

influence of the art of the past, and the torment of the modern artist in having to pander to sensationalism or experience the flight of pigeons (his public) from the palace (his art).

Surely, these brief descriptions of Barthelme's concerns show him to be "a writer of consistent vision and serious intent," as Stengel contends. It is my contention that the form and content of Stengel's work function to bring together Barthelme's admitted fragments, forming a most edifying *whole*.

Charles Stanley Ross

*VLADIMIR NABOKOV: LIFE, WORK, AND CRITICISM*

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1985. Pp. 47.

Reviewed by June Perry Levine

Charles Stanley Ross's brief introduction to Nabokov follows the format of the other studies in the expanding series of York Press guides to major authors: a biography (4 pp.), a chronological list of major works (5 pp.), a discussion of seventeen of Nabokov's novels (22 pp.), remarks on critical response (3 pp.), and an annotated bibliography of secondary sources (7 pp.).

What is the appropriate audience for this introduction? Clearly, it is not the general reader, for whom the quick trip through Nabokov's titles would be more rushed than those tours advertising "eleven European capitals in ten days." Nor do I think that undergraduates reading *Lolita* or *Pale Fire* in a contemporary fiction course will find themselves lead through any particular novel sufficiently to have a better understanding of the whole. The scholarly apparatus suggests that *Vladimir Nabokov* is designed as an aid to graduate students working in the area, but any serious student will have to use Field's bibliography and Schuman's reference guide, supplemented by Parker's research newsletter, because of the limitations of Ross's lists. Finally, whether this slim volume can be of help to the teacher of Nabokov's fiction depends on one's view of the pedagogical efficacy of the overview lecture. The center of Ross's book, the chapter on the major works is of interest and usefulness in direct proportion to the number of Nabokov's novels that the teacher has previously read. However, the more firsthand experience the teacher has with Nabokov's work, the less the need for the guide.

My calling into question the nature of the enterprise is not meant to disparage Professor Ross's command of his material, which is impressive. The biography offers an accurate account of Nabokov's life and some of the thematic preoccupations that grew out of it. The discussions of the novels, although limited to a page or two for each, is sound and stimulating, although I think a better procedure would have been to arrange this chapter thematically according to Nabokov's major concerns and to use the individual works to illustrate the issues. The weakest section of the study is the one on "Nabokov and His Critics," a melange of Nabokov's own critical writing, a passing glance at some books devoted to Nabokov, and Ross's own views, including his ambivalence about the relation of Nabokov's life to his art: not relevant, says Ross, yet he gives some of his precious space to this apparent dead end. *Vladimir Nabokov* is written lucidly (despite the use of "faunt" for "flout" on p. 32). My reservations about this volume reflect dismay at the increasing number of publishing ventures designed to provide short cuts to literary study by encouraging people to read about authors when their time would be better spent concentrating on the author's writings. The limitations of these very short but wide-ranging examinations of prolific major authors may exceed their usefulness.

Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi

*FEAR AND TREMBLING*

Translated by Minoo Southgate

Washington: Three Continents Press, 1984. Pp. xxx + 121

Reviewed by Saad El-Gabalawy

Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi is Iran's most important contemporary writer, now living as an expatriate in Paris, where he has found refuge from tyranny and repression in his native country. His voluminous works, which deal preeminently with interrelated sociopolitical and psychological problems, include over forty novels, collections of short stories, plays, film scripts,