

**Title:** Ethics in an Authored World: Considerations for the Ethics Question in Nabokov's Works  
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I aim to show in this talk that in Nabokov's works the complex network of relationships between characters who author texts and the texts they author is significant for our determination of any ethical worldview that his works might contain. I argue that while it is an irrefutable picture of the physical reality of the works that Nabokov exclusively creates and controls his characters' actions and the nature of their world, the role of author-characters and their authored texts within the works points to a more complicated metaphysics, one whose ethics might be ambivalent.

Dana Dragunoiu, Vladimir Alexandrov, and Stephen Blackwell are among scholars who have argued for the kind of ethics or lack of ethics at play in Nabokov. These scholars collectively attend to the roles of fate and determinism, aesthetic structures and patterning, and references to ethical views within in the works. In this talk I critique their arguments. I give a taxonomy of the various authorship structures found in Nabokov's novels in order to lay out the complexities to which I refer, then I argue for how attention to these structures supports reasonable attribution of agency to Nabokov's characters but might not support us interpreting their actions along a code of ethics.

I will primarily discuss *Ada* because the novel is comprised of a text authored by not one but multiple characters, if we include the text's typist and editors. All of these characters are both authored by each other and authoring of each other, a point which has implications for how we interpret the reality the text describes. Additionally, *Ada* is significant to my discussion because of the great attention it has received by scholars for the ethical topics they find in it.