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From the Editor

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From the Editor

He smoked, inhaling only inadvertently, four decades later ...

Like the previous volumes of *Nabokov Studies*, this one also devotes a considerable amount of space to Nabokov's literary sources. How could it do otherwise in the year of the *Ur-Lolita*? Since I do not read German and could not learn it in time to read Lichberg/Eschwege's story, I have declined all invitations to comment publicly on Nabokov's use of an almost forty-year-old story with another *Lolita* in it. But having been queried about the journal's attitude to possible essays on Nabokov's cryptomnesia or crib-tomnesia, I need to clarify the journal's policy on "Nabokov and X" scholarship. To that end I quote another, much younger editor who suggested in his first editorial column that *Nabokov Studies* would consider essays on intertextuality and influence as being of interest to a number of readers only if "identification of the evoked text and its structural patterns results in the modification of the critic's initial interpretations of the passage(s) in Nabokov's text. ... Following the logic of such modifications (made necessary by the transposition of the evoked texts's signifying processes into the evoking one's) may even make certain features of Nabokov's text appear central rather than peripheral." That still strikes me as a good policy: and in following it, we have put together a volume that locates Nabokov against a background of diverse literary interests, theories of pain and translation, real life events, and even mathematical theories.

Gennady Barabtarlo provides the link between the activities of General Fedchenko from "The Assistant Producer" and those of General Miller while in the hands of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Eric Goldman links Alfred Kinsey's reports to *Lolita*'s dialectic of normalcy and perversity, while David Rampton teases out the consequences of Nabokov's statement that Chesterton was once important to him. Senderovich and Shvarts connect Pnin's cultural displacement with the Petrushka, "the phony foreigner" character of the Russian street shows, while Stephen Casmier finds in Nabokov's treatment of that same displacement a model for reflecting on the difficulties of translating subjectivity. Relying on set theory, Timothy Langen concentrates on the difficulties of ascertaining the reliability of thought in the most entropic fiction of a man known for the seriousness of his playfulness.

In the two Forum pieces Brian Boyd and George Ferger are mindful of the extratextual but thread their respective essays out of the intra- and infra-textual. Boyd outlines the echoes and resonances of the word “veen” in *Ada*, while Ferger tests out the possibility that John Ray, Jr. is Humbert’s Kinbote, that is, he considers the implications of the possibility that what we get to know of Humbert’s manuscript is only what appropriating John Ray, Jr. lets us see.

What Nabokov lets us or does not let us see of Eschwege’s story has been the topic of many electronic and paper exchanges, and in light of these squalls left by the main hurricane, the time seems ripe to invite all those interested in Dolorology to contribute full length essays on *Lolita* to a special–topic issue for Volume 9 of *Nabokov Studies: Lolita* at 50. Although it took *Lolita* four years to become an international bestseller, it was in fact published in 1955 and thus will hit the half-century mark next year. The current editorial staff suggests that we celebrate that anniversary with fully thought out reconsiderations of old and still nagging questions or completely new approaches to the reading of Nabokov’s most famous work. These essays certainly should not be warmed over and expanded version of discussions already carried out on NABOKV-L. Nor should they be manifestoes of one’s reading habits to which *Lolita* serves merely as a source of infrequent examples. While we certainly do not wish to issue a fiat against articles that treat *Lolita*’s sources, we would very much like contributors of such articles to (a) be familiar with *The Annotated Lolita* and (b) heed the warnings issued above: such articles work best when they illuminate some dim corner or touch upon some previously explored pressure point of *Lolita*.