

Title: "essence has been revealed to me...": Nonduality in the Prose of Vladimir Nabokov
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Abstract:

The 'essence' in the title, "sut' otkrylas'", taken from Nabokov's story *Ultima Thule* (1942), can be characterized by the (Non-)Concept of 'Nonduality'.

The 'essence of things' is correlated to the phenomenon of 'egolessness' and hence 'pure seeing', which I consider as the loss of an 'ego-filter.'

Any perspective appears as a kind of filter through which 'reality' ("one of the few words which mean nothing without quotes", as Nabokov says in the Afterword to *Lolita*) – is perceived.

What happens, if this filter – the personal way of perception – vanishes? In Nabokov's prose we find plenty of examples for this 'loss of ego'-phenomenon, which can be stated in two oppositional shapes: the experience of being 'everything' ("oneness with sun and stone", *Speak, Memory*) and being 'nothing' (as occasionally happens, for example, Professor Pnin on his park bench).

In my presentation I will show this phenomenon in some cases, especially the example of two early short stories, *Zvuki* (*Sounds*, 1924) for the experience of 'oneness' – and *Užas* (*Terror*, 1926) for the experience of complete ego-loss. The talk will close with a short interpretation of *Ultima Thule*, where Adam Fal'ter (the metamorphosis from larva to 'moth' (German 'Falter')) has already taken place) stands in the "true reality" („on to vne nas, v javi“).