



Nabokov and his Books: Between Late Modernism and the Literary Marketplace (Oxford English Monographs)

Duncan White

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At the outbreak of the Second World War Vladimir Nabokov stood on the brink of losing everything all over again. The reputation he had built as the pre-eminent Russian novelist in exile was imperilled. In *Nabokov and his Books*, Duncan White shows how Nabokov went to America and not only reinvented himself as an American writer but also used the success of *Lolita* to rescue those Russian books that had been threatened by obscurity. Using previously unpublished and neglected material, White tells the story of Nabokov the professional writer and how he sought to balance his late modernist aesthetics with the demands of a booming American literary marketplace. As Nabokov's reputation grew so he took greater and greater control of how his books were produced, making the material form of the book--including forewords, blurbs, covers--part of the novel. In his later novels, including *Pale Fire*, *Ada*, and *Transparent Things*, the idea of the novelist losing control of his work became the subject of the novels themselves. These plots were replicated in Nabokov's own biography, as he discovered his inability to control the forces the market success of *Lolita* had unleashed. With new insights into Nabokov's life and work, this book reconceptualises the way we think about one of the most important and influential novelists of the twentieth century.

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