On Literary (Ab)normality: *Lolita* and Self-Translation

by

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Abstract

In this dissertation I consider a famous self-translation, the Russian version of *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, through the prism of a descriptive approach in translation studies. Self-translations have been traditionally excluded from consideration in scholarly studies as unrepresentative of common practices, yet I am convinced that comprehensive consideration of such texts is very valuable for the field of translation studies at large. I argue that in this translation Nabokov intentionally violated norms of translation; I approach the text of the novel as a highly sophisticated literary game, a game that was taken by the author to the next level in the Russian version of the novel. Critical consideration of Nabokov's reflection on the process of translating *Lolita* reveals the ambiguity of his own statements and opens to debate his own famous assessment of the Russian version as "correctly" translated into Russian (Nabokov "Postscript":192). The analysis of Nabokov's strategy of translation as evident in the English and Russian versions of the text confirms that Nabokov's version is very different from what would be a "correctly" translated novel in the hands of a commissioned translator. As violation of norms in translation is likely to result in sanctions, I review the Russian reception of novel in order to get a better understanding of what constitutes sanctions in regard to this work. In the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, this approach is particularly fruitful, as the Russian *Lolita* circulated widely in two drastically different cultural environments: first in the Soviet Union, then in post-Soviet Russia. My research examines a wide array of opinions about this text in the target culture in conjunction with culturally-specific emendations to the Russian text of the novel, as evident in common publishing practices in Russia. While the idea of norms only provisionally applies to Nabokov's own practice of translation (as there appears to be a pattern of emendations to the

Russian text in comparison with the original novel), the Russian reception of the novel was governed by norms that informed reception of translated literature in the target culture. Consequently, the text of the novel was systematically amended in common publishing practices of the novel. One could argue that the text of the Russian translation has been brought into compliance with the dominating norms of literature, and these norms were very different in various historical periods.

To V. and Y., my everything!

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1. Introduction

The goal of this dissertation is to consider self-translations (literary texts that were written and subsequently translated by their authors) through the prism of a descriptive approach in translation studies. The text chosen for this analysis is Vladimir Nabokov's most celebrated novel, *Lolita*. Nabokov wrote *Lolita* in English in 1955 and translated it into Russian in 1967. The author also produced a screenplay for a film adaptation of the novel in 1960 (it was revised and published in 1973). *Lolita* is a unique literary experiment, since the author was able to channel his creativity successfully through various media: prose and performance texts as well as the English and Russian languages. His success is evident in the worldwide recognition of his work: both the English and Russian language versions of the novel are frequently listed among the best literary works, and he was also nominated for an Academy award for his work on the script.

The descriptive approach in translation studies is often identified with its signature achievement, the idea of "norms" (as this approach considers translation practices as a heavily regulated, normative activity). This well-known and heavily researched novel by Nabokov does not, at first glance, fit the notion of "norm" for a number of reasons: it is a highly innovative work of fiction that stands above literary traditions; it is a translation that was produced by the original author twice, resulting in a screenplay and a Russian version of the novel; it is written, and re-written, in an innovative, unconventional language(s). The list can go on, but the examples above suffice to demonstrate that this novel has always been considered an exception to established practices, an exception that is situated outside of the realm of "norms." However, I am convinced that the notion of "norms" can and should be applied to this novel.

I use the idea of norms in a very broad sense, and I understand it as a totality of various, often conflicting axes of modalities[1] that apply to both participants in the act of indirect communication in literary works: the producer of a literary work (the author/translator) and the recipient of the literary work (the totality of readers in the target culture). In translation, one set of norms can be said to shape the text production. It can be identified through consideration of the translator's statements about transition in conjunction with analysis of his chosen practice of translation, as evident in the translated text. Another set of norms can be said to govern the reception of translated works. It can be identified through consideration of statements about translation in the target culture in conjunction with publishing practices of the translated text. Most descriptive studies do not make the above distinction; as a matter of fact, they are based on the premise that these two sets of norms are in sync, and translation practices at large are indicative of the axes of modalities that exist in the target culture. In this regard, Theo Hermans noted in "Norms of Translation" that most translators shape their discourses "in response to or in anticipation of real or perceived demands and needs of the recipient culture" (14). However, many descriptive scholars also concur that a translator can disagree with mainstream norms. In this regard, Lawrence Venuti's seminal book *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995, 2nd edition 2008) provides a useful overview of specific instances when translators opted to disagree with dominating norms of the target culture and practiced what Venuti terms "resistant" translation. While I do not subscribe to Venuti's view that *all* translators should invest considerable effort into subversion of the existing norms, this book makes evident that in certain cultural environments *some* translators *did*, in fact, challenge common practices of translation.

[1] These modalities are highly indicative of values associated with translations. The critical discourse about translations has been historically laden with indicators of such modalities, as almost everyone has an opinion of what a translated text must, should and could look like.

This justifies close consideration of self-translation in light of the descriptive approach. Self-translations are texts that were traditionally discounted in descriptive studies as unrepresentative of common cultural practices. Indeed, many authors (such as Iosif Brodsky or Vladimir Nabokov) opted to translate their literary works personally, specifically *because* they were dissatisfied with a translation produced by a commissioned translator. This conviction suggests their disagreement with norms of translation, as they were dissatisfied with the transformation of the text that was evident in the commissioned translation and elected to produce an alternative to it. My main objective in this dissertation is to consider self-translations through the prism of the descriptive approach in order to verify and clarify existing theoretical conjectures. This will be done by comprehensive consideration of a single text, the Russian version of *Lolita* by Nabokov.

In the opening chapter of this work, "On Norms and Abnormalities," I provide an overview of the descriptive approach and discuss important concepts (such as norms, shifts and sanctions). I also consider criticism of this approach in translation studies as my approach to the text of *Lolita* has been informed by this criticism. I then turn to considering the practice of self-translation in general through the prism of the descriptive approach. Ironically, insights into commissioned translators' behaviours make it too tempting for some scholars to approach self-translated texts on the premise that authors, too, will act as commissioned translators. This, I argue, might not be the case. Rather than approaching self-translated texts with a specific premise in mind, it is more instructive to consider what premise underlined a given author's practice of translation through careful examination of the resulting text in conjunction with the said author's statements about the translation.

In the following chapter, "The *Lolita* Game," I turn to a specific example of self-translation, *Lolita* by Nabokov. I frame this discussion by closely considering Nabokov's own conviction that art is a form of a good-natured deception, akin to a game. Indeed, Nabokov's original literary works have been commonly regarded as complex and multi-leveled literary games. With this understanding I review the text of *Lolita* and the text that frames the Russian version of the text "A Postscript to the Russian Edition" (1965). Nabokov frames the Russian text of *Lolita* with a reflection on the process of translation in which he rivals Humbert Humbert, the well-known unreliable narrator of *Lolita*, in unreliability. Interestingly, there is a certain selectivity with which scholars approached the text of the Postcript: while some statements made by Nabokov in this text were disputed by scholars and critics (such as Nabokov's laments about his deteriorating command of Russian, his assessment of the text as "clumsy"), other statements have been uncritically accepted (such as Nabokov's own remark that the Russian text of the novel is a "correct translation" ("Postcript" :192)). I explain this tendency by Nabokov's own remark that made the text of the translated novel relevant to the field of translation studies, a branch of knowledge that has historically been interested in nothing but the *sameness* of texts. This premise is in sharp contrast to considerations of Nabokov's screenplay in the field of adaptation studies, with its pronounced tendency to focus on Nabokov's changed intentions in the original novel and the screenplay. When difference in natural languages is not a factor (as both the original novel and the screenplay are written in English), scholarly responses naturally attribute changes in the resulting texts to the change in the author's artistic intentions. This is in stark contrast with the field of translation studies, where apparent differences in the texts of the English and Russian *Lolita(s)* were attributed to differences in natural languages (English and

Russian). As a result, subtle changes in the texts that could not be explained by the difference of languages were dismissed as unimportant in the overall design of the novel.

In the chapter titled "Literary Game Across Languages: Analysis of *Lolita(s)"* I intend to confront the totality of many subtle discrepancies between the versions as indicative of a substantial difference in Nabokov's artistic intentions based on the Russian text. I am particularly interested in Nabokov's rendering of repetitive, extra linguistic features of the text that are not subjected to language rules (such as numerals, use of italics and author-specific punctuation). Both languages have readily available means to retain these features; moreover, commissioned translators tend to retain them; and finally, Nabokov's own assertion of the importance of these features for his narratives would make it natural for him to retain them. And yet, as my analysis will show, he systematically amends these features in both the screenplay and the Russian version of the novel. The pattern of emendation that emerges in this analysis allows me to confirm provisionally that Nabokov's strategy of translation was informed by a set of very different norms of translation.

In the concluding chapter of the present work, "Translation Problems and Publishing Solutions," I turn to the reception of both the English *Lolita* and Nabokov's own Russian version in different cultural domains (West vs. East) and in different historical periods (Soviet Union vs. contemporary Russian Federation). The unconventional nature of the English *Lolita* (both thematically and linguistically) contributed greatly to forming Nabokov's canon. This canon, when it was first imported into the Soviet Union, was in stark disaccord with common practices of both original writing and translation. While novelty in original writing is commonly praised, I argue that there is very little tolerance for *difference* in cultural attitudes to translated literature, as is evident in unofficial Soviet responses to *Lolita*. Consequently, the popular rejection of

Nabokov's Russian version of the literary text has led to the unusual role that was assumed by the initial publishers of *Lolita*, as they either contemplated re-translation of this text for initial release or omitted the text of the novel altogether in compilations of Nabokov's Russian works.

The collapse of the Iron Curtain, however, has resulted in a tremendous cultural shift. Finally, the Russian readership gained unrestricted access to works by and about Nabokov. The increasing awareness of this writer's literary *œuvre* has led to emendations to the Russian text of *Lolita* that were different in nature. A fragment of the text that Nabokov arguably *intentionally* omitted in the Russian version of the novel is routinely included in contemporary editions of *Lolita*, and often seamlessly integrated into the main body of the text.

To conclude this introduction, I want to rely on Nabokov's own metaphoric language of games to encapsulate my dissertation. Nabokov has the reputation of a verbal trickster who engages his reader in particularly sophisticated literary games. In the Russian *Lolita* specifically, as most people would assume, he is certainly at liberty to take this literary game to a completely different level. My dissertation seeks to verify empirically this assumption. Does the target culture *really* grant the author/translator the right to play this game? As will become evident from this thesis, the answer to this question is negative, and I explain this by the powerful pressure exerted by norms of translation. Findings of this study are specific the the text of *Lolita* and its reception in various cultural contexts, and they illuminate the ways in which norms exerted their influence in this particular case. And, as this specific case illustrates, the power of normative pressure certainly deserves to be studied further.

2. On Norms and Abnormalities

In this introductory chapter, I will review the genesis of the descriptive approach in translation studies, its core concepts (norms, shifts and sanctions), as well as the criticism it garnered ever since it emerged in the late 1970s. I will then turn to considering self-translations in light of the descriptive approach, outlining the trajectory of scholarly insights about translated texts produced by the authors who also wrote the original works. Such texts were discounted until recently in considerations of translating practices through the prism of the descriptive approach, as scholars considered them to be exceptions to the established rules and anomalies in the practice of translation. However, descriptive insights into commissioned translators' behaviour created a backdrop against which self-translated texts seem less markedly different from mainstream practices. I am convinced, however, that self-translation is a category of texts that are particularly resistant to scholarly generalizations. This study will seek to verify and clarify existing theoretical conjectures about translation in general. My approach, however, requires a careful consideration of methodology, as the absence of parallel texts and innovative use of language by self-translating authors present significant challenges in relating such texts to normative practices.

2.1 Genesis of the Descriptive Approach in Translation Studies

This dissertation will rely significantly on the advancements made within the descriptive approach in translation studies, and therefore it seems necessary to start with a general outline of the genesis of this approach. The descriptive approach in translation studies, as expertly summarized by Theo Hermans in the introduction to *The Manipulation of Literature*, is based on a number of premises that are shared by scholars, such as:

> [a] view of literature as a complex and dynamic system; a conviction that there should be a continual interplay between theoretical models and practical case studies, an approach to literary translation which is descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systematic; and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interactions between literatures. (11)

As to the historical origin of this approach to translations, Hermans pointed out that it was rooted in the works of Russian Formalists (such as Yurii Tynianov and Roman Jakobson) as well as Czech Structuralists (Jan Mukařovský and Felix Vodička). As to the scholars-contemporaries that seemed to share the basic premises of this approach, Hermans identified Yuri Lotman, Claudio Guillen, Siegfried Schmidt, and Itamar Even-Zohar, among others. Needless to say, ever since this approach to texts first originated in the 1970s, it has garnered notable scholarly attention, and many more scholars have invested a considerable effort into pursuing its theoretical basis. Contributions by Gideon Toury, Anton Popovič, Theo Hermans, Andrew Chesterman and many others were particularly widely discussed in the field. This section will trace the historic development of this approach to translation and will critically examine contributions of individual scholars to the ongoing debates in the field.

In his seminal article "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), Jakobson broadened the traditional boundaries of translation and posited that translation can be of the following types:

> 1) Intralingual translation or rewording, which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
> 2) Interlingual translation or translation proper, which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
> 3) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation, which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems. (Jakobson 139)

This typology has had a tremendous impact on subsequent scholarship as it broadened the scope of the emerging field of translation studies. As a result, translations of literature to film, or

poems to music became visible to scholars working in the field. Consequently, translation came to be understood as a process of understanding, an idea that was first suggested by George Steiner in *After Babel* (1975). Steiner noted that to define three types of translation, Jakobson used the word "interpretation" three times. Consequently, he questioned Jakobson's typology on the grounds of a "fundamental hermeneutic dilemma," namely "whether it makes sense to speak of messages being *equivalent* when the codes are *different*" (274, emphasis in the original). For Steiner, the process of translation is synonymous with understanding, as he has unambiguously stated: "To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate" (7). This position converges with that of Yuri Lotman, who wrote in *Universe of the Mind* that an "elementary act of thinking is translation" (143).

Jakobson, having approached translation from a linguistic point of view, identified a category of literary texts that he considered untranslatable by definition--poetry--and posited:

> In poetry, verbal equations become a constructive principle of the text. Syntactic and morphological categories, roots and affixes, phonemes and their components (distinctive features) – in short, any constituents of the verbal code – are confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and carry their own autonomous signification. Phonemic similarity is sensed as semantic relationship. (142-143)

Yuri Lotman developed this point further, and maintained that *all* literary artworks exhibit such an autonomous secondary signification of all of their constituents[2]. As Lotman mantained, "Art is one of the means of communication" ("Ob isskustve": 19[3]). The notion of

[2] Lotman's ideas of art as a secondary modeling system were noted by such Western intellectuals as Julia Kristeva, who provided a succinct summary of his theoretical premise:

> Based on natural language, art is nevertheless of another, "superstructural order," it redistributes the primary logic of language according to new logical rules, conferring on humanity new mental (or, as one would say today, new cognitive) possibilities, different principles of logic for the reconstruction of the self and the world. (Kristeva 376)

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

artistic text is central to Lotman's framework, as it is approached as a "'reduced model of culture' not a philological phenomenon but the complex and interactive activity that creates meaning – the semiotic activity" (Kristeva 376). To borrow from an excellent discussion by Zylko (2001), Lotman's notion of text as a model is quite unique, as it represents the point of intersection of various chains of signification. First, it is rendered relative to reality (Zylko names this the "semantic aspect"), second, it is a definite structure ("syntactic aspect"), and finally, it is a sign that participates in communication ("pragmatic aspect" in Zylko's terms). Natural language was conceptualized by Lotman as a material model for the secondary modeling system, and secondary modeling was always conceived in his theoretical writings as built upon a given natural language.

Gideon Toury related this framework to translation studies, noting that: "Verbal texts […] are not the representation of only one organizing principle, that which pertains to their basic, primary code but also of one or more than one 'secondary modeling systems', […] so that, when undergoing an act of translating, they may have more than one semiotic border to cross" ("Translation": 1112-1113). This was the beginning of the fundamental change in the field of translation studies. This understanding of text made explicit that "ideal translation" (in a sense "an exact replica of the original") is theoretically impossible. This acknowledgment, in turn, has led to the need to reconcile tangible presence of many translated texts with this theoretical impossibility. As a result, descriptive studies can be credited with the emergence of interest in translators' agency, as they approach individual translated texts as tangible evidence of what would constitute such an "ideal" translation in various socio-cultural environments. Apparent differences in the versions are conceptualized as shifts along various axes of signification that

intersect within a literary text. The regularities of such shifts in translated works, in turn, shed light on the translators' role as cultural agents.

2.2 Core Concepts of the Descriptive Approach: Shifts, Norms and Sanctions

Toury's framework represents a radical change in the field dominated by theories that suggest what a translation *should* be. He boldly stated that "while one is always free to speculate and/or indulge in introspection, it is only through studies into actual behaviour that [a] hypothesis can be put to a real test" (*Descriptive*: 17). Consequently, he proposed a very simple methodology for analysis, which involves the process of "mapping" target text segments onto segments of the source text. Toury's rationale for such an approach to analysis can be reduced to the following: "Having been established for a series of paired segments, and grouped together on the basis of the comparisons themselves, translation relationships would then be referred to the concept of translation underlying the text as a whole" (*Descriptive*: 37). This approach marks a shift from theoretical conceptualizations of what translation *should* or *should not be*, to a formulation that translation *is* based on the examination of empirical evidence.

Toury conceived of translations as texts that are subjected to the norms of the target culture, defining norms as "translation of values shared by a community […] into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations" (*Descriptive*: 55). As such, norms inevitably affect the selection of the texts to be translated, as well as the production and distribution of translations. As to specific norms, Toury was able to identify preliminary norms (or norms that are linked with consideration as to what text types are imported by a given culture, as well as directness of translation); operational norms (that govern a translator's decisions during a translation); matricial norms (that relate to the material available in the target system),

and textual-linguistic norms (that determine the selection of material in which to formulate the text, both at the macro and micro levels). In subsequent scholarship Toury's notion of the "initial norm" was widely discussed. The "initial norm" has been linked by Toury to "the translator's basic choice between two polar alternatives" (*Descriptive*: 54). For him, a translator can subject himself to "either the original text, with its textual relations and the norms expressed by it and contained in it, or to the linguistic and literary norms active in the [target language] and the target literary polysystem, or a certain section of it" (*Descriptive*: 54). The first choice leads to a translation that is "adequate" and the second choice results in an "acceptable" translation. This initial choice, in the Toury framework, logically belongs to operational norms, and essentially determines the overall strategy of translation.

Anton Popovič pursued this line of thought further when considering literary translations. He noted that in the translation of literature, norms could derive from two sources: the original and the ideal translation. In the first instance the emphasis is placed "on the author's originality and faithfulness to the original, even in details" ("The Concept": 80). The second instance "demands from the translator that he should aspire to match the author in his achievement, and even surpass him in his own way" ("The Concept": 80), resulting in the overall faithfulness in the text, accompanied by a relatively free and arbitrary treatment of details. As we can see, this distinction is very similar to Toury's "initial norm" that determines the overall strategy of translation and its orientation towards the source and the target cultures, but with one important difference. Popovič posited the existence of "ideal translation" in the target culture, which represents a theoretical optimal choice made by the translator. This, in turn, allowed him to formulate the notion of "shift," which he defined as "all that appears to be new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected" ("The Concept": 79). It must

be emphasized that shifts in this framework are identified not as deviations between the source text and the translation, but rather as deviations between the theoretically optimal rendering ("the ideal translation") and the actual translated text. As a result, this framework was based on the premise that what had been traditionally viewed as negative in translation studies (distortions, deviations, omissions, mistranslations and such) can and should be analyzed in terms of differing cultural values and literary norms. Popovič posited that "an analysis of the shifts of expression, applied to all levels of the text, will bring to light the general system of the translation, with its dominant and subordinate elements" ("The Concept": 85). For Popovič, shifts are inevitable in translation but, paradoxically, they are understood as a positive phenomenon: "Shifts do not occur because the translator wishes "to change" a work but because he strives to reproduce it as faithfully as possible and to grasp it in its totality, as an organic whole ("The Concept": 80). Shifts, in a sense of "deviations from optimal rendering," bring more visibility to the translator's agency, as they make it possible to assess the translator's choices as stylistically marked rather than neutral. This approach allowed Popovič to further explore regularities in translators' choices: in addition to the spatial dimension described by Toury (orientation towards source vs. target cultures), in *Problemy Khudozhestv*EN*nogo Perevoda* Popovič introduced a temporal dimension, as translators can also choose to modernize the text, or stay within the linguistic timeframe of the original. As evident from the discussion above, this framework already contains (albeit in a dormant form) the idea that translators typically have a range of options in rendering the text (as opposed to Toury's singular option, which is deemed by the target culture as "correct"). In this framework, the translators' consistent choices within this range make it possible to identify the underlying system of translation, which in turn makes it possible to link this system with the system of values in a given culture.

This idea was subsequently further pursued by Theo Hermans. According to Hermans, "the term 'norm' may refer both to regularity in behaviour and to the mechanism which accounts for this regularity" ("Norms and the Determination of Translation": 25)[4]. Hermans asserted that translators shape their discourses in light of "expectations of expectations" (29) that the given community will have for their translations. As such, his position converges with Andrew Chesteman's "product norms." Hermans' valuable contribution to the debate about the nature of norms is that he further explored the "modalities of normative force" ("Norms and the Determination of Translation": 32). He maintained that the influence of norms can be observed in a range of options available to the translator at the time the translation is produced. Consequently, Hermans is interested in instances where translators are choosing options that would be considered only marginally "correct" in view of the target culture, as this is where the translator's agency is most evident.

As a result, Hermans further explored the idea that norms can affect translators' decisions on different levels and to a different extent. Toury tended to link observed regularities in translated literature almost exclusively with norms. Consequently, his framework has basic (primary) norms, followed by secondary norms or tendencies, followed by tolerated (or permitted) behaviour. Hermans proposed the following classifications, adding valuable categories of "conventions," "rules" and "decrees" that might account for a translator's decisions:

> Conventions arise out of precedent and rely on shared habits and mutual expectations which are common knowledge. Norms differ from conventions in that they have a binding character, carry some form of sanction, and may either grow out of customs or be issued by an authorizing instance. Rules are strong norms, usually institutionalized and posited by an identifiable authority, with or without the full assent of the individual

[4] Incidentally, Chesterman criticized Hermans for equating the regularities of translators' behaviour with norms, as "the regularities themselves are not the norms, they are merely evidence of the norms" ("Description, Explanation, Prediction" :91). According to Chesterman, to equate the two would be a category mistake.

> subjected to them. Decrees are specific directives issued as commands by a particular authority and backed up by drastic sanctions. ("Norms and the Determination of Translation": 7)

While Toury, Popovič and Hermans were interested primarily in literary translation, Chesterman expanded the scope of his inquiry, by arguing that "[any] translator must have a theory of translation: to translate without theory is to translate blind" (*Memes*: 3). Chesterman envisioned norms of translation as only a subsection of norms that govern direct/indirect communication in general. Chesterman approaches this classification from a different angle: in *Memes of Translation* he sees translation as characterized by a tension between the expectancy/product norms (or the idea of "what a translation of this text […] should be like") (64), and three professional/process norms (that govern translators' problem-solving activity), such as (1) the accountability norm, which is concerned with translators' loyalties; (2) the communication norm, which concern problems of optimizing communication; and (3) the relation norm, which establishes the relation of "relevant similarity" (69).

In summary, the discussion above serves to illustrate the development of thought within the descriptive approach. This approach contributed greatly to the transformation of two fundamental notions within translation studies: "equivalence" and "translator's agency." On one hand, the concept of equivalence (the presumed *sameness* of translated texts), which historically dominated the field of translation studies, has been essentially dismissed by insights into the behaviour of translators. Toury retained this concept by positing that "it is norms that determine the (type and extent of equivalence) manifested by actual translations" (*Descriptive*: 61). By equivalence he means "any relationship which is found to have characterized translation under a specific set of circumstances" (*Descriptive*: 61). Hermans, however, asserted that "the belief in equivalence is an illusion – a pragmatically and socially necessary illusion perhaps, but an

illusion nonetheless" as "we all know that a translation cannot coincide with its source" (see Shaffner *Translation*: 63). On the other hand, approaching translations as non-equivalent by definition has led to much interest in the translator's agency, to the extent that Chesterman recently suggested including a separate branch tentatively called Translator Studies into Holmes's classic map of the discipline ("The Name and Nature": 13).

By the same merit, however, scholarly insights into translators' behaviours illuminated difficulties in studing norms. In his ground-breaking study, Toury envisioned norms as being socio-culturally specific and unstable. Hermans further mantained that:

> Norms and rules […] can be strong or weak. They may cover a narrow or a broad domain. They may or may not be explicitly posited. They may be positive or negative, i.e., tending towards obligations or towards prohibitions. ("Norms and The Determination of Translation": 7)

It can further be added that norms, at least in theory, can be discourse-, language-, text-type or even author-specific, shaped by the canon of an author in the context of the given culture.

Nonetheless, these scholars agree that norms *do* exist, and all of the scholars in this field agree that the existence of norms is confirmed by sanctions[5] that follow if a translation violates the norms. Considering the importance that is attached to the notion of "sanctions," it comes as a complete surprise how little research into sanctions has been carried out. This can be explained by the fact that practicing translators are aware (even if this awareness is intuitive) of the existence of norms. As they are personally vested in ensuring that the outcome of their activity will be accepted in the target culture (and validated by publishing or any other dissemination of

[5] Toury, for instance, insisted on the dependence of norms on values that are shared in a given community: "[s]ociologists and social psychologists have long regarded norms as the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community -- as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate -- into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations" (*Descriptive*, 55-56). As such, they are essentially internalized, or "are acquired by the individual during his/her socialization and always imply *sanctions* -- actual or potential, negative as well as positive" (56, emphasis in the original)

their work), translators produce translations so that the resulting texts are in compliance with the existing norms in order *to avoid* possible negative sanctions and possibly *garner* positive ones. Theoretically, however, scholars agree that an individual translator can disagree with the existing norms, even though by doing so he runs the risk of sanctions that can take various forms (and can be positive, resulting in the praise of the translation, or negative, resulting in a critique of translation). As Toury noted, "*non-normative behaviour* is always a possibility" (*Descriptive*: 64, emphasis in the original). As to the specific instances of severe sanctions that might follow norm violation, Toury hypothesized that a range of possible sanctions might take various forms, from "a need to submit the end product to revisions" to the point of "taking away one's earned recognition as a translator" (*Descriptive*: 64). But this position reveals a paradox, as the above-mentioned sanctions would preclude an investigation into norm-breaking behaviour through the prism of a descriptive approach. In the first instance, the text that shows norm-breaking behaviour would not exist in the initial form (as the target culture would not validate it as a translation without substantial revisions). In the second instance, the text would not fall within the scope of translation studies because the target culture would deny it the status of translation, or functional equivalence to its source. However, scholars in the field maintain that norm-breaking behaviour is unlikely yet theoretically possible. Hermans addressed a rarity of such behaviour in translation by stating that "non-compliance with a norm in particular instances does not invalidate the norm" ("Norms and the Determination": 30). Chesterman concurred that "translators do have the option of not conforming to norms, after all, if they find there is sufficient motivation to do so and if they can persuade their clients to accept this" (*Memes of Translation*: 85). As we can see, according to this line of thought, norm-violating behaviour in translation requires an explicit justification on the part of the translator. The extent of this

justification indirectly points to the level at which the norm-breaking behaviour took place (which could theoretically occur at the level of conventions, norms, rules or, highly unlikely, decrees of translation).

Despite the theoretical plausibility of these ideas, this area is relatively under-researched in translation studies and sanctions are often equated with statements about translated texts in the target culture (as evident in critical reviews, scholarly and popular responses). Yet statements about translation are very unreliable, and might not be representative of the target culture at large: they might be highly subjective, informed by such factors as personal feuds and rivalries, or be insincere, such as reviews that are requested and published for marketing purposes. Further, if we accept that translators' behaviour tends to conform to the existing norms, and, as a matter of fact, is a direct reflection of these norms, then it becomes virtually impossible to determine whether norm-breaking behaviour of an individual translator can be interpreted as a personal disagreement with norms or whether cultural norms in themselves are changing, allowing for such disagreement in the first place.

Detailed investigations into norm-breaking behaviour in translation might prove to be very valuable for translation studies, as they will lead to a better understanding of the lower margins of tolerance to novelty in the target culture. In other words, such investigations would complement existing studies that outline what translators *have done* in different cultural environments, by providing data about things that they *absolutely could not have done* in translation and still disseminate the text. Such an investigation would explore in much more detail what form these sanctions can take. I believe that these sanctions extend far beyond a critique of translated texts. In much the same way that translation theorists draw a distinction between practicing translators' *statements* about translation and the nature of their problem-

solving *actions* in rendering the text, a distinction must be made in considering sanctions in the target culture. Translation critique or praise often determines a specific action towards a translated text in the publishing industry of the target culture, such as increase/decrease in publishing numbers, corrections between various editions, a need for a commentary, or a preface, etc. Critique and praise should be considered in conjunction with such actions.

But what groups or individual translators are likely to exhibit norm-breaking behaviour? It is certainly not enough for a translator for produce (for whatever reason) an unconventional translation, as the target culture must also accept and validate the text as a translation. It appears that cultural tolerance for unconventional choices in translation is more likely when these choices are made by a figure of authority in translation, rather than a novice translator. Authors that decide to translate their own works into another language (self-translating authors) are certainly one example of such figures of authority. In this regard, Hermans once remarked that "we commonly accept that the most reliable translation is an 'authorized' translation, the one formally approved and legally endorsed by the author" (see Shaffner *Translation*: 64) and such acceptance might even be more pronounced for a text produced by the author of the original. The self-translation of *Lolita* can help to clarify and verify theoretical conjectures by descriptive scholars. Following Hermans and Chesterman, I will examine two distinct aspects of norms: (1) what, if any, norms governed Nabokov's production of the Russian text and (2) what, if any, norms governed the reception of the Russian text in the target culture.

2.3 The Legacy of the Descriptive Approach

I view translations as texts that originate in the inter-cultural space (rather than in the target culture alone), and this space can be best characterized as a space of various, and often conflicting, modalities (which norms of translation essentially are). It must be noted, however, that not all scholars in the field of translation studies seem to share this position. Since emerging in the 1970s, the descriptive approach has been applied extensively in the field of translation studies. However, as Christina Schäffner rightfully notes, its "value has been both asserted strongly and called into question" (Schäffner "The Concept": 2). The critical responses to this approach raised very important questions that I will consider closely and take into account in my analysis.

Critical apprehension of this approach can be attributed, at least in part, to the ambiguity of the very term used by the scholars, "normative." This term has been used historically in the field to designate the various dominant modalities that are evident in translators' renderings of the target text. This term can be used as a synonym for "prescribed," but it can also be used in a descriptive sense, a synonym for "normal" or natural under a certain set of conditions. An excellent discussion of this issue appears in Chesterman (*Memes*: 52-54). The author posited that the distinction is typically very clear: "If translation theory […] is to be a genuinely scientific undertaking, it must of course be descriptive. Applied research, or translator training, naturally focuses on what translators should be like, prescriptively, but this is not the task of translation theory itself" (Chesterman *Memes*: 52). However, when the term "normative" is used, these two meanings are juxtaposed, and this often leads to equating "normative" with "prescribed," rather than "natural." This is evident in Bell's equation of the normative approach with "the setting up of the series of maxims consisting of dos and don'ts" (Bell 1991: 10, qtd. in Chesterman *Memes*:

52). The juxtaposition is particularly apparent in a somewhat sarcastic discussion by Douglas Robinson:

> They [translators] translate now this way, now that way, however feels right in each isolated situation, without organizing their intuitive decisions into a coherent systems of norms – or else worse, they intuitively organize their decisions into the *wrong* system of norms…
> "We could help them!" these theorists cry. "We have considered the matter at a more comprehensive general level and could guide them to the right decision in *every* situation." (Robinson xi, emphasis in the original)

This passage is valuable for two reasons. First, it captures a general sentiment towards normative studies; second, it demonstrates what the normative approach should *not* be reduced to. Descriptive approaches allow scholars to describe what Robinson's "this way" or "that way" actually means at the abstract level. It is this approach that allows us to link translators' decisions with a certain underlying system, both natural and internalized (or, to borrow from Robinson, "intuitive"), developed due to a culturally-specific tradition. This system, on the other hand, might also be somewhat artificial, imposed by such factors as a theoretical current, or the translator's opinion of the merit of the work (or Robinson's "wrong" system). These findings, however informative, shall not be applied by translators in their practice as ready-made solutions, as the set of conditions under which the solutions have been developed is perpetually changing.

An interesting take on the disagreement with norms appears in Lawrence Venuti's survey of contemporary translation practices in the West, his seminal book *The Translator's Invisibility*. Venuti does not seem to doubt the idea that translating literature is an activity that is subjected to the influence of norms. He convincingly shows that contemporary norms of translation place a very high value on the fluency of a translated text:

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> A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the "original." (Venuti *The Translator's*: 1)

As a result, Venuti invests a considerable effort into providing a solid theoretical basis for practicing translators to disagree with the stated norm of translation and it is evident in the notion of "resistant translation," which he develops and endorses throughout the book. Venuti does not make any secret of his motives to write the book:

> The motive of this book is to make the translator more visible so as to *resist* and *change the conditions* under which translation is theorized and practised today, especially in English-speaking countries. Hence, the first step will be to present a theoretical basis from which translations can be read as translations, as texts in their own right, permitting transparency to be demystified, seen as one discursive effect among others. (Venuti *The Translator's*: 17, emphasis added)

As we can see, the motive here is clearly linked with a change of conditions, with the dismissal of a certain "natural" or culturally and historically justified set of norms that govern the process of translation. Venuti's detailed survey of translation reviews in the opening chapter of the book certainly confirms that "fluency" is a dominant value in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of translation, as it is the conformity to this value that is commonly evoked in translation reviews and often serves as a basis for translation assessment. Venuti's approach to norms, however, can be essentially reduced to creating alternatives to this practice, as he states: "The aim is to develop a theory and practice of translation that resist the dominant values in the target culture so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text" (Venuti *The Translator's*: 18). As we can see, the "resistant translation" is also linked with originality: translation is a creative profession, yet the credit for originality is typically awarded to the author of the work in the target culture. According to Venuti, as far as the translators' role is concerned, conformity to the

norms of the target culture is intellectually inept (and therefore is viewed negatively), while non-conformity is creatively charged (and therefore positive). Unfortunately, the notion of translator's creativity in Venuti's writings is reduced to a mere encouraging of the translator's choices that represent the other side of the normative (in a sense similar to Robinson's "natural") spectrum. As a result, Venuti's highly descriptive account of what translation currently *is*, serves as a basis to illustrate prescriptively what it *should not be*, resulting in a list of formulations:

> Translation is a process that involves looking for similarities between languages and cultures—particularly similar messages and formal techniques—but it does this only because it is constantly confronting dissimilarities. It can never and should never aim to remove these dissimilarities entirely. A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other, and resistancy, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures. (Venuti *The Translator's*: 306)

It must be acknowledged that Venuti's ideas about translation practice certainly achieve his objective, as they make the field of translation studies as a whole more visible by sparking passionate debates about the subject. Moreover, this framework provides a solid theoretical basis for practicing translators to disagree with the established norms, to search for an alternative form of expression. While theoretically valuable, practical guidelines for applying Venuti's ideas are somewhat vague, which is particularly clear in the examination of translations he endorses as "resistant." The controversial nature of his examples, in turn, casts a shadow of doubt on his theoretical premise as well.

For example, to illustrate the fact that "resistant," foreignizing, translation is not necessary elitist, Venuti uses an example of *The Brothers Karamazov* by Dostoevsky, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. This tandem of translators (one of whom is a native English speaker and another native Russian speaker) set out to re-translate Russian classics that

are mostly known to the English-speaking audience through translations by Constance Garnett. These translators make no secret of their chosen approach, in contrast to Garnett's translations that "revised, 'corrected' or smoothed over his [Dostoevsky's] idiosyncratic prose" (Venuti *The Translator's*: 122) they decided to adhere more closely to the writer's Russian. The foreignizing effect of their translation stems from recreating Dostoevsky's specifically Russian syntax in English and experimenting with words of different registers and dialects of English. It must be pointed out that Venuti is hard-pressed to find evidence to support his opinion about the benefit of such translations, as he lists the opinion of an anonymous participant in a discussion forum on the Internet, who states that this translation is "fuller and flows better[6]" (Venuti *The Translator's*: 123). With the exception of this anonymous supporter, translations by Pevear and Volokhonsky have drawn serious criticism, particularly among people who have been trained to assess translations.

The nature of translators' use of language is particularly widely criticized by scholars. In a detailed discussion of their language in "The Sweet Smell of Success?" Michael Berdy and Vladimir Lanchikov point out that this tandem routinely fails to distinguish between common language use and unique/author-specific use. As a result, they consistently render common Russian expressions by highly unusual English words, and downplay the inventiveness of authors they translate by selecting common English words in places where their Russian authors violated the language rules. This observation allows the scholars to conclude that the language of this translation is the language of Pevear/Volokhonsky, and is not representative of Dostoevsky's prose. Gary Soul Morson in a blunt review of this translation points out that the translators' chosen approach makes translators visible but that this visibility completely distorts the

[6] In absence of any information about this anonymous reviewer, it is not clear just how qualified this person is to assess translations. It might as well be that the reviewer "likes" this translation because theorists, reviewers and publishers (all people involved in norm-setting activity) presented this translation as superior to previous versions.

hermeneutic aspect of the work; he approximated the effect by reading the Pevear/Volokhonsky translation and drawing a parallel with a well-known English text: "Imagine someone translating *Paradise Lost* from English into Russian who had somehow missed that Milton was a Christian" (Morson 93).

David Bellos considers broad cultural implications of this approach in "Fictitious of the Foreign." Citing a paradox of foreignization, Bellos maintains that true foreignization, which enriches the target culture, involves no translation at all, as it typically results in the influx of a new lexicon in the target language. This process can only happen when a condition of the initial familiarity with the source culture is met, as without it a foreignizing translation dissolves into something completely different; it becomes "a representation of the funny ways foreigners speak" (Bellos 42). As we can see, under a certain set of conditions (and these conditions certainly apply to the translation of Russian classics), foreignizing translation can only reaffirm the ethnocentric superiority of the target culture.

The discussion above serves to illustrate several points. It is entirely plausible that the idea of norms might not cross the minds of practicing translators when working on a translation of a literary text. However, translators are inevitably faced with norms when they attempt to disseminate the fruits of their labor, as producing a translation is only a part of translation dissemination within a given culture. While some translations may be justified by the development of language itself (such as the need to re-translate works by William Shakespeare into contemporary English), most translations and re-translations of Russian classics took place over a considerably shorter time span, and changes in language use itself cannot account for the need to produce another version of the text. Changing norms (and not just norms of language use, but rather broad cultural norms in representing "the other") can account for the need to

create a new version of the text. Their influence can be seen in the choices that practicing translators make when rendering a text and their justification of the choices, in the publishers' willingness/reluctance to accept these justifications, and in the reviewers' acceptance and validation of them. In short, norms of translation should by no means be equated with Bell's "dos" and "don'ts" of translation practice, but should rather be considered comprehensively in light of the cultural context, in order to understand why the target cultural context encouraged the "dos" and prevented the "don'ts." Further, while I disagree that contemporary norms of translation should be challenged by practicing translators, Venuti's work is an invaluable source of information that illustrates that certain cultural contexts did, indeed, give strength to practicing translators to incorporate the "don'ts" into their practice of translation and, more importantly, the target culture validated the "don'ts" as acceptable. But what was the nature of their disagreement with the existing translations? Why did the target culture tolerate norm-violating behaviour in these instances, but not the others? These questions are yet to be addressed in the scholarship. A closer look at such instances might prove to be very revealing about the functioning of culture.

In this sense, my approach converges with that of Anthony Pym, who called for the need to pay more attention to the concrete instances in which norms originate. As a general criticism of the normative approach, Pym asserted that: "Our attention should perhaps be focused on the human negotiators, the people involved in the development of translational norms, rather than on the mere apparition of the norms themselves" (Pym 113). The focus on the singular and individual in translation practices, according to Pym, can greatly benefit translation studies as a whole:

> Instead of compiling chronicles of stability (since that is what we first find when we start looking for norms), we approach the history of change (which is, after all, what history is all about). Instead of risking an arbitrary selection of regularities or social groups, we can at least point to evidence that might help tie our descriptions to things actually at work

> within the historical objects. And instead of mapping norms onto just one social group or dominant ideology, we start to see them as the results of disagreements bridged by adaptation and compromise. (Pym 112)

The general description of norms above illustrates at least two ways in which these notions can be applied to specific texts, such as Nabokov's own translation of the novel *Lolita*. On one hand, a modified basic methodology developed by descriptive studies can prove to be a valuable tool to address regularities in the translator's choices as evident in the text of the translation (as it is in the regularities of the behaviour where the influence of norms is discovered). A discussion of important limitations of this methodology in regards to self-translations will appear later in this chapter. In recent years, descriptive studies provided valuable insights into commissioned translators' behaviour. These studies will serve as a background for my discussion of Nabokov's strategy in translation. On the other hand, Nabokov's endeavour as a self-translator has been the subject of painstakingly detailed scholarly scrutiny. If we accept that any scholarly or critical reflection on his self-translation is underlined by Chesterman's expectancy norm (in other words, any scholar approaches this text from a position of what a translation/this translation should be), Nabokov's scholarship provides invaluable material to scrutinize Pym's "history of change" of which *Lolita* was a part of. This history, while very local in nature (after all, it only applies to the reception of *Lolita* in various socio-cultural contexts) will nonetheless shed light on complicated cultural mechanisms as well. While the text(s) of *Lolita* remain the same, fossilized by the author in different forms, the scholarly reflections on these texts are drastically different, from assessments stating that "*Lolita* may be termed a fairly close translation" (Grayson 10) to such extremes as "a wonderful but very liberal, very author-specific (as the author is at liberty to do anything) translation" (Nosik 240). There is, of course, a share of the subjective opinion in these assessments; however, there is also a certain continuity in scholarly and critical opinions about

the text. In this work I do not intend to debate the merit of the Russian version of the novel. On the contrary, my objective is to present a broad range of opinions about the text of *Lolita* as completely justifiable in a given cultural context.

While this approach might prove to be fruitful, relating a self-translated text to the descriptive approach is very challenging due to historical, conceptual and methodological factors. These factors will be closely considered below.

2.4 Self-translations in Light of the Descriptive Approach

Nowadays scholars almost unanimously agree that self-translation has always been a neglected area in the field of translation studies. In a volume dedicated to the history of translation studies, Julio Cesar Santoyo lists self-translations as one of the "blank spaces" in the field (Santoyo 21); the editors of the volume *The Bilingual Text: History and Theory of Self-translation,* note a common scholarly attitude towards such texts as "idiosyncratic anomalies" when compared to mainstream translations (Hokenson and Munson 1).

There are many persistent misconceptions surrounding self-translations, which should be addressed here. First and foremost, there is a common belief that self-translations are exceptionally rare and, as an indirect implication of this statement, they are not valuable theoretically. But, as Hokenson and Munson convincingly show in their review of this practice, "Self-translation was a *common* practice in the ambient translingual world of early modern Europe" (Holkenson and Munson 1, emphasis added), and many writers translated their Latin texts into vernacular dialects. While this practice diminished somewhat during the rise of nation-states, events of more recent history (explorations, colonizations, wars, deportations, and other displacements) "propelled writers into new languages where many flourished as self-translators

(ibid). It can only be added that even more recently, the facts of modern lifestyles (globalization, increased mobility, emergence of social media platforms, and the status of English as *the lingua franca* of the modern world, among others) further encourage the ever-increasing number of bilinguals and their literary pursuits. This leads Santoyo to conclude that:

> Self-translations are not at all *exceptions*, nor are they *rare* EN*ough*, nor *few, very few indeed*; we cannot keep saying that they are "*not very common in the field of creative writing,* or that "*few authors have dared to translate their own works*," or that they are *borderline cases*. Research in the history of this particular area will show, is in fact beginning to show, that as Christopher Whyte wrote two years ago, "self-translation is a much more widespread phenomenon than one might think" (2002, 64). And worthy, therefore, of receiving much more attention than it has so far received. (Santoyo, 25, emphasis in the original)

So, if the practice of self-translation has had a very long history, why hasn't it received much scholarly attention? Holkenson and Munson posit that "the neglect of the bilingual text in translation theory as well as critical theory stems rather more directly from the fact that the conceptual problems are daunting" (Holkenson and Munson 2).

What has historically served as legitimate grounds to exclude self-translations from the scope of interest for translation studies is the notion of "liberty" that the self-translator enjoys, given his dual status of author and translator of his own work. The notion of authorial liberty has only been reinforced over the years. A decade ago scholars articulated this idea as a tentative hypothesis: "since the writer himself is the translator, he can allow himself bold shifts from the source text which, had it been done by another translator, probably would not have passed as an adequate translation" (Grutman 18). Nowadays this idea is presented as a definitive feature of self-translations: "Research to date had shown that self-translators bestow upon themselves liberties of which regular translators would never dream; self-translation typically produces another 'version' or a new 'original'" (Cordingley 2). In reference to *Lolita* specifically, the assessment of Nabokov's Russian text as "a fairly close translation" (Grayson 10) is nowadays

almost exclusively presented as an *œuvre* of the author-translator who "enjoyed his authoritative freedom to a degree that any ordinary translator could never afford" (Cechanovičius and Krūminienė 129). The idea that an author-translator *always* exercises liberties in translation is very persistent, yet highly debatable. These liberties, I am convinced, only appear as such when self-translations are approached from the vantage point of commissioned translations. Commissioned translators change the texts too, yet self-translators change text in a drastically different way, and the regularity of such behaviour alone suggests its normative nature. The problem here can be reduced to the following: self-translations might be governed by norms that are drastically different from those that affect commissioned translations, yet they remain virtually unknown in the scholarship. As a result, self-translations are approached on the basis of documented norms as evidenced in regularities of choices among commissioned translators, and, quite predictably, they seem to be eclectic and idiosyncratic at best.

Historically, even Gideon Toury, while greatly expanding the object of study by introducing the term "pseudo-translations," or "production and distribution of texts as if they were translations" (Toury *Descriptive*: 141), specifically excluded self-translations from his study. Toury's interest in self-translations was limited to identifying which version of the text (the first, second or an idiosyncratic combination of both) future practicing translators will use and acknowledge as the main source. He criticized any theoretical attempts to compare emendations of self-translating authors to those by practicing translators, claiming that such attempts are only relevant for the discipline "when *a translator* has actually done" them (Toury *Descriptive*: 75, emphasis in the original). This reasoning is understandable if we keep in mind that Toury's approach was deliberately target-oriented, and this scholar was not interested in comparing translations to the source texts.

As evident from the above statements, Toury tended to differentiate between an author and a commissioned translator, and considered the author as not subjected to the influence of socio-cultural norms. This is an indication of the assumed authorial "freedom" in a strictly socio-cultural sense, that "the special status accorded to, and assumed by, the translator who is also the author of the original means that the self-translator is unique in not being sanctioned for overly exercising creativity in translation" (Cordingley 2) [7]. As a result, it has become a relatively common assumption that self-translators can easily abandon the original concept of the work and whimsically introduce new embellishments to it. The author is traditionally viewed as having a direct, linguistically-unmediated access to the underlying concept of the literary work, and as such is often conceptualized as the only person in a position to select and validate the most appropriate means to express these concepts in a different medium. Amendments to their works in translation have been traditionally approached as determined by the differences in languages (or, by extension, difference in poetics resulting from the difference in medium). Nabokov's scholarship provides an invaluable insight into this process.

Self- translations are, in some sense, a privileged category of translations, simply by virtue of being produced by the author. In this regard, Theo Hermans remarked that "we commonly accept that the most reliable translation is an 'authorized' translation, the one formally approved and legally endorsed by the author" (see Schäffner *Translation*: 64). The idea of even increased reliability certainly applies to self-translations, texts produced by the authors. Arguably, it was this idea that brought self-translations into the focus of translation studies. In the case of Nabokov, this is evident in the conclusion by Beaujour, who approached versions of

[7] Actually, this statement is very debatable. As Chapter Four will show, self-translators too are sanctioned for violating the norms of translation. The difference between traditional translators and self-translators is in the severity of sanctions: a product of an author's endeavour in translation might still be published and severely critiqued while a comparable translation by a commissioned translator might not be published in the first place.

Lolita as ultimate texts, concluding that "because self-translation makes a text retrospectively incomplete, both versions become avatars of a hypothetical total text in which the versions in both languages would rejoin one another and be reconciled" (*Ali*EN *Tongues*: 112).

However, Beaujour's view was based on the assumption that both texts are in a same relationship to the underlying concept of a literary work, as it does not question whether the author intended to produce an exact replica of the original. Therefore, the apparent differences between the texts were seen initially as differences between the languages that embodied this underlying concept, or the respective natural languages (English or Russian) the author opted to use. Thus Nakhimovsky and Paperno, for example, characterized the differences between different versions of the novel as follows:

> Outright puns are more characteristic of Nabokov's English, while the Russian excels in a more subtle word play. The difference, moreover, is not accidental but reflects some intrinsic properties of the languages involved. ("A Linguistic Study": 86)

In a similar fashion, Cummins approached a comparative assessment of lexical fields in *Lolita(s):* "Certain interconnected images of high metaphorical significance to *Lolita* have interdependent and natural Russian associations important to the American work" (Cummins 355). Reflecting specifically on Nabokov's lexical choices in translation, he concluded that:

> In each case Nabokov has chosen a fundamental Russian equivalent in order to exploit an intrinsically Russian development from root-meaning to extended meaning (as in dym, dymka, dymchatyi) and to specify and develop the original generality. Yet in no case are the Russian equivalents limited to single correspondences. Each dominant has a rich series of secondary transformations. (363)

The apparent differences in the texts were often dismissed, as Clarence Brown put it, due to the fact that "the potentialities of the linguistic environment are simply different" ("A Little Girl": 20).

While some of the discrepancies between the texts could be explained by differences in the languages involved, these scholarly attempts also made clear that not *all* differences between these versions could be explained by such differences in languages. Thus, Cummins also cautiously mentions that the Russian text features "some unexplained willful distortions" (Cummins 355) [8]. These discrepancies can only be termed as "unexplained and willful," as they cannot possibly be justified by differences in languages.

Subsequently, the changes in the Russian text of *Lolita* began to be assessed in their hermeneutic aspect. Defending the Russian text[9], Barabtablo reasons that "[m]any of the Russian *Lolita*'s emendations help to unravel the riddles of the original; some even provide ready solutions to those cruxes that Nabokov thought might baffle" (Barabtablo 249). This statement is also based on the implicit assumption that the second version of the text is in the same relationship to the underlying concept of the text as the original novel, yet it acknowledges the author's more active role in the translation process.

This understanding also occurred against the backdrop of the rapid research into commissioned translations by using the descriptive approach. As many descriptive studies to date have shown, traditional translators also systematically re-write their texts to accommodate the change in readership. Quite representative here is a conclusion by Rachel May, who carried out a superb comparative study in literary translation from Russian into English, concluding:

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[8] Examples of such "distortions" abound in the Russian text. For example, Nabokov's English Lolita is "four feet ten" (*L SN*c: 7), or 147.3 centimeters, but her Russian counterpart is "piat' futov bez dvukh vershkov" (Nabokov 1999: 5), i.e. 143.5 centimetres. Similar discrepancies are frequent in the script: Annabel, Lolita's precursor in both the English and Russian novels, is "a few months my junior" (*L SN*c: 9), while in the movie script Humbert notes, that "I was fourteen and she was twelve" (Nabokov 1996: 680). Not only is Lolita smaller and younger in the successive versions of the novel, Humbert Humbert appears to be younger too, as his observations show. "In my twenties and early thirties, I did not understand my throes so clearly" (*L SN*c: 18) is translated as: "No v *dvadtsat'-dvadtsat' piat' let* ia ne tak iasno razbiralsia v svoikh stradaniiakh" (Nabokov 1999: 19, lit. – when I was twenty - twenty-five").

[9] A detailed discussion of why the Russian text had to be defended in the first place in the second part of the 20th century will appear in Chapter 2.

> In the case of English versions of the language of Russian narration, especially in works from the period between Stalin and Gorbachev, a pattern of linguistic changes emerges that is so regular, pervasive, and even predictable that it amounts to a separate grammar of translation practice. Normalization of language leads to repeated and generalizable shifts in syntax, which result in erasure of the subjective elements of narrative voice and, therefore, in regular alterations in literary style. (*The Translator*: 34)

Greater awareness of the transformative power of translation in general had led some scholars to question the very validity of the term "self-translator" and, consequently, to question the traditional separation of self-translating authors into a special category. In a recent volume of *Orbis Litterarum* dedicated to self-translation, Susan Bassnett questioned this traditional distinction:

> How useful is the term "self-translation" in any case? For if all translation is a form of rewriting, then whether that rewriting is done by the person who produced a first version of a text or by someone else is surely not important. What matters are the transformations that the text undergoes, the ways in which it is reshaped for a new readership. (Bassnett 287)

As evident from the statement above, growing awareness of translators' agency has led to the fact that self-translators' supposed "liberties" appear not drastically marked against the patterns of changes that commissioned translators routinely exhibit in their practice. Accepting that these emendations are informed by the norms of translation, some scholars hypothesize that self-translation might be subject to the *same norms*, albeit to a lesser/greater degree. This is evident in a discussion of the approach adopted by Michael Boyden and Liesbeth De Bleeker, the editors of a recent volume dedicated to self-translation. Drawing on Chesterman's classification of norms, they assert that this classification can be a useful tool in describing self-translation processes as well:

> The more important question, then, is which particular norms are at work in self-translations. One could claim, for instance, that what Andrew Chesterman (1997) refers to as the "relation norm" (which establishes a relation of "relevant similarity" between source and target text) is often weaker for self-translators, who may be less bound by the

> expectation of source text equivalence. On the other hand, in spite of the assumed dictate of fluency, it cannot be denied that "regular" translations sometimes display a relatively high tolerance for correctives or explanatory insertions. In this regard, self-translators seem more constrained by their audience's horizon, or by Chesterman's "accountability norm" (which involves the translator's loyalty to the original, the commissioner or the prospective audience): they are supposed to guard over the coherence of the text and are inclined to smooth over, rather than point out, inconsistencies springing from the process of cultural transfer, which they will sometimes do at the cost of violating socially transmitted standards of equivalence. A translator is bound by the demand of consistency in his translation method. A self-translator, however, is often also expected to project a coherent self-image, which may require rewriting of the original. This is not necessarily an expression of freedom. It is simply another norm to be reckoned with. (Boyden and De Bleeker, 181)

The question of "which particular norms are at work in self-translations" is, indeed, of high importance for this emerging field. However, in the statement above, the authors suggest that norms extrapolated from practices of commissioned translators should be applied to the practice of self-translation as well, thus implicitly suggesting that self-translation is somehow similar to traditional translation. I argue that while such an approach can certainly be useful when comparing practices that exist in traditional translation with those that exist in self-translation, it does not answer the question, "Which particular norms are at work in self-translations?" Rather, it simply answers the question, "How does traditional translation compare to self-translation?" This point illuminates the gap in the scholarly field, a simple fact that self-translation has never been approached in its specificity but has always been compared with traditional translation. It seems to be more instructive to contrast these two types of translation modes in order to grasp self-translation in its specificity, and to understand why authors, often *despite* the readily available opportunities and means to commission a translator, choose to personally render their own works into another language. Both commissioned translators and self-translators produce another version of the text, yet this is where the similarity between these two types of translating ends.

This is not to suggest that the very notion of norms is not useful for describing self-translation. One can hypothesize that the specificity of self-translation can be contrasted with that of traditional translation on the basis that certain norms are non-factors in governing self-translators' problem-solving activities. Consider, for instance, Toury's initial norm, or the translator's choice of allegiance to the source or the target text/linguistic environment/culture. This choice, while often subconscious, is of paramount importance for traditional translation. However, it seems to not apply to self-translation at all: "here [in self-translation] the translator is the author, the translation is an original, *the foreign is the domestic and vice versa*" (Holkerson and Munson: 161, emphasis added). Specifically in reference to *Lolita*, it has also been said that: "On the whole, in the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, the very concepts of 'foreign' and 'domestic' escape clarity, as the original version was written in English—a foreign language to its author—and only then translated into his native Russian" (Cechanovičius and Krūminienė: 117).

By the same merit, one can hypothesize that the initial norm for self-translation is of a completely different sort, as it concerns the potential liberties that the author can take with the text. The author is always thought of being at liberty to re-write the text (he is allowed to have "the expression of freedom" mentioned above), but the more important question is in what circumstances does he choose to exercise this liberty. I argue that what Boyden and De Bleeker list as "simply another norm to be reckoned with" (Boyden and De Bleeker 181) is actually of paramount importance for self-translation. We can only compare self-translation with traditional translation when the author *decides to act as a translator*. In some extreme cases, the author might exercise his authorial liberty by refusing to produce another version of the text, which obviously results in the absence of a self-translation. This, too, constitutes a meaningful fact in the target cultural matrix. This issue, authorial liberty and ways in which authors can exercise

this liberty, will be further discussed in this chapter. At this point, however, it must be reiterated that it is more instructive to approach self-translation as an activity that differs from traditional translation. Any attempt to project the findings of inquiries into traditional translations onto self-translations will result in merely re-enforcing the idea that self-translations are different from translations proper but will not address the question of how they are different.

A distinctly different and broad understanding of "authorial freedom" results from the observation that many bilingual authors have, at least at some point in their lives, been exposed to translation. Knowledge of a second language, especially in a context of displacement (forced or voluntary), often allows an author to secure a modest initial income by translating. The recognition of the writer in a new cultural milieu often leads to a financially comfortable living, which provides new opportunities, among them an opportunity to commission a translator to translate his or her own work. Nonetheless, such authors often reject this opportunity, and this rejection might be linked with their previous experience in translation. This link can be exemplified by the following cases, which highlight two extreme points of a certain continuum that applies to many self-translators.

On one end of this continuum is the case of Lilliana Lounguina's *Les Saisons de Moscou* (1990). This book is the award-winning memoir of a famous Russian translator. It was written and published in French, in Paris. However, as Oleg Dorman (the editor of the Russian version of the book) attests, despite being a professional and well-established translator into Russian, Lilliana Lungina adamantly refused to publish her book in Russian, which was motivated by her belief that the Russian version of the book "must be written differently, anew, from the first to the last line" (Dorman 8). Nonetheless, the Russian version of her memoir exists, as Lilliana Loungina eventually agreed to give a series of interviews that later became an award-winning

documentary *Podstrochnik* (1997, officially released in 2009). The script of Lungina's monologue from the film was later released as a book with the same title in 2009. The title of the book, *Podstrochnik* (or "underscore"), is a Russian technical term for a literal translation where the meaning of separate words is noted under the words of the original, which facilitates further translations, typically done by people who are not familiar with the source language. The Russian version of the book is not a traditional self-translation by any stretch of imagination (it is closer to a peculiar species of Toury's "pseudo-translations"). Lungina's refusal to produce a self-translation, despite being a competent and prolific translator herself, is certainly meaningful when considered in terms of the cultural matrix. It shows that she acutely understood the transformative processes that a text undergoes in translation, a process that resulted in her unspoken belief that it is not possible to translate a text and also preserve its integrity. However, the Russian publisher of the book presents it as a self-translation, noting Lungina's exceptional ability to articulate spontaneous thoughts very eloquently in her filmed interview, and attributing her eloquence in the preface to the text to the fact that "the French version of the book was just a draft of her story told over the span of many days" (Dorman 8).

This example, as suggested above, illustrates a peculiar species of "pseudo-translations." Of course, the resulting Russian book is not a translation, yet it is consistently presented as such in the target culture. The possibility of such a presentation is justified by the very content of the book (memoirs of a celebrity translator), the identity of the author, the title and preface. However, above all, this example illustrates the liberty the author can exercise over her text. Here, the liberty of Lungina, an author who is very familiar with the process of translation, results in a non-translation, an explicit refusal to produce a new version of the text.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are instances when self-translators surrender their authority over the text, which can perhaps be explained by the unawareness of the "normalizing" tendency that characterizes conventional translation. This can be illustrated by the case of "A Real American Girl," a short story written by Russian bilingual author Linor Goralik (2004). The story in question is a piece of highly experimental writing, as it was written in a mixture of English and Russian. It is important to keep in mind that Goralik is not a translator (but rather, a bilingual author) and has never ventured into translation (with the exception of this story).

It is impossible to summarize what this text is about without considering how it is written. The story's opening would be almost incomprehensible to monolingual readers, as it features English expressions combined into sentences by means of Russian conjunctions, all recorded in the Cyrillic alphabet. As the story progresses, detailing the narrator's desire to assimilate into the English-speaking environment, the grammar and lexical choices in the text are progressively uniformed, as it begins to feature individual English words written in the Latin alphabet, followed by sentences in normative English (and Latin alphabet), followed by a paragraph in English. The juxtaposition of two languages and two distinct alphabets renders the main idea of the story: the narrator tries on a linguistic "mask" and, by extension, a hypothetically "different" cultural identity. The story concludes with the narrator's rejection of this identity as she repeats the opening passage, this time in standard Russian without any interference from English. The narrator's use of language is a structural element in the story as it clearly marks her true cultural allegiance and belonging. However extensive, her English is never as fluent as her use of Russian, and it is always marked by subtle linguistic interference from Russian, which reinforces the idea that it is somehow uncomfortable and this, in turn, leads to the eventual rejection. Reviewing the Russian story, Yulia Idlis characterized the nature of the main

conflict in the narrative in the following way: "Goralik writes about the *impossibility* of full assimilation between Russians and Americans even in the emigration, even if there is a conscious intention to assimilate and accept the American way of life" (Idlis, n. pag.).

When the story was selected for publication by an American publisher, Goralik was asked to adapt it for the English-speaking audience, and to render it in English. This decision was definitely motivated by the marked difference in the intended audience, as "[m]any more Russians speak English than there are Americans who can read or speak Russian" (Iossel ix), as one of the editors noted in the book's introduction. It is quite conceivable then, that the author's decisions, as exemplified by the text translated into English, were informed by the pressure exerted by the book's American publisher.

As a result, the English version of the text reveals a high degree of conformity to the target culture. The juxtaposition of the Russian and English alphabets is gone since the Russian text of the story was translated into ungrammatical and almost incomprehensible English to mimic the overwhelming effect of the Russian opening, and then translated into normative English at the end. The only indications that the text was originally written in a foreign language are the italics that are used to mark English words in the Russian story and a footnote at the beginning of the text.But more importantly, a substantial change affects a part of the story where it should not have happened—the paragraph written in English in the middle of the original. As mentioned earlier, even though the story is titled "A Real American Girl" there is absolutely nothing real about the identity of the narrator in the original: it is a hypothetical cultural construct, a linguistic mask the narrator plays with. She uses English in a distinctly Russian, unnatural way, and this is what allows the Russian reviewer of the story to say with certainty that

full assimilation is never possible. In the English version of the story, however, the author's specific Russian use of English has been corrected, standardized.

The normalizing tendency is evident in corrections of grammatical errors and occasional misspellings, such as "drugs-free" (RU) that was changed to "drug-free" (EN), "'Breath!'"(RU) to "Breathe!" (EN), "to loose a finger" (RU) to "to lose a finger" (EN), "nasties" (RU) to "nastiness" (EN), "in the age" (RU) to "at the age" (EN). But much more important and telling are the changes, such as word choice, that took place at the lexical level of the story. When comparing the original and the translation, it becomes apparent that in the original text the author refers to the "instant coffee" (EN) as a "refill coffee" (RU). She calls "streamlined flair fins" (EN) "flair-steamed fins" (RU), a "book club" (EN) a "reading club" (RU), a "Hello Kitty" toy (EN) "Sanrio Kitty" (RU), a "spelling bee" (EN) a "spelling contest" (RU), "fireworks" (EN) a "petard" (RU), a "NASDAQ crash" (EN) a "NASDAQ fall" (RU) and, instead of "starting" (EN) "the American Daughters of Liberty," she intends to "set a branch of 'American Daughters' league" (RU), and so on.

The hypothetical nature of this construct is also foregrounded when the narrator intends to ask "Franklin who?" while looking at a $100 bill and instead, in the translation, asks, "Benjamin who?" It is highly unlikely that a "real" American girl would ask "Franklin who?" in reference to $100 bills, simply because such bills are called "benjamins" in colloquial American English. Finally, there is an important omission in the translation: the narrator's sentence that unmistakably reveals her cultural heritage, "I want to be hospitalized with suspected polio" (RU), is missing, as it is highly unlikely that someone would say this in the contemporary United States, where a mandatory polio vaccination was introduced in the 1950s (in Russia it became recommended but not required in the late 1990s). All of these changes are significant to the

story. Keeping in mind the title of the work, the narrator seems much closer to becoming the "real" American girl and her use of English is undistinguishable from that of other real American girls.

By virtue of correcting the unmistakably Russian usage of her narrator's English, the author also relocates her narrator from the margins of the English-speaking world into its centre, the hypothetical America. Thus, the hypothetical nature of this cultural construct is treated as the narrator's actual experience in the reviews of the book published in the United States. For example, Priscilla Mayers notes that "Linor Goralik bewails this condition [impossibility of ever being an American for those who have a Russian past] in her own feisty translation ('A Real American Girl')—she would wish herself born into even the ridiculous aspects of American life over being an immigrant" (Mayers, n. pag.). Rebecca Reich tries to reconcile the increased likelihood of the writer's own experience with the apparent non-existence of the cultural reality she evokes, by noting that "Linor Goralik, one of the collection's younger writers […], launches into a tirade about 'true' Americana […]. It's impossible for a Russian to achieve these things primarily because they don't exist" (Reich, n. pag.).

What emerges from these examples is that the notion of "liberty" is completely different from the conventional sense. The writers are not just at liberty to write as they please, they are certainly entitled to translate as they see fit as well, and they can adopt any position in translating their own work. Interestingly, the author's previous experience in translation appears to be a definitive factor in the case of Lungina, a factor that informs her reluctance to produce another version of the text. The examples above are extreme cases of a certain continuum that seems to apply to a majority of self-translators. On one end of the spectrum is the refusal to translate, linked with the author's extensive experience in translation and ensuing distrust of the activity.

On the other end is a self-translation that is performed in absence of previous experience in translation and that is, to borrow from Venuti, non-resistant, compliant with the norms of the target culture. Considering that authors are at liberty to adopt any approach in translation, it is relevant, when assessing such texts, to consider the factors that precipitated the self-translation in conjunction with the strategies that the author used when rendering the text, as well as possible editorial input imposed by the publisher(s).

2.5 Issues of Methodology in Relating Self-translated Texts to Commissioned Translations

The overview of two very different translations above shows a very important difference between translations performed by commissioned translators and those by authors translating their own work. While commissioned translators must produce another version of the text, self-translating authors are under no obligation to do so. In light of this distinction, possible methodological limitations in relating self-translating practices to mainstream translations will be considered closely. While I accept, that, at the conceptual level, self-translations and commissioned translations are certainly related in very convoluted ways, it seems more instructive to consider in what ways self-translating authors relate to mainstream practices of translation, rather than to approach these texts with a certain relationship in mind. This, however, is a very complex task methodologically. I discuss some of these difficulties below.

2.5.1 The Underlining Imperative of Self-Translating Authors

As stated earlier, some scholars might be tempted to approach self-translations from the vantage point of understanding the translation process, as evident in practices of commissioned translators, and this approach risks a mere affirmation that self-translation is, indeed, somehow different from common translation. It seems more instructive, in this regard, to approach self-

translations without a theoretical premise, and to analyze self-translated texts in light of how authors themselves relate to common practices. Such an approach makes it important to consider closely the underlying imperative to translate their texts personally, that is evident in authorial reflections on self-translations.

Why do authors translate? This question has been tentatively articulated as important in considering the practice of self-translation. In 1998 some scholars saw some significance in considering the underlining imperative that results in self-translation: "*Why* do some writers repeat in a second language what has already been said in their previous work?" (Grutman 18). This scholar does not doubt that "there must be some ulterior motive that helps writers to overcome their initial reluctance" (Grutman 18). This angle, however, has not become common in the field of translation studies. For example, in a recent volume, Jan Holkerson bluntly states that "[m]otive is not a common rubric in Translation Studies", explaining that "that lacuna is probably a legacy of the formalist and structuralist decades of the text dominant" (Holkerson 44). According to this researcher: "We need to situate a self-translator as a singular figure in the historical interchanges between languages and between social milieus, in part in not only looking at the *what* and *how* of their work but also at *why* the translative practice was undertaken in the first place" (Holkerson: 44).

In considering self-translating authors' reflections on their work, it is possible to easily identify a very counter-intuitive, yet prominent, theme. A substantial number of self-translating authors turn to self-translation for only one reason: to prevent, or otherwise discourage, a translation by commissioned translators. This motive can be realized in a variety of ways, and can stem from both empirical evidence (such as reading a translation of a text prepared by a commissioned translator) or on purely theoretical grounds (such as in the Lilliana Lungina case

discussed above, where her experience in translation allows her to assert that the text will change in ways that she would not have preferred). This theme is often detectable in authors' complaints about unsatisfactory translations, in authors' assertions that their texts will be unsatisfactory rendered by translators and in authorial interventions into the translation process. Self-translators certainly change their texts, and commissioned translators do too. But self-translating many authors do it *because* they are dissatisfied with the transformation as evidenced in commissioned translations. Accepting that regularities of behaviour are evidence of norms, it is possible to tentatively conclude that such behavior of authors is certainly of a normative nature.

In addition to the case of Lilliana Lungina, this tendency is evident in the case of Joseph Brodsky, a Russian émigré and a Nobel-prize winning poet. Christopher Whyte noted that Brodsky must be one of the most notorious examples of self-translators, "who, after intervening massively in the translations of his Russian originals by other hands, began to do his own, even, where he saw fit, adding further stanzas to a poem in its new English format" (Whyte 64).

This aspect of self-translation is particularly relevant in discussions of Nabokov's *Lolita*. Reflecting on his objective to translate *Lolita* by himself, Nabokov noted in the afterword to the Russian version: "In publishing *Lolita* in Russian, I pursue a very simple objective: I want my best book, or, to be more modest, one of my best English books, to be *correctly* translated into my native tongue (*L* RU[10]: 308, emphasis is added). His interview with *Playboy* helps shed light on what his notion of "correctness" might entail. Elaborating on his motives to translate *Lolita* personally, he said:

> I imagined that in some distant future someone might produce a Russian version of *Lolita*. I trained my inner telescope upon that particular point in the distant future and saw that every paragraph, pockmarked as it is with pitfalls, could lend itself to hideous

[10] Here and further I will adopt the following abbreviations to distinguish between Nabokov's versions of text that bear the same title: *L* EN will identify *Lolita*, the English novel; *L* SN will identify *Lolita*, the screenplay; and *L* RU will stand for *Lolita*, the Russian novel.

> mistranslation. In the hands of the harmful drudge, the Russian version of *Lolita* would be entirely degraded and botched by vulgar paraphrases or blunders. So I decided to translate it myself. (*Strong Opinions*: 38)

As we can see, the underlying motive to translate *Lolita,* as explained by the author himself, was based on a contrast of this text with a conventional translation[11]. Brian Boyd mentions in *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* that Nabokov's certainty that *Lolita* will be incorrectly translated by somebody else resulted from empirical evidence, as Nabokov reviewed a sample of a translation prepared by a distant relative and was highly dissatisfied with the result. As we can see, Nabokov's intention to translate *Lolita* personally was in part attributable to his being aware that a commissioned translation might negatively transform his work. However, the very choice of the words, "correct translation" lacks scholarly definition and requires extensive critical examination, as the "correct translation" is not and can never be the result of a commissioned translation. Therefore, rather than assuming that Nabokov's "correct translation" refers to what most translators would identify as such, it seems to be more imperative to establish what meaning Nabokov himself attached to such an evaluation. This is only possible by closely examining Nabokov's own choices in rendering the text.

[11] Nabokov's decision to translate *Lolita* personally is particularly significant when considered in the context of his biography. As Grayson explains, the majority of Nabokov's self-translations after 1960 were produced by Nabokov in collaboration with other translators (such as Peter Pertzov, the writer's son and long-time collaborator Dmitrii Nabokov, Michael Scammel, and Michael Glenny). Nabokov often charged his collaborator with producing a somewhat literal version of the work and extensively revised it later. While this practice had become somewhat habitual by 1967, the translation of *Lolita* was undertaken solely by the author, without assistance from another translator.

2.5.2 The Unique Nature of Self-translated Texts

One important methodological consideration with regards to research into self-translated texts stems from the unique nature of the self-translated text. Christopher Whyte, a literary translator, succinctly captured a common attitude toward translated texts when he spoke specifically against self-translations, asserting that such texts are "inevitably, interpretations which reproduce only one of the many resonances of the text, effectively telling us what it means, with an authority we are powerless to controvert, because their source is the author" (Whyte 70). Here again, Whyte evokes the authority of such texts, as by virtue of being translated by the author, such texts occupy a rather privileged position in the target culture. As an indirect corollary of this, such texts are rarely re-translated by commissioned translators, unless, of course, a translation took place chronologically prior to the self-translation, and familiarity with the text of the translation compelled the author to produce another version of the text. In such instances, however, a commissioned translation typically goes out of print, replaced by a more authoritative self-translation[12].

This unique nature of a self-translated text, however, presents difficulies when considering self-translations in light of the descriptive approach. Descriptive studies are usually based on considerations of large corpus of texts, since to deem something "normative" in scholarly research requires one to support this statement by evidence of consistent choices among different translators. It is, however, not entirely impossible to relate individual texts to common translation practices. As Theo Hermans expertly demonstrates in his own discussion of de Buck's translation of Boethius's text (see Schäffner *Translation*: 50-72), in relating a single

[12] Such was the case of Nabokov's novel *Камера Обскура* (1932) translated by Winfred Roy into English as *Camera Obscura* in 1936. Nabokov was displeased with the translation, and produced his own version of the text under the title *Laughter in the Dark* (1938).

text to mainstream translation practices much consideration should be given to a pattern of change on the part of the translator, as opposed to the close consideration of individual shifts. In the above-mentioned discussion, for instance, Hermans is able to draw conclusions about the translator's underlining concept of translation by considering why the translator elected to render poems twice in the text, using different meters, and on more than one occasion (such "double" translations of poetic fragments in the body of a prose text appear twice in the translation).

In my analysis, much consideration will be given to *patterns* of change as evidenced in the versions of *Lolita*(s). I am convinced that valuable conclusions about Nabokov's underlining concept of translation can be drawn from considering repetitive features of the text, i.e., features that can potentially form a pattern. The nature of such features of the text, however, requires some additional considerations that will be addressed below.

2.5.3 Mandatory and Non-mandatory Shifts

Accepting that individual shifts between the original and a translation can be fairly easily identified, a point should be made that not all shifts are equally valuable for a descriptive approach. Some shifts can be conceptualized as "mandatory," as informed and in fact required by the different nature of the languages involved in the translation, as they result from differing grammar and syntax, a drastically different distribution of the meaning of individual words in a given language and their usage, phonetic composition, etc. This point was also raised by Brian Fitch, who closely considered Beckett's self-translations and specifically commented that

> the main problem posed by such comparisons of the fictive words of an original and translation lies in determining to what extent the discrepancies between the two universes are attributable to the shift between linguistic systems so that they would likely be found in the comparison between the fictive word of *any* text translated from English into French, or vice versa, and its original. (Fitch 129)

Moreover, because natural languages are so different one from another, it can be said that in their individual totalities they provide completely different means of artistic expression. Nabokov himself commented explicitly on issues pertaining to the realization of his artistic intentions that he had to overcome in transposing *Lolita* from English to Russian. In the "Postscript to the Russian Edition of *Lolita,*" he said:

> Gestures, grimaces, landscapes, the torpor of trees, odors, rains, the melting and iridescent hues of nature, everything tenderly human (strange as it may seem!), but also everything coarse and crude, juicy and bawdy, comes out no worse in Russian than in English, perhaps better; but the subtle reticence so peculiar to English, the poetry of thought, the instantaneous resonance between the most abstract concepts, the swarming of monosyllabic epithets—all this, and also everything related to technology, fashion, sports, the natural sciences, and the unnatural passions—in Russian become clumsy, prolix, and often repulsive in terms of style and rhythm. (Nabokov "Postcript": 190-191)

Here, what Nabokov describes as "subtle reticence so peculiar to English, the poetry of thought, the instantaneous resonance between the most abstract concepts, the swarming of monosyllabic epithets" ("Postcript": 190-191) clearly mimics Lotman's "syntactic aspect" relating to the internal organization of the text. "Everything related to technology, fashion, sports, the natural sciences, and the unnatural passions" ("Postcript": 190-191) pertains to the text's external organization, or inclusion in a cultural context. Nabokov's purely evaluative terms (better, worse, clumsy, prolix, repulsive) in this paragraph are to be understood as unsuitable for realization of his particular artistic intentions, rather than in absolute terms.

Lotman's understanding of the text (discussed at the beginning of this chapter) certainly suggests that any work of verbal art is a unique singular fusion between artistic content and the means provided by the medium. As such, this understanding implies that an ideal translation, in the sense of an "ideal replica" of the original, is impossible to achieve as the change in medium will also affect the content of the work. While it is reasonable to conceive that commissioned translators strive to reproduce their understanding of the original's content by means of a

different medium, it should be pointed out that producing an exact replica of the original might not be a part of a self-translating author's intention. One theme that consistently emerges in self-translators' reflections on the process of rendering their texts into another language is the impossibility of translation, in a sense that it is impossible to produce an exact replica of the text even when there is a conscious willingness to do so[13]. Needless to say, this point converges with the initial premise of the descriptive approach, which raises the question of how self-translators address the inherent asymmetry of natural languages.

Michail Idov, reflecting on the final product of his self-translation, the Russian text of *Kofemolka* (*Ground Up* in the English version), pointed out the apparent differences between selected passages in English and Russian, and noted that these differences made him contemplate re-writing the text, but "if [one sets out to] to re-write, then one has to rewrite everything. That's why we [the author and his wife] […] did not change anything. But I can tell you what has been omitted in the Russian text" (Idov 12). Further, reflecting on the process of self-translation, he noted that the differences in medium prompted him to omit puns and some poetry (particularly rap songs), while in other instances the change in medium affected his artistic intentions (as certain poems in the Russian text "do not sound quite as graciously," or, in other instances, others "are not repulsive enough"). Further, he enumerates other specific problems, such as the difficulty in rendering French and Latin American accents in Russian, the absence of linguistic terms and even linguistic expressions for a field by noting that "Russian love does not have linguistic expressions that would be located above the back alley yet below the hospital" (Idov 13). Finally, he addresses the issue of familiarity with cultural information embedded in the language itself (such as immediate recognition of references to famous New York addresses

[13] Similarly, Grutman lists the impossibility of translation as one axiom that applies to self-translation, and observes that this belief is "sometimes shared by the very writers that have translated their own work" (Grutman 2013 :65)

mentioned in the English version). As we can see, Idov's observations are very similar to those of Nabokov,[14] but with one important difference: Idov specifically comments on his strategy in addressing the differences in languages, as he admits that he omitted a substantial portion of the text (by estimating that the Russian text represents approximately 75% of the original) and added footnotes. Nabokov, on the other hand, did not provide any information on how he resolved the issue of asymmetry between languages but maintained that he had not omitted anything, by asserting that he prided himself "only on the iron hand with which I checked the demons that incited me to deletions and additions" ("Postcript": 193). However, if an author pronounces the final product of his translation to be "correct," one can hypothesize that he was able to address the irreconcilable differences between these two languages to his satisfaction. Therefore, in Nabokov's self-translated text it is natural to expect shifts in the areas he specifically identified as "problematic."

This, in turn, raises an important question about the difficulty of assessing "shifts" in self-translated texts as mandatory or discretional. Comparing Nabokov's Russian and English texts of *Lolita* provides much food for thought. Russian and English are very distant languages, with marked differences on the phonological, lexical, grammatical and syntactic levels. In considering linguistic features of these texts side by side, it becomes evident that it is virtually impossible to specify the nuances of modality that govern self-translating authors' decisions in rendering the text: in other words, it is very difficult to argue whether the author changes the text because he *has to* (in order to accommodate mandatory rules of linguistic agreement) or whether he changes the text because he *wants to* in a new linguistic environment. This problem can be illustrated by the following examples.

[14] However, by the same merit, it must be pointed out that Idov was familiar with Nabokov's text, and these observations might have been influenced by Nabokov.

The issue of Humbert's accent illuminates a significant problem of languages' capacity and limitation to render accented speech. The famous opening to the novel: "Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth" (*L* EN: 9) was translated by Nabokov as "Ло-ли-та: кончик языка совершает путь в три шажка вниз по небу, чтобы на третьем толкнуться о зубы" (*L RU*: 1), or [Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth]. While formally his translation does not involve any shift, the Russian version of the novel reveals Humbert's accent simply by virtue of immersing the text in a different linguistic environment: when this sentence is pronounced in standard Russian, the speaker's tongue would have tapped the front teeth three times, as the sound [l] is a frontal labial and *d*EN*tal* sound in Russian. However, it can be argued that Humbert's audible accent revealed in this sentence was a part of the original design of the novel. Nabokov consistently maintained in his interviews that American readers, too, do not pronounce the name of the title character correctly:

> Note that for the necessary effect of dreamy tenderness both "l"s and the "t" and indeed *the whole word should be iberized and not pronounced the American way with crushed "l"s, a coarse "t", and a long "o"[..]*. (*Strong Opinions*: 53, emphasis added)
>
> Or, on another occasion:
>
> However, *it should not be pronounced as you and most Americans pronounce it*: Low-lee-ta, with a heavy, clammy "L" and a long "o". No, the first syllable should be as in "lollipop", the "L" liquid and delicate, the "lee" not too sharp. (*Strong Opinions*: 25, emphasis added)

In other instances, however, the change in medium requires extensive emendations on the author's part. Consider the following example: in the second part of the novel Humbert watches Lolita playing tennis at the Hotel Champion, when they are approached by a couple (Bill and Fey) who offer to play doubles. As Humbert contemplates ways to refuse the offer, he is

approached by a hotel staff member who informs him of an urgent phone call. Humbert hurries back to the hotel to answer the call but instead is presented with a note:

> "Mr. Humbert. The head of Birdsley (sic!) School called. Summer residence—Birdsley 2-8282. Please call back immediately. Highly important." (*L* EN: 235)

The Russian translation of the excerpt is very similar. However, due to the very nature of the Russian language, with its prominent grammatical category of gender, the gender of the caller is clearly identified in the note:

> Мистер Гумберт. Звонила директорша Бурдалейской (так!) школы. Летний номер: Бурдолей 2-82-82. Пожалуйста, позвоните ей не откладывая. Чрезвычайно важное дело. (*L RU*: 216)
>
> [Mr. Humbert. A directress of the Burdalei (sic!) School called.Summer number: Burdalei 2-82-82. Please call her back immediately. Highly important matter]

As we can see in the example above, the note, however cryptic, contains three grammatical indicators that the caller was female: the feminine form of the verb in the past tense (звонила), the feminine ending of the professional designation of the caller (директорша) and the feminine pronoun in the dative case after the verb "call" (ей). All of these additions are motivated by the fact that Ms. Pratt, the principal of Beardsley school was indeed a female but this information could not have possibly been known to the person who took the message. Therefore, that person was able to identify the caller as female only through hearing a female voice on the phone. As Humbert realizes that Ms. Pratt could not possibly have known of his whereabouts with Lolita, he begins to suspect that the phone call was staged to distract him from the tennis court. This suspicion is confirmed by the presence of a stranger who takes his place in the tennis game.

But there is an inconsistency here: if the phone call was staged, presumably by Quilty, how to reconcile the fact that he was a male (and Humbert observes a male at the tennis court upon his return) with the fact that it was a female voice that distracted Humbert from the tennis

court? This dilemma results in even more changes to the text. At the end of this passage, Humbert confronts the players about the identity of the stranger:

> "Mr. Mead, who was that person?"
> Bill and Fay, both looking very solemn, shook their heads.
> That absurd intruder had butted in to make up a double, hadn't he, Dolly?
> (*L* EN: 236)

But the Russian version contains a substantial revision to the last sentence of the passage, which changes the authorship of the last utterance, as what seems to be an inner speech by Humbert is clearly identified as an utterance by Fey:

> "Скажите, мистер Мид, кто был этот господин?"
> Сперва Билль, потом Фэй с очень серьезным видом отрицательно покачали головой.
> "Представьте себе", - объяснила Фэй, - "какой-то нелепый нахал присоединился к нам, чтобы составить вторую пару. Не правда ли, Долли?"
> ["Tell me, Mr. Mead, who was that person?"
> First Bill, then Fey, looking very solemn, shook their heads.
> "Can you imagine,"—**explained Fey**—"some absurd intruder had butted in to make up a double, hadn't he, Dolly?"] (*L RU*: 217)

This addition can only be explained in connection with the clearly female voice that distracted Humbert from the game: Fey's voice is primarily *audible* to indicate that there was, in fact, a female in Quilty's entourage who could have potentially placed the phone call and left a message in a female voice. However, this clearly establishes, much earlier in the narrative, a connection between Quilty and what seems to be a random couple at the hotel. Rendering the connection more explicit, in turn, affects the overall interpretation of the novel, as Humbert's suspicions in the Russian version seem to be more motivated by the factual evidence, and are not purely "fruits of his imagination" as they seem in the English version.

The two examples above illustrate the extent of difficulties in assessing two versions of *Lolita*. As evident from the examples above, constraints and opportunism are not just a fact of the target language; they can be said to have been present in the original linguistic environment

as well. As a result, linguistic changes between the original and the self-translation are not conclusive in terms of identifying authorial intention: as the first example illustrates, sometimes self-translation might involve no formal shift at all, yet it reveals authorial intentions (that are visible in the self-translated text simply by virtue of being immersed in a completely different linguistic environment). This intention (in this case—Nabokov's vision of Humbert's accent) is dormant in the original, and made explicit thought authorial statements about the text. As the second example illustrates, however, in other instances Nabokov's intentions can be said to be informed by the prominent grammatical category of gender that had to be accommodated in the translation. This mandatory shift at the micro level (resulting in three feminine endings attached to separated words related to the identity of the caller) led in turn to considerable shifts at the macro level of the novel (resulting in the need to redistribute characters' voices to justify the emendation mentioned above, which, in turn, establishes a connection between the said characters considerably earlier than in original novel). In absence of an explicit authorial comment, it becomes virtually impossible to determine what changes to the text were mandatory, informed by the nature of another language, and what changes rendered the content which was dormant in the original to be more explicit in the translation. My solution to this problem is rather radical in nature, as my analysis will focus specifically on features of the text that are not subordinated to the linguistic rules. In light of considerations outlined above, my analysis will begin with identifying features that have been documented to be systematically retained by translators (and this alone suggests that they are subjected to a strong influence of norms). The selected features must be repetitive in the text and should not be subjected to language rules. Indeed, there are not many features that meet these strict criteria, yet I am convinced that a consideration of such features renders Nabokov's own role in translation particularly visible and

illuminates in what ways the resulting product of his translation is different from those that could have been produced by commissioned translators.

2.6 Conclusion

As this chapter shows, the descriptive approach can and certainly should be applied to self-translated texts. However, considering that self-translated texts were traditionally overlooked, until recently, in scholarly discussions of translation, much consideration should be given to the methodology of approaching such texts. While the descriptive approach provides valuable insight into the nature of consistencies that are evident in commissioned translators' choices when rendering literary texts, considerations of self-translated texts should not be based on the premise that self-translating authors will also act as commissioned translators. Authors are certainly at liberty to do anything in translation. It seems that at some point in their lives, they can find themselves in a position to disagree with the norms of translation and to offer a viable alternative to such norms in rendering their own texts. Future research into self-translation must closely consider such authors in order to gain a better understanding of translation processes at large. Who are these authors? What compels them to disagree with these norms? How do they relate themselves to mainstream translation practices and why? How does this imperative to self-translate inform their strategies in translation? How are the resulting texts perceived by the intended audience?

Considering that there are virtually no such insights into self-translation, and there are also no close parallel texts to which one can compare Nabokov's own successive version of the novel, my objective is rather modest. Accepting that the inter-cultural space is a space of conflicting modalities, it becomes understandable why many discussions of translations

oftentimes lapse into "could have, would have, should have" types of debates. Achievements of the descriptive approach to translations shed light on what features of texts translators tend to retain, and what features of texts are particularly prone to emendations. Given that Nabokov's imperative to translate the text of *Lolita* personally was informed by his conviction that the text would lose its integrity in the hands of a commissioned translator, it is possible to hypothesize that, perhaps, he elected *to do* something in translation that no commissioned translator would have done. If this is the case, then it is more instructive to review the resulting text by contrasting it to mainstream translation practices, rather than by comparing it.

Further, in the absence of parallel texts (translations of the same novel produced by commissioned translators), such analysis can only be carried out by considering the features of the text that commissioned translators can be reasonably expected to retain, as it is in these features where the influence of norms is acutely felt. These features must form a pattern (that is, be repetitive in the text) and they must *not* be subordinated to the rules of language. Indeed, there are not that many features of the literary text that would satisfy such strict criteria, but there are some. Numerals, use of italics, peculiarities of author-specific use of punctuation—even though these features of literary texts are considered relatively minor in the overall design of the novel, it is only these features that any translator *could* (as they are readily available in both languages), and most translators probably *would*, and Nabokov's himself (given the stated importance of these features) probably *should have* retained in the translation. Contrary to this reasonable expectation, my analysis will show that Nabokov deploys a consistent system of emendations in rendering these features.

3. The *Lolita* Game: Nabokov's Statements About Translation

Contrary to most normative studies, my analysis will consider a single text, that of *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov. The descriptive approach in translation studies places very little value on *statem*EN*ts* about translations, as such statements, according to Toury's formulation, "should be treated with every possible circumspection" (*Descriptive*: 65), and "normative pronouncements should never be accepted at the face value" (*Descriptive*: 66). Descriptive scholars value highly translated texts as "*primary* products of norm-regulated behaviour" (*Descriptive*: 65), and consider "normative pronouncements […] merely *by*-products of the existence and activity of norms" (*Descriptive*: 65). Elaborating on the need of every possible circumspection, Toury explained that "there may […] be gaps, even contradictions, between explicit arguments and demands, on one hand, and actual behaviour and its results, on the other" (*Descriptive*: 65-66), for a number of different reasons (subjectivity, naiveté, lack of sufficient knowledge). He did not also exclude the possibility that "on occasion, a deliberate desire to mislead or deceive can also be involved" (66).

While Nabokov's behaviour in translation (specifically, his rendering the text of *Lolita*), will be considered closely in the next chapter, this chapter will focus, in a preliminary way, on some of his statements about art in general, and three versions of *Lolita,* produced by Nabokov (the English novel, the screenplay in the English language and the Russian novel). The overall goal of this chapter is *not* to provide a list of definitive authorial answers, but to show that Nabokov's own statements *can* be open to a variety of interpretations.

I will begin this chapter by discussing Nabokov's novels as complex literary games (an understanding that was rooted in the author's statements about the nature of his art). I will then discuss Nabokov's addendum to the Russian text, "The Poscript to the Russian *Lolita,*" in light of a literary game. This addendum substantially informed the ways in which the Russian version was approached in subsequent scholarship, as evident in the comparison of scholarly assesements of the Russian translation with those of the screenplay produced by Nabokov.

3.1 Artist and Artistry

In interviews about the nature of his artistry, Nabokov consistently evokes the idea of art as good-natured deceit, as a playful game. Art is something only marginally related to reality, "one of a few words which mean nothing without quotes" (*L* EN: 312), as he reminds his readers in the afterword to the English-language edition of *Lolita*.[15] He asserted in an interview to *Playboy* magazine: "Because, of course, art at its greatest is fantastically deceitful and complex" (*Strong Opinions*: 33). He re-iterated a very similar idea on another occasion during an interview with BBC "All art is deception […]; all is deception in that good cheat" (*Strong Opinions*:11). The idea of deceit also explains his interest in other activities that are seemingly unrelated to art, such as the composition of chess problems. In regards to that, he once reflected:

> Deceit, to the point of diabolism, and originality, verging upon the grotesque, were my notions of strategy, I was always ready to sacrifice purity of form to the exigencies of fantastical content, causing form to bulge and burst like a sponge-bag containing a small furious devil. (*Speak, Memory*: 289)

While similarities in these two very different activities, a game of chess and creative writing, might not be immediately apparent, Nabokov consistently drew parallels between chess

[15] This understanding of art converges with the understanding of art as a secondary modeling system by Yuri Lotman, discussed above in Chapter One.

and art. In 1962, during an interview for the program Bookstand, he asserted: “deception in chess, as in art, is only part of the game […] a good combination should always contain a certain element of deception" (*Strong Opinions*:11-12). A few years later, he explained his interest in composing chess problems in *Poem and Problems* (1969), a book on poetry that included 18 chess problems and solutions. Commenting on such a seemingly eclectic combination of the material for the book, Nabokov noted that chess problems are “the poetry of chess. They demand from the composer the same virtues that characterize all worthwhile art: originality, invention, harmony, conciseness, complexity, and splendid insincerity” (Boyd *Vladimir Nabokov*: 574).

In *Speak, Memory,* Nabokov elaborated on his favorite type of chess problems to compose, disclosing to some extent what “deception” and “splendid insincerity” involve. As explained by Brown, Nabokov’s favorite chess problems were:

> [t]he sort that even moderately skillful players can solve by taking certain obvious moves. Only the ideal solver will see that the obvious move—though it *does* lead to a solution—is a trap to lure [the] unworthy away from the real beauty of the problem. ("Nabokov's Pushkin": 199)

Nabokov’s own insistence on these connections makes it possible to extend his metaphoric language and apply it to the discussion of his versions of *Lolita*. Indeed, as Rekka Tammi asserts, “Nabokov’s novelistic discourse is best conceived as “multi-level games with potential ‘solvers’” (244). Approaching the act of indirect communication in literary encounters as a game provides an opportunity to use transparent and understandable metaphoric language to describe Nabokov’s choices in his writing. In this discussion, I will also borrow from game theory (which has been applied to both creative writing and translation). Insights into general decision-making developed by game theory, will serve as background to conceptualize the nature of Nabokov’s own strategic decision-making as evidenced in literary texts. Needless to say, this angle also helps to bypass the question the relative merit of *Lolita*(s) against each other, which has

historically dominated discussions of the original *Lolita* and the translation. Elizabeth Bruss reminds us of "the basic fact that games require parity: a game, by definition, is the encounter between equally matched and equally creative participants" (Bruss 154)[16]. This parity has been underscored by Nabokov in his interviews. When asked the standard question "Whom do you write for?", he responded:

> I don't think an artist should bother about his audience. His best audience is the person he sees in his shaving mirror every day. I think that an audience [the] artist imagines, when he imagines that kind of thing, is a room filled with people wearing his own mask. (*Strong Opinions*: 18)

The Russian postscript to *Lolita* contains a remarkably similar statement: "As a reader, I can multiply infinitely, and can easily fill a sympathetic hall with my own doubles, representatives and stand-ins" (*L* RU: 299). I am convinced that this statement is not designed to emphasize the elitism of Nabokov's artistry, but that it captures Nabokov's belief of equality between him and the other players (the Russian-speaking audience).

Understanding art as a game helps to capture yet another dimension in the interactions of players, their strategies and tactics, and these questions are of direct relevance to *Lolita*. If some literary works can be analyzed as games, then Nabokov's *Lolita* can, and indeed has been, discussed as an example of a superb literary game[17].

[16] This article by Bruss does not make any mention *Lolita* or any other works by Nabokov. Yet her points about literature as a game are certainly applicable to Nabokov's *Lolita*(s).

[17] The conceptualization of Nabokov's works as literary games has proven to be a particularly fruitful method of addressing their complexities. A good example of this approach is a recent superb study by Thomas Karshan, *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Play*, published in 2011.

3.2 The *Lolita* Problem

In this section I do not aim to exhaust Nabokov's strategic arsenal in *Lolita*, or to compile a list of the features in this narrative that attest to the novel's status as a literary game. Instead, I intend to highlight Nabokov's playful treatment of the narrative elements that are important for my analysis of the work: deliberate obscurity of the implied author, duality in the mode of narrative, the theme of re-writing and the idea of foregrounding "errors" as a strategic move.

The novel *Lolita* is widely known: this is a story that explores a very complex relationship between a mature European émigré (Humbert Humbert) and a teenage American girl (Dolores Haze, or Lolita). The story is written in the form of a confession: Humbert writes from solitary confinement after the events detailed in the plot have long passed by and the conflicts have been resolved. He presents the details of his story (his love for Lolita and his growing suspicions that his love is not mutual, her disappearance, his search for her during which his suspicions are confirmed, and finally his murder of Quilty, his rival) as plea for mercy in front of an imaginary panel of jurors. This brief summary, however, does not do the novel justice: the lasting fame of *Lolita* is based not on what the story is *about*, but rather on *how* this story is told.

Discussing works of literature as games, Elizabeth Bruss relies on the analogy with the game of chess, asserting that

> [m]uch like a game of chess, where it is beside the point to admire local harmonies of red and black, or to ask what the display of pieces "describes" or "expresses," literary games exist wherever praxis and strategy provide the principal meaning of the work. ("The Game": 154)

As a result, she approaches the author as "the implied initiator of the game, the strategist inferred from sequence and the direction of the play" and the reader as "the ideal Other, for whom the test is posed, against whose expectations and likely all the ruses and hints have apparently been laid

("The Game": 154). Further, she asserts that "[d]isruptions, discrepant details, a tendency toward self-reference that turns the scrutiny of the text back in upon itself are among the devices that suppress illusion and aestheticism and promote self-conscious play" ("The Game": 154).

Lolita unquestionably fits a general profile of a highly playful literary work. In *Problems of Nabokov's Poetics,* Tammi states that "nowadays the novel is cited almost as a matter of course in narratological discussions of the unreliable discourse[18]" (277), whose main peculiarity he defines as "the author who invites his readers to adopt a skeptical stance towards Humbert's protestations of innocence, and it is the resultant irony that guarantees the literary worth of *Lolita* as a novel" (277). Meticulously describing the events of the plot, Humbert nonetheless manages to leave out a crucial piece of information: who was the mysterious contender with whom *Lolita* fell in love and ran away. Particularly perplexing is the fact that Humbert's narrative is full of clues that point to the answer, but the narrator somehow naively manages to ignore them (and leads his reader to ignore them too). The obvious nature of these clues becomes apparent only in retrospect, when the name of the mystery man is finally revealed.

This tension—the narrator's obvious ignorance of carefully planted clues throughout the text—culminates in one of the final scenes of the novel, when the name of Clare Quilty[19] is finally revealed. Not only is the identity of the man so apparent that Lolita notes that "[s]he thought I had guessed long ago" (*L* EN: 271), but Humbert, too, states that it was "the name that

[18] Indeed, the scholarship on *Lolita* as a superb example of an unreliable narrative is tremendous. Ever since the term "unreliable narrative" was coined by Wayne Booth in *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), investigations of this aspect of the novel yielded numerious important contributions to the field.

[19] Rekka Tammi, discussing the main mystery of this narrative, notes that it is constructed around the identity of Humbert's rival, Quilty. His presence in the text is revealed through a variety of clues (mostly associated with the phonetics of his name imbedded in what seem to be random words (all following examples with references are quoted in Tammi)): "The crazy *quilt* of forty-eight states" (149, 179, 297, 299), "I aim at a bland, *quietly* interested enemy" (48, 211 265, 281, 285), "Our *quiet* pursuer" (213, 223, 239), "A *queerly* observant schoolmate" (185, 179, 212), "I *quip-quoted*" (162), "A very *quaint* name" (242), "A futile *quest"* (242), "A short but slow *queue*" (283), etc. Both the letter q and the sound [q] are absent in Russian, which suggests that Nabokov's tactics in constructing Quilty's presence in the narrative will, by definition, be very different.

the astute reader has guessed long ago" (*L* EN: 272), yet he still does not actually name his rival at this point. As we can see, this novel can best be characterized by a certain duality in terms of narrative mode: one narrator (commonly assumed to be Humbert) is thought to render the factual events of the plot, while the other narrator (commonly assumed to be Nabokov, the implied author of the novel) is thought to fill the text of the novel with clues. This narrative tactic highlights Humbert's ignorance on many levels of the text, resulting in the pronounced ironic stance of the novel.

In this regard, Bruss posited that such narratives can be approached as particularly engaging games, as "[n]arration through a character or even an assumed persona means that there are two strategic levels which a reader must confront: the implied author may be a collaborator while the narrator competes or an antagonist while the narrator cooperates" (Bruss 160). Further, she explained that:

> In mixed-motive games, one must be alert for any evidence of cooperation. The narrator may as easily serve as the reader's own avatar, acting out his probable errors and miscalculations, alerting him to hermeneutic dangers and unforeseen consequences. Since deception must never be complete in mixed-motive games, it is extremely common for them to contain a "key," some global hint that unlocks the whole strategic mechanism on which the work is built. […] Keys may appear wherever there is some element of coordination in the encounter, but the greater the degree of cooperation, the more they will function to initiate the reader's moves rather than to diagnose, after the fact, how they have gone awry. ("The Game": 160)

Needless to say, inquiry into the relationship between the story's two narrators has become one of the major trends in Nabokov scholarship. Early critics seemed to have equated Humbert and Nabokov (the implied author of the novel). For example, Orville Prescott accused Nabokov of describing "[his] perversion with the pervert's enthusiasm" (Prescott 17). However, many subsequent Nabokov scholars insisted on the distinction between two narrators of the story, a distinction that, more often than not, has been linked to the issue of morality. Relating

this idea to Bruss' explanation, Humbert Humbert has been treated primarily as the reader's competitor, while Nabokov (the implied author of the story) has been designated the collaborator. The following critical assessments are representative of this view: Richard Patterson maintained that "Humbert Humbert is the narrator of *Lolita*, but he does not fully comprehend every nuance of the complex verbal tissue which Nabokov […] allows him to weave" (Patterson 84), which is remarkably similar to the conclusion drawn by Tamir-Ghez Bader, who stated that: "While all efforts of the *narrator* to win over the reader fail, it is the *author* who wins us over" (Tamir-Ghez 66, original emphasis).

However, as Tammi rightfully points out, these views seem to simplify the problem of the relationship between the two sources of information about the events that took place in the novel. This scholar maintains in his monograph that "a clear-cut division must be made between the status of the protagonist as a *narrating* agent and as an agent *perceiving* the events inside the narrated story" (278). He argues that it is a common misconception to superimpose the system of values that can be deduced from statements by the narrating agent, Humbert, onto the implicit author of the novel, Nabokov. As he convincingly shows in his interpretation of the text, it is more accurate to discuss this narrative as related by two distinct Humberts—one who has lived through the events of the story and one who is still living through them. This view converges with that of Alexander Dolinin, who also points out this duality of narrative representation by noting a pronounced split in Humbert's personality and acknowledges that: "Humbert Humbert contradicts himself so often and speaks in so many different voices that his personality loses all integrity, splitting into "Humbert the Writing" and "Humbert the Described," each of whom in turn splits into several other "Humberts"" ("Time Doubling": 26-27).

It can be argued that this duality is embedded in the narrative, as it deals with a highly controversial topic. The narrator underscores it when he reflects on the very purpose of telling his story and his difficulties in doing so:

> I am trying to describe these things not to relive them in my present boundless misery, but to sort out the portion of hell and the portion of heaven in that strange, awful, maddening world—nymphet love. The beastly and beautiful merged at one point, and it is that borderline I would like to fix, and I feel I fail to do so utterly. Why? (*L* EN: 135)

Given the controversial topic of the novel—"nymphet love"—it is natural to expect a broad range of views on the topic, from such extremes as "beastly"/"hell" to "beautiful"/"heaven." It is the narrator's statement of yet another failure (and these statements are quite frequent in the text[20]) that demands further examination. Considering the general pattern of these statements elsewhere in the text—to declare something a failure when it is not[21]—it can be argued that the author fails to fix the borderline between these extremes, not due to a lack of ability but because the borderline is shifting. This interpretation would also explain Humbert's fixation on other cultural icons involved in unions with underage girls that were considered to be ordinary at the time they took place.

The notion of "voices" evoked by Dolinin is not to be confused with a distinctly Bakhtinian understanding of the term. In case of Nabokov specifically, Tammi points out "a pronouncedly *anti-polyphonic* feature in the author's writing: *an overriding t*EN*d*EN*cy to make explicit the pres*EN*ce of a creative consciousness behind every fictive construction*" (Tammi 100, emphasis in the original). Such definition is directly opposed to the Bakhtinian definition of

[20]For instance, Humbert recalls "In the days of that wild journey of ours, I doubted not that as father to Lolita the First I was a ridiculous failure." (*L* EN: 251) Lolita, in turn, completely disagrees with this statement, as she mentions at the end of the book: "I had been a good father, she guessed—granting me *that*"(*L* EN: 272).

[21] Along similar lines, Nabokov suggests that his use of English in the English version is "second rate" when compared to his Russian (*L* EN: 317) and points out the linguistic "awkwardness" (*L* RU:296) of his Russian translation of the novel when compared to the original text. The similarity here can be reduced to the author's underscoring the fact that his command of the given language is inadequate for a hypothetical ideal, and the novel is therefore a failure.

a polyphonic novel that "is not constructed as the entirety of a single consciousness which absorbs other consciousnesses as objects, but rather as the entirety of the interaction of several consciousnesses, of which no one fully becomes the object of any other one" (Bakhtin: 14). *Lolita*, in particular, is dominated by Humbert(s) consciousness. All events of the plot have to pass this consciousness in order to appear on the page. All other voices in the novel, even when they render factual information, are subordinated to the state of mind of the narrator who flaunts his role as the supreme ruler of this world. Occasionally he admits that the statements he just ascribed to other characters are really his own. John Farlow, for example, says to Humbert: "'why don't I drive there right now, and you may sleep with Jean'—(he did not really add that but Jean supported his offer so passionately that it might be implied)" (*L* EN: 100). On another occasion Humbert engages in a conversation with a hotel front desk agent, and reveals that his own thoughts are seamlessly integrated into the agent's utterance only after the conversation is over: "One crowded night we had three ladies and a child like yours sleep together. I believe one of the ladies was a disguised man [*my* static]" (*L* EN: 118). In a Bakhtinian understanding of the term, "voices" can be revealed through nuances in language used by the characters. However, in the above-mentioned examples, all that identifies the authorship of the utterance are the narrator's direct statements. In this novel, the narrator's voice dominates those of the characters by seamlessly combining two remarks (the factual and imaginary) into one.

The goal of this mode of narration is arguably what makes *Lolita* stand out among other unreliable narratives, according to Dolinin, as the juxtaposition of various frames of reference leads to what he terms nothing short of a "delirium" from a narratological point of view. This masterfully created literary delirium accounts for *Lolita*'s lasting fame and the many debates about the novel, as "unlike many texts with unreliable narrators, *Lolita* does not seek to reveal

the inner logic of the delirium, as is the case with Gogol's 'Notes of a Madman' or Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*. On the contrary, it strives to hide that logic" ("Nabokov's": 26).

While I tend to accept the importance of Tammi's distinction, this distinction leads to one obvious question, albeit one that Tammi does not address directly: what is the role of the implied author, i.e., Nabokov, in all of this? If the implied author does not reveal himself in the narrative, being overshadowed by two Humberts[22], what function can be ascribed to him? Arguably, it can be said that the implied author's function can be limited to careful orchestration of the dominant points of view in the narrative, that of two Humberts. If we approach the narrative from this vantage point, then in order to distill the implied author's position we need to analyze not *what* Humbert(s) said at various points of the narrative (as his remarks, as shown above, can seamlessly combine actual and imaginary information) but rather *how* these two often opposing viewpoints are juxtaposed in the text. This seems to be a very fruitful method for assessing the narrative. After all, Nabokov himself seemed to share the belief that the *how* of literature supersedes the *what* of literary texts: "By all means place the 'how' above the 'what' but do not let it be confused with 'so what' (*Strong Opinions*: 66). As my analysis will show, close consideration of *how* the Russian version is formatted can provide valuable insights into the implied author's disposition towards his characters.

It can be argued that a gap between the mode of the highly subjective perception of reality and the record of this perception in writing is extremely significant for the novel. This idea allows us to explore the notion of "error" as a signpost for highlighting Humbert's unreliability or, in the context of this novel, as a signpost of the deployment of a literary device.

[22] While my reading suggests that the implied author does not reveal himself explicitly in the narrative, two addendums to the novel, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*" and "Postscript to the Russian Edition," can be said to be produced by the implied author of the novel. As the discussion of these addendums will show, Nabokov's unreliability, as evident in these texts, rivals that of Humbert Humbert.

The idea of re-rewriting, amending and correcting the narrative is advanced early in the novel. Dr. Ray, according to the foreword, was hired specifically to *edit* the work, and he acknowledges vaguely "the correction of obvious solecisms and a careful suppression of a few tenacious details" (*L* EN: 3). Furthermore, Humbert systematically underscores the theme of re-writing. At the time he is writing the novel, Humbert is in prison. He points out that most of the material for the novel comes from his diary, which was re-written once (with often noted possibilities for amendment):

> First I jotted down each entry in pencil (with many erasures and corrections) on the leaves of what is commercially known as a "typewriter tablet"; then, I copied it out with obvious abbreviations in my smallest, most satanic, hand in the little black book just mentioned. (*L* EN: 40)

It is unclear what happened to these notes but they evidently went missing: reflecting on the trip he took with Lolita in 1947-1948, Humbert notes that "this is not too clear I am afraid, Clarence, but I did not keep any notes, and have at my disposal only an atrociously crippled tour book in three volumes, almost a symbol of my torn and tattered past, in which to check these recollections" (*L* EN: 154). These statements highlight the complex relationship between the "reality" of the novel and the ways Humbert perceives this reality, which results in the text of the novel. On one hand, his diary is a highly subjective and intimate account of this perception, which is integrated into the text of the novel, and which is designed to make an astute reader question the "reality" underlining this text. On the other hand, Humbert uses a "tour book" (a book written to literally convey how the "reality" ought to be viewed) to form a basis for his own perception and recollection, which results in a drastically different text. As we can see, re-writing as such is a recurring and integral theme throughout the novel and is introduced to showcase the highly egocentric nature of Humbert's world. By the same token, the development of this theme also suggests a very active role for the reader, as it is the reader who must be very critical of

Humbert's verbiage to identify the gaps between the "reality" and the ways "reality" is embedded in each successive version of Humbert's text. The self-referentiality of this text demands particularly astute reading and re-reading (and Nabokov himself consistently promoted this type of reading in his lectures on literature). Moreover, in the context of literature as a game, an act of re-reading the text can be seen as a form of the ultimate engagement between the author and his readers.

The discussion above serves to not only illustrate the complexities of analyzing this text but also to underscore that this project is based on the principles that are integral to the original novel. If the role of the implied author in the original text is obscured, because two distinct points of view by Humbert (the above-mentioned Humbert the Writing and Humbert the Described) dominate the narrative, one way to address this role is to examine changes in the successive versions of the novel. In the case of *Lolita*, the idea of rewriting extends into the extra-textual realm as well, as Nabokov produced other versions of *Lolita* (for screen and in the Russian language). It can be argued that shifts that are detectable in the various versions of the text are indicative of the implied author's change in views on the topic; in other words, they provide a map of the evolution of this idea of the novel. However, keeping in mind that we cannot trust what Humbert actually says, I propose to examine how his narrative is presented in each successive version of the text, paying special attention to the features of the texts that are not strictly linguistic but are certainly related to language and shared by both Russian and English versions[23]. However, prior to my analysis of the text, it is necessary to critically examine Nabokov's own assessment of his Russian translation of *Lolita* by considering the addendum to the Russian version, "The Postscript to the Russian Edition," in light of a literary game. I am

[23] See Chapter One for my discussion of general difficulties in establishing the nature of modality which might have affected the author's problem-solving decisions in versions of the texts written in different languages.

convinced that the literary game between the author and his readership is not over when the novel ends. It can be argued that the text of the postscript to the Russian version is produced by the implied author of novel and, therefore, is also a fictitious text. When seen in this light, this text can be read as an attempt to take the literary game, which *Lolita* is, to a completely new level in translation, as Nabokov's own evident "unreliability" in his reflections on translation rivals that of Humbert.

3.3 Nabokov as self-translator: authorial comments on the Russian *Lolita*

The status of the postscripts to *Lolita*(s) deserves a special comment, as these texts played a formative part in shaping the critical responses to the novel. The first United Kingdom edition of the book was published without any postscript by the author. However, the first American edition was accompanied by "On a Book Entitled *Lolita,*" dated November 12, 1956. Nabokov had translated this postscript into Russian when he completed his translation of the novel, but the Russian version of the book also contains "A Postscript to the Russian *Lolita,*" in which he specifically comments on the issues he encountered rendering the novel in Russian. The status of these texts is ambiguous; they might be considered extra-textual facts in relationship to the text of the novel (as they contain the author's reflection on the creative process), or they might be considered an organic part of the novel. Joanna Trzeciak points out the specifically literary nature of Nabokov's prefaces and afterwords by noting that they "always work to sway the reader's expectation" (Trzeciak 2005: 22). In the afterword to the English novel, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita,*" she points out that Nabokov is "going to great lengths to frame the reading its author prefers" (Trzeciak 2005: 23). This also seems applicable to the afterword of the Russian version of the novel. At first sight, it might appear that Nabokov concludes the Russian *Lolita* with his justification for publishing a "clumsy translation," yet a close reading of this text reveals

that Nabokov himself subverts many of his points in the text of the Russian translation. The postscript seems very "realistic" (in a sense that Nabokov's points appear to be very plausible), yet this "realistic" appearance does not exclude the element of play. Bruss, following Goffman, notes that "realistic appearances demand 'absolute continuity of resources and infinitely confirmed connectedness'" ("The Game": 157). Explaining this statement, she further elaborates that:

> Realistic literature is therefore as far as possible consistent with other modes of evidence, remaining within the epistemological and even the documentary style of history and science for the sake of 'continuity of resources.' ("The Game": 157)

It can be said, therefore, that in the text of "The Postscript to the Russian Edition," Nabokov masterfully evokes other "modes of evidence," in his own assessment of the resulting text. This is very significant, given Nabokov's privileged status as the *author* of the text. Nabokov's assessment is superimposed on the general attitude to translation as a secondary, derivative activity (a commonplace attitude at the time) and somewhat amplified by a direct mention of limitations in terms of the "mutual translatability" between the English and Russian literary languages (equally commonplace). Nabokov's points, however, must be examined closely to understand his strategy in subverting them, as evident from the text of the novel in conjunction with the text of the postscript.

As Nabokov boldly stated, "The history of this translation is the history of disillusionment" ("Postscript": 190). As to the reasons Nabokov considered the process of this translation a failure, he lists the "translator's loss of touch with his native speech[24]," and also

[24] It must be kept in mind that in the afterword to the English novel Nabokov evoked inferiority of his command of the English language, by mentioning "My private tragedy, which cannot, and indeed should not, be anybody's concern, is that I had to abandon my natural idiom, my untrammeled, rich and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English" (*L* EN: 317). In the afterword to the Russian version of the novel, Nabokov evokes a

many considerations regarding the "mutual translatability of these two amazing languages," English and Russian ("Postscript": 190). It must be pointed out that all of these issues pertain to the process of translation and appear to be quite plausible.

However, Nabokov's clearly stated objective, "In publishing *Lolita* in Russian, I pursue a very simple objective:[…] to be *correctly* translated into my native tongue ("Postscript": 192), pertains to the final product of this translation, rather than the process. Upon closer examination, this sentence turns out to be not an objective at all but rather an indirect assessment of his translation: after all, the text had already been translated by the time Nabokov made his observation. This, in turn, suggests that whatever difficulties Nabokov had encountered in his translation, he was able to resolve them to his satisfaction. While this does not answer the question of what is a "correct translation," it certainly validates Nabokov's choices as correct in a given set of circumstances.

Finally, Nabokov specifically commented on his role as a translator: "As a translator, I am not vain, I am indifferent to the experts' corrections, and pride myself only on the iron hand with which I checked the demons who incited me to deletions and additions" ("Postscript": 193). This seems to be a preemptive statement that attests to the fact that Nabokov was fully aware of the unconventional nature of his translation and, perhaps, expected to be criticized for it.All of these assertions must be critically examined to determine how and why they appear to be so believable, so "realistic." A critical examination of Nabokov's points will reveal that the postscript to the Russian *Lolita* is as fictitious as the novel itself.

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comparable inferiority of his command of the Russian language, by asserting that "[t]he rattle of my rusty Russian strings only nauseates me now" ("Postscript": 190).

3.3.1 Translator's means: command of language

Nabokov's acknowledgment of his deteriorated command of the Russian language prompted some scholars to debate the relative merit of his knowledge of English and Russian. Thus Grayson, for example, closely considered Nabokov's lament about "the second-hand brand of English" (*L* EN: 317) used in the original novel and provided the following assessment: "Personally, I would tend to agree with Nabokov that his Russian is superior—if only because it is less uneven and, on the whole, less mannered than his English" (185). It is, however, unclear whether this conclusion is based on Nabokov's use of everyday language or his literary use of language, as the two must be differentiated. As to the translation of the novel, Grayson specifically noted that "As for the Russian *Lolita*, the style here bears such strong traces of English construction that it cannot be safely treated as an autonomous piece of Russian" (193) and completely disregarded this version of the novel in her analysis. As is evident from Grayson's assertions, she tended to regard the afterword of the novel as factual information. In her view, the idiosyncratic use of Russian in the context of Nabokov's supposedly better command of his native language certainly suggests that his translation of *Lolita* was, indeed, a failure.

However, some of Nabokov's contemporaries recorded notes on Nabokov's excellent fluency in English, particularly in everyday use. Herbert Gold (one of Nabokov's interviewers), for example, recorded a note addressing Nabokov's request to answer his interview questions in advance and always in writing:

> He claims that he needs to write his responses because of his unfamiliarity with English; this is a constant seriocomic form of teasing. He speaks with a dramatic Cambridge accent, very slightly nuanced by an occasional Russian pronunciation. Spoken English is,

> in fact, no hazard to him. […] However, his frequent apologies for his grasp of English clearly belong in the context of Nabokov's special mournful joking: he means it, he does not mean it, he is grieving for his loss, he is outraged if anyone criticizes his style, he pretends to be just a poor lonely foreigner […]. (qtd. in Pifer "Vladimir Nabokov's": 196)

Other scholars focused on addressing Nabokov's claim that his Russian has not been used for a while. Beaujour, for example, debunks Nabokov's claim that by 1966-1967 "the excitement of verbal adventure in the Russian medium has faded away gradually after I turned to English in 1940" (*Strong Opinions*: 106):

> Despite his claim in 1966 that he could no longer write in Russian because the "adventure" was gone, he never really abandoned using Russian in one way or another, and he did not stop writing in Russian altogether […] What he did was compartmentalize, reserving the right to write poetry in Russian while writing prose only in English. (Beaujour *Alien Tongues*: 97)

The relative merit of Nabokov's command of languages is outside of the scope of this paper, as in the case of *Lolita*(s) it is more pertinent to discuss the literary use of languages involved. However it must be pointed out that there have been attempts to link Nabokov's use of Russian (the language he referred to as "my native tongue" in the afterword) with a certain cultural allegiance, and the relativity of these attempts should be addressed here. Thus, Joanna Trzeciak notes that the language of the English novel renders "the self-consciousness of Humbert's English diction, which sends even the most sophisticated reader to the dictionary" (Tzerciak "Wooley-woo-boo-are?": 617). As many experts have shown, Nabokov's tactics in rendering some features of the novel into Russian reveals the mechanisms of his literary style. One example of this tendency is a consistent explicitation of literary allusions and oftentimes direct identification of their sources[25]. Nosik, for instance, maintains that Nabokov rendered the text into Russian "without hoping that the [Russian] reader will consult the Oxford dictionary"

[25] A characteristic example of this tactic appears in the very beginning of the novel: "In a princedom by the sea" (*L* EN:1) is translated by Nabokov as «В некотором княжестве у моря (почти как у По)" (*L* RU: 1) or [In a princedom by the sea, almost as in Poe].

(239). Further, this scholar offers an interpretation of this difference, suggesting that it attests to the author's covert attitude towards his prospective audiences: "Where the author could just throw up his hands into the air with Americans, […] he would secretly extend a helping hand to his Russian reader" (Nosik 240). This interpretation of a primarily friendly gesture, however, is extensively debated by Barabtablo, who sees it as a gesture that is almost insultingly patronizing towards his less educated former countrymen by evoking "the contemporary Russian reader, less versed in the subtle lore of cutting across a literary webwork than the best of Nabokov's original American and European readers" (Barabtablo 240). As we can see, in the absence of other indicators of authorial intentions, Nabokov's attitudes towards his Russian readership can be interpreted in a drastically different fashion[26].

What emerges in the above discussion is a simple fact that it is possible to defend either position regarding Nabokov's command of languages, which all and by itself suggests that he was, indeed, fully bilingual, without any pronounced preference for a specific language[27].

Moreover, it can be argued that Nabokov's multilingualism (as he spoke Russian, English and French from early childhood) also informed his unique brand of artifice, allowing him to challenge norms of language use. Nakhimovsky and Paperno, for example, acknowledged Nabokov's exceptional lexical range by stating that "Nabokov's vocabulary is strikingly rich" ("A Linguistic Study": 79). Brown asserted that "Nabokov is incomparably resourceful in both languages" and specifically noted his ability to render meaning while preserving the formal features of words that stylistically establish their interconnectedness; Brown concluded in this

[26] In my opinion, these assessments confuse Nabokov's tactic (a short-term solution) with the overall strategy.
[27] While it can be reasonably argued that Nabokov did not distinguish between languages as far as their use goes, he naturally distinguished his attitudes to these languages. When asked in an interview what language he considered the most beautiful, Nabokov responded: "My head says English, my heart, Russian, my ear French" (Nabokov 1973: 49), underscoring different modes of pleasure he experienced when using these languages—mental, emotional, auditory.

regard by saying that “Nabokov is routinely brilliant at this sort of thing” ("A Little Girl": 19). As the highest testament to Nabokov’s linguistic virtuosity, some scholars pointed out that even Nabokov’s deliberate deviations from the norm of usage are semantically charged: “As with most violations of norms of language, skillful usage results in heightened expressiveness” (Nakhimovsky and Paperno, "A Linguistic Study": 81).

But if Nabokov was indeed content with his command of languages, why did he need to frame both English and Russian versions of the novel as produced by a foreigner? Brown, one of the first to review Nabokov’s Russian translation, suggested a specifically fictitious nature of the afterword by critically examining Nabokov’s own admission of failure:

> I am moved by the crusty old Olympian conjurer when he seems for a moment to drop his defenses and admit to his Russian audience that the luminous and supple style, the occasion of so much homesickness, has lost some resilience in its long disuse. It is moving, and, if I am any judge, only slightly justified. But with this writer, it is best to be most on one’s guard when he seems to be least at his. For when you think of it, how could he better translate (in one sense) those apologies for his English (Nabokov’s English!) than by apologizing for his Russian. The difference is in the degree of appropriateness. Since Nabokov is the living master of the English prose, and knows that he is, his enactment of apology is just that, a part of his supremely skillful act. For a writer who makes no distinction between life and art, who has said that “reality” is the one word that must always be used in quotes, there is nothing outside of act. ("A Little Girl": 20)

As evident in the passage above, Brown questioned factual grounds of Nabokov's statements in the afterword by drawing attention to the fact that Nabokov apologized for his language in both versions of the novel[28] and dismissed them as a peculiar functional equivalent of the English original, underscoring the fictitious nature of the text. This in turn leads to the question of *why* Nabokov needed to emphasize his status as a foreigner in both versions of the text. I argue that

[28] In this light, it must be pointed out that Nabokov also apologized for his endeavour in the preface to the screenplay by noting, “By nature I am no dramatist, I am not even a hack scenarist” (*L* SN: 673). This statement is in turn debunked by Julia Tribukhina, who notes that “Nabokov was nonetheless the author of several plays, taught drama at Stanford and at some point in the 1930s seriously aspired to a collaboration with Lewis Milestone (Tribukhina 149)

this can be explained by considering the thematic and linguistic nature of the narrative in the context of cultural norms that underlined his readers' expectations about the text.

The novel develops a theme that is commonly regarded as one of the taboo topics in literature. Arguably, Nabokov's status as a foreigner, along with the very particular language he uses in the novel, can be seen as an attempt to offset the shocking effect of such a theme. His status of foreigner can also somewhat justify the very language he uses in *Lolita*(s). In a novel that *can* be read as an *exposé* of social issues, the angle of exposure (from within the culture or from outside of it) is extremely important. It can be argued that, for Nabokov it was very important to capture, and systematically underscore, a view of a cultural outsider.

English readers of the book characterized the language as "uneven," "mannered" (Grayson 185) and featuring many Gallicisms (Tzerciak "Wooley-woo-boo-are?": 615). The Russian version of the novel has also been characterized as featuring "strange, intricate, almost exotic" language (Vail, n. pag.), bearing a strong trace of English (Grayson 185). The "strange" language of *Lolita*(s) is motivated, in part, by the fact that Humbert Humbert is a foreigner. However, it can be said that his "foreignness" is constructed in drastically different ways across the versions. As Trzeciak explains: "Because both the French people and the French language bear a relationship to literature and culture that differs between America and Russia, Humbert's identity as constructed through his use of French undergoes a shift in translation" ("Wooley-woo-boo-are?": 629).

The question of Humbert's cultural heritage is a very complex one. On one hand, as pointed out by Trzeciak, he introduces himself as being only a quarter French at the beginning of the English *Lolita*, yet elsewhere in the novel refers to himself as a Frenchman. In the Russian *Lolita*, however, he identifies himself as half French. However, despite this marked change, his

use of French substantially diminishes in the Russian version or, as Cummins puts it, the Russian reader is "robbed of much of the Humbert Humbert's French" (Cummins 354). One way to explain this transformation is by keeping in mind that Russian had been profoundly influenced by French culture in the 19th century and had assimilated an extensive lexical repertoire from French. Therefore, a simple transplantation of Humbert's French utterances would inevitably lead to the suppression of his marked foreignness. Nabokov's over-reliance on the Anglicisms in the novel can be seen, in this context, as at attempt to preserve his foreignness in translating *Lolita* into a different cultural milieu, and to preserve a hint of a foreign accent in Humbert's speech.

Moreover, the Russian version of the novel further underscores the fact that Humbert is not only generally foreign but also specifically non-Russian. For example, in the scene where Valeria prepares to leave Humbert and is frantically packing her belongings, Humbert notes that "every now and then she would volley a burst of Slavic at her stolid lover" (Nabokov1997: 28). This phrase is rendered by Nabokov as "причем то и дело разражалась залпом польских или русских фраз в направлении своего невозмутимого любовника [every now and then she would volley a burst of **Polish or Russian phrases** at her stolid lover]" (*L RU*: 19). Valeria is, of course, of Polish descent, while her new lover (Maksimovich) is Russian. As is evident from the text of the Russian version, Humbert is clearly not able to identify a possibly Russian utterance, or to distinguish between Polish and Russian, which further emphasizes that he is alien to the Slavic domain.

The effect of such language use can be seen as a peculiar type of *ostranieie*, or defamiliarization, as described by Viktor Shklovsky in "Art as Technique": "The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult to increase the difficulty and length of

perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" (Shklovsky, n. pag.). However, in the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, it can be said that Nabokov's language completely conceals the referent of his speech, which has been commented upon by his readers. Robert Stam, for example, commented on the difficulty of understanding what is actually going on in the novel:

> It is ultimately up to us to discern in the interstices of all *Lolita's* circumlocutions and literary allusions, exactly what is going on. Indeed, at times we have to figure out exactly what sexual acts are being performed, to realize that when Humbert tumescent prose speaks of being "proud like a Turk in his tower" as Lolita sits on his lap, for example, he is referring to his erection, and then "going over abyss" means he is having an orgasm. (Stam 113)

Oleg Kovalev, a prominent Russian film director, recalled his very similar impressions upon reading the Russian *Lolita* for the first time when it was smuggled into the Soviet Union: "[b]ased on the ornate descriptions by Nabokov, I often could not understand what his character was doing. His manipulations were presented in such a way that I could not understand the *mise*-EN-*scène"* (qtd. in Vail, n. pag.). As the discussion above shows, Nabokov can be said to have a superior command of both languages, which is evident not so much in his fluency, but rather in his skillful violation of conventional usage in a literary work.

3.3.2 The Translator's Role: No Emendations

In the afterword to the Russian version of the book, Nabokov explicitly commented on "on the iron hand with which I checked the demons that incited me to deletions and additions" (*L RU*: 298). However, in 1977 Jane Grayson noted that there *is* a substantial omission, as an extended passage in Part II (section 3) is missing in the Russian version. Grayson explained this omission by noting that "it is conceivable that Nabokov decided that the incident was repetitious. A similar scare had been described a few chapters earlier" (Grayson 120). In Russia, the fact that

a paragraph was missing in the text of the novel was not discovered until January 2003, when it made national headlines. Beginning in 2007, publications of the Russian version of the book routinely incorporate the missing paragraph (this recent tendency is the subject of a detailed discussion in Chapter Four below). However, given that there are no factual grounds for the claims that Nabokov made elsewhere in the afterword to the Russian version of the novel, it is reasonable to hypothesize that this omission was deliberate, a direct indication of the fictional nature of the afterword. This hypothesis, however, will require extensive substantiation (see Chapter Three).

In Nabokov scholarship, the Russian *Lolita* has been approached as having "exegesis right in the body of the text" (Cummins 354) and its interpretative mode is almost exclusively linked with the fact that "the potentialities of the linguistic environment are simply different" (Brown,"A Little Girl": 20). Scholarly discussions of the Russian version of the text are almost exclusively based on the often unstated assumption that both versions of the text stem from the same content, which can only be explained by the fact that translation studies have historically focused on similarities between versions. Therefore, the differences between versions have more often than not been explained by the intrinsic differences of the languages involved, yet such an approach esomewhat ignores the question of the extent to which the author's intentions were shaped by a given language. This is, indeed, a methodologically very difficult task, yet some valuable conclusions can be drawn from existing scholarly debates.

Both English and Russian are very distant languages and both naturally provide very different means for the embodiment of artistic intentions. Scholarly assessments of Nabokov's usage of a given natural language in *Lolita*(s) vary greatly. Some scholars contend that the totality of changes in the text is a *result* of differences in languages, while others approach

differences in languages as a *cause* of the totality of changes in the texts. Invariably in these discussions, Nabokov's emendations of a text are viewed as a spontaneous reaction to a change in the medium, rather than a deliberate strategy of the author.

This tendency can be illustrated by considering scholarly assessments of drastically different alliterative patterns between the versions. Many scholars have commented that Nabokov favored alliteration as a stylistic device, as there are numerous examples of alliterations in his work. Nakhimovsky and Paperno even noted that it would not be possible to discuss all of them in a scholarly paper "because examples are much too numerous" for a standard-sized scholarly paper to consider ("A Lingustic Study": 85). The role that alliteration plays in Nabokov's work far exceeds a simple embellishment but "intervenes organically in the meaningful structure of the text and determines [Nabokov's] strategy of translation" (Shatalov, n. pag.). Barabtarlo observed: "As it sometimes happens in Nabokov's fiction, an especially dense and persistent sound-play which suddenly stirs the fair surface of prose alerts the reader to the plot's making a crucial shift" (241). As is evident from these observations, alliteration has a meaning-generating function in Nabokov's work and is linked to reinforcing his novels' crucial themes. It is, however, naturally seen as dependent on the resources provided by a given medium.

Scholarly assessments, therefore, vary greatly in describing alliterative patterns in different versions of *Lolita*. Grayson, for instance, noted that "In two novels [*Invitation to a Beheading* and the Russian *Lolita*] more alliterative effects are lost in translations than are gained" (Grayson 123). One way to explain this broad statement is to keep in mind that Grayson approached these texts as a lateral transfer on a textual segment level and naturally did not find Russian alliterative patterns in the corresponding textual segments of the English text.

Other scholars found this conclusion highly debatable. Cechanovičius and Krūminienė, for instance, see Nabokov as voiding the irreconcilable differences between languages at a textual level by pointing out that "what Nabokov fails to render in one place he compensates for (often abundantly) in another" (Cechanovičius and Krūminienė, 129). Therefore, their conclusion directly contradicts that of Grayson, as they maintain that Nabokov was striving for a similar and even more exaggerated overall effect made possible by the new medium, concluding that:

> [Nabokov] made many alterations and additions to the source text, some of them serving as explicitations to help his prospective audience detect what he was playing on; others were introduced mainly because the Russian language allowed him to perform new stylistic maneuvers, and the authorial self could not resist the temptation. (Cechanovičius, Krūminienė 126)

Similar reasoning underlined a discussion by Barabtablo when he considered specific instances of alliteration in the Russian text:

> The relatively plain alliteration "millions of so-called 'millers', a kind of insect" [243], intensifies in the Russian version into a lambent multitude of swarming m's, l's, and t's: миллионы мотельных мотылей, называемых "мельниками" - не то от "мелькать", не то из-за мучнистого оттенка на свету. [222] [*there mingled motley millions of motel moths called "millers," either because they "mill around" or perhaps because of the "millet" shimmer they have wh*EN *lit.*] (Barabtablo 241, emphasis added)

Perhaps most significant in the example above is the relative ease with which Barabtablo provides a back translation of the Russian fragment into English *while preserving the same stylistic* effect (the last segment of the text). This fact alone subverts the point that he attempted to make: the intensity of the effect has absolutely nothing to do with the new resources provided by Russian to create this effect (as English has the same resources to render this effect, which Barabtalo's back-translation illustrates). The fact that both languages have the capacity to create alliterative patterns in this particular case requires us to re-visit the issue of the system of authorial intentions. On one hand, Nabokov can be seen here as exercising his authorial

inclination to engage further with a singular opportunity provided by the new linguistic environment. But on the other hand, if we continue to follow Barabtablo's earlier line of thought (that dense alliterative patterns mark crucial shifts in the narrative), it is possible to argue that the shift that follows the passage in question was perhaps regarded as *more* significant by Nabokov in the Russian version of the book. The question here, of course, is whether this argument can be sustained by establishing a pattern in the Russian version.

To date, many scholars have thoroughly debunked Nabokov's claim about the supposed absence of emendations in the translation. Thus, Cummins mentioned in passing that the Russian text actually contains "numerous omissions and interpolations, albeit none of any structural importance" (Cummins 355). Here, designating the discrepancies in the texts as "unimportant" structurally eliminates the need to justify them, yet this approach completely contradicts Nabokov's own insistence on the importance of details in the overall design of his work.

I completely agree with Cummins that there are numerous omissions in the Russian text. However, while they might not have any structural importance, they are important details that contribute to indirect characterization of the characters and they certainly carry an interpretative weight. Cummin's assessment of omissions as "unexplained and willful" only underscores that these omissions cannot be justified by the linguistic differences between the languages. This is particularly apparent in the following examples.

Humbert's English diary ends with: "This proved to be the last of twenty entries or so" (*L* EN: 55), translated into Russian as "На этом кончались записи в дневнике [This proved to be the last of my entries in the diary]" (*L RU*: 44). However, there are only 17 entries in Humbert's diary (or 19, if we choose to count notes made later in a day as separate entries). In any case, they do not add up to 20, but this is in part justified by the qualifier "or so" in the original. This is

an important qualification of Humbert's character, as it reinforces his overall unreliability. It suggests, above all, that even in a highly personal and intimate account of the events, when his honesty is underscored by his repeated acknowledgments of possible amendments in the text of the diary, he manages to omit an entry (as if hiding something). As evident from the Russian version of the novel, this detail is intentionally omitted by Nabokov *despite* the fact that it could have been easily incorporated into the Russian text. This evident omission should not lead to the conclusion that this detail was unimportant in the overall design of the novel. Considering that Nabokov's himself equated "capacity to wonder at trifles" with "the highest form of consciousness" (*Lectures*: 373) , it seems more instructive to approach this omission in light of the interpretation as to *why* the author considered it unimportant in the later version of the novel, instead of simply asserting that it was not.

A side-by-side comparison of English and Russian *Lolita*(s) reveals many such "trifles" that cannot possibly be explained by differences in natural languages. For instance, having found and read Humbert's diary, Charlotte writes three letters and frantically runs out of the house to mail them, at which point she is run over by a car and killed. The letters are later returned to Humbert by a neighborhood girl. Humbert rips them apart in his pocket while at the accident scene. However, eventually his curiosity prevails, and he attempts to reconstruct the letters. One letter was addressed to Humbert, and he arranges the torn pieces in the following order:

> "... after a year of separation we may... "
> "... oh, my dearest, oh my... "
> "... worse than if it had been a woman you kept..."
> "... or, maybe, I shall die..." (*L* EN: 99)

The Russian version of the letter is rearranged in a slightly different fashion, as the third fragment of the original (which mentions the "other woman") is missing:

> "...может быть, после года разлуки мы с тобой...", "...о, мой любимый, о, мой...", "...или, может быть, я умру..."
> ["... after a year of separation we may... ", "... oh, my dearest, oh my... ", "... or, maybe, I shall die..."] (*L RU*: 87)

Charlotte's assessment of Humbert's infatuation with her daughter, "... worse than if it had been a woman you kept..." certainly reflects a general assessment of the immorality of Humbert's actions as a spouse. However, in the English fragment it appears after Charlotte's insinuation in the first sentence that she would *still* consider reconciliation with him. What emerges from this juxtaposition is that Charlotte was fully aware of the extent of Humbert's infatuation with her daughter by having read the entire diary and nonetheless she chose to ignore his strong feelings, which in turn reinforces her image as a ruthless mother. By omitting this information in the Russian version, Nabokov introduces uncertainty about just how much Charlotte really knew about his true love interest, as she might simply have been offended by the unflattering epithets Humbert used early in his diary to describe her (which she had earlier quoted to him).

In summary, my approach to the text will be informed by Nabokov's own assertion on the importance of a detail within a whole that the writer consistently promoted in his lectures on literature:

> In reading, one should notice and fondle details. There is nothing wrong about the moonshine of generalization when it comes after the sunny trifles of the book have been lovingly collected. If one begins with a readymade generalization, one begins at the wrong end and travels away from the book before one has started to understand it. (*Lectures*:1)

Ironically, Nabokov's own designation of the Russian text as a translation somewhat contributed to one such generalization, resulting in a premise that Nabokov too will act as a commissioned translator in rendering it (i.e. that he will replicate the same text in a different linguistic/cultural environment). This premise, I am convinced, might not necessarily apply to this writer.

3.3.3 Translator's objective: "correct" translation

When examined closely, many of Nabokov's claims made in the afterword to the Russian text reveal their fictitious nature or, extending the gaming metaphor, they can be seen as a "bluff" on the part of the implied author of the narrative. This, in turn, justifies a close examination of Nabokov's own assessment of the text as a "correct translation" in light of his efforts to strategically deceive his readers. As Theo Hermans rightfully noted, "to speak about translation in terms of sameness is upholding an ideology of translation as it has existed for some centuries" (see Schäffner *Translation*: 82). Nabokov's assessment of the Russian version as a "correct translation" then, can be seen as a strategic move to prompt his bilingual readers to see nothing but "sameness" in the two versions of *Lolita*. Moreover, this was a rather successful attempt, I must add, as discrepancies between versions were, indeed, considered by some scholars as "unimportant" in the overall design of the novel, and consequently dismissed in their analyses.

Approaching Nabokov texts as "games" has benefits and shortcomings. On one hand, if Nabokov is seen as a strategist behind the textual production, one is able to identify gaps between expected behaviour and Nabokov's own actions related to the translation of *Lolita*. In Chapter One I showed that Nabokov undertook the translation of *Lolita* personally *despite* the availability of a commissioned translator. Indeed, he did so specifically to prevent the translation by a commissioned translator. These observations enabled me to hypothesize that perhaps the author *has done* something in this translation that no commissioned translator would have done. Further, he designated the resulting text specifically as a "correct translation," *despite* being a well-known literalist well-versed in translation terminology (which would make it natural for him to designate the text as a "literal translation" if this is what he meant).

But on the other hand, attempts to discern Nabokov's strategy in considering linguistic features of the texts might seem futile. If the text of a novel can be approached as an example of a literary game, the language used in the novel (English or Russian) constitutes yet another game, as Linda Gorlee reminds us:

> Because of its relative fixity, the game of chess has often been compared with the system of language. As a matter of fact, this supposed kinship is an almost classical topic in language philosophy, and has been referred to [by] de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics*, Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*, and Hjelmslev in his *Prolegom*EN*a to a Theory of Language.* (see Gorlee "Translation Theory": 99)

Artistic creativity in relationship to the chosen medium of expression has been explored by Gaudreault and Marion, who articulated a thought-provoking idea: "Any means of expression […] has to be framed in relation to constraints of the chosen materials of expression." However, "a constraint is not a limit, because a constraint is also the source, and even the condition, of creativity" (60). This raises an interesting issue of the extent to which a given medium shapes artistic intentions.

Perhaps one of the best reflections on this duality of language as a means of poetic expression has been provided by T.S. Eliot, who summarized the creative process in the following way:

> The poet has something germinating within him for which he has to find words; but he cannot know the words he wants until he has found the words; he cannot identify this embryo until it has been transformed into the right words in the right order. When you have found the words, the 'thing' for which the words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by the poem. (17)

As we can see, Eliot's statement echoes the arbitrariness of distinction between form and content as explored by Formalist scholars (Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Tynyanov, Boris Eikhenbaum and Boris Tomashevsky), as the content (or "the thing") cannot be known until it finds expression (or the form) at which point the form becomes part of the content. The understanding that any great

work of verbal art is a unique fusion of form and content has since become commonplace in literary studies, and does not need further justification. Self-translating authors routinely evoke the dependence of their artistic intentions on the natural language that embodied their artistic intentions.

Michael Idov, the author of the novel *Ground Up* (2009), which he translated into Russian as *Kofemolka* (2010), underscored the fact that his text is a translation. In the foreword to the Russian version of the novel, he explained: "It [the novel] was written in English because *it could not have been written in any other language*" (Idov, 11-12, emphasis added). Reflecting on the novel in "On a Book Entitled *Lolita,*" Nabokov pointed out a remarkably similar dependency of his artistic endeavours on the nature of the chosen medium:

> After Olympia Press, in Paris, published the book *Lolita*, an American critic suggested that *Lolita* was the record of my love affair with the romantic novel. The substitution "English Language" for "romantic novel" would make this elegant formula more correct. (*L* ENc: 316)

But this leads to an important question: how did the author render his love for the English language in Russian? Is it likely that he pursued *the same* artistic goals in another language or, perhaps, that his artistic pursuits *changed* in the context of another language?

Nabokov often maintained that his creativity was not constrained by a particular linguistic medium. When asked in an interview whether he thought in Russian or English, he explained: "I don't think in any language. I think in images. I don't believe that people think in languages" (*Strong Opinions*: 14). He also repeatedly emphasized that in his novels the linguistic material is subordinated to a precise rendering of his authorial vision: "The design of my novel is fixed in my imagination and every character follows the course that I imagine for him. I am the perfect dictator in that private world insofar as I alone am responsible for its stability and truth" (*Strong Opinions*: 69). A similar idea was iterated in the foreword to *Lolita,* the screenplay, as

the writer reflected on what he would do had he been a playwright: "I would have advocated and applied a system of total tyranny […] pervading the entire show with the will and art of one individual" (*L* SN: 673). This feature of Nabokov's novels allowed Rekka Tammi to identify a "pronouncedly anti-polyphonic feature," which he defines as "an overriding tendency to make explicit the presence of a creative consciousness behind every fictive construction" (100). Thus, since Nabokov's works are always carefully orchestrated by the author, every single detail, no matter how small, must be approached as a part of a larger meaning-generating structure.

There is a remarkably large number of documented shifts, or discrepancies, in details between Nabokov's two versions of the novel *Lolita*. For example, Nakhimovsky and Paperno (1982) compiled a list of more than 7000 Russian equivalents of words and phrases that Nabokov uses in the Russian *Lolita* but do not appear in standard dictionaries. Considering that standard dictionaries are a part of norm-forming processes in translation proper, this invaluable work serves to illustrate the extent to which Nabokov's translation does not follow the norms of traditional translation. Previous inquiries into this work were, more often than not, based on the assumption that Nabokov, simply by designating the derivative text a *translation*, had the same artistic goals. In light of this understanding, the 7000 shifts mentioned above seem rather odd. But understanding that Nabokov's pursuits might have not been the same in the translation can help to explain his unconventional word-choices.

When viewed from this perspective, Nabokov can be seen as engaged simultaneously in two distinct games: a linguistic game generally (Nabokov's language use as a chess game) and a literary game specifically (*Lolita* as a specific instance of a chess game). Given natural language rules (linguistic means available in English or Russian) might be seen then as informing Nabokov's tactics and strategies in the texts of *Lolita*(s) and undistinguishable from them. The

rules of these two distinct games might be in conflict, forcing the author to choose a specific tactic, or they might be in agreement, resulting in amplified features of the text. Because the unstated rules of these two simultaneous games are so "fuzzy," and repeatedly broken, and indiscernible from each other, my analysis of this work will consider extra-linguistic features of the texts. This approach will at least illuminate the general direction of Nabokov's strategy.

Nabokov's own statements about this translation are notoriously ambiguous. However, it is important to keep in mind that he approached the translation of *Lolita* as a mature writer and experienced translator. He famously characterized the process of this translation in an interview as "[c]ompleting the circle of my creative life. Or rather starting a new spiral" (*Strong Opinions*: 52). While this text has been historically approached as a compromise or, at best, as a continuation of Nabokov's maturity as a writer, my analysis will show that Nabokov's translation strategy in rendering *Lolita* into Russian amounts to a strategic move of taking this literary game to a completely new level.

This, of course, shall not imply that Nabokov's own translation was "incorrect." When seen from the vantage point of the descriptive approach, it might be said to have been informed by a set of other, non-conventional norms of translation. The patterns that emerge in Nabokov's three versions of *Lolita* (the original, the screenplay and the Russian version) will be the subject of close examination in Chapter Three. Further, accepting that norm-violating behaviour is likely to result in sanctions, the Russian reception of Nabokov's translation along with publishing practices of the Russian text in the target culture will be closely reviewed in Chapter Four.

3.4 From Page to Screen and… back to Page

This chapter will conclude with a few considerations about the status of yet another translation of the novel: the screenplay version of *Lolita*. It is important to examine, and valuable conclusions can be drawn from considering this text alongside the Russian translation. Historically, specific types of intersemiotic translation, namely, adaptations of literature to film, have been actively researched in the field of film adaptation studies. This connection has been pointed out by John Milton, who attempted "to approximate the areas of Adaptation Studies and Translation Studies, which although closely connected, seem to have followed somewhat different paths" (47). In his opinion, "One of the aporia of many studies in Adaptation Studies is the lack of awareness and analysis of the interlingual element in the adaptation of plays, films and novels. Likewise, many scholars in the field of Translation Studies and professional translators work and carry out research in areas that can easily be included in Adaptation Studies" (47). To explain such segregation by a historical dominance of the concept of equivalence in translation studies, Milton points out that "the major trend of research in Translation Studies […] has been that of equivalence, which has downgraded adapted versions to an area that is unworthy of study" (48). Much like considerations of literature translated into other languages, approaches to film adaptations have been informed by an expectation that the content of the work will remain the same. Blyn, for example, notes: "Whether as 'faithful' to the 'letter' 'spirit' or 'essence' of a novel, the question of a film fidelity has functioned as the paramount issue of academic and popular debate on the issue of cinematic adaptation" (Blyn 54).

Despite such similarities, these fields seem to have developed independently, and a combination of approaches developed in these fields is still a rather marginal phenomenon in research projects. In a recent article, Zethsen points out that "there seems to be much to gain theoretically as well as practically by looking for similarities and differences between various kinds of translational activities", yet she also admits that "an academic discipline needs to delimit its field" (Zethsen, n. pag.). This need could at least partially explain scholarly skepticism about exceptionally broad definitions of translation (as evident in works by Yuri Lotman, Roman Jackobson and George Steiner).

As the Russian version of the novel clearly falls under the "interlingual" type of translation, a few preliminary notes should be made about the status of the screenplay. The status of the screenplay text is rather ambiguous. From one point of view, it is a written text, and therefore, intended for reading. However, from another point of view, the text represents Nabokov's vision of the film, which is intended for viewing. Consequently, the ambiguity of the status of the text demands clarification whether it will be approached as an intralingual or intersemiotic type of translation in my analysis.

Although Nabokov was credited as the author of the screenplay in Stanley Kubrick's film, he also admitted that the original screenplay had been extensively changed. Remarkably, when he made this admission he drew a parallel with translation proper:

> The modifications, the garbling of my best little finds, the omission of entire scenes, the addition of new ones, and all sorts of other changes may not have been sufficient to erase my name from the credit titles but they certainly made the picture as unfaithful to the original script as an American poet's translation from Rimbaud or Pasternak. (*L* SN: 676)

Regrettably, a thorough analysis of the screenplay has yet to be done, although it is often discussed in connection with films produced by Stanley Kubrick (1962) and Adrian Lyne

(1997)[29]. The problem of "fidelity" is frequently evoked in these discussions, as the screenplay features substantial departures from the structure of the original novel. For example, Stam goes as far as to ask that, "[i]f a novelist has written a novel, but also produced a screenplay which is already 'unfaithful' to the novel, to which text is the filmmaker to be 'faithful'?" (118)[30].

Scholars have also pointed out that the alterations that Nabokov made to the screenplay text are comparable in scale to other interpretations of the novel, as Nabokov's screenplay "reveals the instabilities of textual production, the fact that so-called definitive works are actually only one version arbitrarily frozen into definitive status" (Stam 118). The differences between the original novel and the screenplay are typically explained by differences in the media. Quite representative here is the conclusion by Boyd: "Obviously, there are differences, but they seem designed primarily to make the major effects of the novel possible on the screen" ("Even Homais Nods" : 72). It appears that Nabokov himself shared such an attitude, by terming *Lolita* the screenplay "a vivacious variant of the old novel" (*L* SN: 676).

The main difficulty in rendering the novel for the screen can be reduced to challenges associated with the loss of general unreliability of the narrator, a signature feature of the text of the novel. A visual component of the film, the pictorial representation, serves as a representation of the objective "reality" for the viewer, against which the verbal component is inevitably evaluated. This difference in the medium is detrimental to rendering the intricate linguistic web of the text of the novel for the screen. However, it can be argued that this difficulty not only did

[29] See Stam; Trubikhina; and Jenkins. Individual scenes of the script are also cross-referenced with the novel in Boyd (1991), Kuzmanovich and Diment (2008) and Tribukhina (2007), among others.

[30] Remarkably similar questions have been asked by scholars in reference to the interlingual version of *Lolita*, the Russian version of the text. Beaujour, for instance, quotes Johnson: "But if one of the greatest stylists of modern literature, a man bilingual from earliest childhood, cannot successfully translate his own poetry, then who can? The same question can also be put for *Lolita*." (Beaujour 1989: 117)

not deter Nabokov from working on the screenplay, it formed a basis for his involvement in the film, and it informed and shaped his artistic intentions, as evident by the resulting script.

Reflecting on his involvement in the filming of *Lolita*, Nabokov recalled that when he was initially approached about the project, producers informed him that some changes would be imposed on the film due to considerations of censorship. This condition alone led to his refusal to participate in the project, to which he eventually returned after the production company assured him that he would have "a freer hand" (*L* SN: 671) in rendering the novel for the screen At the core of the film version was inspiration, as Nabokov reflected: "I had long ceased to bother about the film when suddenly I experienced a small nocturnal illumination, of diabolical origin, perhaps, but unusually compelling in bright sheer force, and clearly perceived an attractive line of approach to the screen version of *Lolita*" (Nabokov 1996: 671). Further, Nabokov alludes to the specific nature of his inspiration: "Long before, in Lugano, I had adumbrated the sequence at the Enchanted Hunters Hotel, but the entire mechanism now proved tremendously difficult to adjust so as to render by the transparent interplay of sound effects and trick shots" (*L* SN: 673). While he does not mention the specific scene in question, it is quite conceivable that Nabokov had in mind a brilliant rendering of the unreliable discourse on screen, as exemplified by the following passage.

The novel features a particular exchange between Humbert Humbert and a hotel clerk at the Enchanted Hunters. This exchange poses great difficulties in terms of rendering the unreliable discourse. When Humbert checks into the hotel, the place where he and Lolita will eventually become lovers, he is overcome by very conflicting feelings: his acute lust for the teenage girl and general awareness of the immorality of his feelings about and actions towards her. In this light, the following exchange is quite notable, as it reveals the inner working of

Humbert's consciousness. In an attempt to justify his actions, Humbert ascribes utterances to others, combining in one sentence what has actually been pronounced and has not been pronounced, resulting in a dark comic effect. The hotel clerk specifically comments on the size of the bed in the only room that is available for rent on that particular night:

> One crowded night we had three ladies and a child like yours sleep together. I believe one of the ladies was a disguised man [*my* static]." (*L* EN: 118)

This passage shows Humbert subconsciously combining both the clerk's actual statement (information that the bed can actually accommodate more than one person) and an imagined one (information that in the past, these people might have been of different genders) into one remark. In this specific exchange, Humbert's authorship of the second utterance is made evident after the fact, by an explicit mention of a static noise that is attached to the second part of the utterance. The resulting effect of this juxtaposition would have been incredibly difficult to reproduce on screen where the viewer is presented with the visual illustration of two people engaged in a dialogue. But difficult here should not be equated with impossible, as Nabokov's screenplay brilliantly demonstrates:

> POTTS: It's really quite a large (opens the book) bed. The other night we had three doctors sleeping in it, and the middle one was a pretty broad (offers the desk pen to Humbert whose own pen has stalled) gentleman (*L* SN:747)

As we can see here the ambiguity of the word "broad" (which can be used as an adjective in the sense of "wide," but also as a noun in the sense of "young woman"), followed by a pause (motivated by the clerk's assumption that Humbert's pen no longer works, as he offers him another one) plays a verbal trick on the viewer, as the factual information originating in the text is not the same as the viewer thinks it is. This example illustrates that it is not impossible to render the unreliable narrative on a cinematic screen; indeed, Nabokov offers a very inventive

solution to the problem. This solution, which strives to reproduce the same effect as in the English language novel, requires extensive textual changes: the "three ladies" are changed into the non-gender-specific "three doctors." As inventive as this particular solution is, it is also evident from Nabokov's reflection that he was acutely aware of the limitations and possibilities embedded in the new medium, specifically that it would be very difficult to sustain the mechanism of such representation for the entire duration of the film.

In my analysis, I will rely on the text of the screenplay as an intralingual translation or "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language" (Jakobson 139). Nabokov himself emphasized in the *Foreword* to the screenplay (1973) that this text was intended primarily for reading: "All I could do in the present case was *to grant words primacy over action*" (*L* SN: 673, emphasis added). Moreover, the fact that the screenplay was revised and published by Nabokov independently in 1973 (eleven years after Kubrick's film had been released) suggests that Nabokov envisioned it as an independent work of art (rather than just a component of the film). Finally, the very nature of the text corroborates this point: as noted by Boyd, the stage directions in the script are mostly unstageable (for example, Vivian Darkbloom blows Lolita a kiss "darkly blooming," Quilty's hands are "meatily clapping") and they "take on a considerable part of the novel's verbal glee" (originally cited in Boyd 2000: 413, also in Tribukhina, 158).

While both texts (the screenplay and the Russian version) can be approached as translations, a comparison between approaches developed within adaptation studies and translation studies reveals a rather peculiar difference in the basic premise on which the resulting texts are based. In practical terms, this can be exemplified by the very terminology used in these fields to designate Nabokov's derivative text. While scholars in adaptation studies refer to the

screenplay as a "translation," scholars in translation studies, following Nabokov himself, designate the Russian version of the text as an English-ed, Russian-ed and even Re-Russian-ed novel (bearing in mind that ur-*Lolita*, a short story titled "Volshebnik," was written by Nabokov in Russian). This choice of words underscores the fact that the Russian version of the novel is *not* considered a translation. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, Nabokov's status as the author-translator of his novel and the unconventionality of his choices when examined against the backdrop of traditional translation served as grounds for scholars to exclude the Russian text from consideration of common practices, as violating the norms of translation. In translation studies, historically bound by the notion of equivalence, the scope of inquiries had been traditionally informed by the search for similarities of the texts. In the case of the Russian *Lolita*, this angle promoted a premise that the author intended to produce the *same* version of the text in the Russian language[31]. As a result, many comparisons of the novels tend to justify discrepancies between versions as equivalents, relating them to the process, product or effect of translation, and identifying them at a local/segment level or at the level of overall textual strategy.

This premise is in stark contrast with the basic premise underlining film adaptation studies. Most screen adaptations do not involve crossing an interlingual boundary, as typically both the original novel and the resulting script are based on the same natural language (in case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, it is English). Therefore, there seems to be greater tolerance for inevitable differences between the texts, as posited by Louis Giannetti: "In each case, the cinematic form inevitably affects the content of the literary original" (Giannetti 389). When the interlinguistic element is taken out of the equation, the focus naturally shifts to the author and the issue of authorial intentions. In Nabokov's case, Tribukhina wrote: "Any question of interpretation,

[31] I am convinced that creating a replica of the English novel might not have been Nabokov's primary intention. However, the field of translation studies at large has not, until recently, developed any methodological tools to consider intentions of each individual translator.

including cinematic, raises the issue of what is eventually represented and what *can* be represented" (Tribukhina 155, emphasis in the original). She further pointed out that "to put the question of the representational in the perspective of translation, the question that arises is the relation of the authorial intent behind the original to its subsequent versions" (Tribukhina 155). Similarly, Schuman approaches the screenplay in light of Nabokov's own assertion that "The values of literary art lie not in the tale told, but in the profit and pleasure of the telling" (Schuman 195). Consequently, he focuses on the changes between the versions of the text in an attempt "to reveal some of Nabokov's critical dispositions regarding the two media involved" (Schuman 195). As we can see, adaptation studies tend to view the individual author as actively engaging with and reconciling the constraints and possibilities determined by the change in medium. This premise will also inform this analysis of the Russian version of the text.

A few comments must be made about the extent of my reliance on the text of *Lolita*, the screenplay, in my analysis. When approached holistically, the text of the screenplay is very different from that of the novel, and naturally it cannot be used in the analysis in the same way as the text of the Russian novel. Nonetheless, when the body of these three texts is viewed through the prism of evaluating changes in authorial intentions as far as they can be discerned, the text of the screenplay is invaluable in determining the pattern of change that is evident in the Russian version of the novel as well. As will be suggested in my analysis in Chapter Three, Nabokov employed a continuous pattern of emendation in all three versions of *Lolita*. This pattern suggests that shifts in the Russian version are not accidental, but were a part of his deliberate strategy in transforming the text.

3.5.Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed Nabokov's own statements about the nature of his art and, specifically, about *Lolita*. While understanding his playful attitude toward art makes it possible to approach his tests as multi-layered games designed for a variety of potential solvers, it also raises the question of the limits of a specific instance of a game (*Lolita*). The status of the authorial postscript to the Russian *Lolita* is rather ambiguous, as it can be considered an extratextual fact in relationship to the text of the novel, but it can also be approached as an integral part of it. My reading of this text pursues the second option and, as such, the text of the postscript can be open to interpretation. As suggested above, this text *can* be approached as Nabokov's own attempt to take the game of *Lolita* to a completely new level. While this reading seems plausible, conclusions about Nabokov's strategies can only be drawn from closely considering the empirical evidence, the Russian text of *Lolita*, which is the main focus of investigation in the next chapter.

4. A Literary Game Across Languages: Analysis of *Lolita(s)*

What the artist perceives is, primarily,
the *difference* between things. It is
the vulgar who notes their resemblance.
V. Nabokov *Despair* (1965)

My approach to the analysis of *Lolita(s*) in this chapter has been informed by Theo Hermans's excellent point, which offered a general critique of common practices within the descriptive approach:

> It cannot be enough to say that a particular option was chosen by a translator or met with approval from the audience because this or that was the norm and the option chosen conformed to it. If we want to assess the significance of translation in its historical, cultural and geopolitical context, we need to figure out not what the possible alternatives were (in principle, just about anything is possible), but what the most likely, the most obvious alternatives were, the alternatives that were emphatically not chosen. The significance of a choice lies in its contingency. The illocutionary force of an utterance, its point, can only be gauged against the background of what, in the circumstances, could have been expected but was excluded. (Shaffner *Translation*: 134)

Admittedly, in a linguistic analysis of *Lolita(s)*, one must acknowledge that the novel has become a staple of *innovative* use of language (as the author pushes, twists and breaks the rules of language to realize his artistic intentions). In light of this acknowledgment, it would be close to impossible to compile a list of equally innovative alternatives to Nabokov's actual choices (as evident from the text of the novel). Due to this understanding, my analysis of the text will focus on repetitive and extra-linguistic features of the text, such as Nabokov's own rendering of numerals, vocal emphasis (by means of italics) and author-specific use of punctuation. These features might be seen as relatively minor in the overall design of the novel, yet dismissing them as unimportant means turning a blind eye to the apparent differences in the translated texts. I contend that their extra-linguistic nature (as they are not subjected to a given natural language

explicit rules and regulations) make them an invaluable source of information about Nabokov's own artistic intentions. The repetitive character of such features in the text (and repetitiveness with which Nabokov emends them) are indicative of a normative behaviour, i.e. behaviour influenced by, provisionally, norms.

This approach is in contrast to most views about the text of Nabokov's translation. Sampson, who made the translation of the Postscript to the Russian Edition of *Lolita* available to the English-speaking audience, framed the text by the meticulous comparison between the English and the Russian versions (translated into Russian by Nabokov himself) of "On the Book Entitled *Lolita*"(1967), and mentioned that there are actually many discrepancies in Nabokov's own translation, yet he discounted them as "small differences in wording or phrasing, often a matter of stylistic equivalences vs. lexical literariness" ("Postcript": 189). My opinion, however, directly opposes that of Sampson: I argue that the totality of these small discrepancies between the versions is indicative of the larger difference in the design of the two novels, and all of the discrepancies deserve to be interpreted in light of this understanding.

It can be argued that, simply by virtue of designating the Russian version of the novel as "a correct translation," Nabokov himself determined the premise on which the Russian version of the text was approached. Nabokov's assessment, made with "an authority we are powerless to controvert, because their source is the author," (Whyte 70) has placed the resulting text directly into the focus of translation studies, a discipline that has been historically interested in the *sameness* of texts. In fact, this authoritative authorial angle has even been further amplified by Nabokov's own legacy as a scholar-literalist. Not surprisingly, then, the discrepancies in the resulting versions have long been seen as Nabokov's exercising an unsystematic and whimsical liberty in translation and therefore often dismissed in the field.

I am convinced, however, that in the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, it is more instructive to approach the texts as evidence of a system of emendations that informed Nabokov's strategy in translation. In this regard, it is more instructive to start the analysis by considering *repetitive* features of the text that exemplify "shifts" between the original and derivative texts (the screenplay and Russian version).

Further, as has been suggested in Chapter One, not all "shifts" are equally valuable for such analysis. Russian and English are very different languages, and some "shifts" can be seen as mandatory, informed by the very nature of the languages involved, such as dissimilarities in grammar[32] or semantic asymmetry[33]. Assuming that an internal logic interlining a given language might be very different in natural languages and might affect a translator's decisions in a variety of ways, I am particularly interested in features of the texts that are commonly described as *extra-linguistic,* that is, features of the text that are outside the domain of explicit linguistic rules and regulations. Use of numerals, graphic representation of vocal emphasis (by means of italics), and peculiarities of author-specific use of punctuation certainly fit this general profile, as these features are extra-linguistic and repetitive in the text. Crucially, both Russian and English have readily available means to retain these features, as nothing in the target language *prevents* practicing translators from retaining these features in translation.

Finally, as the discussion below will show, in the view of many theoreticians of literary translation between Russian and English (including Nabokov himself), the extra-linguistic nature

[32] Consider, for instance, a Russian translation of "This is a dog. **It** barks" as «Это собака. **Она** лает»,where **it** in the second sentence must be replaced by the Russian pronoun **she**, as the Russian word for a dog is formally a word with a feminine ending. This is an expected change, hardly indicative of a translator's agency.

[33] In this regard, it must be pointed out that Russians routinely identify two shades of English blue as two distinct colors: dark blue, or синий, and light blue, голубой. In English translations of Russian originals it is almost expected that both синее море (dark blue sea) and голубое небо (light blue sky) will be rendered as blue sea and blue sky, as the target language does not really provide any options in this regard. It might, however, be meaningful in considering Russian translations of English originals, to consider how to render a description of, say, a characters' blue eyes. Translators into Russian are forced to select between light blue and dark blue.

of such textual elements, along with available means to retain them, have served as a basis for assertions that they indeed *must* be retained. In what has become a foundational document of the Russian school of literary translation, Kornei Chukovsky's article "Principles of Literary Translation" (1919), the author specifically spoke against liberal practices of literary translation, and insisted on the approach he defined as "scholarly precision," which requires translators to render precisely even the smallest details of the text. Specifically, he asserted that:

> If the original features a word or a sentence marked by italics, a translator must introduce italics in the translation. Parenthesis, ellipses, dashes - all peculiarities of author-specific use of punctuation must be religiously preserved by the translator. (Chukovsky 1919: 23)

In light of this assertion, Nabokov's own article "The Art of Translation" (1941) suggests a number of convergence points with Chukovsky's statement. An "authentic poet" Nabokov argues, when undertaking a literary translation, more often than not, "lacks the scholar's precision and the professional translator's experience" (n. pag.), and consequently is likely to produce a liberal translation that does not represent the original text, or, in Nabokov's own words, "instead of dressing up like the real author, he dresses up the author as himself" (n. pag.). Nabokov (much like Chukovsky) speaks *against* liberal translations, and provides a list of requirements that a translator must meet in order to "to be able to give an ideal version of a foreign masterpiece (sic!)" (n. pag.). According to Nabokov , a translator (1) "must have as much talent, or at least the same kind of talent, as the author he chooses" (1941: n. pag.); (2) "must know thoroughly the two nations and the two languages involved and be perfectly acquainted with all details relating to his author's manner and methods" (1941: n. pag.), and (3) "while having genius and knowledge he must possess the gift of mimicry and be able to act, as it were, the real author's part by impersonating his tricks of demeanor and speech, his ways and his mind, with the utmost degree of verisimilitude" (1941: n. pag.). Despite the general polemical nature of

these assertions, it remains out of the question that Nabokov, being both the author and the translator of *Lolita*, is the only translator capable of meeting all of the above criteria. Further, if Chukovsky's listed features (use of italics, parenthesis, ellipses, dashes) are understood as specific textual instances of Nabokov's "real author's […] tricks of demeanor and speech" (Nabokov 1941: n. pag.), it would be natural to expect that Nabokov would retain these features in translation. However, contrary to this reasonable expectation, these features are surprisingly subjected to extensive modifications in Nabokov's own translation of *Lolita.*

I would like to conclude this introduction by pointing out that commissioned translators might not always adopt any particular theory of translation as a guidance tool in their decision-making. Indeed, despite scholarly assertions that these features *must* be retained, a sustained consideration of translation practice shows that these areas are particularly "fuzzy" in actual renderings[34]. Therefore, in this analysis I will adopt the following structure: my discussion of each of the features will be prefaced by a consideration of common translation practices to show what would be a normative range of deviations. Against this framework, I will consider Nabokov's own rendering of the stipulated features (that are clearly outside of the range of "normal" deviation) and will analyze Nabokov's strategy in light of the differences in the overall interpretation of the novel.

4.1. Rendering of Numerals

The rendering of numerals, particularly between languages that share the same numeral system, is rarely seen as a problem area. However, metaphorically speaking, the translation of numbers (especially in literary translation) perfectly illustrates problems of translation in general, as it is not the alignment of numbers from different cultures that poses various problems (after

[34] It can also be pointed out that rendering of such features is particularly prone to emendations by publishers (or editors and correctors), as they are heavily dependent on publishers' guidelines and conventions.

all, different cultures might use the same system of numerals), but rather the alignment of values the numerals may represent at the cultural, social and narrative levels, thereby constituting a grey area in the field. Scholars point out that there is a certain trust that a given community bestows on the translator, a trust that the information will remain *the same* in the translation. Chesterman, for example, evokes numerals (and specifically monetary sums) as the most obvious example of this sameness: "'*Trente francs'* has to be 'thirty francs', not twenty" ("Description": 93).

However, in considering the practice of translation, it would be simplistic to assert that numerals never change. For example, Natalia Strelnikova, the author of a recent handbook for translators working from Russian into English, discusses a handful of issues that practicing translators might encounter when rendering numerals, and outlines a number of instances when a change of numerals is even desirable (128-129). These changes might be informed by various differing conventions, such as cultural (the author suggests converting metric measurements into imperial in texts intended for an American audience), stylistic (the author points out that English sentences cannot start with a number, and this convention might require translators to change the position of the numeral in the sentence) and historical (such as different cultural conventions in formatting dates). A sample of literary renderings found in May (1994a: 80) perfectly illustrates the range of possibilities that practicing translators can adopt in rendering numerals. A sentence from "Odin den' v Zhizni Ivana Denisovicha" by Alexander Solzhenitsyn that describes the weather conditions from the perspective of an inmate in the Soviet labour camps, in which the narrator notes that the temperature outside is "двадцать семь с ветерком [twenty-seven with wind]" (May *The Translator*: 80), has lent itself to a variety of translations, such as the following:

1. "temperature of sixteen below" (translated by Hayward and Hingley, 30)
2. "seventeen degrees below zero" (translated by Parker, 38)

3. "-27 and a wind" (translated by Aitken, 25)
4. "a windy 17 below" (translated by Whitney, 40)
5. "twenty-seven below" (translated by Wilettes, 29)[35]

As we can see, practicing translators' strategies in rendering the numeral here are not limited to an accurate retention of the information provided in the source text. The discrepancies also illustrate a token of the translators' own interpretation of the significance of this statement. It should be kept in mind that the original story is set in a labour camp in Siberia (a northern locality in Russia that is well known for its brutal weather), so the original narrator's reference to "twenty-seven" outside cannot possibly refer to warm weather and this explains why the narrator skips the word "below." All translators, however, explicitly remind their readers that this passage refers to the negative side of the scale (evidently not taking for granted that their new audience will be familiar with the brutal weather conditions in this specific region, which is somewhat general knowledge in Russia). Keeping in mind that the original numeral represents the temperature on the Celsius scale (and -27C = -16.6F), one realizes that most translators (1, 2 and 4) not only rendered the numeral in Fahrenheit, but also rounded it up/or down (thus subtly altering the severity of the weather conditions). Some translators (3 and 5), on the other hand, choose to preserve the original numeral, yet did not make clear what scale it refers to (F or C). In this particular instance, the rendering of numerals might appear more accurate, yet the intended audience might automatically assume that they refer to the Fahrenheit scale (more common in the USA), and consequently get the impression that the living conditions in this locality are even *more* unbearable. In summary, as evident from this example, while in theory one would expect that numerals will remain *the same* in translation, in actual practice there is some lenience in

[35] All references appear in (May *The Translator*: 80).

rendering them, as translators settle for some degree of similarity as opposed to the exact retention.

Lolita reveals Nabokov's very peculiar approach in translating numerals. Numbers permeate this narrative, appearing in the form of measurements, dates and records of monetary exchanges. Considering that both Russian and English share the same numeral system, and assuming that the numerals have a particular significance for the author, it is fairly easy to identify a large number of shifts that are outside merely conventional "fuzzy" rendering. In this chapter, I will examine Nabokov's systematic changes of numbers in three versions of *Lolita:* the English novel, the screenplay and the Russian novel. The possible implications of these shifts for the interpretation of the resulting texts will be reviewed in thematic blocks. I will now, however, focus on records of monetary exchanges and time markers in the text.

4.1.1 Records of Monetary Exchanges

Keeping in mind Chesterman's reasonable assertion that "'*Trente francs'* has to be 'thirty francs', not twenty" ("Description": 93) in translation and assuming that there was some significance attached to selection of the numeral in the original novel, it would be natural to expect that Nabokov would preserve the amounts of money mentioned in the text. And yet the Russian text features multiple departures from the original in this regard. While these shifts are easily identifiable, their significance is very difficult to interpret. In my reading of the novels, I link the significance of monetary transaction to the theme of Lolita's value to Humbert, and this value is very different in the three versions of the text.

Generally speaking, financial matters are of little concern for Humbert, as he explicitly states:

> During that extravagant year 1947-1948, August to August, lodgings and food cost us around 5,500 dollars; gas, oil and repairs, 1,234, and various extras almost as much; so that during about 150 days of actual motion (we covered about 27,000 miles!) plus some 200 days of interpolated standstills, this modest *r*EN*tier* spent around 8,000 dollars, or better say 10,000 because, unpractical as I am, I have surely forgotten a number of items. (*L* EN: 175)

However, Humbert's self-professed impracticality in financial matters does not explain the transformations of the amounts of money that are mentioned in different versions of the book. An illustrative example appears in the Russian novel when Humbert picks up Lolita from the camp Q (shortly after her mother's passing), and the following scene takes place:

> Let me retain for a moment that scene in all its trivial and fateful detail: hag Holmes writing out a receipt, scratching her head, pulling a drawer out of her desk, pouring change into my impatient palm, then neatly spreading a banknote over it with a bright "... and five!" (*L* EN: 110)

> Хочу на минуту продлить эту сцену со всеми ее мелочами и роковыми подробностями. Карга, выписывающая расписку, скребущая голову, выдвигающая ящик стола, сыплющая сдачу в мою нетерпеливую ладонь, потом аккуратно раскладывающая поверх монет несколько ассигнаций с бодрым возгласом: "и вот еще десять!"
> [Let me retain for a moment that scene in all its trivial and fateful detail. The hag writing out a receipt, scratching her head, pulling a drawer out of her desk, pouring change into my impatient palm, then neatly spreading a **few banknotes** over it with a bright **"and here is another ten!"]** (*L RU*: 97)

In these versions of the same scene, the numeral "five" is rendered by "ten," and further, Nabokov renders "a banknote" not just by a plural noun, but also by adding "a few" in front of it. As evident from this scene, the Russian Humbert finds himself in the possession of not only Lolita but, perplexingly, in possession of a larger sum of money as well. I would contend that the difference is textually meaningful, rather than merely incidental, that the translation change is deliberate, reflective of authorial intentions.

I am convinced that in Humbert's world money plays a dual role: it is a means to exert his control over Lolita and a way to demonstrate her growing value to him. Humbert admits that he started paying Lolita for "fulfilling her basic obligations" (*L* EN: 184), yet upon discovering Lolita's secret savings, Humbert steals the cash, and justifies this action by saying that "what I feared most was not that she might ruin me, but that she might accumulate sufficient cash to run away" (*L* EN: 184). It comes as no surprise, then, that shortly after picking up Lolita from the camp, the following exchange takes place, where Humbert highlights Lolita's dire financial circumstances as well as his ability to improve them:

> "How much cash do you have?" I asked.
> "Not a cent," she said sadly, lifting her eyebrows, showing me the empty inside of her money purse.
> "This is a matter that will be mended in due time," I rejoined archly. (*L* EN: 115)

Thus, the theme of financial exchange is established as reflection of a mutual love relationship (i.e., Lolita is not yet Humbert's lover and she does not have any money, all of which will be mediated in due time). Money here represents Humbert's willingness to pay for that which he deems precious and valuable. An unexplained increase in the refund amount that Humbert received for her unfinished stay at the camp then acquires a very personal significance, as the Russian Humbert has literally more means to exert control over Lolita. Furthermore, this reading of translation difference is confirmed by a review of other monetary transactions taking place between Humbert and Lolita, showing that the mentioned amounts increase exponentially, both within each narrative and from one version of the novel to another. As to the general arrangement, Humbert notes his perceived helplessness as her customer:

> Her weekly allowance, paid to her under condition she fulfill her basic obligations, was twenty-one cents at the start of the Beardsley era—and went up to one dollar five before its end. […] Only very listlessly did she earn her three pennies—or three nickels—per day; and she proved to be a cruel negotiator […] Knowing the magic and might of her

> own soft mouth, she managed—during one schoolyear—to raise the bonus price of a fancy embrace to three, and even four bucks! (*L* EN: 184)
>
> Ее недельное жалование, выплачиваемое ей при условии, что она будет исполнять трижды в сутки основные свои обязанности, было, в начале Бердслейской эры, двадцать один цент (к концу этой эры оно дошло до доллара и пяти центов, что уже составляло не один цент, а целых пять за сеанс). […] Уж больно апатично зарабатывала она свои три копейки (а потом три пятака) в день, а в иных случаях умела жестоко торговаться, […] Хорошо учитывая магию и могущество своего мягкого рта, она ухитрилась - за один учебный год! - увеличить премию за эту определенную услугу до трех и даже четырех долларов!
> [Her weekly allowance, paid to her under condition she fulfill her basic obligations **three times a day**, was twenty-one cents at the start of the Beardsley era **(**and went up to one dollar five before its end, **which meant not one, but five cents per session)** . […] Only very listlessly did she earn her three **kopeks**—or three **pyataka**—per day; and she proved to be a cruel negotiator […] Knowing the magic and might of her own soft mouth, she managed—during one schoolyear—to raise the bonus price of a fancy embrace to three, and even four bucks!] (*L* RU: 166)

It must be noted that while the amounts listed by the narrator increase substantially (illustrating Lolita's growing erotic value for Humbert), the Russian version places additional emphasis on how objectively *little* were Lolita's earnings by breaking down her weekly allowance into separate payments per session. This meagreness is highlighted by using a phrase, зарабатывать (свою) копейку, or "to earn one's kopeika," which means "to earn a modest living" in Russian and explains the sudden change of currency in the narrative.

Despite her modest allowance, the Russian Lolita manages to accumulate slightly more money than her American counterpart, thus making Humbert's fear of her escape more justified:

> Once I found eight one-dollar notes in one of her books (fittingly—*Treasure Island*), and once a hole in the wall behind Whistler's *Mother* yielded as much as twenty-four dollars and some change—say twenty-four sixty—which I quietly removed. (*L* EN:184)
>
> Раз я нашел восемь долларовых билетов в одной из ее книг (с подходящим заглавием "Остров Сокровищ"), а в другой раз дырка в стене за репродукцией Уистлеровой "Матери" оказалась набитой деньгами—я насчитал двадцать четыре доллара и мелочь—скажем, всего двадцать шесть долларов,—которые я преспокойно убрал к себе. (*L* RU: 166)

> [Once I found eight one-dollar notes in one of her books (with a fitting title *Treasure Island*), and once a hole in the wall behind Whistler's *Mother* turned out to be filled with coins—I counted twenty-four dollars and some change—say **twenty-six dollars**—which I quietly removed.]

As evident from this example, Lolita's savings of $24 and some change transform into $26 in the Russian version. Keeping in mind that Lolita only had one source of income, this increase indicates that she was required to fulfill her responsibilities even more often. Again, this discrepancy suggests that Nabokov amplifies Russian Lolita's value to the narrator by increasing the frequency of sexual and economic exchange.

Further, it can be argued that the theme of monetary relations reaches its climax at the end of the novel, when Humbert hands Lolita (by then—Mrs. Dolly Shiller) her inheritance. While technically this is not a payment for her "basic obligations," Lolita makes no mistake in identifying it as such, and asks:

> "You mean," she said opening her eyes and raising herself slightly, the snake that may strike, "you mean you will give [us] that money only if I go with you to a motel. Is that what you mean?" (*L* EN: 278)

Humbert emphatically denies this insinuation, but nonetheless, it must be pointed out that he refers to her inheritance as *mon petit cadeau*—the same term he used earlier in the novel when detailing his payment to a French prostitute Monique, where "[a]s usual, she asked at once for her *petit cadeau* (*L* EN: 22). Similarly, in this scene where Humbert gives Lolita an envelope with her late mother's inheritance, he notes:

> I handed her an envelope with four hundred dollars in cash and a check for three thousand six hundred more.
> Gingerly, uncertainly, she received *mon petit cadeau*; and then her forehead became a beautiful pink. "You mean," she said, with agonized emphasis, "you are giving us four thousand bucks?" (*L* EN: 278)

A similar tendency—systematic increase of Humbert's payments to Lolita as a way to underscore her rapidly growing value to him—is also apparent in the text of the screenplay. First,

Lolita responds to Humbert's request to "have a little chat with him" with "[i]f you give me a dime. From now on I am coin operated" (Nabokov 1996: 767). Then, a few pages later, the following scene takes place:

> LOLITA Give me a quarter for TV.
> HUMBERT It's free, my pet, in this, as they say, joint.
> LOLITA I need a quarter anyway.
> HUMBERT My pet must earn it. (*L* SN: 770)

And, finally, the next page culminates in:

> LOLITA (reading a notice) Children free. Goody-goody.
> HUMBERT. (laughing tenderly) No quarter tonight, free child.
> LOLITA That's what you think. From now *this* child is paid half a dollar. (*L* SN: 771).

It must be a pointed out that the amount of Lolita's inheritance in the screenplay is also increased substantially (two and a half times) in comparison with the original novel, as Lolita exclaims: "You mean you are giving us ten thousand bucks?" (*L* SN: 830).

As evident from the discussion above, translating "five" as "ten" is far from being an error or a misprint; monetary transactions serve a very particular purpose in the versions of the novel and in the process of rendering the text over and over (first as a screenplay, then as a novel in Russian), the author enhances this striking economic feature. The pattern of monetary transactions across the versions can be summarized as follows: the amount mentioned in the original novel, followed by a drastic increase/decrease (if mentioned) in the screenplay, followed by a corresponding adjustment in the Russian version. In itself, of course, these changes are minute, yet they illustrate an emerging pattern: it seems that details of the narrative that have passed through the cinematic adaptation are respectively adjusted in the Russian version of the novel as well. A similar pattern can also be observed in scenes that do not involve money. For example, the records of Lolita's fever, which leads to hospitalization (and her hospitalization, in turn, leads to the escape from Humbert), also seem to fluctuate across different versions. When

Lolita becomes ill and needs to be taken to the hospital, Humbert takes her temperature, and the objective measure of her fever indicates to the reader just how worried he *should* be:

> Her skin was scalding hot! I took her temperature, orally, then looked up a scribbled formula I fortunately had in a jotter and after laboriously reducing the, meaningless to me, degrees Fahrenheit to the intimate centigrade of my childhood, found she had 40.4, which at least made sense. (*L* EN: 240)

Remarkably, Lolita's fever in the screenplay is significantly less dangerous, as Humbert notes that it measures only 39.4C, a seemingly unwarranted departure from the original novel:

> HUMBERT: These tricky American thermometers are meant to conceal their information from the layman. Ah, here we are. Good God, **one hundred and three**. I must take you straight to the hospital! (*L* SN: 806, emphasis added)

But, subsequently, the Russian version of the novel features a slight reduction of the temperature as well:

> Я поставил ей градусник в ротик, затем посмотрел формулу, записанную, к счастью, у меня в книжечке, и, когда я наконец перевел бессмысленную для меня цифру с Фаренгейтовской шкалы на близкую мне с детства стоградусную, оказалось, что у нее сорок и две десятых, чем по крайней мере объяснилось ее состояние
>
> [I inserted a thermometer into her mouth, then looked up a scribbled formula I fortunately had in a notebook and, having laboriously reduced the meaningless to me numeral from Fahrenheit to the intimate centigrade of my childhood, found she had **forty and two tenths**, which at least made sense] (*L* RU: 221)

As we can see from the discussion above, numeric measurements play a dual role in this narrative: on one hand, they are objective units of measure, but on the other hand they also have a highly personal, subjective significance that is ascribed to them by the author. Clearly, the author accentuates this personal meaning attached to the use of numbers from version to version, which results in the increase/reduction of the objective/numerical measurements used in the text. These changes cannot be explained by the influence of social/cultural norms, but should rather be seen as a tangible evidence of the author's changing views on certain elements of the book.

4.1.2 Temporal Markers

There are two very important categories of numerals pertaining to time in Nabokov's narrative that merit close consideration: numbers that represent time as objective and external (specifically, dates) and internal time markers, pertaining to time lapses within the narrative. As to the typical rendering of dates, Lawrence Venuti mentioned that present-day Western translations routinely conform to contemporary canons of accuracy that are "based on the adequacy to the foreign text" (Venuti 484), and tend to preserve specific dates in narratives.

In light of this tendency, Nabokov's strategy in regards to rendering dates is certainly unusual, as he systematically provides additional dates in the text of the Russian novel. This tendency has been pointed out by Brian Boyd and Alexander Dolinin, and it is evident in the following examples (additions are listed in bold in the third column):

English novel	**Russian novel**	**Back translation**
It was then that began our extensive travels all over the States. (*L* EN: 145)	Тогда-то, в августе 1947-го года, начались наши долгие странствия по Соединенным Штатам. (*L RU*: 128)	[It was then, **in August of 1947,** that began our extensive travels all over the States.]
I cannot be absolutely certain that in the course of the winter she did not manage to have, in a casual way, improper contacts with unknown young fellows. (*L* EN: 186)	Я не могу поклясться, что в течение той зимы (1948 - 1949 г.) Лолите не удалось войти мимоходом в непристойное соприкосновение с мальчишками. (*L RU*: 168)	[I cannot be absolutely certain that in the course of the winter **(1948 - 1949)** she did not manage to have, in a casual way, improper contacts with unknown young fellows.]
For her birthday I bought her a bicycle. (*L* EN: 199)	На ее четырнадцатое рождение, в первый день 1949-го года, я подарил ей велосипед. (*L RU*: 181);	[For her **fourteenth** birthday, **on the first day of 1949**, I bought her a bicycle.]

inventive Humbert was to be, I hinted, chief consultant in the production of a film dealing with "existentialism," still a hot thing at the time. (*L* EN: 208)	изобретательный Гумберт намекнул, что его приглашают консультантом на съемку фильма, изображавшего "экзистенциализм" - который в 1949 годусчитался еще ходким товаром. (*L* RU: 189)	[inventive Humbert hinted that he was to be a chief consultant in the production of a film dealing with "existentialism," still a hot thing **in 1949.**]
But the most penetrating bodkin was the anagramtailed entry in the register of Chestnut Lodge "Ted Hunter, Cane, NH." (*L* EN: 251)	Но больнее всего пронзила меня кощунственная анаграмма нашего первого незабвенного привала (в 1947-ом году, читатель!), которую я отыскал в книге касбимского мотеля. (*L* RU: 232)	[But the most penetrating bodkin was the anagramtailed entry of our first unforgettable overnight stay **(in 1947, oh reader!**) that I found in the register of Chestnut Lodge.]
But on two occasions an art instructor on the Beardsley College faculty had come over to show the schoolgirls magic lantern pictures of French castles and nineteenth-century paintings. (*L* EN: 252)	Но два-три раза в течение учебного года (1948 - 49) приходил с волшебным фонарем искусствовед из Бердслейского Университета показывать гимназисткам цветные снимки французских замков и образцы импрессионистической живописи. (*L* RU: 233)	[But on two occasions during the school year **(1948-49)** an art instructor on the Beardsley College faculty had come over to show the schoolgirls magic lantern pictures of French castles and samples of impressionistic paintings.]
This book is about Lolita; and now that I have reached the part which (had I not been forestalled by another internal combustion martyr) might be called "Dolorès Disparue," there would be little sense in analyzing the three empty years that followed. (*L* EN: 234)	Эта книга - о Лолите; теперь, когда дохожу до той части, которую я бы назвал (если бы меня не предупредил другой страдалец, тоже жертва внутреннего сгорания) "Dolores Disparue", подробное описание последних трех пустых лет,	[This book is about Lolita; and now that I have reached the part which (had I not been forestalled by another internal combustion martyr) might be called "Dolorès Disparue," there would be little sense in analyzing the three empty years that followed**, from the beginning of July 1949 to the**

	от начала июля 1949 до середины ноября 1952, не имело бы смысла. (*L* RU: 253);	**middle of November 1952.**]
When I first met her she had but recently divorced her third husband. (*L* EN: 258)	Когда мы познакомились (в 1950-ом году), с ней недавно развелся третий ее муж. (*L* RU: 238).	[When I first met her **(in 1950)** she had but recently divorced her third husband.]

Such systematic addition of dates is certainly an unusual practice, and as such it attracted considerable scholarly attention[36]. Boyd, following Dolinin, explains this tendency by listing several reasons: Nabokov's evolution of style towards greater chronological detail; Nabokov's need to clearly identify for the Russian readership the timeframe of the narrative (self-evident for the American audience) and the author's need to correct inconsistencies he had noticed earlier. Some scholars attempted to link the significance of these additions with Nabokov's covert attitude to his Russian readership. Barabtablo, for example, specifically commented on this strategy: "Even the dates are obligingly furnished in parentheses at appropriate moments lest the careless Russian reader should lose track of time progress in the book" (240). It will be shown here, however, that Barabtablo's supposed "careless Russian reader" might have had every reason to lose track of time in the novel, considering Nabokov's own strategy in rendering temporal markers between the versions.

[36] Actually, most scholarly debates surround an omission of one important date at the end of the novel. A passage, "The letter was dated September 18, 1952 (this was September 22), and the address she gave was 'General Delivery, Coalmont'"(*L* EN: 267) was translated by Nabokov as "Письмо было от сентября 18, 1952 года, и адрес, который она давала, был 'До востребования, Коулмонт'[The letter was dated September 18, 1952, and the address she gave was "General Delivery, Coalmont"]" (*L* RU: 247).

It must be pointed out that the Russian version of the book is also substantially longer: "the Russian translation of Lolita is nearly a third longer than the English original"[37] (Johnson, n. pag.), despite several missing fragments in the Russian text. This fact alone is of little value, but in addition to the objectively longer text, it appears that other numerals in the narrative, numbers representing time as experienced by Humbert, are consistently increased. In particular, the author prolongs certain, often pleasurable, moments, which forms a distinct pattern in the novels, and serves as indirect characterization of Humbert as well.

More often than not, this amplification happens when Humbert describes himself experiencing intense feelings. And if the duration of the stated time in these instances is of any indication of the *intensity* of these feelings, then Humbert certainly experiences them more deeply in the Russian version. Consider, for example, the scene when Humbert reminisces about his first encounter with Monique, a French girl-prostitute that is prolonged in the Russian version:

> So let her remain, sleek, slender Monique, as she was for a minute or two: a delinquent nymphet shining through the matter-of-fact young whore. (*L* EN: 23)
>
> Так пускай же она останется гладкой тонкой Моникой - такой, какою она была в продолжение тех двух-трех минут, когда беспризорная нимфетка просвечивала сквозь деловитую молодую проститутку.
>
> [So let her remain, sleek, slender Monique – such as she was for those **two or three minutes**, when a delinquent nymphet was shining through the matter-of-fact young whore.] (*L RU*:14)

A date with Monique was Humbert's first encounter with a girl-prostitute, and he recalls a profound sensual pleasure from this encounter, which ultimately became a formative part of his fixation on young girls. As evident from the comparison above, in the subsequent version of the

[37] However, it is unclear how Johnson arrives at this conclusion (whether it is the word count, the character count or the page count between the versions). It must also be emphasized that Russian translations tend to always be longer than the English originals, with some practicing translators considering a 20% increase in size as normal. Still, according to Johnson, the increase of text in this particular case is above average.

novel Nabokov further prolongs the moments Humbert admires the girl, indirectly highlighting the significance of this experience. Moreover, Nabokov uses the same strategy of prolongation of time on numerous other occasions in the book, forming another distinct pattern between the versions.

Humbert, having just found out that Charlotte was killed in an accident, points out that "[a]t this point, I should explain that the prompt appearance of the patrolmen, hardly more than a minute after the accident" (*L* EN: 98). This sentence is translated as "Тут я должен пояснить, что незамедлительное появление дорожной полиции (не прошло и двух минут после несчастия)" [At this point, I should explain that the prompt appearance of the patrolmen (not even **two** minutes have passed after the accident)] (*L RU*: 85). This passage is actually preceded by Humbert's indirect reflection on his feelings, as he says: "I have to put the impact of instantaneous vision into a sequence of words; their physical accumulation in the page impairs the actual flash" (*L* EN: 97). This "flash" lasts longer in the Russian version, underscoring the importance of this event for the novel as a whole: Charlotte is dead, Humbert is now the sole caregiver of Lolita, and he can do what he pleases with her. The Russian translation thus consistently uses increased measures—money and time—to signal its account of increased intensities.

In the English-language novel, having killed Quilty, Humbert confesses that "I may have lost contact with reality for a second or two," but immediately clarifies "oh, nothing of the I-just-blacked-out sort that your common criminal enacts; on the contrary, I want to stress the fact that I was responsible for every shed drop of his bubbleblood" (*L* EN: 304). This time lapse is rendered as "Возможно, что в течение двух-трех секунд я потерял связь с действительностью ["I may have lost contact with reality for **two or three** seconds"]" (*L* RU:

282). As we can see, the ultimate victory over his rival is experienced slightly more pronouncedly by the Russian Humbert as well.

The examples above are fairly consistent in the narrative: the augmented timeframe of these individual moments serves as an indirect but meaningful characterization of Humbert's positive or even joyous emotional state during various points of the narrative, and elongation of the time serves to underscore the intensity of Humbert's feelings in the overall design of the Russian version of the novel. In short, the Russian version emphasizes the narrator's emotion more than either the English original or the text of the screenplay.

There are, however, other examples of temporal shifts that allow us to draw broader conclusions about the narrator's state of mind. For example, consider the scene where Humbert, having received Charlotte's love letter, makes the decision to marry her, and phones the camp in hopes to inform Charlotte about his decision immediately, only to find out that "she had left half an hour before" (*L* EN: 72). This section is translated as "но оказалось, что она вот уже час как выехала ["It turned out she left **an hour** ago"]" (*L* RU: 60). Considering that this timeframe relates to one of the novel's crucial sequences (Charlotte and Lolita had just left for camp; a maid gives Humbert Charlotte's love letter; Humbert reads it mockingly and then makes the decision to marry Charlotte in order to gain unlimited access to Lolita), the implication of time contraction is very significant. Humbert makes this important decision for the novel *much faster* in the Russian version, which, in turn, implies that it was a less torturous decision to make.

Another striking example in the text that should be discussed separately, as it illustrates how systematic contraction (not just within one text, but also across the versions) can be linked to Nabokov's artistic goals. Humbert makes no secret of his "idea of marrying a mature widow (say, Charlotte Haze) with not one relative left in the wide gray world, merely in order to have

my way with her child (Lo, Lola, Lolita)" (*L* EN: 70). Clearly, being aware of possible social repercussions of his aspirations, Humbert underscores that the potential candidate must be lonely, so that nobody is interested in the fate of the child with whom he has his way. Charlotte Haze and Lolita, then, fit his requirement perfectly, as the reader learns that "[t]hey had moved to Ramsdale **less** than two years ago" (*L* EN: 46), translated as "В Рамздэль они переехали около двух лет тому назад ["They had moved to Ramsdale **about** two years ago"]" (*L RU*: 36).

However, shortly after the wedding Humbert informs his readers that "by engaging in church work as well as by getting to know the better mothers of Lo's schoolmates, Charlotte in the course of *twenty months* or so had managed…" (*L* EN: 75, emphasis added). The contraction of time that Charlotte and Lolita supposedly lived in Ramsdale, however, suddenly becomes even more pronounced in the Russian version, as the passage is translated as "Тем, что она участвовала в работе церковно-благотворительных кружков, и тем еще, что успела перезнакомиться с наиболее задающимися мамашами Лолитиных товарок, Шарлотта за полтора года изловчилась […] ["by engaging in church work as well as by getting to know the better mothers of Lo's schoolmates, Charlotte in the course of **a year and a half** had managed […]"]" (*L* RU: 63). As we can see, the relatively short period of time the Haze family resided in Rasmdale gradually lessens as it becomes more numerically specific both within and across versions, as "two years" gradually transforms into "20 months" and then are decreased down to "18 months."

4.2 Use of Italics

Nabokov's own assertion that a translator "must possess the gift of mimicry and be able to act, as it were, the real author's part by impersonating his tricks of […] speech [...] with the utmost degree of verisimilitude" ("The Art": n. pag.) serves as basis to consider Nabokov's rendering of graphic representation of oral emphasis by means of italics. Words marked by italics are dispersed throughout the novel, but the pattern of their usage is very different in the two versions of *Lolita*. At one point Humbert quips: "In my youth I once read a French detective tale where the clues were actually in italics; but that is not McFate's way—even if one does learn to recognize certain obscure indications" (*L* EN: 211). It can be argued that this carefully planted remark is designed to prompt the astute reader to search for clues in the use of italics, only to find Nabokov's use of italics does contain any clues pertinent to the main mystery of the novel. I contend, however, that Nabokov's use of italics deserves detailed consideration.

Conventionally italics are widely used to mark an emphasis on the spoken word, particularly if this emphasis is different from normal emphasis (arising from the structure of the sentence), and conveys the intention of the speaker to highlight a word. As evident in *Lolita*(s) Nabokov deliberately uses vocal emphasis in very distinct ways, and this strategy merits closer consideration.

Nabokov consistently elects to adjust the use of emphasis between versions without changing the word order in the Russian text. Consider the following example: Nabokov translates "Oh, Lolita, had *you* loved me thus!" (*L* EN: 14) as "О, Лолита, если б ты меня любила *так*! ["Oh, Lolita, had you loved me *thus*!"]" (*L* RU: 6). This translation, as far as the word order and semantic composition go, is identical to the original, yet the placement of italics brings out very different nuances of meaning, and these nuances are important for the novel as a

whole. The English Humbert places a slightly stronger emphasis on the addressee of his exclamation, Lolita, which renders his frustration with her disobedient ways. The Russian version, in contrast, emphasizes the foundational event from Humbert's past (his love for Annabelle), as an example of feelings he fails to emulate in his relationship with Lolita. This difference in italicization carries significant interpretive weight: the Russian Humbert nostalgically wishes to replicate a powerfully transformative experience ("*thus*"), whereas the American Humbert feels he has missed the possibility of love in the present moment ("had *you* loved me"). It can be argued, then, that this change also indicates a change in Humbert's attitude as well, as he is obviously more concerned with the *how* of his love relationship in the later version of the novel when compared with the *who*, the object of his love, in the earlier version. Nabokov thus has the wistful narrator opt for a drastically different placement of emphasis despite the possible and readily available means to preserve the original emphasis. Such subtly strategic alterations warrant further examination of the use of italics in the novel(s).

A review of the use of italics in the novel shows remarkable consistency, as it appears that all female characters in the English version of the book speak considerably more emphatically than their Russian counterparts, Lolita included. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this tendency. At one point Lolita asks Humbert: "Don't tell Mother but I've eaten *all* your bacon" (*L* EN: 50) is translated as "Не говорите маме, но я съела весь ваш бекон ["Don't tell Mother but I've eaten all your bacon"]" (*L* RU: 39). She warns Humbert in another scene: "*Don't* do that," she said looking at me with unfeigned surprise" (*L* EN: 115) translated as "'Не сметь этого!' - сказала она, глядя на меня с непритворным удивлением" ["Don't you dare to do that," she said looking at me with unfeigned surprise"] (*L* RU:103). In yet another scene she

asks: "Are we going to sleep in *one* room?" (*L* EN: 118) translated as "Как же так - мы будем спать в одной комнате? ["How is it – are we going to sleep in one room?"]" (*L* RU: 106)[38].

This elimination of italics seems to form a general pattern throughout the text, and what is more interesting, Nabokov avoids using italics in his representation of female characters' speech in the Russian version even when the stated circumstances of speech would warrant it. This is apparent in the following scene and its translation, which details Humbert's encounter with Vivian Darkbloom:

> As we pulled up, another car came to a gliding stop alongside, and a very striking looking, athletically lean young woman (where had I seen her?) with a high complexion and shoulder-length brilliant bronze hair, greeted Lo with a ringing "Hi!"—and then, addressing me, effusively, edusively (placed!), stressing certain words, said: "What a *shame* was it to *tear* Dolly away from the play—you should have *heard* the author *raving* about her after that rehearsal—" (*L* EN: 208)

> Только мы застопорили, подъехала слева и плавно остановилась другая машина, и худая чрезвычайно спортивного вида молодая женщина (где я видел ее?) с ярким цветом лица и блестящими медно-красными кудрями до плеч приветствовала Лолиту звонким восклицанием, а затем, обратившись ко мне, необыкновенно жарко, "жанна-дарково" (ага, вспомнил!), крикнула: "Как вам не совестно отрывать Долли от спектакля, вы бы послушали, как автор расхваливал ее на репетиции..."

> [As we pulled up, another car came to a gliding stop alongside, and a lean, very strikingly athletic-looking young woman (where had I seen her?) with a bright complexion and shoulder-length brilliant bronze hair, greeted Lo with a ringing exclamation--and then, addressing me, in a remarkably heated, "jeanne-d'arc-esque" way (placed!), yelled: "What a shame was it to tear Dolly away from the play--you should have heard the author raving about her after that rehearsal…"] (*L* RU: 190)

The woman, unmistakably, is Vivian Darkbloom, or her Russian counterpart Vivian Damor-Blok. Her name was revised in the Russian version as it contains the anagram of the author's name—hence the change of the adverb that allows Humbert to place the character. She speaks to Humbert "stressing certain words," which justifies the use of italics in rendering her statement. In the Russian version, however, she yells in a "heated way" (which again, implies unusual

[38] This particular sentence is also featured in the screenplay, but note the difference in the placement of emphasis in Lolita's remark: "LOLITA (her features working) You mean we are *both* going to sleep *here*?" (*L* SN: 747)

enunciation of words), but any mention of unusual emphasis, along with italics, is removed from her utterance, even though the retention of italics would have been easily justified. This translation feature, yet again, underscores a very intentional purpose of the elimination of italics in the later version from the speech of female characters. In fact, this graphic element is linked, almost exclusively, with the speech of Humbert in the Russian text, and implications of this marked change should be considered carefully.

It seems that this specific change in italicization can be linked to one of the novel's major themes, that of seduction and power distribution among characters. One of the greatest ironies of the book can be reduced to the following: throughout most of the first part of the novel Humbert painstakingly plans to seduce Lolita, only to exclaim after their first night together that "I am going to tell you something very strange: it was she who seduced me" (*L* EN: 133). This idea—a charmer being charmed—is thematized on many levels in the narrative, including the very use of the language by the characters. For example, Humbert is specifically hired by the Haze family as a French tutor (and his primary responsibility is to teach her the French language, his native tongue), but his teaching endeavours have an almost opposite effect. In the second part of the book, the following exchange takes place in which Humbert evidently appropriates Lolita's language in their conversation:

> "Come and kiss your old man," I would say, "and drop that moody nonsense. In former times, when I was still your dream male [the reader will notice what pains I took to speak Lo's tongue], you swooned to records of the number one throb-and-sob idol of your coevals [Lo: "Of my what? Speak English"] (*L* EN: 149)

The dialogue above highlights the irony that is evident in the very fact of language use by the characters: not only did Humbert fail to teach Lolita to speak French, his native tongue, but he, too, began to use Lolita's vernacular American language in their conversations. His attempts,

however, are clearly not recognized as such by Lolita, as she does not understand what he means when he speaks in elevated diction and instructs him to speak English.

To relate this theme of seduction and language use to the strategy of italics placement in the novels, it must be pointed out that English Humbert's attempts to appropriate Lolita's tongue go beyond his use of slang words typical for an American teenager. Lolita's highly emphatic way of speaking penetrates into Humbert's speech as well, as he too, begins to speak as emphatically as her. When reflecting on their travels together, Humbert recalls: "If a roadside sign said: Visit Our Gift Shop—we *had* to visit it, *had* to buy its Indian curios, dolls, copper jewelry, cactus candy" (*L* EN:148). This reflection, even though it is narrated by Humbert, alludes to the implied authorship of the utterance, as Lolita's highly emphatic speech is revealed in the italics. As we can see, Humbert's appropriation of Lolita's language is evident not just in his use of lexical items, but also in the *way* he now speaks (emphatically). This feature is completely absent in the Russian text, as the passage in question is rendered as follows:

> Если вывеска придорожной лавки гласила: "Купите у нас подарки!" - мы просто должны были там побывать, должны были там накупить всяких дурацких индейских изделий, кукол, медных безделушек, кактусовых леденцов.
>
> [If a roadside sign of a shop said: Visit Our Gift Shop—we simply had to visit it, had to buy all kinds of silly Indian curios, dolls, copper knickknacks, cactus candy.] (*L RU*: 131)

It can be argued that the difference in rendering the speech of characters is particularly clearly emphasized in one of the final scenes of the novel. Recounting the events that took place after Lolita had left him, Humbert reports the following information obtained from Lolita: "Fay had tried to get back to the Ranch—and it just was not there anymore—--it had burned to the ground, *nothing* remained, just a charred heap of rubbish. It was so *strange, so strange*—" (*L* EN: 277). Once again, against the backdrop of the established pattern in the English version of the novel, this passage leaves the impression that Humbert's and Lolita's voices fuse together, and Humbert

is following Lolita in lamenting the destruction of the ranch. This fusion symbolically renders his ultimate submission to her, as it is her voice that is heard in his speech. Surprisingly, the Russian version of the sentence reads completely differently despite a very similar graphic representation, as it is translated as:

> Фэй попробовала вернуться в ранчо, но оно просто несуществовало больше - сгорело дотла, *ничего* не оставалось, только черная куча мусора. Это ей показалось так странно, *так странно*...)
>
> [Fay had tried to get back to the Ranch--and it just did not exist anymore--it had burned to the ground, *nothing* remained, just a charred heap of rubbish. It was so strange*, so strange*…] (*L RU*: 257

The significance of italics placement in the Russian text is very different from the one in English. As is evident from the rest of the text, emphatic use of stress in the Russian version is the prerogative of Humbert the narrator, and Humbert alone. Rather than fusing two voices together in this scene, italics here unmistakably mark the authorship of words in the passage and this is evident in the representation of the final words, repeated "so strange." Here the first instance is not specifically marked as it represents the factual information received by Humbert from Lolita, while the second instance is clearly authored by Humbert alone, who repeats these words after Lolita, and places further emphasis on these words. Thus italics in the text here can be seen as the Humbert's fixation on this information (that the ranch had burned and this is, indeed, very strange). They do not mark what Lolita had *said*, but rather—what Humbert *hears*. The plausibility of this interpretation is evident in the addition that follows the passage in question in the Russian version of the novel (it is absent in the English novel): Humbert attempts to explain what it is he finds so strange and makes explicit the significance of this event in connection with other details mentioned in the story: "Что ж, у Мак-Ку было тоже похожее

имя, и тоже сгорел дом ["Well, McCoo had a similar name and his house burned down too']" (*L* RU: 257) .

To conclude this section, I would like to emphasize the significance of departures in italics placement in the Russian novel. As is evident from the discussion above, this departure is deliberate and systematic, and it is indicative of Nabokov's completely *different* artistic intentions in translation.

4.3 Author-specific Use of Punctuation

Punctuation is a prominent feature of any natural language, and punctuation marks aid in comprehension of the written text by marking intonation and pauses that must be observed when reading it. The rules of punctuation vary from language to language, and there are certainly differences in how punctuation marks are used between English and Russian. D. Barton Johnson, one of the first researchers to consider the implications of Nabokov's use of punctuation in translation (by examining English and Russian versions of *The Transparent Things*), noted that "[t]he punctuation patterns of Russian and English are radically different—thanks, in part, to their syntax and morphology" (Johnson, n. pag.). This scholar observes that "[o]ne might also note that Russian punctuation tends to be syntactically based, i.e., mechanical, while English relies more on semantic and emotional factors" (Johnson, n. pag.).

It must be emphasized that, while there are differences, both languages also allow author-specific use of punctuation (in Russian *avtorskie znaki*), not regulated by language rules[39]. It is

[39] Consider, for example, humorous sentences, such as "Woman without her man is nothing" (or its Russian equivalent "Казнить нельзя помиловать'") where altering the punctuation leads to a drastic difference in meaning: "Woman! Without her, man is nothing" or "Woman without her man, is nothing"

precisely these marks—solely controlled by the author and not regulated by external rules—that provide valuable insight into the workings of an artistic mind.

The use of punctuation and visual representation of the text in general is a relatively under-researched field in translation. Regarded as a relatively minor aspect of language, the use of punctuation was often overlooked in translation studies. This attitude, however, is changing rapidly. In her excellent discussion of literary prose translations from Russian into English, Rachel May posits that punctuation can be a subtle site of interpretive tension and power:

> Translators tend to explain their often cavalier treatment of punctuation by the search for 'what sounds right' to them. However, psycholinguistic research shows punctuation to be a fundamentally visual effect that does not lend itself to such aural criteria. Instead, punctuation appears to be a locus of translational control, the place where translators assert the most authority. (*The Translator*: 6)

As we can see, in the absence of any strict documented rules, this area allows for much "cavalier treatment" on the part of translators, which makes it particularly valuable for research. Translators routinely elect to use punctuation marks according to "what sounds right," i.e., according to their own interpretation of the texts, thereby making their own role and strategy in translation visible.

The case of Nabokov's legacy in this context, however, merits further consideration. Arguably, Nabokov was acutely aware of the significance of punctuation for his work, as is evident from a letter written by Vera Nabokov on behalf of her husband just a few years prior to the release of the Russian *Lolita*. The letter was essentially a request to see the final proofs of *Invitation to the Beheading*, which was prompted by the detection of numerous misprints in the text:

> In order to avoid new misprints, my husband reluctantly accepts the substitution of dots for dashes and dashes for inverted commas, although this substitution is unfortunate in

> view of the fact that dots, dashes, and inverted commas all had their carefully assigned meaning in the original. (cited in White 48)

Lolita specifically features frequent direct or implied meta-textual references to punctuation. The narrator, for example, highlights the difference between the nature of Charlotte's remarks and the way they are presented in the text, as she says: "How I love this garden [no exclamation mark in her tone]. Isn't it divine in the sun [no question mark either]" (*L* EN: 55, examples are listed exactly as they appear in the text of the novel), and goes as far as to ask Jean Farlow to "forgive me all this, parenthesis included" (*L* EN:115).

This aspect of Nabokov's works certainly did not go unnoticed by his readership. Zinaida Shakhovskaya, one of his early critics, for example, specifically pointed out his "extravagant" use of punctuation marks. Barton D. Johnson, the first scholar to further explore the phenomenon, observed that Nabokov's fiction is "heavily punctuated" (Johnson, n. pag.), and linked the symbolic representation of punctuation marks to the author's intended effect of particular scenes in *Transparent Things*. Duncan White pointed out the abundance of brackets in the English *Lolita* as a particular literary device that reflected and amplified the novel's crucial themes—imprisonment, seduction, mystery—concluding that Lolita is, in fact, "a heaven for charged punctuation" (47). A Russian scholar, B.Yu. Shavlukova, explored a very Nabokovian usage of a dash combined with "and" in his early Russian prose, pointing out that he often used this combination in direct violation with normative usage, in order to achieve very specific literary effects.

Nabokov's own stated importance of punctuation, further amplified by the general awareness of his theory of literal translation—his repeated assertions of the importance of slightest details in interpretation of literary works—has led to the fact that translators of Nabokov's texts tend to observe religiously the author-specific use of punctuation when

translating his texts. This is particularly evident in the translation of "The Postscript to the Russian Edition of *Lolita*" written by Nabokov in Russian (1965) and made available to his English-speaking readership by Earl D. Sampson in 1982. As evident from my comparison of the original and the translation, Sampson only changed punctuation and formatting of this texts in instances where it was mandated by the rules of the English language, such as removing quotation marks around book titles and names of mentioned publishing houses (as well as marking book titles with italics in the English text), or inserting the present tense of the verb "to be" in places where the Russian text featured a dash. These are, of course, mandatory shifts, expected in any translation from Russian into English. However, this translator also meticulously retained the punctuation symbols in all instances that are not so heavily regulated by the rules of English. Particularly insightful here is the following example: defending his right to translate *Lolita* personally, Nabokov vividly conjures up an image of "американец, который «брал» русский язык в университете" (Nabokov 1968: 298), translated by Sampson as "the American who had 'taken' Russian at the university" (Sampson 192). *"To take" a language [class] at the university* in Russian is a notorious lexical calque from English (common among novice students of Russian), as in standard Russian students typically *learn a language* (изучают язык). In standard Russian, when a supposed language professional claims *to have "taken" the language*, this wording alone raises the question of his or her supposed proficiency. This violation of the norms in standard usage certainly justifies the inclusion of the word in the quotation marks. In English, however, "to take a language" is a standard expression that is commonly used, which does not require special formatting. Nonetheless, the translator here preserves the quotation marks[40]. This example serves to illustrate the point that, while many translators do not put much

[40] This, in turn, brings out a semantic implication that is very different from the original: while the Russian version suggests that the said professional took a language class, but failed to learn the basics of the language, the formatting

thought into preserving punctuation marks in their texts, translators of Nabokov's texts tend to invest a considerable effort into retaining all of the features of the original, even if it might not be necessary. In this context, Nabokov's own treatment of punctuation across different versions of the novel is very different from that of most translators of his own texts.

4.3.1 Parentheses

The sheer abundance of round parentheses in *Lolita* is truly astounding. Duncan White notes that there are as many as 450 in the novel, and it must be pointed out that Nabokov places further emphasis on the use of parentheses in the Russian version of the novel, though this amplification is not considered by White at all.

As far as their conventional usage is concerned, parentheses commonly mark a piece of unessential information. See, for example, the definition from the Oxford Dictionary: "a word or phrase inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it, in writing usually marked off by brackets, dashes, or commas." This general guideline is very similar in Russian as well. The Russian *Academic Grammar* (published in 1967, around the time *Lolita* was translated into Russian) maintains that "parentheses are used to mark words and sentences that are inserted into other sentences for explanation or as addition to the expressed thought." As an alternative to this method, the *Grammar* lists separation by dashes on both sides of the inserted fragment, "in instances where separation by parenthesis might lessen the link between the main sentence and the addition."[41] The use of parenthesis in literary texts, while it often mimics the conventional usage, can also be drastically different. For example, the

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of the English translation might suggest that the person never actually took the class.

[41] In this chapter I will accept this alternative—separation by dashes—as an adequate alternative to separation by parenthesis; however, additional consideration of instances where Nabokov opts for either of these marks might yield interesting results.

Russian *Literary Encyclopedia* underscores that parentheses also highlight the isolation of the enclosed thought from the discourse as it demands "a change of tone."

This punctuation aspect—Nabokov's use and even over-use of parentheses—has attracted some scholarly attention. White points out that the abundance of bracketed phrases in the English *Lolita* may be explained as several authorial strategies at once: as the development of the theatrical theme (where brackets mark additions that are used similarly to stage directions), as the special brand of Humbert's viciousness (hinting at his real motives in front of an unsuspecting audience), and as Nabokov's interest in exploring a purely typographic usage of brackets (where brackets are compared to windows in the narrator's facade). White then further explores the use of parentheses in the story and shows their use mirrors and even amplifies the novel's crucial themes—imprisonment, seduction, mystery.

Michael Wood in a recent piece dedicated to exploring the notion of "norm" in Nabokov's afterword to *Lolita* reminded us of the "extraordinary vivid use Nabokov makes of this typographic convention" (238), and in addition to listing some of the conventional purposes of parentheses—to provide quick examples or supplementary argument, to add information or anecdote, or as a parody of the device itself—explores the ambiguity of this mark in the Afterword to *Lolita*, as "the parenthesis […] leaves the precision and detail to us" (239). On a similar note, Bulgarian scholar Katherina Kokinova pointed out the specifically literary use of brackets in Witold Gombrowicz and Vladimir Nabokov's Russian prose, as well as the perplexing ability of these marks to hide and reveal at the same time, concluding that "what has been put into (brackets) oscillates between the presence and the attempt at absence" (4). She elaborated her radical view by explaining this punctuation's visual contradiction:

> It looks as though the brackets are a concisely chosen punctuation mark that stands out visually at the same time as what is within it may be omitted, could be read, "played"

> without it. On the other hand, graphically outstanding, they are more likely to take a "leading position," the text in brackets the first/only text read. (Kokinova 4)

These scholars (with the exception of Kokinova) focus on the English version of *Lolita*, but an examination of various versions of *Lolita* reveals very distinct and different patterns in the use of brackets that ought to be considered in the context of the narratives as a whole. Consider the following examples, where almost identical phrases have a drastically different placement of parenthesis: "She went on, her cheek (recedent) against mine (pursuant); and this was a good day, mark, o reader!" (*L* EN: 165) translated as "Она продолжала, отодвигая щеку от моей наступавшей щеки (и это был, заметь, еще легкий день, о мой читатель!) " ["She went on, receding her cheek against pursuant mine (and this was, mark, an easy day, oh my reader!)"]. (*L* RU: 149) Here the English version has an opposite effect to the conventional usage of brackets: by placing the adjective after the noun and separating it in parentheses, Nabokov draws additional attention to the direction of movement, very similar to theatrical scripts. The Russian version contains a direct appeal to the reader, "*my* reader," in parenthesis, where the conventional "insignificance" of the bracketed phrase is somewhat subverted by the request to "mark" this occurrence, thus implying that it is important. The placement of brackets in his particular scene, when approached in abstraction, highlights the shifting emphasis between the original and the translation, as the original draws more attention to the events as perceived by the narrator, while the translation puts more emphasis on the communication between the narrator and his readership. However, while this particular scene features a strikingly different placement of brackets, the analysis of this scene does not indicate whether this is a separate instance of the narrator's whimsy or an indication of a pattern affecting the design of the novel as a whole. In order to make broader conclusions about this aspect of the novel, one must consider whether parenthetical inclusions form distinct patterns in various versions of the novel. My review of

these patterns reveals that the discrepancies in the use of parentheses between different versions of the novels cannot be explained by maturity of the author's style in use of this unconventional feature (and should not be viewed as the author's attempt to enhance this feature, already prominent in the original), but are rather indicative of his changing artistic intentions in the overall design of the novel.

The following section will review the effect of the additional parentheses placement in the Russian version of the novel in light of the consequences of these additions for the narrative as a whole. Particularly revealing are conclusions that can be drawn from instances where (a) the Russian version features added parentheses along with new information absent in the original, and (b) the Russian version features additional parentheses otherwise identical (semantically and compositionally) to the original sentences.

a) Added parenthesis with new information absent in the original

A review of additions in parentheses in the Russian version of the text reveals numerous additional interjections by Humbert that seek to evaluate the text surrounding round brackets, often from what seems to be a retrospective vantage point (indicative of Humbert reflecting on the events of the plot in retrospect). Considering the importance of juxtaposing two distinct points of view in the narrative—Humbert the Writing vs. Humbert the Described, to use Dolinin's terminology ("Nabokov's Time" 27)—these additions reveal a more prominent voice of Humbert the Writing throughout the Russian text.

This is evident in the following example, as Humbert laments the fact that he did not film Lolita while she was playing tennis:

> That I could have had all her strokes, all her enchantments, immortalized in segments of celluloid, makes me moan today with frustration. They would have been so much more than the snapshots I burned! (*L* EN: 232)

> Меня заставляет стонать от обиды мысль, что я мог так легко обессмертить все эти волшебные узоры, запечатлев их на целлулоидовой ленте. Насколько они бы превосходили те моментальные снимки, которые я (безумец!) сжег!
>
> [The thought that makes me moan today with frustration is that I could have immortalized all these magic patterns, by placing them onto segments of celluloid. They would have been so much more than the snapshots that I **(a madman!)** burned!] (*L* RU: 213)

Here, the additional bracketed interjection "(a madman!)" shows an emotionally charged evaluation of the events in the passage, made by Humbert from a retrospective point of view. In this particular case, we have to rely on the chronology of the events to identify the retrospective nature of the remark, as Humbert could not have referred to himself as a madman had he known what events were to follow (Lolita's disappearance from his life).

Occasionally, the addition of brackets in the Russian text is accompanied by subtle changes in the lexical items or grammar, all of which unambiguously identify that these remarks were retrospective. Consider the following striking example, Humbert's confession made after having spent a day on the beach with Lolita:

> […] but the fog was like a wet blanket, and the sand was gritty and clammy, and Lo was all gooseflesh and grit, and for the first time in my life I had as little desire for her as for a manatee (*L* EN: 167)
>
> [….] но туман нависал как мокрое одеяло, песок был неприятно зернистый и клейкий, и Лолита вся покрылась гусиной кожей и зернами песка, и (единственный раз в жизни!) я имел к ней не больше влечения, чем к ламантину.
>
> [[…] but the fog was like a wet blanket, and the sand was gritty and clammy, and Lo was all covered in gooseflesh and grit, and (for **the only** time in my life!) I had as little desire for her as for a manatee] (*L RU*: 150)

As we can see, the English version identifies Humbert as lacking desire for Lolita for *the first time* in his life, which identifies Humbert as reflecting on the event as an immediate participant. In the Russian version, however, Humbert is writing from a much later perspective, and having lost Lolita, is able to conclude that this was the *only* time he ever lacked desire for her.

On a similar note, parentheses sometimes interrupt the grammatical sequence of tenses of the original and underscore more definite future events in the Russian version. In one scene, Humbert, admiring Lolita as she is playing with the dog, remarks: "Lo, leaving the dog as she would leave me some day, rose from her haunches" (*L* EN: 118) and this remark is translated as "Лолита, оставив собаку (так и меня она оставит), поднялась с корточек" ["Lo, leaving the dog (as she **will leave** me some day) rose from her haunches"] (*L RU*: 105).

Occasionally, these interjections serve to highlight the gap between the reality that surrounds Humbert and the way he perceives it at the moment, which is only possible from the retrospective point of view. This gap is evident from the following changes:

> There was the day, during our first trip—our first circle of paradise—when in order to enjoy my phantasms in peace I firmly decided to ignore what I could not help perceiving, the fact that I was to her not a boy friend… (*L* EN: 283)
>
> Помню день, во время нашей первой поездки—нашего первого круга рая, —когда для того, чтобы свободно упиваться своими фантасмагориями, я принял важное решение: не обращать внимания на то (а было это так явно!), что я для нее не возлюбленный
> [There was the day, during our first trip—our first circle of paradise—when in order to freely enjoy my phantasms I firmly decided to ignore **(and it was so obvious!)** that I was to her not a boy friend]. (*L RU*: 263)

In the above examples the indication that there is, in fact, a disconnect between reality and Humbert's perception of it is dormant in the original, rendered by the casual "what I could not help perceiving," but the translation renders this potential disparity more explicit, in "it was so obvious!" separated from the utterance both by graphical means (parenthesis) and way of changed intonation.

The retrospective point of view in these bracketed interjections is particularly apparent when they chronologically precipitate the events of the plot. Consider, for example, a remark made by Humbert while driving next to Lolita in the car: "while I prayed we would never get to

that store, but we did" (*L* EN: 51) translated as "я же молился - увы, безуспешно, - чтобы мы никогда не доехали[while I prayed – alas, unsuccessfully – we would never get to the store"]" (*L* RU: 40). Here, the Russian version makes explicit that Humbert's prayers were unsuccessful *before* the trip was completed, and therefore identify a change in perspective.

Oftentimes, parentheses are used in almost identical sentences in the Russian version, which, when considered against the backdrop of the general pattern outlined above, can be argued to render a slightly more distant perspective on the details of the plot. Thus, Humbert's statement "My choice, however, was prompted by considerations whose essence was, as I realized too late, a piteous compromise" (*L* EN: 25) is translated as "Но в этом выборе я руководствовался соображениями, которые по существу сводились—как я слишком поздно понял—к жалкому компромиссу [My choice, however, was prompted by considerations whose essence was—as I realized too late—a piteous compromise]" (*L* RU: 16). Both versions here present an identical sentence. The only difference is the placement of dashes around "as I realized too late" that might suggest a more distant vantage point from which the main sentence is assessed.

The slightest manipulations to the sentences can have a striking artistic effect. Quite illustrative here is Humbert's reflection on making love to Lolita:

> I recall certain moments, let us call them icebergs in paradise, when after having had my fill of her—after fabulous, insane exertions that left me limp and azure-barred—I would gather her in my arms with, at last, a mute moan of human tenderness (*L* EN: 285)
>
> Вспоминаю некоторые такие минуты— назовем их айсбергами в раю,—когда, насытившись ею, ослабев от баснословных, безумных трудов, безвольно лежа под лазоревой полосой, идущей поперек тела, я, бывало, заключал ее в свои объятья с приглушенным стоном человеческой (наконец!) нежности (*L* RU: 264)
>
> [I recall certain moments—let us call them icebergs in paradise,—when after having had my fill of her, being limp after fabulous, insane exertions laying under the azure bar that

> crossed my body, I would gather her in my arms with a mute moan of human (at last!) tenderness]

Both versions feature *at last* but its placement is drastically different in the Russian version, which leads to a change of the words' meaning. In the original it has an almost purely chronological meaning (an embrace after intercourse), while in Russian it acquires a pronounced emotional charge, as it contrasts Humbert's human attitude towards the girl at the moment with his implicit wrongdoings to her in the narrative up to this point. More importantly, this particular instance highlights Humbert's realization and acknowledgement of his conflicting and complex feelings towards Lolita.

As we can see from the discussion above, the bracketed interjections in the Russian version rarely contain new factual information; however, there is a definite pattern in the translated novel that indicates a redistribution of dominant voices in the novel—a change that cannot be explained by social or cultural factors. In light of this pattern, other changes in the text, perhaps of a more subtle nature, can be productively examined as well.

(b) Parentheses added in otherwise identical sentences.

The previous section reviewed multiple instances in the Russian text where parentheses are added (in instances where there are none in the original), leading to the redistribution of the main voices of the narrative, as the voice of Humbert the Writing becomes more dominant than the voice of Humbert the Described, and this retrospective point of view is also revealed through changes in lexical items, grammar and chronological inconsistencies as observed in the placement of the remarks. As we can see in the previous section, the voices of the two narrators of the story (which is the crucial element of the original text) are juxtaposed in a slightly different way. Nabokov embeds the point of view of Humbert the Writing and consistently

makes it explicit in reflections of Humbert the Described, a strategy that emphasizes very different aspects of the Russian novel in comparison with the original.

Keeping in mind the importance of Humbert's voice for the narrative as a whole (as Humbert is, after all, the dominant narrator of the novel), a reader must question the instances where parentheses are added/removed in otherwise identical sentences. One way to interpret these additions/omissions is to link them with Nabokov's strategy to highlight (rather than dismiss as unimportant) details of Humbert's emotional state, albeit in a very subtle way. Parentheses serve as a means to render and highlight the emotional state of Humbert at various points in the narrative. Particularly revealing is the following example: "Clouds again interfered with that picnic on that unattainable lake" (*L* EN: 50), which is translated as "Опять тучи помешали пикнику на—недосягаемом—озере" [Clouds again interfered with that picnic on that—unattainable—lake] (*L* RU: 39). The lake, of course, plays a very important part in Humbert's plans to seduce Lolita. A prospect of a picnic by the lake deploys wild fantasies in his mind, where he manages to "plunge with my nymphet into the wood " (*L* EN: 53), a musing that soon turns into " a quiet little orgy with a singularly knowing, cheerful, corrupt and compliant Lolita behaving as reason knew she could not possibly behave" (*L* EN: 54). The lake is also linked to Humbert's murderous plan to drown Charlotte (which would leave him sole caretaker of Lolita), the plan that he decides to abandon at the last possible minute. As we can see in the Russian version of the novel, the narrator skillfully highlights the emotional charge that is indicative of Humbert's frustration with the chain of events that postponed the picnic.

Similarly, on the night at the Enchanted Hunters, the hotel where Humbert actually succeeded in seducing Lolita, he notes in passing that: "[t[he dining room closed at nine, and the green-clad, poker-faced serving girls were, happily, in a desperate hurry to get rid of us (*L* EN:

121). The Russian version highlights Humbert's state of anticipation with less ambiguity (as it is not clear who is happy—the serving girls or the narrator—in the original) by "Ресторан закрывался в девять, и каменнолицые подавальщицы в зеленой форме отчаянно спешили—на мое счастье—от нас отделаться [The dining room closed at nine, and the green-clad, poker-faced serving girls were—happily for me—in a desperate hurry to get rid of us]" (*L* RU: 108). The Russian translation thereby alters the original text to keep Humbert's emotions and psyche squarely before us, whereas the English version plays more ironically with polite ambiguities.

Reflecting on the last time he saw Lolita (in the hospital, right before she disappeared for three years), Humbert states that "[a]s I was leaving, leaving voluntarily, Dolores Haze reminded me to bring her next morning […]" (*L* EN: 244), translated as "Уходя, - уходя по собственной воле, - я услышал, как Долорес Гейз повторяет мне, чтобы я завтра утром принес[…][As I was leaving - leaving voluntarily - Dolores Haze reminded me to bring her next morning….]" (*L* RU: 225). As we can see in the translation of this fragment, Humber further emphasizes the voluntary nature of his action, along with his disbelief that it was, indeed, voluntary in the Russian version of the text.

Furthermore, considering that Nabokov worked on this narrative on three separate occasions (first on the original novel, then on the screenplay, and finally on the Russian version), the resulting texts showcase instances where details, having passed through cinematic adaptation, can be said to have acquired additional significance in the Russian version of the novel as well. This is evident the following example, where Humbert laments his permission granted to Lolita to study acting: "By permitting Lolita to study acting I had, fond fool, suffered her to cultivate deceit" (*L* EN: 229). As we can see, this passage features a moment of self-reflection by

Humbert, as he connects Lolita's learning of acting with her increasing ability to deceive him. A very similar passage is also featured in the screenplay: "HUMBERT: What a fool—what a fool is this Humbert! Giving little Lolita numberless humbertless opportunities" (*L* SN: 794). Of course, this version is slightly different, as Humbert's frustration here is motivated by the fact that Lolita used her acting lessons as an opportunity to be unsupervised (and therefore, to have an opportunity to deceive Humbert). But note a slightly more prominent self-reflection here, first by repetition of the word "fool" and also by the change in reference—from the first person to the third person, which implies both subjective and objective perspective. The Russian version renders this emphasis on self-reflection even more evident by employing parenthesis as well: "Тем, что я разрешил Лолите заниматься театральной игрой, я допустил (влюбленный простак!), чтобы она научилась всем изощрениям обмана [By permitting Lolita to study acting I had **(fond fool!)** suffered her to cultivate deceit]" (*L* RU: 210). The parenthical addition in the Russian version, in comparison with the original novel, can be interpreted as placing further emphasis on Humbert's evaluation of his actions in retrospect, by combining two distinct points of view in a single utterance, similarly to the text of the screenplay.

In an analogous way Nabokov translated "My heart beat like a drum as she sat down, cool skirt ballooning, subsiding, on the sofa next to me, and played with her glossy fruit (*L* EN: 58) as "Сердце у меня забилось барабанным боем, когда она опустилась на диван рядом со мной (юбка воздушно вздулась, опала) и стала играть глянцевитым плодом[My heart beat like a drum as she sat down on the sofa **next to me (skirt ballooning in the air, subsiding)** and started playing with her glossy fruit"]" (*L* RU: 46). This scene is very similar to a scene in the screenplay as well, where Lolita is portrayed as she intentionally and "gracefully gyrates in front of Humbert" (*L* SN: 714). Thus the fact that this detail is bracketed in the Russian version, along

with the narrator's emphasis on the girl's voluntary proximity to him, suggests the narrator's self-serving implication that his feelings are reflected mutually (an implication made much earlier in the text of the Russian novel). Again, Nabokov's Russian translation illuminates an inner life and a thought process of enjoyment, value and self-justification that only exists more implicitly in the English original. Such a pattern of consistent amplification is indicative of the author's fundamental change in the overall design of the novel, as these insinuations are consistently made much earlier in the body of the Russian text.

A review of bracketed details in descriptions of other characters in the story reveals a differing effect: a tendency to underscore the distance between Humbert and the other characters. The following example, which was discussed in great detail by White (51), illustrates Humbert's sense of Lolita as belonging in his private, constructed world: "That old woman in black who sat down next to me on my bench, on my rack of joy (a nymphet was groping under me for a lost marble), and asked if I had a stomachache, the insolent hag" (*L* EN: 21). White links Nabokov's use of parentheses here with the overall meaning-generating features of the passage, and notes that they fulfill a dual function, as on one hand, brackets separate the nymphet from the narrator (much like the park bench conceals the girl from the voyeur). On the other hand, the parentheses also serve visually as an indication of the focus of the narrator's glance, unmistakably identifying the main object of his interest. In this light, it is pertinent to consider how this sentence is formatted in Russian:

> Незабвенная старуха в черном, которая сидела рядом со мной на парковой скамье, на пыточной скамье моего блаженства (нимфетка подо мной старалась нащупать укатившийся стеклянный шарик), и которая спросила меня—наглая ведьма—не болит ли у меня живот" (*L* RU: 12)
>
> [That unforgettable old woman in black who sat down next to me on the park bench, on torturous rack of my joy (a nymphet was groping under me for a lost marble), and who asked—**the insolent hag**—if I had a stomachache].

The Russian version has the narrator in this passage also graphically distance himself from the character he finds unpleasant (the old hag in the example above) by enclosing the character in dashes, which forms a curious pattern in the book. Thus, Nabokov continues to both intensify and slightly alter meaning from his original by evoking various effects (focus, distance) in the text of translation.

This distancing tendency is also observed in mentions of Mary Lore, the nurse who facilitated Lolita's escape from the hospital. The sentence "Mary Lore, the beastly young part-time nurse who had taken an unconcealed dislike to me, emerged with a finished breakfast tray"(*L* EN: 242) is translated as "Мария Лор (молодая гадина, служившая сиделкой и с первого дня меня возненавидевшая) как раз выходила оттуда с остатками Лолитиного утреннего завтрака на подносе" [Mary Lore **(the young beastly nurse who had taken an unconcealed dislike to me from the very first day)** emerged with leftovers of Lolita's breakfast on a tray] (*L* RU: 223). And, on a different occasion, the sentence "'Dolores,' said Mary Lore, entering with me, past me, through me, the plump whore, and blinking, and starting to fold very rapidly a white flannel blanket as she blinked" (*L* EN: 243) is translated as "'Долорес!' - воскликнула Мария Лор, входя со мной, мимо меня, сквозь меня—пухлая лахудра—и моргая ресницами и начиная быстренько складывать белое фланелевое одеяло, продолжая моргать" ["'Dolores!' exclaimed Mary Lore, entering with me, past me, though me - **the plump slut** - and blinking, and starting to fold very rapidly a white flannel blanket as she blinked"] (*L* RU: 223). As is evident in these examples, Humbert's focus on characters he finds unpleasant in the story is much more pronounced in the Russian version.

Humbert, it seems, is quite aware of the conventions surrounding the use of parentheses and never hesitates to subvert these conventions. When Jean Farlow attempts (unsuccessfully) to seduce Humbert after the death of Charlotte, the following scene takes place:

> A clap of thunder reverberated throughout the house, and she added: "Perhaps, somewhere, some day, at a less miserable time, we may see each other again" (Jean, whatever, wherever you are, in minus time-space or plus soul-time, forgive me all this, parenthesis included) (*L* EN: 104-105)

White notes that at the time of writing the novel Jean will be dead (she will have died from cancer three years later) and underscores that Humbert acknowledges that "not only his tone, but his frequent parenthesis demand apology" (50). There is, however, an additional layer to this passage: by dismissing her name in a bracketed aside, Humbert also highlights the insignificance of the role that she plays in *his* narrative in sharp contrast to her implicit expectations. A further comparison between the two versions of the novel reveals that parenthetical additions in references to the Farlow couple are systematically redistributed by Nabokov in the Russian version.

Compare, for example, Humbert's extended reflection upon his first meeting with the couple which features very different formatting in the two versions of the novel:

> John Farlow was a middle-aged, quiet, quietly athletic, quietly successful dealer in sporting goods, who had an office at Parkington, forty miles away: it was he who got me the cartridges for that Colt and showed me how to use it, during a walk in the woods one Sunday; he was also what he called with a smile a part-time lawyer and had handled some of Charlotte's affairs. Jean, his youngish wife (and first cousin), was a long-limbed girl in harlequin glasses with two boxer dogs, two pointed breasts and a big red mouth. She painted—landscapes and portraits—and vividly do I remember praising, over cocktails, the picture she had made of a niece of hers, little Rosaline Honeck, a rosy honey in a Girl Scout uniform, beret of green worsted, belt of green webbing, charming shoulder-long curls—and John removed his pipe and said it was a pity Dolly (my Dolita) and Rosaline were so critical of each other at school, but he hoped, and we all hoped, they would get on better when they returned from their respective camps. (*L* EN: 79)
>
> Джон Фарло был пожилой, спокойный, спокойно-атлетический спокойно-удачливый торговец спортивными товарами, с конторой в Паркингтоне, в сорока

> милях от нас; это он снабдил меня амуницией для пресловутого Кольта и научил им пользоваться (как-то во время воскресной прогулки в приозерном бору); он также был "отчасти адвокатом" (как сам говорил с улыбкой) и в свое время привел в порядок некоторые Шарлоттины дела. Джоана, его моложавая жена, приходившаяся ему двоюродной сестрой, была долгоногая дама, в очках с раскосой оправой; у нее были два палевых бульдога, две острых грудки и большой красный рот. Она писала пейзажи и портреты—живо помню, как за рюмкой коктейля мне случилось похвалить сделанный ею портрет маленькой племянницы, Розалины Грац, грациозной, розовой красотки в гэрл-скаутской форме (берет из зеленой шерсти, зеленый вязаный поясок, прелестные кудри до плеч), и Джон вынул изо рта трубку исказал, как жаль, что Долли (моя Доллита) и Розалина так неприязненно относятся друг к дружке в школе; впрочем, он выразил надежду, и мы все поддакнули, что они лучше сойдутся, когда вернутся, каждая из своего летнего лагеря. (*L RU*: 67)
>
> [John Farlow was a middle-aged, quiet, quietly athletic, quietly successful dealer in sporting goods, who had an office at Parkington, forty miles away: it was he who got me the cartridges for that Colt and showed me how to use it **(during a walk in the woods one Sunday)**[1]; he was also a "part-time lawyer" **(as he said with a smile)**[2] and had handled some of Charlotte's affairs. Jean, his youngish wife **who was also his first cousin**[3], was a long-limbed girl in harlequin glasses with two boxer dogs, two pointed breasts and a big red mouth. She painted **landscapes and portraits**[4]—and vividly do I remember praising, over cocktails, the picture she had made of a niece of hers, little Rosaline Honeck, a rosy honey in a Girl Scout uniform **(beret of green worsted, belt of green webbing, charming shoulder-long curls)**[5] and John removed his pipe and said it was a pity Dolly (my Dolita) and Rosaline were so critical of each other at school, but he hoped, and we all hoped, they would get on better when they returned from their respective camps].

This translated Russian fragment features five instances of authorial intervention, all of which play some eventual role in the narrative. In reference to John Farlow (instances 1 and 2), Nabokov uses parentheses for two separate descriptive details in Humbert's recollection of the initial encounter, and this strategy draws the readers' attention to two crucial facts for the narrative about John Farlow: his mastery with guns and his professional occupation (he is a lawyer). These details, which might seem insignificant at the first mention, acquire significance later in the novel. Just prior to the murder scene, Humber acknowledges the role of John Farlow in teaching him how to use his murder weapon:

> I was now glad I had it [the Colt] with me—and even more glad that I had learned to use it two years before, in the pine forest around my and Charlotte's glass lake. Farlow, with whom I had roamed those remote woods, was an admirable marksman, and with his .38 actually managed to hit a hummingbird. (*L* EN: 216)

By the same token, Farlow's professional occupation also becomes very significant for the story, as his letter advising Humbert to "better produce Dolly quick" (*L* EN: 266) reaches the latter on the same day as the letter from Lolita, and is the Farlow's letter that sets in motion the events that eventually lead to Quilty's murder. Nabokov in the original version thereby continues a punctuation pattern of making the apparently incidental eventually important (or a marker for the important), by using his parentheses to enact a doubled strategy of sideline and centre, of marginalized and main points. These particular parentheses may contain only information about a walk and a smile, but they are also the contextualizing details for the facts of the gun and Farlow's legal knowledge and status.

In contrast to the addition of parentheses in recollection of John Farlow, all parenthical inclusions of details from Jean Farlow's biography in the Russian translation are removed (instances 3 and 4 above), and these details are seamlessly integrated into the body of the main text. Considering the insignificance of the role of this character for Humbert, made explicit earlier in the story by his direct apology for the use of parentheses, the absence of parenthesis here is indicative of Humbert's indifference to his character.

As to the last bracketed reference in the above passage (instance 5), the addition of parentheses around the phrase that depicts the Girl Scout's appearance highlights a detail of what particularly attracts Humber's attention. Metaphorically speaking, the use of parentheses in this instance may be compared to the use of the magnifying glass, which brings into focus various details that shed light on Humbert's state of mind. I concur with White's thesis that Humbert is by no means a reformed man (rid of his paedophilia), as the text of the novel features many

mentions of nymphets in general, not just Lolita. It must be noted, however, that the Russian version of the novel places further emphasis on Humbert's interest in other nymphets, as the author's systematic addition of parentheses for *all* mentions of young girls in the text indicates:

> I remember once handling an automatic belonging to a fellow student, in the days (I have not spoken of them, I think, but never mind) when I toyed with the idea of enjoying his little sister, a most diaphanous nymphet with a black hair bow, and then shooting myself. (*L* EN: 29)
>
> Помнится, я однажды имел в руках пистолет, принадлежавший студенту-однокашнику, в ту пору моей жизни (я, кажется, об этой поре не упомянул, но это неважно), когда я лелеял мысль насладиться его маленькой сестрой (необыкновенно лучистой нимфеткой, с большим черным бантом) и потом застрелиться. (*L* RU: 20)
>
> [I remember once handling an automatic belonging to a fellow student, in the days (I have not spoken of them, I think, but never mind) when I toyed with the idea of enjoying his little sister **(a most diaphanous nymphet with a black hair bow)** and then shooting myself.]

Or, when reflecting on Lolita's interest in reading comic books: "Her eyes would follow the adventures of her favorite strip characters: there was one well-drawn sloppy bobby-soxer, with high cheekbones and angular gestures, that I was not above enjoying myself" (*L* EN: 165), which is translated as "Глазами она прослеживала приключения своих любимых персонажей на страничке юмора (среди них была хорошо нарисованная неряха-девчонка в белых носочках, скуластенькая и угловатая, которой я сам не прочь был бы насладиться) [Her eyes would follow the adventures of her favorite characters in the humor section **(there was one well-drawn sloppy bobby-soxer, with high cheekbones and angular gestures, that I was not above enjoying myself)**]" (*L* RU: 148).

Nabokov's use of punctuation in the subsequent version of the novel reveals the change in his artistic intentions. He now uses parentheses to mark changes in perspective on the events of the plot and to highlight details that acquire special significance in this later version. All of

these changes are also indicative of the author's evolving concept of the work. As it was suggested in the discussion above, changes in punctuation make visible not just individual discrepancies between the versions of the text, but also highlight an underlying system of emendations. This system ultimately linked with the implied author's redistribution of values assigned to the characters in the novel. Some characters of the novel (John Farlow, nymphets in general) are shifted more prominently into the focus of Humbert's attention, while his interest in others (Jean Farlow, for instance) is noticeably dwindling in the Russian version.

4.3.2 Square Brackets

There are many instances in the English *Lolita* where Nabokov uses square brackets, while the Russian version features none, but many of them are replaced by parenthesis. Square brackets may well relate to the theme of theatricality in the novel, as they are often used to frame stage directions, as mentioned earlier.

Consider their specific function, for example, in this particularly striking scene: Lolita and Humbert's conversation about their first night together. The mention of "rehearsal" here is quite ambiguous, as this paragraph follows Humbert's description of Lolita's rehearsals for the play, one of many intended ambiguities in the text:

> There was one very special rehearsal... my heart, my heart... there was one day in May marked by a lot of gay flurry—it all rolled past, beyond my ken, immune to my memory, and when I saw Lo next, in the late afternoon, balancing on her bike, pressing the palm of her hand to the damp bark of a young birch tree on the edge of our lawn, I was so struck by the radiant tenderness of her smile that for an instant I believed all our troubles gone. "Can you remember," she said, "what was the name of that hotel, you know [nose puckered], come on, you know—with those white columns and the marble swan in the lobby? Oh, you know [noisy exhalation of breath]—the hotel where you raped me. Okay, skip it. I mean, was it [almost in a whisper] The Enchanted Hunters? Oh, it was? [musingly] Was it? (*L* EN: 202)
>
> Среди репетиций случилась одна совсем особенная... о сердце, сердце!... был в мае один особенный день, полный радостной суеты—но все это как-то прошло мимо,

> вне моего кругозора, не задержавшись у меня в памяти, и когда уже после, к вечеру, я опять увидел Лолиту (она сидела на велосипеде, балансируя, прижав руку к влажной коре молодой березы на краю нашего лужка), меня так поразила сияющая нежность ее улыбки, что я на миг поздравил себя с окончанием всех моих печалей. "Скажи",—спросила она,—"ты, может быть, помнишь, как назывался отель—ах, ты знаешь, какой отель (нос у нее сморщился), ну, скажи—ты знаешь,—там, где были эти белые колонны и мраморный лебедь в холле? Ну, как это ты не знаешь (она шумно выдохнула)—тот отель, где ты меня изнасиловал? Хорошо, не в том дело, к чорту. Я просто хочу спросить, не назывался ли он (почти шепотом) - "Зачарованные Охотники"? Ах, да (мечтательно), в самом деле?" (*L* RU: 184)
>
> [There was one very special rehearsal... my heart, my heart!... there was one day in May marked by a lot of gay flurry—it all rolled past, beyond my ken, immune to my memory, and when I saw Lo next, in the late afternoon **(she sat on her bike, balancing, pressing the palm of her hand to the damp bark of a young birch tree on the edge of our lawn)**[1] I was so struck by the radiant tenderness of her smile that for an instant I congratulated myself with the end of all our troubles. "Say," she said, "Maybe you remember what was the name of that hotel—**you know which**[2] **(her nose puckered)**[3]**,** come on—**you know**[4]—with those white columns and the marble swan in the lobby? Oh, **what do you mean you don't**[5] **(she loudly exhaled)**[6]--the hotel where you raped me? Okay, skip it. I mean, I just wanna ask if it was **(almost in a whisper)**[7] The Enchanted Hunters? Oh, it was? **(musingly)**[8] Was it?].

There are a number of systematic changes in this scene between the Russian and the English versions. They are certainly interconnected with each other, and support the hypothesis that Nabokov deploys a system of quite intentional revisions in the later version of the novel, and this system is akin to rewriting the text anew, rather than creating a replica of the English text. These punctuation changes affect the following features in the passage: (a) rendering of brackets, as round brackets are added (instance 1) and square brackets are consistently rendered by means of round ones (instances 3,6,7, and 8), (b) translation of the bracketed utterances (particularly instances 3 and 6); and, finally (c) translation of "you know" (instances 2, 4, and 5).

As noted, square brackets are completely eliminated in the Russian version, and are replaced by parentheses. It is important to keep in mind that the usage of square brackets in the English novel is to be considered against the usage of parentheses (where the very shape of

brackets clearly signals a difference in their intended effect, as it brings to mind theatrical scripts). This punctuation opposition—a presumption of rhetorical choices—is completely eliminated in Russian. However, it would be premature to conclude that "something is lost in translation," as the system of brackets in the Russian text is actually enhanced by the influx of nuances of meaning that square brackets so clearly identify in the original.

There is some ambiguity in the original passage above: on one hand, square brackets mark details of Lolita's facial expressions during the conversation, indicating the intensity with which Humbert is listening to her and noting the slightest movements of her face (and, of course, highlighting her intense, sudden and seemingly unprovoked interest in the name of the hotel where she actually first met Quilty). Quilty had by now prepared a script for the play she will take part in, though Humbert, the self-congratulatory intellectual, manages to ignore all these connected facts. On the other hand, square brackets along with the reference to a "rehearsal" highlight the role Humbert plays in constructing his "reality": his role can be likened to that of the stage director, but one that inadvertently allows others to act. It is important to consider the nature of utterances in brackets: the pronoun is missing in the English version, so the utterance can be understood in two ways: as a statement of fact (or Humbert's observation) or as a direction (not unlike the scriptwriter's instructions on how to play a certain role). The Russian version eliminates this ambiguity, however, as these utterances are rendered as unambiguous statements of fact, or Humbert's unvarnished observations, by consistently adding a pronoun (*her* nose puckered, *she* loudly exhaled). So the effect of these revisions can be summarized as follows: in this particular Russian scene, Nabokov downplays Humbert's role in constructing the reality of the novel, and emphasizes instead his role as the merely recording voyeur of the scene. The Russian version emphasizes young Lolita's emerging control of information, demeanour and

action. In Russian, Humbert's receding control of her is further accented by adding brackets. Instance #1 is—"(she sat on her bike, balancing, pressing the palm of her hand to the damp bark of a young birch tree on the edge of our lawn)"—yet another purely visual observation further distanced by the parentheses, as she begins to take steps to remove herself from him.

The striking differences in formatting this scene result in important consequences for the power struggle in the narrative as a whole, as is suggested by the transformation in the role Humbert plays in the narrative: his role as the "creator" of the fictional world is limited to that of a mere "observer" in the Russian version. Moreover, these observations can be further supported by considering Nabokov's strategy in translating the expression "you know" (which Lolita utters three times during the scene). This seems to be mere a pause filler in Lolita's English speech—quite logical for the speech of a teenager who reluctantly approaches a topic that seems to be significant. Emphasis on the semantic meaning of these utterances in the Russian version ("Oh, you know which one"—"you know"—"what do you mean you don't?") suggests that Lolita is far more aware of Humbert's personality: she knows for a fact that Humbert would remember the name of the hotel, and she is clearly skeptical of his implied denial that he doesn't. To relate this observation to my previous discussion, this subtle rendering, which many readers may slide past unaware, crucially indicates that Humbert not only metaphorically (and at this point unintentionally) surrenders his role of creator of the fictional world, with himself as its sole controller, but that Lolita, in this instance, is given a much stronger, more self-aware voice. This is just one example of how Nabokov intentionally and systematically reworked the Russian text of the novel, offering therefore much more than a faithful translation of his English work. As the discussion of Nabokov's formatting of dialogues below will show, a similar tendency to make

voices of other characters in the novel more explicit is evident throughout the Russian version of the text.

However, in reference to the variety of ways Nabokov uses brackets in the novels, another illustrative example should be considered, and it pertains to Nabokov's strategy in rendering the first person plural pronoun ("we") throughout the novel and in different versions of the text. The words "we" or "us," when uttered by Humbert, are certainly intended to mark his alliance and unity with the girl, which is not always shared by Lolita. This is particularly evident in the following example from the screenplay:

> HUMBERT: We should have turned half an hour ago and taken 42 south, not north.
> LOLITA: We? Leave me out of it. (*L* SN: 761)

At the Ramsdale house, Lolita (who is not yet Humbert's lover) approaches the latter with a request: "Look, make Mother take you and me to Our Glass Lake tomorrow" (*L* EN: 45), which is translated as "Заставьте-ка маму повести нас (нас!) на Очковое озеро завтра" (*L* RU: 34), or ["Make Mother take us (us!) to Our Glass Lake tomorrow"].

During the scene of Humbert's last conversation with Dolly Skiller, when she practically spells out to Humbert the significance of clues that were dispersed throughout the novel (albeit never presented as significant), she inquires: "Did I remember the red-haired guy we ("we" was good) had once had some tennis with? (*L* EN: 276), translated as "Я, может быть, помнил рыжего типа, с которым мы (мы!) как-то играли в теннис? [Did I, perhaps, remember the red-haired guy we (we!) had once had some tennis with?]" (*L* RU: 256). Finally, when Humbert gives to the now married Lolita her inheritance, she voices her concerns that Humbert expects her to have sex with him in return: "you mean you will give us [us] that money only if I go with you to a motel" (*L* EN: 278), translated as "ты хочешь сказать, что дашь нам (нам!) денег,

только если я пересплю с тобой в гостинице? [you mean you will give us (us!) that money only if I will sleep with you in a motel?]" (*L* RU: 258).

As we can see from the overview of the examples listed above, there are specific instances in the English text where "we" could have been used ("you and me", emphatic "'we' was good" and "[us]") that are rendered by a consistent "(us!)" in the Russian translation. The thematic implication of this pronoun shift for the narrative as a whole must be discussed in each example above. As to the first example, it must be considered in conjunction with the scene at the Enchanted Hunters, and Humbert's important revelation that it was, in fact, Lolita, who seduced him. However, while at the Ramsdale house, the speech of Lolita clearly does not contain any romantic innuendoes. However, by highlighting ("us!") in the Russian version, Humbert deploys, considerably earlier than in the original novel, a series of statements suggestive that his advances towards Lolita were provoked by the latter and, more importantly, welcomed by her .

As to the second instance, it occurs considerably later in the novel (when Lolita is married to and pregnant by another man), while Humbert still hopelessly toys with the idea that she might abandon her new family and come back to him. Reminiscing about their past travels together, Lolita mentions a specific episode from their travels and uses "we"— which gives Humbert false hope that she regarded their affair as significant (where in reality she uses the pronoun simply because there were two of them during the scene).

The final example comes from the scene where Humbert realizes that Lolita's use of *us,* refers to her and Richard and actually excludes Humbert himself. The square brackets in the original signal, primarily, a flat intonation that is evident in Lolita's casual mention of the other man. The Russian rendering—(us!)—highlights Humbert's fixation on her usage, however,

along with the outrage it instigates. As evident from this discussion, all mentions of the first person plural pronoun in the novel are linked with very different meanings the characters ascribe to it. Nabokov's Russian rendering of these mentions in a unified manner forms yet another remarkable pattern in the text. On one hand, Nabokov's different formatting in three separate mentions of the pronoun in the English version allows drastically different nuances of meaning (unity, outrage) ascribed to it by Humbert as his relationship with Lolita progresses. But on the other hand, by deploying a uniform usage in the Russian version, Humbert establishes a clear pattern in the novel, where each new instance is connected to the previous one and yet is very different from it (first it marks Humbert's hope that Lolita's remark contains an insinuation, followed by his hope that their relationship will survive, and, finally, his outrage when this hope is shattered), thus rendering the dynamic of the relationship more explicit.

4.3.3 Quotation marks

Quotation marks conventionally serve in writing to mark the direct speech of characters, and the guidelines for their use are very similar in Russian and in English. However, the Russian translation of the novel reveals Nabokov's rather peculiar approach to formatting dialogues in the text. Consider the following example, when Humbert informs Lolita that her mother is at the hospital (which explains why Lolita had to leave the camp early and why her mother is not there to pick her up):

> "How's Mother?" she asked dutifully.
> I said the doctors did not quite know yet what the trouble was. Anyway, something abdominal. Abominable? No, abdominal. (*L* EN: 111-112)

> "Как мама?", - спросила она вежливенько, и я сказал, что доктора не совсем еще установили, в чем дело. Во всяком случае, что-то с желудком.
> "Что-то жуткое?"
> "Нет с желудком"

> ["How's Mother?" she asked politely, and I said the doctors did not quite know yet what the matter was. Anyway, something abdominal.
> "Abominable?"
> " No, abdominal"] (*L RU*: 98)

There is a drastic difference in formatting of the exchange, as the English text suppresses Lolita's voice: what appears to be a dialogue between Humbert and Lolita is actually Humbert's internal speech directed at Lolita, while the formatting of the Russian text clearly identifies these remarks as actually pronounced by Lolita. This pattern (suppression of other characters' voices in the English version in contrast to their clear identification in the Russian text) is evident on multiple occasions in the texts.

For instance, in considering the nature of formatting used in a scene of Humbert's conversation with Lolita's classmate at Beardsley (Mona), some conclusions can be drawn as to what has actually been said in the conversation:

> How had the ball been? Oh, it had been a riot. A what? A panic. Terrific, in a word. Had Lo danced a lot? Oh, not a frightful lot, just as much as she could stand. What did she, languorous Mona, think of Lo? Sir? Did she think Lo was doing well at school? Gosh, she certainly was quite a kid. But her general behaviour was—? Oh, she was a swell kid. But still? "Oh, she's a doll," concluded Mona, and sighed abruptly, and picked up a book that happened to lie at hand. (*L* EN: 191- 192)

> "А как прошел бал?" "Ах, буйственно!" "Виноват?" "Не бал, а восторг.
> Словом, потрясающий бал". "Долли много танцевала?" "О, не так уже страшно много - ей скоро надоело" "А что думает Мона (томная Мона) о самой Долли?" "В каком отношении, сэр?" "Считает ли она, что Долли преуспевает в школе?" "Что ж, девчонка она - ух, какая!" "А как насчет общего поведения?" "Девчонка, как следует". "Да, но все-таки...?" "Прелесть девчонка!" – и сделав это заключение, Мона отрывисто вздохнула, взяла со столика случайно подвернувшуюся книгу"

> ["How had the ball been?" "Oh, it had been a riot!" "Pardon?" "A panic. Terrific, in a word" "Had Lo danced a lot?" "Oh, not a frightful lot – she got bored soon" "What does she, Mona **(languorous Mona)** think of Lo?" **"In what sense, sir?"** "Does she think Lo is doing well at school?" "Gosh, she certainly **is** quite a kid" "But what about her general behaviour?" "Oh, she **is** a swell kid" "But still?" "Oh, she's a fine girl" and having come

> to this conclusion, Mona sighed abruptly, and picked up a book that happened to lie at hand] (*L* RU: 173)

In the versions of the exchange above, the dialogue is formatted in this similarly divergent fashion, where the English version suppresses the voices of others, while the Russian version presents those voices. The absence of quotation marks in the English text suggests that the dialogue is imaginary, taking place in Humbert's head, where only the last remark is actually pronounced by Mona (which is further emphasized by the switch to the present tense and the use of quotation marks around the remark). Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that this is a conversation between a teenage girl and an adult male, during which he imaginarily addresses the former as "languorous Mona," a rather inappropriate form of address, and this inappropriateness is accentuated in Mona's constructed remark that follows - "Sir?" In short, the exchange is almost entirely Humbert's fantasy, except at its end, where the quotations signal reality. However, in the Russian version, where the dialogue is presented as if it actually took place (which is further emphasized by the switch to the present tense and the consistent use of quotation marks throughout), the inappropriate form of address is bracketed and represents one of Humbert's mental notes (as discussed above in this study). Moreover, Mona's remark that follows does not contain any indication of awkwardness in the exchange, as she simply inquires "In what sense, sir?"

On a similar note, this dialogue in the screenplay takes the form of an actual exchange due to the nature of the medium. Mona's languorous attitude is transposed, metonymically, onto one of the unstageable directions in the text, her languorous shrug:

> HUMBERT So the party was a success?
> MONE Oh, a riot, terrific.
> HUMBERT Did Dolly, as you call her, dance a lot?
> MONA Not a frightful lot. Why?
> HUMBERT I suppose all the boys are mad about her?

> MONA Well. Sir, the fact is Dolly is not concerned with mere boys. They bore her.
> HUMBERT What about that Roy, what's-his-name?
> MONA Oh, him.
> A languorous shrug.
> HUMBERT What do you think of Dolly?
> MONA Oh, she is a swell kid.
> HUMBERT Is she very frank with you?
> MONA Oh, she is a doll. (Nabokov 1996: 791-792)

As evident from this example, similarly to the use of punctuation in the later versions, the text of the screenplay confirms the systematic nature of intentional transformation deployed by Nabokov in all successive versions.

However, this linguistic and punctuation production of a distinction between the imaginary/inner and the actual dialogues is most important for the scene of Humbert's and Lolita's reunion at the end of the novel. It helps to address a scholarly discussion that was started in 1976 by Elizabeth Bruss[42]. This discussion largely concerns the dates in the narrative: a widely discussed inconsistency in dates referenced by Humbert in different versions of the novel prompted many scholars to offer a reading of the text that insists that the scene of Humbert's final reunion with Lolita never took place. This reading can be explained as follows: on the last page of the novel, Humbert notes that his work began 56 days ago, "first in the psychopathic ward for observation, and then in this well-heated, albeit tombal, seclusion" (*L* EN: 308). The novel's preface by Dr. Ray, on the other hand, contains a specific reference about Humbert's date of death, "November 16, 1952". Counting back exactly 56 days from Humbert's date of death, we arrive at September 22, 1952. This date, in turn, is specifically mentioned in the English novel (but omitted in the Russian version), as Humbert receives Lolita's letter (which subsequently sets off a chain of events leading to Quilty's murder): "The letter was dated

[42] Bruss' thesis was further developed by Christina Tekiner in 1979, Leona Toker in 1989, Alexander Dolinin in 1995, and Julian Connolly in 1995.

September 18, 1952 (this was September 22), and the address she gave was "General Delivery, Coalmont""(*L* EN: 267), which, incidentally, was translated as “Письмо было от сентября 18, 1952 года, и адрес, который она давала, был "До востребования, Коулмонт"[“The letter was dated September 18, 1952, and the address she gave was "General Delivery, Coalmont”]” (*L* RU: 247). This inconsistency of dates, spotted by the above-mentioned scholars, served as grounds for the argument that Humbert could not possibly drive to Coalmont to see Lolita, then to Ramsdale, then to the ranch to kill Quilty all in one day, resulting in an interpretation of the novel that suggests that neither Humbert’s reunion with Lolita nor Quilty’s murder ever really took place, but were rather “invented” by Humbert while in the psychopathic ward for observation.

On the other hand, there is a very well substantiated argument by Boyd (2003), who insists that the scene did indeed take place and was not invented by Humbert. Boyd reminds us that the “revisionists’” theory is based on a single piece of evidence (a single instance of inconsistency in dates). This scholar convincingly argues instead that (a) Nabokov *could* possibly make a mistake as far as dates are concerned; (b) the supposedly “imagined” scenes containing information that reappears elsewhere in the novel (for example, if Humbert never reunited with Lolita, how could she travel to Alaska, where, according to the Preface, she died in childbirth?); and (c) that the script of the screenplay, despite substantial modifications, does not contain any indication that this scene was imagined by Humbert. Nabokov would probably have offered some indication of a dream scene or delusional projection in the film had he intended that interpretation with the discrepancy of dates in the novel.

This scholarly debate can certainly be related to the ways the characters’ speech is presented in the scenes that follow Humbert’s receipt of Lolita’s letter, as examination of their

speech across the versions provides another piece of evidence to suggest that the scene in question might not have been envisioned by Nabokov as imaginary in the Russian version. Following the general pattern established in the book, Lolita's utterances are presented as if actually pronounced by the girl during the meeting in Coalmont. While in the English version Humbert reiterates the information obtained from Lolita, as in the following example: "Yes, she said, this world was just one gag after another, if somebody wrote up her life nobody would ever believe it" (*L* EN: 273); in the Russian version Lolita acquires her own voice and tells her story, concluding "- Да (продолжала она), жизнь - серия комических номеров. Если бы романист описал судьбу Долли, никто бы ему не поверил [—Yes, (she continued), this world **is** just one gag after another. If a novelist wrote up her destiny, nobody would ever believe him]" (*L* RU: 254).

As we can see, the Russian version presents Lolita's remark as unambiguously pronounced by the girl (which is underscored by the switch to the present tense, as if the conversation develops in real time), as opposed to the English version, where the remark is rendered by Humbert and contains information received from Lolita. Of course, this example does not invalidate the fact that the meeting could have been conceived by Nabokov as imaginary in the original novel. Rather, it certainly shows that the scene evolved into a concrete meeting developing in real time in the later version of the novel (hence the omission of the crucial date in the narrative).

4.4 Conclusion

As suggested in Chapter Two, Nabokov approached the translation of *Lolita* from the place of disagreement with norms of translation (evident in his belief that translation will change the text if performed by a commissioned translator). This, in turn, led to my proposed hypothesis that Nabokov, perhaps, *did* something in translation of this text that no commissioned translator would ever have done.

Chapter Three, consequently, provided empirical evidence of how Nabokov's role in translation can be contrasted with that of (potential) commissioned translators. Considering features of the texts that are repetitive (that is, able to form a pattern that would have been preserved by commissioned translators), that are not regulated by a given language rules (extra-linguistic) and that are (as many descriptive studies of translation practice indicate) commonly preserved by commissioned translators enabled me to contrast the role of Nabokov-translator with that of commissioned translators.

That is not to say that the text was not transformed. As my analysis shows, awareness of the transformative power of translation prompted Nabokov to exert control over the change the text is subjected to. Close consideration of features detailed above allowed me to demonstrate some ways in which the text was transformed. These changes are indicative of the author's diminishing interest in some characters (Charlotte Haze, Jean Farlow), and renewed interest in others (particularly Lolita). Humbert's dominating position in the narrative is reduced in the Russian version, which also leads to a redistribution of roles of other characters. Lolita's voice, for example, is very clear in the later version; she acquires her own stance (particularly evident is her skepticism about Humbert's inability to recall a specific detail from the past). Humbert's supposed unity with Lolita (as evident in usage of the word "us") is gradually developed in the

English version; in contrast, it is fully-formed, scrutinized and questioned in the Russian text. Accepting Hermans' assertion that "the term "norm" may refer both to regularity in behaviour and to the mechanism which accounts for this regularity" (Hermans 2013: 2) along with Chesterman's important addition that "the regularities themselves are not the norms, they are merely evidence of the norms" (Chesterman1998: 91), I approach regularities in Nabokov's own behaviour as evidence of norms, and tentatively[43] designate Nabokov's Russian version as informed by an alternative set of norms.

However, one's disagreement with the norms does not cancel the fact that norms still govern the reception of translation in the target culture. In theoretical conjectures the clash between different sets of norms (norms of production and norms of reception) always leads to sanctions. A text that does not appear to follow norms of translation is typically excluded from the body of translated literature (but, in the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, not discarded completely—it is simply moved into a category of exceptions). I argue that his text is particularly useful for establishing on *what grounds* it has been excluded from the body of Russian translated literature. Much like Toury who advocated a distinction between *stat*emen*ts* about translation and translation *practice,* I propose to examine *statements* about this text in the target culture in light of specific *actions* that the resulting text was subjected to in the publishing practice. These sanctions are particularly revealing, as it seems, in terms of norms that dominate in the target culture. Re-translations of the text (attempted, alleged or considered) or commonly accepted modifications to the text in the publishing industry are very revealing in assessing the mechanism of norms. These issues will be further discussed in chapter four.

[43] There have been no other descriptive studies of self-translation to date, so elaborating on the nature of these norms is not possible at this time.

5. Translation Problems and Publishing Solutions: Responces to the Text

In Chapter Two I adopted a commonplace understanding of *Lolita* as a highly sophisticated literary game. In Chapter Three I reviewed Nabokov's practice of translating *Lolita*, which suggested that this literary game was taken to a completely different level in his Russian translation. In this chapter, my main objective is to verify empirically the idea of whether Nabokov was *really* allowed to play this game.

This chapter will consider in detail critical responses to the Russian text of *Lolita* in the context of Nabokov's legacy in translation. Extending Nabokov's own metaphoric language, I will designate the relationship between two texts (the original *Lolita* and the Russian version) as a well-documented "problem" of Nabokov scholarship, akin to a chess problem. In light of this designation, various critical responses to the texts will be approached as obvious "solutions" to this problem, as they were determined and justified by broad cultural contexts in which they originated. This overview will show that these solutions can be grouped together on various conceptual grounds, as "obvious" solutions were drastically different in various ideological-geographical domains (West vs. East), as well as in different historical periods (Soviet vs. contemporary Russia). Naturally, there is a token of subjectivity in all of the statements made about the relationship that links these two texts, but this chapter will primarily focus on the recurring patterns of assessments in order to capture collective attitudes toward Nabokov's translated text. The attitudes, in turn, justified *actions* that are very different in nature towards the text of *Lolita* in the target culture, specifically in the Russian publishing industry. The status of this text as *translation* is perhaps the greatest factor that made emendations to the text possible in

the cultural context. These emendations (considered, attempted or actually implemented) are, in turn, tangible evidence of powerful cultural mechanisms at work.

As a background study for this chapter, I will use theoretical concepts articulated by Linda Gorlee in *Wittgenstein in Translation: Exploring Semiotic Signatures* (2012). The scholar posits that the goal of commissioned translation is "cultural equivalence" (*Wittgenstein*: 219) and it "is more than a linguistic affair" (*Wittgenstein*: 219). As a result, she approaches the body of translated work as a particularly valuable insight into the operative practices of culture:

> Embedded in the text and the elements which compose it (as well as subsumed in it) lies a refined lens vulnerable to constant change of culture in time and place. Nothing is fixed in translation: the translating text, the translated text, the linguistic and non-linguist codes and subcodes, the translator's mind, and the translational and cultural […] norms will all be subject to continual interaction and change, even to a minute degree. (*Wittgenstein*: 220)

This cultural instability and sensitivity is, in part, responsible for the phenomenon of retranslations; in this regard Gorlee maintains that "retranslation will be needed for 'classics' in a broad sense, in order to keep them alive and up to date into the future" (*Wittgenstein*: 219).

Each act of translation and re-translation of the text is, in turn, likened by the scholar to an act of game[44] with language: "In the language-game of translation […] in order to become a fluency of speech, the fuzzy (that is, not logical) translation must become 'logical,' as required by the goal of translation" (*Wittgenstein*: 220) and further that "not only visible parts of speech but also the invisible and possible feelings, experiences, and extra-linguistic contexts must be rectified and corrected, and then assimilated into the new translated versions" (*Wittgenstein*: 221). These words show a particularly acute understanding of processes that inform

[44] In a much earlier article "Translation Theory and the Semiotics of Games and Decisions" (1986), Gorlee explores the fundamental kinship between a specific game (jigsaw puzzle) and translation. Their kinship, according to the author, is evidenced in the following: in both activities, the solitary player/translator must put together dispersed pieces/words together in light of the completed design/cultural context.

commissioned translation in a given culture and are convincingly supported in her book by close examination of translated versions of Wittgenstein text.

While this understanding seems to be applicable to commissioned, naturally-occurring and normative translation practices, as stated earlier, there is absolutely nothing normative or natural about Nabokov's own self-translation, neither are there any Russian retranslations of the text[45]. Nonetheless, I argue, the target culture at large had to rectify the "fuzzy logic" that was evident in Nabokov's own version, but in absence of translators willing to perform this task, this role was assumed by other cultural agents, specifically by publishers of Nabokov's works.

This chapter will begin with a brief overview of Nabokov's own attitudes to translation, which as many scholars would agree have a particular value for the legacy of this author. I will then consider Western reception of the original *Lolita* and Nabokov's own self-translation into Russian as well as implications of Nabokov's dual status in the Russian version of *Lolita* (both as author and translator) for translations into languages other than Russian (such as Polish, Lithuanian and Hebrew). As will be evident from this discussion, scholars often invest considerable effort to re-assert Nabokov's authority over his own text and justify his right to translate as he sees fit. I will then consider the Russian reception of the work; both in the context of the Soviet Union and after its collapse, paying close attention to the emendations to the text in the publishing industry that were not always made public or opened for debate. As will be evident from this discussion, Nabokov's Russian publishers have to assume a rather unusual role in preparation of *Lolita* for publication.

[45] An important qualification to this statement will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, as there is some indirect evidence that a re-translation of Nabokov's text into Russian might have been performed.

5.1 Nabokov and Translation

Nabokov was, of course, a very prolific writer and it was his creative writing that brought him world-wide fame. However, his legacy as a translation scholar and a practicing translator is truly remarkable: it includes not only scholarly articles about translations, but also translations from and into different languages (English, Russian and French), translations of poetry and prose, as well as translations of his own works and those by other writers. Typically, an examination of the writer's artistic principles in any domain, be it creative writing or translation, can be conducted by two methods: (a) by considering the writer's explicit statements about his artistic principles, and (b) by extrapolating his artistic principles from the body of his work. The two methods typically do not exclude each other, but in the case of Nabokov's legacy, the writer's explicit statements about the nature of his approach to translation often exhibit a great dependency on the immediate context in which they were made, and should therefore be approached very cautiously.

Translation (not just as theory or practice, but rather as a very special mode of expressing oneself) is of very special significance for Nabokov's legacy. Nabokov's immense efforts invested into translation throughout his life have attracted considerable scholarly attention. His translations, as some scholars argue, are "of such prodigious extent and diversity that they must be regarded as a principle part of his life work" (Beaujour "Translation": 40). Other scholars see Nabokov's efforts in translation as the very foundation of his artistic endeavors[46]:

[46] One of the most interesting and convincing cases that directly link translation in general and the English *Lolita* in particular has been made by Priscilla Meyer. This scholar convincingly shows that the English *Lolita*, too, can be approached as translation: "Nabokov writes the most Russian *Onegin* possible in the English translation and produces its most American paraphrase in *Lolita*: he uses both methods of translation to close the cultural gap between the producer (Pushkin) and the consumer (the American reader circa 1950)" (Meyer 94). This approach has been explored further by other researches, such as Clarence Brown, who identified Nabokov's "absolute unity" (Brown 200) in creative writing, which he links with the idea that the writer wrote "the same book" over and over throughout his career. This approach limits itself to examination of themes, plot structures and character

> Translation, like trickery, was one of Nabokov's main obsessions.[…] For a rare bird like Nabokov, […] translation could not be simply a means of reaching a wider audience, of selling more books. Translation was an essential process whereby he articulated his thoughts. To write, for Nabokov, meant to translate.[…] His attitudes toward translation are therefore of immense value. (Liberman 46)

However, a closer examination of Nabokov's theory and practices of translation throughout his life makes it extremely difficult to capture one systematic attitude towards translation. In fact, his legacy in this regard is commonly described as full of contradictions and is widely known to follow three distinct phases: (1) early extremely liberal translation practices, (2) theory of rigid literalism, and (3) prolific self-translations that do not appear to fall under either of these extremes. The three phases somewhat correspond to stages in his career (first as an unknown translator, then as an instructor of Russian and an aspiring writer, and finally a literary celebrity) and life in various countries (Russian, America, and Switzerland).

5.1.1 Early Liberal Practice of Translation

Nabokov grew up "a perfectly normal trilingual child in a family with a large library" (*Strong Opinions:* 43) as he famously described himself. He spoke Russian, English and French from birth and started translating considerably earlier than writing original works, producing a translation of Mayne Reid's *The Headless Horseman* into French at the age of eleven. Soon other literary texts attracted his attention—first various collections of poetry, then *Colas Breugnon* (translated from French into Russian), and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (translated from

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relationships in Nabokov's works, and when these aspects are considered at the sufficiently abstract level, many of Nabokov's novels appear to be strikingly similar. It is important to keep in mind, that one might argue that literature in general has rather limited variance in these aspects. In a famous study, *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), Russian structuralist Vladimir Propp was able to reduce structural variants of the entire corpus of Russian folktales involving magic (over 500 actual texts) to a mere 30 structural "moves." Needless to say, my analysis adopts a directly opposite to the above-mentioned approach, as it focuses on differences at the textual level, rather than structural similarities.

English to Russian). The last translation attracted considerable scholarly attention, and it is often used to illustrate Nabokov's approach to translation in his early years.

As numerous studies of Nabokov's practice of translation indicate, in his early years he adapted an extremely target-oriented, domesticating, approach. For example, Clark (1982) was among the first scholars to observe that Nabokov used the translation of *Alice's Adv*EN*tures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll as "a vehicle for his own style and vision" (72). As Natalia Vid (2008) convincingly shows, in translating this book Nabokov consistently followed the main strategy of domestication (realized in the text by substitution and localization), interpreted puns, parodies, word play, intentional misunderstandings, etc. Finally, Charychanskaya (2005) concluded that Nabokov's liberties in interpreting this text resulted in the distortion of the character of Alice, as "the author and the translator present to the reader are two characters completely different in nature" (Charyshanskaya, the translation is mine). Nonetheless, some scholars note that this text is "the best translation of the book into any language" (Boyd "Nabokov as Translator": 197). This text is also often used by scholars as a "good early example of Nabokov's willingness to transform, to transpose, and to sacrifice sense for sound" (Beaujour *Alien Tongues*: 87-88). The extent of emendations to the text has led some scholars to conclude that this book can hardly be called a translation (especially in light of Nabokov's own theory of literalism), but should rather be referred to as "adaptation" or "transposition" (Connolly "Ania": 19), albeit they did not offer any insights into how these categories are different from conventional translation. It should be kept in mind, however, that such extreme assessments are a result of examination of the text through the prism of Nabokov's literalism, a theory that was formulated by Nabokov much later in life. At the time these texts were produced, they were not markedly different from other translated texts in Russia. For instance, when Boris Nosik, a

Russian literary translator, mentioned this text in passing, he asserted that this translation was "performed according to the best traditions of the Russian school of translation" (Nosik 239). This approach to translation practice was later condemned by the writer; once having completed his English translation of the Russian masterpiece *Eugene Onegin*, he emerged as a well-known literalist.

5.1.2 Nabokov's Theory of Rigid Literalism

The majority of Nabokov's explicit statements about the nature of translation were generated in conjunction with his own translation of *Eugene Onegin* (by Aleksander Pushkin) into English, on which he worked for 10 years (1954-1964). His theory of translation was thoroughly described in both the preface to the translation and the commentary that accompanies it, and also in essays: "Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English" (1955), "Zapiski Perevodchika I" and "Zapiski Perevodchika II" (1957), and "The Servile Path" (1959).

Essentially, this was a theory of extreme literalism. Having considered the two most common criteria for assessing literary translations—fidelity (or accuracy in rendering the original) and transparency (or conforming to the norms of the target culture)—Nabokov articulated a clear preference for the former: "The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase" ("Problems of Translation": 115). His classification of translation, offered at the time, included the following translation types:

> *Paraphrastic*: offering a free version of the original with omissions and additions prompted by the exigencies of form, the conventions attributed to the consumer, and the translator's ignorance. Some phrases may possess the charm of stylish diction and idiomatic conciseness, but no scholar should succumb to stylishness and no reader should be fooled by it.
>
> *Lexical*: (or constructional): rendering the basic meaning of the words (and their order). This a machine can do under the direction of an intelligent bilinguist.

> *Literal*: rendering, as closely as the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original. Only this is a true translation. (*Eugene Onegin*, vol. I: vii)

Consequently, Nabokov produced a translation of *E*ugen*e Onegin*, a well-known Russian masterpiece, in which he stated, "I sacrificed everything—elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar" to "my ideal of literalism" (*Eugene Onegin,* vol. I: x).

It must be emphasized that Nabokov did not have any illusion regarding the fact that his literal translation would functionally replace the original in the target culture, and would exert a similar aesthetic effect of the original on the new readership. Instead, he clearly stated that:

> It is hoped that my readers will be moved to learn Pushkin's language and go through EO again without this crib. In art as in science there is no delight without the detail, and it is on details that I have tried to fix the reader's attention. Let me repeat that unless these are thoroughly understood and remembered, all "general ideas" (so easily acquired, so profitably resold) must necessarily remain but worn passports allowing their bearers short cuts from one area of ignorance to another. (*Eugene Onegin,* vol. I: viii)

This statement, however, was somewhat ignored by many initial critics of this translation who approached the text as a work of art in its own right. This attitude is evident in the general reaction to a publication of a translation produced by his approach that was best summarized by Wodehouse: "the raised eyebrow, the sharp intake of breath" (cited in Brown, "Nabokov's Pushkin": 168). Clarence Brown, when reflecting on the circumstances surrounding the original publication, noted that "the attention of reviewers was mesmerized by one thing: that incredible translation" ("Nabokov's Pushkin": 196). He continued to characterize it as "preposterous, gauche beyond words, intentionally ugly, a travesty of a great work of art, sickeningly cute, incomprehensible" (Brown 1967:196). It is important to keep in mind that such strong reaction to his translation was fueled, in part, by all the negative publicity that accompanied the text's publication: Nabokov's own harsh critique of the award-winning translation by Walter W. Arndt

was published just one year earlier, and he had a very public feud with his former close friend Edmund Wilson, who reviewed this translation in the *New Yorker* and criticized Nabokov's use of "bald and awkward language which has nothing in common with Pushkin"[47]. Moreover, it can be argued that such a strong public rejection of this translation was, as least in part, attributed not to the quality of the text but to the figure of the translator himself who by then had emerged as a master of English literature and the author of *Lolita*. Coates rightfully hypothesizes in this regard that "[h]ad his four-volume translation been the fruit of labour by some unknown professor of Russian, it would have been read in a different light and probably praised as a work of brilliant but eccentric scholarship" (Coates 91).

Given the unreadability of the translation widely discussed in the critical responses, the scholarly attention soon focused on the commentary, which was understood as the true essence of Nabokov's undertaking. Although the merit of his commentary is outside of the scope of this study, it must be noted that it provides numerous glimpses of Nabokov's own aesthetic premise, as he often offers his own validations of Pushkin's stylistic choices[48]. Even more perplexing, there are instances in the text when Nabokov openly disregards his own method of literal translation, despite his conviction that "[f]ree translation smacks of knavery and tyranny. It is when the translator sets out to render 'spirit'— not the textual sense—that he begins to traduce the author" ("Problems": 115). His numerous violations of his own stated method are evident in the following examples. Having translated *Встает купец, идет разносчик* as "the merchant's up, the hawker's on the way," he notes: "My version of this line is on the brink of an abhorred paraphrase. But somehow I disliked the falsely literal *Rises the merchant, goes ...the hawker"*

[47] *New York Review of Books*, July 15, 1965.
[48] See, for example: "The text is clumsy!" (*Eugene Onegin*, vol. II: 39), or "The comparison is trivial, and the expression, clumsy. The whole stanza, in fact, is poor" (*Eugene Onegin*, vol.II: 158).

(*Eugene Onegin*, vol.1: 142). Or, when pondering ways to translate the passage *Янтарна трубка Тцареграда* he explains, "In rendering Pushkin's rather clumsy line it was rather difficult to resist the pretty paraphrase: ambered chibouks from Istamboul" (*Eugene Onegin*, vol.1: 100). When translating *Мечты, мечты, где ваша сладость, где вечная к ней рифма младость* he notes: "This translator has not been able to resist the temptation: "Dreams, dreams! Where is your dulcitude! Where (its stock rhyme) juventude" (*Eugene Onegin*, vol.II: 63). He then follows with the observation that, of course, at no age did this rhyme crop up commonly in English poetry. As evident from the examples above, Nabokov's theory was not as rigid as one might think. It was a method of translation that *could* occasionally be violated.

Nonetheless, given the immense publicity that this translation has enjoyed in the West, it often serves as a basis for Nabokov's reputation as a translation theorist and translator. In one of his interviews Nabokov famously reflected on his legacy: **"**I shall be remembered by *Lolita* and my work on *Eug*EN*e Onegin***"** (Boyd *Vladimir Nabokov*: 318), and this prophecy certainly came true. While, as shown in chapter three, it is possible to argue that literalism was not a part of the Russian novel production (as Nabokov systematically amended the later text which is particularly evident in considering features of the versions that a literalist would be expected to preserve), it has become a prominent fact of reception of this text. To this day, any scholar writing on the Russian *Lolita* must address its relationship to Nabokov's theory of translation. This theory, as will be shown below, also has a prominent place in the discussions of translating *Lolita* into languages other than Russian.

5.1.3 Self-translation

Once Nabokov achieved international recognition, he became very interested in making his early Russian works available in English, and seemingly they were not subjected to his theory of literalism. This phase of his oeuvre was well described by Coates, who states that at this time "Nabokov is commonly accused of self-contradiction in his theory and practice of translation, preaching fidelity while practicing freedom" (99).

Considering the sheer volume of novels that he intended to bring out in English, Nabokov resorted to working in tandem with other translators, and their statements are consistent in mentioning the liberties Nabokov took with his own works. Dmitrii Nabokov, for instance, the writer's son and one of his more prolific collaborators, recalled in an essay that he " was to furnish as literal a translation as possible, with which [Nabokov] could take any liberties he pleased" ("Translating with Nabokov" 149). According to his son, not only Nabokov *could* but he actually always *did* take great liberties with the resulting texts, "deliberately allow[ing] himself authorial license when dealing with his own works" (150).

This is not to say that Nabokov was no longer preoccupied with the accuracy in the translation of his own texts. Accuracy seems to be his primary concern throughout his life. For example, complaining in a letter to a publisher about the English translation of *Camera Obscura* (*Laughter in the Dark*), Nabokov asserted that he was "trying to obtain an exact, complete, and correct translation" but instead he received a text that was "loose, shapeless, sloppy, full of blunders and gaps, lacking vigor and spring, and plumped down in such dull, flat English that I could not read to the end" (*Selected Letters*: 13). Similar complaints are exceptionally frequent in his interviews, letters to publishers and prefaces to his novels, which allows Tammi to conclude that "concern with accuracy of translation has surely become one of the best-known features

associated with his public *personae*" (338). This, I am convinced, does not mean that Nabokov just happened to collaborate with a number of particularly "bad" translators. Behind the writer's frustration one can recognize first-hand experience with the transformative power of translation. Translation always changes everything. Yet Nabokov was in the position to control this change, and it is this aspect of his self-translations that is particularly fascinating.

Another interesting point that stems from the overview of Nabokov's translation practices is a seeming lack of a uniformed approach to translating, as his practices seem to fluctuate greatly between two extremes (highly-liberal to strictly-literal), with his own self-translations being often placed anywhere on this range. This lack of consistency can only be strange if one believes that literary translators must be consistent in producing texts. I am convinced that in any overview of his own practices, Nabokov emerges as a highly skilled translator, who was capable of using a very broad range of strategies in rendering texts by other writers into different cultural milieus. Moreover, his artistic sensibility allowed him to determine what approach was best-suited for a given text and for a given readership. Of course, in his early career, he too was subject to the norms that governed production of texts in Russian culture. Translating works that were virtually unknown to the Russian readership at the time, he deployed a highly liberal approach to the texts, seeking to capture the aesthetic and intellectual pleasure from reading the originals. His insistence on a literal approach, in turn, only took place when he worked on masterpieces that had already been translated multiple times (with previous translators firmly establishing an aesthetic canon of translating these works). In a series of resulting texts, all of which sought to capture the aesthetic effect of the original, Nabokov was using his literal approach to bring across nuances of content that remained virtually unknown to the American readership at the time.

Finally, it must be stressed that by the time he launched his self-translated works in the USA, he was an established writer. He no longer needed to justify his approach in order to publish his works, as he definitively *knew* that his works were going to be published. Finally, he was in the position to rise above the norms that govern the reception of translated works. Once again, it is possible to hypothesize that as the author of these works, he was in the best position to select an approach that would be best suited to a given text, rather than to impose a specific method of translating. It would be ridiculous to seek some sort of "consistency" in method by considering translations by a commissioned translator, who had rendered into a given language two drastically different texts: a recent short story written by a post-modern writer and a 15th century Russian poem, for instance. Why then seek the same consistency in the works of a writer who rendered drastically different novels into the said language? It seems that a more productive approach would be to consider the resulting texts in light of *why* the author had deployed a specific strategy of translation in relationship to the very nature of the texts he produced, as opposed to dismissing the evident inconsistencies as a whimsical exertion of authorial liberties. This latter approach, unfortunately, has been a common premise underlying *Lolita* scholarship.

5.2 Reception of the American Novel

Consideration of Nabokov's changing attitudes to translations is virtually impossible without considering his ascension to the celebrity status. And a particularly large step in this ascension was *Lolita*, first published in English in 1955. The goal of this section is to provide an overview of the reception of *Lolita* in the Anglophone world, as the initial response to the text was a formative step in shaping the Nabokov canon. Any serious inquiries into this novel were somewhat impeded by the initial public outcry about a highly controversial theme of the book,

which received much negative publicity. As a result of this publicity, "Nabokov" and "Lolita" soon became household names, yet even today some scholars feel the need to justify the merit of the object of their study and to address its highly controversial nature. *Lolita* was unquestionably the novel that shed a permanent spotlight on Nabokov and made him visible on the literary scene. But it was also the novel that subjected this author to extended public scrutiny, served as a basis for allegations of the author's own perversion, and sparked numerous debates about not just literary aspects of this work but also such social issues as morality and censorship. Despite the commonly accepted idea of inseparability of content and form in a literary work, it can be said that it was the content of *Lolita* that attracted the initial attention of mass readership in the West. It was the wide familiarity with the content that then paved the ground for interest in the formal features of the work.

Lolita, the story of love between a middle-aged European émigré and an American teenage girl, is still somewhat synonymous with the word "scandal." However, ironically, a scandal was the least of the author's intentions as he expressed it in a letter to Maurice Girodias, the first publisher of the novel: "*Lolita* is a serious book with a serious purpose. I hope the public will accept it as such. A *succès de scandale* would distress me" (*Selected Letters*: 175).

As Nabokov explains in "On a Book Entitled *Lolita,*" the first idea to write *Lolita* came upon him in 1939 or 1940 in Paris when he wrote what later became to be known as ur-*Lolita*, a novella *Volshebnik* (translated as "The Enchanter" by his son Dmitrii in 1976). This book was never published by Nabokov and appeared in print only after his death. As the author reflected in the afterword to the novel, he started developing the same theme again in Ithaca, NY, around 1949. The novel titled *Lolita* was completed in 1954 and the author showed it to four different American publishers, none of whom wanted to publish it (they were shocked and some even

feared prosecution). Nabokov in turn felt that the refusal of these publishers to buy this book was based not on his treatment of the theme but on the theme itself, as he reflected in the famous afterword to *Lolita* (*L* RU: 314).

Having realized that it would be almost impossible to publish *Lolita* in the United States, Nabokov decided to look for a publisher overseas. Finally, with the help of his old friend Doussia Ergaz he contacted Maurice Girodias, owner of Olympia Press. Years later, Girodias recalled his initial impression of the book in the following manner:

> [T]he story was a rather magical demonstration of something about which I had so often dreamed, but never found: the treatment of one of the major forbidden human passions in a manner both completely sincere and absolutely legitimate. I sensed that *Lolita* would become the one great modern work of art to demonstrate once and for all the futility of moral censorship, and the indispensable role of passion in literature. (Girodias, n. pag.)

Girodias enthusiastically agreed to publish the novel in France. *Lolita* was released in the fall of 1955 (with a relatively modest print run of 5000 copies). However, it was not noticed by the public until December of the same year when the American writer Graham Green recommended it to the readers of the British *Sunday Times* in the Christmas issue. Ironically, this favorable recommendation would have probably not done much for the publicity of the novel, had it not been seen by John Gordon, the editor of Sunday Express, who deemed it "sheer unrestrained pornography" (6). The disagreement among these reviewers led to a very public debate, which resulted in enormous publicity for the book. It needs to be pointed out that many issues brought out by this debate related primarily to the content of this novel, rather than its formal properties and such debates dominated discussions of this book for years to come. This very public disagreement of two critics started an avalanche of critical responses to the text. Editors of *Klassic bez retushi* note that in the first year after publication, this novel was referenced in over 250 reviews, articles and essays. Because of the initial publicity, the book was soon noticed on

the international literary scene. The American release of the novel in 1958 surpassed all expectations, as the book sold 100 thousand copies in the first three weeks, and exceeded the previous record of *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell.

Nabokov became a celebrity overnight. While many reviews praised the inventiveness of the novel, some critics completely denied it any literary or aesthetic appeal. For example, Prescott who saw *Lolita* as:

> undeniably news in the world of books. Unfortunately, it is bad news. There are two equally serious reasons why it isn't worth any adult reader's attention. The first is that it is dull, dull, dull in a pretentious, florid and archly fatuous fashion. The second is that it is repulsive. (Prescott 17)

But many more critics insisted that the novel deserved to be published, albeit their opinions as to why it should be published differed greatly. Some considered it a masterful representation of the thought process in a pervert's mind, others as a socially valuable way to expose the evil of perversion, while yet others maintained that this book was an important step in the civil struggle to overturn excessively rigid rules of censorship. Reflecting on the reception of *Lolita*, Parker posits in the *Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*: "Apart from an occasional review or notation of a book in print, serious English language criticism of Nabokov dates to the many reviews and essays which accompanied and followed the American publication of *Lolita*" (69). As Ellen Pifer points out in the *Casebook* dedicated to the novel, "despite the critical acclaim that *Lolita* has garnered since its publication, the controversy sparked by its startling subject has never fully abated" (186). Particularly persistent is the attitude based on a suspicion that "Nabokov's art encourages the reader's participation in Humbert's sexual exploitation of a little girl in order to disguise the author's own complicity" (*Casebook*: 186). However, as Pifer rightfully points out, the fallacy of this line of thought is that such critics "fail to grasp the ways in which Nabokov deploys the devices of artifice to break the reader's identification with

Lolita's narrator" (186). Similarly, Rekka Tammi makes this observation in his unsurpassed study of Nabokov's poetics: "It has been the dominant trend in *Lolita*-scholarship to lay exclusive stress on the communicative process taking place between Humbert and his immediate audience (the court of jurors), with the result that the novel has come to be treated as a more or less burlesque 'defense' for its protagonist" (276). However, the dominance of such an attitude came to an end after the critics turned to close examination of the formal aspects of the book.

As Elllen Pifer points out in the *Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, "Once the literary merit of *Lolita* has been recognized, many scholars brushed aside the moral and psychological dilemmas of the novel—eager, instead to solve *Lolita*'s linguistic puzzles and to limn the facets of its cunningly wrought design" (307). Pifer is convinced that the best studies in the Nabokovian scholarship have shown "how a close examination of the novel's linguistic structure does not obviate, but rather enhances an understanding of the human dimensions of Nabokov's art" (307). She seems to link this understanding with the nature of the unique brand of Nabokov's artifice: "art operates as Nabokov's model of the universe" as "the world human beings perceive […] – is known only through their perceptual reconstruction of it" (307). *Lolita* specifically "comprises nothing more or less than a dazzling 'game' of words—and worlds" (see Alter 1975, Appel, 1967, 1991; and Karlinsky "Nabokov's Russian Games")" (309).

The meticulous examinations of interconnectedness in form and content of Nabokov's works have led scholars to define the unique brand of the writer's artifice, that is, his style. On one hand, scholars agree that Nabokov's use of English in the novel is markedly different from the use of his contemporaries, which is somewhat justified by the ethnic background of Humbert and often linked with its author's own Slavic roots. Joanna Trzeciak noted that one of the novel's most striking features is Humbert Humbert's "inventive use of English in narrating

his tale" ("Wooley-woo-boo-are?": 616); similarly, Grayson arrives at the conclusion that "in [Nabokov's] later English production it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between what is 'foreign' and 'non-standard' and what is original and calculated to enrich the scope of the English language" (Grayson 190). Eventually, scholars came to the understanding that Nabokov's novelty in language use has a highly functional purpose, as it has been linked with the so-called "hermeneutic imperative" that emerges from his narrative. One of the more prominent definitions was made by Alexandrov (and further endorsed by other scholars, such as David Bethea):

> The experience [of epiphany in Nabokov art] is […] structurally congruent with a characteristic formal feature of his narratives, in which details that are in fact connected are hidden within contexts that conceal the true relationship among them. This narrative tactic puts the burden on the reader either to accumulate the components of the given series, or to discover the one detail that acts as a "key" for it; when this is achieved, the significance of the entire preceding concealed chain or network is retroactively illuminated. (Bethea 697)

Further, contemporary scholars directly link stylistic properties of Nabokov's texts with the artistic method of the writer:

> All the various qualities that critics have traditionally subsumed under the rubric of "style" in Nabokov's case—onomatopoeia and alliteration, anagrams, patterns of imaginary, tampering with viewpoint and other narrative ploys, etc.- are placed in the text at the service of this "hermeneutic imperative" ("deception through concealment"). (Bethea 698)

This understanding of "deception through concealment" is extremely important for Nabokov's legacy in creative writing, but this line of thought has not been sufficiently pursued in considering Nabokov's endeavours in translation. Would concealment of a highly original work under the guise of a translation constitute the act of ultimate deception? This would be a very "unobvious" yet quite plausible answer to the problem stated in the introduction to this chapter. Perplexingly, the Russian text had never been approached as such.

5.2.1 Nabokov – translator of *Lolita*…

When the Russian version of the novel was first published in the USA, some critics rightfully pointed out that "We are faced with a thing that cannot be measured by the tools we have, we must invent others" ("A Little Girl": 19), as the text did not really seem to fit any existing conceptualizations of translation. By the time Nabokov's translation was published, his public reputation (attributable, in part, to the debates surrounding the publication of *Eug*EN*e Onegin*) was established, in the words of Brian Boyd, as follows:

> Nabokov was of a notoriously precise, even pedantic temperament, hard on anyone else's mistakes, exigent about particulars, insistent on the exactitude of detail and the delicacy of interconnection that make it natural to expect him to ensure the accuracy of his own work. ("Even Homais Nods": 63)

However, in absence of the aforementioned "tools" some Western scholars automatically accepted that what Nabokov termed "correct translation" actually stands for a literal translation. Jane Grayson, for instance, referred to it as "a fairly close translation" (Grayson 10). Even such a well-known Nabokov scholar as Brian Boyd concluded that this text was "for the most part […] as literal as any of his other translations" (*Vladimir Nabokov*: 489). It must be pointed out, however, that Nabokov's own word choice here is rather suspicious: after all, if he, a well-known scholar-literalist at the time, really wanted to indicate that he had produced a literal version of the text, why did he not just identify it as such?

In light of the awareness of Nabokov's *public personae*, many obvious discrepancies between the versions were dismissed by scholars by evoking the writer's authority over the text. Brown, for instance, noted in one of the first reviews of the book:

> Lolita herself, if I correctly calculate the old-fashioned unit of the linear measurement that Nabokov employs, is one-and-a-half inches shorter in Russian, but I am sufficiently apprehensive of Nabokov's painstaking ingenuity to fear that he might have looked up

> the tables on the physical stature of American and Russian twelve-year-olds and concluded that she should be shorter by that much. ("A Little Girl": 19)

On a similar note, some unexplained discrepancies were often dismissed as misprints. Thus Sampson, who made the translation of the Postscript to the Russian Edition of *Lolita* available to the English-speaking audience, framed the text by meticulously comparing the English and the Russian versions (translated into Russian by Nabokov himself) of "On the Book Entitled *Lolita*"(1967), and mentioned that there are actually many discrepancies in Nabokov's own translation: "small differences in wording or phrasing, often a matter of stylistic equivalences vs. lexical literariness" (Sampson 189). When discrepancies did not fit either of these categories, he dismissed them as misprints that were outside of the author's control, by noting that "Ashland, Oregon is mistakenly given as "Ashton"—possibly a printer's error influenced by Afton, Wyoming, earlier in the list" (Nabokov 1982: 188).

Incidentally, Russian specialists immediately recognized the translation of *Lolita* as anything but a literal translation. Nabokov scholar and translator, Boris Nosik, remarked in this regard that "familiarity with imperfect translations led Nabokov to his formulations and bans on the artistic translation, which he, thank God, disregarded in a marvelously unsystematic way, when translating *Lolita*" (239). Gradually, however, careful comparisons of these two texts in the Western scholarship has led to the emergence of the Russian text status as "the best example of self-translation as a powerful tool for self-exegesis" ("*Lolita*" 325) and as "a *new reduction* of the novel, its second avatar in a parallel linguistic and cultural reality, rather than a bleak copy of the dazzling original" ("*Lolita*" 323, emphasis in the original). As a result, attention to Nabokov's own rendering of details in the text has led to an awareness of the unusual role that the author assumed in this translation:

> Besides purely technical substitutes and glosses for numerous English puns and allusions that were obviously motivated by differences between languages and /or cultural and literary backgrounds, the Russian *Lolita* incorporates a whole layer of cross-references and indices that have nothing to do with the problems of translation and serve as prompts pointing at some missed key or hint or parody in the body of the original text—the author's discreet censure, as it were, of his inattentive readers and critics. (Dolinin "*Lolita*" 325)

The process of searching for the above-mentioned "cross-references and indices" is rather peculiar, as the additional clues found in the Russian version launch a scholarly search for compatible clues in the original, which are often found, at the very abstract level (such as an allusion to William Faulkner's theme of incest, or in parallels in plot structure to King Lear by William Shakespeare), thus enabling the scholar to ascribe the same features, albeit in a dormant form, to the original as well. In this context, Nabokov is seen as striving to render accurately and even more explicitly the same content of the book. I submit, however, that these features of the text remained unnoticed by the scholarship in the original *Lolita* until the Russian version was considered specifically *because*, much like many italicized words and parenthical additions, they were not present in the original text. The Russian *Lolita* is not a mere key to the English version. It is a key that can unlock yet another layer of cross-cultural artistry by Nabokov.

5.2.2 … and translators of *Lolita* into other languages

Needless to say, Alexandrov's definition of Nabokov's style is very significant for this writer's legacy, as it assigns a particularly important role to the formal stylistic features (such as onomatopoeia and alliteration, anagrams, patterns of imaginary) in the meaning-generating mechanisms of the literary works. However, in terms of Nabokov's legacy, understanding the importance of these stylistic devices has an additional significance: it appears that translations of *Lolita* into languages other than Russian are assessed only in regards to translators' solutions

in rendering these features (most frequently—allusions, alliteration and puns). Translators of the novel into other languages, as will be evident from the overview below, deploy a wide variety of strategies to render these features: some opt to rather conservatively render the literal sense of the original, others set out to render the acoustic/artistic effect of the original, yet some even attempt to approximate Nabokov's own strategy that is evident in comparisons of English and Russian versions of the novel. But whatever strategy they use, no matter how well they justify the use of said strategy and how skillfully they implement it, their efforts (inevitably and predictably) are considered by critics as *failures*. This troubling tendency will be evident in the overview of various translations of *Lolita* into such languages as Polish, Lithuanian, and Hebrew.

The stylistic devices listed above are greatly dependent on the means provided by a given language. As such, they constitute a very problematic area in translation studies, and it is this area where difference between languages and cultures is acutely felt. It would be safe to say that in different times and in different regions of the world, *all* literary translators at some point have contemplated the best ways to render such stylistic peculiarities of any original into the target milieu. As a result, this area accumulated a broad range of possible solutions, and it is simply impossible to know what would constitute a preferred solution in a given language, in a given culture and in a given variety of texts. Consequently, such comparisons are inherently unfair to ordinary translators, as in all such comparisons scholars and critics only re-affirm Nabokov's status as the best possible translator for this work[49]. Nabokov's conflicting legacy in translation (his early liberal practices, his theoretic formulations about literalism, and his own

[49] Of course, these critics are forced to admit that Nabokov's solutions to these problems are "the best" in a given context simply because he is the author of the work. In contrast to these attitudes, my analysis focuses on examining the repetitive textual features that we can be reasonably sure ordinary translators would preserve. Nabokov's own systematic emendation of these features suggests that Nabokov certainly does not act as an ordinary translator in rendering the text.

practice in *Lolita(s)* that, in turn, clearly violated his own theoretic formulations) serves as a basis to defend any point of view. In scholarly responses to Polish, Lithuanian and Hebrew translations of *Lolita*, all scholars, unanimously citing the "complexity" of the original text, predictably elect to address only a narrow aspect of it, and this is always linked with translators' renderings of Nabokov's stylistic features of the text.

Thus Anna Ginter, considering the Polish translation of *Lolita* (by Robert Stiller, 1987), points out the differences between the English and the Russian versions: "Nabokov introduces in the Russian text of the novel much new information, detailing place, time, actions and nature of characters" (Ginter 1999: 172) and emphasizes that the Polish translator based his text on the English version, considering it more successful. The Russian text, Ginter explains, was used by the translator as a commentary only, as an interpretation of certain fragments of the novel. In practice, however, the critic points out that, despite the translator's stated approach, he elected to incorporate, rather idiosyncratically, fragments of the Russian text that were missing in the original novel, into his translation. While this strategy is explained by the Ginter as the translator's desire to allow his Polish readership "to get to know [Humbert] better" (176), awareness of Nabokov's own solutions to translation problems also suggests that the translator should have replicated Nabokov's own behaviour. Thus, in a place where Nabokov elected to render a Macbeth allusion by a quote from *Eugene Onegin* (but Stiller preserves the Shakespearian quote), Ginter concludes that the translator, too, could have found a text in Polish literature that would have served as a functional equivalent of Nabokov's own solution. Overall, however, Ginter's conclusion ranks the resulting Polish text as inferior to the original. She states that:

> Stiller is not always successful in rendering alliteration or assonance. In many instances he even rejects deployment of stylistic means and concentrates on literal translation

> (primarily from English) and due to that the novel in the Polish language loses stylistic and linguistic inimitability. (Ginter 182, translation is mine)

Nabokov, too, does not always render alliteration or assonance in the Russian version of the novel, a fact that is not explicitly addressed by the scholar. Given the general awareness of Nabokov's own theory, one should hardly criticize a translator for being "too literal" in rendering the source. Yet this assessment is approached from a position of awareness of Nabokov's own violations of the stated method (a result of Ginter's familiarity with the Russian text of *Lolita*), creating an unreasonable expectation that the translator too, much like the author of the work, should have violated Nabokov's own theory. The choice of word here in Ginter's conclusion is rather surprising, as it deems the original text "inimitable." This reveals the hidden bias of the author herself: if the original inherently cannot be imitated, any translation by an ordinary translator will always fall short.

This is precisely the case in considering alliteration in the Lithuanian text of *Lolita* in an article written by Artūras Cechanovičius and Jadvyga Krūminiene in order to "test the hypothesis that a bilingual author who translates his works himself achieves a greater approximation to the original, both in form and content, than an ordinary translator does" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 121).[50] Drawing parallels between Nabokov's own strategy in rendering alliteration in the Russian version of the novel, and that of the Lithuanian translator, the authors note that Nabokov carefully preserved and at times even enhanced the alliterative patterns of the original. However, instances when the Lithuanian translator attempts to preserve alliterative patterns (at

[50] This formulation, from the Western perspective, might appear somewhat humorous, as it leads to other questions, such as (1) whether such a hypothesis *can* be tested (as if the researcher definitively knows what the original was about) and (2) whether this is the kind of hypothesis that *should* be tested in the first place (as such formulation asserts that the author intended to reproduce the original exactly, while it might not be the author's intention). However, this formulation is somewhat justified as it is laden with an Eastern perspective on the translated text, which has a pronounced tendency to view the translation as failure with the resulting need to justify the writer's decisions. This tradition is firmly rooted in the initial Russian reception of the text, and will be considered later in this chapter.

the expense of the resulting semantic dissimilarity of words in specific instances) are being criticized by the authors, as "alliteration should not be forced to the extent of causing a degeneration of meaning or content" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 121). Moreover, the scholars go to considerable length "to prove that Nabokov was an alliteration virtuoso" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 123), and list multiple "cases where he successfully alliterates *the same words* in the translation as in the original" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 123, emphasis added). While the selection of examples generally confirms Nabokov's careful consideration of both semantic and phonetic shapes of the lexical items used in the translation, one example stands out. Nabokov's own rendering of "they were as different as mist and mast" (Nabokov 1991, p. 18) as "они были столь же различны между собой, как мечта и мачта" [they were as different as dream and mast] where, ironically, English "mist" is certainly very different semantically from the Russian "мечта" (dream), appears as the first example on the compiled list. And yet marked difference in lexical meaning remains unaddressed by the scholars.

Further, Cechanovičius and Krūminiene contrast Nabokov's role with that of an ordinary translator by emphasizing that "the writer preferred to preserve the rhythmic pattern at the expense of the semantic pattern" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 123) and considering instances "where Nabokov alters the content to preserve an alliterative pattern"(124). Yet the Lithuanian translation is only assessed as successful when it approximates the example set forth by Nabokov himself in the Russian version of the novel. Often the authors resort to purely quantitative comparisons of three versions of the novel (English, Lithuanian and Russian). For example, when addressing a specific instance, they observe: "As for the alliteration, although the sentence in the Russian text demonstrates a richer alliteration, the Lithuanian translator's attempt may be

regarded as rather successful: there are four alliterated sonorous *m* in the original, eight cases in the Russian version, and six cases in the Lithuanian translation" (Cechanovičius and Krūminiene 126). What is clear from this statement is that the authors regard the English version of the novel as just a preliminary draft, successfully improved upon by the author-translator in Russian. Consequently, the success of the Lithuanian version of the novel is linked with the idea that the translator must emulate exactly the strategy of Nabokov-translator. At first glance then, there is nothing strange in this assessment: two versions of Nabokov's text show a range of variation (four and eight instances respectively), and the translated passage falls within this range (six instances) which, according to the authors, constitutes a "rather successful" translation. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Lithuanian translator specifically acknowledges the Russian version of the novel as *her* source text. In light of this statement, shouldn't the omission of two instances of alliteration (six repetitive sounds in a place where the author used eight) be regarded as a failure on the translator's part? To continue this line of thought logically (that Nabokov's strategy of translating this text is an indication of how *Lolita* ought to be translated) would lead to an almost ridiculous expectation for those translations that were performed from the Russian version: in the example above, if Nabokov himself doubled repetitive sounds from the source text (EN) to the target text (RU), shouldn't this translator be expected to do the same from her source language (RU) to her target language (LU)? That would require the said translator to produce 16 instances of repetitive sounds! And this is to be done without "forcing" alliterative patterns at the expense of accuracy in rendering the semantic content of the novel. Clearly, no translation can ever satisfy these conflicting criteria.

Cechanovičius and Krūminiene's global conclusion clearly contrasts the self-translation with an ordinary translation which echoes Nabokov's own idea that a literal translation is a crib that should impel the reader to learn the original language in order to read the original text:

> This exploration of the two versions of the novel has revealed that the complete *Lolita* may best be appreciated by bilingual readers through an interactive reading of the original English version and the author's own Russian translation, as they offer two distinct expressions of Nabokov's poetics. Unfortunately, an ordinary translation would never exert such an effect (127).

Interestingly, the Lithuanian readers (and, by extension, speakers of all other languages, except for Russian and English) are clearly at a disadvantage when reading this text. In order to truly appreciate *Lolita*, they must then be trilingual (adding sufficient command of both Russian and English to their native languages to appreciate this text). Translation of this text is clearly impossible, yet the fact that Nabokov himself seemed to regard the Russian version as translation is not explicitly addressed. The essay seems to strongly reaffirm the idea that Nabokov's status as author of the original *Lolita* makes it possible to justify the emendations to the successive Russian version, while comparable strategies of an ordinary translator are critiqued. Consequently, self-translation is predictably contrasted with translation, resulting in statements such as "The author-translator enjoyed his authoritative freedom to a degree that any ordinary translator could never afford" (126). This, however, is a dangerous statement to make, as translators in other languages saw inspiration in the inventiveness of the Nabokov's English text, and exercised considerable creative license to re-create its stylistic effects.

A good case in point is a Hebrew version of *Lolita*, translated by Dvorah Steinhart and discussed in an essay by Ari Liberman. By publishing standards, it seems to be a rather successful translation, as it has been re-published many times (first printing in 1986, twenty-second printing in 2001). Liberman points out, using Nabokov's own terminology, that this text

is “not the work of a hack but of a conscientious translator” (Liberman 40), a translator “who appreciated the vital role of sound in Nabokov’s prose and attempted to convey not only the meaning but also the verbal magic of the original text” (Liberman 40-41). The Hebrew novel is accompanied by a translator’s foreword in which Steinhart discusses “the value of form, of wordplay and soundplay in Nabokov’s prose, and explains why she chose sometimes to sacrifice denotation in favor of euphony” (Liberman 41). This, as Liberman points out, is a consistent strategy chosen by the translator, which is evidenced in a very detailed list of the emendations, provided in the essay (all of them seem to apply throughout the text of the novel for the sake of euphony, or for the sake of rhyme, or for the sake of familiarity). Yet another set of examples illustrates semantic alterations that are “clever Hebrew solutions to English puns—for which one must allow a bit of freedom” (Liberman 58). All of these alternations are justified by the translator herself in the introduction as the translator is convinced that this “free or interpretative translation […] is more faithful in spirit and sound to what Humbert Humbert and his author had in mind” (Liberman 44). However, the translator’s liberties with this text are criticized by Liberman on the grounds of Nabokov’s own theory of literalism. He even conjures up an imaginary conversation between the translator and Nabokov’s angry ghost, in which the latter bluntly states:

> You have taken liberties which I cannot live with. You have redecorated my house without my permission. This is a paraphrastic translation teeming with errors, distortions, and fabrications which I cannot and will not authorize. (Liberman 50)

Despite the translator’s stated objective to reproduce stylistic effects comparable to the original (often at the expense of the factual content of the work), and the noted consistency of this approach, the scholar still criticizes the fruits of her labour. While the translator’s solutions are

warranted and well-executed on a local level (as noted by Liberman), nonetheless he concludes that they fail at the overall textual level:

> Here is the difference, then, the seemingly trivial but actually crucial difference between the original *Lolita* and its Hebrew translation: they differ, not just in language, but in quality. And this goes beyond wordplay. I am talking about Nabokov's English prose, Humbert Humbert's fancy style—you can always count on a translator to spoil it. (60)

Elaborating on his findings, Liberman asserts that the translation is actually a failure, "because the translator failed to reproduce the comic brilliance of *Lolita*, the ironic voice of Humbert Humbert" (Liberman 61). The findings of my analysis, by the same merit, suggest that Nabokov too was not preoccupied by a mere reproduction of Humbert's voice. Having assessed Steinhart's overall approach as failure, Liberman turns to exploring possible alternatives to this translation, and finds a solution in adherence to Nabokov's own theory of strict literalism, concluding that:

> I […] am left with the suspicion that Nabokov's alternative, an unreadable word-for-word translation of *Lolita* into Hebrew, with more commentary than text, which would force innocent readers to improve their English and go back to the original, is not such a kooky idea after all. (Liberman 62)

This brings us to square one of this discussion, the Polish translation, which was criticized precisely for the translator's too "literal" choices in rendering the text. In summary, this discussion shows that no matter what strategies translators of *Lolita* choose, no matter how well they execute them, no matter how explicitly they state them and to what extent of research they go to in order to justify them, their achievement is never seen as being able to approach that of Nabokov, and they are almost predictably criticized for their efforts. Nabokov's own conflicting legacy in translation and creative writing provides sufficient grounds to justify just about any opinion of the text(s). Nabokov's own Russian translation seems to occupy a rather special place in these discussions, and it is often used to contrast self-translation with ordinary, or commissioned, translation (inevitably on the grounds of considering stylistic properties of the

text). Nabokov's status as *Lolita's* author makes it possible to defend and justify his choices (no matter how idiosyncratic they might seem), while ordinary translators are criticized for comparable tactics. Naturally, Nabokov emerges as the best possible translator for this text, and the Russian version serves as tangible evidence to re-affirm this. One would expect that it was this text, a supposedly improved version of the original novel, a text that contains "self-exegesis" right in the body of it, that would be praised even more than the original novel.

This expectation, however, is in sharp contrast to actual critical responses to the Russian version of the text in the USSR and the Russian Federation. Novelty in creative writing always presupposes a token of *difference*, and it was this marked difference in expression that has been responsible for critical and public appreciation of the English *Lolita*. Attitudes to translated literature, however, more often than not, show a rather low tolerance for *difference*, and the text of even such a recognized wordsmith as Nabokov is no exception. The next section will show that critical responses to the Russian version of the text, given its status of translation, were always informed by unstated expectation of *sameness*, albeit the idea of what would constitute this *sameness* was very different at different periods of Russian history. *Lolita* was met with overwhelmingly negative reception in Nabokov's former homeland. The status of the text as a translation (rather than an original work) justified emendations to the text in the publishing industry that seemed to be of a drastically different nature in different historical periods. The emendations, as well as stated justifications that accompanied them, reveal very powerful cultural mechanisms at work and will be considered in greater detail below.

Overall, the idea that emerges from pitting Nabokov's own translation against the translations done by commissioned translators of *Lolita* into other languages seems to only reinforce the idea that only Nabokov, as the author of the work, can translate this text however

he sees fit. But can he? The Russian reception of this text provides a very important lesson in this regard.

5.3 Reception of *Lolita* in the former USSR

When seen in retrospect, Soviet literature (or literature published in the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1991[51]) can be approached as a relatively stable and very isolated literary system which can be described through tension between two modes of publishing practices: the "official" literature endorsed by the state and/or state representatives and its opposition, a grassroots subversive movement of *samizdat*. This divide was deeply rooted in politics, as the "official" literature was entrusted by the Party with a number of ideological goals: developing ideals to be emulated by the general population or exposing "incorrectness" of prohibited topics; strengthening the only endorsed method of artistic expression (Social Realism); establishing and promoting canonic interpretations; and standardizing the use of language throughout all regions and social classes. *Samizdat* (the term first surfaced in the 1950s, after the death of Stalin, but the phenomenon is often said to have existed during Stalin's purges in the oral form as well) was a practice by which artistic works prohibited for some reason by the "official" literature were copied by literary enthusiasts (usually in 3-4 copies on a typewriter and sometimes even by hand) and then disseminated illegally among acquaintances[52]. These two practices were very much "in sync" in a sense that any official ban on a book or a writer would immediately result in a surge of *samizdat* publications of that work along with a surge of interest in the writer who dared to produce it.

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[51] Here I rely on the conventional timeframe marked by two significant events: the Russian Revolution of 1917, when the Soviet Union was formed and the Putsch of 1991, when the Soviet Union was dissolved.

[52] Mirriam Webster provides the following definition for the word *samizdat*: "a system in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and countries within its orbit by which government-suppressed literature was clandestinely printed and distributed; *also***:** such literature," see http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/samizdat

Nabokov's Russian *Lolita* circulated exclusively in samizdat in the Soviet Union, as it was not officially published there until 1991. To date, the topic of official and unofficial responses to the text of the novel has been explored in only a handful of scholarly works. Of course, general difficulties involved in such research are linked with the secretive nature of the samizdat movement. Nonetheless, some very valuable information about the general reception of *Lolita* in the USSR can be found in "Nabokov's Russian Readers" by Ellendea Proffer, "Official and Unofficial Responses to Nabokov in the Soviet Union" by Slava Paperno and John V. Hagopian, "Spending the Night with *Lolita*" by Olga Shekhovtsova, and "Literary Return to Russia" by Aleksei Zverev.

The existence of communist ideological dogmas in the former Soviet Union is, perhaps, the greatest factor that affected the distribution of Nabokov's books in his homeland. Nabokov certainly did not have any illusion as to how his social status, political views and artistic principles were going to be perceived in his former homeland. As he reflected in the "Postscript to *Lolita*":

> I find it difficult to imagine the regime in my prim homeland, whether liberal or totalitarian, under which the censorship would pass *Lolita*…. As a writer, I have grown all too accustomed to the fact that a blind spot has loomed black on the eastern horizon of my consciousness for nearly half a century now: I do not have to worry about any Soviet editions of *Lolita*! (192)

This awareness, one might argue, also affected his approach to translating the text. Humbert's lyric reflection about the prospect of publishing the book contains a passage in which he asserts, "In its published form, this book is being read, I assume, in the first years of 2000 A. D. (1935 plus eighty or ninety, live long, my love)" (*L* EN: 299), which was translated as "напечатанном виде эта книга читается, думаю, только в начале двадцать первого века (прибавляю к 1935-ти девяносто лет, живи долго, моя любовь)" (*L RU*: 277) .The author replaced a

tentative timeframe of “eighty or ninety” years with a more definitive “ninety years” as if anticipating a longer delay in reaching the Russian readership. By the same merit, it can be argued that Nabokov longed for a chance to make his masterpiece available in his former homeland, as he likened “every spectral smuggler” who brought the novel into the Soviet Union to “a hundred legitimate readers in other parts of the world” ("Nabokov o Nabokove": 368).

Clearly, by virtue of his social status at birth, this writer did not exist as far as the Soviet government was concerned. Paperno and Hagopian wittily remarked in their article “Official and Unofficial Responses to Nabokov in the Soviet Union” that the official Soviet responses to Nabokov’s legacy as a whole may be designated as a triptych of silence: aggressive silence followed by total silence, then followed by cautious silence (all of which somewhat correspond to three prominent periods of Soviet history: before Stalin, under Stalin and after Stalin) (99). With *Lolita*, however, the silence was broken, as it was practically impossible to ignore the novel considering its world-wide fame. The Russian scholar Shekhovtsova proposes the following development of the official Soviet criticism of *Lolita* specifically: 1959 – 1971 (the period of unconditional condemnation), 1972 – 1985 (the period when the novel was often used as a vivid example of literary modernism in America and served to criticize capitalism), 1986 – 1988 (the period when *Lolita* was no longer banned in the USSR, but was not officially published there either), and finally, 1989 -1991 (the period when the novel was finally released in Russia with an official print run of 100,000 copies). According to the scholar, *Lolita*’s destiny in the USSR could have been marked by the word *catastrophe*, the word that was articulated in almost of all of the reviews, but designated different things during different periods: first it had a meaning of a catastrophe in literature; then a collapse of bourgeois society; and finally the fate of two main characters, Lolita and Humbert Humbert (Shekhovtsova 86-87). While this work is incredibly

valuable in exploring the nuances of the scholarly discourse surrounding this text, it must be noted that the official mentions of this novel in the Soviet press are not even comparable to the scale of the American reception: in contrast to the 250 articles in the USA dedicated to *Lolita* in the first year alone, the Russian official scholarship resulted in barely 30 mentions of the novel over the course of 30 years! This section will focus primarily on the unofficial reception of the Russian text of *Lolita* (rather than the novel as such, without the distinction in what language it has appeared).

Shekhovtsova rightfully notes that "Nabokov's books were banned [in the USSR] even before he had done anything of significance and before anyone could have supposed that he would ever make a lasting mark in literature" (Shekhovtsova 76), due to his kinship with one of the founders of the Cadet Party, which supported the monarchy during the time of the 1917 Revolution. As a result:

> Everything written by Sirin [Nabokov's pen-name in the beginning of this career as a writer], as by the rest of the "young White émigré" writers, was automatically stigmatized as hostile and could have no expectation of receiving an impartial view. It was not the writer's works or even his views that were critiqued but the fact of his having emigrated. Therefore, rather than analyzing the texts, the reviewers wrestled quotations out of context and pinned labels on them—they employed, that is, the standard techniques not of literary conflict but of ideological struggle. (Shekhovtsova 77)

To make matters worse, Nabokov never bothered to conceal his highly negative attitude towards the established regime, and openly articulated his views on numerous occasions. Consequently, his honesty made him a poster child for dissidence in the USSR and "A familiarity with the works of Nabokov gave an automatic entrée in the unofficial "elite" culture, to a stratum of the chosen ones who saw themselves as opponents of the regime" (Shekhovtsova 74).

Despite their differences in assessment of *Lolita*'s reception in the USSR, there seems to be two points on which all scholars agree. The first is that, despite being officially banned, *Lolita*

circulated widely, and virtually all mass readership was familiar with the Russian text. Proffer, for instance, reflected on her visit to the Soviet Union in 1979: "It seems that almost every person seriously interested in literature that one meets in the Soviet Union has read at least two works by Nabokov, and *Lolita* is almost always one of them" (Proffer 253). The second point being that despite the wide availability of *Lolita* (and the often high value of the text, which is evidenced in the amounts of money Russian readers were willing to pay to gain access to it[53]) the Russian *Lolita* was equally widely disliked by the Russian readership. In this regard, Proffer rather harshly commented that "Even Nabokov's most ardent fans dislike the Russian translation of *Lolita*" (258).

A close consideration of existing mentions of the novel's reception in the context of the Soviet Union reveals a striking difference from its reception in the USA. It appears that, in contrast to the American reception of the novel, where the initial readership was primarily outraged by the *content* of the book (and it was the scandalous subject matter that led to the interest in the formal properties of the text), the discussions of the text in the context of the USSR centered on the *form* of Nabokov's artistic expression in this particular text, rather than its content. Consequently, the considerations on the acceptance of this text in the Soviet Union were of a completely different nature than the initial American outrage.

Some scholars tend to link the popular disapproval of the text with the misunderstanding of Nabokov's artistry (which was an indirect consequence of the ban on his works); in this regard

[53] Proffer notes "Russian *Lolita* is currently more in demand than a Russian *Doktor Zhivago*, and that for private book traders it is worth an equivalent of $20 (Proffer 254). Shekhotsova provides the following information: "this book cost up to 80 rubles on the black market and for that amount of money—10 rubles more than the minimum wage—you could live modestly for an entire month" (Shekhotsova 73). Alternatively, the Russian *Lolita* could be "rented overnight for 5 rubles, if you promised not to make copies, and for 10 rubles with photocopying rights" (Shekhotsova 19).

Shehkovtsova's remarks that "it is not surprising that when people began openly discussing Nabokov in the late 1980s, the first articles about him were full of errors and hostility based on a misunderstanding of his *œuvre* and the events of his life" (Shekhovtsova 74). However, it should be stressed that these views were a result of a complete lack of information about this writer in the Soviet Union (which, in turn, led to misunderstandings). Quite valuable here are the observations of Proffer, resulting from extensive interviews with Nabokov's Soviet readership, who met "a few people in the Soviet Union who have managed to read all of Nabokov's prose works (even they are amazed to learn that Nabokov has written a substantial amount of poetry)" (Proffer 257), "teachers (usually of English) who have read only one or two of the novels in English and are surprised to learn that Nabokov had ever written in Russian" (Proffer 257), and "a few dim *littérateurs* who read only the Russian works and do not know that Nabokov has written in English" (Proffer 257).

By virtue of the book being officially banned in the Soviet Union (with the resulting complete lack of information about this writer), Nabokov's Russian readership read the text unframed, as it were, without any background information that would sway their expectations and would affect their assessment of the text's merit. Without such information, it can be argued that readers' expectations were inevitably shaped by the venue of his texts' distribution and were directly dependent on it. Inevitably then, the merit of the text was assessed from the position of the broad cultural, literary and linguistic norms that were prevalent at the time. As such, the text of *Lolita* was implicitly measured against the backdrop of official literature (both original and translated) that was readily accessible to the readership in the Soviet Union, and unofficial literature, *samizdat* (in which it actually circulated).

Of course it would be a simplification to say that *all* readers internalized the aesthetic ideas of Soviet letters. For one, there appears to be a difference in the response to the text between different generations of readers:

> Almost all of his [Nabokov's] admirers were younger than forty. The older generation equated Nabokov and Humbert Humbert and found his books disgusting and the plot of *Lolita* revolting. […] How could they, being so accustomed to literature as edifying exposé, enjoy a writer who "squandered" his talent on stories about deranged men and bratty girls? A bad person cannot write a good book. (Shekhovtsova 75)

The older generation's (born before the 1950s, according to the timeline indicated above) perception of the text was shaped, as one scholar put it, by the "the nineteenth-century ideal model of a Russian writer as a spiritual apostle who put ideas into practice" (Livak 9). This model was further promoted in the Soviet official society, where a writer (especially a classic one) was a figure of substantial authority, often with a canonized biography and bibliography (which was at times heavily censored: for example, the Soviet editions of supposedly *complete* works by Aleksander Pushkin never included his poem "Gavriliada," a text full of obscenities and erotic innuendoes, as it was considered improper for a poet of Pushkin's stature).

The younger generation, one might argue, grew up with an acute understanding of the conventionality of such an attitude. It seems that this generation had somewhat internalized the idea that the form of a literary work is an indirect reflection of its content, and therefore the form *must* be stylistically immaculate (that is, stylistically uniformed, transparent and invisible). This unstated assumption is very different from Nabokov's artistic method, which in turn resulted in numerous assessments suggesting that the form *must* be deficient (as the value of the content has been indirectly validated by Nabokov's world-wide fame). This becomes apparent when one considers a statement made by Jane Grayson, a notable expert on Nabokov's self-translations, who noted that most Russian readers found the Russian version *linguistically* inferior

(presumably, to the original text of the novel). It is highly unlikely that many Russians could have any access to the original text (and even less likely that they were in any position to understand the formal nuances of a text written in English), yet this statement reveals their conviction that the original *must* have a superior aesthetic value, which was not immediately apparent from the text in translation. This resulted in negative assessments of the text, which, in turn, justified specific actions that sought to bring the text in compliance with the literary norms, (such as retranslations, considerations on how the text is to be published, and limitations in circulation). These attitudes were justified by the dominating norms of the target culture, a close consideration of which provides much material for considering cultural mechanisms in regards to absorbing novelty and, in the case of Nabokov specifically, normalizing the abnormal.

Around the time when Nabokov translated *Lolita* and it was smuggled into the Russian market to be distributed through *samizdat*, translation studies in Russia were on the rise. The following statistics attest to the fact that there was much public interest in translated literature, according to Laurie Leighton:

> Prior to 1961 the number of publications on translation during the Soviet period amounted to between 100 and 120 separate items. In 1961 there were 154 items published, and thereafter the publication of critical and theoretical studies skyrocketed. By 1968 the number had reached 493 items. (Leighton 18)

However, while the quantity of translated works increased fourfold, translated literature occupied a relatively small *niche* in the publishing industry that brought thousands of new books every year (and was subordinated to the language attitudes that applied to the original literature as well). It is also necessary to point out that Nabokov translated in the context of a very uniformed translating tradition, as Russians took great pride in their translation school during Soviet time. As Leighton succinctly demonstrated, this school was not based on any rules, but rather a set of five principles:

> First, Soviet translators accept the principle of translatability, at least in principle. Second, translation as a literary process is accepted over translation as a linguistic process. Third, translators consider themselves writers and are thus concerned with reality as well as text. Fourth, the process and result of translation are understood in relation to functionality: the process should lead to a text that has the same effect on its readers as the original has on its readers; a translation should be not a copy or an imitation but an artistic work in its own right. (Leighton 13-14)

This description is consistent with a summary by Maurice Friedberg, another theorist interested in the Russian school of translation. Friedberg summarizes the main points of the Gorky-Chukovsky-Kashkin doctrine of translation, which he identifies as a mainstream doctrine in the Soviet Union that was representative of attitudes towards translation practice in the Soviet Union as follows:

1. Any literary text is translatable.
2. A translator, like the original author, should study not only the text, but life itself.
3. In literary [khudozhestvennyi] translation, literary aspects are more important than linguistic ones.
4. A literary translation should be neither "precise" (that is, literal) nor "free," but "should rather strive to achieve an artistic impact on readers of the translation that equals the impact of the original on the author's countrymen" (Friedberg 95).

The existence of these principles allows Leighton to conclude that "Translation is an art by tradition in the Russian world" (Leighton 19). Soviet literary translators had the luxury of very narrow specialization, often translating only a rather limited number of writers from the same period or a number of works by the same author to ensure the consistency of stylistic and semantic word usage.

The above-mentioned principle of functionality, however, had very peculiar repercussions in the Soviet time, as the desire to achieve an effect similar to the one the original text might have had on its audience gave Soviet translators somewhat of an artistic license to change the text: oftentimes substituting foreign phenomena for distinctly Russian ones, over-

relying on Russian colloquial speech, etc. Clearly, when in doubt, Soviet translators tended to over-use the ethnocentric solutions in their work, and this tendency was exposed and condemned by a famous Russian translator and translation theorist Kornei Chukovsky in *High Art*. Having listed a large number of highly Russified translations from English into Russian (primarily from Charles Dickens), Chukovsky concluded that upon reading these translations:

> One is left under the impression that Mr. Squeers, and Sir Mulberry Hawk, and Lady Verisopht live in the Piatisobichiem alley in Kolomna and only pretend to be British, but in reality they are Ivans Trofimivichi, just like characters from the books by Schedrin or Ovstrovsli. (*High Art*: 122)

Nabokov's approach to translation was drastically different from that trend of extremely fluent, domesticated translations, which explains why his translation was not accepted by many readers. The fact that Soviet translators viewed themselves as writers suggests that the values associated with the language use were similar for both translated and original literature, and these values were very different from those of Nabokov.

Language use, among other things, was heavily regulated in Soviet times through editors and correctors, who in turn justified their choices using regularly published dictionaries and academic grammars of the Russian language. Any publicly available piece of writing, be it a news report or a scholarly article, had to be written in the Russian standard literary language (in other words, stylistically neutral language). The importance ascribed to the standard language by the official culture is obvious in the following passage from a much-discussed book, *The Editor's Lab,* by Lidya Chukovskaia published in the 1960s:

> Any writer—no matter who he is, no matter what he writes about, not matter what special goals he has—is obliged to talk to his reader using correct, understandable, exact language. Otherwise his article will be useless. Not only useless, it will actually be harmful to the reader as it will teach him to think in inexact terms and inaccurately express his thoughts. In short—any article should be written in the Russian literary language. This is obvious and does not require any corroboration. (Chukovskaia 53)

However, the "literary language" is not to be confused with the "language of literature," "a favorite topic for Soviet philologists," as Rachel May puts it (1994a: 82). According to her, the distinction between the two can be traced to the opposition between Old Church Slavonic (a written language reserved exclusively for serious and religious literature) and the oral tradition (a spoken language reserved for everything else). However, with the evolution of literary forms and styles the difference became much less noticeable. Rachel May argues that:

> In the Soviet period the spoken and the written languages have, theoretically been the same, with the same dictionaries and grammar. However, there is still a divergence in vocabulary and structure between the language as spoken and the language as written. In Russian it is far more noticeable than in English … (*The Translator*: 81).

Essentially, when a mark of orality appears in the written form it is stylistically marked as a colloquialism, *prostorechie* (a common word) or a regional variant. While all of these were absolutely not permitted in the Russian literary language, they could appear in the language of official literature, more often than not as an indirect characterization of the main protagonist's social background (as in *Na Dne, or The Lower Depths* (1901), a famous play by Maksim Gorkii that is set in a pre-revolutionary flop house and depicts characters of the lower social strata), or to render an unmistakably local flavor of the narrative (as in *Tikhii Don,* or *The Quiet Don* (1928) the epic novel by Mikhail Sholokhov, set in the early years of 20th century Ukraine). In other words, even stylistically Soviet literature was relatively narrow-ranged, and books that featured experimental, playful language (such as *Moskva-Petushki* by Venyamin Erofeev, which showcases a remarkably broad range of styles) circulated only in *samizdat* or tamizdat (a branch of samizdat network that disseminated banned literary works published overseas).

In this context, it was not surprising that Nabokov's self-translation of his most cherished books was not met in the Soviet Union with any enthusiasm. For example, Proffer even recalls a

Russian translator of poetry who, while being able to quote several lines from the Russian version of *Dar* (*The Gift*) by heart, was very frustrated by the Russian version of *Lolita* and kept saying, "He has forgotten… he has forgotten" (Proffer 258). While this quote ends abruptly, it is possible to surmise, given the context, that the translator in question meant to imply that the author of *Lolita* simply forgot how to write in Russian, which would somewhat justify the poor quality of the text[54]). On a similar note, Grayson observes that in this translation "much of the language is indeed awkward, unnatural, and strongly influenced by English idiom and English construction" (Grayson 183). As is evident from these examples, the literary use of language in *Lolita* was indeed equated with a personal idiolect of the author-immigrant in popular response to the text.

Nabokov's novel, stylistically very diverse, seemed to lack a system of organization, as it combined outdated concepts with foreign notions through calques from foreign languages in the Russian narrative often on the verge of being simply ungrammatical. However, this novel could only be perceived as such against the backdrop of highly regulated and standardized language use in Soviet times. Nabokov's theory of literalism was virtually unknown in the Soviet Union, as Proffer observed that "the one item that is the most difficult to obtain in the Soviet Union is Nabokov's *Onegin*—all teachers of Russian literature whom I met *knew* about it, but not one of them had ever *seen* a copy" (Proffer 257, emphasis in the original). Familiarity with Nabokov's theory of strict literalism could potentially enable intellectual appreciation of *Lolita*'s "oddness," as it would offset the jarring effect of the text: when this text is understood as a practical application of the author's theory of translation it would have possibly not been seen as "strange."

[54] "The poor quality" here is, of course, not to be understood in absolute terms: *Lolita* just appeared as such against the general backdrop of literary practices.

However, due to the general unavailability of this text, it can be argued that the Russian *Lolita* has been deprived of the status of literary text in popular reception. This is evident in the culturally specific actions that accompanied the reception of this novel, and they are perhaps more valuable than statements about the merit of this translation.

One such action is the re-translation of the text. Thus, for instance, Grayson quotes a "Soviet writer who had access to an independent samizdat translation of *Lolita* [and] judges it greatly superior to Nabokov's own version" (Grayson 184). Re-translations of self-translations or authorized translations are certainly unusual in the field of translation studies[55], but such an action seemed justified in the Soviet Union. The conviction of the anonymous translator that he could render the content of the work better than the original author is particularly striking in this example, as it serves as another piece of indirect evidence of just how far Nabokov's artistry was divorced from what has been the habitual, internalized norm of this literary system. This process seems to have become even more explicit in the years immediately preceding the collapse of the Soviet Union. Shekhovtsova notes that at this time was particularly rife with criticism, both official and unofficial, of the Russian *Lolita*:

> While previously such [critical] reactions could have been attributed to ideological pressure "from above," when the critics could express themselves freely, it turned out that many were completely sincere in reviling the banned Nabokov. (Shekhovtsova 75)

Gennadi Barabtarlo, at the time a recent emigrant from the Soviet Union, published an article in the West, which reads as a passionate defense of *Lolita*. In this article, he too confirms that the re-translation of this text was an actual consideration at the time: "And I indeed have recently learned from a well-informed Moscow source that the editorial board of a Moscow literary

[55] While conducting this research, I attempted to locate possible alternative translations of *Lolita*. It appears that no contemporary *samizdat* archives contain texts of unauthorized translations of *Lolita*. I have also consulted *samizdat* specialists, Nabokov's translators into Russian and his Russian publishers, all of whom unanimously assured me that they have never seen any alternative translations of *Lolita*.

magazine is seriously debating whether to venture the publication of *Lolita* in the author's translation or in one of the 'greatly superior' versions, leaning toward the latter solution" (Barabtarlo 242). Interestingly, Barabtarlo's arguments in defense of Nabokov's self-translation are completely unrelated to the complexities of moral dilemmas evoked by the narrative, and pertain exclusively to the justification of its form:

> I submit that the Russian *Lolita* is not merely an unrivaled triumph of an exceedingly sophisticated translation technique but also an ultimate masterpiece of Russian prose, which ought to be studied and savored, and not dismissed by those who are reduced to relying on scarcely reliable sources. The infinite diversity and rich shimmer of the vocabulary (catalogued, in part, in the English-Russian lexicon of *Lolita*, which comprises seven thousand entries that are not in the standard two-volume Soviet NERD[56]); the inimitably resourceful, singularly pliable, "sailing" syntax; the cornucopia of tropes whose very mechanism had been theretofore unknown to Russian prose; even the partly deliberate, partly automatic dose of what Grayson calls the "English constructions" - in short, all ingredients of style that are affected by translation and all elements of composition and design that are not, combine to form a piece of art of the highest order and quality, which puts the Russian *Lolita* on the very top step of the frozen escalator of Russian masterpieces. (Barabtarlo 242)[57]

Eventually, as is known from the history of *Lolita*'s publication, a Moscow literary journal, *Inostrannaya Literatura (Foreign Literature),* made the decision to bring *Lolita* out in Nabokov's translation. The first Soviet edition of this novel was 100,000 copies and all the Soviet editions totaled two million copies[58] from 1980 to 1991. While these numbers alone are comparable to the American success of the novel, one should make no mistake in identifying them as a fortuitous turn of events, a gambling move on the part of the publishers, rather than

[56] The scholar evidently refers to *New English*-RU*ssian Dictionary* edited by I.R. Galperin and published by Russian Language Publishers in 1977

[57] The scholar also addressed the jarring effect of the Anglicisms used by the author: "As for Nabokov's Anglicisms, they would have become as integral a part of the Russian cultivated and literary language as are the Gallicisms encrusted in it, had this language not vanished along with those who spoke it and wrote in it" (Barabtablo 242). Arguably, this is exactly what happened after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

[58] By way of comparison, the 1955 Olympia Press [Paris] edition ran 5,000 copies, and the first American edition of 1958, published in New York by G.P. Putnam's Sons, had 62,500 copies in circulation in four days and 100,000 at the end of the first three weeks.

recognition of the writer's artistic achievement. Additional indirect evidence corroborates this point: a four-volume set of Nabokov's works, published by *Ogonek* as a summary of his Russian legacy in1990, did not even contain *Lolita*, his masterpiece, even though this can be considered his last novel written in the Russian language.

Some scholars, reflecting on the complex history of the Russian version, note that "in the final analysis, even [*Lolita*'s] foreignness proved to be beneficial because it gave the aged tradition an invigorating jolt (not unlike Joseph Brodsky's injection of 'Englishness' into Russian poetry) that helped it gain new momentum and direction" (Dolinin "*Lolita*" 324). I am convinced that, in light of the discussion above, Nabokov's influence on Russian literature was much more indirect. True appreciation of Nabokov became possible only when the cultural environment at large shifted. And paradoxically, true appreciation of Nabokov does not mean that the text of *Lolita* remained unchanged. It has been changed, albeit on completely different grounds.

5.4 Reception of *Lolita* in the Russian Federation

The collapse of the Soviet Union is unquestionably an extremely important even of Russia's recent history. While this event officially took place in 1991, the social and cultural consequences of dismantling the Iron Curtain could be sensed in all aspects of the lives of people behind it for the ensuing decade. The lasting effect of this event is, perhaps, best described as highly "disorienting" for people in the former Soviet Union.

The policy of "glasnost" ("outspokenness") officially deployed by Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, had reached an unprecedented scale by the mid-1990s. While the original policy sought to make government structures and management more transparent and open to debate, it

gradually evolved into something completely different, as this "outspokenness" resulted in the exposure of mechanisms of Soviet ideological control (such as censorship and secrecy) and brought awareness of the atrocities of the Soviet government and its officials (particularly Stalin). As a result, the label of "Soviet" had begun to designate the undesirable, outdated, and flawed—in short everything and anything that was wrong.

The political restructuring was also accompanied by a pronounced social crisis. During the turbulent 1990s many publishing houses were forced to close or to minimize production with the result that many editors and correctors were laid-off. Manuscripts were often accepted "as is" and published with minimal or no correction or censorship. This, in turn, led to publishing works that would sell in the context of an economic crisis, often works of questionable moral or aesthetic value, and sometimes works with outright shocking effect. These works provided a completely different background for the reception of *Lolita,* and the novel could then be perceived as almost innocent in nature.

The removal of the Iron Curtain also marked the beginning of a rapid Westernization of Russian society, which had a rather extensive effect on the language and literature of the post-perestroika era. Linguistic borrowings from other languages (primarily English) have reached an unprecedented rate, which some scholars tend to explain by either Russian cultural fascination with Western values and economic status or by a lacuna of new terms in business, sports, and politics. To illustrate the extent to which the use of anglicisms has spread in Russia, one can mention numerous legislative attempts to regulate the use of English borrowing and calques in public and state institutions: an attempt by state officials in Chuvashiya, a federal district of the Russian Federation, to ban the use of the word "OK" during state debates (motivated by "the fight for purity and beautification of the Russian language" by an unnamed state official),

proposals to issue fines to businesses in Kaliningrad, Omsk and Belgorod for the use of foreign words in public advertising.[59] While all of these attempts were essentially unsuccessful, they testify to the extent of acceptance of foreign words in everyday lives of ordinary Russian people. Moreover, this strictly linguistic phenomenon paved the way for a rather peculiar literary trend, which can be termed a "bilingual mode" of narrative. A rather large number of Russian writers started experimenting with a combination of two languages—Russian and English—in their literary works, such as Viktor Pelevin in *Pokolenie P*, Sergei Minin in *Dukhless* and *The Telki*, Oksana Robski in *LubOFF/ON*, and Linor Goralik in "The American Girl."[60] However, this relatively recent trend, while it remains largely under-researched, makes Nabokov's attempts to synthesize two languages in his writing seem quite conservative.

As a result of having passed through the Westernization period of the Russian language, contemporary Russian speakers appear to be collectively blind to Nabokov's unusual reliance on foreign borrowings in the text of *Lolita*. A website http://www.livelib.ru is one of the larger online collections of user-generated reviews of this novel, containing 368 very thoughtful reviews of the book (and some of these reviews have garnered hundreds of readers' responses). Virtually none of these reviews refers to the language use by Nabokov as "strange" or "awkward." When users comment on the language used in *Lolita* specifically, they often resort to what seems to have become stock epithets to describe Nabokov's language: viscous, sticky, absorbing, enveloping.

What is more important, Nabokov's excellent command of language is acknowledged by the users who did not even like the book. One such user is Mracoris (June 2011), who posted: "This is unbearable boredom for the sake of boredom. In the first part of the book, my attention

[59] Information from http://www.newsru.com/arch/russia/03mar2008/language.html

[60] Underlined here are elements of English in the original Russian titles.

has been drawn to the novelty of theme and the good language, but in the second part of it the novelty dwindled off, and I got fed up with the style of writing. Then came the realization that this is not my [cup of tea]".[61]

The only "foreignness" of this text, when commented upon by the users, is linked exclusively with the abundance of French phrases in the text. User lena_k_monino (August 2013) commented on how distracting these phrases were for reading the novel: "The language of descriptions, in my opinion, is very complex. There are many French words and sentences, without any footnotes, by the way. Sometimes I had to re-read a sentence or a paragraph, as I could not wrap my mind around the story."[62]

User trounin (February 2014) wrote his review in the form of the open letter to the writer, and concluded the letter with mentioning two aspects of book he did not like:

> 1. There are only Russians all around. Here and there. Humbert did not have any relationship to them, why do we have to see recurring Russian surnames?
> 2. French expressions and words. Personally, I never understood why they like to use words from other languages in foreign literature. A book in the English language always contains Latin, French and German expressions. English is not a self-sufficient language? I understand, Vladimir Vladimirovich, you are an erudite, but I really do not understand the need to incorporate different languages[63].

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[61] Невыносимое занудство ради занудства. Если первую половину книги внимание удерживали новизна темы и хороший язык, то в конце концов новизна сошла на нет, а язык и стиль успели вполне распробоваться, и пришло осознание, что не моё

[20]Язык написания весьма ,как мне показалось, сложен. Проскакивают французские словечки,предложения,причем без сносок. Иногда я даже перечитывала предложение или абзац, т к иногда мои мысли совсем не улавливали линию рассказа.

[63] Два момента мне не понравились в книге:
1. Вокруг одни русские. Там и тут. Гумберт же никакого отношения к ним не имел, так зачем постоянно смотреть на мелькающие русские фамилии?
2. Французские выражения и слова. Лично я никогда не понимал почему в иностранной литературе так любят вставлять слова из другого языка. В книге на английском языке обязательно встретятся латинские, французские, немецкие выражения. Английский язык не может похвастаться самодостаточностью? Я понимаю, Владимир Владимирович, вашу эрудированность, но я действительно не понимаю смысла прибегать к разным языкам.

In short, Nabokov's Russian over the course of the last decades became undistinguishable from the Russian commonly used by contemporary speakers and no longer creates a startling effect that was evidenced in the Soviet times.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, accompanied by an economic, political and demographic crisis, Nabokov's views became somewhat of a mainstream point of view on the Soviet Union. As Yuri Leving points out, as far as Nabokov's post-Soviet readership is concerned, "Nabokov is no longer just a writer, but the last nobleman in Russian literature" (Leving 143). Furthermore, because he was associated with pre-revolutionary Saint Petersburg, in popular culture he was often falsely equated with a longing for the culture of the perished state, as "Petersburg more often [was] associated with pre-revolutionary (here read—authentic) Russia" (Leving 143).

However, it must be pointed out that the general availability and interest in Nabokov's works, as well as interest in the writer, made his theory of literalism widely known. Nosik, a translator of Nabokov's *Pnin*, recalled in 1993 the tremendous pressure of the editorial team to translate this novel into Russian literally:

> When I submitted it [the translation] to the publisher, the editors-Nabokovians, knew that one must translate "literally", that is "honestly", that is word per word, and better yet—not to translate from foreign languages—a smart [person] will understand even the foreign language. Do not render comic effects—this is not literal. And therefore—dishonest. So I gave up—in some sense and in some places. (Nosik 242)

The idea that Nabokov's theory of literalism is to be strictly adhered to and never violated found its way into very scholarly publications as well. In a Russian volume of highly scholarly articles, *Vladimir Nabokov: Pro and Contra*, editors note that they strove to translate Nabokov's texts "just as he demanded: literally" (9), despite the fact that the writer's preoccupation with literal translation was just one aspect of his translation career. The fact that Nabokov's name is firmly

associated with literalism in translation has had very unexpected consequences for *Lolita*'s publishing practices in the Russian Federation.

In 2003, a major Russian news portal released an article with the somewhat sensationalist title "A Lost Page from the Nabokov's *Lolita* is Found" (Altantov, n.pag.), and it has since then been re-published in many print newspapers. The article reported a "discovery" made by a journalist in a provincial town: that the Russian version of the novel was missing a "substantial fragment" (Altantov, n.pag.) The word "discovery" here has to appear in quotation marks, as this fact was mentioned in passing by one of the first scholars of Nabokov's translations, Jane Grayson, 20 years prior, in 1977. Reflecting on the structural changes between a number of Nabokov's English novels and their Russian translations, she noted that (original references preserved):

> *Lolita* R contains the only deletion of some length. It is a passage twenty-one lines long which describes an occasion when Humbert Humbert is stopped in his car by the police: "Another jolt I remember… as she mimicked limp prostration" (*Lolita* E, pp. 167 – 8). It is conceivable that Nabokov decided that the incident was repetitious. (Grayson 120)

As evident from Grayson's statement, she attempted to justify the omission by the author. The actions of Russian publishers, however, were completely different from this attitude (yet completely justifiable in light of Nabokov's reputation). The mass media sources reported that the said Russian journalist contacted Nabokov's son and copyright holder, Dmitrii Nabokov, who had access to the manuscript of the novel and subsequently confirmed that the fragment was indeed missing. In the subsequent publications of the novel in Russia, this error has been corrected. All contemporary editions (beginning in 2007) of the Russian *Lolita* routinely include a translation of the missing paragraph into their publications.

Earlier in this thesis, I have connected Nabokov's own norm-violating behaviour in translation with his rising authority. Interestingly the idea of authority seems to affect publishers' decision on *how* to present the missing paragraph, albeit in a very different and convoluted ways.

In a letter evidently addressed to the Western scholarly community, which was made available to the public on a reputable scholarly forum[64] by Dr. Galya Diment, Dmitrii Nabokov confirmed that the paragraph was indeed missing in Nabokov's own drafts:

> I hasten to extend a clarification for all. Sharp-eyed Mr. Svirilin informed me of the missing *Lolita* paragraph some time ago. I checked back through all the Russian-language editions to the ms, and found that he was right. (Dmitrii Nabokov, n. pag.)

Further, he asserted that, in his view, the paragraph was unintentionally omitted by the writer:

> Since the paragraph was well worth retaining in Russian one can only conclude that my father inadvertently skipped it while writing the translation, not on index cards, but in an album with lined pages. There is no reason on earth to accuse Nabokov of "hiding" this innocuous and entertaining fragment. (Dmitrii Nabokov, n. pag.)

As evident from this statement, Dmitrii Nabokov's position on this matter is opposed to that of Grayson who attempted to justify this omission as intentional in 1977, by stating that the passage was omitted by the author, as "[i]t is conceivable that Nabokov decided that the incident was repetitious" (Grayson 120). Indeed, there appears to be nothing outrageous about the passage in question (see Appendix One for the text of the paragraph). However, in light of my analysis of the novel, this particular omission acquires significance. When *Lolita* is approached as a highly sophisticated multi-level game with bilingual readers, in light of the author's explicit assertion that he "pride[s] [himself] only on the iron hand with which [he] checked the demons that incited [him] to deletions and additions" ("Postscript": 193), this omission can be approached as a direct invitation to the reader to further engage in the game, proving the author wrong (not unlike

[64] See full text here: https://listserv.ucsb.edu/lsv-cgi-bin/wa?A2=nabokv-l;ccdcc5be.0302

Nabokov's own statements on the command of the language, that were thoroughly debunked by scholars).

Finally, Dmitrii Nabokov's letter concludes with his assessment of Svirilin translation and sheds some light on the nature of their collaboration by stating that:

> I have translated the missing paragraph and sent it to St-Petersburg for publication in the coming edition of the Symposium *Lolita*. Mr. Svirilin jumped the gun a bit and proceeded to make a translation of his own. To be fair, I think he has made a good effort, and there are relatively few corrections I would have made in his version, mainly matters of style and nuance and only one real boner. At the same time, I have borrowed a couple of felicitous locutions from his text. I have been in touch with him and we are in full agreement that it is my version that will be included in the new edition. My translation is now in semi-final draft, and may undergo some very minor revisions (Dmitrii Nabokov, n. pag.)

The translation was attached to the above-mentioned letter (see full text in Appendix One). Perplexingly, despite Dmitrii Nabokov's clear differentiation between his own version and a version by Svirilin's, there appears to be only one translation of the text that is routinely incorporated into the full text of the novel by the Russian publishers. Interestingly, publishers' decisions on *how* to incorporate the translated fragment seem to be dependent on *who* the text of translation is attributed to.

It seems that at some point, the authorship over the text of translation has been disputed between two translators (Dmitrii Nabokov and Alexander Svirilin), and, with Dmitrii Nabokov's recent passing, it might be impossible to clarify the exact nature of their collaboration. Nonetheless, there appears to be two distinct tendencies in publishing practices that will be reviewed below.

It seems that when the text of the translation is attributed to Alexander Svirilin, a virtually unknown journalist who was responsible for the discovery and publicity that surrounded the missing paragraph, publishers tend to clearly identify visually or even separate completely the

text of the translation. One such example is shown in Appendix Two: this specific edition is prefaced by what appears to be Svirilin's own note that acknowledges the addition of the missing paragraph, and the text of translation, in turn, is clearly identified within the body of the novel:

1. by a statement immediately in front of the paragraph (specifically the Russian phrase that reads [In the English version these words are followed by a passage that remained untranslated by the author (a fact established by Alexander Svirilin)] and is placed in front of the addition),
2. followed by the translation of the passage itself, marked by a differed colour of font,
3. concluded by a statement on the authorship of translation (translated by Alexander Svirilin).

This tendency is also evident in the printed versions of the novel. Interestingly, despite Dmitrii Nabokov's assertion that "we are in full agreement that it is my version that will be included in the new edition" (Dmitrii Nabokov, n. pag.), *Symposium* (the publishing house mentioned in the letter) evidently made the decision to attribute the translation to Alexander Svirilin specifically, and, as a result, includes the translation as an addendum to the main body of the novel[65].

Other publishers, however, opt to seamlessly integrate the text of the translation into the main body of the novel. One such example appears in Appendix Three. In this instance (see example in Appendix Three), the text of the novel is prefaced by a note, evidently written by Dmitrii Nabokov, who acknowledges that the translation is *his*. The text of the translation in such instances seems to be seamlessly incorporated into the main body of the novel, and remains unidentified any further (as evident from the screenshot provided in Appendix Three). This is also evident in printed editions of the novel by publishing house *Azbuka*, for instance. This publishing house consistently presents the translation in this way, beginning in 2007.

[65] The novel is published on pages 11 – 391 in Volume II of five-volume *Compilation of American Works*, and the translation in question is included on page 670 and clearly identified as translated by A. Svirilin.

Needless to say, all marketing materials for the book by this publisher routinely incorporate a mention of the unique nature of the edition, as it incorporates a previously unknown omission.[66]

In concluding this section, I would like to emphasize that there are, indeed, subtle differences in versions of the translation. They certainly do not suggest that the translation was performed anew by both translations. Rather, comparisons of translations suggest that the translation was completed by one person and edited by the other. However, at this point the exact sequence and nature of collaboration between Dmitrii Nabokov and Aleksander Svirilin remains unclear, and until it is clarified, no preliminary conclusions (or judgments) should be made. It is also entirely possible that the editing was initiated by a specific publisher (rather than any of the translators in question).

What remains out of question in the review of publishing practices above, however, is that Dmitrii Nabokov (the writers' son, copyright holder and collaborator in his translational endeavors into English) is a figure of substantial authority in the eyes of the publishers, despite some of his controversial decisions regarding Nabokov's estate[67]. As a result, when the translation of the paragraph is attributed to him, publishers tend to seamlessly integrate the text into the main body of the novel.

[66] Full list of marketing blurbs for editions is available here http://www.livelib.ru/book/420807/editions

[67] This, of course, brings to mind Dmitrii Nabokov's widely discussed decision to publish Nabokov last unfinished novel *The Original of Laura* (1977) *despite* his father's specific instruction to destroy the manuscript, in 2009. See a discussion in *The Guardian* for more information http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/nov/22/original-of-laura-vladimir-nabokov

6. Conclusion

As recent inquiries into translators' behaviours convincingly demonstrate, *something* always happens in translation. While popular discourse is often quick to designate this change as "something is lost in translation" or "something is found in translation," the metamorphosis of the translated text cannot be reduced to this simple dichotomy. A descriptive approach in translation studies is a very useful tool to describe what this *something* actually is, as it considers each individual text as a site where various, often conflicting modalities of intentions, suggestions and regulations intersect, bend and twist. Each and every translated text is a reflection of, ultimately, values that are dominant in the target culture, captured in a unique way by a translator, a cultural agent.

Not all translators, however, are such cultural agents, and self-translating authors are a good example of such exception. Specifically, Vladimir Nabokov, who grew up and matured in geographically and culturally different countries, but lived and wrote his novels in an ambiguous intercultural space. He was a bilingual writer and a prolific translator. His translations were undertaken with acute artistic sensibility towards peculiars of each literary text. Moreover, given his authoritative status as the author of these texts, his practice of translation has a definitive scholarly value.

As my examination of this text had shown, Nabokov approached the translation of *Lolita* by expressing no doubt that if this translation had been performed by a commissioned translator, the text would have been transformed, and not in a way he would have preferred. This assertion, in turn, allowed me to suggest that, perhaps, Nabokov also *did* something in translation that no commissioned translator would have done. This, however, raised an important methodological question: what empirical evidence can be used to support this argumentation? Most studies to

date have only considered Nabokov's rendition of formal linguistic features associated with his style (such as allusions, alliterations and puns, for instance). Rendering of such stylistic devices in general is a well-documented problem of translation. Based on a consideration of these features, it is simply impossible to compare/contrast Nabokov's role in translation with that of a commissioned translator, as we simply do not know how a commissioned translator would render such features. Therefore, in my review of the texts, I focused on considering Nabokov's strategy in rendering repetitive, extra-linguistic features that are readily available in both English and Russian and not subject to given natural language rules. The a-linguistic nature of such features explains why practicing translators tend to retain them in their renderings of originals, as no explicit rules of language prevent them from doing so. This background illuminates Nabokov's role in translating *Lolita* into Russian: given the stated importance of these features it would be natural to expect Nabokov to retain them. And yet, as my analysis illustrates, Nabokov deploys a system of emendations of these features. This intentional system of emendations can be explained by Nabokov's change in artistic intentions throughout the Russian text. And yet, this system of emendations remained unaddressed for many decades. Arguably, by designating the Russian text a translation, Nabokov's himself determined the way the second version was received. As evident from close consideration of publishing practices in Russia, these practices have always been informed by the premise that the author could not do anything but approximate the original text in translation. Consequently, the Russian publishing industry at large deployed a system of emendation to the text that would bring it to compliance with what would constitute a "normative" translation. The nature of these emendations shows that the idea of "normative" translation of this text was very different in Soviet and post-soviet Russia.

Throughout writing this dissertation, I have intentionally abstained from using evaluative terms; such terms should not be expected in this conclusion either. I want to state emphatically that while Nabokov's text is full of what most translators would consider, bluntly, "errors," such discrepancies should not result in assessments such as "incorrect translation" or "non-translation." I insist that Nabokov's text is a translation, albeit a translation governed by a set of alternative, unknown at present, norms. To deny it this status means to continue the tradition of turning a blind eye to the unusual and dismissing it under the rubric of "exceptions."

The same applies to the actions and decisions made by publishers of the Nabokov's Russian text. While these actions fall under the umbrella term of "sanctions" in the target culture, I want to acknowledge that they were informed by the best possible intentions, and were made by people who truly valued Nabokov's legacy and deeply cared for promotion of his legacy in Russia. There cannot be any evaluation of these actions and decisions, as they were absolutely *normal* (that it, influenced by norms) under the circumstances.

One global conclusion that I would like to make in considering the Russian text of *Lolita* pertains to the notion of liberty in translations. Liberal translations are not uncommon, yet liberty in translation should not be equated with a license to do just about anything. Arguably, even the range of liberties one can exercise in translation is determined by the target culture norms. As my discussion of Nabokov's text illustrates, when authorial liberties are divorced too much from the norms that dominate the target culture, the target culture at large deploys a mechanism of bringing the text into compliance with its norms (which can be very different in different historical periods). But where does the boundary between norms and abnormalities lie? This can only be established by future research into norms. As my discussion suggested, the descriptive

approach should not limit itself by focusing on mainstream practices, as considering the unique and unusual can result in valuable insights as well.

I would like to conclude this thesis by listing a number of questions and considerations that remained unanswered in the present work to outline possible directions of future research into self-translations. Of course, the case of Nabokov's *Lolita* is very specific, and findings of my analysis might not apply to other self-translators. Yet I am convinced that a number of comprehensive considerations of self-translated texts might shed some light on patterns that will enable us to draw more abstract conclusions about this phenomenon. One such pattern has been suggested in this work: an observation that many authors undertake a translation of their own text specifically *because* they are dissatisfied with a commissioned translation. This observation certainly deserves further exploration. Does this dissatisfaction lead to doing something in translation that no commissioned translator would have done? How can this assumption be empirically verified? Studies that pursue this line of thought might prove very valuable in further developing and sharpening methodological tools of investigation.

Another line of inquiry pertains to *Lolita* specifically. As I made clear in the discussion of the text, my designation of the Russian novel as informed by an alternative set of norms is provisional at this point. I have only considered Nabokov's use of numerals, graphic emphasis and use of author-specific punctuation in this analysis, and my findings suggest the intentional nature of these emendations. I sincerely hope that this analysis will provide sufficient grounds to reconsider other features of texts (such as Nabokov's introduction of Russian subtexts in the later version, changed patterns of alliteration and a large number of unusual lexical choices) in light of Nabokov's intention to amend the text, rather than considering them mere functional equivalents of the English original.

Finally, there are certainly gaps in the reception of the Russian text that can be further investigated. Despite scholarly mentions of possible alternative translations of *Lolita* into Russian, I was not able to locate such texts. They might or might not have existed. Should such parallel texts be found, their comparison with Nabokov's own translation could be instrumental in clarifying the nature of norms in Soviet Russia. As to the more recent practices, the authorship of the translation for the missing paragraph is evidently disputed between Dmitrii Nabokov and Alexander Svirilin. What were the disagreements on the translation, and how did their views affect their word choices? Should the missing paragraph be incorporated into the contemporary editions of the novel, and how should the authorship of its translation be identified?

I see the value of this dissertation not so much in providing definitive answers to a range of questions that a comparison of *Lolita*'s two versions raises, but rather in providing a foundation from which even more questions can be asked and, hopefully, answered. Nabokov himself characterized the process of this translation in an interview as "Completing the circle of my creative life. Or rather starting a new spiral" (Nabokov, 1973:52). I sincerely hope that this dissertation will help to start such new spiral in considering this text, not just in the context of Nabokov's legacy but also in the field of translation studies.

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Appendix One: The Text of the Missing Fragment

The text of the missing paragraph, omitted by Nabokov in the Russian version:

Another jolt I remember is connected with a little burg we were traversing at night, during our return journey. Some twenty miles earlier I had happened to tell her that the day school she would attend at Beardsley was a rather high-class, non-coeducational one, with no modern nonsense, whereupon Lo treated me to one of those furious harangues of hers where entreaty and insult, self-assertion and double talk, vicious vulgarity and childish despair, were interwoven in an exasperating semblance of logic which prompted a semblance of explanation from me. Enmeshed in her wild words (swell chance... I'd be a sap if I took your opinion seriously... Stinker... You can't boss me... I despise you... and so forth), I drove throuth the slumbering town at a fifty-mile-per-hour pace in continuance of my smooth highway swoosh, and a twosome of patrolmen put their spotlight on the car, and told me to pull over. I shushed Lo who was automatically raving on. The men peered at her and me with malevolent curiosity. Suddenly all dimples, she beamed sweetly at them, as she never did at my orchideous masculinity; for, in a sense, my Lo was even more scared of the law than I--and when the kind officers pardoned us and servilely we crawled on, her eyelids closed and fluttered as she mimicked limp prostration.
(*L* EN: 171)

The text of the Russian translation of the missing paragraph (Dmitrii Nabokov claimed authorship of this specific passage, see https://listserv.ucsb.edu/lsv-cgi-bin/wa?A2=nabokv-l;ccdcc5be.0302):

Еще одна встряска, помниться, была связана с городком, через который мы проезжали ночью, на обратном пути. Миль за двадцать до того мне довелось сказать ей, что частная гимназия, которую она будет посещать в Бердслее — это школа весьма приличная, для девочек, без всякой современной чепухи, после чего Ло угостила меня одной из тех своих бешенных тирад, где мольба и оскорбление, самоутверждение и лукавая бессмыслица, яростная вульгарность и детское отчаяние переплетались в возмутительном подобии логики, что подталкивало меня к подобию объяснения. Опутанный ее дикими словами (размечтался!.. я не дура какая-то, чтобы серьезно это слушать… гадина… ты не можешь мной распоряжаться… я презираю тебя… и так далее), я ехал через дремлющий городок на скорости пятьдесят миль в час, не прерывая ровного шоссейного хода, когда двое патрульщиков осветили машину и приказали мне съехать на обочину. Я шикнул на Ло, машинально продолжавшую бушевать. Полицейские разглядывали ее и меня с недоброжелательным любопытством. Внезапно все ее ямочки залучились на них, как никогда, никогда не лучились на мою орхидейную мужественность; ибо в некотором смысле моя Ло боялась закона еще больше, чем я сам — и когда добрые служители порядка простили нас и подобострастно мы уползли, веки ее опустились и затрепетали — она изображала полное изнеможение.

Appendix Two: Clear Identification of the Missing Paragraph When It Is Attributed to Alexander Svirilin

The following screenshots were taken on website http://nabokovandko.narod.ru/Texts/Lolita_rus.html. The text is prefaced with the following disclaimer:

Настоящая электронная версия подготовлена на основе текста с компакт-диска В. В. Набоков. Энциклопедическое собрание сочинений ("Адепт", 2003). В окончательный вариант добавлены предисловие, словарь иностранных терминов, а также перевод фрагмента третьей главы второй части. Вычитка производилась по изданию Набоков В. В. Собрание сочинений в 5 томах. Т. 2. ("Симпозиум", 1997). О замеченных опечатках просьба сообщать по адресу svirilin@mail.ru.

Александр Свирилин

[The present e-book is prepared on the basis of text from a CD titled V. Nabokov Encyclopedic Works Compilation (Adept 2003). The final version includes a preface, dictionary of foreign words as well as a translation of a fragment from the second part of the novel, section three. Final proofing was based on the text as it appears in Nabokov V.V. Compilation of Works in Five Volumes, volume two (Symposium 1997). Please inform of any noted typographical errors at svirilin@mail.ru. Alexander Svirilin]

The missing paragraph is clearly identified in the body of the novel:

героя, который обнимает красавицу-невесту на дальней границе цивилизации. Мне вспоминается дневное представление в маленьком затхлом кинематографе, битком набитом детьми и пропитанном горячим душком кинолакомства - жареных кукурузных зерен. Всходила желтая луна над мурлыкающим гитаристом в нашейном платке; он поставил ногу на сосновое бревно и пощипывал струны, и я - совершенно невинно - закинул руку за плечо Лолиты и щекой приблизился к ее виску, как вдруг - две ведьмы за нами стали бормотать престранные вещи - не знаю, правильно ли я понял, но то, что я наполовину расслышал, заставило меня снять с нее мою ласковую руку, и, конечно, остальная часть фильма прошла для меня в тумане.

[**В английской версии после этих слов следует непереведенный автором абзац (факт сообщен Александром Свирилиным)*:

Еще одна встряска, помнится, была связана с городком, который мы пересекали ночью, на обратном пути. Миль за двадцать до того я сказал ей, что школа, в которой она будет учиться в Бердслее - довольно высокого ранга заведение, без совместного обучения и без современного вздора, после чего Ло обратилась ко мне с одной из тех свойственных ей возмущенных речей, где мольба и оскорбления, самоутверждение и лицемерие, злостная вульгарность и детское отчаяние сплетались в раздражительное подобие логики, толкавшее меня на подобие объяснения. Опутанный ее дикими словами (хорошенькая возможность... я была бы дурочкой, если бы приняла твое мнение всерьез... сволочь... ты не можешь командовать мной... я презираю тебя... и так далее), я ехал через спящий город со скоростью в пятьдесят миль в час, не прерывая ровного шоссейного хода, и тут двое патрульщиков направили свой прожектор на машину и приказали мне съехать на обочину. Я шикнул на Ло, которая автоматически продолжала нести околесицу. Мужчины всмотрелись в нас с недоброжелательным любопытством. Вдруг вся переливаясь ямочками, она улыбнулась им так сладко, как никогда не улыбалась моей орхидейной мужественности; ибо в некотором смысле моя Ло боялась закона еще больше, чем я - и когда добрые патрульщики простили нас, и мы подобострастно поползли дальше, ее веки опустились и затрепетали - она изображала полное изнеможение. (*Перевод Александра Свирилина.*)]

Тут мне приходится сделать странное признание. Вы будете смеяться - но если сказать всю правду, мне как-то никогда не удалось в точности выяснить юридическую сторону положения. Не знаю его до сих пор. О, разумеется, кое-какие случайные сведения до меня дошли. Алабама запрещает опекуну менять местожительство подопечного ребенка без разрешения суда; Миннесота, которой низко кланяюсь, предусматривает, что если родственник принимает на себя защиту и опеку дитяти, не достигшего четырнадцатилетнего возраста, авторитет суда не пускается в ход. Вопрос: может ли отчим обаятельной до спазмы в груди, едва опушившейся душеньки, отчим всего с одномесячным стажем, неврастеник-вдовец с небольшим, но

Appendix Three: No Clear Identification of the Missing Paragraph When It Is Attributed to Dmitrii Nabokov

The following screenshots were taken on website http://rubook.org/book.php?book=232264&page=1. *The text is prefaced with the following disclaimer:*

Примечание к настоящему изданию

В это издание «Лолиты» включен мой русский перевод фрагмента (часть II, глава 3, одиннадцатый абзац), который оказался случайно выпущен Набоковым из его перевода романа. Я признателен А. Свирилину за указание на эту и некоторые другие неточности в русском тексте, а также А. Коновалову за помощь в составлении списка ошибок, которые будут исправлены в последующих изданиях.

Дмитрий Набоков

Палм-Бич, Флорида,

сентябрь 2007 г.

[**A Note on the Present Edition**
This edition includes my Russian translation of a fragment (Part II, section three, eleventh paragraph) that was unintentionally omitted by Nabokov from his translation of the novel. I am grateful to A. Svirilin for pointing out this and some other discrepancies in the Russian text, as well as to A. Konovalov for his help in compiling the list of discrepancies that will be corrected in the subsequent editions.
Dmitrii Nabokov
Palm-Beach, Florida
September 2007]
The missing paragraph is seamlessly integrated into the body of the novel:

скуле разогревшегося героя, который обнимает красавицу-невесту на дальней границе цивилизации. Мне вспоминается дневное представление в маленьком затхлом кинематографе, битком набитом детьми и пропитанном горячим душком кинолакомства — жареных кукурузных зерен. Всходила желтая луна над мурлыкающим гитаристом в нашейном платке; он поставил ногу на сосновое бревно и пощипывал струны, и я — совершенно невинно — закинул руку за плечо Лолиты и щекой приблизился к ее виску, как вдруг — две ведьмы за нами стали бормотать престранные вещи — не знаю, правильно ли я понял, но то, что я наполовину расслышал, заставило меня снять с нее мою ласковую руку, и, конечно, остальная часть фильма прошла для меня в тумане.

Еще одна встряска, помнится, была связана с городком, через который мы проезжали ночью, на обратном пути. Миль за двадцать до того мне довелось сказать ей, что частная гимназия, которую она будет посещать в Бердслее — это школа весьма приличная, для девочек, без всякой современной чепухи, после чего Ло угостила меня одной из тех своих бешеных тирад, где мольба и оскорбление, самоутверждение и лукавая бессмыслица, яростная вульгарность и детское отчаяние переплетались в возмутительном подобии логики, что подталкивало меня к подобию объяснения. Опутанный ее дикими словами (размечтался!.. я не дура какая-то, чтобы серьезно это слушать... гадина... ты не можешь мной распоряжаться... я презираю тебя... и так далее), я ехал через дремлющий городок со скоростью в пятьдесят миль в час, не прерывая ровного шоссейного хода, когда двое патрульщиков осветили машину и приказали мне съехать на обочину. Я шикнул на Ло, машинально продолжавшую бушевать. Полицейские разглядывали ее и меня с недоброжелательным любопытством. Внезапно все ее ямочки залучились на них, как никогда, никогда не лучились на мою орхидейную мужественность; ибо в некотором смысле моя Ло боялась закона еще больше, чем я сам, — и когда добрые служители порядка простили нас и подобострастно мы уползли, веки ее опустились и затрепетали — она изображала полное изнеможение.

Added fragment