

Cambridge University Press  
0521829577 - The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov  
Edited by Julian W. Connolly  
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## The Cambridge Companion to Nabokov

Vladimir Nabokov held the unique distinction of being one of the most important writers of the twentieth century in two separate languages, Russian and English. Known for his verbal mastery and bold plots, Nabokov fashioned a literary legacy that continues to grow in significance. This volume offers a concise and informative introduction to the author's fascinating creative world. Specially commissioned essays by distinguished scholars illuminate numerous facets of the writer's legacy, from his early contributions as a poet and short-story writer to his dazzling achievements as one of the most original novelists of the twentieth century. Topics receiving fresh coverage include Nabokov's narrative strategies, the evolution of his worldview, and his relationship to the literary and cultural currents of his day. The volume also contains valuable supplementary material such as a chronology of the writer's life and a guide to further critical reading.

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THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
NABOKOV

EDITED BY  
JULIAN W. CONNOLLY  
*University of Virginia*



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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**BRIAN BOYD** is University Distinguished Professor in the Department of English, University of Auckland. He is the author of *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* (1990), *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* (1991), *Nabokov's Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery* (1999), *Nabokov's Ada: The Place of Consciousness* (1985, second edn 2001), and "Annotations to *Ada*" (*The Nabokovian*, 1993–; as *ADAonline*, at <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/nabokov/ada/index.htm>). He is the editor of the Library of America's publication of Nabokov's English novels and autobiography (3 vols., 1996), and with Robert Michael Pyle, of *Nabokov's Butterflies* (2000). He is also editing, with Stanislav Shvabrin, *Verses and Versions* (Nabokov's verse translations), and with Olga Voronina, *To Véra* (Nabokov's letters to his wife). Among other work he also publishes on Shakespeare and on evolution and fiction, and is currently writing *Heads and Tales: The Origin of Stories*.

**JULIAN W. CONNOLLY** is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *Ivan Bunin* (1982), *Nabokov's Early Fiction: Patterns of Self and Other* (1992), and *The Intimate Stranger: Meetings with the Devil in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (2001). He also edited the volumes *Nabokov's Invitation to a Beheading: A Course Companion* (1997) and *Nabokov and His Fiction: New Perspectives* (1999). He has written extensively on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature.

**NEIL CORNWELL** is Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature at the University of Bristol. Among his authored books are *Vladimir Nabokov* (in the series "Writers and Their Works," 1999), *James Joyce and the Russians* (1992), and *The Literary Fantastic* (1990). He is also the editor of the *Reference Guide to Russian Literature* (1998) and *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature* (2001). He has translated

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

collections of the stories of Vladimir Odoevsky (*The Salamander and Other Gothic Tales*, 1992) and Daniil Kharms (*Incidences*, 1993), and his edition of Maiakovsky's *My Discovery of America* is forthcoming. He is currently completing a general study of the absurd in literature.

ALEXANDER A. DOLININ is Professor of Russian Literature in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the author of *Istoriia, odetaia v roman. Val'ter Skott i ego chitatelei* (1988) and *Istinnaiia zhizn' pisatel'ia Sirina. Raboty o Nabokove* (2004). He helped to edit and annotate Nabokov's collected works in Russian (5 vols., 1999–2000) and in French (Pleiade edition). He has written over 100 articles, with scholarly interest in Nabokov, Pushkin, Russian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Russian–English literary connections.

JOHN BURT FOSTER, JR. is Professor of English and Cultural Studies at George Mason University. He is the author of *Nabokov's Art of Memory and European Modernism* (1993), of numerous articles on the contexts of Nabokov's fiction, and of many other publications on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and thought. He recently completed a six-year term as editor of *The Comparatist* and has co-edited *Thresholds of Western Culture: Identity, Postcoloniality, Transnationalism* for the International Association for Philosophy and Literature.

GALYA DIMENT is Professor and Chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington, Seattle. She is the author and editor of four books, including *Pniniad: Vladimir Nabokov and Marc Szeftel* (1997). She is currently co-editing a Modern Language Association volume on approaches to teaching *Lolita* and writing a cultural biography of Samuel Koteliansky, a Russian translator for Bloomsbury's Hogarth Press.

ZORAN KUZMANOVICH teaches literature and film at Davidson College. He writes on the relations among arts, ethics, and politics. Since 1996 he has served as the editor of *Nabokov Studies*.

PRISCILLA MEYER is Professor of Russian Language and Literature at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. She published the first monograph on Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden* (1988), and edited Andrei Bitov's collected stories, *Life in Windy Weather* (1986). She is co-editor of collections on Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Nabokov, and has written articles on Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Nabokov, and Soviet prose writers of the 1960s–1970s.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Her most recent book is *How the Russians Read the French: Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy* (forthcoming).

ELLEN PIFER is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Delaware. She has written five books and dozens of essays on modern and contemporary literature. Her numerous studies of Nabokov include *Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita: A Casebook* (2003), chapter four of her *Demon or Doll: Images of the Child in Contemporary Writing and Culture* (2000), and *Nabokov and the Novel* (1980). She has been Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Lyon, France. Fellowships and grants include Fulbright and National Endowment for the Humanities awards.

BARRY SCHERR is the Mandel Family Professor of Russian at Dartmouth. His teaching interests center on both nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature, comparative literature, and film. He has published articles on a wide range of topics in Russian poetry and prose, with special interests in the work and career of Maksim Gorky, literary figures of the early twentieth century, Russian verse theory, and the poetry of Joseph Brodsky. His books include *Russian Poetry: Meter, Rhythm, and Rhyme* (1986); *Maksim Gorky: Selected Letters*, which he co-edited and co-translated with Andrew Barratt (1997); and, with Al LaValley, he co-edited *Eisenstein at 100: A Reconsideration* (2001).

SUSAN ELIZABETH SWEENEY is Associate Professor of English at Holy Cross College. She has published many essays on Nabokov's work, including other accounts of his American literary career. Recent publications include "Looking at Harlequins: Nabokov, the World of Art, and the Ballets Russes," in *Nabokov's World: Reading Nabokov* (2002); "The Enchanter and the Beauties of Sleeping," in *Nabokov at Cornell* (2003); and "Executing Sentences in *Lolita* and the Law," in *Punishment, Politics, and Culture* (2004). A specialist in postmodernist fiction, she also studies revisions of such popular genres as mysteries, romances, ghost stories, and folktales, and co-edited the volume *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism* (1999). She is now working on allusions to fairy tales in Nabokov's fictions about pedophilia.

LEONA TOKER is Professor in the English Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures* (1989), *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (1993), *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (2000), and articles on English, American, and Russian writers. She is editor of *Partial Answers: A Journal of Literature and the*



## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

*History of Ideas*. Current research interests include English fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, James Joyce, Nabokov, and literature as historical testimony.

MICHAEL WOOD is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Princeton University. He is the author of *The Magician's Doubts: Nabokov and the Risks of Fiction* (1994), *Children of Silence: on Contemporary Fiction* (1998), and most recently, *The Road to Delphi: the Life and Afterlife of Oracles* (2003). He writes frequently on film and literature for the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review of Books*, and other journals.

BARBARA WYLLIE has contributed articles on Nabokov to the *Reference Guide to Russian Literature*, ed. Neil Cornwell (1998); *Nabokov at the Limits: Redrawing Critical Boundaries*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (1999); *Torpid Smoke: The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. Steven G. Kellman and Irving Malin (2000); the special edition of the *Revue des études slaves*: "Vladimir Nabokov dans le miroir du XXe siècle" (2000); and the first of two festschrift volumes of the *New Zealand Slavonic Journal* in honor of Arnold McMillin (2002). Her book, *Nabokov at the Movies: Film Perspectives in Fiction*, was published in 2003. She is assistant editor of the *Slavonic and East European Review* at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London.

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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The Library of Congress system of transliteration (without diacritics) has been used throughout the bibliographic references and the main text of the essays, with the following exceptions:

- a. For personal names in the main text, the letters ю and я are rendered as “yu” and “ya” at the beginning of the name, and the sequence ый and ий is rendered as “y” at the end of the name (e.g., “Yakov,” “Yury,” “Bely”).
- b. The spelling used by Nabokov for names of figures in his works has been retained (e.g., “Chernyshevski” and “Koncheyev”).
- c. We have retained the familiar English spelling of well-known Russian figures (e.g., “Tolstoy,” “Gogol”). Soft signs occurring within well-known proper names (e.g., “Olga”) are generally not denoted to facilitate reading for the non-specialist.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Ada*      *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*. 1969. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- AnL*      *The Annotated Lolita*. Ed. with preface, introduction, and notes by Alfred Appel, Jr. 1970. Revised edition: New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- BS*      *Bend Sinister*. 1947. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- CE*      *Conclusive Evidence: A Memoir*. New York: Harper, 1951.
- Def*      *The Defense*. Trans. Michael Scammell in collaboration with the author. 1964. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Des*      *Despair*. 1966. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- En*      *The Enchanter*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov. 1986. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- EO*      *Eugene Onegin. A Novel in Verse by Aleksandr Pushkin*. Trans. with commentary by Vladimir Nabokov. Bollingen Series 72. 4 vols. 1964. Revised edition: Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Eye*      *The Eye*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov in collaboration with the author. 1965. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Gift*      *The Gift*. Trans. Michael Scammell with the collaboration of the author. 1963. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- Glory*      *Glory*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov in collaboration with the author. 1971. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- IB*      *Invitation to a Beheading*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov in collaboration with the author. 1959. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- KQK*      *King, Queen, Knave*. Trans. Dmitri Nabokov in collaboration with the author. 1968. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- LATH*      *Look at the Harlequins!* 1974. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Laugh*      *Laughter in the Dark*. 1938. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- LDQ *Lectures on Don Quixote*. Ed. Fredson Bowers. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / Bruccoli Clark, 1983.
- LL *Lectures on Literature*. Ed. Fredson Bowers. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / Bruccoli Clark, 1980.
- LRL *Lectures on Russian Literature*. Ed. Fredson Bowers. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / Bruccoli Clark, 1981.
- Lo *Lolita*. 1955. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- Lo Screen *Lolita: A Screenplay*. 1974. New York: Vintage International, 1997.
- Mary *Mary*. Trans. Michael Glenny in collaboration with the author. 1970. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- NWL *Dear Bunny, Dear Volodya. The Nabokov–Wilson Letters, 1940–1971*. Revised and expanded edition. Ed., annotated, and with an introductory essay by Simon Karlinsky. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- NG *Nikolai Gogol*. 1944. New York: New Directions, 1961.
- PF *Pale Fire*. 1962. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- Pnin *Pnin*. 1957. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- PP *Poems and Problems*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.
- RLSK *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*. 1941. New York: Vintage International, 1992.
- SL *Selected Letters, 1940–1977*. Ed. Dmitri Nabokov and Matthew J. Bruccoli. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / Bruccoli Clark Layman, 1989.
- SM *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. 1967. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- SO *Strong Opinions*. 1973. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- Song *The Song of Igor's Campaign*. Trans. Vladimir Nabokov. 1960. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.
- Stikhi *Stikhi*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1979.
- Stories *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*. 1995. New York: Vintage International, 1997.
- Ssoch *Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v piati tomakh*. 5 vols. St. Petersburg: Simpozium, 1999–2000.
- TT *Transparent Things*. 1972. New York: Vintage International, 1989.
- USSR *The Man from the U.S.S.R. and Other Plays*. Introductions and translations by Dmitri Nabokov. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / Bruccoli Clark, 1984.

## CHRONOLOGY

Dates before the departure of the Nabokov family from Russia in April 1919 are given in Old Style (Julian Calendar); the New Style date (Gregorian Calendar) is given in parentheses. In the nineteenth century, the Julian Calendar lagged the Gregorian Calendar by twelve days; in the twentieth century, the discrepancy grew to thirteen days. Thus, while April 10, 1899 – the date of Vladimir Nabokov’s birth in Russia – was April 22 in the West, it became April 23 in 1900. The sources for the information contained in this chronology are Brian Boyd’s two-volume biography of Nabokov (*Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* and *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years*), the chronologies Boyd prepared for the Library of America editions of Nabokov’s English-language novels and *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, Michael Juliar’s *Vladimir Nabokov: A Descriptive Bibliography*, the volume entitled *Nabokov’s Butterflies* that was edited and annotated by Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle, and Stacy Schiff’s *Véra*.

- 1899 Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov (VN) born on April 10 (April 23) at 47 Bolshaia Morskaiia Street, St. Petersburg. Parents are Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov (VDN [1870–1922]), a teacher of criminal law at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence, and Elena Ivanovna Nabokov (née Rukavishnikov [1876–1939]).
- 1900 Brother Sergei born February 28 (March 13).
- 1901 VN’s Rukavishnikov grandparents die. Mother inherits country estate Vyra, and VN’s uncle Vasily inherits country estate Rozhdestveno. Mother travels with Vladimir and Sergei to Biarritz, France.
- 1902 VN and Sergei learn English from British governess, Rachel Home. Sister Olga born December 24 (January 5, 1903).
- 1903 VDN responds to pogrom in Kishinev in April by writing article in journal *Pravo* that criticizes governmental attitudes fostering climate of anti-Semitism. Family travels to Paris and Nice in the fall.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1904 Russo-Japanese War begins in February. Nabokov family travels to Rome, Naples, and Beaulieu. National congress of zemstvos (local assemblies) meets in St. Petersburg, calls for major political changes (constitution, civil rights); final session meets in Nabokov home.
- 1905 January 9 (January 22) – “Bloody Sunday” – tsarist troops fire on demonstrators in St. Petersburg. VDN deprived of court title after denunciation of the incident in the St. Petersburg Duma (City Council). Family travels to Abbazia (now Opatija, Croatia) in February. VDN returns to St. Petersburg and renews involvement in political activity; becomes one of founders of Constitutional Democratic (CD) Party.
- 1906 Family returns to Russia. Swiss governess Cécile Miauton joins family. Sister Elena born March 18 (March 31). VDN continues pushing for major political reform in State Duma until its dissolution in July. VN tutored in Russian by village school teacher Vasily Zhernosekov. VDN becomes editor of *Rech'* newspaper.
- 1907 VN seriously ill with pneumonia; studies books on butterflies while recovering.
- 1908 VDN serves three-month sentence in Kresty prison for signing Vyborg Manifesto in 1906 calling for civil disobedience.
- 1909 Family travels to Biarritz, where VN falls in love with nine-year-old girl, Claude Deprès (“Collette” in VN’s memoir *Speak, Memory*).
- 1910 VN pursues his interests in lepidoptery. Family travels to Germany in fall.
- 1911 VN enters Tenishev School in St. Petersburg. Brother Kirill born June 17 (June 30).
- 1912 VN studies drawing with Mstislav Dobuzhinsky.
- 1914 Composes first poem. Germany declares war on Russia. VDN called up for military service as reservist. St. Petersburg is renamed Petrograd.
- 1915 VN bedridden with typhus. After recovering, begins serious romantic affair with Valentina (“Liusia”) Evgenievna Shulgina. In November he co-edits school literary journal, *Iunaia mysl'* (*Young Thought*), in which his first published poem, “Osen'” (“Fall”) appears.
- 1916 Publishes translation of Alfred de Musset’s “La Nuit de décembre” in *Iunaia mysl'*. Publishes collection of poetry entitled *Stikhi* (*Poems*) at his own expense. Poem “Lunnaia greza” (“Lunar Reverie”) appears in journal *Vestnik Evropy*. Uncle Vasily Rukavishnikov dies, leaving VN his Rozhdestveno estate, worth several million dollars.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1917 February 27 (March 12) – February Revolution. Tsar Nicholas II abdicates; VDN accepts post in new Provisional Government. VN has appendix removed in May. Writes “Dozhd’ Proletel” (“The Rain Has Flown”), the earliest poem he would include in his later collection *Poems and Problems* (1970). Makes selection of poems to appear in collection *Dva puti* (*Two Paths*) with Tenishev School companion Andrei Balashov (published 1920). VDN resigns from the Provisional Government with other members of the CD party. October 25 (November 7) – Bolshevik Revolution. VDN sends sons Vladimir and Sergei to Crimea to avoid their conscription into the Red Army; they are soon joined by their mother and siblings. Arrested and imprisoned for several days by the Bolsheviks, VDN leaves Petrograd and rejoins his family in December. VN composes first chess problems.
- 1918 German army takes Crimea in April. VN hunts butterflies, composes poems. After departure of German troops, VDN becomes Minister of Justice in Crimean Provisional Government.
- 1919 Facing approach of Bolshevik troops, Nabokov family departs Sebastopol for Athens on Greek ship on April 2 (April 15). From Athens, Nabokov family moves on to London. VN enters Trinity College, Cambridge, in October; begins studying zoology and then modern languages (French and Russian). Writes poetry in Russian and in English; also writes first entomological paper (published 1920).
- 1920 Nabokov family moves to Berlin; VDN helps establish Russian-language newspaper *Rul’* (*The Rudder*). VN’s poem “Home” appears in *Trinity Magazine*; his poem “Remembrance” appears in *The English Review*. He also publishes Russian poems in *Rul’* using the pen name “Cantab.”
- 1921 Publishes poems and the short story “Nezhit’” (“The Wood-Sprite”) in *Rul’* in January, using for the first time the pen name “Vladimir Sirin.” Finishes translation of Romain Rolland’s *Colas Breugnon* (published as *Nikolka Persik* in 1922). During summertime visit to Berlin, falls in love with Svetlana Romanovna Siewert.
- 1922 On March 28, VDN is shot and killed while trying to defend Pavel Miliukov from assassination by two monarchist gunmen. In June, VN receives BA degree and moves to Berlin, where he becomes engaged to Svetlana Siewert. Receives commission to translate Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Collection of poems entitled *Grozd’* (*The Cluster*) published in December.



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- 1923 Poetry collection *Gornii put'* (*The Empyrean Path*) appears in January. Engagement with Svetlana Siewert ends because of her parents' concern with Nabokov's financial situation. *Ania v strane chudes*, Nabokov's version of *Alice in Wonderland*, is published in March. Two-act play entitled *Smert'* (*Death*) published in May. Nabokov meets Véra Evseevna Slonim (1902–1991) at a charity ball in May. Works as agricultural laborer in South of France during summer. Writes five-act verse play, *Tragediia gospodina Morna* (*The Tragedy of Mr. Morn*).
- 1924 Publishes several short stories, including “Kartofel'nyi elf” (“The Potato Elf”), “Katastrofa” (translated as “Details of a Sunset”), and “Bakhman” (“Bachmann”) in Russian periodicals. Drama *Polius* (*The Pole*) published in August. Nabokov supports himself by giving private lessons in tennis, boxing, Russian, and English.
- 1925 Marries Véra Evseevna Slonim in May. Writes first novel, *Mashen'ka* (*Mary*). Publishes stories, including “Vozvrashchenie Chorba” (“The Return of Chorb”) and “Putevoditel' po Berlinu” (“A Guide to Berlin”).
- 1926 *Mashen'ka* published in March.
- 1927 Short story “Uzhas” (“Terror”) published in *Sovremennye zapiski*, the premier literary journal of the Russian emigration. Long narrative poem “Universitetskaia poema” (“A University Poem”) also appears in *Sovremennye zapiski*.
- 1928 Novel *Korol', dama, valet* (*King, Queen, Knave*) published in September.
- 1929 Completes work on novel *Zashchita Luzhina* (*The Defense*). Novel appears serially in *Sovremennye zapiski* in 1929–1930. Collection of stories and poems entitled *Vozvrashchenie Chorba* (*The Return of Chorb*) appears in December.
- 1930 Short novel *Sogliadatai* (*The Eye*) published in *Sovremennye zapiski* in November. *Zashchita Luzhina* appears in book form.
- 1931 Novel *Podvig* (*Glory*) published serially in *Sovremennye zapiski*.
- 1932 *Podvig* published in book form. Nabokov travels to Paris to give public readings of his work. Novel *Kamera obskura* (*Laughter in the Dark*) appears serially in *Sovremennye zapiski* in 1932–1933.
- 1933 Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany in January. *Kamera obskura* appears in book form.
- 1934 Novel *Otchaianie* (*Despair*) appears serially in *Sovremennye zapiski*. Son Dmitri born in May.

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- 1935 Novel *Priglasenie na kazn'* (*Invitation to a Beheading*) published serially in *Sovremennye zapiski* (1935–1936). Nabokov translates *Otchaianie* into English.
- 1936 *Otchaianie* published in book form in February. English translation of *Kamera obskura* by Winifred Roy published with title *Camera Obscura*; Nabokov dissatisfied with translation. “Mademoiselle O,” story in French, published in April. Véra loses job at engineering company because she is Jewish.
- 1937 Nabokov leaves Germany for a reading tour in January; he would never return. Essay on Pushkin, “Pouchkine ou le vrai et le vraisemblable” (“Pushkin, or the Real and the Plausible”) published in March. Nabokov becomes involved in romantic liaison with Irina Guadinini in Paris. Travels with family to Cannes; ends affair with Guadanini. *Despair*, Nabokov’s translation of *Otchaianie*, appears in England. Last Russian novel, *Dar* (*The Gift*), begins serial publication in *Sovremennye zapiski*; novel is published 1937–1938, with the exception of chapter four, which editors of journal refuse to publish because they disapprove of the treatment of its subject, the life of the nineteenth-century writer N. G. Chernyshevski.
- 1938 Two dramas, *Sobytie* (*The Event*) and *Izobretenie Val'sa* (*The Waltz Invention*), published. *Priglasenie na kazn'* appears in book form. *Laughter in the Dark*, Nabokov’s translation of *Kamera obskura*, comes out in the United States. *Sogliadatai* (*The Eye*), a collection of short fiction, appears in October.
- 1939 Writes *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, his first English-language novel. Travels to England looking for employment. Mother dies in Prague. Germany invades Poland on September 1. France attacks Germany on September 7. Nabokov receives and accepts offer to teach summer course in Russian literature at Stanford University. Writes *Volshebnik* (*The Enchanter*).
- 1940 Germany begins invasion of France on May 12. Nabokov departs France soon afterwards with Véra and Dmitri aboard ocean liner *Champlain*. Arrives New York May 27. Vacations at summer home of Mikhail Karpovich in Vermont. Rents apartment in New York City. Meets Edmund Wilson. Writes reviews for the *New Republic* and the *New York Sun*. Works on Lepidoptera at the American Museum of Natural History.
- 1941 Gives lectures on Russian literature at Wellesley College. *The Event* is produced in New York City. Nabokov is driven to Stanford by former student Dorothy Leuthold; on route west, Nabokov

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- discovers new species of butterfly he names *Neonympha dorothea dorothea* in Leuthold's honor (the butterfly has since been reclassified as a subspecies, *Cyllopsis pertepida dorothea*). Begins one-year appointment as Resident Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Wellesley College in the fall. Begins helping put Lepidoptera collection at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology in order. Publishes articles on Lepidoptera in the *Journal of the New York Entomological Society*. *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* is published by New Directions in December.
- 1942 Appointed Research Fellow at the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Short poem "The Refrigerator Awakes" becomes Nabokov's first poem published in the *New Yorker*. Long Russian poem "Slava" ("Fame"), which Véra later points to as showing Nabokov's central interest in the "otherworldly," appears in *Novyi zhurnal*.
- 1943 Begins teaching non-credit Russian language course at Wellesley College. Receives Guggenheim Fellowship to work on new novel, *Bend Sinister*. During summer, collects butterflies and works on novel in Utah.
- 1944 Short monograph entitled *Nikolai Gogol* published by New Directions. Nabokov appointed lecturer at Wellesley College.
- 1945 Collection of translations entitled *Three Russian Poets* published by New Directions. Poem "An Evening of Russian Poetry" published in *New Yorker* in March. First short story published in the *New Yorker* – "Double Talk" (later retitled "Conversation Piece, 1945") – appears in June.
- 1946 Works on lectures for course on Russian literature at Wellesley. Finishes *Bend Sinister*.
- 1947 *Bend Sinister* published in June. Nabokov offered teaching appointment at Cornell. Collection *Nine Stories*, containing stories translated from Russian as well as English-language stories, appears in December.
- 1948 Short story "Signs and Symbols" published in the *New Yorker* in May. Excerpts from *Conclusive Evidence*, first version of autobiography, published in the *New Yorker*. Nabokov moves to Ithaca and begins teaching Russian literature at Cornell.
- 1949 Continues to publish excerpts from autobiography and to teach at Cornell. Participates in writers' conference in Utah in July.
- 1950 Begins working on novel entitled *The Kingdom by the Sea*, which later evolves into *Lolita*. Discouraged, he is prevented from burning

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- his early drafts by Véra. Begins teaching major course on European fiction at Cornell.
- 1951 *Conclusive Evidence* published in February. Nabokov continues work on *Lolita*. Near Telluride, Colorado in July, Nabokov catches first female of *Lycaeides argyrognomon sublivens*, male specimens of which he had studied at the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Nabokov later uses this setting for a key passage in *Lolita*.
- 1952 Teaches Russian literature and a course on the novel as a Visiting Lecturer at Harvard during the spring. Receives second Guggenheim Fellowship. *Dar* published in (complete) book form. Returns to Cornell to teach in the fall. Collection of Russian poems, *Stikhotvoreniia 1929–1951 (Poems 1929–1951)*, published in Paris.
- 1953 Takes leave from Cornell to work on translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. Publishes first chapter of *Pnin* in the *New Yorker*. Finishes writing *Lolita* in December.
- 1954 *Drugie berega*, a revised Russian version of Nabokov's autobiographical memoir, published. Nabokov unsuccessful in finding an American publisher for *Lolita*.
- 1955 *Lolita* accepted for publication by Maurice Girodias, owner of Olympia Press in France. Named one of the best books of 1955 by Graham Greene in the London *Sunday Times*.
- 1956 John Gordon denounces *Lolita* in the London *Sunday Express*, sparking controversy over the novel. Nabokov's collection of Russian short stories, *Vesna v Fial'te i drugie rasskazy (Spring in Fialta and Other Stories)*, published in New York. French government bans *Lolita* along with several other Olympia Press titles (ban is overturned in January 1958).
- 1957 *Pnin* published; receives nomination for National Book Award. The *Anchor Review* publishes passages from *Lolita* together with Nabokov's essay, "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," and a critical essay by Fred Dupee.
- 1958 Nabokov's translation of Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* is published. *Lolita* published by G. P. Putnam's Sons; achieves instant success. Collection of short stories, *Nabokov's Dozen*, appears. Nabokov takes a year's leave of absence from Cornell.
- 1959 Resigns from Cornell. Travels to Europe. Small collection of poetry entitled *Poems* appears. *Invitation to a Beheading*, Dmitri Nabokov's translation of *Priglasenie na kazn'*, published. *Lolita* published in England.

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- 1960 Works on screenplay for *Lolita*. *The Song of Igor's Campaign*, Nabokov's translation of medieval Russian epic, published.
- 1961 Works on *Pale Fire*, finishes novel in December. Takes rooms in Montreux Palace Hotel, Switzerland.
- 1962 *Pale Fire* published. Stanley Kubrick's film version of *Lolita* released.
- 1963 *The Gift*, translation of *Dar* largely completed by Michael Scammell with Nabokov's corrections, appears in May. *Notes on Prosody* published.
- 1964 Nabokov's last public reading takes place in April, at Harvard University. His translation of *Eugene Onegin* with extensive notes and commentary published in June. *The Defense*, Michael Scammell's translation of *Zashchita Luzhina*, appears in September.
- 1965 Edmund Wilson's critical review of *Eugene Onegin* triggers heated debate in periodical press. *The Eye*, Dmitri Nabokov's translation of *Sogliadatai*, appears in the fall.
- 1966 *The Waltz Invention*, translation of *Izobretenie Val'sa*, published. *Despair*, Nabokov's revision of his early translation of *Otchaianie*, appears.
- 1967 Short-story collection *Nabokov's Quartet* appears. Revised version of Nabokov's memoir, *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*, published. Nabokov's Russian translation of *Lolita* published.
- 1968 *King, Queen, Knave*, Dmitri Nabokov's translation of *Korol', dama, valet*, extensively revised by Nabokov, appears in April. Anthology entitled *Nabokov's Congeries* (later entitled *The Portable Nabokov*) published in September.
- 1969 *Ada* published in late spring. Joseph Papp stages Russell McGrath's adaptation of *Invitation to a Beheading* at the New York Shakespeare Festival in March.
- 1970 *Mary*, the translation of *Mashen'ka* by Michael Glenny and Nabokov, published in September.
- 1971 Musical based on *Lolita – Lolita, My Love* – has unsuccessful run in Philadelphia and Boston. Collection of poetry and chess problems entitled *Poems and Problems* published in March. *Glory*, Nabokov's translation of *Podvig*, published in December.
- 1972 *Transparent Things* published in October.
- 1973 *A Russian Beauty and Other Stories*, a collection of stories originally written in Russian, appears in April. *Strong Opinions*, a collection of interviews and notes, appears in November. Nabokov awarded the National Medal for Literature in the United States.

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- 1974 *Lolita: A Screenplay* published. His last complete novel, *Look at the Harlequins!*, appears in August.
- 1975 A second collection of early stories, *Tyrants Destroyed and Other Stories*, appears in January.
- 1976 Third collection of early stories, *Details of a Sunset and Other Stories*, published in March. Nabokov sustains concussion from a fall, hospitalized for ten days. Later infection sends him back to hospital from June to September. Selects poems for extensive collection of Russian poetry entitled *Stikhi (Poems)* that will not be published until 1979.
- 1977 Hospitalized in Lausanne with fever and influenza from March to May. Returns to hospital in Lausanne in June. Dies on July 2. After cremation, body is interred in Clarens cemetery.
- 1991 Véra Nabokov dies on April 6.