



THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

Volume 26, Issue 4 (2019), Pages 1-84

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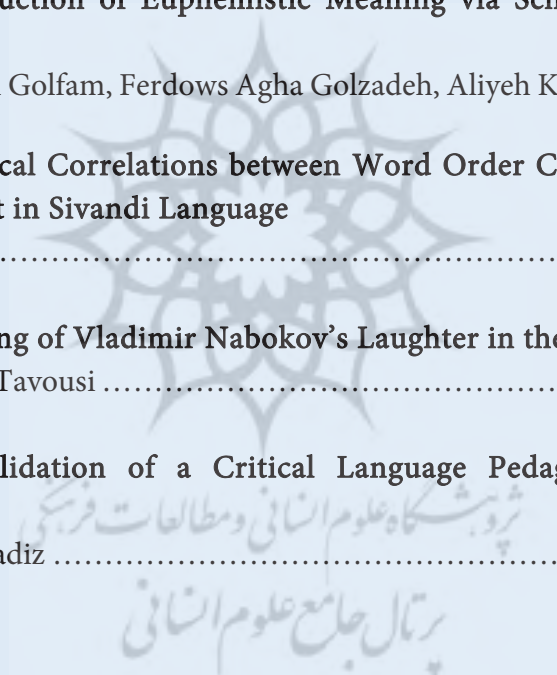
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Dear readers

In this issue of the journal of humanities, some papers have been reviewed and selected from different scholars in the domain of language studies. It goes without saying that areas of interest are diverse and theoretical frameworks in contemporary linguistics are expansive. Broadly speaking there are three major trends in linguistics. Formal linguists are interested in developing formal (read mathematical) rules and principles for studying different building blocks of language. So formal linguists take language as a system with well-defined patterns and symbols. On the other hand, functional linguists give priority to the role of speakers (not pure grammar) and the factors which lubricate language use. As a new offshoot of functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics emerged as a rival to the above mentioned theories. Nowadays, most of the forward looking universities with linguistics program are hard working to institutionalize their academic curriculum with Cognitive approaches to the study of language. In Iran TMU (Tarbiat Modares University) is the leading academic institute that included Cognitive linguistics in its PhD programs. In order to help researchers and academics who are desirous of cognitive linguistics, the guest editor has given more space to articles with cognitive interest and the appellation for this special issue of the journal comes from that.

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The Ecofeminist Reading of Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*

Jalal Sokhanvar¹, Sohrab Tavousi²

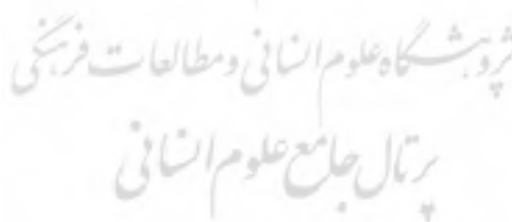
Received: 2019/7/1

Accepted: 2019/12/7

Abstract

This article aims at studying ecofeminism in Vladimir Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark*. Ecofeminism which is a widely-accepted branch of ecological studies deals with the similarities between women and nature in a work of literature. It emphasizes that women and nature are similar in many ways, especially in being manipulated, both physically and spiritually, by men. In the article below one certain identical feature of women and nature is analyzed in a novel by Nabokov: being nurturing and destructive simultaneously. The novel presents two main female characters and this paper shows how each one is attributed to one side of the environment. One of them stands for nurturing motherhood of nature, while the other one represents the destructive side of nature. The logical conclusion of such study is the claim that Nabokov whose *Lepidoptera* is widely known could not stand indifferent to the chaotic condition of the environment.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; Ecofeminism; Vladimir Nabokov; Moth



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Introduction

Vladimir Nabokov's seventh novel, *Laughter in the Dark*, was published in 1938 when Nabokov was living in Berlin. The story, as a consequence, sets in Berlin's lifestyle. The rich and educated Albinus with a mellow taste for art and literature and a benign family falls in love with a teenage whore and, as the book itself surprisingly clarifies in the very first page, "his life ends in disaster". By disaster Nabokov means losing family, eyesight, and life respectively.

Critics have welcomed *Laughter in the Dark* for its complicated imagery and tragic dimension. Dabney Stuart claims that it is a parody, and the 'object parodied is film, not literature' (Stuart, 1971: 51). What makes Stuart idea more plausible is the subtitle Nabokov had given to the book, deleted later though: "The Novel As A Film". Stuart emphasizes his cinematic reading by putting that "the mode of telling of the story is more important than the salient events of the story" (Ibid, 1971: 75). Parody is, indeed, Nabokov's cup of tea. Alfred Apple Jr. also puts finger on this aspect of the novel (Apple Jr., 1971: 263). The realistic reading of the novel, as David Rampton suggests, was encouraged by Nabokov himself, who in an interview said: "I tried to express a world in terms as candid, as near to my vision of the world, as I could. If I was cruel, I suppose it was because I saw the world as cruel in those days" (Rampton, 1993: 21). Julian Moynahan, with the same realistic look, comments that "Nabokov's great theme, which he shares with the Beethoven of *Fidelio* and the Gluck of *Orfeo* and *Alceste*, is that of married love" (Moynahan, 1971: 251).

In *Nabokov's Cinematic Afterlife*, Ewa Mazierska sees "the book as concerning mostly love or art, predominately men or predominately women" (Mazierska, 2011: 52). She puts her concentration on the cinematic aspect of the novel which is not deniable and comments that "the occupations and ideas of these characters pertain to the period after the First World War" (ibid). Laurie Clancy in *The Novels of Vladimir Nabokov* believes that *Laughter in the Dark* shares the theme of "the eternal triangle of love" with another novel of his, *King, Queen, Knave* (Clancy, 1984: 49). The theme and similarity with this novel are so obvious that Andrew Field calls *Laughter in the Dark* as "an adaptation or free translation from the Russian of *KQN*" (Field, 1973: 158). G. M. Hyde, on the other hand, assumes that this novel is a debt Nabokov always felt to be paid to Leo Tolstoy. He states that *Laughter in the Dark* might be compared with several of Tolstoy's late parables "formally and even thematically, in content it is closest to the story called "The Devil" (1977: 59); the one that Tolstoy wrote in 1889. In *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Painting*, Gerard de Vries and Donald Barton Johnson narrate from Boyd that *Laughter in the Dark* has often been regarded as "a demonstration of the ultimate kinship of moral and artistic vision" (2006: 24). They use this unclear statement to conclude that "Margot's vile nature is in sharp contrast with her physical beauty" and "Albinus's pursuit is a kind of discovery or revelation in art" (2006: 30).

What the research in hand does is, as a matter of fact, near to none of the comments given above. This study believes

that *Laughter in the Dark* is another debt Nabokov felt to give to the environment. In his line of authorship, starting from *Mary* to *Ada* and *Look at the Harlequins*, Nabokov follows a set of bright straightforward policies among which respecting nature is clearly shining, and *Laughter in the Dark* is not an exception. He shows his admiration of nature as the mother of human thought in his whole novels, each, of course, in its own way. In *Laughter in the Dark*, he shows a prostrate man entangled between two women, each represents one aspect of nature. In this view, Elisabeth stands for nurturing, kind and mothering aspect of nature, while Margot represents nature's destructive dimension. Ecofeministically speaking, Nabokov portrays these two aspects of nature through two female characters because he could comprehend that nature is female.

Ecocriticism

The word 'ecology' first appeared in the English language in 1873. Ecocriticism, as a branch of study whose main topic is ecology, is a portmanteau word made of Eco and Critic. Both words derive from Greek, *Oikos* and *Kritis*, and in tandem, they mean "house judge which may be disappointing to the lovers of green, outdoor writings" (1996: 69). In the very first pages of *Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm define ecocriticism as: "Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious prescriptive, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary

studies. (Glotfelty and Fromm, 1996: xvii)"

Ecocriticism has recently been improved and has divided into many branches and subdivisions. One of the main branches is ecofeminism. Ecofeminism argues that the struggle for survival of ecology is closely related to the project of women liberation. In its classic version, ecofeminism believes that women and nature are identical in that they both can give birth and can grow offspring up, both have been manipulated by men, and both entice men to usurp them. Ecofeminism, as Karen Warren claims, believes that the dichotomy man/woman and its aftermaths are based on the "logic of domination" (1990: 129) that women have been associated with nature, the material, the emotional, and the particular, while men have been associated with culture, the nonmaterial, the rational, and the abstract.

Ecocriticism: Is Nature Killer or Healer?

For centuries, poets and philosophers extolled the fruitful effects of a walk in the jungle: Beethoven drew inspiration from rocks and trees; Wordsworth composed while climbing The Pyrenees, and Nikola Tesla conceived the electric motor while visiting a park. In a book entitled *The nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*, Florence Williams gives a deep analytic account of the healing and inspiring side of nature. In this book, Williams makes eye-catching research on the fragrant cypress forests in Korea to introduce and analyze the local belief of "forest healing programs" (Williams, 2018: 52). *The Nature Fix* demonstrates that man's

connection to nature is much effective to his cognition and that even a little touch to the natural world can improve man's creativity and enhance his mood (2018: 75). Many more examples can be named with the same subject including *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *100 Simple Secrets Why Dogs Make Us Happy; The Science Behind What Dog Lovers Already Know* by David Niven, *The Normativity of the Natural: Human Goods, Human Virtues, and Human Flourishing* by Mark J. Cherry.

On the other hand, some other scientists and ecocritics have dealt with the opposite side of the environment. *Dangerous Natural Phenomena (Encyclopedia of Danger)* written by Missi Allen and Michel Peissel is a good example which Provides a brief description of twenty-five natural phenomena (drought, dust devil, El Nino, mudslide, storm surge, lightning, monsoon, etc.), possible damage each may cause, different forms of prevention, and survival instructions. Moreover, numerous studies have been done to show the effects of dangerous animals and insects.

The quarrel is reconciled by the third group whose thinkers, mainly ecofeminists, believe that nature is both healing and killing. A good example of this kind is *Roles of Northern Goddess* by Hilda Ellis and Hilda Elis Davidson. In this book which focuses on a dog's behavior, they make the statement that animals are both helpful and harmful at the same time. Another scientific book in this case is *The Professor, the Institute, and DNA* by Rene Jules Dubos. Susan Griffin, who is

known for her study on the similarities between nature and women, in her *Women and Nature*, claims that this characteristic is common among both women and nature. She states that these two are not predictable and can be helpful and harmful at the moment (Griffin, 1980: 64). Also, Andree Collard in *Rape of the Wild* puts that women reveal their wrath like environment, while they can get calm very easily (Collard, 1989: 198-206).

Nurturing Nature

As mentioned earlier, Albinus is a "rich, respectable, happy" (3) man who falls in a satanic love with a teenaged harlot that destroys him completely. The way he lives and the way he goes forward in his tragic love bring about some curiosities to mind. Why does not he get back after Margot's first wicked trick? Why does he seem to insist on making mistakes? Why does he, in spite of ruining her life and leaving her alone, still talk about his wife, Elisabeth, with admiration and respect? Why does not he return to Elisabeth even after he becomes aware of the conspiracy? Such irrational extraordinary fallacies are so far from acceptable from an aged man. These and more other questions need a different interpretation.

When the story starts, the reader feels certainty that Albinus lives in prosperous tranquility. This certainty is verified when the story continues and the present and past life of his are shared with the reader. They live in a white house with "white door", and their happy married life is replete with "laughing, kissing" (15). The emphasis on the whiteness of the building and the butterflies becomes more significant when it is compared to the darkness of Margot's place, the cinema.

However, the writer assures his reader that this prosperous life is combined with the elements of nature. In describing their marriage which is after a trip to “a mountain”, Nabokov writes: “the chestnuts were in full bloom” (5), and then attaches Elisabeth to the elements of environment: “her love was of the lily variety” (5), and in her pregnancy “she would greedily devour handfuls of snow” (5). Surprisingly, when Albinus falls in love and his temper changes at home, Elisabeth bridges this to “the weather” (21). Then, Margot intentionally sends a letter to Albinus’s house and it is given to Elisabeth. The mystery unfolds. Even now that she has been humiliated and left for another woman, Elisabeth does not lose her temper and love to her husband. She just goes into a psychic shock, because she has never “raised her voice in her life” (26). What makes Elisabeth wrathful to leave the house is not that he humiliated her “but because he had abased himself” (32). Partly because of her too much suffering and partly because of her vicinity with nature, Elisabeth has the power of intuition by which she can guess the occurrence of events before they happen. Times and again, like a cloud which foreshadows the rain, she guesses the events. When, kilometers farther, Albinus is driving on the road to perdition, she tells her brother, Paul: “I have a feeling that something happened” (44). This is an intuitive feeling coming to her about Albinus’s harsh accident which gifts him blindness. Later, she foresees her daughter’s death by waking with the “feeling very restless” (68). Also, when she wants to predict if he would come back, she does this by watching and behavior of a monkey “which had escaped from its owner and

was up in a tall elm tree”. Then she cries: “It won’t come back, it’s hopeless; it will never come back” and burst into tears (32). Her power of intuition, as the latter example shows, comes from nature because she is the representative of one side of nature.

When Albinus, after passing first night with Margot, wants to come back home, the elements of nature are in full bloom: “sparrows bustling about in the sky”, “young and fresh air”, “in the front gardens the Persian lilac was in bloom”, “white butterflies”, “All these things surrounded Albinus” (24).

Much later, when he gets blind and floating in the dark valley of misery and dreams about his past life, Albinus remembers “a landscape in which he had once lived, he could not name a simple plant except oaks and roses, nor a single bird save sparrows and crows, and even these were more akin heraldry than to nature” (73). This is a fact acknowledged many times that Albinus does not have even a surface knowledge of nature; what is ascertained at the end when he is naming the natural elements to Margot: “trees, wind, squirrel, and things I cannot name” (76). The already-mentioned fact is more significant when it is compared to Albinus’s lack of knowledge of women. His ignorance of Margot’s conspiracy in spite of all clues and signs is not because of love; rather, it is because he does not know women. Nabokov writes: “although he was good-looking, in a quiet well-bred way, he somehow failed to drive any practical benefit from his appeal to women” (5). He is a “good talker” and “good-looking”, but he cannot have relationships with women. Albinus’s main problem is his lack of

knowledge about women and nature which lead him to perdition.

Elisabeth, therefore, stands for the nurturing side of nature. She is always calm, tranquilizing, and considerate like a mother. She looks after Albinus more like a mother than to be like a wife: "She read all the letters which he wrote or received" (6). She is happy with a "mysterious smile" (5), and her gaiety has made his life bland. It is because of her motherhood and nurturing that Albinus, right after being infatuated and making mistake, feels the urgent need of seeing Elisabeth. When Albinus exits Margot's flat, Nabokov writes: "... he felt a queer sinking in the pit of his stomach as he reflected that, in a moment, he would see his wife" (13). And, that is why he confesses he cannot deceive her (21). Elisabeth is a mother in nature, and Nabokov is so careful in his style and uses the words "softly", "calmly", "unconcernedly" for Elisabeth when he describes the dialogues. Elisabeth is always calm and lives with serenity. This is clearly seen when her husband leaves her. She does not shout, nor does she lament. As Nabokov says, Elisabeth's life is full of "quiet, almost floating movements" (73). As a matter of fact, in comparison to irritable, exasperated Margot who is like the sea, Elisabeth is like a calm and tranquilizing river. She suffers and feels the ups and downs of life but, being a mother in character and in her real life, she just suffers sans lamenting.

Moth or Butterfly

Elisabeth is like one shoe and the other one is Margot. The fact that there are only two female characters in this novel is not accidental. In doing so, Nabokov wants his reader to make a comparison between

them. Comparing them, one can find how far and different they are. Their difference is seen everywhere even in their appearance. Nabokov, in characterizing Elisabeth, invests more energy on her moral – or spiritual – highness, while Margot is described as a woman whose only feature is her physical beauty. Margot is talkative while Elisabeth is always silent. While Elisabeth is calm, meek and forbearing, Margot is irritable and easily-seethed. As mentioned, Elisabeth's role in the story is to be a mother. She comes into the story as a mother. In the same paragraph by which she enters the story, she marries and becomes pregnant and gives birth to her child. On the contrary, Margot's love affair lasts more than half of the book without any talk or sign of offspring. It seems that Nabokov has created the former as a mother and the latter as a kid. Metaphorically, while snow is pregnancy habit of Elisabeth and "she would greedily devour handfuls of snow" (5), it melts away when Margot comes to Albinus's life (7).

These and many more show Nabokov wanted his readers to make a comparison between these two to make, by this, Albinus's entanglement more suppressing and choking. Before going into details about Margot as the destructive side of nature, one important comparison Nabokov has furtively made should be brought into the surface. That is: while Elisabeth is like a butterfly, Margot is identical with a moth.

Moth or Butterfly?

Moth and butterfly both belong to Lepidoptera class. The Lepidoptera is an order of insects which is one of the most widespread and widely recognizable

species of a living organism (Kristensen, 1999: 32). The most known Lepidoptera insects include: moths, butterflies, and skippers. The most noticeable difference between moth and butterfly which is clearly distinguishable is that moths are nocturnal while butterflies are diurnal; that is they fly in the days (Kristensen 1999: 60). This is, of course, a characteristic which nearly all entomologists have pointed out, and something easily distinguished by an unarmed eye.

Keeping the above-mentioned paragraph in mind, the reader finds out how astonishing it is that Margot works at a dark cinema, and Albinus finds and falls in infatuation with her there, while Elisabeth lives in a white house. When Elisabeth's child is going to be born, Nabokov emphasizes on the white color: "whitewashed, white-enameled passage", "whiteness of the place", "white-winged heads" (2). A few lines later, he describes Albinus's love for his wife by making him remember "white croup" (2). When Albinus wants to go home, Nabokov tells the reader of the "white door" (13) behind which his daughter is sleeping. When he stands beside Elisabeth, "part of the central heating apparatus (painted white)" (14) is emphasized. Next page, Albinus notices his wife's "white shoulder", and speaking to her, he again recalls "white receiver" (15). Her daughter's body is also "very white and thin" (45), and her hands "bony white" (47). Even the time when her daughter dies because of Albinus's stupidity and she should be wearing black, the writer does not forget to make a balance by bringing an ice-cream vendor whose cap is white (68). Later, when Albinus reentered Elisabeth's residence, he finds everywhere white: "the white parapet

to the right and in front of him" (69). Elisabeth's whiteness of spirit is strongly emphasized in the last paragraph of the novel where Nabokov, metaphorically, stresses on her glove which is "black outside, white inside" (83). This whiteness of her appearance and her behavior relates to her presence in the day. Never does the reader find Elisabeth at night throughout the whole novel. She belongs to the day and this is justified when one compares her to the nightly presence of Margot. Elisabeth is white and lives in a white atmosphere because butterflies walk and fly in the day.

Margot appears in the novel in "velvety darkness" (6). The scene in which the Margot enters the story is filled with the imagery of darkness: "dark gangway", "dimly distinguished her", "rich dark background", "she ... lost in the darkness", "her black frock", "sat in the darkness", "walk in the darkness", "gliding about in the dark" (6-7). Before that, when he is still daydreaming about her and feels he "is going mad", Albinus puts emphasis on Margot's affinity to darkness: "tomorrow I'll go there again and sit like a fool in that darkness" (4). Then, as Margot enters his life, Albinus feels entangled between two "dark thoughts, each of a different kind of darkness" (6). Nabokov's focus is on her job. She is a teenaged harlot who works "at nights": "Out of sheer boredom she used to pick out the best-looking man and throw him a dark liquid glance", "To amuse herself she made up her face for the sitting, painted her dry hot mouth, darkened her eyelids, although indeed they were quite dark enough" (9). He affirms this by adding dark to her makeup: "dark pink" (9). When she finds Rex, she goes to meet her in the "darkness" (12). Her place of

living before Albinus is “dark” (13). Apart from what was brought, pages 14, 15, 23, 24, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 52, 56 (two times), 57 (two times), 71, 72, 75 (two times), and 78 are the ones that Nabokov attributes darkness to Margot in one way or another. This is clearly not by chance. It is absolutely intentional, and the story gets more complicated when at the end of the story the attachment of darkness to Margot reduces. The reason is that from the time that Albinus goes blind the imagery and attributions of blindness comes from Margot to him. In other words, Albinus’s blindness, as his name suggests, metaphorically means his destruction and falling into a deep well; therefore, Margot’s role seems to be redundant. Anyway, Nabokov’s aim is to share two meanings: first, to show Margot’s villainous plans, second, to show her as a destructive moth which, biologically, should be working at nights. Moreover, as images and studies clarify, moths are usually dark and dark brown; the colors that are suitable for Margot’s work time.

The part which brightly shows this comparison especially Margot’s vicinity to moth is chapter 13 when Margot and Albinus have an excursion by the sea. In *The Peppered Moth: An Update*, Ken Miller discusses moth’s lifestyle. There, he claims that moths flatten wings against the body or spread out in a jet plane position in rest (2010: 32). “Margot lay spread-eagled on the platinum sand”, (32) Nabokov writes. Margot’s position is similar to that of a moth while sleeping. It should not also be forgotten that moths like the wet atmosphere and the sea (Miller, 2010: 43).

On the other hand, moths are of different colors; however, the most

widespread one is brown and dark brown. Nabokov writes: “her [Margot’s] limbs a rich honey-brown”, then continues to repeat the words “brown” and “dark”: “her wet dark hair”, “her brown polished shoulders”, “the close-fitting seal-like black thing she had on” (32). However, the darkest moths also have spots of other colors on some parts of their bodies (Miller, 2010: 64). In this seaside scene, Nabokov does not forget to bring various colors, mainly dark and blue: black (2), brown (2), white, dark, silver, blue, purple, orange, and red (2). This amount of color in a scene no more than three paragraphs is a bit strange. Adding the blueness of the sea and greenness of the trees behind them, one cannot deny the cinematic scene Nabokov has pictured. However, here different colors, in ecocritical reading, can connote different colors on the body of a moth particularly when Margot’s position of sleeping is exactly like that of a moth. Her color, her sleeping position, and her place of living are emphasized here to make Margot a moth. And one more undeniable document to attach Margot to a moth is the text itself. The insect moth appears 3 times in the story. Here is a brief summary of its appearance: first, right after the seaside scene, continuing naming the colors, Nabokov suddenly brings: “A clumsy moth flapped round a rose-shaded lamp and Albinus danced with Margot” (33). After giving latent clues to the reader about Margot’s being a moth, here Nabokov makes another hint by metonymically showing Margot is dancing and hanging around Albinus, and moth is hanging around a lamp. The second time, the day after a party in which Rex and many other fellow artists take part, as Rex and Albinus walking along a “passage

where there was a nice Linard – flowers and an eyed moth” (42). Right at the moment, Margot comes in: “At that moment Margot emerged from the bathroom... she ran down the corridor” (42). In this side: a passage and only one moth, on the other side: a corridor, and one Margot running. The third time, they are on a trip looking for a place to reside in, Rex is their driver. Margot, who disagreed with the hotel, finding it suddenly a suitable place to be furtive with Rex, accepted it contently. At the moment “a white moth fluttered round the lamp and fell down on the tablecloth” (59). Here again, moth is Margot who finds a good place after long wandering like the moth who turns around the lamp and resides on the tablecloth. In all three appearances of the moth, Nabokov is adroit enough to find a way to attach it to Margot. One cannot see the trace of a moth in the scenes where Margot is not. One more point is that Margot is restless and cannot stay in one place. This is what she shares with moth again. Moths are restless insects. They come and go suddenly from nowhere (Kristensen, 1999: 61). Nabokov says that there is something “acrobatic about her bad manners ... she would skip out and prance up and down the room” (24). Later, he describes how Margot’s appearance is: “suddenly she would appear from nowhere” (33). And most direct of all, Nabokov writes: “she loved settling in a new place” (72). This impatience, this restlessness, is another characteristic which attaches her to moth.

While moth is harmful and somehow dangerous to the life of many creatures, butterflies make life more beautiful. They never hurt others. Therefore, Nabokov, as a person who is a specialist in the case so

that he discovered two new species of Lepidoptera insect to the National America Museum, should not be negligent on this case either. That is why he compares his good character, Elisabeth, to butterfly (3). By doing so, and keeping in mind the comparison discussed so far, the reader will find two sides of nature completely and skillfully presented: Elisabeth as a nurturing side, which was elaborated earlier, and now Margot as the destructive dimension of nature is argued in coming lines.

Destructive Nature

Margot is harmful. She, in her pre-Albinus life, looks for adult and rich people to destroy their lives: “she used to pick out the best-looking man and throw him a dark liquid glance” (9). This very sentence proves that her demoniac is a part of her character. That is the reason that, after being Albinus’s mistress, she calls unknown individuals, orders flowers to their houses: “she made fool of worthy citizens and advised their wives to be less credulous; she rang up the same number ten times in succession, thereby reducing Mesers” (48). This desire to ruin married lives is more than a psychological symptom; it is, rather, a technique of characterization Nabokov has given to her. This is her character that she does not let Albinus go to his daughter’s death bed. If she let him do that, she would reach her dreams sooner by showing a little bit of humanity. She is like the sea and that is why she enjoys going to the seaside, and like the sea, she entraps Albinus by coming near to him and going far from him simultaneously (13).

“The disorder in the bedroom told its tale. His wife’s evening gowns lay on the

bed. One drawer of the chest was pulled out. The little portrait of his late father-in-law had vanished from the table. The corner of the rug was turned up” (25). This is how Nabokov describes the destruction caused by Margot when she, intentionally, sends a letter to Albinus’s residence to make his wife aware of her presence. The bedroom which was “quietly furnished, with, as usual, part of the central heating apparatus (painted white) reflected in the mirror” (15), and the rug that made her anxiously surprised: “she said as they entered the next room. “Heavens, what rugs!” (17) are now turned to mess. Like a flood, Margot comes and ruins everything. That is why Nabokov uses the verb “overtake” (13) to express Margot’s dominance over Albinus.

Conclusion

To sum it up, this should be taken into account that Nabokov has looked at environment by presenting two characters opposite to each other, and in the competition between them, the one that is filled with generosity and motherhood wins. He creates two female characters and gives one side of nature to each. He makes his protagonist leave and come back to live with the nurturing side of nature. In this

way, he gives his readers some more hints like disclosing the conspiracy to Albinus two times both in the open nature, once by Udo Conrad (62) and then by a squirrel by a stone (75), or describing Albinus’s idea of colored animated drawings as pictures all about the beauty of environment while he is still living in felicity.

In order to put into challenge the hierarchical system of Western culture, Nabokov has chosen the environment and its chaotic condition and by praising it he questions the culture and its concepts. Like his other works, he, in *Laughter in the Dark*, portrays a modern man straddling between two women each one representing one side of nature. Not only does he show this in the content of the novel, but he also presents this skillfully in the structure of the novel. As an example, each one of these two female characters has been depicted like one element of Lepidoptera: the nurturing side, in shape and function, is like a butterfly, and the destructive side is like a moth. Therefore, Nabokov starts by creating a male character living in prosperity, then putting him between two sides of nature between which this ignorant man is straddling.

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پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی
پرتال جامع علوم انسانی

خوانش رمان خنده در تاریکی نوشته ولادیمیر نابوکوف بر اساس بوم‌گرایی زن محور

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تاریخ دریافت: ۱۳۹۸/۴/۱۰ تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۳۹۸/۹/۱۶

چکیده

هدف این مقاله بررسی بوم‌گرایی زن محور در رمان خنده در تاریکی نوشته ولادیمیر نابوکوف است. بوم‌گرایی زن محور که شاخه‌ای از مطالعات زیست‌محیطی است به مطالعه شباهت‌های بین زن و طبیعت در اثر ادبی می‌پردازد. تأکید اصلی بوم‌گرایی زن محور این است که زن و طبیعت از جنبه‌های زیادی به همدیگر شبیه هستند به‌ویژه در اینکه هر دو، هم از نظر جسمی و هم روحی، توسط مردان مورد تجاوز قرار گرفته‌اند. براساس دیدگاه بوم‌گرایان زن محور، یکی از شباهت‌های بین زن و طبیعت، اینکه هر دو همزمان هم ویرانگر و هم درمانگر هستند، در این رمان نابوکوف مورد کاوش قرار می‌گیرد. این رمان دو شخصیت اصلی زن دارد و مقاله حاضر نشان می‌دهد چگونه هرکدام از این دو به یکی از جنبه‌های طبیعت پیوند خورده است. یکی از آنها نماینده طبیعت درمانگر و مادرانه و دیگری نمایانگر جنبه ویرانگر زیست‌بوم است. پیامد منطقی این مطالعه این است که نابوکوف، که پروانه‌شناس بودنش شهره عام است، نمی‌توانسته نسبت به وضعیت بحرانی محیط‌زیست بی‌تفاوت بماند. از این روی، نویسندگان مقاله پیش‌رو، کوشیده با بررسی عناصر محیط‌زیست نگاهی متفاوت با آنچه تاکنون در جهان بر آثار این نویسنده انجام شده است داشته باشد و افق تازه‌ای برای نابوکوف شناسان باز کند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: بوم‌نقد، بوم‌گرایی زن محور، ولادیمیر نابوکوف، پروانه

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