
Transcript of the Ada Forum

Mar.-Apr. 2005 (Part I Ch. 22-24)

Brian Boyd and the Kyoto Reading Circle

This is the last of the Ada Forum Transcripts. It covers the cyberspace exchanges between Brian Boyd and the Kyoto Reading Circle on the latter's annotations for Part I, Chapters 22 – 24. With the annotations to Chapter 24, the Circle has begun to tread fresh ground without the comforting guidance of Brian Boyd's annotations in *The Nabokovian*.

Up to now, both the Kyoto Reading Circle's Annotations to *Ada* and the internet forum that followed it had been published in *Krug*, the Nabokov Society of Japan newsletter. It is my pleasure to announce that the Circle's Annotations and the Forum transcripts will henceforth be shown on the internet site of the Nabokov Society of Japan.

To celebrate Nabokov's 106th birthday—April 23, 2005—the Circle's annotations and the corresponding Ada Forum transcripts will be uploaded on the “Kyoto Reading Circle” page of the “Nabokov Society of Japan” site. Annotations for the subsequent chapters will follow as soon as they are edited by the Circle.

We welcome participation by Nabokov readers of *Ada* worldwide on our annotations in the internet Nabokov forum, NABOKV-L. Readers with queries or suggestions for the Circle Annotations who are unfamiliar with NABOKV-L are encouraged to subscribe to NABOKV-L as follows:

To subscribe, send the following message to listserv@listserv.ucsb.edu:

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We look forward to your responses. –Shoko Miura, Forum Editor.

Forum Discussion on KRC Annotations Part I Chapters 22 - 24

[Brian Boyd]

This comes at a pressured time for me, so I don't have much to say, except that I'm glad *you've* now taken over from me the role of ploughing virgin soil.

Nevertheless:

141.13: “The ‘crescent’ is Van’s exhausted part”: are you sure? The sphingid larva at 56.07-10 seems more like Van's “part,” and the curved groove eaten out of the leaf might if anything seem more Ada-like (not that I think the references are primarily sexual in this particular phrase).

140.04: Yes, that “Which” is nicely trivial (in the sense of “three-way”): the tome, the scene in the grotto while “everybody had gone to Brantôme” (140.25), and the vines (if, as you suggest, the “Which” refers in part to *Vendange*) in both the pictures in the tome, and in the grotto.

141.18: a Venetian blonde: more a reference to Venetian painters Titian and Palma Vecchio (141.17-18) and their blondes, surely?

146.31: Nice link with the “ghosts” on Van's arrival at Ardis (and rather like the “phantom . . . ghost” motif associated with Hazel in the poem “Pale Fire”).

148.9: I am puzzled by the Parluggian Owl. Don Barton Johnson seems to suggest there is an owl with this name (or at least Parluggla); others seem to assume the name is VN's invention.

148.12: Don't jingle them: there is only one bottle. Perhaps the bottle and the owl? But how does even a stuffed owl jingle?

149.21: Nice link.

Otherwise everything looks fine. I have yet to tackle I.24 myself, so have no idea quite how it will turn out (and I'll still be pressed for time), but it will be valuable to have the soil already turned.

[Akiko Nakata]

Thank you very much, Brian, for your reply. I am terribly sorry for a long silence.

141.13: “The ‘crescent’ is Van’s exhausted part”: are you sure?

Tadashi promised to explain it.

141.18: a Venetian blonde: more a reference to Venetian painters Titian and Palma Vecchio (141.17-18) and their blondes, surely?

Of course, yes. We meant "besides Titian and Palma Vecchio and their blondes."

148.12: Don't jingle them: there is only one bottle. Perhaps the bottle and the owl? But how does even a stuffed owl jingle?

You are right, Brian. There is only one bottle. Grammatically, "them" must be the "glass cases" or just some jingling things there, or could be the keys Van is carrying. But the "jingle" sound and the empty bottle on the shelf evoke the figurative "little bottle" (its "original" is a medicine bottle beating on the shelf while Van and Ada are making love) "tinkling on its (that is, in a safe place of her mind) shelf" that we have just read in Lucette's last note to Van. I think the association made us duplicate the only empty bottle here and I even suspect the obscure "them" is meant to give that effect.

Thanks for your kind words on our reckless project. I hope we have not just defiled the lovely, dreamy, enormous ADA land with our blind steps in vain.

[Tadashi Wakashima]

First, I apologize for this late posting.

141.13: "The 'crescent' is Van's exhausted part": are you sure?

Sorry, giving an explanation is not my intention, and I just want to make a rather puerile remark.

"There was a crescent eaten out of a vine leaf by a sphingid larva." This description is certainly naturalistic as Brian suggests, but there is a playful superimposition of images: a sphingid larva *eating* a vine leaf and a tendril climber *biting* the neck of a column.

And for this occasion, let me quote John Updike's praise in his review "Van Loves Ada, Ada Loves Van," collected in *Picked-Up Pieces*: "Nabokov adds a charming page (page 141) to the rapidly expanding American anthology of fellatio. €35

[Shoko Miura]

Dear Forum Members:

I am sorry to see the Forum go, but I do believe all is for the best. We will be able to share what we have found with other Nabokovians in the world.

I thank everyone for the precious contributions you have made to the Forum. I am

especially grateful to Brian Boyd for having joined us and guided us into delightful discoveries and stimulating exchanges. It was so typical of Brian's generosity to offer to ask Jeff Edmunds to put a link for the KRC annotations to the appropriate pages of ADAonline. By the way, congratulations, Brian, on the anniversary of ADAonline!

I depend on Brian to continue to discuss our annotations with us, only this time it will be in NABOKV-L.

So, I will now close the last session of the ADA Forum.

Thank you all.