The focus of this thesis is to closely analyze two novels by Vladimir Nabokov, namely Invitation to a Beheading and Bend Sinister, and on the basis of close reading as well as detailed examination of critical literature enlighten the circumstances of their creation in the course of author’s life and the influences and experiences that might have imprinted in the novels. Although validity of biographical approach may be subjected to question, it proves to be a rather insightful approach concerning the central topic of the thesis and it also provides wider perspective for more accurate understanding of the novels, as it directs the reader from politics towards more philosophical and aesthetical concerns. The thesis should also summarise the main points of Nabokov’s artistic theory and clarify what was the main concern of Nabokov’s literary works.

Invitation to a Beheading, one of the last works Nabokov wrote in his mother tongue, a “dystopian fable” which appeared for the first time in a Russian émigré magazine Sovremenniya Zapiski in 1938, follows the last days of Cincinnatus C., a prisoner sentenced to death for his deviation from the common transparency of his fellow citizens in a world which is a grotesque parody of an absurd political regime, but at the same time this exaggerating portrayal depicts the most absurd features of totalitarian regimes in general with striking accurateness.1 Bend Sinister originally published in 1947,2 on the other hand, is one of the earliest works of Nabokov’s American period and it is one of the first attempts to write a novel entirely in English. Its protagonist, the philosopher Adam Krug, represents the last instance of resistance to the all-consuming political tyranny of the ‘Ekwilist’ party and its leader Paduk.