

Olga Hasty

Memory, Consciousness, and Time in Nabokov's *Lolita*

ABSTRACT

In his "Confession of a White Widowed Male," Humbert Humbert, the fictional narrator of Nabokov's Lolita, writes: "I am not concerned with so-called 'sex' at all." In the context of a narrative that centers on his pedophilia, it is difficult to take this assertion seriously. Yet if we do, we come to appreciate that Humbert's sexuality is emblematic of a distinctly modernist response to the perennial question of how to counter temporal passage and the inevitable loss attendant on it. Nabokov's configuration of memory, consciousness, and time in Lolita shows how passage itself might be engaged in the creative enterprise of resisting loss.

In his afterword "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*" Vladimir Nabokov situates the origin of the work that won him notoriety, acclaim, and considerable wealth in an incident that is distant from the pedophilia that appears central to the novel:

The first little throb of *Lolita* went through me late in 1939 or early in 1940, in Paris, at a time when I was laid up with a severe attack of intercostal neuralgia. As far as I can recall, the initial shiver of inspiration was somehow prompted

by a newspaper story about an ape in the Jardin des Plantes, who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: this sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage.¹

The pitiable results of the experiment Nabokov designates as "the first little throb of *Lolita*" had been anticipated by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke who, some four decades earlier (1902-3), having observed a beast pace his narrow cage in that very same Jardin des Plantes, described it in the exquisite lyric "Der Panther:"

Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe
Und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.
(It seems as if there are a thousand bars
And past these thousand bars no world.)²

Like the ape that Nabokov subsequently invoked, the panther is shown not simply in sad captivity, but in a state of tragically circumscribed consciousness, aware only of the bars of his cage in their horrific multiplicity and not of the world beyond them. Such circumscription of consciousness lies at the heart of *Lolita*, where we see the drawing of the confining bars (indeed, the very construction of the cage) and yet also the means by which awareness might be extended beyond them. In the following exploration of the complex architecture of this cage, we observe that it is the configuration of time and memory that determines whether consciousness is gloriously expanded or tragically minimized. In this context, the pedophilia that shocked readers when *Lolita* was brought out - first by a French (1955) and then by an American publisher (1958) - can be recognized as not itself the illness, but rather as the symptom of a distinctly modernist confrontation with temporal passage. By attending to how the fictional narrator's desire is framed, we come to understand that his sexuality foregrounds questions of time and that his cage is a temporal one.

Nabokov began work on *Lolita*, the novel for which he (correctly) believed he would be remembered, as he was writing the sketches of what would become *Speak, Memory*, a dazzling display of the creative possibilities that arise when, as he puts it, "memory meets imagination half-way." This lucid memoir is a testament to Nabokov's conviction that a fully conscious self both fuels and is itself fueled by the ceaseless absorption of experience into

memory, an on-going process in which past, present, and future are figured in dynamic interdependency and not simply in succession. As elsewhere in his writings, in *Speak, Memory* Nabokov deploys what he calls “memory in the making” in a forceful stand against linear temporality in favor of a thickly experienced time. In this regard Nabokov concurs with Bergson and Proust. Yet although he held these great thinkers about time and memory in esteem, when it came to the notion of involuntary memory, Nabokov parted company with them to claim memory for consciousness. This claim informs the vehemently anti-Freudian stance Nabokov assumes in his fictional and non-fictional writings alike. Freud roots his theory of memory in a sharply-drawn distinction between memory and consciousness which he regards as alternatives that do not occur simultaneously. The Russian language - and Nabokov with it - thinks otherwise, providing two synonymous, fully interchangeable prepositional phrases that describe an unconscious body: “bez soznaniia” (literally “without consciousness”) and “bez pamiati” (literally “without memory”). Memory and consciousness are inextricably interrelated and Nabokov’s remembered self is an integral part of a creative identity projected in terms of transcendent consciousness and not the workings of the unconscious. Thus Nabokov urges his memory to speak while he sets down what it recounts.

The interactive relation in which Nabokov places memory and consciousness suggests a possibility for thwarting the sway passage holds in a mortal world and yet, as Nabokov well understands, is itself dependent on unfolding in time. Michael Wood has pointed out that in *Speak, Memory* Nabokov writes of the “free world of timelessness” and twice of the “prison” of time, and yet also presents “the birth of consciousness as the birth of the sense of time, or vice-versa.”³ This powerful link between time and consciousness is predicated on Nabokov’s awareness that the creation of memories that forestall loss depends on that very passage that poses the threat of loss to begin with. It is the change that transpires over time that saves memory - both the act of remembering and what is remembered - from objectification and mere reproduction that would leech it of vitality. The result, as Rachel Trusdale says of *Speak, Memory*, is “less a nostalgic ache for what has been lost than an ecstatic re-living.”⁴

Arising from the modernist tendency to think in terms of process and change rather than stability and stasis, this configuration of time, memory, and

consciousness introduces an important wrinkle into that compelling tension between the ephemeral and the eternal on which creative minds have focused for centuries. In *Speak, Memory* Nabokov's realization of the possibilities that derive from this configuration are virtuosic, and the reader sees only what is gained and not the risks that have been successfully negotiated. In *Lolita* the relationship of memory, consciousness, and time is problematized, and it is through this problematization that the reader glimpses how very much is at stake. *Lolita* is a novel about mortality and loss. This is true not simply because the reader is given to understand that the very fact that she is reading it means that all its major players are dead, but because the novel concerns itself with how the loss attendant on passage might be countered. In the last analysis *Lolita* is a novel of recuperation - a powerful instantiation of "the refuge of art" (309) that forestalls irredeemable loss. But before that refuge can be attained, the horror of confined consciousness must be confronted. The transformation of cage into refuge is one of the miracles of *Lolita*.

In *Lolita* Nabokov creates a fictional character who, under the assumed name "Humbert Humbert," pens a manuscript entitled "Lolita, or the Confession of a White Widowed Male" while in prison, awaiting trial for murder. Although Humbert's pedophilia takes center stage for most readers of *Lolita*, it is in fact not sex but memory that plays the leading role. The "Confession" presents recollected and not on-going events and abounds with figurations of memory. Indeed, the narrative is itself what a Durkheimian psychologist might call "an instrument for provoking recall."⁵ The remembering self Humbert projects is defined in terms of the exceptional memory he repeatedly draws to his reader's attention and demonstrates in a profusion of literary references and recollected details. The reader learns too that the props of recall Humbert invokes in the course of setting down his story have for the most part been destroyed or lost and, as he underscores, must be remembered. So too the "documentary" evidence he presents in his "Confession" - a letter and the contents of his diary - no longer exist and are also set down from memory.

Writing about the process of self-construction, Daniel Albright notes that "[o]ur remembered selves are everywhere informed by and dependent on literary concoctions, sometimes quite flimsy and absurd literary concoctions, and it is possible to be uncertain of the exact boundaries of our affective sys-

tems - just where our own memories end and literary pseudomemories begin."⁶ For Humbert these boundaries are indeed uncertain. In fact, Nabokov seriously questions whether here we can speak in terms of boundaries at all.⁷ Literary models shape the remembered self and guide his narrative even as the literary references that the well-read Humbert introduces into his "Confession" demonstrate the exceptional memory in terms of which that self is defined. These references serve as a constant reminder both of how very many different stories can be derived from lived experience and of the complex motivations of human behavior which no one narrative can adequately convey. At the same time, the literary references - when they are recognized - establish a space of memory that the reader shares with Humbert.

Even the richest of photographic memories such as Humbert's (or, for that matter, Nabokov's) is significant not simply as a storage space for the moments it shelters from obscurity, but as the impetus for active engagement in the course of which the memories emerge as both familiar and yet ever-new within the interactive space of the remembering and the remembered self. In the midst of Humbert's flamboyant feats of recall, it is ultimately the Proustian question of what effect recollection has on consciousness that is of paramount importance. Here it is not the truth value of Humbert's record that must concern us, but rather what his narrative tells us about memory and consciousness within the broader framework of creative resistance to passage, mortality, and loss.

"The remembered self," as Albright trenchantly observes, "is not linear, but a matrix ramifying backward in all directions, a garden of forking paths that converge in the present."⁸ Humbert constructs his narrative in full awareness of such "forking paths" among which he traces the origin of his pedophilia in general and his relations with Lolita in particular to his first young love in the summer of 1923 for a girl he names "Annabel Leigh:"

When I try to analyze my own cravings, motives, actions and so forth, I surrender to a sort of retrospective imagination which feeds the analytic faculty with boundless alternatives and which causes each visualized route to fork and re-fork without end in the maddeningly complex prospect of my past. I am convinced, however, that in a certain magic and fateful way Lolita began with Annabel.⁹

Although fully reciprocated, Humbert's first love, as he describes it, was destined to remain unconsummated. Annabel's death came hard on the heels of a desire-enflamed summer on the French Riviera, and it is in terms of intense passion on the verge of consummation that the relationship is recalled. By connecting himself with the speaker of Poe's much anthologized lyric "Annabel Lee," Humbert highlights - in terms of a literary memory his reader shares - the protraction of desire that the death of his beloved effects. At the same time, the homonymic Leigh that he affixes to his own Annabel evokes Byron's intimate relations with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. This connection is presumably intended to presage the incestuous relations with Lolita that Humbert is at pains to portray as fated when he draws her into a "kingdom by the sea" that he has made his own: "But that mimosa grove - the haze of stars, the tingle, the flame, the honey-dew, and the ache remained with me, and that little girl with her seaside limbs and ardent tongue haunted me ever since - until at last, twenty-four years later, I broke her spell by incarnating her in another" (15).

Humbert grounds this "incarnation" in what he insists is an instantaneous "recognition" of Annabel when he first sees Lolita:

[. . .] from a mat in a pool of sun, half-naked, kneeling, turning about on her knees, there was my Riviera love peering at me over dark glasses.

It was the same child - the same frail, honey-hued shoulders, the same silky supple bare back, the same chestnut head of hair (39).

Humbert's incantatory repetitions of "the same," his subsequent references to "young memory," his exclamations "I recognized" and "I saw again," and his claim to have "checked" Lolita's features, as he puts it, "against the features of my dead bride" (39) can only emphasize the irremediable loss of Annabel. Indeed, the deck is stacked heavily against the recapture of his boyhood love. Only one love can be the first and the love for Annabel is situated in a now distant childhood. Even if Annabel were not dead, she would no longer be the same "fey child" who entranced him. Humbert is at an impasse: Because his first love is both defined and sustained by unfulfilled desire, it must remain unsatisfied if it is to be preserved. The satisfaction of his desire with a child onto whom Annabel is projected can only eliminate the distinctive feature of the relationship he wishes to recapture. The obsessive iteration of the sex act to which Humbert resorts with Lolita can only

underscore the unrepeatability of Annabel. Far from being “the same,” as Humbert insists they are, Annabel and Lolita are, in this sense, mutually exclusive. For all of his efforts to establish an identity between them, his relations with them, like the girls themselves, could scarcely be more different. If Humbert’s love for Annabel is characterized by protracted desire, his relations with Lolita are marked by repeated gratification.

This makes us ask not whether Humbert’s explanation of his obsessive lust for Lolita is plausible, but rather *why* he would insist on pairing her with Annabel. Clearly there is more here than an explanation that panders to the very psychologists Humbert - in this instance echoing the novelist who authored him - despises. Humbert’s assertion, “I am not concerned with so-called ‘sex’ at all” (134) provides us with a point of departure for considering this question, for however improbable it may sound in the context of the events he describes in his “Confession,” this statement is true in a very important way. Humbert indicates that his pedophilia manifests a temporal problem: “Anybody can imagine those elements of animality. A greater endeavor lures me on: to fix once for all the perilous magic of nymphets” (134). Humbert’s nymphets inhabit a brief span of time that he describes using a spatial metaphor: “I would have the reader see ‘nine’ and ‘fourteen’ as the boundaries - the mirrory beaches and rosy rocks - of an enchanted island haunted by those nymphets of mine and surrounded by a vast, misty sea” (16). Humbert’s desire to “fix once for all” a phenomenon that is defined expressly in terms of its fleetingness highlights a distinctly modernist concern that also informs, as we will see, his juxtaposition of Annabel and Lolita: The preservation of a fleeting phenomenon destroys its essential quality of evanescence, yet without such preservation, the momentary is doomed to vanish forever. If particularity is predicated on evanescence, what possibility exists to forestall loss without compromising the particularity of what is preserved? The “same” on which Humbert insists when he claims to see Annabel in Lolita is predicated on not any actual similarity between the girls, but rather on this underlying issue that his relations with them reflect.

We can perhaps best appreciate Humbert’s situation if we recognize that with the juxtaposition of Annabel and Lolita he positions himself between two great literary paradigms of mortal resistance to temporal passage: Orpheus, the mythic poet whose desire for Eurydice is endlessly protracted by her

death and Don Juan, the legendary lover famous for his copious rehearsals of gratification. Orpheus resists passage by focusing, paradoxically, on loss. Each poetic invocation of Eurydice summons not his flesh-and-blood wife, but her absence. In so doing he wins duration - not in the sense of the commonplace that Eurydice is made eternal in his art, but because in her absence his desire is sustained by creative gestures that both fuel and are, in turn, fueled by that desire. Duration prolongs a particular event, but it also resists closure and new experience, which would interrupt that which is being prolonged. Thus after his beloved's death Orpheus rejects all other women so that his desire might be protracted. The price exacted for such sustenance is high: duration predicated on the absence of the desired object precludes fulfillment.¹⁰

Opposite Orpheus is Don Juan, the legendary lover who is defined by repeated gratification rather than protraction of desire. Sequence entails a rushing forward into new experience. Because the moment of satisfaction is fleeting, Don Juan is driven to one amorous adventure after another with women whose individuality is absorbed into the single list that brings him celebrity. The succession of amorous escapades erodes the particularity of his moments of satisfaction. For Don Juan repeated gratification precludes the protraction of desire while sequence and repetition absorb uniqueness and, far from making a given moment endure, devalue it.

Important to us in connection with *Lolita* is that underlying the antithetical modes these legendary lovers suggest for dealing with affairs of the heart (fidelity and fickleness) are the two distinct temporal constructs of duration and sequence that we find replicated in Humbert's account of his relations with Annabel and Lolita respectively. In this light we can see in the "Confession" a peculiar hybridization of Orpheus and Don Juan by means of which Humbert attempts to overcome the insufficiencies inherent in the temporal constructs these mythic heroes engage in their unequal contests with passage. Humbert's pairing of Annabel and Lolita manifests his confrontation with time, and we can say that *Lolita* is about passage rather than about sex in the same sense that the stories of Orpheus and Don Juan are.

Humbert's account of his relations with Annabel and Lolita reenforces what the legends of Orpheus and Don Juan document: ultimately neither duration nor sequence can forestall loss. Protraction is not preservation. Orpheus repeat-

edly invokes his dead beloved to sustain his love, and Eurydice's own image must eventually fade before that of her recurring absence. Thus, too, in the very absence that protracts Humbert's desire for her, Annabel fades and gives way to Lolita's presence, leading Humbert to admit: "this *nouvelle* Lolita, this Lolita, *my* Lolita, was to eclipse completely her prototype" (*Lolita*, 40). Far from regaining him his child love, Humbert's repeated gratification of desire with Lolita effects a second loss of Annabel: what had been lost to the death becomes lost also to memory. The replacement of Annabel with Lolita leads Humbert to a disturbing fantasy of protracted sequence as a means to thwart passage:

[. . .] the thought that with patience and luck I might have her produce eventually a nymphet with my blood in her exquisite veins, a Lolita the Second [. . .] indeed, the telescoping of my mind, or un-mind, was strong enough to distinguish in the remoteness of time [. . .] bizarre, tender, salivating Dr. Humbert, practicing on supremely lovely Lolita the Third the art of being a granddad (174).

Although only one name appears in this projected Don Juan list, the particularity of its bearer is absorbed into an unsettling succession of nymphets.

Significantly, Humbert understands the complexity of the temporal issue in which his desires are rooted. Having replaced Annabel with a new child-love, he admits: "I knew I had fallen in love with Lolita forever; but I also knew she would not be forever Lolita" (65). Does this mean that he can do no more than rehearse before his reader the insufficiencies of both duration and sequence enacted by Orpheus and Don Juan in their confrontations with passage? Whatever the limitations of the narrator he invents, Nabokov surely intends to accomplish more than this. Indeed, the very juxtaposition of the essentially irreconcilable temporal constructs of duration and sequence leads to a productive complication of the problem.

If we keep this in mind as we now return to Humbert's account of his love at first sight for Lolita, we recognize that in his efforts to link her with Annabel he succeeds in getting beyond the limitations of the durational and the sequential to which his legendary predecessors resort. Here is what Humbert says about the recognition of Annabel in Lolita that we have been considering: "The twenty-five years I had lived since then [that is, since his summer with Annabel], tapered to a palpitating point, and vanished. I find it most difficult

to express with adequate force that flash, that shiver, that impact of passionate recognition" (39). The source of Humbert's excitement is more profound than may appear at first glance, for he has recognized not only Annabel, but a very promising new possibility: namely to exert control not over passage, as Orpheus and Don Juan seek to do, but rather over the elapse of time.

The notion of exercising such control is echoed variously in the "Confession." Thus Humbert speaks of cutting away bits of film in order to place side-by-side events that in lived experience are separated by time. He is conscious, too, of such splicing within his own narrative. In this light, the age difference on which he insists between himself and the desired nymphet, like his repeated sexual contacts with Lolita, can be seen as emphatically rehearsed eradications of intervening time. Indeed, Humbert's "Confession" itself both depends on and effects an annihilation of the time between the events he records and the (now past) time of recollection in which the "palpitating present" of his narrative is constructed. Such mastery over intervening time creates the possibility for a present that ramifies endlessly both in the past and into the future.

In writing of Proust and Nabokov, Michael Wood observes that "[b]oth acknowledge that time can be regained only within time."¹¹ The fictional author of the "Confession" realizes this as well. It is precisely Humbert's acknowledgement of the need for passage that distinguishes him from Orpheus and Don Juan, for the elimination of passage would obviate not only that evanescence that informs his desires, but also his narrative and the memory that enables it. The loss of Annabel and the prospect of losing Lolita notwithstanding, Humbert recognizes the invaluable potential that the prospect of unfolding time offers. Thus he describes the nympholepsy that is predicated on an appreciable age difference between himself and the object of his desire as indicative of that potential: ". . . indeed, it may well be that the very attraction immaturity has for me lies not so much in the limpidity of pure young forbidden fairy child beauty as in the security of a situation where infinite perfections fill the gap between the little given and the great promised - the great rosegray never-to-be-had" (264). If Orpheus and Don Juan acquiesce to passage, Humbert, in true modernist fashion, learns to value it.

In writing of memory and time, Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin observe that "[m]odernist conceptions of memory might be regarded as con-

tradictory of modern regimes of temporality, tied as they were to constructions of history as linear progress."¹² Such contradiction is crucial for Nabokov who spares no creative effort to combat linear time and who engages memory as a powerful ally in this cause. Time can be neither reversed nor arrested, and yet the manipulation of intervening time underscores that it is highly susceptible to the workings of memory which successfully subverts the linearity and unidirectionality of time's arrow.

Here we can observe that a dependency on memory is the only thing that duration and sequence have in common. It is precisely on the strength of memory that these otherwise dissimilar temporal concepts can be reconciled and the failings specific to each overcome. The availability of a particular event to memory grants that event the potential for duration in repeated recollections. The event is thus neither lost to passage nor subjected to the protraction that threatens to absorb both its particularity and its evanescence. At the same time, memory's distinctly anti-linear dynamic means that each event does not simply give way to successive ones, but can instead be engaged in ever-new configurations. The fertile combination of repetition and novelty that memory thus enables forestalls the consciousness-dulling effects both of mere repetition and mere succession.

The *remembered* Humbert's dromomania marks a desperate attempt to outdistance time, whose swift passage is only underscored by the changes he remarks in Lolita's maturing body in the course of their travels. The *remembering* Humbert develops a more sophisticated way to confront passage. Rather than see the forward rush of time in terms of loss, he comes to see it as increasing both the span of time along whose continuum the remembering individual can freely range and the possibility that can be derived from that ranging. Thus in an article he has authored and which he notes in his "Confession," Humbert speaks of the mind "creating a continuous spanning of two points (the storable future and the stored past)" (260). Even as it renders immaterial the elapse of time, memory absorbs passage into creative identity.

"In writing," as one scholar of memory reminds us, "a *version* of experience is set down, a representation, the result of sifting and perspective. What has been written is not interchangeable with what has been experienced."¹³ But in *Lolita*, Humbert's writing *is* the experience. The process of recollection

enlivens the consciousness that was lacking in the time Humbert describes in his "Confession" and makes for a more a vivid experience than the one he lived. The past Humbert revisits emerges with renewed presence when memory surges into the bleak space of his lived life. As his consciously directed memory overrides intervening time, he arrives at the critical realization that any given present is the stuff of future memory that will link what is yet to come with what has already transpired. Thus Humbert speaks of "the stark lucidity of a future recollection (you know - trying to see things as you will remember having seen them)" (86). As Humbert works on his narrative, his memory-fueled consciousness enables him to see the events of his past in what might be described as a mnemonic equivalent of stereoscopic vision.

In his "Foreword" to Humbert's "Confession" the fictional John Ray, Jr., Ph.D. writes: "had our demented diarist gone, in the fatal summer of 1947, to a competent psychopathologist, there would have been no disaster; but then, neither would there have been this book" (5). This highly parodic psychologist misses the point. What he fails to understand is that had there been no narrative, Humbert would not have come to see beyond the bars that confined his consciousness at the time his "Confession" describes, and thus would not have come to recognize the real disaster, which is not the murder of Quilty to which Dr. Ray refers, but an even more serious crime: the defilement of Lolita's memory which his defilement of her body emblemizes.

Wood aptly notes that Humbert's memory "is better than his understanding."¹⁴ On the basis of the "Confession" we might even say that memory is itself better than understanding. In the course of writing Humbert finds himself overwhelmed by memories that take over to force him into conscious awareness. Thus in the latter stages of his narrative, he acknowledges "still other smothered memories, now unfolding themselves into limbless monsters of pain" (284) and describes himself as "squirming and pleading with my own memories" (287). The remembering self is powerfully altered by the experience of confronting a remembered self.

Describing his last encounter with Lolita - by then seventeen, married, and pregnant with her husband's child - Humbert notes Lolita's assurance that "[t]he past was the past" (272). The significance of the verb tense here goes beyond marking indirect speech, for to say that the past *was* the past is to say that this is no longer the case. Indeed, as Humbert writes his memory-

fed "Confession," the time between what transpired and the time in which he records it vanishes, and the past is understood to be very much part of the present. The dawning of his own memory-inspired consciousness makes Humbert aware - for the first time - of Lolita's as well, thus fostering what one critic describes as his "gradual recognition of the child's essential reality."¹⁵ Humbert realizes that, whatever else it may have been, his defilement of Lolita's body constituted memory-in-the-making - not only his own but, more importantly, hers as well. This is the real tragedy that Humbert ultimately confronts when he becomes aware of what transpired while he was "without memory" in the Russian sense of being "without consciousness," and goes on to face the consequences of such "withoutness" itself.

The "refuge of art" into which Humbert ultimately succeeds in transforming his cage is the space of a present that - in full awareness of its future pastness and past futurity - remains open to both renew and itself be renewed by what conscious memory can summon. Even as Humbert's narrative overrides the time intervening between what is remembered and the act of remembering it, so too does the time that has elapsed between the writing and the reading (and re-reading) of Nabokov's *Lolita* vanish with each new engagement of the novel. The endless possibility it both enacts and enables is shaped by memory and consciousness working in concert with that very passage they teach us to withstand. Thus time itself is productively engaged to subvert deterministic linearity and to forestall loss.

Notes

- ¹ Vladimir Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," in *The Annotated Lolita* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 311.
- ² Rainer Maria Rilke, *Werke in sechs Bänden* (Wiesbaden: Insel Verlag, 1980), 2:261. The English translation is my own.
- ³ Michael Wood, "Broken Dates: Proust, Nabokov, and Modern Time," in *Nabokov's World*, vol. 2 *Reading Nabokov* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 163.
- ⁴ Rachel Trusdale, "Transformations of Memory: Marcel Proust, Vladimir Nabokov and James Merrill," in *Nabokov's World*, vol. 2 *Reading Nabokov* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 199.
- ⁵ Richard Sennet, "Disturbing Memories," in *Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.
- ⁶ Daniel Albright, "Literary and psychological models of the self," in *The remem-*

bering self: Construction and accuracy in the self-narrative, eds. Ulric Neisser and Robyn Fivush, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33.

- ⁷ In this understanding of the interanimation of literature and life, Nabokov follows in the footsteps of the Russian Golden Age poet Alexander Pushkin, whose *Eugene Onegin* Nabokov translated and painstakingly annotated. Pushkin's characterization of Tatiana, the heroine of this novel in verse, arises from and vividly demonstrates a mutual interdependency of literature and self-construction. See Olga P. Hasty, *Pushkin's Tatiana* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1999).
- ⁸ Daniel Albright, "Literary and psychological models of the self," 33.
- ⁹ Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita*, ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (New York: Vintage, 1991), 13-14. All subsequent quotations from *Lolita* will be from this edition. Page numbers will appear in the text.
- ¹⁰ We can observe here that Orpheus's renown rests not on a codified body of texts but derives from his practice of the ephemeral art of poetic performance. (He does not set down his lyrics, but sings them to the accompaniment of his lyre.)
- ¹¹ Michael Wood, "Broken Dates," 167.
- ¹² Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, "Introduction," in *Regimes of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003), 15.
- ¹³ Douwe Draasima, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 45.
- ¹⁴ Michael Wood, *The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 115.
- ¹⁵ Ellen Pifer, "Lolita," in *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. Vladimir E. Alexandrov (New York: Garland, 1995), 317.