The Artistic Censoring of Sexuality
Contents

PREFACE
Sexuality in Literature: Toward an Ethics  ix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS  xvii

INTRODUCTION
The Sense of Censoring  1

CHAPTER 1
Censorship: Political and Theoretical Structures  23

CHAPTER 2
Circean Censoring: Joyce’s Theater of Judgment in Ulysses  39

CHAPTER 3
Lolita: American Mimetic Fantasy, Ethical Reading, and Censoring Narrative  112

CHAPTER 4
The Masochistic Pleasure of Censoring Modes of Fantasy: Alienation, Cancer, and Judgment in Tiempo de silencio  161

CHAPTER 5
Apocalyptic Beauty, Russian Sublimity: Viktor Erofeev’s Russkaia krasavitsa  215

CONCLUSION
Comparative Reflections  268

APPENDIX
Summaries of Novels’ Historical Censorship  277

WORKS CITED  279

INDEX  309
SEXUALITY IN LITERATURE: TOWARD AN ETHICS

Sexuality has often had an uneasy relationship to art. Art aspires to beauty, sublimity, and eros, and surveys a shifting border of acceptability of sexual expression. Today, as through the twentieth century, sex in art can potentially degrade the form to mere pornography. Yet sexuality is close to the core of understanding ourselves and our social life, so omitting it from artistic discourse altogether is nowadays seen as prudish or repressive. This perception is the result of a twentieth-century historical trajectory when, in Europe and North America, the modern novel became increasingly the site for creative exploration of sexual themes and references. To include sexuality became a mark of social progressiveness and artistic innovation, dual aims evident in modernist and postmodernist novels of leading innovators such as James Joyce, Vladimir Nabokov, Luis Martín-Santos, and Viktor Erofeev.

In fact, despite these authors’ and novels’ very different chronological, cultural, and political contexts, they all seek to make sexuality a central social issue, a key to understanding our weaknesses and inequalities. While sexuality in literature can offer eroticized aesthetic pleasure, it is also problematized critically by the inclusion of social considerations of the status of women, pornography, prostitution, marriage and interpersonal relationships,
reproduction and fertility, and of the status of men as purveyors, consumers, fantasists, and masters of sexuality. The contemplation of sexuality has the human subject reflect back on himself or herself, as is the case with the three male protagonists of the first three novels, and with Irina, the female protagonist of the fourth novel. Thus narrative avenues of masculinity and femininity are explored, often revealing the modern human subject in deep conflict. Sexuality is also politicized in these novels because their national social settings (British colonial 1904 Dublin in Ulysses; pre-WWII France and democratic 1944–1952 America in Lolita; 1949 Madrid and Spain under Franco in Tiempo de silencio; the Soviet Union of the late 1970s in Russkaia krasavitsa). We are prompted to reflect critically on the actual performance of the respective countries and their governments and social institutions.

Censoring sexuality is an artistic act. These novels’ treatment of sexuality emphasizes how language is regulated. To express the condition of sexuality, these novels present it as something that needs to be both confronted and censored artistically—that is, judged, negated, elided, screened over, or transformed. Censoring is part of the writing process, creating choices that negotiate the degree of explicitness. Sexuality seems to contain knowledge, power, and freedom. Yet these novels use it to reveal social problems and degradation of ethical values; thus, they suggest alternative ways of knowing, beyond dominant discourses and national master narratives. To achieve a critical investigation, raise questions, and solicit readerly judgment, the authors do not elevate the protagonists in their explorations of sexuality to heroic status, but rather, situate them, at best, in critical frameworks.

By selecting these four novels that all experienced some degree of censorship in their early publication years, I have aimed to gain a view of their differences and similarities in relation to their cultural and sociopolitical contexts as well as explore each novel’s project with sexuality. Why include sexuality in a narrative? What kind of meaning and complications does sexuality add to characterization, plot, and themes?

The aim to censor or control sexuality in literature has similar motivations and origins across the decades and political and legal systems. If we agree with Michel Foucault that the twentieth century became a confessional society, then we may propose that sexuality divulged in literature is offered for analysis and judgment, as well as for potential pleasure. The countries involved in these novels’ censorship—England, Ireland, the United States, France, Spain, and (Soviet) Russia—provide a twentieth-century sampling of different cultures’ and societies’ persistent, common need to censor the disseminated expression of sexuality in literature. This question of the need to censor is further complicated by the twentieth century’s
marked liberalization of the freedom to express sexuality in an increasingly diverse range of media.¹

In the context of the twentieth-century novel in Europe and North America, I suggest that there are two basic artistic approaches to the treatment of sex in fiction. These two approaches share an interest in sexuality as both a source for critical social commentary and an artistic innovation. However, their paths diverge in terms of how that commentary and innovation should be carried out. The four novels chosen for this study share the first approach, which includes irony, intertextuality, self-reflectiveness, and suggestion. Meanwhile, the second approach finds examples in the novels by D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. Novels of this latter group tend toward a remarkable expressive explicitness in portraying sexuality and a strong sense of didacticism or militancy; they also tend to avoid intertextuality, allusion, substitution, irony, and other modes of complicating or diversifying interpretation. At times, the didactic tone or message counterbalances to some degree the explicitness.²

In the four novels of this study, sexual portrayals can be seen in the following ways: (1) as artistic negotiations with ethical values vis-à-vis sexuality and the censorial forces of both the human subject and society; (2) as representations of, or references to, what cannot or should not be known (das Ding) (thus these particular novels do not strive toward full explicitness; they employ a good deal of allusion and substitution, avoid didacticism, use intertextuality and irony as subterfuges and enrichment of the discourse); (3) as attempts to create contemporary narratives of ethics for the individual (his negotiation between the good and the pleasurable) by integrating sexuality into a value system to be judged; (4) as problematic scenarios in which man questions his relations with women (especially prostitution, pornography, marriage and other relationships, reproduction) and his set of values for them (e.g., fantasy, beauty, sublimity, disease, death, seduction, creation).

¹. For studies on the liberalization of censorship laws (and the problems with these), see Beardsmore; Burt, Introduction, The Administration of Aesthetics; Butler; Califa; Censorship and Freedom of Expression; Censorship and Obscenity; The Censorship of Books; Communications Control; Craig, Banned Books and Suppressed Books; Daily; Day; De Grazia; Dollimore; Ernst; Gaskins; Geller; Goodrich, Languages of Law; Jonathon Green; Leslie Green; Harrison; Jansen; Langton; Lewis; MacKinnon; McKee; Miller; Pornography and Censorship; Post; Press and Speech Freedoms in the World; Randall; Robbins; Robins; Schauer; Tribe; Versions of Censorship.

². For critical and historical perspectives on Lawrence in particular, see Goodheart, “Censorship and Self-Censorship” and Desire and Its Discontents; Grant; H. Montgomery Hyde. For commentary on Miller, see Bécourt, La censure en France; Pauvert. Couturier’s Roman et censure and De Grazia discuss both authors. De Grazia offers a survey of twentieth-century American censorship of literature, and thus discusses a wide range of authors, legal problems, and changes in laws affecting publishing.
Thus, these novels do not provide clear-cut moral premises or resolutions, but rather offer possibilities of complicated interpretation which would require the reader to take on a provisional judgmental role. The reader’s role is challenged by the novels’ features relating to sexuality because such passages are designed to delight, shock, disgust, enlighten, offend, and intrigue (and thus can complicate interpretation or judgment).

My inquiry is informed, in part, by Roland Barthes’s and Pierre Bourdieu’s recognition of the potential power of censorship in our discourse, literary and otherwise. Barthes observes that French literary history can be constituted by a counterhistory of censorship. He catalogues four basics “acts” of censorship: the censorship of social class; of sexuality; of the concept of literature; of language (“Reflections,” 73). He reveals an underside of literature, the unwritten history of the conditions that determine the literary text. Barthes’s determining “acts” of censorship can be related to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of censorship as an imposition of form. Bourdieu maintains that censorship imposes form on all our communications:

This structural censorship is exercised through the medium of sanctions of the field, functioning as a market on which the prices of different kinds of expression are formed; it is imposed on all producers of symbolic goods, including the authorized spokesperson, [ . . . ] and it condemns the occupants of dominated positions either to silence or to shocking outspokenness. (138)

Censorship connects the individual artist (and reader) to institution. The institution’s discourse insists on being recognized in some way. The point is that one makes a basic disavowal, conscious or unconscious, in order to “accept” the importance, relevance, or power of the institution: “I know that it is just an arbitrary construction but even so I will go through the motions of its discursive practice. . . .” Bourdieu explains that the ability to impose form can be found in both society and the individual; censorship should not be seen as limited to one particular linguistic, legal, or political mode, although these are significant areas of its manifestations.

In my study, thematic censoring practices belong not only to a variety of institutions (e.g., in Tiempo de silencio, these include the Catholic Church, medicine, and Franco’s regime) but also to various groups and individuals, especially the protagonists and supporting characters. The censoring practices are played out in dialogues, narration, plot developments, characterizations, metaphor, and other poetic devices.

The treatment of sexuality in these novels has often suggested to readers that there is a way to achieve a certain truth or liberation through revealing sexual knowledge. Through censorship trials and difficulties with
publishing certain works, *causes célèbres* were produced. The reader reception of such celebrated works has involved an expectation of heroic and rebellious revelation. In such novels, the sexual can acquire the cachet of some kind of progressive respectability or aesthetic superiority versus a sanitized, innocent, or austere art as supported by puritans and moralist censors.

My study partly responds to Foucault’s suggestions that our supposedly “open” society has its own repressive practices; that the manipulation of sexuality in discourse is a method of control, and not one of liberation. In the twentieth century, sexuality has entered public discourses to an unprecedented degree—be they medical, psychoanalytic, legal, philosophical, political, aesthetic, or religious. Sexuality’s ample commoditization has become commonplace in the world market. By contrast, in the narrative worlds of these novels, sexuality is integrated into the thematic and aesthetic signifying structures, while in the corresponding contemporary actuality of those novels’ settings (be it 1904 Dublin, 1940s and 1950s America, 1949 Madrid, or 1980 Moscow) sexuality was kept marginalized, silenced, or screened in discourses and public communications. In these societies, sexuality, if it actually was named, was subversive and it had the potential to signify pleasure, transgression, danger, and lawlessness.

Foucault’s theory of the confessional society relies on tenets of psychoanalysis. Yet he also criticizes its supposedly altruistic therapeutic aim which belies an alliance of power. For example, he sees the endless reworking of the “transcultural theory of the incest taboo” as a way of governing sexuality; and he consequently views this “deployment” of sexuality as one of power or alliance (*The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 109–10). He overlooks, however, Freud’s and Lacan’s repeated criticism of altruism.

Foucault’s pessimistic view of power and alliances should be balanced by the observation that we as human subjects seek to have signifying structures to make our lives livable. If we did not have an incest taboo or other features of the Symbolic that provide differentiation (language, law, etc.), how would we have any way of creating signification? Meaning and value are determined through exchange, negotiation, commonly shared usage, disavowals, and also through transgression or abuse. In Wolfgang Iser’s terms, a message cannot be communicated unless the sender and receiver share or understand linguistic and cultural codes. In turn, these verbal and interpersonal exchanges necessarily involve issues of power and alliances.

In this book, it is understood that communication involving sexuality also involves power relations. The novels explored do not posit sexuality

3. My position is grounded, in part, in Freud’s “Civilization and Its Discontents,” “Three Essays on Sexuality,” *The Interpretation of Dreams,* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*
as some innocent Eden for revelry, but rather as a complicated field of potential pleasure (especially pertaining to men) that also can encroach dangerously, even fatally, on others (especially women). The Iserian implied readers of Joyce, Nabokov, Martín-Santos, and Erofeev are thus not only called upon to engage in the decoding of the complex messages of the aesthetic texts but also to weigh or judge the power relations described in the novels’ forays into sexuality.

While we may be concerned by the application of publication censorship and by the potential threat of diminishing our freedom of expression, we should recall that censorship and censoring emphasize important values in civilization. As part of the Law, it functions to regulate and determine acceptable standards for the social group at stake. It also confirms our need to have language maintain its signifying value.

If language did not mean anything, there would be no need or desire to communicate and likewise no need to censor. The combative element of censorship, while admittedly at times unbearably and unnecessarily brutal or didactic in certain societies, is essential to the (re)creation of signification, the exchange of value, and, in particular, the erotically charged conflicts inherent in human sexuality.

The power struggle in censorship is between the Law and subject. While art tries to achieve something more than pure mimesis of life (which in any event would be impossible to achieve), the Law is concerned that glamorous, beautiful, or desirable sexual transgression will inspire readers to change their values and to imitate that art (and perhaps not serve the social good). If lawlessness and sexual transgression are assigned an aesthetic component, then the right of the Law has been challenged, and formally agreed-upon (or presupposed) social values have been questioned.

We could consider a pivotal modern novel’s collision with censorship. The *Madame Bovary* trial (1857) exemplified the state’s fear that other women readers might copy the protagonist’s sexual transgressions and suicide. Ironically, Flaubert had been inspired by some real-life stories of adultery and bankruptcy in the newspapers. Further, his novel appeared

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4. I use the Lacanian terms the Symbolic, Imaginary, Real, and Law here and throughout my discussion. For Lacan, our existence is divided into three orders or registers. The Symbolic represents language and all our civilization practices and relationships within the codified system. The Symbolic is the determining order of the subject. The Imaginary is the subject’s psychic perception (conscious and unconscious) of relations, experiences, and phenomena; the Real is actual reality which, although tangible, can never be directly known (i.e., outside the Symbolic and Imaginary; it is the residue or foreclosed element). The Law refers to laws written and unwritten that regulate our social and civil relations. The Law both signifies the Symbolic Father and is authored by him. See Lacan’s *Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* and Ragland-Sullivan’s excellent exploration of these terms.
shortly after a string of French novels highlighting adultery had been published. *Madame Bovary* could thus provide a critical reflection on this special genre. Meanwhile, within his text, Flaubert shows us a young woman who is partly motivated to commit adultery after reading too many romantic novels. Thus he complicated issues of influences and authorial intent.\(^5\)

Like the authors of this study, Flaubert challenged the Law with his artistic inclusion of sexuality. As the novels in this study demonstrate, sexuality challenges not only the Law, but also us in our relation to the Law, our social institutions, our appreciation of art, and our ethics.

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\(^5\) The state’s censorial reaction to the potential power of the word was perhaps not as unreasonable as we might think it today when we remember that half a century earlier in Europe there had been many actual emulators of the fictional young Werther: the obsessive wearing of a blue coat and yellow vest as well as the act of suicide.
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Introduction

THE SENSE OF CENSORING

This book explores four novels written under historical censorship conditions in their respective places of composition and publication: Great Britain, Ireland, France, the United States, Spain, and Soviet Russia. Owing to their controversially artistic treatment of sexuality, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* (1955), Luis Martín-Santos’s *Tiempo de silencio* (1961; *Time of Silence*), and Viktor Erofeev’s *Russkaia krasavitsa* (1990; *Russian Beauty*) became landmark cases of historical censorship. Each novel, in its early publication history, was the object of court trials, bannings, rejection by publishers, and prepublication censors’ cuts. The conservative sensibility and criteria for these forms of censorship were remarkably similar, despite differences in time, region, and obvious cultural and political features. The United States and Great Britain of the 1920s through 1960s did not essentially differ in their resistance to

1. While I have consulted a variety of editions of these novels, I use the following editions for direct quotations. For *Ulysses*, I cite the Gabler edition; Jeri Johnson’s edition of the 1922 text is helpful for some notes to the text. For *Lolita* discussions, I make use of Appel’s *The Annotated Lolita* (which keeps the pagination of many Vintage editions). For *Tiempo de silencio*, I use the definitive edition of 1980, supplemented by comparisons with other editions. See the introductory note in chapter 4 for more details. For *Russkaia krasavitsa*, I quote from the uncensored Russian version of 1994; I have compared the censored edition (1990) and subsequent uncensored Russian editions of the novel. Andrew Reynolds’s English translation, *Russian Beauty* (1992), is generally satisfactory for direct quotations (although I have occasionally pointed out some nuances in the Russian original for non-Russian readers).
publishing certain sexual expressions from the censors of the Soviet Union (1917–1990) and Franco’s Spain (1939–1975).

Censorship signifies on textual and extratextual levels, in literature and life, and no civilization is without some taboos that help to set parameters and transform human life and creative production. Twentieth-century novelists in Europe and America sought to make the sexual subject critical in literature by integrating motifs and stratagems of censoring. This book investigates how censorship themes and techniques have shaped the meaning of the sexuality in the twentieth-century novel, thus requiring the reader’s critical judgment. This invocation complicates possible explicit claims to truth. Censoring acts as a creative form of writing that both veils the sexual subject and implicates themes of judgment, condemnation, and negation.

In the selected novels for this study, the reader’s role as judge (through interpretative activity) implicitly confirms a commonly felt but often tacit need (or desire) to evaluate sexuality, especially our ethical involvement in it. With modernism’s and postmodernism’s foregrounding of textual self-consciousness, literary sexuality has posed a puzzle.

I have selected these four novels because they were considered particularly provocative in their day for their representation of sexuality. I wanted to determine how they integrated sexuality in the novel and which sexual features prompted censors to respond. As we shall see, the novelists integrated actual motifs of censoring in their deployment of sexuality so that censoring became paradoxically a productive, generative set of practices. In terms of thematic integration of sexuality, the writers tend to embed it in the modernist domains of the mind—such as fantasy—and the modernist and postmodernist registers of the existential—namely, judgment. These authors offer sexuality as fantasy at a price: it must be evaluated by powers of judgment, thus pushing the boundaries of artistic expression of their time.

In this book, my special use of the term “censoring” intends to demarcate it from the connotations of historical pre- and postpublication censorship and the psychoanalytic censorship. “Censoring” of course derives some signification and strategies from these censorships. But as a hybrid term, it particularly connotes the activity and artistic production of censorship in a literary text.

Let us first then consider how forms of publication censorship originate in modern European languages and become a varied practice in our production and circulation of written discourse. I will then turn to the operations of psychic censorship, and finally the artistic censoring of sexuality in literature, in order to set the parameters of the literary analysis of the four novels.
Introduction

1. CENSORSHIP: ETYMOLOGY AND HISTORICAL PRACTICES

“Censor”’s Latin origins involve an essential duality that is never lost through the centuries. Censor and its adjuncts in most Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages derive from the Latin noun censor, from the verb censere, “to give as one’s opinion, recommend, assess” (Oxford English Dictionary). In the ancient Roman republic, there were two official censors: one who kept the register or census of citizens and one who supervised manners and morals. In late antiquity, with the institutionalization of censorship, these two responsibilities became combined and were related to the powers of the church or state. With Pope Innocent I (r. 401–17) and his list of forbidden books, books were submitted to postpublication censorship by the church, a formal process. A millennium later, the effort to exercise control over the written word became far more complicated, as a result of the invention of book printing in the West. As Norman Davies explains, after Gutenberg’s invention around 1450 in Mainz, “presses spread quickly to Basle (1466), Rome (1467), Pilzno in Bohemia (1468), Paris (1470), Buda (1473), Cracow (1474), Westminster (1476), and Cetinje in Montenegro (1493). Printing reached Moscow in 1555” (Europe, 445). We can see that in a mere hundred years the press became distributed through Europe, simultaneously accompanied by practices of official censorship.

Printing developed at various rates and was controlled diversely in Europe, and then, with European expansion, in the New World. Despite the accelerated pace of new printing technology, the production of printed matter did not bypass regulated application of criteria designated by religious or political authority. To consider one example of real practice, we could take Russia. It was one of the last countries in Europe to acquire the press, and then its presses were extremely limited in number (no more than three) and under the tsars’ direct control. Russia thus developed a deeply ingrained tradition of rigorous censorship of literature from the press’s inception through to the period of 1905–1917, when censorship was briefly relaxed. Prior censorship resumed its hold through the entire Soviet period, with only some marked relaxation of practices in the final years of the regime under glasnost’ (1986–1991).

Overall, in each country, writing and censorship go hand in hand; one is not produced without the other. Writing is conditioned by writers’ awareness of, and sensitivity to, contemporary and prior publication and censorship standards and criteria. The stricter the censorship conditions, the more attuned good writers need to be to subtle (and not so subtle) signs of what is permissible by judging contemporary publications, both
Introduction

of books and periodicals, the latter providing a more immediate sense of political and moral criteria.

Censorship had an early symbiotic relationship with printing, arbitrating the growth and development of print culture. Davies reminds us of how power worked both ways in this relationship:

The power of the printed word inevitably aroused the fears of the religious authorities. Hence Mainz, the cradle of the press, also became the cradle of censorship. In 1485, the local ruler, the Archbishop-Elector, asked the city council of nearby Frankfurt-am-Main to examine books to be exhibited at the Lenten Fair, and to help in the suppression of dangerous publications. (445)

These early European beginnings set up a continuous and conditioning relationship between censorship and subsequent writing practices over the ages. The legal offices of censorship have followed and adjusted to changing forms of state power and authority, as well as to the status of the writer. With the rise in constitutional monarchies, liberal democracies, and modern market economies, writers moved away from patronage to self-employment. The advent of copyright laws further determined an individual and responsible role of the artist.

The slackening of censorship does not eliminate it. In a liberal democracy, in general, the activity of censorship is widely dispersed through the law and society, whereas in repressive regimes it is usually concentrated as a designated office.

The development of institutionalized censorship practices in Europe over the centuries varied according to factors of religion, government, economy, literate population, and cultural values and interests. The nineteenth century witnessed the steady and rapid growth of literacy and printed materials. With these, we note a paternalistic concern for the effects of these materials on a growing reading public, especially on women and children. Governments, educators, collective groups, and private individuals contributed to this conservative, at times reactionary, regulating trend. By the late nineteenth century, copyright redefined the concept of authors as individuals owning a creative product. Copyright as a contract connotes responsibil-

2. This movement derives from state initiatives in legislation or law enforcement and from individuals who took a passionate interest in censorship. Perrin describes Dr. Bowdler and his legacy. Sharing Bowdler’s concern for sanitary reading conditions for the people were the various self-appointed societies for the suppression of vice which emerged in Great Britain and the United States during the nineteenth century. De Grazia and others have researched the contributions to American censorship made by Anthony Comstock. The Anglo-American tradition particularly includes a citizen-based participation in control (which demonstrates the communal, social needs, and dynamics of censorship and the danger of simplifying criteria to one basic readership).
Introduction

ity and a degree of poetic license. In the emerging liberal democracies of western Europe in the 1800s, prepublication censorship offices were replaced by various legislative measures to effect a postpublication censorship of offensive materials. As a result, in such states, the Catholic Church’s index of prohibited books came to represent one opinion among many in terms of general censorship and publication practices.

Generally, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed fluctuating censorship offensives depending on various arbitrary factors, such as whether a potentially offensive work had a large print run and distribution, its author was well known, or its text well written. In liberal democracies, the onus of the publishing decision fell usually upon the writer along with his editor or publisher (and at times on printers or book dealers). Using his discretion and knowledge of what was currently acceptable in society, an author decided on the text’s form and message. If the risk of prosecution seemed too great, he would probably revise or not publish, although the history of censorship shows that some significant writers have dared to overstep the contemporary demarcations of morality or decency. That kind of daring could have painful personal consequences, experienced by such different writers as Gustave Flaubert, Thomas Hardy, Radclyffe Hall, Mikhail Bulgakov, and Juan Goytisolo, as well as the writers focused on in this study.

In the twentieth century, one can recognize two fundamental ways for a state or society to apply publication censorship to an author’s artistic expression. Here Bourdieu’s concept of the “imposition of form” finds expression in law. First, in liberal democracies, censorship is applied through the judiciary system. A work must first be published and then, if it gives offense in some way, it may be suppressed through legal action or through the postal or customs office, public libraries, or schools. Twentieth-century liberal democracies have seen the laws and procedures that impose forms of censorship change dramatically toward a liberal ideal of freedom of expression. Definitions of “obscene” and “immoral,” which have traditionally relied on some tautology and the assumption that the “obscene” corrupts youthful or easily influenced readers, have been replaced by measurement of standards according to contemporary trends and local community or zoning needs (e.g., regulated placement, number, and management of adult venues [bookshops, video stores, etc.] in a municipality).

Most liberal democracies have been obliged to reassess the balance between freedoms and rights of writing and reading at various junctures

3. See Birrell; Lyman Ray Patterson.
4. See Hudon; LaCapra; Levine; Joss Marsh, Word Crimes; Née; Perrin; Walsh; Weeks, Sex, Politics, and Society.
throughout the twentieth century. What has been a continuous trend is the fact that there has generally not been a prior censorship (or prepublication censorship) of literary works in most liberal democracies in the twentieth century. This trend reflects the democratic judiciary principles of being innocent until proven guilty and the need to show a burden of proof. In print culture and regulation, these legal tenets have contributed to a general liberal-democratic movement toward an ideal of “flexible legality.”

By contrast, in dictatorial regimes, such as Franco's Spain or the Soviet Union, preemptive censorship takes on hardened forms, offices, and bureaucratic and punitive procedures. Simply put, nondemocratic regimes assume a writer's lack of innocence; the burden of proof lies in the manuscript which must be submitted for review and permission before publication. Unlike the democratic ideal of flexible legality, the nondemocratic ideal would appear to be an immutable legality. Moreover, these regimes tend to bind together state leadership with the law. Many repressive regimes install and maintain a prepublication censorship bureaucracy on the pretext that it is a temporary, military action to deal with a national state of emergency.

By contrast, plays and films have fallen into a different category and have undergone censorship assessment prior to performance or screening. Great Britain's prior censorship of theater lasted until the 1960s; the Licensing Act (1737), which allowed for the Lord Chamberlain's prior review and approval prior to performance, was repealed only in 1968. Another form of censorship has been an attack on the author himself: witness the intriguing phenomenon that was the trial of Oscar Wilde of 1895, potentially setting subsequent twentieth-century authors on the defensive. E. M. Forster, to mention one prominent modernist, did not publish in his lifetime works referring to homosexuality (e.g., *Maurice*; “The Other Boat”). While an analysis of these issues is beyond the aim of this book, they remind us that twentieth-century liberal democracies have resorted to what today we generally consider unjust or overly paternalistic control of artistic production. In the first case, the communal experience of theater and explosive consequences of a scandalous work have been deemed reasons for prior censorship. Theater in such cases is considered a powerful, political, and public medium; this medium's effect must therefore be anticipated and possibly curtailed by the censor in order to avoid public disorder. In the second case, a writer's fictional texts (especially drama) are used as evidence to condemn him in court for his private relationships. Wilde's trial curiously reversed the elements of a traditional censor's ad hominem attack on a writer's text; in some ways, Wilde's trial realized many authors' private censorship fears. Also compare Wilde's trial with Flaubert's (see LaCapra's *Madame Bovary on Trial* and Née's “1857: Le double procès de *Madame Bovary* et des *Fleurs du mal*”).

For more on this concept, see my chapter 1 and Gaskins, 8–9.

Our assessments are complicated by many censorship-related issues that can arise with prior censorship. Authors’ reputations, connections, and nonliterary activities can influence whether they will be permitted to publish. Furthermore, published authors and their works may suffer from post-censorship strategies (conducted by various authorities in a repressive regime) such as restricting print runs, distribution, promotion, engineering negative reviews in well-known publications, fines, jailing, prosecuting and sentencing under criminal codes, punishing by camp detention, hard labor, psychiatric rehabilitation, or execution.

These repressive strategies all convey the state's perception of the individual writer as a potentially dangerous individual, and not as an individual with rights to freedom of expression and equality.
Francoist Spain and the Soviet Union demonstrated two basic ideological approaches to prepublication censorship. In Spain, authoritarian rule sought to preserve a certain illusory view of the country’s glorious past and an ideal of Catholic nationalism, and its censorship focused on eliminating anything overtly anti-Catholic, anti-Franco, or obscene. Thus Francoist censorship was characterized by its proscriptive paternalism.8

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union’s censorship functioned as both a proscriptive and prescriptive organ. It could suppress or cut offensive material, but it also aimed to promote an ideological program through literature.9 Soviet censorship displayed the panoptic and paternalistic tendencies of the totalitarian state. It stressed the state’s forceful application of the Law, which in turn revealed the state’s reliance on secrecy, surveillance, and didactic forms in education or indoctrination.

In the twentieth century in Europe and North America, the censorship of sexuality in literature for decades affected the oeuvre of writers on the cutting edge. Joyce had to publish *Ulysses* outside of his native Ireland, where neither the local Irish nor the imperial English would have permitted publication. The cessation of its serialization in the *Little Review* due to censorship action by trial blocked further U.S. publication. Only through the dedication of Sylvia Beach and her Paris bookstore Shakespeare and Company could Joyce bring his novel fully into print in 1922. And only after 1933, and a new U.S. trial, could his book be circulated legally for sale in the United States and other countries that had followed the U.S. example of a ban.

Under the censorious market conditions of the 1950s, Nabokov’s manuscript was rejected by a series of overly cautious U.S. publishers and would only be initiated into print through a small English-language press in Paris, Olympia Press, in 1955. As we shall see, *Lolita* challenged legal and state censorship practices in both France and Great Britain, as well as influencing cultural reception in the United States and elsewhere.

While by the late 1960s sexuality in literature was becoming more acceptable in liberal democracies, in dictatorial regimes such as Franco’s Spain and the USSR, censorship of sexuality was integral to the maintenance of a sanitized public national image. I have selected two pivotal moments in both countries when the censorship started to give way to liberalization, for it could only be in such relatively relaxed phases of censorship that a literary treatment of sexuality might be granted permission. In Spain, the early 1960s was a time of gradual increased permissiveness,

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8. For the concept of “Eternal Spain” in Francoist censorship, see Neuschäfer.
9. For more on the prescriptive element of Soviet censorship, see Lenin; James.
with a new liberalizing censorship law being under review. Martín-Santos’s manuscript underwent heavy excisions with the Spanish censor’s blue pen prior to first publication in late 1961. The last fifteen years of Francoist censorship, from roughly 1960 through 1975, experienced various challenges of the status quo in literary publications, with contemporary Spanish authors often citing *Tiempo de silencio* as a benchmark for change. Meanwhile, in the case of the Soviet Union, it is only in the final years of glasnost’ or “openness” that the official prior censorship started to relax its standards. After more than ten years of searching for a willing editor, Erofeev could publish his *Russkaia krasavitsa* in 1990, initially with some words censored (words considered obscene or pornographic). In 1994, with his first fully uncensored edition of the novel, Erofeev still had to negotiate carefully with resistant typesetters to set the previously excised words in print, so ingrained were censorship practices and prudish morality in Russia.

2. CENSORSHIP IN MENTAL LIFE AND SOCIETY

*The Artistic Censoring of Sexuality* draws on an understanding of censorship as a determining, normative function in the individual’s mental life just as it has been in our collective social existence. The novels in this study emphasize how the protagonists’ mental life is in conflict with their society, and how much of this perspective involves sexuality as potentially problematic and in need of censoring. In this sense, the artistic censoring inscribed in the text resembles psychic censorship in dreaming.

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the psyche’s censorship is a kind of agency which particularly regulates the *way* we dream. In dreams, thoughts and wishes normally repressed in waking hours are given some form of expression, but usually in a mediated manner. Desires and fantasies are altered or distorted in some way in order to pass the mind’s censorship, often resulting in a dream difficult to interpret. But giving usually forbidden thoughts some form of expression provides mental satisfaction and relief. In fact, the subject’s inability to grasp consciously the full significance of what he has dreamt may be an additional protection from unsettling emotions and desires. Repressed wishes and fantasies are often irrational, unreasonable, or unattainable, so knowing them can cause feelings of guilt or worry.

Meanwhile, dreaming can provide pleasure, as it is inventive and creative, with witty and ingenious subterfuges for evading the censorship (e.g., screening, transformations, distortions, displacements, digressions, negating or oppositional replacements). Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* identifies some of these strategies, such as condensation and displacement (which can be related in poetic terms to metaphor and metonym). The creative, transformational qualities of dreaming allow the subject to work through unpleasant or unsavory aspects of his unconscious desires.

Sexuality figures as one of the most censored elements in a subject’s life precisely because, as an infant, the subject has had to organize his unruly “polymorphously perverse” sexuality to agree with the predetermined, ritualized role he will assume in the family and social life. In order to relate to his fellow subjects, the infant subject must renounce powerful attachments he has developed to his caregivers and replace them with socially acceptable aims and objects. He is persuaded to negotiate these renunciations in his efforts to retain the love and approval of his caregivers, and later those of his friends, teachers, and others in his society. The subject’s development includes the formation of the superego which incorporates moral, regulatory values. The superego may undergo further changes throughout life as the subject may call into question or discard some of these values, but it will continue to exert its influence on the subject’s mental life.

This structuring of the subject’s psychic apparatus depends on the participation of social elements (starting usually with the parents). While every subject is born with innate propensities, gifts, and characteristics which may or may not come to light during his development, he must try to find acceptable ways to behave sexually and ethically in social life. This transformation particularly becomes manifest when the subject enters the Symbolic register, that is, when he acquires language (and by extension other cultural codes of exchange), which will shape the way he thinks and acts and interacts with others. Indeed, the Symbolic involves the powerful language of the Law which allows the development of the superego. We can consider the early intimate entwining of the Law with language. Language as a system of signs adheres to values codified and maintained by society; by learning a language, one enters into relations with others who all use agreed-upon, often tacit, collective rules. Language depends on mental censorship, both in waking hours and in dreams, to regulate human integration in civilization.

As long as we live with others there has been a constitutive need for us to regulate and control our behavior. In any society, there are therefore at least a few regulative taboos and customs which may not always have a rational purpose but which provide some structural boundaries for
A cluster of conventional sexual practices guides us in ethical approaches to sexuality. Our perceptions of right and wrong are strongly related to (if not produced by) both our sexual formation and social institutions that govern sexuality and gender (e.g., the church or temple, the law, the market, the school).

Writers’ desire in creating potentially offensive material may be to challenge readers’ values. Writing that gives offense has been often considered subversive, containing the potential to overthrow authority or contradict dogma. In a parallel sense, a person’s internal, psychic censorship is essential to his ability to live in society and to arbitrate his communications and actions. Lacan explains that this relationship between the individual and his surroundings “places man in the mediating function between the real and the signifier [involves the Thing] . . . , all forms of which created by man belong to the sphere of sublimation” (Ethics, 129). The act of writing, as with any creative act, any sublimation, is a mediation which employs consciously and unconsciously overvaluation and disavowal, transformation and interpretation, inclusion and omission, suggestion and negation.

The subject’s aim to censor himself or others and his conflicting aim to express himself or act transgressively constitute a basic common dilemma. By our resolutions to this conflict, we exercise judgment. So, too, in the novels of this study the same dilemma is played out, based on diverse cultural and historical contexts. In each novel, when sexuality is evoked, the motifs and dynamics of censorship, fantasy, and judgment are deployed. The trials and stresses of historical and cultural censorship are embedded in the novels’ themes and aesthetics.

In the European and North American cultural contexts of our inquiry, institutionalized Christianity constitutes a decisive and crystallizing factor in the development of sexual morality and of social censorship. Sacred texts such as the Bible, as well as church law and local policies, have served as sources of prohibitions and prescriptions which determined how people regulated their lives. Christianity emphatically prefers chastity, often limiting sexuality to a reprehensible practice necessary for procreation. Even with increased secularization of legal and moral codes during and after the Enlightenment, much of our ethics and laws continue to derive in some

11. See Claude Lévi-Strauss for an elaboration of these studies. Lévi-Strauss’s structuralist approach is influential in the Lacanian theory from which much of my discussion derives.

12. Our lasting belief in the power of the word is implied in laws regarding slander, libel, sedition, blasphemy, and treason. With the increased number of writers and readers (and consequently increased plurality of perspectives and contexts), liberal democracies have had to relax their interpretation and enforcement of these laws. That relaxation should not be mistaken for relinquishment in belief (or susceptibility to be offended). For just a short sample of the past decade’s explosion of publications about the censorship issues involving new electronic media, see Bozonnet.
way from church doctrine.

This institutionalized, restrictive attitude toward sexuality is reflected clearly in publication censorship.\(^{13}\) The textual explosion that came with the advent of the printing press in Europe made the church’s censoring interests more frantic. The church aimed to maintain authorization over all printed matter. It sought to prohibit blasphemy and obscenity in print. Furthermore, not long after the advent of the press in the 1450s and the coinciding establishment of a coordinated regulating ecclesiastic censorship, there followed university and governmental censorship offices to control the publication of scholarly and lay texts.\(^ {14}\) Whether religious or lay, the three institutionalized censorships all presupposed the incredible power of the written word. Temporally and spatially, however, the severity of European censorship varied greatly (e.g., the Roman and Spanish Inquisitions, the *Indices librorum prohibitorum*, Calvin’s repressive policies in Geneva, the licensing act in England).

Since Gutenberg, what the church might gradually relinquish in censorship control, the state or its representative branches usually gained, and with it, the obligation to apply moral standards to censoring practices. In Europe and North America, as literacy and print culture have grown over the years, the perceived need to regulate and supervise both education and publications has not slackened, but rather has been modified. An institution’s actual enforced authority over the production of the printed text have enhanced the sense of that institution’s general power to rule, and its loss of or diminished censorship authority might indicate its own decline and not censorship’s.

### 3. OBSCENITY AND WRITING

The modern novel has its origins in the Italian *novella* and the French *roman* or romance, both of which involved tales of love and adventure, often accompanied by veiled or overt expressions of sexuality. Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and Rabelais’s *Gargantua and Pantagruel* are early examples of the emerging modern novel’s interest in sex, and encountered censorship

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13. For histories of censorship, see Legendre; *Censorship and Obscenity; Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation; Censorship and the Control of Print in England and France, 1600–1910; The Censorship of Books; La censure en France à l’ère démocratique (1848– . . . );* De Grazia; Dollimore; Dury, *La censure: La prédication silencieuse;* Patterson, ““Censorship”; *Censure: De la Bible aux larmes d’Eros; Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tseuzury;* Minois; Negroni; Oboler; Shackleton; Strauss.

14. Censoring practices could be in competition with one another in some circumstances (e.g., Dury; Legendre; Harrison; Hiley; Hunter et al.; Jansen; Walsh; *Patterns of Censorship around the World*).
repeatedly. In their wake, many novels representing sexuality in some form were determined indecent, immoral, obscene, or pornographic.

These censorious labels deserve some attention, especially because they have been used interchangeably by censors and legislation over the centuries to describe works of very different content and intent. “Indecent” and “immoral” describe by negative inference—what is not decent, not moral, what is adverse or offensive to morality (Christian morality), in particular to the proscriptions of sexual conduct. These proscriptions could involve anything which threatens chastity, inspires lust, or suggests adultery, fornication, or any “unnatural” sexual act. This range seems to cover a lot of territory, but censorship often exceeded even these prohibitions to include sensual, lurid, crude, or straightforward descriptions of bodily parts or functions, as well as descriptions of food, clothing, surroundings, nature, and so on.

“Indecent” and “immoral” became outmoded in the twentieth-century censorship, replaced by “pornographic” and “obscene.” These terms form part of the inner dynamics of the novels of this study. “Pornographic” derives from the Greek *porne* (harlot) and *graphos* (writing, writer). The term only emerged in mainstream European usage in the eighteenth century (in English by the nineteenth century), perhaps coinciding with the increased appearance and circulation of writing about prostitution and the secularization of the Enlightenment. Of uncertain origin, “obscene” possibly came from the Latin *ob* and *scena*, can mean “off scene,” that is what is not to be shown, what takes place off scene. In its etymological entry “obscene,” the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes the classical Latin *partes obscenae* that denote the genitals; the classical *obsenus* or *obscaenus* “has been variously associated, by scholars ancient and modern, with *scaevus* left-sided, inauspicious [. . .] and with *caenum* mud, filth.”

Legally, “obscene” came to mean “tending to deprave and corrupt.” Appearing in English as early as 1593, the term later became codified and aligned with censorship in Great Britain in 1858 and 1859, with the Obscene Publications Act. With the first case and appeal (*Regina v. Hicklin* 1858) under this new law, the Queen’s Bench produced an obscenity test. As Richard Randall explains, this test would determine whether

15. See, for example, Hunter et al.’s *On Pornography: Literature, Sexuality and Obscenity Law; The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800; Perspectives on Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature; Pornography and Censorship.*

16. The etymology of “obscene” is complicated and somewhat obscure. See Havelock Ellis’s essays “The Function of Taboos” and “The Revaluation of Obscenity,” and, for example, Butler; *Censorship and Freedom; Censorship and Obscenity; Craig; Daily; Davies; De Grazia; Ernst; Freud, Jokes and “Repression”; Gordon; Hunter et al.; The Invention of Pornography; Kait; Kaplan; Levine; Lewis; Oboler; Perrin; Pornography and Censorship; Randall; “To Deprave and Corrupt . . . .”
the material tended to “deprave and corrupt those whose minds were open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall.” Perhaps without intending to, the Hicklin rule, as it came to be known, recognized the personal and idiosyncratic character of the pornographic. “Whose minds are open to such influences” effectively institutionalized the variability of obscenity, while at the same time failing to provide triers of fact with guidelines to relieve their own subjectivity. (50)

In the twentieth century, lawmakers were obliged eventually to move away from Hicklin rules, for obscenity eludes clear, quantifiable identification and puts judge and jurors in the awkward position of having to identify and then deny or admit apparent obscenity’s effects.

Roland Barthes notices how obscenity does not have to apply to sex, depending on historical context. In his fragment “Love’s Obscenity” in A Lover’s Discourse, he suggests that the “moral tax levied by society on all transgressions affects passion still more than sex today. Everyone will understand that X has ‘huge problems’ with his sexuality; but no one will be interested in those Y may have with his sentimentality: love is obscene precisely in that it puts the sentimental in place of the sexual” (178). Barthes indicates how the sexual became part of everyday discourse in 1970s France, while the sentimental realm of love had become rarefied enough to seem outlandish or obscene, an affront to modern human relations invested in an openness about sex (perhaps to the detriment of love relations). Discourse finds ways to regulate itself through social appraisal, codification, and difference.

Writing is at once a part of regulated behavior and a commentary on it from the margins. It offers a contextualized web of perceptions, thoughts, and emotions which can then be recognized, appraised, misinterpreted, tolerated, celebrated, rejected, or disregarded by others.17 Writing embraces both poesis and ethos, despite their conflicting aims. In the history of writing, the author emerges as an individual who can be held accountable for his work; the law potentially concentrates its focus on the responsibility of the legal person. With the shift of emphasis on the creative individual (signaled, for example, by Enlightenment thinkers), and with the dramatic increase in general literacy and amplification of print culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the writer gained greater legal and moral responsibilities as well as a greater sense of independence and individuality than before (e.g., the establishment of copyright which emphasizes the substance of writing as “legal property”; the instances of writers in self-exile

17. See Holquist on some of the paradoxical features of censorship.
Introduction

or imposed exile, who suffer incarceration, or who are denied travel visas at home or abroad through the twentieth century).

The concerns of censorship and writing are intricately related, whether censorship is an external, administrated office, a self-administered selection process, or usually a combination of both. Writers’ inspiration competes with their inhibition: their own values and sense of prohibition may differ from those of external authority and of substantial social groups. In executing their profession, writers clearly risk giving offense to certain readers.

4. CENSORSHIP, THE LAW, AND THE PRODUCTION OF SIGNIFICATION

The complex function of censorship manifests itself in many ways in order to regulate, control, transform, or repress any kind of expression or behavior that can have meaning in a given society and for a given subject. Censoring practices are observable in all societies through their deployment of the law, religion, and other customs; individuals take on personal censoring practices by being raised by others (parents) in a society with certain laws and values. Certainly censorship practices can vary widely in terms of degree, emphasis, system of values, and other cultural and historical contexts, but the basic practice appears to be a common regulatory feature to all societies.

Presumption of guilt or innocence may simply be two sides to the same law. While liberal democracies and nondemocratic states differ in their approaches to the freedom of expression, they share some underlying assumptions. First, they believe in the power of the word to influence. Second, they believe that the state has a responsibility to protect the average citizen from harm or wrongdoing. Third, they share a faith in the Law despite their differences in wielding it. Fourth, they believe that sexuality needs to be regulated through law and custom.

Sexuality in literature has proven to be a thorny issue for legislators and censors because of the ambiguous questions of harmful influence and intent. It cannot be consistently proven that reading literature does or does not influence its readers in some way. An author’s intention to create a certain effect on a reader cannot be readily determined either. Even if an author attempts to clarify the purpose or meaning of his work, he cannot ultimately control or determine the possible variety of readers’ responses to it (one reader alone can have more than one response to a given work, whether rereading it the same day or revisiting it after twenty years).

Influence and intent are terms used readily in the law (crimes or acts
committed without intent are considered less reprehensible than premeditated ones), but these terms are used differently in literary interpretation, often in the form of suggestion. It is probably impossible to resolve the conflict between the legal context of a person’s intent, act, and consequences of the act and the literary context of writing, text, and interpretation, although both liberal democracies and nondemocratic regimes have sought to do so through their varying approaches to censorship. In Foucault’s thought, the dispersed power that keeps watch over and controls modern society shows us that we are not really ever “free.” Nor in our confessions, including literary revelations of sexuality, do we obtain freedom. However, I suggest that novelists have been historically interested in this paradox, questioning the limitations that we impose upon ourselves. By comparing censorship under very different political and legal conditions, we discover that sexuality becomes deeply politicized and that the law is inscribed in artistic and contemplative ways in the literary text.

The conflict of legal and aesthetic approaches to literature—what the text claims to be—can be, however, a tantalizing issue to pursue and dramatize in literature itself. My study shows how the law’s interest in regulating sexuality is what often becomes reenacted and reinterpreted in literary fiction involving sexual portrayal. In the novels of this study, sexuality is especially explored as sexual transgression: prostitution, pornography, obscenity in literature, problems with reproduction and fertility, the fallen woman, pedophilia, and incest. All of the selected novels consider the power relations between men and women, with men generally positioned as the desiring subject and women as the elusive, sexual other. All of the novels emphasize motifs of judgment, including narratives of court trials, fatal and punishing sentences, martyrdoms, and the apocalypse.

5. ARTISTIC CENSORING THROUGH FANTASY
AND THE LAW

Much like publication censorship, psychic censorship evaluates and conditions words or signifiers; it changes signification in order to avoid expressing anything that comes too close to being explicit about (forbidden) desires or objects. It does this in order to disavow a lack that is at the center of the desired other, to prevent the subject from realizing fully his

18. François Ost has recently contemplated the deployment of the law in literature, one that “poses the most fundamental questions about justice, the law and power” (4). Sharing one of the aims of my inquiry, Ost proposes a study of the law in literature that asks the question, “What can literature gain by the understanding of the presence of the law in its works?”
desire. Desire and fantasy have important relations to censorship, and owe their intriguing, circulating, and at times antithetical forms to censorship’s regulatory function. We only consciously perceive desire and fantasy once they have passed through censorship. They rely on the prohibitionary force of the superego, as played out in censorship, in order to create meaning by contrast. Thus, censorship functions to help transform meaning. In this way, it can be seen as aligned with the function of sublimation, which also works to transform and elevate the erotic drive to some nonsexual but creative activity.

There is a basic ethical presupposition involved with legal, social, and psychic censorships, and artistically portrayed censorship and sexuality; that is, our need to censor implies that there is a good that can be achieved, usually through some correction or regulation. This ethical drive can become entangled with the possibility of deriving pleasure from regulating oneself or others. Pleasure may also be derived from sublimating our sexuality through the creative processes of writing and reading. At bottom, the problem of ethics can be said to be found in our lack of ability to resolve the difference between what is supposed to be good (as opposed to bad) and what is pleasurable (as opposed to unpleasurable). On an irrational, libidinal plane, the subject equates what is pleasurable with what is good. Meanwhile, through the series of renunciations of erotically charged objects and activities that the subject has had to make throughout childhood and afterwards, the subject has a competing set of criteria about what constitutes the good for others (and therefore for himself, too). In the intersection of these two planes, there is an area of negotiation in which pleasure and signification can still be procured through censorship.

In our mental life, censorship might be seen as a function that makes these signifying negotiations possible. The sense of censorship relates in part to a psychoanalytic concept of a system of checks and balances. Our psychic economy helps to produce our conscious awareness of values and ethics. In his Ethics of Psychoanalysis, Lacan discusses our tendency toward rectification, the reality principle and its fundamentally conflicting character. He stresses the importance of our sense of a lived experience and that that experience have a moral foundation.

This need to have a sense of a lived experience relates to censorship, literature, and sexuality in crucial ways. First, the general need to censor literature in some way or form is a way to determine meaning. The need to censor sexuality in literature is one aspect of how sexuality is controlled and regulated in society. Both expressing and censoring sexuality endow it with meaning. In the novels selected for this inquiry, the “need to censor”
gets transformed into creative literary strategies and themes of judgment and transgression. Accompanying the need to censor are the epistemic drive and the ethical drive: in the texts, there is often a presupposition that there is some kind of (special) knowledge to be attained through sexuality. Competing with this drive toward determining some knowledge is the urge to evaluate what is right and wrong (versus what is pleasurable and unpleasurable). Sexuality becomes a value factor for both the ethical drive and the epistemic drive.

In the novels chosen for this study, sexuality is often represented as fantasy and desire. Artistic censoring helps to fashion fantasy into its unusual, dynamic forms and enactments of transgression, subjection to pain, or judgment. Slavoj Žižek’s definition of fantasy clarifies what is at stake in my claim:

> [I]n the fantasy-scene the desire is not fulfilled, ‘satisfied,’ but constituted (given its objects, and so on)—through fantasy, we learn ‘how to desire.’ In this intermediate position lies the paradox of fantasy: it is the frame co-ordinating our desire, but at the same time a defence against ‘Che vuoi?;’ a screen concealing the gap, the abyss of the desire of the Other. Sharpening the paradox to its utmost—to tautology—we could say that desire itself is a defence against desire: the desire structured through fantasy is a defence against the desire of the Other, against this ‘pure,’ trans-phantasmic desire (i.e. the ‘death drive’ in its pure form). (Sublime, 118; emphasis in original)

This definition of fantasy supports an understanding of the subject’s need to censor. What Žižek describes as a “defence against ‘Che vuoi?’” and a defense against the desire of the Other approximates what I describe as part of psychic censorship and part of the artistic censoring of sexuality in the selected novels. This defensive function has its parallels in artistic, social, and political censorship. Sexuality is censored in various ways at all levels, which is how it is endowed with conflicting signification.

In Ulysses, Lolita, Tiempo de silencio, and Russkaia krasavitsa, sexual acts viewed as crimes or transgressions, such as adultery, voyeurism, prostitution, masturbation, pedophilia, necrophilia, and pornography, are dramatized and submitted to forms of judgment. These forms of judgment often depict or allude to the erotic desire or fantasies of the subject, usually the masculine

19. What I have called “epistemic drive” or drive toward knowledge, Brooks, after Freud and Irigaray, calls “epistemophilia” (Wissmich), or the “epistemophilic urge,”“which we find repeatedly conjoined in presentations of the body” (Brooks, Body Work, 9, 11).
Introduction

subject. The enactment of censorship moments provides values for sexuality. By applying values, decisions can be made about good and bad, right and wrong, and not just desirable and undesirable. The dramatization of censoring maneuvers in fantasy provides complex, often difficult combinations of ethics and eroticism.

These novels bring to the fore the problems in ethics by using sexuality as the hotly contentious value; that value can then serve as a problematic issue or action to be judged. Sexuality is a useful motif of conflict in narrative art, especially in the modern novel, because sexuality's values are not clear and undisputed. Because these novels rely in part on a very active reader response, particularly a contemporary readership cognizant of the social, cultural, and political values in the novel's local setting, they tend to activate judgment. The necessary tension at stake in the ethical premise of these novels can be outlined by Lacan's general explanation of the dynamics of an ethics: “an ethics essentially consists in a judgment of our action, with the proviso that it is only significant if the action implied by it also contains within it, or is supposed to contain, a judgment [. . . ]. The presence of judgment on both sides is essential to the structure” (311).

Joyce, Nabokov, Martin-Santos, and Erofeev establish in their novels the sense of a two-sided process of judgment producing an ethics. In the theater of judgment of Ulysses’s midnight chapter “Circe,” Bloom and Stephen, along with their sexual fantasies, face judges in themselves as well as in various censorious parental and social figures and institutions. In Lolita, Humbert the character-narrator presents himself for judgment to the reader-jurors and submits himself and his sexual desires and transgressions to his own forms of creative judgment. Tiempo de silencio sets up several trials for the protagonist Pedro to fail and to be judged by the authorities, the director of his institute, and himself. All of these male protagonists seem to derive a degree of masochistic pleasure through their sufferings. Finally, in Russkaia krasavitsa, Irina as another character-narrator constructs a confessional text in which she relates her experiences as a sexual being who is harshly judged by others in power. She uses the text as a form of self-judgment as well, ultimately ending her life with the end of the text.

While some of the characters inspire a modicum of sympathy, they are generally offered to us as flawed beings whose sexuality, or their approach to others’ sexuality, merits critical and often negative judgment. In each of these texts, I examine censoring as a productive function, even though it is often a negating force.
6. CENSORING’S ARTISTIC AFFIRMATION AND NEGATION

Censoring in artistic production, such as in the narrative, is potentially creative as well as destructive. Artistic censoring uses strategies and motifs similar to those of psychic censorship. Both aim to transform or sublimate (forbidden) wishes and to exercise judgment that will produce signifying value. Our need to represent wish fulfillments for ourselves (as we do in dreams) coincides with, and may be dependent upon, a need or drive to be judged (and thus create values).

The selected novels dramatize themes and metanarratives of judgment and oblige the reader to adopt a judge’s role. First, these novels manifest an awareness of and opinions about the law, religion, education, science and medicine, and other regulating forces. Second, through allusion, parody, intertextuality, and other means, they make references to other works of art, especially controversial ones which had at some time been judged harshly. In this way, they appeal to a kind of artistic canon and a continuum across time. Third, these novels tend to highlight the arbitrariness of judgment, its inability to account for everything all of the time. Finally, the narratives reflect aspects of a superego, expressing at times harsh and irrational forms of parental and other laws.

Put broadly, the demanding parental superego motivates the subject to achieve approval and love or rebellion and enjoyment of forbidden sexuality (e.g., the conflicts in the Oedipal and pre-Oedipal stages). Censorship as a psychic function must negotiate meaning with the rule-bound superego. On an artistic plane, a similar negotiation (conscious or unconscious) helps to transform the raw material of artistic work into a signifying creation. This transformational aspect of artistic censoring uses digression, oscillation, screens to conceal or transform, allusion, intertexts, disavowal, metonymy, metaphor, and irony in combination with motifs of judgment and sexuality. All of these techniques allow for the coexistence or suggestion of two or more meanings, often in conflict.

The novels’ strong emphasis on sexual pleasure and knowledge gained through negative or negating means poses a potential double criticism. The protagonists, along with their freedom or aim to serve the good, may suffer under an abusive or unjust society or regime. Or, the society suffers the transgressions of the individual that do harm to the other and betray the good. Sexuality serves as a source of a new realism in the modern novel,
a metaphor for possible concealed truth and pleasure, and a screen for the subject’s struggle with the Law and judgment. In this way, while Foucault’s concept of a confessional and regulating society may remain valid, it does not consider, as I do, the dynamic ethical potential of literary sexuality and its relation to twentieth-century political contexts.

Finally, we should allow for the occurrence of artistic transnational cross-fertilization, in spite of national censorship practices and attempts to banish provocative foreign works by dictatorial regimes. For Joyce, incorporating sex into his novel was part of a modernist reevaluation of art and a call to include the body and desires explicitly and innovatively in novelistic discourse. For twentieth-century modernists and postmodernists, *Ulysses* became a touchstone for possibilities in literature, including original explorations of sexuality. Nabokov, Martín-Santos, and Erofeev all acknowledge *Ulysses* as formational in their own development, particularly in relation to the novels selected for this study. Erofeev additionally salutes Nabokov and *Lolita*. In such cases as *Ulysses*, we can see how twentieth-century novelists, in pushing literature’s margins of acceptability of sexual expression, looked beyond national borders for aesthetic trends and practices, while maintaining a critical focus on a specific national context.

Concomitantly, Joyce, Nabokov, Martín Santos, and Erofeev draw from the very particular social and historical contexts of 1904 colonial Ireland, post–World War II America, Spain under Franco in 1949, and Soviet Russia around the late 1970s for the treatment of the settings in their novels. These historically grounded contexts lend additional politicized force to the daring sexual expression integrated in the novels. While the years of first publication of the novels are somewhat distanced from the time periods of the fictional settings, a national critique of censorship standards is implied. The authors all experienced, firsthand, difficulties with getting these novels into print, facing as they did conservative laws, whether in liberal democracies, dictatorship, or totalitarian regime. The legal forms of censorship are intimately related to power and authority.

Chapter 1 compares the selected novels’ historical encounters with actual censorship and the legal and political theories underpinning these moments. Both *Ulysses* and *Lolita* challenged the contemporary limits of acceptability of modes of sexual expression in literature and served as landmark works that influenced legal decisions of subsequent cases regarding other works. These novels obliged the judicial sphere to adopt new ways of regulating and judging literature. 20 The chapter proceeds with a

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20. This literary history is the topic of my forthcoming article “*Lolita’s Foundations in Censorship*.”
comparative publication history of *Tiempo de silencio* and *Russkaia krasavitsa* in countries with state-operated censorship bureaucracies. The permission to publish came at a cost to the works’ initial integrity. For both novels, the first publications in 1961 and 1990, respectively, involved suppression of parts of the texts.

After the comparative chapter 1, the subsequent chapters (chapters 2 through 5) focus on how the artistic censoring of sexuality is developed as a theme and creative strategy in each of the selected novels. These chapters are sequenced according to the chronology of the novels’ publication. This book’s study spans from early in the century (*Ulysses*, 1919–1922) to late (*Russkaia krasavitsa*, 1990–1994): while occurring in different decades through the century, the novels each transpire at crucial points in the changing of the law, acting at the very least as signs of change (e.g., *Russkaia krasavitsa*) and at best as actual catalysts (e.g., *Ulysses* and *Tiempo de silencio*). In my conclusion, I offer some further comparisons of the chapters’ interpretative findings.
we started our investigation, these four novels may have seemed strange bedfellows. This investigation has established how these texts, representing four distinct instances of barrier-breaking publishing at four different points in the twentieth century, share an investment in critical explorations of sexuality, and through these, the artistic censoring of sexuality.

Sexuality and the act of writing are centralized in these works as potential transgressions and as mediations between the individual and society. The narrative techniques and themes highlight the symbiosis of writing and censoring practices. In *Ulysses*’ “Circe,” with the adaptation of the dramatic format to the narrative, the dialogue and stage directions expose the human subject’s inward confrontation with his fantasies; these fantasies are predicated on narratives of judgment. The dialogue and directions largely pertain to the mental worlds of Bloom and Stephen. In this way, Joyce makes exterior and actually stages the inner conflicts of the desiring men in Nighttown. Joyce’s emphasis on characterization in “Circe” makes dramatic discourse perform like a narrative of dreaming and inner monologue. While the writing tends toward revelation and openness, on the one hand, the men’s inner conflicts are depicted as negating, masochistic, and nostalgic. Stephen’s and Bloom’s experience of sexuality derives from unpleasurable judgments and trials of the self. In this way, while superficially

Conclusion

COMPARATIVE REFLECTIONS
a chapter about two men’s midnight trip to a prostitution district, a trip suggesting release and access to unruly sexual freedom, it turns out that the men enter a realm as heavily regulated as the rest of Dublin, both by others and themselves.

Bloom’s masochistic transformations into a suffering novice female prostitute and savior of Dublin, martyred for his sexuality, show a desire to be judged harshly and to enjoy erotically such judgment. For Stephen, sexuality is assigned a forbidden space of freedom in which art and desire can be practiced. His fantasies involve pleasure in punishment of the self and martyrdom, as well as negating fantasies of achieving a hypermasculine ideal in paternal figures like Shakespeare. Stephen’s insistent idealization of Yeats’s “Who Goes with Fergus” draws him toward a nostalgic, retrogressive place in an idyllic but ambiguous Irish past. Altogether, the two men’s voyeurism, exhibitionism, postponement, narcissism, and masochistic posturing are indicative of complex performative, solitary masculinity, in which the traditional phallic man and dominant discursive sexual arrangement are marginalized.

With *Lolita* and *Russkaia krasavitsa*, the character-narrator in both instances is an unusual hybrid of the *pícaro* (or *pícara*) or rogue who provides a confessional text. In Humbert’s case, his writing both reveals and disavows alternately his sexual abuse of the girl Dolores Haze. Meanwhile, Irina tells her story in a whirling series of returns and digressions to moments in the plot of her life: as a postmodern mimetic version of the Russian beauty and martyr characters in literature, Irina’s beauty is censored for its sexual transgressiveness and lack of coherence with Soviet ideology. In both novels, the character-narrators’ writing and lives are interwoven. Their sexuality is reencountered and artistically censored in their writing. Whereas Humbert is framed as a criminal monster, camouflaged in postwar middle-class America, Irina’s narrative depicts her as an impossible martyr, whose extraordinary sexual beauty is not sufficient to save Russia.

In *Tiempo de silencio*, the two main narrative voices, those of the omniscient narrator and the protagonist Pedro, develop through Pedro’s thoughts and acts; through this character, the novel configures sexuality as potentially liberating pleasure, a source of scientific knowledge, and a site of pain and damage. Pedro’s interpellation into Spanish master narratives of triumphant defeat and isolation criticizes Franco’s regime, a complicit society, and a complacent or cynical middle class and body of intellectuals.

In each of the novels, the style and forms of writing impose specific conditions on the writing of sexuality. With these modernist and postmodernist works, one aim of writing is to relate the inner workings of the mind, to transcribe thoughts, fantasies, and perceptions. This psychological emphasis
Conclusion

on character and writing in the twentieth-century novel brings together the social- and publication-censorship concerns on the one hand, and, on the other, the psychic, mental censorship of the human subject. The authors in this study prioritize this collision of inner and outer worlds in the form of the protagonists, who each offers, to some degree, cases of neurosis or pathology, exaggerated examples of human subjectivity and of problematic symptoms. The most pathological of the characters studied is Humbert. This pedophile attempts to seduce the reader by explaining how the girl Dolores Haze is mimetic of his former love Annabel; then his fantasy nymphet and lover “Lolita” partially screens Dolores. His narrative often aims to conceal or camouflage (censor) his abuse of a child by overlaying it with the narratives of the fairy tale, the frontier bride, the fallen woman or seductress, and the beautiful woman as revered, loved object.

Irina’s state of mind approximates psychosis by the end of her text. Her split subjectivity is presented in her writing in self-observation (“I” and “you”) and in her experiences as harshly judged woman. Moreover, in the novel’s fantastic context, she is both of this world and called to a world beyond her Soviet Russian reality, to her former lover Vladimir Sergeyevich. Her necrophilic union with this Soviet ghost removes Irina from the text and from her place in the Soviet world. Her attempts to fulfill a martyr’s narrative as a Russian Joan of Arc, as a new Russian beauty, do not succeed; her fantastic potential to absorb the world’s evils remains unappreciated by Soviet Russians.

Bloom and Stephen are also subject to fantastic visions or hallucinations. Although these visions express their inner fantasies, they appear as though real and able to interact with the protagonists. In what could be seen as a dramatic version of a series of long sessions, each man revisits his desires, fears and memories, largely in the form of fantasies. Both men demonstrate forms of masochism; the elements of judgment and suffering in both cases are crucial for developing a sense of censored sexuality. Bloom’s masochism is luxuriously and often comically explored in numerous wild scenarios in which he becomes victimized, often by women. Meanwhile, Stephen’s masochism is largely moral, deriving from the weighty institutions of the Irish family, the Catholic Church, and the British Empire, as well as the awesome influences of literary precursors (notably Yeats and Shakespeare).

Perhaps paralleling Stephen, we find in Pedro another moral masochist. Pedro is at once attracted to and repulsed by sexuality, and his fantasies of sexual pleasure, investigation, and pain in the woman’s body are imbricated in his cancer research. Pedro’s series of misadventures lead him to a sort of triumphant failure, or victory of the fatalist. For he condemns himself to a pleasurable but complacent life in the provinces as a doctor, while fulfilling
a Spanish master narrative of defeat in assimilation and isolation, symbolic castration, and martyrdom, as shown in his comparisons between himself and the martyred San Lorenzo (St. Lawrence) who was toasted on both sides. While in a heroic novel, a doctor takes the role of healer or therapist, in this satirical novel, Pedro the doctor moves toward a masochistically pleasurable existence.

While the novels suggest sexuality as a potential realm of freedom and pleasure, they tend to deny a fulfillment of such a view by insisting on political and social problems and concerns that condition sexuality and sexual pleasure. In this way, the works transcend pornography (pornography in the sense of literature designed almost exclusively with the aim to arouse sexually), because they complicate and question the basis of men’s pleasure in pornography and, on a broader level, sexuality. In this way, the novels fulfill Bakhtin’s principles of the modern dialogic and heteroglot novel. Sexuality is made dialogic, referring to two or more narrative perspectives, and opening interpretation to critical review by the reader. The novelists also involve many societal strands in their works, using heteroglossia to represent conflicting or contrasting social perspectives. In “Circe,” Stephen parodies a French presentation of a brothel act (“Vive le vampire!”); the Continental brothel collides with the provincial Dublin brothel (“Parley-voo!”). Bloom’s hallucinations rearrange Jewish, legal, colonial British, Irish, and feminine discourses. Lolita’s teacher Miss Pratt spouts supposedly enlightened psychological jargon at a masked pedophile (Humbert). In Tiempo de silencio, Pedro’s mind alternates between the medical discourses of his study and his prurient interests in the female (and male) body. Irina’s voice in Russkaia krasavitsa brings together the discourses of pornographic fantasy in photography with Dostoevskian hope that beauty will save the world.

Fantasy offers a space for artistic exploration of sexuality and censoring of it. The many fantasies of “Circe” integrate both sexuality and the protagonists’ concerns related to the family or society. In Lolita, Humbert’s fantasies dangerously mediate and collide with his acts in reality. In contrast to the devious plotter Humbert, Pedro passively allows himself to be manipulated, in part enticed by his own fantasies of sexuality and ambition. In all of these cases, men’s desires, when acted upon, affect others negatively, especially women. Their desires in fantasy form reflect back on the masculine subject in negating and judgmental ways. Russkaia krasavitsa turns the narrative tables by considering a woman’s point of view. As a Russian beauty, Irina is mimetic of certain former literary and historic Russian beauties, who meet a tragic and early end.

If censoring helps to create the fantasy that is the sexual relationship, then sexuality also helps us to understand the dynamics of censoring. The
The protagonists of all four novels come to define themselves in relation to, or in contrast with, their countries’ ideologies and dominant fictions. This commonality shows that sex does not take the individual further away into some private, unregulated realm. Sexuality, despite the illusion of its private, personal pleasures, is a regulated domain; sexual pleasures are a product of regulation and signifying structure. The novelists highlight their protagonists’ concomitant social isolation and integration in order to meditate on the relationship between the modern human subject and society: how do we live in the world with others? In each case, the political, social, and cultural specificities are emphasized and cannot be divorced from consideration of their respective protagonists and crises: Ulysses is a novel about 1904 colonial Ireland, Lolita about postwar America, Tiempo de silencio about Francoist Spain, and Russkaia krasavitsa about Soviet Russia.

The differences between the novels’ settings in liberal democracies and repressive regimes are not stark. Tiempo de silencio and Russkaia krasavitsa stress the alienated individual’s position in a strongly regimented society that pretends to have a homogeneous unity. Similarly, Lolita and Ulysses show how alienated individuals’ erotics are derived from confrontations with the dominant fictions of their societies. The individual does this not so much through analysis, but through erecting his or her own fantasies and crises. Those fantasies and crises, when focused on sex, are produced through a creative filter of censorship and with the rules and prohibitions of society in mind.

Applying censoring and judgment entails eroticism; the will to Law involves an erotic drive to be loved in the form of judgment. The conflict of choosing between love and sexuality (or finding a reconciliation or compromise) is at stake in the censoring of sexuality. Censoring itself is an eroticized function, in its play of affirmation and negation.

Censoring’s role in determining ethical meaning and value is dramatically emphasized when it comes to sexual references because at stake is the subject’s potential loss (i.e., of love, parental love, of meaningful structure). These novels tend to reconfigure love in the form of lack and mourning, suggesting a crisis or negation of love. In “Circe,” Stephen and Bloom both mourn loved ones: Stephen mourns a dead mother whose Catholic version of the Law stifled him; Bloom mourns an infant son, the fantasy of an unfulfilled love of purity and promise. Both men mourn, in effect, a filial loss of self, an authentic self: themselves as once dearly loved sons. Humbert frames his narrative with mourning and regret; he has stipulated that his
text be read only once Dolores has died. His supposed “love,” not shown to her in her lifetime, is expressed in part as mourning. Pedro has experienced keen erotic interest in both Florita and Dorita; when he remembers their deaths, particularly Florita’s, he is implicated in guilt. Although he is not an actual murderer, he has been involved contiguously in their deaths; moreover, as Dorita’s fiancé, he mourns in a way that replaces her with new concerns, the life as provincial doctor he is traveling toward. Irina’s love for Vladimir Sergeyevich, made difficult and unfulfilled during his lifetime, is transformed into an erotic mourning, as explored in several episodes: her running on the field as a Russian Joan of Arc; her sexual intercourse with him as a ghost lover-groom; her erotic photo-shoot in which she seduces the viewer as the mourning widow; her pregnancy and eventual submission to her groom’s wishes to join him in the afterlife. None of these novels present love as a successful, life-affirming element; love is made impossible in each narrative, in part through censoring mediations with sexuality.

Mourning can be seen as a developmental stage in human subjectivity, on a symbolic level, and not just as an actual mourning of a deceased loved one. Lacan explains how the function of the superego (which administers the subject’s collection of sources of the Law) is constructed on the foundation of mourning: “Oedipus’s mourning is at the origin of the superego, the double limit—from the real death risked to the preferred or the assumed death, to the being-for-death—only appears as veiled. [. . .] Any alert author locates the final term of the psychic reality we deal with in the ambivalence between love and hate” (Ethics, 309).

For Lacan, mourning may mask or conceal not only love but hate; mourning is an ambiguous response, involving a kind of domination or mastery. Oedipus’s mourning of his father involves a recognition that Oedipus has taken the father’s place; the son can occupy the place of the Law. Also in mourning, the mourner can regret the loss of powerlessness and innocence. The superego is closely related to the psychic censor; both oversee and regulate the subject’s thoughts and actions. In Lolita, Humbert constructs a confessional narrative predicated on death. His mourning of “Lolita” attempts to renegotiate his transgression of the Law. Stephen’s and Bloom’s mourning involves reconsideration of their roles as (symbolic) fathers, who would occupy the place of the Law, rather than their more familiar roles as sons, in which they can act pleasurably, erotically dreading parental censorship. Pedro arguably resists mourning altogether in order to remain in the position of masochistic son in his paternalistic society. Russkaia krasavitsa, another confessional narrative predicated on death, presents the protagonist’s attempt to become the Soviet heroine and enter the dominant fiction by using her sexuality, her unspeakable beauty or sublimity.
Her erotic mourning of Vladimir Sergeyevich, the canonized Soviet writer (her “Leonardik,” “a legend in his lifetime”), positions her as potentially empowered to negotiate a Russian renaissance; ultimately, however, her beauty and writing lead her to death, not to new life.

All four texts filter instances of sexuality through the context of the individual and the body. This mode of presentation emphasizes how sexuality determines the outwardly desiring aims of our subjectivity and a misapprehended belief that the physical body will yield meaning, value, love, or truth. In “Circe,” the body is most pleasurable as fantasy and in various masks and disguises. Bloom’s own body is transformed, dressed up in various costumes, and dies several times in his eroticized encounters with the judgment of the Other (family, Jewishness, Irish society) and others (desiring women). Both Bloom and Stephen reenact masochistic fantasies of identifications with Christ’s martyrdom; Christ’s mutilated, revered body erotically presents a version of the loved child. The imaginary bodies of dead loved ones haunt Bloom’s and Stephen’s fantasies of negating or censorious desire, provoking unpleasure (the awful cancerous specter of May Dedalus) and pleasure (the fairy image of Rudy). Humbert cloaks the childish body of Dolores Haze with the womanly and fantastic guises of “Lolita” as nymphet, Carmen, fallen woman, and eternal love object. In his confession, he seeks to render his pleasure in the girl’s body sensible by veiling it with his various aesthetic discourses and his narrative maneuvers that partially reveal and conceal the obscenely abused body of the prostituted child. Pedro’s contact with Florita and Dorita, along with his confrontations with himself in the brothel and the prison, signals his belief that one can find a certain truth in the body; his dedication to scientific research and medicine emphasize his fixation on the body and the possible knowledge it can reveal. Finally, Irina’s extraordinarily beautiful or sublime body is the actual site and framing context of her narrative; she writes the textual story of her body, beginning and ending with her negated sex, in an effort to make it speak, and therefore to produce some kind of truth. In all of these novels, the body of the other is at once the site of desire, sexuality, and knowledge. The novelists problematize critically the body of the desired other by making it a conflicting site of pleasure and transgression in the terms of the respective social and political contexts.

By extension of the sexual human body, the novels explore the twin issues of pornography and prostitution. On an uncritical level, these resources serve men’s sexual pleasure; the novels reconfigure critically pornography and prostitution so that the characters’ involvement in these realms, and society’s participation, are highlighted and offered for judgment. Given the
twentieth century’s dramatic change in the status of women in Europe and North America, the social contexts of pornography and prostitution become more apparent. The novels’ prostitution theme dramatizes modern man’s troubled negotiation with women’s changing status. Joyce and Martín-Santos show women’s economic dependence on prostitution in harsh economic times. Although these authors recognize that men may approach the brothel with their fantasies, and that part of the “profession” encourages those fantasies in order to conduct business, they also dramatize women’s perspectives, including the local political and legal authorities’ hypocritical accommodation of prostitution. Nabokov shows how the prostitute can emerge from the figure of the child (e.g., in the case of the French adolescent prostitute Monique); further, Humbert’s fantasy of a sexual-love relation with his “Lolita” is debunked by the fact that he is compelled to bribe and pay her for sexual cooperation. In all of these novels, prostitution does not provide access to love, although it can provide the site for fantasized desire. In Russkaia kravavtsa, Irina’s status is left ambiguous: while not a prostitute, her love for Vladimir Sergeyevich is brought into question by his maintaining her partially as a secret mistress. Like other fallen women (e.g., Moll Flanders), Irina believes that she has negotiated marriage and love in exchange for sex. Erofeev thus returns to the critical question, already posed by Chernyshevskii in the nineteenth century (Chto delat’?; What Is to Be Done?), of the status of women in their relationship with men: marriage and prostitution are not oppositional, but rather tangential in that both institutions place the woman in a situation of economic dependence on man. Ulysses, Lolita, and Tiempo de silencio visit this intersection of prostitution and marriage in critical ways as well. For example, Bloom’s fantasies of his wife (and of himself) deploy prostitution motifs; Humbert’s marriages, and his relation with Dolores, bleed into the sphere of prostitution; la vieja ensnares Pedro in an engagement to her granddaughter (that would benefit her family economically) by essentially pimping the young Dorita.

Pornography, or the writing of prostitutes (writing about them or by them), is integrated critically in all of these texts. While the novelists make use of certain narrative techniques related to pornographic writing (e.g., confession; fantasy), they embed these in modernist and postmodernist styles in order to create ironic, self-reflective texts that problematize potential pornography and aestheticize erotic language. Their artistic censoring produces critical and aesthetic versions of the sexual self. By endowing literary sexual contexts with ethical meaning (i.e., indicating the subject’s responsibility for the other, or lack thereof), the authors of these texts make the often taboo subject of sexuality an ethical domain of human
relations and conduct to be explored and questioned. In framing sexuality
in dramatic, ironic, nondidactic ways, they leave much of the judgmental
activity to an implied reader.

The judgment that the novels’ protagonists bring to weigh upon them-
\-selves functions as an evaluation or census taking, as a form of censoring
(in that original dual sense of censura as moral evaluation and property taxa-
tion). These novels’ underlying prostitution motif blurs the border between
our potential, modern sexual liberation and a possible devaluation of our-
\-selves and others. These novels reprioritize sexuality as meaningful to their
societies and as a vitally important theme in art, not just to be celebrated
or deplored, but to be questioned and judged. They present sexuality in
a manner particularly reflective of our problematic interpersonal relations,
especially power relations between men and women and between the soci-
ety and the individual. The personal inner world of sexual desire and artistic
censoring—what constitutes fantasy—\-is integrated into these narratives, so
that the distinctions between society and the individual are questioned, and
an interpersonal and dialogic perspective is prioritized.
Appendix

SUMMARIES OF NOVELS’ HISTORICAL CENSORSHIP

Ulysses

1. While early chapters of Ulysses were published in serialized form in the Little Review, the U.S. Postal Authorities confiscated two issues, the January 1920 issue (second half of “Cyclops”) and the July–August 1920 issue (second half of “Nausicaa”). The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice lodged a complaint, citing “Nausicaa.” The final serialized chapter (the first part of “Oxen of the Sun”) was published in the September–December 1920 issue.

2. With the court proceedings of February 1921, editors of the Little Review were convicted of publishing obscenity and publication ceases.


4. U.S., English, Canadian, Irish, and other Customs authorities regularly from 1922 to 1933 seized and confiscated copies of Ulysses. The U.S. ban’s strictness extended to the post office.

5. From 1925 to 1927, Samuel Roth, a well-known publisher of pornography and erotica, without Joyce’s permission, attempted to publish an expurgated version of the novel in serialized form; Roth then attempted publishing bootlegged editions of the whole novel. His efforts were often curtailed by local authorities.

6. In December 1933, in the case The United States v. Ulysses, Judge John Woolsey, U.S. District Court, ruled that Ulysses was not obscene and could be published in the United States. The end of the ban resulted in its gradual removal, such as in Great Britain in 1936.
Lolita

1. In 1955, the novel was published by Olympia Press in Paris. Owing to market censorship, especially publishers’ concerns for possible court actions after publication, Nabokov could not find a willing U.S. publisher.
2. In 1956, the British Home Office influenced censorship in France. Great Britain’s Customs were seizing *Lolita* along with other Olympia publications. The Home Office asked the French authorities to ban *Lolita*, along with other books from Olympia Press.
3. In 1957, *Lolita* was signed to be published in the United States by G. P. Putnam’s Sons; Nabokov cut his ties with Girodias. In August 1958, the novel was published successfully in the United States. The United States did not ban the novel, despite the ongoing censorship activity in Great Britain and France.
5. In January 1958, the French ban was ruled illegal. At the end of that same year, France’s Conseil d’État found favor on the part of the Ministère de l’Intérieur for taking action on *Lolita* and the French ban was renewed.
6. In 1958, the British used the novel as a case study for the formulation of a new obscenity bill to update and revise the old nineteenth-century law for obscenity that had used the *Hicklin* rule. After the new Obscene Publications Bill (1958), *Lolita* was published in Great Britain by the then fledgling publishers Weidenfeld and Nicolson (1959).

Tiempo de silencio

1. First edition with one of Spain’s leading literary publishers Seix y Barral was published in late 1961 with some passages and episodes heavily censored. Until 1965, the various print runs maintained this censorship.
2. In the 1966 edition, most of the censored passages were restored.
4. In 1980, Seix y Barral published an “edición definitiva” (definitive edition), reprinted in 1993. This edition actually appears identical to the 1966 and subsequent editions. The “definitive edition” of 1980 (and subsequent reprints) is longer in pagination, but does not seem to restore any previously censored passages according to my comparison of segments and the overall text. It does not include additions from a manuscript or notes that were never submitted to the censor.

Russkaia krasavitsa

1. The first edition of *Russkaia krasavitsa* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1990) was lightly censored; several sexual or other offensive words were replaced by dashes or ellipses (words such as “blow job” or “whore”).
2. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Erofeev sought to republish the uncensored novel. In 1994, Molodaia gvardiia published it without any suppressions (*Russkaya krasavitsa: Roman, rasskazy*).


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abortion, 34, 162, 164, 165, 170, 171, 180, 187n31, 189, 190, 201n40, 202, 203, 205, 210, 211, 229, 244, 257. See also birth; pregnancy
adultery, xiv, xv, 12, 17, 26, 43, 57, 58, 60, 69, 75, 77, 84–87, 97, 102, 107, 218, 226, 238, 251, 254, 259
Alice in Wonderland. See Carroll.
alienation: 36, 272; and Lolita, 123, 139; and Russkaia kravavita, 258–67, 261; and Tiempo de silencio, 161, 164, 165–72, 167n9, 168, 174, 176, 180, 189, 193, 195, 196, 200; and Ulysses, 60, 68n40, 90, 91, 96, 105
Althusser, Louis, 35n14
Anna Karenina (Tolstoi), 57n22, 215, 226, 226n13, 261
Anderson, Hans Christian, 150
El árbol de la ciencia (The Tree of Science)
(Baroja), 175
Aristophanes, 230n18, 244
Bakhtin, M. M., 41n4, 43, 44n9, 46, 49n12, 56n18, 61n29, 64n35, 141, 142, 151, 217, 271. See also character zones; dialogism; heteroglossia; narrative; narrators
Baroja, Pío, 175
Barrie, J. M., 114n3, 125, 125n14, 126, 150
Barthes, Roland, xii, 13, 46, 64, 64n34, 151
beautiful, the, ix, xi, xiv, 36, 37, 76, 84, 94, 96, 119, 125, 135, 140, 145, 149, 150, 156, 159, 164, 186, 192, 193, 213, 215, 215n1, 216–18, 219–30, 225n10 and n12, 230–40, 236n27, 240–44, 247n37, 248–58, 257n46, 260–67, 264n52, 269–74. See also beautiful woman; blason du corps feminin; Blok; Burke; Dostoevsky; heroine; Kant; Tiutchev
beautiful woman (prekrasnaia dama), 226, 229, 248, 250, 270. See also beautiful; blason du corps feminin; Blok; Dostoevsky; femininity; femme fatale; heroine; Tiutchev
Beauvoir, Simone de, 129n17
Berdiaev, Nikolai, 32n9, 232, 249
birth, 70n42, 76n47, 78n50, 88–89n57,
Index

116, 136, 141, 159, 173, 207, 208, 229, 229n16, 232, 256, 266n55. See also abortion; pregnancy

blason du corps feminin, 119, 121n9, 139

Blok, Aleksander, 219, 222, 226, 227, 232, 243, 248, 249, 261

Boheemen-Saaf, Christine van, 63n33, 97, 97n67

Boone, Joseph Allen, 51n13

Borenstein, Elliot, 248, 250, 256

Bourdieu, Pierre, xii, 5, 80

Bowen, Zack, 91n60, 109n76, 110

Boyd, Brian, 28n4, 125n15, 129n17, 131n19

bride. See marriage

Brivic, Sheldon, 60, 90n60

Brodsky, Joseph, 31n7, 225n12

Brooks, Peter, 17n19, 62n32, 64, 235n26, 237n3, 245n33

brothel, and Tiempo de silencio, 162–64, 164n4, 165, 172, 177, 178n21, 200–208, 203n41, 209, 274, 275; and Ulysses, 42, 43n7, 51, 51n15, 56, 58, 64, 65, 73, 84, 91n11, 93, 95, 98, 103, 271, 275. See also prostitution

Brown, Richard, 41n4, 62n32

bullfight (corrida; lidia), 183, 183n27, 186, 192, 193

Burke, Edmund, 227, 240, 241, 261, 264n52

El burlador de Sevilla (Tirso de Molina), 175n16, 187n31. See also Law; theater

cancer, 30, 37, 93, 93n61, 96, 109, 146, 166, 167–75, 170n11–12, 179, 182n26, 189, 190, 196–200, 199n38, 203, 208–12, 212n46, 213, 270, 274

Carmen, 122n10, 131, 131n19, 133, 274

Carroll, Lewis, 125, 125n15, 126, 150, 150n32

castration, 36n15, 49, 50, 53, 58n24, 89n59, 161, 170, 174, 176, 176n18, 178, 189, 193, 213, 214, 271

Catholicism, xii, 5, 7, 27, 33, 34, 39, 41, 50, 53, 58, 60, 66n36, 77, 79, 81, 92, 93, 93nn1, 95, 96, 101, 107–9, 138, 139, 163, 168, 172, 176, 185, 208, 247, 270, 272


Cervantes, Miguel de, 174, 175n16, 193, 197 character zones (zony geroev), 35, 61, 61n29, 67, 72, 103, 105, 106, 114, 132, 136, 149, 160, 162, 184. See also Bakhtin


Christ, Jesus, 77, 83, 84, 94, 95n64, 97n67, 105, 109, 215, 222, 231, 233, 234, 239, 256, 274. See also apocalypse; birth; Christianity; Easter; martyrs; sons

Christianity, 10, 12, 71n44, 77, 83, 84, 94, 95n64, 97n67, 105, 109, 215, 222, 231, 233, 234, 239, 256, 274. See also apocalypse; birth; Christianity; Easter; martyrs; sons

Cleland, John, 44–45n10, 144, 216

clothes, 12, 51n14, 63, 84, 89–91, 237,
Index • 311

237n28, 257
commedia dell’arte, 43, 99. See also irony;
pantomime; theater
confession, x, xiii, 15, 18, 20, 26, 35, 269,
273, 274–75; in Lolita, 26, 112, 114–18,
121, 127–30, 135–38, 137n25, 139–45,
152, 154–60, 269, 273, 274; in Russkaja
krasavitsa, 35, 216, 218, 226, 227, 242,
243, 253, 254, 254n44, 258, 262, 269,
273; in Tiempo de silencio, 168; in Ulysses,
101. See also Catholicism; discourse;
Foucault; masochism; narrators; narra-
tive; pícaro/pícara; rogue narrators
copy, 112, 119, 122, 122n10, 155, 216, 218,
230, 242, 266. See also double; fantasy;
masochism; mimesis; repetition
copyright, 4, 13
Countess Cathleen, The (Yeats), 97–98n67,
103, 107–9, 107n75. See also “Who
Goes with Fergus?”, Yeats
cuckold, 60, 69, 85, 86, 89n59, 95n64. See
also adultery; marriage; masochism
cutting, 36n15, 63, 165–72, 176, 183, 186,
188–90, 192, 193, 213. See also abortion;
castration, histology; martyrs; masoch-
ism; medicine; science; vivisection

Dark, Oleg, 34n13, 220n5, 233n18, 233n24,
254n45
De Grazia, Edward, xi nn1–2, 4n2, 11n13,
12n16, 25n1, 28n4, 40n1
death, xi, xiv, 17, 36, 37, 272–74; in Lolita,
115–20, 135, 136, 143, 145, 146, 148,
151, 158, 159; in Russkaja krasavitsa,
215, 219, 221n6, 223, 225n10, 227, 229,
229n16, 230, 231, 234, 235, 238n29,
240, 242, 244, 244n33, 247n37, 249,
250, 254–57, 260–62, 266, 266n55,
267; in Tiempo de silencio, 161, 164, 165,
166n6, 169, 171, 178, 180, 183n27, 186,
187, 187n31, 189, 190, 193, 209–11,
214; in Ulysses, 42, 43, 43n5, 45, 58n25,
65, 66, 69, 73, 76n47, 77, 78, 78nn49–
50, 80, 83, 85–87, 90–91n60, 93n61,
94, 95n64, 96, 97–98n67, 98n68, 100,
102n71, 104, 104n73, 105, 106, 109,
110. See also apocalypse; cancer; femme
fatale; negation; martyrs
Defoe, Daniel, 216, 242, 262, 275
Le déjeuner sur l’herbe (Manet), See Manet;
painting
Deleuze, Gilles, 48, 88n56, 89n58, 172
Devlin, Kimberly J., 49, 49n12, 50, 58n24,
96n60
dialogism, 41, 44, 44n9, 56n18, 57, 57n21,
60, 65, 69, 70–72, 70n43, 71n44, 87, 93,
100, 103, 105, 110, 114, 124, 142, 143,
150, 185, 217, 271, 276. See also Bakhtin
discourse, x–xiii, 2, 13, 20, 25, 26, 30, 36,
39, 44, 49n9, 46, 47, 52, 61n31, 62, 63,
71n44, 88, 98, 101, 105, 127, 129n16,
138–47, 151, 152, 163, 172, 187, 193,
194, 200, 212, 241, 243, 244, 254, 256,
260, 261, 263, 266, 271; literary (artistic,
dramatic; narrative, novelistic), ix, xii, 20,
26, 39, 40n2, 41, 41n4, 43n7, 44, 44n9,
45–47, 47n14, 52, 55, 56, 56n19, 56n20,
57, 59, 60–62, 65, 67–70, 70n43, 71n44,
72, 76, 78, 78n49, 79, 80, 83–86, 88, 89,
89n58, 91, 92, 98, 105, 106, 112, 114,
127, 129n17, 130–33, 132n21, 136–38,
141–52, 157, 160, 162, 163, 167, 176,
179, 194, 214, 227, 243, 248, 253, 260–
63, 266, 268, 269, 274. See also narrative
Don Giovanni (Mozart), 76, 76n47
Don Juan, 175n16, 187n31. See also Law;
masculinity
Don Quijote (Cervantes), 174, 175n16, 193,
197
Dostoievsky, Fyodor, 141, 142, 215, 215n1,
219, 223, 223n9, 225, 225n11–12, 226,
227n14, 231, 232, 238n29, 244, 244n33,
250, 253, 253n42, 266, 271. See also The
Idiot; Notes from Underground
double, 122, 136–38, 159, 169n10, 191n32,
211. See also copy; fantasy; masochism;
mimesis; repetition
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Stevenson), 114,
114n3, 142, 143, 143n27, 262n50. See
also Stevenson
Dubliners (Joyce), 68n40. See also Joyce
Easter, 70, 94, 96n65. See also birth; Catholic-
ism; Christ; Christianity; confession;
martyrs
Enchanted Hunters, 121n8, 122, 123n11, 124n13, 125n14, 131, 146, 149–51, 154. See also fairy tale; mimesis; theater engagement (compromiso), 35, 161, 184n28. See also Sartre
Epstein, Mikhail, 31n7, 32n9, 34n12, 233n23
Ermolaev, Herman, 31n7, 32n9, 33n10, 216n2, 228, 246n35, 247n38
Erofeev, Viktor, ix, xiv, 1, 8, 18, 20, 34, 37, 38, 215–67, 215n1, 216n2, 219, 225n11, 230n18, 231n21, 236n27, 260n49, 278–79. See also Russkaia krasavitsa
Exiles (Joyce), 45, 68n40, 73–74n45. See also Joyce
fairy tale, 102, 104, 108, 109, 109n77, 110, 114, 120, 123–27, 131, 139, 142, 145, 146, 149–51, 154, 159, 222, 245, 251, 251n40, 252, 255, 270, 274. See also Anderson; Barrie; Carroll; child; fantasy; girl; Grim Brothers; nymph; Pushkin; sons
femininity, x, 30, 271, 274; in Lolita, 112, 119, 133, 146, 147; in Russkaia krasavitsa, 216, 223, 227, 228, 230n18, 234, 242, 245, 248, 249, 256, 262, 264; in Tiempo de silencio, 163, 172, 187, 208; in Ulysses, 39, 49, 49n12, 50–52, 51n13, 59n26, 65, 65–66n36, 77–79, 83, 86–89, 89n59, 97–98n67. See also beautiful woman; blason du corps feminin; femme fatale; girl; heroine; mothers; pícaro/pícara; pregnancy
femme fatale, 95n64, 112, 122n10, 124, 141
film, 6n5, 12n15, 47, 121, 124, 146, 147, 151, 172, 210n45, 246, 247
Finnegans Wake (Joyce), 73–74n45, 259n48
Flaubert, Gustave, xiv, xv, 6n5, 57n22, 238, 238n9. See also Madame Bovary
Flavitskii, Konstantin, 229, 229n17. See also Princess T arakanova
focalization, 44, 46, 52, 56n19, 57, 66, 68, 113n2, 118, 125, 136, 143, 160, 168, 180n24, 193, 203, 212. See also narratives; narrators
Foucault, Michel, x, xiii, 15, 20, 139, 143
France, x, xi n2, xii, xv, 1, 7, 11, 11n3, 13, 29, 30, 40n1, 62n32, 65, 75, 124, 129n17, 225n11, 235n26, 236–38, 26n27, 271, 275, 278
Franco, Francisco, x, xii, 2, 6, 7, 7n8, 8, 20, 24, 31, 31n8, 32, 31–32n8, 33, 33n10, 34–37, 162, 163, 162–63n3, 171, 176, 179, 194, 195, 200, 203n42, 205, 205n43, 206, 209, 210, 214, 247, 269, 272
Freud, Sigmund, xiii, xiii n3, 8, 8n10, 9, 12n16, 17n19, 36n15, 48, 79, 89n58, 90–91n60, 103n72, 137, 137n25, 172, 176n18, 214. See also Lacan; psychoanalysis
Fromm, Erich, 255, 256. See also necrophilia
Gay, Peter, 57n23, 24n33
gaze, 36n15, 48, 58, 63, 87, 121, 122, 135, 140, 150, 194, 207, 221. See also fantasy; film; mimesis; mirror; painting; photography; voyeurism
ghosts, 42, 45, 46, 49, 57, 58n25, 65, 78n49, 102n71, 102–3n71, 108–10, 121n9, 151,
Index • 313

187n31, 218, 228, 231, 241, 250, 255, 256, 260, 270, 273. See also fantasy; gothic; vampires
Girodias, Maurice, 28, 28n4, 29, 129n17, 278. See also France; Nabokov; Olympia Press
Goodheart, Eugene, xi n2, 25n1, 29n5
Goodrich, Peter, xi n1, 26n2, 134n22
Goriæva, Helena, 32n9, 246n35, 247n37, 252–53n41
gothic, 51n15, 66, 102–3n71, 114, 138, 146, 149, 227–29, 227–28n14. See also fantasy; ghosts; heroic; heroine; love; Russian gothic; vampires
Goya, Francisco, 165, 165n5, 188. See also painting
Great Britain, x, 1, 4n2, 6n5, 7, 11, 11n13, 12, 27, 28n3, 29, 30, 40n1–2, 41, 45, 53, 74, 75n46, 88, 95n64, 98, 99nn69–70, 100, 102, 102–3n71, 250, 251, 270, 271, 277, 278
Greene, Graham, 29, 113n1, 129n17
Grimm brothers, 150, 251n40. See also fairy tale
Gubern, Román, 31–32nn7–8, 184n28, 194n35
gynecology, 229, 234, 254, 256, 266n55. See also abortion; birth; medicine; mothers; pregnancy
hallucination, 43, 44n10, 56n19, 61, 75, 77, 79, 83, 84, 87, 88–89n57, 92, 93n61, 94, 96, 97, 98n68, 100–106, 201, 218, 258, 270, 271
Hamlet (Shakespeare), 42, 56n19, 57, 58, 69. See also Shakespeare
Hathaway, Anne, 58, 69, 95. See also Shakespeare
Henke, Suzette A., 87n56
Herbold, Sarah, 113n2, 117
heroic, x, xiii, 32, 34, 40, 57, 57n21, 64, 90–91n60, 101, 102n71, 102–3n71, 105, 114, 141, 146, 162, 163, 172, 176, 194, 200, 212, 213, 216, 228, 237, 262, 271. See also heroine; pícaro/pícara; rogue narrators
heroine, 57, 76, 124n12, 136, 141, 217–20, 225–27, 227n14, 228, 230n18, 236n27, 237, 250, 256–58, 262, 273. See also heroic; pícaro/pícara; rogue narrators
Herr, Cheryl, 25n1, 41n2, 43, 44n9
Herzberger, David K., 31n7, 194n35
heteroglossia, 39, 44n9, 45, 51, 52, 56n18, 61, 65, 71n44, 83, 84, 98, 114, 139, 151, 191, 217, 227, 271. See also Bakhtin
history, 170, 183, 189. See also cutting:
Ramón y Cajal; science; vivisection
Hitchcock, Peter, 41n4
homoeroticism, 66, 73, 95, 100
homosexual, 6n5, 30, 49, 50n14, 59, 59n26, 73, 173, 227, 236, 244, 246–47n36, 254 husband. See marriage
Hutcheon, Linda, 219, 227, 263, 266
Ibsen, Henrik, 42–43, 43n5, 45, 46, 108
Idiot (The Idiot) (Dostoevsky), 36, 215, 223–25, 223n8, 225n10, 231, 233, 238n29, 250, 261, 266. See also Dostoevsky
Imaginary, the, xiv n4, 88, 236. See also
Lacan; Real; Symbolic
incest, xiii, 15, 30, 34, 43, 43n5, 73–74n45, 76n47, 85, 117, 134, 136, 159, 162, 167, 171, 182, 183, 205, 208–10, 227n14, 246, 257, 263. See also child; fathers; mothers; pregnancy
interpellation, 34, 35n14, 175, 269
Ireland, x, 1, 7, 20, 39, 40–41n2, 41n4, 43, 49, 50, 53, 57n21, 58, 60, 65–66n36, 74–77, 75n46, 82–85, 92, 93n61, 94, 94n62, 95n64, 96–102, 98n68, 99n70, 104n73, 107–9, 107n75, 269–72, 272, 274, 277
irony, xi, 19, 27, 35, 275, 276; in Lolita, 113, 113n1, 116, 117, 117n4, 124–29, 124n12, 129n17, 134, 137, 139–41, 144, 146–48, 150, 153, 154, 156, 159, 160; in Russkaia krasavitsa, 216–19, 222, 223, 226n13,
229–36, 230n18, 239, 243, 248–52, 253n42, 255, 257, 257n47, 262, 266; in Tiempo de silencio, 161, 163, 165, 166, 168, 171, 172, 175, 175n16, 180n24, 185, 188, 193–97, 199n38, 200–202, 205, 210; in Ulysses, 46, 49n12, 51n13, 61, 62n32, 68n39, 77n48, 88, 93n61, 96, 100, 104. See also Hutcheon; parody

Jewishness, in Ulysses, 39, 51n13, 79, 79n51, 81–86, 82n53, 89n59, 271, 274; in Tiempo de silencio, 164, 184, 186; in Russkaia krasavitsa, 257

Joan of Arc, 218, 231, 234–40, 238n29, 254, 256, 260, 261, 270, 273

Jordan, Barry, 31n7, 212n47

Joyce, James, ix, xiv, 1, 7, 18, 20, 24–28, 25n1, 32, 38, 40, 40nn1–2, 41n3–4, 43, 43n5, n6, and n7, 44n9, 45–47, 49n12, 50, 51n32, 64, 68, 68n40, 70, 71, 71n44, 73–74n45, 79n51, 84, 89n58, 90–91n60, 99, 107, 109, 120n7, 201, 201n39, 268, 275, 277. See also Dubliners; Exiles; Finnegans Wake; Portrait; Stephen Hero; Ulysses

judgment, x–xii, xiv n4, 5, 7, 14–18, 15n18, 23, 27, 31, 31n8, 35, 272, 273; and Lolita, 124, 125, 131, 134, 134n22, 137, 137n24, 139, 143n28, 157, 174; and Russkaia krasavitsa, 223, 246–47n36, 263; and Tiempo de silencio, 179, 187n31, 191, 201–9; and Ulysses, 62–63n33, 72–87, 78n49, 89n58, 92–95, 98, 101–6, 109

Legendre, Pierre, 11nn13–14, 26n2, 134n22

Leonard, Garry, 29n12

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 10n11

Little Review, 7, 27, 40–41nn1–2, 68, 277

Lolita (Nabokov), x, 1, 7, 17, 18, 20, 24, 26–30, 35, 36, 40n1, 112–60, 253, 262, 269, 270–75, 278; characters in: Anna Bel, 115, 119–21, 120n6–7, 121n8, 132n20, 140, 144n29, 158, 270; Gustave Godin, 114, 124n13; Charlotte Haze, 114, 115, 128, 130, 131, 144n29, 147, 148, 155, 156, 156n37, 158; Dolores Haze, 112–60, 120n6, 122n10, 124n12, 125n15,
128–29n16, 129n17, 131n19, 136n23, 137n24, 139n26, 152n33, 269–75; Gustave Godin, 114, 124n13; Humbert Humbert, 18, 27, 29, 112–60, 178n21, 269–75; Monique, 115, 275; Miss Pratt, 114, 149, 271; Clare Quilty, 114–16, 124, 124nn12–13, 125n14, 131, 147–54, 158, 159; John Ray, Jr., 114, 116, 131, 158; Richard Schiller, 116, 124n13, 128–29n16, 136, 136n23, 147, 150, 151, 152n33, 159

love, 9, 11, 13, 19, 35–37, 272–74; in Lolita, 112, 115–24, 120n6, 121n9, 127, 129n17, 131–41, 132n20, 145, 148–52, 156, 159, 270, 273–75; in Ulysses, 57, 58, 62–63n33, 65n36, 69–70n42, 75, 78–83, 78n49, 80, 86, 89, 92, 93n61, 94n63, 96–98, 97n66, 97–98n67, 100, 102, 104–9, 109n76, 270, 274. See also blason; fantasy; femme fatale; gothic; marriage

MacKinnon, Catharine, xi n1, 26n2, 143n28

Madame Bovary (Flaubert), xiv, xv, 6n5, 57, 57n22, 68, 141, 238, 238n29–30. See also adultery; Flaubert; heroine

Manet, Édouard, 235, 235n26, 237, 237n28, 238, 264


Martin, Wallace, 46, 47

Martin-Santos, Luis, ix, xiv, 1, 8, 18, 20, 34, 37, 38, 161, 163, 162–63n33, 167–68n9, 172, 175, 175n16, 183, 191n32, 193n34, 201, 201n39, 203n41–42, 214, 275


masculinity, x, 17, 269, 271; and Lolita, 113n1, 129n17, 140, 155; and Russkaia krasavitsa, 217, 248, 249, 255, 256, 262n50; and Tiempo de silencio, 174, 178, 195, 197; and Ulysses, 39, 41n3, 47–53, 49n12, 51n15, 57, 59n26, 60–64, 61n31, 66, 73–76, 78, 83, 85–89, 92, 93, 95, 97n67, 102, 102n71, 105, 111. See also castration; fathers; heroic; homosexual; Law; masquerade; patriarchy; sons

masks, 43, 49, 49n12, 50, 99, 125, 133, 153, 188, 246–47n36, 271, 273, 274

masochism, 18; and Lolita, 122, 124; and Russkaia krasavitsa, 254; and Tiempo de silencio, 161, 162, 172–78, 179, 186, 189, 195, 200, 213, 214, 271, 273; and Ulysses, 40, 47–55, 56, 62, 75, 77, 78, 84–89, 87–88n56, 89n58, 92, 97n67, 102, 110, 268–70, 274. See also judgment; Law; martyrs; Sacher-Masoch; sadism; sadomasochism; trials; Venus in Furs; vivisection

masquerade, 44, 44n9, 47, 49, 49n12, 50–53, 57, 77–78n48. See also Lacan; masks; Riviere

masturbation, 17, 40n1, 41n3, 59, 68, 76, 120, 185, 186, 187n31, 197, 201n40, 208, 244, 277

maternal. See mothers

medicine, xii, xiii, 19, 32n9, 48, 77, 162–65, 168, 173–80, 173n15, 182, 188, 190, 200, 202, 203n42, 209, 212n46–47, 213, 270–74. See also abortion; cancer; gynecology; pregnancy; science; vivisection

Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (Fanny Hill) (Cleland), 44–45n10, 144, 216. See also memory; narrative; prostitution

memory, 35; and Lolita, 115,116, 119–21, 121n9, 134, 135, 138, 141, 144, 149, 158, 159, 190; and Russkaia krasavitsa, 34n13, 216, 219, 221, 222, 226, 233n24, 253, 253n43, 261, 265; and Tiempo de silencio, 166, 273; and Ulysses, 59, 61, 63, 67, 70, 71, 74, 77–80, 78n50, 85, 86, 91–103, 97–98n67, 102–3n71, 110, 270. See also
confession; narrators

_Merchant of Venice_ (Shakespeare), 83. See also Shakespeare

Meredith, George, 102–3n71, 107, 107n74

mimesis, xiv; and _Lolita_, 112–14, 119, 120, 127, 136, 145, 148, 150, 151, 153, 270; and _Russkaia kravatsitza_, 218, 230, 264, 267, 269, 271; and _Tiempo de silencio_, 191; and _Ulysses_, 43–46, 43n7, 44n9, 49n12, 55, 56n20, 61–67, 68, 70, 71n44, 72, 77, 78, 86, 92–94, 98, 100, 105, 111.

See also copy; double; fantasy; mask; masquerade; mirror; repetition; theater


See also copy; double; fantasy; gaze; mimesis; repetition

mitosis, 169, 170, 170n11, 196. See also cancer

_Moll Flanders_ (Defoe), 216, 242, 262, 275

Moss, Kevin, 246–47n36

mothers, 37, 272; and _Lolita_, 115, 121n9, 122, 123n20, 167, 170n14, 179, 180, 199, 202, 205–8, 213; and _Ulysses_, 42, 47, 51, 53, 58n25, 59, 60n28, 62–63n33, 65–66n36, 66, 69, 77–78n48, 78, 78n49, 80, 88–89n57, 92, 93n61, 94–98, 96n65, 97–98n67, 98n68, 100, 102, 102n71, 105, 107–11, 107n76, 272.

See also abortion; child; fathers; girl; gynecology; pregnancy; sons

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 76, 76n47

Mullin, Katherine, 40n2, 51n15, 52

Nabokov, Vladimir, ix, xiv, 1, 7, 18, 20, 24, 26, 28, 28n4, 29, 32, 38, 40n1, 113n1, 114n3, 117, 118n5, 123, 124, 125n15, 129n17, 130, 131n19, 132, 132n20, 137n25, 135, 140–42, 142n27, 154n35, 236n27, 275, 278. See also Evroeev; Girodias; _Lolita_; Olympia Press

Nadel, Ira, 79n51, 82–85, 82n53

Naiman, Eric, 32n9, 36, 37, 229, 249, 250

narrative, x–xiii, 15, 18, 19, 26, 27, 32–37, 268–76; and _Lolita_, 112–25, 124n13, 125n14, 127–60, 128–29n16, 137n25; and _Russkaia kravatsitza_, 215–27, 231–2, 235n26, 238–54, 254n44, 258, 260–67, 262n50, 266n55; and _Tiempo de silencio_, 161, 162, 165–71, 174–78, 175n16, 180–83, 187n31, 188, 191–200, 191n32, 192n33, 204–8, 205n44, 212, 212n46, 213, 214; and _Ulysses_, 39, 40, 43, 44n9, 45–48, 54–60, 56n20, 57n23, 61–64, 61n29, 62n32, 66–70, 70n43, 86–89, 87–88n56, 91, 100–5, 111. See also Bakhtin; character zone; confession; dialogism; discourses; focalization; heteroglossia; narrators; _picaro/picara_; rogue narrators

narrators, 18, 35, 36, 269; and _Lolita_, 112–19, 121n9, 122, 125n15, 126, 128–29n16, 130, 132, 132n20–21, 133–36, 139–45, 144n29, 152–54, 157–60, 269; and _Russkaia kravatsitza_, 36, 216–20, 223, 232, 240–53, 246–47n36, 254n44, 258, 261, 262, 265, 269, 271; and _Tiempo de silencio_, 161–63, 165–68, 175n16, 180n24, 181, 183, 188, 191–96, 199, 201–14, 269; and _Ulysses_, 39, 40, 44–47, 44n9, 44–45n10, 49n12, 56n18, 57n23, 60, 65–66n36, 66, 67. See also Bakhtin; character zone; confession; dialogism; discourses; focalization; heteroglossia; mask; masquerade; narrative; _picaro/picara_; rogue narrators national discourses. See discourses

Nausicaa, 40n1, 41n3, 44–45n10, 46, 68, 70n43, 77–78n48, 201n40, 277

necrophilia, 17, 66, 255, 256, 270. See also death; fantasy; gothic; masculinity; vampire

Index

108, 268–72, 274. See also abortion; apocalypse; castration; censoring; cutting; death; fantasy; judgment; masochism; sadism; vivisection

Norris, Margot, 43, 43n7, 51n14

Notes from Underground (Dostoevsky) 139, 141, 142, 215, 253. See also Dostoevsky

nymph, 77, 87, 112–15, 113n2, 120, 121n8, 122, 122n10, 125, 125n15, 126, 132, 132n20, 133, 136, 137, 140, 143, 145, 147, 152, 152n33, 157–59, 270, 274. See also child; fairy tale; fantasy; femme fatale; girl

“O, kak ubistvenno my liubim” (“How murderously we love”) (Tiutchev), 220–222, 261

obscenity, xi n1, 5–8, 11–15, 12n15 and Lolita, 121, 128, 131–33, 143, 145–48, 154, 157, 160, 274, 278; and Russkaiia krasavitsa, 238, 247, 250n39, 252, 260, 263; and Tiempo de silencio, 177, 178, 206, 209, 216; and Ulysses, 40n2, 41, 41n3, 56n19, 61, 71, 83, 85, 100, 277

Olympia Press, 7, 28, 29, 278. See also Girodias; Nabokov

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (Meredith), 102–3n71. See also Meredith

oscillation, 19, 27, 39, 54, 55–60, 55n17, 70, 75, 119, 135, 166, 172, 174, 200, 206. See also censoring; confession; knowledge; narrative; negation

Othello (Shakespeare), 42, 60. See also adultery; cuckold; Shakespeare

painting, 102–3n71, 147, 157, 164, 165, 165n5, 184–88, 184n28, 229, 229n16–17, 235, 235n26, 237, 237n28, 238, 245, 263, 264, 265, 267. See also photography

pantomime, 43–45, 55, 57, 102, 109–11, 109n77. See also commedia dell’arte; fantasy; mimesis; theater

Parkes, Adam, 25n1, 40n2, 41n3, 238n30

parody, 19; in Lolita, 116, 117, 127, 134–39, 137n25, 154, 155, 159, 160; in Russkaiia krasavitsa, 216, 217, 219, 220n4, 230–40, 256, 257n46, 261; in Tiempo de silencio, 165, 175, 187n31, 201n40; in Ulysses, 49n12, 52, 52n16, 57, 68, 88, 96, 101. See also Hutcheon; irony

paternal. See fathers; Law

Peace (Etirene) (Aristophanes). See Aristophanes

Pease, Alison, 40n2, 52

pedophile, 15, 17, 26, 30, 114, 120, 127–29, 139, 159, 270, 271. See also child; girl Pérez Firmat, Gustavo, 180, 186n30

Pérez Galdós, Benito, 175, 180n24, 203n41, 209

performance, 6n5, 268, 269; in Lolita, 112, 113, 118, 120, 124n12, 128, 146, 147, 151; in Russkaiia krasavitsa, 249; in Tiempo de silencio, 162n2, 164, 170, 171, 174, 189, 202, 211, 214; in Ulysses, 47–55, 49n12, 51n14, 56, 62, 66, 74, 75, 83, 87, 88, 93, 107, 268, 269. See also mask; masquerade; mimesis; narrators; theater

Peter Pan, 114, 114n3, 125, 125n14, 126, 150n32. See also Barrie; child; fantasy; girl

phantasy. See fantasy

Phelan, James, 113n2, 117, 122

La philosophie dans le boudoir (Sade). See Sade

photography, 86, 147, 148, 218, 223, 224, 237, 243, 253, 254, 260, 263–67, 271, 273. See also fantasy; film; gaze; mimesis; mirror; painting; pornography

picaresque, the, 139–41, 242. See also narrative; pícaro/pícara; rogue narrators

pícaro/pícara, 139–41, 242, 253, 269. See also heroic; heroine; narrators; picaresque; rogue narrators

police, 41, 100, 104, 107n75, 116, 165, 167, 168, 183n27, 187n31, 191, 202, 206, 210, 211, 213, 239. See also fathers; judgment; Law; trials

porno–graph, 218, 240–53, 260, 262. See also narrative; narrators; photography; pornography; prostitution
pornography, ix, xi, xi n1, 8, 12, 12n15–16, 13, 15, 17, 25, 27, 30, 32, 36, 36n15, 61n31, 62n32, 143n28, 246n35, 247n38, 262n50, 265, 271, 274–75; in Lolita, 30, 114, 123, 124n13, 126, 127, 139, 143, 143n28, 144, 271, 274–75; in Russkaia krasavitsa, 36, 216, 218, 228, 232, 234, 240–53, 246n35, 247n38, 256, 260, 262n50, 263, 263n51, 265, 266, 271, 274–75; in Tiempo de silencio, 173, 174, 184–88, 201, 271, 274–75; in Ulysses, 30, 41, 41n3, 43n7, 51n15, 52, 61, 61n31, 62, 62n32, 65, 66, 69–70n42, 71, 72, 79, 84, 271, 274–75, 277. See also blason; fantasy; film; kaite; MacKinnon; photography; pornograph; randall

Porter, Robert, 217n3, 220nn4–5, 222, 223n8, 226, 237, 238, 247n37, 254n45

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Joyce), 51n14, 62n32, 68n40, 69, 95, 96n65, 101, 107, 107n5, 108, 120n7. See also Joyce

pregnancy, 37; in Lolita, 128–29n16, 136; in Russkaia krasavitsa, 37, 219, 228–31, 230n18, 234, 236n27, 242, 249, 250, 254–57, 260, 273; in Tiempo de silencio, 37, 164, 167, 169, 171, 187, 199, 206–11; in Ulysses, 65–66n36, 100. See also abortion; birth; cancer; child; fathers; gynecology; incest; mothers

prekrasnaia dama, 226, 229, 248, 250, 270. See also beautiful; beautiful woman; Blok

Princess Tarakanova in the Petropavlovsk Fortress (Flavitskii), 229, 229n16–17. See also Flavitskii; painting

Prodigal Son, 74, 93. See also sons

prostitution, ix, xi, 12, 15, 17, 26, 34, 269, 274–76; and Lolita, 26, 115, 122, 133, 142, 144, 148, 159, 162; and Russkaia krasavitsa, 34, 216, 216n2, 218, 222, 227, 233, 244, 244–45n33, 245, 246, 246n35, 247n37, 248, 250, 250n39, 251, 278; and Tiempo de silencio, 34, 163, 173, 199, 200–208, 203nn41–42, 213; and Ulysses, 26, 39, 41, 41n4, 42, 49, 50, 51n15, 52, 53, 62, 62n32, 64, 65, 66, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76n47, 77n48, 84–88, 93, 95–100, 95n64, 99n70, 101

psychoanalysis, xiii, xiv n4, 2, 8–11, 8n10, 16, 23, 30, 92, 134n22, 166n6; and Lolita, 137–39, 137n25, 166n6; and Tiempo de silencio, 193, 202, 214; and Ulysses, 77, 88, 89, 89n58, 92, 128, 134n22. See also Freud; Lacan; Silverman; Žižek


Ramón y Cajal, Santiago, 170, 171, 171n13, 175, 189

Randall, Richard S., xi n1, 12, 12n16, 26n2, 28n3, 143n28, 155n36

rape, 66, 127, 135, 137, 154, 157, 171, 178, 227–29, 249. See also gothic; pedophile; vampire

Real, the, xiv n4, 10, 16, 74, 88, 168, 183, 194. See also Imaginary; Lacan; Law; Symbolic

realism, 19, 32, 34, 44, 56n19, 62, 64, 67, 71, 71n44, 78, 85, 90–91n60, 92, 100, 141, 184, 191, 211, 236, 252, 253. See also mimesis; socialist realism; surrealism


Restuccia, Frances L., 50, 71n44, 89n58, 97n67

Riquelme, John Paul, 55, 56, 56n20

Riviere, Joan, 49, 52, 53

rogue narrators, 139–45, 153, 160, 240–53, 258, 269. See also confession; heroic; heroine; narrators; narrative; picaresque; pícaro/pícara

Rozanov, V.V., 32n9, 219, 232

Russian Beauty (Erofeev). See Russkaia krasavitsa

Russian gothic, 227–29, 227n14. See also gothic
Russkaja krasavitsa (Erőfeev), x, 1, 1n1, 8, 17, 18, 21, 24, 34–37, 34n13, 215–67, 269, 271–73, 275; characters in: Fla-
vivsky, 229, 234, 254, 256; Irina Tar-

rylkova, galina, 220n5, 231n21, 232, 233n25, 236–37n27, 250, 254n45

Sacher-Masoch, leopold, ritter von, 47, 48, 54, 87n56, 89n58, 172. See also Venus in Furs

Sade, d. a. F . de, 123, 124, 124n12, 147, 155n36. See also pornography; sadism; sadomasochism

sadism, 51–54, 97n67, 125, 142, 143n27, 178

sadomasochism, 54, 254. See also masoch-
ism; sadism

San Lorenzo (St. Lawrence), 174, 176, 177n20, 200, 213, 271. See also martyrs

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 35, 161, 167–68n9, 214

scalpel. See cutting; histology; vivisection

Schiller, Friedrich von, 136n23. See also Lol-
ita (character Richard Schiller); sublime

Schwaber, Paul, 52n25, 60n28, 77n48, 95

science, 18, 19, 30, 128–29n16, 139n26, 143, 162–75, 169n10, 170n12, 171n13, 178, 180n24, 181–83, 182n26, 187–90, 187n31, 196–200, 199n38, 203, 206, 208–13, 212–13mn46–47, 269, 270, 274. See also cancer; cutting; gynecology; histology; knowledge; medicine; mitosis; Ramón y Cajal; virus; vivisection

scopophilia, 207. See also fantasy; gaze; masochism; mirror; voyeurism

sexual reproduction. See medicine; pregn-
nancy

Shakespeare, william, 42, 46, 51n14, 56–60, 56n19, 58nn24–25, 59n27, 67, 69, 70n43, 83, 92, 107, 223, 269, 270. See also adultery; cuckold; fathers; Hamlet; Hathaway; marriage; Merchant of Venice; mimesis; Othello; theater

Shakespeare and Company, 7, 28, 277

Schechner, Mark, 41n4, 90n60

Showalter, Elaine, 234, 262n50

Silverman, Kaja, 36n15, 61n31, 87–88n56, 172

Sloterdijk, Peter, 45

Smirnoff, Victor, 54. See also masochism

socialist realism, 33, 34, 226, 227, 238. See also realism; Soviet Union

Soloviev, Vladimir, 219, 232, 249, 250

Solzhenitsyn, Alexander, 225, 259

sons, 42, 51n14, 53, 57, 57n21, 58, 69, 72–81, 78n49, 83, 92–94, 94n63, 96, 97n67, 102–3n71, 104–7, 110, 111, 272, 273. See also child; Christ; fathers; mothers


Spain, x, 1, 2, 6–8, 7n8, 11, 20, 31, 31–32mn7–8, 32–35, 32n9, 33n10, 35n14, 37, 161–63, 167n8, 168, 170, 170n12, 172–79, 175–76n16, 182, 184, 185, 188, 191, 194, 195, 199, 199n38, 203, 204–4nn41–42, 206, 208, 209, 212–14, 269, 271, 272, 278

Stephen Hero (Joyce), 68n40, 73–74n45

Stevenson, Robert Louis, 114, 114n3, 142, 143, 143n27, 262n50, 147–48. See also Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Treasure Island

Stewart, Suzanne R., 48, 53, 87–88n56, 172

sublime, the, ix, xi, 17, 36, 60, 136n23, 149, 215, 216, 222, 237, 239, 240–53, 253–58, 260, 263, 264n52, 273, 274. See also beautiful; Burke; Kant; Schiller; Žižek

surrealism, 56n19, 84, 90–91n60, 147, 148, 184n28, 234, 236, 254

Symbolic, xiii, xiv n4, 9, 34, 36n15, 49, 66, 73, 77–80, 88, 89n59, 105, 106, 168, 176, 212, 236, 242, 254, 256, 260–63, 271. See also Imaginary; Lacan; Law; Real
theater, 6n5, 18, 26, 39–49, 43n7, n8, 44n9, 44–45n10, 51, 51n14, 54–61, 56n18–20, 59n27, 63–74, 70n43, 77–81, 81n52, 84–94, 87–88n56, 89n59, 97–98n67, 99–109, 107n75, 109n77, 113, 115, 116, 123–25, 124nn12–13, 125n15, 128, 131, 138, 139, 145–49, 150, 151, 154, 187n31, 205n44, 229n4, 230n18. See also discourses; Enchanted Hunters; mask; masochism; masquerade; mimesis; pantomime; Shakespeare; Yeats


Time of Silence (Martín-Santos). See Tiempo de silencio

Tirso de Molina, 175n16, 187n31

Tirtoeff, Fedor, 219–22, 220n5, 221n6, 226, 227, 243, 261

Tolstoi, Lev, 57n22, 215, 226, 226n13, 261

Trials, xii, xiv, 1, 6n5, 7, 10, 15, 25–30, 29n5, 31–32n8, 40–41n1–2, 42n3, 68, 73, 81–87, 103, 115, 116, 130, 141, 143, 158, 186, 240, 243, 254, 268. See also discourses; judgment; Law; police; theater

Treasure Island (Stevenson), 147–48. See also Stevenson

Tiebo the Terrible, 109, 109n77, 110. See also pantomime; theater

Ulysses (Joyce), x, 1, 1n1, 7, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 25n1, 27–30, 35, 36, 39–111, 120n7, 164n4, 201, 201n40, 262, 268, 272, 275, 277, 278; characters in: Ellen (Higgins) Bloom, 77–78n48, 80; Leopold Bloom, 18, 27, 39–111, 201n40, 268–75; Molly (Marion) Bloom, 42, 44, 49, 49n12, 56–58, 60, 67, 74–78, 75n46, 76n47, 77–78n48, 78n50, 81, 83–85, 87, 89n58; Rudolph Bloom, 51n14, 80, 81; Ruddy Bloom, 42, 49, 76n47, 78–80, 78n50, 88–89n57, 92, 104–106, 110, 111, 274; Blazes Boylan, 50, 57, 58, 69, 74, 75, 76–77n47, 81, 87; Bella/Bello Cohen, 42, 51, 51n14–15, 52, 56n19, 62, 64, 73, 73–74n45, 76n47, 77, 77–78n48, 84, 85, 90–91n60, 92, 98; May Goulding Dedalus, 49, 58n25, 78n49, 92, 94, 96–98, 102, 102–3n71, 107–10, 272, 274; Simon Dedalus, 50, 51n14, 75, 93, 94, 109n76; Stephen Dedalus, 18, 27, 39–111, 120n7, 268–74; Zoe Higgins, 65, 77n48, 87, 95n64; Virag Lipoti, 77, 79, 80, 90n60; publication history, 278

United States of America, x, xi n2, xiii, 1, 2, 4n2, 7, 20, 24, 25n1, 27–29, 28nn3–4, 40–41n1–2, 68, 114, 115, 123, 128, 128–29n16, 131n19, 135, 136, 139, 139n26, 140, 146, 151, 153, 156, 164, 169, 179, 234, 237, 238n30, 269, 272, 275, 277, 278

vampires, 65, 66, 65–66n36, 97, 97–98n67, 102, 102n71, 114, 146, 147, 271. See also fantasy; ghost; gothic; masculinity; Russian gothic

Vanderham, Paul, 25n1, 40–41n2, 41n3

Venus, 43n7, 48, 83, 89n58, 135, 147, 148, 172

Venus in Furs (Sacher-Masoch), 43n7, 47, 48, 54, 83, 87n56, 89n58, 172. See also femme fatale; martyrs; masochism; Sacher-Masoch; theater
virus, 170n12, 179, 182n26, 198, 211, 212n46. See also cancer; medicine; science vivisection, 188–90. See also cancer; castration; cutting; histology; masochism; medicine; Ramón y Cajal; science voyeurism, 17, 62, 76, 123, 178, 183, 207, 210, 269. See also fantasy; gaze; mirror Wagner, Richard, 48, 98 wedding. See marriage Weininger, Otto, 51n13 “Who Goes with Fergus?” (Yeats), 47, 97–98n67, 102, 107–9, 111, 269. See also Countess Cathleen; Yeats whore. See prostitution wife. See marriage Yeats, William Butler, 47, 92, 97–98n67, 102, 103, 107–9, 269, 270. See also Countess Cathleen; “Who Goes with Fergus?” Ziarek, Ewa Plonowska, 65–66n36 Žižek, Slavoj, 17, 23, 37, 62–63n33, 241, 241n32. See also Burke; fantasy; Freud; Kant; Lacan