A Reply to Professor Kuzmanovich's Random Late-Night Thoughts

Akiko Nakata

Zoran, thank you very much for your illuminating comment. I am deeply grateful to you for generously sharing your thoughts though you were not in good condition.

Your comprehensible explanations so helpfully make up for deficiencies in my discussion that all the participants, including those who might not be familiar with Moore's Paradox and Wittgenstein's arguments regarding the paradox, will be able to grasp the points of them. "I am female, but I don't believe that I am female" is the best variation of "p and I don't believe that p" I have ever seen!

The fictional "versioning" of the slowly revealed the difference between belief and assertion, which you indicated as a possibility that Moore's paradox opens up and its examples you found in "That In Aleppo Once" are really amazing. I have never thought about that. And Iago's belief and disbelief of Emilia's betrayal is a telling example of Moore's Paradox.

I only thought about the doubling of the characters in the last line of Othello:

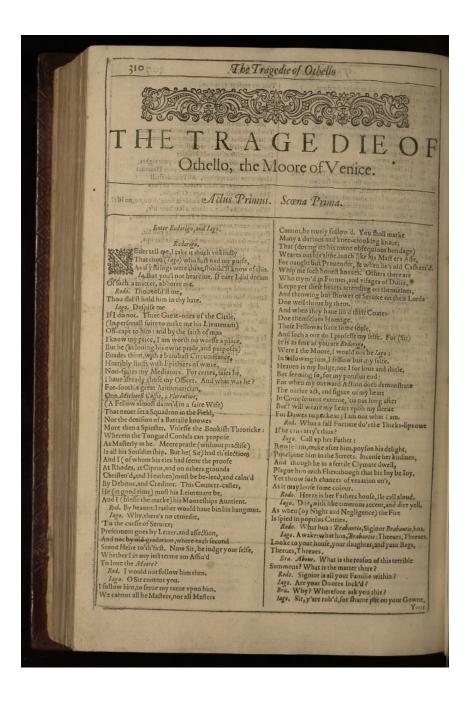
And say besides that in Aleppo once, Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk Beat a Venetian and traduced the state, I took by the throat the circumcisèd dog, And smote him, thus. [He stabs himself] (5.2.354-358)

In the scene in Aleppo are a Turk, a Venetian and Othello involved, and Othello helps the Venetian by killing the Turk who has beaten the Venetian. In the last scene, Othello commits suicide to punish himself for murdering Desdemona, where Othello is himself and the Turk he punished in Aleppo. Desdemona is the Venetian beaten by the Turk [Othello], and also the Turk who was strangled by Othello in Aleppo. It did not occur to me that I could relate these doublings or amalgams to Moore's paradox.

As for Alexander Chernyshevsky's last words, I compared it with Wittgenstein's last words in my note ¹ and discussed it as an example of the hereafter paradoxically revealed in a Japanese essay "Death and Concealment: *Transparent Things* and Other Works."² However, I did not discuss his words as related to Moore's Paradox.

Thank you very much for reminding me of another Nabokov version of Moore's Paradox in *The Gift*. I had completely forgotten it. What Fyodor's father experiences at the base of a rainbow, which follows the description, seems to have pushed it aside in my memory.

For your information, I add an image of the first folio of *Othello*. The page shows *The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice*.



othello, Moore of Venice, first folio - Bing images

Thank you very much again for your really helpful comment and please accept my apologies for this belated and meager reply.

Notes

¹ "Lastly, I would like to cite Wittgenstein's last sentences, which could suggest another example of similarity between Nabokov and Wittgenstein in treating rain in the matter of recognition. Two days before his death, Wittgenstein wrote his last note: 'Someone who, dreaming, says 'I am dreaming,' even if he speaks audibly in doing so, is no more right than if he said in his dream 'it is raining,' while it was in fact raining. Even if his dream were actually connected with the noise of the rain' (On Certainty 1969; trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe, para 676). Wittgenstein of course wrote it long after The Gift, and there is no record that he had read Nabokov at all. We know that this is nothing but a coincidence; however, it still allures us to read it as if it paraphrased the last paradoxical words by Alexander Chernyshevsky, who, on his deathbed, is deceived by the sound of dropping water from the flower pots on the upstairs balcony under the cloudless sky. 'Of course there is nothing afterwards.' He sighed, listened to the trickling and drumming outside the window and repeated with extreme distinctness: 'There is nothing. It is as clear as the fact that it is raining' (The Gift, 312)." Akiko Nakata, "Wittgenstein Echoes in Transparent Things," The Nabokovian 45 (2000): 48-53, 53.

² Akiko, Nakata. "Shi to Inpei—*Transparent Things* o Chûshin ni" [Death and Concealment in *Transparent Things* and Other Works], *The Rising Generation*, vol. 145, no. 8, November 1999, 20-22, 20.