

Title: America Obscura, or Segelkranz and Guinea Pig are Dead
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Abstract:

This paper examines Nabokov's rewriting of both the Russian and British versions of *Camera obscura* (1932, 1935) for an American audience as *Laughter in the Dark* (1938). Bringing to bear archival material relating to Nabokov's interactions with American agents and publishers throughout the 1930s, I argue that the novel represents a conscious repurposing (or *regifting*) of his Russian work in accordance with the tastes of both an American readership and Hollywood production companies. Exploring the changes made to descriptions of the film medium, the downplaying of specifically German markers, and the elimination of both Cheepy, the franchising guinea pig, and Dietrich von Segelkranz, the exiled German novelist, I situate *Laughter in the Dark* within the context of Nabokov's broader strategy of disseminating and promoting his work internationally.