Lectures on Literature

In April 1972, Nabokov took a look at the lectures he had delivered at Wellesley, Cornell, Harvard, and elsewhere. He had long thought of publishing them but he was disappointed in what he read. “My university lectures (Tolstoy, Kafka, Flaubert, Cervantes, etc. etc.) are chaotic and sloppy and must never be published. None of them!” (VNTAY 602) They were, however. Three years after his death, Lectures on Literature became the first of four published volumes of lectures.

As Boyd points out (VNTAY 172–73), his notes were in his own hand rather than typewritten, and with erasures and insertions, revisions, alternatives, supplementary sheets, looping arrows and sweeping crosses, a plethora of possibilities from which he had to select as he lectured. Already in class in the 1950s he announced plans to publish his lectures, and by the middle of the decade the project seemed under way. As late as the early 1970s he was still expecting to publish the material.

His wife and son missed that do-not-publish note when they were preparing the material. Boyd says, “The lectures as edited for publication contain many puzzling omissions, misreadings, spurious improvements, and even sheer editorial inventions.” (VNTAY 173n)

Edition Summary

| A51.1 Lectures on Literature | First edition (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Bruccoli Clark), Aug-1980, 1 issue |
| A51.2 Lectures on Literature | First British edition (Weidenfeld & Nicolson), 22-Jan-1981, 1 issue |
| A51.3 Lectures on Literature | First wrappers edition (Bruccoli Clark, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 1982, 5 issues |
| A51.4 Lectures on Literature | First British wrappers edition (Picador), 1983, 1 issue |
| A51.5 Lectures on Literature | New wrappers edition (Bruccoli Clark, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 16-Dec-2002, 1 issue |
Lectures on Literature

First edition (Bruccoli Clark)
First printing, Aug-1980


Title page: VLADIMIR NABOKOV LECTURES ON LITERATURE EDITED BY Fredson Bowers INTRODUCTION BY John Updike HARcourt brace jovanaovich | Bruccoli Clark New York and London


Covering: White dust jacket. Front cover: blue background! two lines of white lettering with gold highlighting! VLADIMIR | NABOKOV! gold rule! two lines of white lettering with gold bullets! AUSTEN • DICKENS • FLAUBERT • JOYCE • KAFKA • PROUST • STEVENSON


Price: $19.95

Additional Works: Editor’s foreword by Fredson Bowers, introduction by John Updike

Works:
1) Good Readers and Good Writers
2) Jane Austen (1775–1817): Mansfield Park (1814)
   – Includes reproductions of the opening page of Nabokov’s teaching copy of Mansfield Park, a hand-drawn map of England, two pages of notes, a sketch of the layout of Mansfield Park, and a chronology of the novel.
3) Charles Dickens (1812–1870): Bleak House (1852-1853)
   – Includes reproductions of Nabokov’s map of Great Britain locating the action of the novel, two pages of his notes on the characters in his teaching copy of the novel, his diagram of the main themes, and his outline of the main structural features of the novel.
4) Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880): Madame Bovary (1856)
   – Includes reproductions of the opening pages of Nabokov’s teaching copy of the novel, his notes on the layers theme, his annotations on Emma’s reading in his teaching copy, his notes on the daydream theme in his teaching copy, his notes on Emma’s loves, his notes on structural transition, his list of mistranslated words in the Aveling translation, and an end note on style, imagery, and the equine theme.
5) Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894): “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” (1885)
   – Includes reproductions of Nabokov’s handmade cover for the story, his diagrams of the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde, a student drawing of the layout of the Jekyll house, with his alterations, his notes on the setting of the story, and his notes on lepidoptera, omitted from his lecture.
6) Marcel Proust (1871–1922): The Walk by Swann’s Place (1913)
   – Includes reproductions of from Nabokov’s lecture notes, his notes on the plan for In Search of Lost Time, his notes on imagery from his
lecture, his annotations in his teaching copy, his map of the streets of Combray in his teaching copy, his comments on the translation in his teaching copy, and his drawing of an orchid.

7) Franz Kafka (1883–1924): “The Metamorphosis” (1915)
   – Includes reproductions of Nabokov’s marked up opening page from his teaching copy, his sketch of the layout of the Samsa flat, two drawings of a beetle, and his notes on the triad theme.

8) James Joyce (1882–1941): Ulysses (1922)
   – Includes reproductions of the opening page of his lecture notes on the novel, the opening pages of his teaching copy, his map of Bloom’s and Stephen’s travels in part two, his notes on the Blooms’ house, his map of the blind striplings’s route in part two, his notes on the routes followed by Bloom, Farrell, and the blind stripling, his notes on the action in part two, chapter 7, his annotations in his teaching copy, part two, chapter 8, and his transcription of the lyrics for “The Croppy Boy” in his teaching copy.

9) The Art of Literature and Commonsense
10) L’Envoy [from Lectures on Literature]
11) Appendix [from Lectures on Literature]
   – Sample questions from Nabokov’s exams on Bleak House and Madame Bovary.

### A51.2

**FIRST BRITISH EDITION (WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON)**

First printing, 22-Jan-1981


**Price:** £12.50
**A51.3 First wrappers edition (Bruccoli Clark)**

- **First printing, 1982**
  
  **As first edition, except**
  
  **Title page:**
  
  Vladimir Nabokov | LECTURES ON | LITERATURE
  
  EDITED BY Fredson Bowers | INTRODUCTION BY John Updike | A HARVEST/HBJ BOOK | HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH, PUBLISHERS | BRUCCIOLI CLARK NEW YORK AND LONDON
  
  
  **Binding:** White wrappers with blue background.
  
  
  **Price:** $8.95
  
  **Description:**
  This boxed set includes wrappers issues of Lectures on Literature and Lectures on Russian Literature.

  **Points**
  This boxed set includes wrappers issues of Lectures on Literature and Lectures on Russian Literature.

- **Second printing, unknown date**
  
  **Unexamined**

- **Third printing, unknown date**
  
  **Unexamined**

- **Fourth printing, unknown date**
  
  **As first printing, except**
  
  **Title page:**
  
  Vladimir Nabokov | LECTURES ON | LITERATURE
  
  EDITED BY Fredson Bowers | INTRODUCTION BY John Updike | A HARVEST BOOK | BRUCCIOLI CLARK | HARCOURT BRACE & COMPANY | San Diego New York London
  
  **Copyright page:** … | D E F G H I J
  
  **Price:** $12.95

**A51.4 First British wrappers edition (Picador, imprint of Pan)**

- **First printing, 1983**

  **As first printing, except**
  
  **Title page:**
  
  Vladimir Nabokov | LECTURES ON | LITERATURE
  
  EDITED BY Fredson Bowers | INTRODUCTION BY John Updike | A HARVEST BOOK | BRUCCIOLI CLARK | HARCOURT BRACE & COMPANY | San Diego New York London
  
  **Copyright page:** … | D E F G H I J
  
  **Price:** $12.95
As first edition, except

Collation: (19.7 X 12.9 cm), 416 pages

Title page: ‘rule\ | Vladimir | Nabokov | LECTURES ON | LITERATURE | EDITED BY Fredson Bowers | INTRODUCTION BY John Updike | ‘publisher’s device of rule, name, rule\ | published by Pan Books


Binding: White wrappers with yellow background and black and blue lettering.


Price: £3.95

NEW WRAPPERS EDITION (BRUCCOLI CLARK)
¶ First printing, 16-Dec-2002

As first edition, except

Collation: (20.3 X 12.8 cm)

Title page: VLADIMIR | NABOKOV | LECTURES ON | LITERATURE | EDITED BY FREDSON BOWERS | INTRODUCTION BY JOHN UPDIKE | A Harvest Book • Harcourt, Inc. | Bruccoli Clark | San Diego New York London

Copyright page: ‘the author’s name is consistently misspelled as “Nabakov” throughout the page\ … | (A Harvest Book) | … | ISBN 0-15-602775-5 | … | First Harvest edition 1982 | J I H G F E D C B A

Binding: White wrappers with photo of Nabokov, designed by Jeff Puda


Price: $18.00

Description: At least four printings (“J I H G F E D” on the copyright page).