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Dolorous Haze, Hazel Shade:

Nabokov and the Spirits

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4,589 words

> 'A creative writer[…]cannot help feeling that[…]in his taking sides with the irrational, the illogical, the inexplicable, and the fundamentally good, he is performing something similar in a rudimentary way to what [two pages missing] under the cloudy skies of gray Venus'.
>
> -- Vladimir Nabokov[1]

> 'He is the bard of immortality'
>
> -- Andrei Bitov[2]

Since Vera Nabokov designated otherworldliness as Nabokov's 'watermark' in 1979,[3] there has been increasing discussion of its manifestations in his fiction. Nabokov had an 'intuition of a transcendent realm',[4] and called human life 'but the first installment of a serial soul'; he believed that 'one's individual secret is not lost in the process of earthly dissolution'.[5] But what access did Nabokov think there was to that other world? In Nabokov's fiction, fairies

and other spirits appear as messengers from it; spiritualism is one means of contacting them. This subject is important to both Lolita and Pale Fire, novels that can be read as a pair presenting negative and positive attitudes toward emanations from the beyond.

Nabokov considers the existence of the hereafter in his private notes. In his diary for 1951, Nabokov notes 'the hereafter finds its beautiful proof in the series: 1. Time without consciousness 2. Time with consciousness 3. Consciousness without Time'[6]. Six years later, in the first index card relating to Pale Fire, Nabokov wrote:

> A wonderful point in favor of some kind of hereafter is this: When the mind rejects as childishly absurd a paradise with musical angels or abstract colonnades with Horace and Milton in togas conversing and walking together through the eternal twilight, or the protracted voluptas of the orient or any other eternity -- such as the one with devils and porcupines -- we forget that if we could have imagined life before living it would have seemed more improbable than all our hereafters.[7]

Nabokov displays a detailed knowledge of the history of spiritualism in 'The Vane Sisters', written in 1951. The skeptical and scornful narrator gives a catalogue of its highlights while trying to resist Cynthia as he falls asleep:

> I reviewed in thought the modern era of raps and apparitions, beginning with the knockings of 1848, at the hamlet of Hydesville, New York, and ending with grotesque phenomena at Cambridge Massachusetts; I evoked

> the ankle bones and other anatomical castanets of the Fox sisters[…];the mysteriously uniform type of delicate adolescent in bleak Epworth and Tedworth[…]old Alfred Russel Wallace, the naïve naturalist, refusing to believe that the white form with bare feet[…]before him[…]could be prim Miss Cook whom he had just seen asleep[…]; two other investigators[…]clinging with arms and legs about Eusapia, a large, plump elderly female reeking of garlic, who still managed to fool them; and the skeptical and embarrassed magician, instructed by charming young Margery's 'control'[…]to follow up the left stocking until he reached the bare thigh—upon the warm skin of which he felt a 'teleplastic' mass[…][8]

The catalogue sounds like a fabrication. But each person or place alluded to has historical referents: the poltergeist occurrences in the Wesley household in Epworth, England (1716–1717); the Drummer of Tedworth; the well-known telekinetic mediums—an Italian woman Eusapia Palladino, and 'young Margery's 'control', Mrs. Crandon. In an earlier scene in the story, the narrator attends a séance with Cynthia Vane in which Frederick Myers 'hammers out a piece of verse' (231). A Trinity college, Cambridge graduate, F.W.H. Myers (1843-1901) was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 1882 that is the center of spiritualist activity in England to this day. He wrote several works on spiritualism: Phantasms of the Living (1886), Science and a Future Life (1893) and Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death (1903), a book

that William James described as 'the first attempt to consider the phenomena of hallucination, hypnotism, atomatism, double personality and mediumship, as connected parts of one whole subject'. [9]

'The hamlet at Hydesville' alludes to the event that launched the spiritualist movement in 1848, when rappings were heard at the home of the Fox sisters, Margaretta and Katherine, aged fourteen and eleven, who lived in a two-room farmhouse in Hydesville, New York. The sisters later confessed to using an apple on a string to make thumping sounds and their ankle bones to communicate during seances. But the Vane sisters' emanations from the spirit world are genuine, and go unnoticed by everyone within the story. The reader might well miss them too, if not told to look for the acrostic in the final paragraph. This is an appropriate way for Cynthia and Sybil to communicate their presence: spirits are known to communicate through anagrams, acrostics, sentences written backwards and other verbal puzzles.[10] By having Cynthia and Sybil send the narrator his unaccustomed vision at the opening of the story and report that they have done so through their acrostic at its close, Nabokov rewrites the Fox sisters' fraud to affirm the survival of the personality after death.

Nabokov's interest in spiritual phenomena is already clear in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight (1938).[11] The heart problem that carries off Sebastian, 'Lehmann's disease,' is named for Alfred Georg Lehmann (1858-1921), a Dane who wrote about colored hearing, and who compiled a detailed history of the

occult, witchcraft and spiritualism, the German translation of which, Aberglaube und Zauberei (Superstition and Witchcraft), published in 1908, contains material about the materialisation and photographing of spirits, and cites, among many others, A. R. Wallace, F. W. H. Myers and the SPR.[12]

Sebastian is the first in a series of Nabokov's artists who die of some unspecified affliction of the heart, and each death, physical or metaphorical, is associated with a set of three motifs: 1) the transition from 999 to 1000, 2) a lake or sea, and 3) indications of the uncanny. When Sebastian's diagnosis is made, he and Clare sense a gnome (88), a brownie and eerieness (89) in the German beechwood on the coast by a 'steely grey sea' (88). The novel begins with Sebastian's birth in 1899 together with the record of the day's weather kept by Olga Olegovna Orlova (OOO), and is written by V. in nearly invisible collaboration with the spirit world.

Pnin too suffers from heart problems. During his first seizure an uncanny prosphesy is fulfilled: his current position on the bench had already been depicted on the screen that stood in his childhood bedroom, which showed 'a lily pond, an old man hunched up on a bench, and a squirrel holding a reddish object in its front paws',[13] the riddle of which is now solved by the squirrel in front of Pnin's American bench who is holding a 'peach stone' (25). Pnin's memory of his nursery 'interfered less with his surroundings than would the reflection of an inside object in a windowpane with the outside scenery perceived through the same glass'(24). His attack places him briefly in both

worlds simultaneously. Victor's art teacher Lake teaches that to immortalize man-made things, you should show their reflections, a process Lake calls the 'necessary "naturalization'" of them (97); the analogy is with naturalised Pnin in his American world that he departs from his final address, 999 Todd (cf. German Tod, death) Road, heading up a 'shining road' into the mist (191). Pnin's heart problem is thus accompanied by the 999 motif, a lake indicated by the art teacher's surname, and the uncanny predictive pyrograph with its squirrel emissary.

In Pale Fire, the quest for the otherworld by author and characters is carried on in a web of references to spiritualism that appear in both Shade's and Kinbote's writing. Nabokov alludes to at least five men who participated in the movement: James Coates, A. R. Wallace, Charles Kingsley, Andrew Lang, and Conan Doyle.

James Coates wrote books on photographing the spirits: Photographing the Invisible: Practical Studies in Spirit Photography, Spirit Portraiture, and Other Rare but Allied Phenomena (1911) and The Case for Spirit Photography (1923).[14] In Pale Fire, Nabokov gives his name to the reporter, 'Jim Coates', who had interviewed Mrs. Z. The name points to the historical Coates's faith in the spirit world; by using it Nabokov suggests that the fictional Coates is too quick to dismiss Mrs. Z.'s near-death vision and the misprint that transformed it from 'mountain' to 'fountain'.

Alfred Russel Wallace, the 'naïve naturalist' mentioned in 'The Vane Sisters', arrived at a theory of survival of the fittest simultaneously with Charles Darwin. He was a regular frequenter of seances. His faith in a spirit world is affirmed in his books The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural (1866) and Miracles and Modern Spiritualism: A Defense of Modern Spiritualism (1874). In Pale Fire, Charles the Beloved's mother had talked with Wallace on the ouija board. But Nabokov balances Queen Blenda's potentially interesting communication with a negative example: after the Queen's death, the Countess de Fyler uses the ouija board for propaganda purposes ('Charles take take cherish love flower flower flower').[15] Wallace's interest in lepidoptery and rejection of Darwin's materialist understanding of human development are close to Nabokov's.[16]

The Kingsley-Lang-Doyle line represents three generations of Victorian spiritualists.

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), an English clergyman, poet and novelist, chaplain to Queen Victoria and tutor to her son, is smuggled into Pale Fire through the name of Sylvia O'Donnell's British chauffeur, 'an old and absolutely faithful retainer', who picks up King Charles when he parachutes into America (166). Although Kingsley's bust stands in Westminster Abbey's chapel of the minor poets, most people know him for his children's book, The Water Babies (1862). In it Tom, a poor chimney sweep, drowns himself in despair, whereupon 'his whole husk and shell had been washed quite off him' and he is turned from

a land-baby into a water-baby by the fairies.[17] Tom forgets all the ugly sorrows of his life on land. 'That is not strange, for[...]when you came into this world, and became a land-baby, you remembered nothing. So why should he, when he became a water-baby?' (84). Kingsley addresses his reader (the book was written for his youngest son):

> […]till you know a great deal more about nature than Professor Owen and Professor Huxley put together, don't tell me about what cannot be, or fancy that anything is too wonderful to be true. 'We are fearfully and wonderfully made,' said old David, and so we are; and so is everything around us, down to the very deal table. (76)

Furthermore, Kingsley writes:

> 'The most wonderful and the strongest things in the world[…]are just the things which no one can see[…]and so there may be fairies in the world' (59-60). 'The wise men of old say that everything on earth had its double in the water' (73). 'Does not each of us, coming into this world, go through a transformation as wonderful as that of a sea-egg or a butterfly? And do not reason and analogy, as well as Scripture, tell us that that transformation is not the last? And that, though what we shall be, we know not, yet we are here but as the crawling caterpillar, and shall be hereafter as but the perfect fly'. (75)

Kinbote's transition from Zembla to America is analogous (but inverse) to Tom's from land to water; confirmation that Nabokov thinks this way appears in Pnin

where Victor's land-father (Wind) and water-father (Pnin) also represent real/ideal domains. Kinbote's Zemblan fantasy is his fairy-tale realm which allows him to '[peel] off a drab and unhappy past', as Shade says (159).

Kingsley also has some personal traits in common with Kinbote; he was eccentric, unpopular at school, tall and spare, completely unworldly, thin-skinned when reading his often hostile critics, given to nervous attacks and a misfit at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he taught History rather unconventionally for nine years (1860-69). A contemporary said of him: 'despite his rough voice and vigorous manner he was[…]feminine in his likes and dislikes, his implulses and prejudices', having a disproportionate amount of the female in his make-up.[18]

Kingsley too was a passionate naturalist who had long talks with 'his dear and honored master' Darwin[19] and studied A. R. Wallace's work. He saw every scientific discovery as a message from God and, unlike most of his contemporaries, had no difficulty reconciling Scripture with the theory of evolution. He wrote that he was unable to 'give up the[…]conclusion arrived at over twenty-five years of study of geology and believe that God has written in the rocks an enormous and superfluous lie'.[20] After witnessing a great meteor shower, he preached a Chapel sermon on 'the pitiless laws of nature':

> Horrible[…]to the man of sound reason[…]must the scientific aspect of Nature become, if a mere abstraction called law is to be the sole ruler of the universe[…]if instead of the Divine Eye, there must glare on us an

> empty, black, bottomless eye-socket[…]Is there a Living God in the universe or is there none? That is the greatest of all questions.'[21]

Charles Kinbote, a fervent Zemblan Protestant, voices similar ideas: 'once we deny a Higher Intelligence that plans and administrates our individual hereafters we are bound to accept the unspeakably dreadful notion of Chance reaching into Eternity' (151).

The Scottish romantic writer Andrew Lang (1844-1912) is best known today for his Blue, Red, Green and Yellow Fairy Tale books, but wrote prodigiously on myth, religion and folklore and published works on Scottish and French history as well as poetry and translations from the Greek and the French; the Dictionary of National Biography called him 'the greatest bookman of his age'.[22] Like Kingsley, whose fiction he read as a boy, he was highly sensitive and shy. This led to a certain brusqueness, as in the incident in the library of the House of Lords, where Lang was visiting his friend the librarian:

> Presently the Duke of Northumberland came in, and, recognizing Lang, bowed and smiled. Lang glared at him like a basilisk through his eye-glasses, and the Duke, abashed, presently went out. I said: 'The Duke bowed to you.' 'What Duke?' said Lang. 'Northumberland.' 'Oh, was that he? I never recognize anybody.'[23]

The anecdote recalls Alfin the Vague's *mot*, 'What emperor?' But Lang's name comes up in Shade's poem, not Kinbote's commentary. In Canto Two Shade, addressing his wife, recalls that some other Lang 'made your portrait', in

a literal sense, in the period following Hazel's death. The overarching importance of the supernatural theme that embraces both Shade and Kinbote is in Nabokov's eye.

Lang was interested in psychical phenomena. 'I do firmly believe that there are human faculties, as yet unexplained, as yet inconsistent with popular scientific "materialsm"'.[24] Lang linked psychical research with his anthropological studies, and wrote a volume of essays on it, Cock Lane and Common Sense (1894) as well as The Book of Dreams and Ghosts (1897), a compendium of psychical stories from classical times to the contemporary. He was a member of the Society for Psychical Research, president of it in 1911, and wrote the article on 'poltergeists' for the ninth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Like Nabokov, Lang felt that the undoubted existence of fraud in some cases did not disqualify the possibility of the truth of the unexplained residue. The Shades should have had Hazel sit for him rather than Sybil.

A sybil, a go-between from this world to the next, should be a likely sitter for a portrait by Lang. But Sybil Shade plays an anti-supernatural role in Kinbote's commentary, scoffing at Hazel's attempt to commune with the spirits, and Shade remains a materialist, albeit with a 'faint hope' of future life, throughout his poem.

Lang was loathed by the more sophisticated writers of his time (Henry James, George Moore, Max Beerbohm), but loved by others for his generosity to young writers, among them Conan Doyle, whose early work he promoted. Sir

Arthur was a well-known spiritualist, and a member of the Society for Psychical Research for thirty-six years. He inherited his interest in the occult from his father Charles Altamont Doyle (1832-1893) (an alcoholic who died in a lunatic asylum) and his uncle Richard ('Dickie') Doyle (1824-1883), who were well-known painters of fairy pictures and illustrators of fairy subjects.[25] Shade's poem mentions Arthur Conan Doyle only as author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, but during the 1920s Doyle toured the United States and South Africa, addressing thousands as a self-appointed missionary for spiritualism. He and his wife regularly participated in seances and many times talked with the spirit of their son, also named Kingsley, who had died in World War I. Doyle wrote a two-page newspaper article on 'Life After Death' in 1918,[26] and his spiritualist activities were much written about in the British press while Nabokov was at Cambridge. The case of the Cottingley fairies made a particular splash: two girls in Yorkshire photographed themselves with a gnome and groups of fairies. Doyle was sufficiently impressed that he went to meet them, took their plates to Kodak for verification and wrote a book, The Coming of the Fairies (1922),[27] insisting that the photographs were genuine. But as one biographer says, 'before long articles appeared that pointed out a suspicious similarity between the Cottingley fairies and the images in an advertisement for a brand of night light'.[28] Shade's poem describes just such a mundane fairy in a TV soap advertisement, the only kind he can recognize.

Hazel Shade is a medium for poltergeists and supernatural communications, according to the evidence in Shade's poem and Kinbote's more sympathetic interpretation of that evidence.. Her name derives from Walter Scott's 'Lady of the Lake', set in the Scottish highlands 'in lone Glenartney's hazel shade'[29] whence emerges the Huntsman, 'advancing from the hazel shade'.[30] The Huntsman, meeting the heroine Ellen Douglas, exclaims 'I found a fairy in fairy land!'[31] He becomes the heroine's benefactor, and at the climax of the tale reveals himself to be none other than Scotland's king, incognito. Zembla's incognito king cannot be Hazel's benefactor since she is in another world, but he identifies with her.

In Pale Fire, Hazel Shade becomes the lady of a lake, her choice of final abode on that fateful March night.[32] Her character is located at a boundary: between the human world and the spirit world, as well as between human being and poem. Nabokov uses haze as a motif to indicate the boundary between two worlds: In Shade's poem Mrs. Z. glimpses her white fountain/mountain beyond a 'hazy orchard' (35), and in Kinbote's commentary, as he escapes over the Bera mountains he sees distant ridges in a 'tender haze' (95).[33] Hazel steps into one of the three lakes, Omega, Ozero, or Zero; the subject of Shade's 999-line poem, Hazel's suicide and the possibility of another world, is emblematized by the three Os or zeros -- the lakes' three names represent alphabet, lake and number in that order, indicating the boundary between this world and the otherworld, its infinitude and unknowability.[34] Again Nabokov uses the motif cluster uncanny-

lake-three Os. Only Kinbote negotiates the two: he writes a commentary to line one thousand, itself a kind of zero since it may or may not exist, in which he describes John Shade's transition from this world to the other.

Shade's poem 'The Nature of Electricity' makes a joke about the existence of spirits using 999:

Streetlamps are numbered, and maybe

Number nine-hundred-ninety-nine

(So brightly gleaming through a tree

So green) is an old friend of mine. (129)

Shade's investigations of the hereafter at the I.P.H. (which parodies the SPR) leave him with a 'faint hope' of existence after death, but he is a materialist despite his art,[35] and never wonders about Hazel's psychic abilities. He laments her failure to be a normal, attractive girl in the here and now:

[…]while children of her age

Were cast as elves and fairies on the stage

That she'd help paint for the school pantomime

My gentle girl appeared as Mother Time,

A bent charwoman with slop pail and broom. (23)

Hazel can't dress up as a Disney-style fairy from TV ads, but she is actually the real thing, from another world. She returns to the world she came from by entering the three Os, the natural habitat of the spirits. Hazel may turn from ugly duckling in this life into swan on the other shore. But Shade would

'turn down eternity' unless it contains the features of mortal life, 'This index card, this slender rubber band/Which always forms, when dropped, an ampersand' (ll. 533-34; p. 29). He 'knows' no spirit will rap out Hazel's pet name (32) and has Hentzner's barn demolished because of the stir over its psychic phenomena, but Kinbote tells us that Hazel had taken a message from Aunt Maude's spirit in that barn. Like Kinbote, Hazel 'twists words' (24): both come from the other side; they are grotesque mirror versions of their ideal selves. Like the nonnons in Invitation to a Beheading, they require the mirror of the other world to show them in their ideal guise, one that normal mortals fail to recognize.

Nabokov conducts an argument with himself from book to book by answering negative versions of his ideas with positive ones. An example is the pair of novels, Despair and The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, which are mirror images whose motif systems oppose death to eternal life.[36] Sceptical materialism is pitted against faith in survival of the personality. A similar opposition exists between Lolita and Pale Fire: while fairies and spirits are active forces in Pale Fire, they are only part of Humbert's romantic solipsism in Lolita.

Humbert the would-be artist projects literary images of fairy lore onto a very real Dolly Haze but the poet Shade fails to discern the fairy in Hazel, and instead grieves over Hazel's physical embodiment.[37] Literary models play inverse roles in the fates of the two girls: Humbert's psycho-sexual perversity has him impose Poe's heroine Annabel Leigh onto real-life Dolores Haze; he sees his

version of the poem, not the child. Hazel Shade's parents are blind to the accuracy of their own 'Lady of the Lake' allusion, distressed for their child but unsusceptible to occult prophetic potential. The plot is inverted too: Lolita loses her parents and is abducted by a rapist; the Shades lose their daughter who dies virginal.

In Lolita, the motifs that in Nabokov's other novels indicate the uncanny transition to another world connote bodily death for Humbert, whose memoir is materialist: his heart condition is associated with alcoholism and psychological breakdown, not with an ability to glimpse the beyond. He uses mythology and enchantment to elevate his obsession with Lolita's sexual aspect (e.g. 'enchanted voyage' as euphemism for sexual intercourse), and projects them onto mundane objects. Of the clothing store where he buys Lo a new wardrobe, Humbert says 'There is a touch of the mythological and enchanted in those large stores where according to ads a career girl can get a complete desk-to-date wardrobe, and her little sister can dream of the day when her wool jersey will make the boys in the back row of the classroom drool' (108). This device governs his entire narrative, just as he calls normal American Dolly Haze a 'fey' child. The meaning of her name is hinted at in the poem Frederick Myers raps out in 'The Vane Sisters':

> What is this—a conjurer's rabbit,
>
> Or a flawy but genuine gleam—
>
> Which can check the perilous habit
>
> And dispel the dolorous dream? (231)

The 'dolorous dream' is this life, and Dolores lives on the mundane side of the haze. Hazel Shade goes in search of beings akin to herself via the lake; for Humbert, Hourglass lake is not a potential entry to the otherworld, but a place to drown the 'mediocre mermaid' Charlotte in order to pursue Lolita.

There are three lakes whose names end in x at Lolita's camp -- Onyx, Eryx, and Climax. Unlike Pale Fire's three lakes ending in o where Hazel moves to the otherworld, Lolita's lakes are associated with crass sexuality. At Lake Climax Lolita loses her virginity to 'impish' Charlie Holmes. Conan Doyle's spiritualism explains why Nabokov named the camp mistress Shirley Holmes: when Humbert arrives at Camp Climax he hears Charlie playing horseshoes; it is the beginning of the Erlkonig's abduction of Lolita. Humbert casts himself as elf king by taking Lolita on the thousand mile ride from Kasbeam to Elphinstone (247), yet at the same time feels pursued by a 'heterosexual Erlkonig' as he brings her to Dr. Blue and the Elphinstone hospital (240). His evil double Quilty reveals the sexual truth that Humbert attempts to disguise using Goethe's poem, as he had disguised his lust for Lolita using Poe's.

Humbert had echoed Goethe's 'Erlkonig' when he anticipates possessing Lo for the first time; he writes that 'by nine[…]she would be dead in his arms' (116). On their second journey across the United States Lolita exclaims that all the nines on the odometer are changing into the next thousand (219). The nines-lake-uncanny motif here shows Humbert to be a travesty of the magical, invisible king of the elves. As rapist, not 'therapist' (150) or even an enchanted hunter,

Humbert kills the child and potential nymph in Lolita by forcing the physical world to dominate her life.

In Pale Fire, the Erlkonig theme is used by both Shade and Kinbote to accompany transitions to an otherworld; Shade interlards his account of Hazel drowning herself while her parents watch TV with echoes of the Erlkonig and Kinbote repeats Goethe's poem as he crosses the Bera range leaving Zembla for the mirror of exile. Misfits in New Wye, Hazel and Kinbote move to the otherworld of their own volition, lured by invisible alderkings. By contrast, Dolores Haze is well adapted to the mundane, and her abductor has nothing of the supernatural.

The gradual emergence through three novels of the character 'Starover Blue' is at the heart of the matter. Sebastian Knight's Doctor Starov signals that Sebastian's process of dying involves a return to his Russian self, a passage to the other shore. Lolita's Dr. Blue, having calmed Humbert in the Elphinstone hospital, exclaims 'Now who is nevrotic, I ask?', the v revealing his Russian origins, like Starover's Russian spelling of Sevastian's name in RLSK (190-91). In Pale Fire, Knight's 'Doctor Starov' and Humbert's 'Dr. Blue' are combined in Wordsmith's astronomer Starover Blue. Kinbote says that Blue's grandfather was an Old Believer; thus the Russian Old Believer meaning is finally revealed to the Russianless reader who has waited from 1938 until 1962 to see the light. Blue's mother's name, Stella Lazurchik (158), links the doctor to the stars and the azure

motif emblematic of the next world;[38] the name functions as Nabokov's declaration of faith.

In Pale Fire Nabokov affirms his spiritualism. Humbert is right about one thing, at least in terms of Nabokov's Hegelian synthesis of humor: one has to be a poet and a madman to recognize the nymphet. Shade (poet) or Kinbote (madman) alone cannot recognize the spirit in Hazel, only the reader and writer of the book can because they have access to both visions, which they must hold in balance. Nabokov's faith in emanations of the beloved dead from the spirit world must have stemmed from his own encounter with his father as described in The Gift, as Vera Nabokov hints in her foreword to Nabokov's verse. In his art, Nabokov's faith in the possibility of the survival of the spirit after death is only subtly perceptible, like the spirits themselves whom it is his gift to see.

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[1] Vladimir Nabokov, 'The Art of Literature and Commonsense', Lectures on Literature, New York and London, 1980, pp. 371-380 (p. 377).

[2] Andrei Bitov, 'Death as Text', Life Without Us, New York, 1998, pp. 103-113, (p.103).

[3] Vera Nabokov, 'Predislovie' (Foreword'), Vladimir Nabokov, Stikhi, Ann Arbor, MI, 1979, pp. 3-4.

[4] Vladimir Alexandrov, Nabokov's Otherworld, Princeton, NJ, 1991, p. 3.

[5] Vladimir Nabokov, 'The Art of Literature and Commonsense', p. 377.

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[6] Christine Raguet-Bouvart, 'riverrunning acrostically through "The Vane Sisters" and "A. L. P.', or "genealogy on its head"', Cycnos, 12, 1995, 2, pp. 21-28 (p. 27).

[7] Quoted in Priscilla Meyer and Jeff Hoffman, 'Infinite Reflections in Nabokov's Pale Fire: The Danish Connection (Hans Andersen and Isak Dinesen)', Russian Literature, XLI, 1997, pp. 197-222 (pp. 201-202).

[8] Vladimir Nabokov, 'The Vane Sisters', Tyrants Destroyed and other stories, New York etc., McGraw-Hill, 1981, pp. 219-238 (p. 236-377).

[9] Quoted in 'Frederick Myers', Encyclopedia Britannica, Chicago, London, Toronto, 1946, 24 vols., xvi, pp. 41-42 (p. 42). See also 'Psychical Research', vol. xviii, pp. 668-672 and Daniel Stashower, Teller of Tales, New York, 1999.

[10] See Fremont Rider, Are the Dead Alive? , London, 1909, p. 330.

[11] Vladimir Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, New York, 1959.

[12] Alfred Lehman, Aberglaube und Zauberei, Stuttgart, 1908.

[13] Vladimir Nabokov, Pnin, New York, 1989, p. 23.

[14] I am grateful to the photographer Hilda Bijur, curator of the exhibit 'The Case for Spirit Photography' (Neikrug Gallery, New York, December 1987) for sharing her materials, which include a spirit photograph of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as correspondence with both the American and British branches of the Society for Psychical Research.

[15] Vladimir Nabokov, Pale Fire, New York, 1982, p.70 (note to line 80).

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[16] For more on A. R. Wallace and Pale Fire, see Priscilla Meyer, Find What the Sailor Has Hidden, Middletown, CT, 1988, pp. 170-174.

[17] Charles Kingsley, The Water Babies, London, 1966, p. 76.

[18] Una Pope-Hennesy, Canon Charles Kingsley, New York, 1949, pp. 3-4.

[19] Pope-Hennessy, p. 243.

[20] Quoted by Pope-Hennessy, p. 184.

[21] Quoted by Pope-Hennessy, pp. 242-43.

[22] Quoted in 'Lang', Encyclopedia Britannica, xiii, p. 690-91 (p. 691).

[23] Roger Lancelyn Green, Andrew Lang, A Critical Biography, Leicester, 1946, p. 190.

[24] Lancelyn Green, p. 72.

[25] Jane Martineau (ed.), Victorian Fairy Painting, London, Toronto, New York, 1998-99, especially 'Richard Doyle', pp. 126-134 and 'Charles Doyle', pp. 138-39.

[26] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Life After Death', The Daily Chronicle, 5 November, 1918.

[27] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Coming of the Fairies, London and New York, 1922.

[28] Daniel Stashower, Teller of Tales, p. 356.

[29] Sir Walter Scott, The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, London and New York, 1891, pp. 121-203 (Canto First, I), (p. 123). Mary McCarthy was the first to identify this source in 'A Bolt from the Blue', New Republic, 4 June 1962, pp. 21-27. Others have taken it up in discussing Hazel's distance from Scott's heroine,

e.g. David Galef, 'The Self-Annihilating Artists of Pale Fire', Twentieth Century Literature, 31, Winter 1985, 4, pp. 421-37 (p. 421) and Shoshanna Knapp, 'Hazel Ablaze: Literary License in Nabokov's Pale Fire', Essays in Literature, 14, Spring 1987, 1, pp 105-15 (p. 110).

[30] Ibid, p. 128 (Canto First, XX).

[31] Scott, (Canto First, XXII), p. 128.

[32] Galef makes this point as part of a psychological analysis of Hazel), but notes that she has become 'a spirit at last' (p. 426). Knapp reads her as a witch (p. 110).

[33] Knapp makes the connection between Hazel, haze and the afterlife based on lines 580 and 756 of Shade's poem, concluding that 'Hazel is magic' (pp. 110-11).

[34] Phyllis Roth, 'The Double in Nabokov's Pale Fire', Essays in Literature, 2, 1975, pp. 209-29, writes that all three, Nabokov, Shade and Kinbote, 'are concerned with mortality and questions of the survival of consciousness' (p. 212).

[35] William Monroe, 'The Sequestered Imagination: Nabokov Versus the Materialists', Philological Quarterly, 70, Summer 1991, 3, pp. 379-94, agrees: 'Shade immerses himself in the material world' (p. 388. 'Pale Fire is[…]a provocative gauntlet thrown down before materialists of every stripe with smiling fierceness' (p. 380).

[36] See Priscilla Meyer, 'Black and Violet Words: Despair and The Real Life of Sebastian Knight as Doubles', Nabokov Studies, 4, 1997, pp. 37-60.

[37] Others have noted the Dolores Haze/Hazel Shade relationship: Knapp notes 'Both Hazel and little Haze are contemplated by madmen (Kinbote and

Humbert) and artists (Shade and Quilty)' pp. 109-10. Charles Nicol shows the heroines' two families to be opposites in 'Hazel and Haze,L: Families and Anti-Families', paper delivered at the Vladimir Nabokov Society Meeting, MLA annual convention, Washington, DC, 1996. I am grateful to him for sending me his paper.

[38] Pekka Tammi, 'Shadows of Differences: Pale Fire and Foucault's Pendulum', Cycnos, 12, 1995, 2, pp. 181-89 (p. 188) links azure and immortality.