

## A Reply to Professor Boyd's Comment on My Paper

Akiko Nakata

Thank you very much for your generous comment that illuminated some important points.

I had missed the connection between Hugh's decision to return to the hotel caused by the raindrop on his head and Wittgenstein's "If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk." Indeed, the sentence, together with his "Either it is raining or it isn't," sounds in Nabokov's long, entangled sentence about the obscure raining.

I had not related "*more*" to Armande. I thought that it was one of the pointers to Nabokov himself, but to regard it as a sign to Armande's appearance is better.

"The first kiss, he felt on his bald spot" sounds like Armande's-she might love to kiss his bald spot when she is in a good mood, except-which leads Hugh back to the hotel and his death. She seems to wish his death, as we find her among the flames coming up "humming happily" towards Hugh in the last scene (103). The raindrop also has an association with "a raindrop fell on Charlotte's grave" in *Lolita* (118), but unlike the mother in despair-the sentence has a twist, though-the raindrop that falls on Hugh cannot be a teardrop of Armande. She may not be in the group of ghosts trying to influence Hugh to evade the catastrophe in the paragraph you cited.

I had thought of the ghost in *Hamlet*, but did not mention it because I did and do not have a clear picture including the ghost. The ghost of *Hamlet* appears to his son, and tells the story of his death and his being suffered in the limbo so that the son swears revenge on the murderer. The ghost prepares the plot of the drama. On the other hand, we do not see the ghost of Hugh's father or we have no idea what he wants. In the midnight just after his death, Hugh feels as if his father were inviting him to join him in

the hereafter. We do not understand why his father wants his son to die, but we only imagine that Hugh must feel guilty because he did not love his father so much. I cannot identify the ghost of his father anywhere. In place of his real father, Mr. R. takes a role of godfather to Hugh.

The italics for “*versionize*” seem connected with the italics of the passage you cited. According to the ghosts, they can influence the living only by “a breath of wind” “the lightest, the most indirect pressure” just like “the ghost of sound produced by a drizzle.”

As researching the documents of the SPR at the Cambridge Library is involved in this Kaken project, I will do it if possible. At least, I will be certain that neither Wittgenstein nor Moore had anything to do with the society.

For the participants who may not know this, I would like to add that the letters in the picture book, *The Vege-Men's Revenge*, are also italicized, imitating the legs of the vegetables in the pictures. The book by Florence Kate Upton seems to be referred to at the end of Hugh's life.

[The Vege-men's Revenge by Upton, Florence K. and Upton, Bertha:: \(1897\) | Peter M. Huyton \(abebooks.com\)](#)

Moreover, also analytic philosophers seem to me to depend on italics. Wittgenstein sometimes uses Italics, and Moore often uses them, almost on every page, for all the parts of speech, not only for nouns, verbs and adjectives. For example, I quote from “The Conception of Intrinsic Value”:

A kind of value is intrinsic if and only if, when anything possesses it, that same thing or anything exactly like it would *necessarily* or *must* always, under all circumstances, possess it in exactly the same degree. (290)

But *what* the difference is, if we suppose, as I suppose, that goodness and beauty

are *not* subjective, and that they do share with “yellowness” and “containing pleasure,” the property of depending *solely* on the intrinsic nature of what possesses the in a sense in which predicates of value never do. (297)

I am not certain if I can say that Moore depends on italics much more than the other analytic philosophers, but I think that we can see the ghosts, the picture book, and probably Moore-or Moore and Wittgenstein, or analytic philosophers in general-are related to italics, a hub of the novella.

It is stimulating that “raining or not raining” may be the long tradition in philosophy. If it is the case, did Nabokov know that? In this novella, we see a lot references on rain. Some of them show the narrator’s interest in, or memory of, raining, like this: “He expects his friend Kandidatov, the painter, to join him here any moment for the outing, one of those lighthearted hikes that romantics would undertake even during a drizzly spell in August; it rained even more in those uncomfortable times” (TT, 18).

I look forward to Professor Koyama’s comment on this topic.

#### Works Cited

- Moore, G. E. 1922. “The Conception of Intrinsic Value.” *Principia Ethica*. Edited by Thomas Baldwin. Cambridge UP, 1993,  
Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. 1957. Vintage,  
----. *Transparent Things*. 1972. Vintage,  
Upton, Florence Kate. *The Vege-Men's Revenge*. Longmans Green & Co., 1897.