ev, Briusov, Blok, Belyi, Ivanov, Khodasevich, Akhmatova, Mandel'shtam, Tsvetaeva one after another adopted Pushkin as *moi Pushkin*. But perhaps no one at home or in exile made claim to his legacy more faithfully than Vladimir Nabokov. Born one hundred years after Pushkin, Nabokov adopted him as his personal muse and never abandoned that calling.

The importance of the Pushkinian creed for Nabokov is best perceived in the light of the debate over Pushkin's legacy which developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s in émigré circles. The polemic put into focus the fate of Russian poetry in exile and questioned the vitality of Pushkin's model

for Russian literature in the future. G. Adamovich and V. Khodasevich, the two deans of Russian letters in diaspora, found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict.¹ Adamovich, the leader of the Paris group, called for a turn away from Pushkin. He accused Pushkin of lapidary simplicity, formal perfection and lack of concern for content and, furthermore, declared his poetic model inadequate to express the complexity of the modern world and to capture the increasingly introspective human soul. Much to Khodasevich's and Nabokov's dismay, the Paris group found Pushkin's verbal perfection "suspicious," and urged young poets to embrace Lermontov's soul-searching rhetoric and the "inelegant" manner of Pasternak. The Parisian journal *Chisla*, which boycotted Khodasevich and regularly assaulted Nabokov, became the main tribune for the anti-Pushkin campaign. According to Adamovich,

Pushkin began to dry up in the 1830s, and Benkendorf and Natal'ia Nikolaevna were not the only ones to blame. The worm of emptiness was gnawing at Pushkin. . . .

Pushkin still managed to save "grace" from the silliness which kept creeping in. . . .

(*Chisla* 1, 1930:142; 2/3, 1930:168)

In a later article Adamovich questioned Nabokov's mission of keeping Pushkin's tradition alive: "[Nabokov] plows up the earth for some future Pushkin who once more will take it upon himself to put our poetry house in order. Perhaps the new Pushkin will never appear" (Adamovich 1955:227). Adamovich's opinions were readily echoed by his disciples, such as the talented young poet B. Poplavskii who declared that

All lucky men are on the roguish side, even Pushkin. Lermontov, of course, is a different case. Pushkin was a child of the Catherine epoch who achieved the top of perfection in the ironic genre (*Eugene Onegin*). For the Russian soul everything is serious. There is no place for frivolity, for trifles. All who laugh will end in Hell. . . .

Pushkin was the last among the magnificent 'major-keyed' dirty people of the Renaissance. However, is not even the greatest worm just the greatest worm?

(*Chisla* 2/3, 1930:309-310; 4, 1930-31:171)

Nabokov did not participate directly in this critical polemic, yet in his fictional works he missed no opportunity to cross swords with the calumniators of Pushkin. In the narrative fragment entitled "Iz Kalmbrudovoi poemy 'nochnoe puteshestvie'" (1931), the invented English poet Vivian Calmbrood converses with the poet Chenston (whose non-existent tragi-

comedy "The Covetous Knight" Pushkin allegedly translated in "Skupoi rytsar'"). Nabokov puts in Chenston's—and hence Pushkin's—mouth two satirical portraits of Adamovich and Georgii Ivanov, whose names are not mentioned but whose identity is unmistakable. Likewise, the stories "Usta k ustam" and "Vasilii Shishkov" have as their direct target the aesthetical and ethical turpitude of Adamovich and his clique. In the former story the almanac *Chisla* figures under the Pushkinian title *Arion*. Nabokov best assessed the satirical role he played in the annals of Russian émigré literature in the poem "Neokonchennyi chernovik" (1931):

...
 меня страшатся потому,
 что зол я, холоден и весел,
 что не служу я никому,
 что жизнь и честь свою я взвесил
 на пушкинских весах, и честь
 осмеливаюсь предпочесть.

However, the work in which Nabokov most openly challenges present as well as past transgressions against Pushkin's creed is *Dar*, Nabokov's last Russian novel. As he tells us in the introduction to the English edition, *The Gift's* central character is Russian literature. Indeed, "not since *Evgenii Onegin* has a major Russian novel contained such a profusion of literary discussions, allusions and writers' characterizations," writes Simon Karlinsky (1963:286) in the first critical article on the novel.

For Nabokov the attitude of Russian critics and writers toward Pushkin was the litmus test of their intelligence and talent, and he applied these same standards to the characters of his fictions as well. Fedor, Nabokov's most autobiographical creation, is a beginning poet on his way to becoming a major writer. *The Gift* traces three years of Fedor's aesthetic education, and each of Fedor's artistic accomplishments is weighed on Pushkin's scales. Fedor's development as an artist loosely parallels the path Russian literature took after the Golden Age of poetry in the 1820s, to the turn to prose in the 1830s, through the age of Gogol' and Belinskii, to the utilitarian Iron Age of the 1860s, and through the period of Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, into the Silver Age and modern times. In addition, Fedor refracts this evolution of Russian literature through the theoretical achievements of the Formalist school.² This dramatization of literary history and criticism in *The Gift* is Nabokov's most elaborate answer to the anti-Pushkinian attitudes voiced in the last century and repeated in more recent times.

Chapter One, covering the period of Fedor's poetic apprenticeship, con-

tains an array of minor and major allusions to Pushkin. Fedor's name, Godunov-Cherdyntsev, belongs to an extinct aristocratic lineage and owes something to the great poet. And so does Fedor's nanny, whom Nabokov took from the same region as Pushkin's Arina Rodionovna (*Dar*:111).³ Nabokov's own nanny, we are told in *Drugie berega* (1954:37), came from that same region. Nabokov also seems to continue Pushkin's experiments with the hybrid genre. Entire sections of the novel are written in verse form, overt and concealed, which makes *Dar* a generic cousin of Pushkin's "novel in verse."

Fedor's collection of verses, partially reproduced in Chapter One, opens with a poem about his nanny and introduces us into the *Kinderstube* of the future poet. All of Fedor's poems are couched in the measure given to Russian poetry at its birth by Lomonosov ("Oda na vziatie Khotina") and immortalized by Pushkin. Fedor is aware of the pitfalls of writing modern poetry in iambic tetrameter, "kotoromu uzhe Pushkin. . . grozil v okno, kri-cha chto shkol'nikam otdast ego v zabavu" (33-34).⁴ Fedor does not mind the role of a school boy. He inoculates the iambic tetrameter with all the rhythmical extravaganzas discovered by A. Belyi (1910) in his studies on prosody. The results are mixed, to say the least. With a neophyte's enthusiasm, Fedor abuses the freedom offered within the boundaries of this classical measure about which Khodasevich wrote:

Таинственна его природа,
В нем спит спондей, поэт пэон,
Ему один закон—свобода,
В его свободе есть закон. . .
(“Ne iambom li chetyrehstopynym,” 1938)

Khodasevich allegedly served as a model for the poet Koncheev, who plays such a crucial role in Fedor's artistic development. The two imaginary conversations Fedor has with him (Chapters One and Five) symmetrically frame the entire narrative. In Chapter One Fedor considers Koncheev his only true rival. He is envious of Koncheev's gift whose mysterious growth only a ringful of poison (German *Gift*) can stop: "tainstvenno razrastav-shiisia talant kotorogo tol'ko dar Izory mog by presech'" (75). No doubt, such a gift is beneath the dignity of the hero of *Dar*. As Fedor matures, the Salieri-Mozart syndrome gives way to a rather symbiotic union between the two poets. By the time of their second imaginary conversation it becomes clear that their spiritual union is that of Virgil and Dante, with Koncheev leading Fedor through the labyrinth of exile.

Pushkin's contemporary A. Bestuzhev-Marlinskii once wrote that "poetry is to prose as an infant's rattle is to a youth's compass." In Chapter Two the young poet makes his transition to prose. Fedor embarks on an imaginary journey to Central Asia and China, tracing the steps of his father, a famous explorer who did not return from his last expedition to this region. The apprenticeship to Pushkin continues in this chapter also. The son's search for his lost father is prompted by a sentence from "Puteshestvie v Arzrum" (1835/36). Learning entire pages of Pushkin by heart, Fedor absorbs into his poetic system Pushkin's narrative manner. He attempts to bring the "transparent rhythm" of Pushkin's prose "to the limits of blank verse." The accidental iambic sentence from *Kapitanskaia dochka* serves as a living example:

Не приведи Бог видеть русский бунт
бессмысленный и беспощадный.

(111)

The short samples of Pushkin's prose which Fedor quotes or paraphrases in this chapter are all alliteratively patterned: "*Zhatva struilas', ozhidaia serpa*" (109), "*Navstrechu shla Karolina Shmidt, devushka sil'no narumiannaia, vida skromnogo i smirennogo, kupivshaia krovat', na kotoroi umer Shoning*" (111). In Pushkin's original the alliterations are even tighter.⁵ Thus, the sound of Pushkin's prose serves as a "tuning fork" for the young poet during his migration to prose. This alliterative quality is, of course, a permanent hallmark of Nabokov's prose, Russian and English.

During his imaginary journey, Fedor continually refracts the image of his lost father through the prism of Pushkin: "ritm pushkinskogo veka meshalsia s ritmom zhizni ottsa," or even more directly: "S golosom Pushkina slivalsia golos ottsa" (111). The "hills of sorrow" ("*kholmy moei pechali*") (155) which Fedor ascends during his journey are of the same tonality as Pushkin's melancholy mountains: "*Na kholmakh Gruzii lezhit nochnaia mгла; / Shumit Agrava predо mnoiu. / Mne grustno i legko; pechal' moia svetla.*" Thus, Fedor's sorrow and the search for his lost father actually involve two parental figures. Both missing men exert their presence in an elliptic yet tangible way, best expressed in the words of the invented memoirist Sukhoshchekov:

Говорят ... что человек, которому отрубили по бедро ногу, долго ощущает ее, шевеля несуществующими пальцами и напрягая несуществующие мышцы. Так и Россия еще долго будет ощущать живое присутствие Пушкина.

(112)

It is according to this bizarre principle that Fedor physically resurrects Pushkin in the following episode. The episode involves a practical joke played by two pranksters on Fedor's grandfather, who has returned from America after twenty years and is unaware of Pushkin's fatal duel. During a theater performance of "Othello" the two boys point out to Fedor's grandfather a swarthy elderly gentleman in the adjacent box and casually inform him that he is Pushkin.

Что если это и впрямь Пушкин, грезилось мне, Пушкин в шестьдесят лет, Пушкин пощаженный пулей рокового хлыща, Пушкин вступивший в роскошную осень своего гения... Вот это он, вот эта желтая рука, сжимающая маленький дамский бинокль, написала «Анчар», «Графа Нулина», «Египетские ночи»... Действие кончилось; грянули рукоплескания. Седой Пушкин порывисто встал и все еще улыбаясь, со светлым блеском в молодых глазах, быстро вышел из ложи.

(115)

The refusal to accept Pushkin's death and the quibbling attempt to restore him to life find their reflection in Fedor's no less bizarre attempt to resurrect Pushkin's text. In Chapter Two Fedor quotes two quatrains which Pushkin allegedly wrote in an album of one of Fedor's aunts:

О, нет мне жизнь не надоела,
Я жить хочу, я жить люблю.
Душа не вовсе охладела,
Утрата молодость свою.

Еще судьба меня согреет,
Романом гения упыюсь,
Мицкевич пусть еще созреет,
Кой чем я сам еще займусь.

(112)

The first quatrain (save one minor transposition for rhyme's sake) is taken from an undated and unfinished poem by Pushkin; the second quatrain, however, is Fedor's own creation—a collage of various bits from Pushkin ("Elegiia" 1830, *Evginii Onegin* 3:13, 8;12). Completing the poem, Fedor fulfills, as it were, Pushkin's own wish expressed in the first stanza: "Ia zhit' khochu. . ."6

In a similar vein, Fedor's voyage to China can be seen as a realization of a dream that both Pushkin and Nabokov once cherished. In 1830, Pushkin asked for permission to join a diplomatic mission to Peking but was informed that "Gosudar' nesoblagoizvolil razreshit' Vam posetit' chuzhi kraia."7 In 1916, the seventeen-year old Nabokov inherited a sizable fortune

and planned to sponsor an entomological expedition to West China to be led by the famous naturalist Grum-Grzhimailo. This time the revolution destroyed the poet's dream (Nabokov 1954:210; 1970:72; Field 1977:96).

Fedor's imaginary journey in Chapter Two can be seen as a compensation for the unrealized dreams—his, his author's, and Pushkin's. Fedor embarks on his imaginary journey by means of a picture of Marco Polo leaving Venice. It depicts a ship with lowered sails, shortly before its departure for the Far East (132). Fedor's own situation—pen in hand, in front of the picture—calls to mind the final stanzas of Pushkin's fragment "Osen'" (1833):

XI

И пальцы просятся к перу, перо к бумаге,
 Минута—и стихи свободно потекут.
 Так дремлет недвижим корабль в недвижимой влаге,
 Но чу—матросы вдруг кидаются, ползут
 Вверх, вниз—и паруса надулись, ветра полны;

XII

Плывет. Куда ж нам плыть?

.....

.....

Fedor's imaginary journey in search of his father proceeds, as it were, along Pushkin's dotted itinerary, whereas the concrete geographical details, the descriptions of exotic fauna and flora were lifted from the books of the great naturalists N. M. Przheval'skii (1883; 1888) and G. E. Grum-Grzhimailo (1896–1907). Pushkin too, when writing "Kamchatskie dela" (1837), copiously excerpted the work of the eighteenth-century explorer of that region, S. P. Krasheninnikov (1755). If one realizes that Pushkin began to write about Kamchatka—a place he had never been—just a few days before his fatal duel, this exotic journey attains a certain touch of other-worldliness.

Fedor's naturalistic expedition to Tibet, from which his father did not return, becomes for Fedor a metaphysical journey into the *terra incognita* of the beyond. The journey is begun by the father whom the son joins mid-way, but the trip is completed by the son alone. As a result of this "at-one-ment" with his father, Fedor has matured spiritually as well as artistically—the young poet returns from the journey as a prose writer of some stature. At the end of the journey, Fedor's search for Pushkin is also completed, and it is now time for him to move on. At the end of Chapter Two Fedor leaves his old room and moves to a new place: "Rasstoianie ot

starogo do novogo zhil'ia bylo primerno takoe, kak, gde-nibud' v Rossii, ot ulitsy Pushkinskoi—do ulitsy Gogolia" (164).

Chapter Three brings us to the 1840s, the Gogol' period. In his book *Nikolai Gogol* Nabokov singled out *poshlost'* as the prime target of Gogol's art. Fedor's reading of the *Dead Souls* in Chapter Three (175) proved to be an invaluable practice in detecting *poshlost'*, while *Gogol's art of the grotesque set the example of how poshlost' should be mocked. Berlin and its inhabitants provided Fedor with stunning samples of poshlost'*, indigenous as well as Russian. However, even this essentially Gogolian theme owes something to Pushkin. Reflecting upon his *Dead Souls*, Gogol' wrote:

Обо мне много толковали, разбирая кое какие мои стороны, но главного существа моего не поделили. Его слышал один только Пушкин. Он мне говорил всегда, что еще ни у одного писателя не было этого дара выставлять так ярко пошлость жизни, уметь очертить в такой силе пошлость пошлого человека, чтобы вся та мелочь, которая ускользает от глаз, мелькнула бы крупно в глаза всем.⁸

If Gogol's testimony can be trusted, one can safely say that Nabokov read his Gogol' through Pushkin's eyes.

Gogol's skill of rendering *poshlost'* absurd and his art of blurring the boundaries between phantom and reality found its full expression in Chapter Four, in Fedor's mock biography of N. G. Chernyshevskii. Fedor casts Chernyshevskii as the hero of a would-be Gogolian tale. The cruel but hilarious vivisection of the darling of the liberal intelligentsia is performed with a Gogolian scalpel. Yet there remains one substantial difference: in Fedor's art even the most fantastic and absurd details which one would take for figments of the imagination turn out to be true and verifiable fragments of Chernyshevskii's real life.⁹

According to Fedor, Pushkin is Chernyshevskii's "most vulnerable spot; for it has long become customary to measure the degree of flair, intelligence and talent of a Russian critic by his attitude to Pushkin" (267). The radicals of the 1860s dethroned Pushkin, using his *Sovremennik* as the main tribune for their utilitarian campaign against pure art. Thus, Pushkin and Chernyshevskii represent for Fedor two antagonistic lines in the history of Russian culture. Pushkin's prophetic 1828 poem "Poet i tolpa," written in the year of Chernyshevskii's birth, reads like a blueprint for Fedor's sally against the utilitarian aesthetic of the men of the 1860s who were reputed to value a pair of boots higher than art. Commenting upon Chernyshevskii's critical judgement in matters of art, Fedor compares him to the "cobbler who visited Apelles' studio" (254). Fedor's remark is a direct allusion to Pushkin's 1829 parable "Sapozhnik":

Картину раз высматривал сапожник
 И в обуви ошибку указал;
 Взяв тотчас кисть, испаравился художник.
 Вот, подбочась, сапожник продолжал:
 «Мне кажется, лицо немного криво...
 А эта грудь не слишком ли нага?»...
 Тут Апеллес прервал нетерпеливо:
 «Суди, дружок, не свыше сапога!»

Its nonchalant ease, wit, and playful irreverence link Fedor's lampoon of Chernyshevskii to the tradition of "Arzamas" with its travesties, skits, and exorcism of the demons of the "Beseda liubitelei russkogo slova." For Nabokov who was a founding member of the émigré "Arzamas," the anti-aesthetic and anti-Pushkinian attitudes of the past had far-reaching implications for the present. In Fedor's eyes the men of the 1860s were directly responsible for the advent of Socialist Realism in the 1930s, which placed an iron full stop after the Silver Age. The invective against Chernyshevskii was also obliquely aimed at the Adamovich clique, the "Paris mystagogues," whom Nabokov held responsible for the wasteland of Russian literature in emigration.

Fedor happened to be more fortunate in the novel than Nabokov was in real life: Fedor does find a publisher for his book in Chapter Five, while Nabokov was not allowed publicly to slaughter the holy cow of the Russian liberal intelligentsia. *Dar* appeared on the pages of the otherwise very tolerant *Sovremennye zapiski*, but without the "Life of Chernyshevskii"—a rare example of censorship from the left in the annals of Russian émigré literature. As if anticipating this cut, Nabokov opened Chapter Five with several mock reviews of the purged chapter. This device is reminiscent of Pushkin, who in the foreword to the second edition of "Ruslan i Liudmila" reproduced some of the most inept reviews of his *poema* without adding a word in his own defense.

The first reviewer Linev (Warsaw), for example, criticizes Fedor for placing "solemn but not quite grammatical maxims in the mouths of his characters," such as "Poet sam izbiraet predmety dlia svoikh pesen', tolpa ne imeet prava upravliat' ego vdokhnoveniem" (338)—without recognizing that this sentence is a quote from Pushkin's "Egipetskie nochi." The next review, written by Christopher Mortus (Paris), is a masterful imitation of Adamovich's style:

Безвозвратно прошло то золотое время, когда критика или читателя могло в первую очередь интересовать «художественное» качество или точная степень талантливости книги. Наша литература,—я говорю о

настоящей, «несомненной» литературе,—люди с безошибочным вкусом меня поймут,—делалась проще, серьезнее, суше,—за шет искусства, может быть, но зато ... зазвучала такой печалью, такой музыкой, таким «безнадежным» небесным очарованием, что, право же, не стоит жалеть о «скучных песнях земли.» ...

О, разумеется,—«шестидесятники» и в частности Чернышевский, высказывали немало ошибочного и может быть смешного в своих литературных суждениях. Кто в этом не грешен, да и не такой уж это грех... Но и нам, как и им, Некрасов и Лермонотв, особенно последний, ближе чем Пушкин.

(339-40)

Mortus' circular musings are followed by Koncheev's review in which he fleetingly but correctly touches upon the ideological aspects of Fedor's book and goes on to praise the artistic side of Fedor's "skazochno-ostroumnoe sochinenie" (345). Koncheev saves, however, his criticism for the private conversation with Tedor during which he spills his just but merciless litany of Fedor's shortcomings. The Mozart-Salieri conflict too is resolved during this conversation, as Koncheev concedes that in spite of their differences "mezhdū nami krepnet dovolno bozhestvennaia sviaz'" (383). Koncheev also makes here the correct prediction that Fedor will abandon writing poetry and will switch to prose (382).

By the end of Chapter Five, Fedor's last work, *The Gift* itself, is born. Until this point it existed only in potentiality, as a novel to be. However Fedor's presentiments of the finished book permeate its not-yet-written pages:

Это странно, я как будто помню свои будущие вещи, хотя даже не знаю, о чем будут они. Вспомню окончательно и напишу.

(218)

Временами я чувствую, что где-то [моя книга] уже написана мной, что ее только нужно высвободить по частям из марка, и части сложатся сами...

(156)

The anticipation of the final form of the not-yet-written work is one of Pushkin's devices most skillfully employed in *Evgenii Onegin* in which Pushkin, peering into a "magic crystal," recognizes his future novel:

И даль свободного романа
Я сквозь магический кристалл
Еще не ясно различал.

(VIII, 50).

In Chapter Three Pushkin announced this novel:

Тогда роман на старый лад
 Займет веселый мой закат.
 Не муки тайные злодейства
 Я грозно в нем изображу,
 Но просто вам перескажу
 Преданья русского семейства,
 Любви пленительные сны
 Да нравы нашей старины.

(III, 13)

In the last chapter, Pushkin has his hero Onegin read this very novel:

Он меж печатными строками
 Читал духовными глазами
 Другие строки. В них-то он
 Был совершенно углублен.
 То были тайные преданья
 Сердечной, темной старины,
 Ни с чем не связанные сны,
 Угрозы, толки, предсказанья,
 Иль длинной сказки вздор живой,
 Иль письма девы молодой.

(VIII, 36)

Finally, not only Fedor's anticipation of the future book, but also his parting from the completed work is truly Pushkinian. The final paragraph of *The Gift* is Fedor's final tribute to Pushkin, to his iambic tetrameter, to the Onegin stanza, and to Pushkin's closing of his novel in verse:

Прощай-же книга! Для видения—отсрочки смертной тоже нет. С колен поднимется Евгений,—но удаляется поэт. И все-же слух не может сразу расстаться с музыкой, рассказу дать замерет... судьба сама еще звенит,—и для ума внимательного нет границы—там, где поставил точку я: продленный призрак бытия синее за чертой страницы, как завташные облака,—и не кончается строка.

Compare with the last lines of *Eugene Onegin*:

Блажен, кто праздник жизни рано
 Оставил, не допив до дна
 Бокала полного вина,
 Кто не дочел ее романа
 И вдруг умел расстаться с ним,
 Как я с Онегиным моим.

The Gift, in which Nabokov resurrects Pushkin in so many ways, takes us through a century of Russian literature. Nabokov (1973:13) considered it

"the best, and the most nostalgic" of his Russian novels, while A. Field (1967:249) called it "the greatest novel Russian Literature has yet produced in this century." Be that as it may, with this *stoletnee vozvrashchenie* in *The Gift*, Nabokov made his definitive entry into modern literature. It was Nabokov's last Russian work, and as such it also can be seen as a farewell to this twenty-year-long literary career in the docile Russian tongue. Nabokov, whom many compatriots considered to be the most "un-Russian" of Russian writers, was soon to leave the Old World to become an American writer, never to write another novel in Russian.¹⁰ Yet the American Nabokov would return to Pushkin as a translator and scholar, devoting to *Evginii Onegin* as many years of his own life as it took Pushkin to write it. Nabokov's translation, accompanied by three volumes of meticulous commentaries, remains the most enduring monument raised to Pushkin on American soil.

Notes

1. For the Khodasevich-Adamovich polemics, see G. Struve 1956:199-222; R. Hagglund 1973:515-526, 196:239-252; and D. Bethea 1983:317-331).

2. The Formalist connection is analyzed in the excellent article by Irina Paperno, "Literatura 19-go veka v romane Vladimira Nabokova *Dar*," an unpublished manuscript.

3. V. Nabokov, *Dar* (New York, Iz. im. Chekhova, 1952). All page numbers appearing in the text parenthetically are to this edition.

4. Fedor's quote mixes lines from *Eugene Onegin*: "Malysh uzh otmorozil pal'chek / Emu i bol'no i smeshno / I mat' grozit emu v okno" and from "Domik v Kolomne": "Chetyrehstopnyi iamb mne nadoel:/ Im pishet vsiakii./ Mal'chikam v zabavu / Pora b ego ostavit'."

5. Pushkin: "Krovat', na kotoroi umer Shoning, kuplena byla Karolinoi Shmidt, devushkoi sil'no narumianennoi, vidu skromnogo i smirennogo." I have analyzed in detail Pushkin's sound patterning in prose in a separate article (Davydov 1983:1-18).

6. Nabokov himself engaged in writing apocrypha of this kind, composing, for example, the final scene for Pushkin's "Rusalka" or "restoring" the French original of Tat'iana's letter to Onegin, which Pushkin so conspicuously "translated" into Russian. Likewise, Nabokov fulfills a promise made by Pushkin in a footnote to his African line, "Pod nebom Afriki moei" (*EO* I, 50). Pushkin's footnote: ". . .po prichine nedostatka istoricheskikh zapisok, strannaia zhizn' Annibala izvestna tol'ko po semeinym predaniiam.

(My so vremenem nadeemsia izdat' polnuiu ego biografiu.)" Pushkin began this biography in the first chapters of the unfinished novel *Arap Petra Velikogo* (1829). Nabokov finished the task for Pushkin in his commentaries to *Evgenii Onegin* (Nabokov 1964, 3:387-447). Nabokov's learned treatise about Pushkin's African ancestor is based on historical documents which were unavailable to Pushkin.

7. From Benkendorf's letter to Pushkin of 7.I.1830.

8. "Tret'e pis'mo po povodu *Mertvykh dush*" (1843).

9. I have documented and analyzed the sources from which Nabokov culled this true-to-life biography of Chernyshevskii in a separate article (Davydov 1985). See also D. Rampton (1984) and Irina Paperno's analysis of these sources in her article mentioned in note 2.

10. Nabokov's alleged "un-Russianness" is discussed in Struve (1956: 282-86).

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