Egor Bukovey
Saint-Petersburg

ALLURING AND PERILOUS: "THE MERMAID" AND *THE ENCHANTER*

The seductive and destructive power of water, which enchants characters only to eventually consume them, is one of Vladimir Nabokov's most recurrent motifs. Not infrequently, the water motif, embodied in the narrative, transfigures maidens into mermaids[1]. Beginning with his early poem "The Mermaid," Nabokov's works repeatedly feature the image of a "mermaid-like woman [who] seems to be granted brief access to the otherworldly dimension"[2] — most often, by serving as a conduit for deathor as a guide to the hereafter. [3]

In this article, I will examine how Vladimir Nabokov employs the theme of an alluring yet perilous water element in his late Russian and frequently overlooked story *The Enchanter*. A close reading of the story, focused on its water and mermaid motifs, elucidates previously un-recognized structural and intertextual parallels between *The Enchanter* (1939) and Alexander Pushkin's unfinished drama "The Mermaid," which Nabokov intermittently attempted to complete while working on the early drafts of the

---

[1]Relevant discussions of the mermaid/water motifs are found in: D. B. Johnson, "'L'Inconnue de la Seine' and Nabokov's Naiads, *Comparative Literature*, vol. 44, no. 3, 1992, pp. 225-248; Elena Sommers, "Nabokov's Mermaid: 'Spring in Fialta'," *Nabokov Studies*, vol. 12, 2009/2011, pp. 31-48; Emily Collins, "Nabokov's *Lolita* and Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, *Nabokov Studies*, vol. 9, 2005, pp. 77-100; Jane Grayson, "'Rusalka' and the Person from Porlock, *Symbolism and After: Essays on Russian Poetry in Honour of Georgette Donchin*, ed. Arnold McMillin (Bristol Classical Press, 1992), pp. 162-185. See also: Brian Boyd, *Nabokov's Ada: The Place of Consciousness* (Ardis Publishers, 1985), pp. 202-219 on Lucette as a mermaid; Priscilla Meyer, *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's* Pale Fire (Wesleyan University Press, 1988), pp. 188, 207 on Hazel Shade as a mermaid/Ophelia; J. W. Connolly , *A Reader's Guide to Nabokov's* Lolita. (Academic Studies Press, 2009), p. 21 and Carl R. Proffer, *Keys to Lolita* (Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 133-134 on *Lolita* (noting that Lo is also *l'eau)* as a mermaid. Mermaids are also a vital part of *Pnin*. See Gennady Barabtarlo, *Phantom of Fact: A Guide to Nabokov's* Pnin (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1989), pp. 139-141.

[2]Elena Sommers, "Nabokov's Mermaid: 'Spring in Fialta'," *Nabokov Studies*, vol. 12, (2009/2011), p. 31.

[3]The list of previously unrecognized lethal 'water' heroines can be expanded by *la femme fatale* Nina Rechnoy — the surname 'Rechnoy' [*Речной*] means 'riverine' in Russian — who seems to drain Sebastian Knight of life and ultimately destroys him. Like "The Enchanter," the novel was completed in 1939. Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* (Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 503. The heroine's aquatic surname also explains why she remains inaccessible for V., the narrator.

second volume of *The Gift*. After ultimately abandoning the novel, he published "The Final Scene of Pushkin's 'Mermaid'" in 1942 as an independent work.[4]

Nabokov was deeply engaged with the mermaid myth and the rich history of its representation and reinterpretation in Russian literature. On one hand, the Russian *rusalka*, introduced into literature by the Romantics, fascinated Nabokov both as a rich palimpsest shaped by such diverse artists as Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gogol and as a monitory figure, exposing the dangers of Romantic solipsism and egotism. As Priscilla Meyer astutely remarks, "Pushkin and Nabokov […] warn us not that the reading of romantic novels is dangerous, but that the misreading of them is."[5] On the other hand, Andrei Babikov points out, Vladislav Khodasevich, Nabokov's close friend, and "the greatest poet of our time, Pushkin's literary descendant,"[6] had written about "The Mermaid" on several occasions, and it was his death which prompted Nabokov to resume *The Gift*, in late autumn–winter 1939.[7]

It is impossible, unfortunately, to establish the exact year when Nabokov completed "The Final Scene." A. Babikov initially dated the work to 1939;[8] however, his more recent archival research led him to suggest that the composition of the concluding scene "may have been inspired by joint work with [Edmund] Wilson on the English translation of Pushkin's "Mozart and Salieri" in March 1941."[9] My reading of "The Enchanter" suggests that as early as 1939 Nabokov had meticulously incorporated allusions to Pushkin's drama into his story — and that, apparently, he already had the ending of the second volume of *The Gift* in mind.[10] Jane Grayson notes that

---

[4]For a detailed discussion of *The Final Scene of Pushkin's Mermaid* in the context of *The Gift* and Vladislav Khodasevich's essays on Pushkin, see Сергей Фомичёв, "Набоков — соавтор Пушкина," *Пушкинская пер-спектива* (Znak, 2007), pp. 315-332.

[5]Priscilla Meyer, *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's* Pale Fire (Wesleyan University Press, 1988), pp. 23-24.

[6]"Владимир Набоков, "О Ходасевиче," *Полное собрание сочинений русского периода*, (Симпозиум, 2008), vol. 5, p. 588. Translation mine. It is worth mentioning that, in his critical examination of "The Mermaid", Vladislav Khodasevich placed particular emphasis on autobiographical subtexts of Pushkin's drama. Nabokov evidently dismissed this interpretation as unwarranted speculation, and his "Final Scene" is not only a tribute to Pushkin but also a dialogue, if not a polemic, with Khodasevich.

[7]Андрей Бабиков, "Примечания к «Заключительной сцене пушкин-ской Русалки'" In Набоков, Владимир. Трагедия господина Морна. Пьесы. Лекции о драме (Азбука-классика, 2008), p. 626. Translation mine.

[8] Ibid, p. 625

[9]Бабиков, Андрей. Прочтение Набокова: Изыскания и материалы (Ivan Limbakh, 2019), p. 339.

[10]Pushkin's "The Mermaid" is only one thread connecting the second part of *The Gift* with *The Enchanter*. The two works are also linked by the motif of a fatal car

The Mermaid "is located in Nabokov's writing precisely at the point of hiatus between his Russian and English careers"; it is, in other words, "an assurance of continuity through change, a way from one world to the next."[11] As we will see, this hypothesis is particularly illuminating when applied to *The Enchanter*, finished towards the end of 1939 and replete with mermaid allusions that link Nabokov's final completed Russian story (albeit published posthumously and initially in English translation) to *Lolita*, his English masterpiece.

I will begin my analysis by examining several formal features of *The Enchanter* that Nabokov may have borrowed from Pushkin but profoundly re-encoded in the narrative, which, despite its fairy-tale quality, contains far less of the Romantic fantasy. "The Mermaid" recounts the story of a pregnant miller's daughter who, abandoned by the Prince ('*Knyaz*'), the father of her unborn child, drowns herself. Sometime later, pursued by remorse, the Prince returns to the banks of the Dnieper, where he encounters a "lovely child"[12] — his deceased daughter who has become a mermaid. At her mother's request, the child is to lure the Prince to the bottom of the river.[13] The drama breaks off at this point. Nabokov, in fact, wrote two final

---

accident: Zina is killed in such an accident, as is the protagonist of *The Enchanter.* In both works, the protagonist becomes a widower, and both characters have a sister. Indirect evidence further suggests that, like *The Gift*, *The Enchanter* was originally intended to be set in France, although the final version of the story depicts only a generalized European landscape. Babikov has also pointed out that both works use the metaphor of a 'trick [фокус, *truc*]' (see p. 60 of the cited Russian original) to veil the protagonists' sexual arousal.

[11]Jane Grayson, "Rusalka and the Person from Porlock," p.170.

[12]Pushkin, Alexander. "Rusalka," Trans. John Coutts, in *The Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin*. 15 vols. (Milner and Company Limited, 1999), vol. 6, p. 319. All subsequent parenthetical references to the English translation will be to this edition.

[13]Folkloric and "fairy-tale" motifs are meticulously woven into the plot of "The Mermaid," which Pushkin borrowed from the Russian adaptation of Karl Friedrich Hensler's (now blissfully forgotten) comic opera *Das Donauweibchen*. One of the opera's arias is mentioned in *Eugene Onegin*. For a detailed thematic and intertextual analysis, see: Сергей Бонди "Примечания," in Aleksandr Pushkin, *Полное собрание сочинений v shestnadtsati tomakh.* 16 vols. (Akadmeiia nauk SSSR, 1935-1959) vol.7, pp. 623–636. Nabokov was almost certainly aware of this source for "The Mermaid," which makes it all the more intriguing that, like Pushkin's drama, the plot of *The Enchanter* is, according to Alexander Dolinin's observation, an artistic reframing and adaptation of Valentin Samsonov's "flimsy and mawkish" short story "A Fairy-Tale Princess" ('*Skazochnaya printsessa'*). Alexander Dolinin, "Nabokov and "Third-Rate Literature": On a Source of *Lolita* (Elementa, vol. 9, 1993), pp. 168-169. Nabokov's remark that 'Pushkin had a strange leaning toward borrowing from ludicrous sources' is therefore strikingly (self-)ironic: in *The Enchanter*, Nabokov himself reworks a similarly ludicrous' source. Vladimir

scenes to *The Mermaid*: in the published version, the Prince drowns; in the alternative one, which was ultimately rejected, he "runs away."[14]

The daughter who lures the protagonist to the bottom of the sea serves as a catalyst for the plot of *The Enchanter*. As in *Lolita*, the protagonist of *The Enchanter* falls in love with a twelve-year-old girl and marries her widowed mother. Soon afterwards, the mother dies from complications following surgery, leaving the vulnerable girl in the hands of a rapist who, before he can commit the ultimate violation, is killed beneath the wheels of a truck. Nabokov thus appropriates the motif of a young girl who enchants her father in order to kill him, but radically alters its meaning: in Pushkin, the mermaid's allure becomes an instrument of retribution, whereas in *The Enchanter*, her chaste beauty becomes the object of desperate and deplorable desire.

Another important detail of *The Enchanter* that was probably suggested by Pushkin is the protagonist's profession. In "The Mermaid" the Prince gives the miller's daughter a necklace and a bag of silver, believing that wealth might console the peasant girl; in *"*The Final Scene," Nabokov develops this motif: the Prince gives his daughter a gold coin in an attempt to break free from the mermaid's spell.[15] *The Enchanter* reworks this Pushkinian motif by transforming the protagonist from a prince into a prosperous jeweler. Hoping to grow closer to the impoverished widow, the jeweler purchases pieces of furniture from her. After they become engaged, he gives her "a wonderful uncut stone" (28); for the privilege of being near the girl, he is willing to offer "a sack of rubies" (19).[16] The necklace given to the peasant girl by the Prince also finds its echo in *The Enchanter*. After the protagonist's wife dies, a family friend brings the girl a jewelry casket containing the family heirlooms. In the final scene, the narrator draws attention three times to the "golden little *stream* [here and elsewhere, italics are mine — E. B.] of chain" (58, 65, 72) inherited from her mother, which implicitly evokes the miller's daughter's necklace in "The Mermaid." This "*stream* of gold," however, is far from the only aquatic metaphor used to describe the girl.

From the very first encounter between the protagonist and the young girl, the narrator, without immediately revealing the secret of her mermaid-like allure, begins to subtly weave water motifs into the narrative fabric.

Nabokov *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse: Commentary.* 4 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1975), vol.2, p. 247.

[14]Translation mine. The complete second version can be found in Андрей Бабиков, *Прочтение Набокова: Изыскания и материалы* (Izd. Ivan Limbakha, 2019), p.370.

[15]Curiously, the enchanter finds a coin (which later turns out to be counterfeit) on the very day he first meets the girl. (8)

[16]Nabokov, Vladimir. *The Enchanter*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov (Vintage International, 1991), p. 28. All subsequent parenthetical references to the English text of the story will be to this edition.

The reader first meets a girl with "russet curls" (9) (both *rus*set and *rus*alka presumably originates from the Latin *russus*, meaning 'red'), who, rushing away, "swings her hands" (10) [плещет (26), i.e."splashes," in the original] — and thereby "simply exacerbates his [the protagonist's] hopeless longing' (10). In the Russian original, instead of "longing," Nabokov employs the rather faded metaphor of "thirst" — "обострит его безнадёжную *жажду*" — to signify that the girl herself might be capable of quenching it.[17] A few pages later, a closer look by the Enchanter reveals that the girl has "a soul that seemed *submerged*, but in a radiant *moistness*. *Opalescent on the surface but translucent in her depths*" (18).

Several days before the wedding, the girl arrives wearing "an unbuttoned *blue coat* with the ends *of its belt dangling behind*, woolen stockings almost up to her knees, and a beret on her *damp curls*" (29). Damp russet curls — it seems to have been raining, although the narrator says nothing to this effect, tempting readers to supply their own interpretations — and a blue coat (perhaps drenched as well) evoke the image of a mermaid emerging from the ocean floor. The ends of the belt, "dangling behind," could be perceived by both the protagonist and the reader as a mermaid's tail. Bereft of context, this conclusion might seem somewhat far-fetched; yet already on the following page, the narrator draws attention to "the *undulations* ['излучина,' (42) 'riverbend'] in her *subterranean streams* (without which she could not have had those eyes)" (31). Thus, the water element is directly associated with the girl's overwhelming beauty, also accounting for the mermaid-like nature of her magnetism.

Before turning to the discussion of the underwater motifs in the final part of the story, it is necessary to say a few words about the miller's daughter in Pushkin's drama. Pregnant with the Prince's child, she drowns herself in the Dnieper and, in the final act, appears as the Queen, ready to avenge both her daughter and her broken heart. In *The Enchanter*, Nabokov manages to combine, through a complex pattern of overlapping associations, two motifs in the figure of the widow: that of the pregnant woman who dies indirectly because of the Prince/Enchanter, and that of the Queen, who already has a daughter. In other words, by transposing the motivations of Pushkin's drama into a prose text built on implicit allusions and omissions, and with a diminished element of Romantic fantasy, Nabokov allows the iridescence of a mermaid's tail to shimmer beneath the shabby dress of a deceived widow.

On the surface, the impoverished widow has "after a long illness, undergone a serious operation of the intestine" (16) and now suffers from an unspecified abdominal ailment. Her illness might seem destined to become an obstacle to the marriage, yet the Enchanter, not without difficulty,

[17]Набоков, Владимир. Волшебник. Solus Rex. (Izd. AST: CORPUS, 2022), p. 27. All subsequent parenthetical references to the Russian original of the story will be to this edition.

surmounts his repulsion toward the forty-two-year-old woman. The theme of pregnancy becomes more pronounced in the second part of *The Enchanter*:

> He made mooing sounds of consolation and accepted her awkward caresses with concealed hatred when, on occasion, she tried to explain, grimacing, that not she but it (a little finger indicated her belly) was responsible for their nocturnal separation, and it all sounded exactly as if she were pregnant (*a false pregnancy, a pregnancy with her own death*) (41).

Nabokov borrows from Pushkin the motif of the pregnant heroine but transforms pregnancy into an abdominal illness that ultimately brings about the widow's death and leaves the girl at the mercy of the Enchanter. Yet this is only one part of her image.

The narrator refers to the widow's "pliable solitude" (24). Curiously, the Russian original has "*плавкое* одиночество" (37), an adjective that ordinarily describes the property of a material or substance that melts easily, passing from a solid to a liquid state under the influence of heat. Its use is probably motivated by the protagonist's profession, since, as a jeweler, he works with molten gold. To a Russian reader, however, *plavkoe* evokes not only *plavit'* ('to melt') but also *plavat'* ('to swim'). This is not the only instance in which Nabokov exploits the different semantic associations of a single word to encode different levels of subtext. "It was perfectly clear," the narrator observes, that the protagonist "would be physically unable to tackle those broad bones, those multiple caverns, the bulky velvet" (37) on his wedding night. These "multiple caverns" seem considerably cruder than the neologism "многостремнинное" (47) used by Nabokov in the Russian original. The word стремнина, which provides the basis for the neologism, has two meanings in Russian: a particularly turbulent stretch of a river and a steep cliff or ravine. Dmitri Nabokov chose to preserve only the latter sense in his translation. Finally, when the protagonist sees his wife for the last time, following her death from complications after yet another operation, he notices "the translucent nostrils with the *pearly wart* on one side" (49). Death thus acquires an unmistakably marine hue, while the choice of the jewel-like epithet simultaneously receives plot-based justification: the dead body is being perceived through the eyes of a jeweler.

An important difference between the widow and Pushkin's Queen is that, in *The Enchanter*, the mother does not use her daughter as an instrument of vengeance; on the contrary, she does everything in her power to prevent the impending violence. Gennady Barabtarlo was among the first to draw attention to the metaphysical, otherworldly forces intruding into the

'reality' of the story.[18] At first, the girl does not appear at the mother's funeral, for she is "laid up with the flu" (49), which has struck her entirely abruptly and, literally, out of the blue. On the eve of the protagonist's arrival, a violent fire destroys a corner of the garden belonging to the friend with whom the girl has been staying: "a heap of ashes and charred logs <…> there had been a fire that night; the firemen had had trouble bringing the raging flames under control, had broken a young apple tree" (57-58). Later at the hotel, when the Enchanter is finally alone with his victim, a knock at the door delays the inevitable: the police demand that he come downstairs. Soon, however, it turns out that the hotel manager has confused the spelling of the name, and the girl, tragically, falls victim to the molester.

Let's turn to the final sequence of the story in greater detail. In Nabokov's "Final Scene," the Prince encounters his daughter, who reproaches him for being "…not human. You are ours, since // you left my mother and now languish [*тоскуешь*]."[19] Succumbing to his daughter's enchantment, the Prince "disappears into the Dnieper."[20] The mermaids sing: "Swaying ever more quietly, // the misty bridegroom // sank to the bottom // and fell utterly silent."[21] Marine imagery pervades the second part of *The Enchanter*. The protagonist takes the girl to the seaside, where she dreams of learning "how to swim." (59) Sitting in the car, the Enchanter holds "a stick — a very valuable antique thing with a thick *coral* head," (61) while through the open window there pours "a *stream* of heat [*горячая струя*]" (61). At the hotel, rushing toward the sleeping girl, the protagonist "*ducked out* [*вынырнул*, literally "surfaced"] into the entrance hall next to a dimly illuminated nook" (69). In the room, on the "*island* of the bed" (69) lies a stunning girl, "*the flow and ebb* of her light-colored robe mingle[s] with revelations of her beauty" (70). Against the backdrop, "a truck ascended from *the bottom of the night*" (69) — a premonition of the car that will crush the rapist just a few pages later.

Finally, in the climactic sentence, the dramatic subtext linking *The Enchanter* to Pushkin's "The Mermaid" is laid bare: the girl's cry wakes the neighbors, and the frightened protagonist finds himself in the middle of the road — literally, "the ripple of [his] dance carried him to the *stage* centre" (76). The first encounter between the Enchanter and his mermaid daughter is accompanied by the stage direction: "And at this point the curtain rises." (8) The performance begins. At the end of the story, the curtain falls: the protagonist, who is, like the Prince, "not human," but an enchanter and, bluntly put, a paedophile, perishes, consumed by his reckless passion. *The*

[18]Геннадий Барабтарло, Бабушкина вещица. Сочинение Набокова. (Izd. Ivana Limbakha, 2011), pp. 86-92.
[19]Владимир Набоков, "Заключительная сцена к пушкинской 'Русалке,'" p. 487. Translation mine
[20]Ibid, translation mine.
[21]Ibid, p. 488; translation mine.

Enchanter, then, replicates the plot of Nabokov's conclusion to "The Mermaid": at its beginning, the protagonist encounters his daughter; at its end, he dies metaphorically lured to the bottom of the sea by the mermaid.

In closing, I would like to return to the time and setting of *The Enchanter*. Commentators have repeatedly discussed the story's fairy-tale chronotope, which veils the unbearable brutality of the violence.[22] The fantastic world of Pushkin's "The Mermaid," which, as my brief analysis has suggested, is unmistakably present in the story's subtext, may have exerted no less influence on some of Nabokov's artistic decisions. In particular, in Pushkin's drama, as in *The Enchanter*, all the characters remain unnamed, while the action takes place in a vaguely defined, quasi-fairy-tale space.[23]

As I have mentioned, direct time indications in *The Enchanter* are extremely rare, while the setting is deliberately reduced to a syncretic provincial European town. All the more striking, then, is the fact that in the final sequence, despite the temporal indeterminacy of the preceding events, the exact month is explicitly mentioned twice: "the weather was exceptionally warm for June" (61) and "thank Doom they did not go mushroom-hunting in the June"(67). Why does such an economical writer as Nabokov set the story's climax in June and draw attention to it twice?

To interpret this detail, it is worth returning to the protagonist's opening monologue. He asks himself whether his attraction to young girls might be regarded as the rare flowering of a fern "on the Walpurgis Night ['*Ivanova noch'*, Kupala Night] of [his] murky soul" (5). In Russian folklore, Kupala Night is associated with the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24 O.S.), and it is on this night, according to folklore, that the fern is said to bloom, granting access to hidden treasures and supernatural knowledge. The finale of *The Enchanter*, as we have seen, takes place in June. Moreover, the town to which the protagonist takes the girl is hosting a "flower show" (63), which explains why the hotel has only a room with a single bed available. Taken together, these three details — the repeated emphasis on June; the motif of the impossible flowering of the fern, which signifies the protagonist's impossible desire to possess the girl; and the

[22]Susan E. Sweeney has written a number of insightful studies exploring the fairy-tale subtext of the work. See: Susan Sweeney, "Fantasy, Folklore, and Finite Numbers in Nabokov's 'A Nursery Tale'," *Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 43 (Fall, 1999), No. 3, 1999, pp. 511-529. See also: Susan Sweeney, "Nabokov, Perrault, and Tales of Long Ago". *Vladimir Nabokov et la France*, ed. Yannicke Chupin, et al. (Presses universitaires de Strasbourg), 2017), pp. 47-66.

[23] These two features distinguish "The Mermaid" from the *Little Tragedies*, the works immediately surrounding it in Pushkin's dramatic corpus. The blending of the "fantastic" and the curiously "real", "human", and "relatable" in Pushkin's drama was noted by his early scholars, including Chernyshevsky, Belinsky, and Druzhinin. See: Владимир Рецептер, "Высокая трагедия: 'Русалка' и драматическая реформа Пушкина," *Московский пушкинист*, vol. IV (1997), pp. 233–277.

flower exhibition — allow me to hypothesize that the finale of the story takes place precisely on Kupala night. The metaphor that initially describes merely the possibility of the protagonist's despicable desire thus receives a literal realization: the fern finally "blooms," granting access to forbidden knowledge.

The Enchanter explores, in Dmitri Nabokov's words, "madness seen through the madman's mind."[24] One of the most important manifestations of this madness is the protagonist's misreading of the mermaid myth. By modelling *The Enchanter* on Pushkin's unfinished drama and using a mermaid's tail to disguise the heroine's childlike naivety, Nabokov allows his insane hero to perceive the girl as an irresistible water maiden. The aquatic visions, however, do not justify the violence; rather, they veil it, requiring the reader to see through the Enchanter's spell — a task made all the more suggestive by the fact that the Enchanter himself bears unmistakably aquatic features.[25] *The Enchanter* merely outlines a tendency to blur ethical boundaries by subverting Romantic reminiscences and, in particular, the mermaid myth. Humbert develops this device further, turning literary allusion itself into a potent means of aestheticizing and legitimizing his abuse. He "bolsters the legitimacy of his behavior by invoking a distinguished genealogy,"[26] in which the unnamed protagonist of *The Enchanter* appears to be one of his closest literary kin.[27]

Works Cited:

Barabtarlo, Gennady. *Phantom of Fact: A Guide to Nabokov's Pnin*. Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1989.

Boyd, Brian. *Nabokov's Ada: The Place of Consciousness*. Anna Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1985.

Boyd, Brian. *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Collins, Emily. "Nabokov's *Lolita* and Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*," *Nabokov Studies*, vol. 9 (2005), pp. 77-100.

Connolly, Julian W. *A Reader's Guide to Nabokov's Lolita*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009.

[24] Nabokov Dmitri, "On the Book Entitled *The Enchanter*, in Vladimir Nabokov, *The Enchanter* (Vintage International, 1991), p. 93.

[25]I have already mentioned the "coral head" of the protagonist's stick. Apart from that, in the Enchanter's dream, his hands are "turned into eight tentacles affixed to every detail of her nudity" (44); like Humbert, he is dreaming of "a circular island, with my little female Friday" (4). The examples can be easily multiplied.

[26]J. W. Connolly. *A Reader's Guide to Nabokov's Lolita* (Academic Studies Press, 2009), p. 22.

[27]Many thanks to Alex A., my first reader, and to Valery Timofeev, my academic adviser.

Dolinin, Alexander. "Nabokov and "Third-Rate Literature" (On a Source of *Lolita*)." *Elementa*, vol. 1 (1993), pp. 167-173.

Grayson, Jane. "*Rusalka* and the Person from Porlock," in *Symbolism and After: Essays on Russian Poetry in Honour of Georgette Donchin*, ed. Arnold McMillin. Bristol Classical Press, 1992, pp.162-185.

Johnson, D. Barton. "'L'Inconnue de la Seine' and Nabokov's Naiads," *Comparative Literature*, vol. 44 (1992), no. 3, pp. 225-248.

Meyer, Priscilla. *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's* Pale Fire. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1988.

Nabokov, Dmitri. "On the Book Entitled The Enchanter," in Vladimir Nabokov, *The Enchanter.* New York: Vintage International, 1991, pp. 81-109.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse: Commentary*. 4 vols.. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *The Enchanter*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov. New York: Vintage International, 1991.

Proffer, Carl. R. *Keys to* Lolita. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1968.

Pushkin, Alexander. "Rusalka," Trans, John Coutts, in *The Complete works of Alexander Pushkin*, 16 vols. Downham Market: Milner and Company Limited, 1999, vol.6, pp. 292-319.

Sommers, Elena "Nabokov's Mermaid: 'Spring in Fialta'," *Nabokov Studies*, vol. 12 (2009/2011), pp. 31-48.

Sweeney, Susan E. "Fantasy, Folklore, and Finite Numbers in Nabokov's 'A Nursery Tale'" *Slavic and East European Journal,* Vol. 43 (1999), No. 3, pp. 511-529

Sweeney, Susan E. "Nabokov, Perrault, and Tales of Long Ago". *Vladimir Nabokov et la France*, ed. Yannicke Chupin, et al. Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2017, pp. 47-66.

Бабиков, Андрей. Примечания. "Заключительная сцена пушкинской Русалке'" In Набоков, Владимир. Трагедия господина Морна. Пьесы. Лекции о драме. Saint Petersburg: Izd. Azbuka-klassika, 2008, pp. 625-630.

Бабиков, Андрей. Прочтение Набокова: Изыскания и материалы. Saint Petersburg: Izd. Ivana Limbakha, 2019.

Барабтало, Геннадий. Бабушкина вещица. Сочинение Набокова. Saint Petersburg: Ivd. Ivana Limbakha, , 2011, pp. 61-98.

Бонди, Сергей. Примечания к "Русалке" In Пушкин, Александр. Полное собрание сочинений, 16 vols. Izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1935-1959, vol. 7, pp. 610-638.

Набоков, Владимир. “О Ходасевиче”. Полное собрание сочинений русского периода. 5 vols. Saint Petersburg: Simpozium, 2008, vol.5, pp. 587-590.

Набоков, Владимир. Волшебник. Solus Rex. Izd. ACT: CORPUS, 2022.

Пушкин, Александр. “Русалка,” Полное собрание сочинений. 16 vols. Leningrad: Akadmeiia nauk SSSR, 1935-1959. Vol 6, p. 725.

Набоков, Владимир. “Заключительная сцена к пушкинской ‘Русалке’,” in *Трагедия господина Морна. Пьесы. Лекции о драме.* Moscow: Izd. Azbuka-klassika, 2008, pp. 485-488.

Рецептер, Владимир. “Высокая трагедия: ‘Русалка’ и драматическая реформа Пушкина,” *Московский пушкинист*, vol. IV, (1997), pp. 233–277.

Фомичёв, Сергей. *Пушкинская перспектива*. Moscow: Znak, 2007.