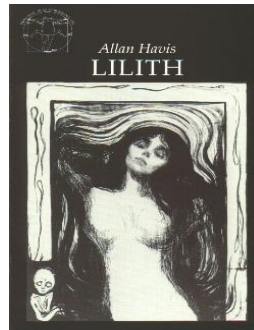


Literary Masochism (Slavic 0550)



Spring 2009

Tuesdays, Thursdays 2:30 – 3:45 in CL 242

Instructor: Lenka Pánková

Office: 1417 Cathedral of Learning

Office hours: Tuesdays 11:30 – 1:30, and by appointment

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A. Course Objective

This course rests on the generally accepted premise that masochism is a phenomenon whose significance extends far beyond the erotic sphere, into everyday social life as well as art, literature and cinema. Even though the tendency, naturally, has existed since times immemorial, a lively medical and psychological debate around it arose merely a hundred and twenty years ago. Examining masochism through literary readings from several cultural traditions, through viewing and discussion of films, and through non-literary texts pertaining to the topic, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

In what ways does the ebbing and flowing interest in the concept correspond to the general intellectual and cultural climate in a given society? What are the main theoretical approaches to masochism? What are their advantages and limitations? How is masochism reflected in specific films and literary works? Apart from imparting pertinent information, the course seeks to foster meaningful discussion, to sharpen students' analytical skills, to improve their oral and written communication, as well as to spark new appreciation for films and literature.

B. Organization of the course

The course will progress through the following inter-related themes:

- Theoretical approaches to masochism
- *Venus in Furs*, masochism's Ur-text, in the novel form and on screen
- Renowned masochistic motives in poetry
- Vampires
- *Femmes fatales*
- Masochism in the Slavic context

C. Course Requirements

Students must complete the following requirements for this course:

- Required readings as listed in the list of weekly assignments below.
- Three non-cumulative examinations. Each examination will contain twenty-five multiple-choice questions and one essay question.
- At least five unannounced reading comprehension quizzes, which are designed to insure the completion of reading assignments. Even though more than five quizzes will be given throughout the semester, only the five highest scores will count towards the final grade.
- Active participation in class discussion and group work.
- Attendance (see attendance policy below).

C.1 Required Texts and Other Readings

C.1.1 Books to be ordered by the University of Pittsburgh Bookstore:

Deleuze, Gilles and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "Notes from Underground." *Notes from Underground and the Double*. London: Penguin Books, 2003. 15-123.

Schulz, Bruno. *The Street of Crocodiles*. Trans. Celina Wieniewska. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Zamyatin, Evgeny. *We*. Trans. Mirra Ginsburg. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Materials uploaded on the Pitt Course Web:

Dijkstra, Bram. *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. 235-271, 333-351. 49-81.

Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 18. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1955-1974. 7-64.

- - -. "The Economic Problem of Masochism." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 19. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1955-1974. 159-170.

Krafft-Ebing, Richard von. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. New York: Pioneer Publications, 1953. 86-88, 133-140.

Moore, C. L. "Shamblau." *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories*. Ed. Alan Ryan. New York: Penguin Books, 1988. 255-281.

Rancour-Laferriere, Daniel. *The Slave Soul of Russia: Moral Masochism and the Cult of Suffering*. New York: New York University Press, 1995. 18-65.

Reik, Theodor. *Masochism in Sex and Society*. New York: Pyramid Books, 1976.

Turgenev, Ivan. "First Love." *First Love and Other Stories*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 144-202.

Online readings are to be accessed via the URLs provided below as well as the Pitt Course Web.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

01/06: Introduction, syllabus, required and recommended readings

01/08: Theories of masochism I

Naming the perversion: *Venus in Furs* (Leopold von Sacher-Masoch) and *Psychopathia Sexualis* (Richard von Krafft-Ebbing)

Reading: *Psychopathia Sexualis* (86-88, 133-140, Course Web)
+ *Venus in Furs* (143-189)

Week 2

01/13: *Venus in Furs*, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and his times

Reading: *Venus in Furs* (189-232)

01/15: *Venus in Furs*: A failed dominatrix?

Reading: *Venus in Furs* (232-271) + Excerpt from “Coldness and Cruelty” (Gilles Deleuze, 25-35, 69-80)

Week 3

01/20: Masochistic motives in poetry and visual arts

Charles Baudelaire, John Keats, Alexander Blok, Heinrich Heine

Reading:

“The Vampire” (<http://fleursdumal.org/poem/128>)

“La Belle Dame sans Merci” (<http://www.bartleby.com/126/55.html>)

“The Unknown Woman”

(<http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/demo/texts/unknown.html>)

“Lorelei” (<http://www.business.uiuc.edu/vock/poetry/lorelei.html>)

01/22: Theories of masochism II: The Freudian Approach; Masochism and the *Fin-de-Siècle*'s debate on degeneracy

Reading: “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” “The Economic Problem of Masochism” (excerpts, Sigmund Freud, Course Web) + Excerpt from *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Bram Dijkstra, 235-271, Course Web)

Week 4

01/27: EXAM 1

The Vamp, the Vampire and the Femme Fatale

01/29: Introduction to “vampirology”

In-class screening: *Shadow of the Vampire* (E. Elias Merhige, 2000)

Week 5

02/03: Class screening and discussion: *Shadow of the Vampire* (E. Elias Merhige, 2000; ending)

02/05: *Femmes Fatales*: The traditional cinematic vamp

Class screening and discussion: *A Fool There Was* (Frank Powell, 1915)

Reading: Excerpt from *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Bram Dijkstra, 333-351, Course Web)

Week 6

02/10: *Femmes Fatales*: The traditional cinematic vamp (continued)

In-class screening and discussion: *Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930)

Reading: Excerpt from *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Culture* (Bram Dijkstra, 49-81, Course Web)

02/12: *Femmes Fatales*: The traditional cinematic vamp (continued)

Class screening and discussion: *Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, 1930; ending)

Week 7

02/17: EXAM 2

Masochism in the Slavic Context

02/19: Is Russian (Slavic) culture inherently masochistic?

Reading: Excerpt from *The Slave Soul of Russia: Moral Masochism and the Cult of Suffering* (Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, 18-65, Course Web)

Week 8

02/24: The tradition of superfluous men in Russian literature

Reading: "First Love" (Ivan Turgenev, Course Web)

02/26: Ivan Turgenev

Reading: *Spring Torrents* (11-63)

Week 9

03/03: Ivan Turgenev

Reading: *Spring Torrents* (64-120)

03/05: Ivan Turgenev

Reading: *Spring Torrents* (121-176)

Week 10

Spring break – no classes

Week 11

03/17: Theories of masochism IV: social (moral) vs. erotic masochism

Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

Reading: *Notes from Underground* (Part I) + Excerpt from *Masochism in Sex and Society* (Theodore Reik, Course Web)

03/19: Fyodor Dostoevsky: *Notes from Underground*

Reading: *Notes from Underground* (Part II)

Week 12

03/24: Religious masochism?

Leo Tolstoy: “Father Sergius” (Course Web)

03/26: Collective masochism?

Evgeny Zamyatin: *We*

Reading: *We* (1-69)

Week 13

03/31: Evgeny Zamyatin: *We*

Reading: *We* (70-147)

04/02: Evgeny Zamyatin: *We*

Reading: *We* (148-232)

Week 14

04/07: Bruno Schulz, masochism in his literary art and beyond

Reading: *The Street of Crocodiles* (“August” through “Tailors’ Dummies”)

04/09: Bruno Schulz

Reading: *The Street of Crocodiles* (“Mr. Charles” through “The Comet”)

Week 15

04/14: Review, class evaluations

04/16 EXAM 3

No final cumulative exam!

Grading Policy

Relative Weight of Each Requirement

Examinations 1, 2 and 3	Maximum 120 points
Five quizzes	Maximum 25 points
Attendance and participation	Maximum 20 points

Total possible: 165 points

Extra credit analytical paper (10 pages, due date: last class meeting, April 16)

Maximum: 10 points

Note: Consult your topic with the instructor

Policy on Attendance and Make-up Examinations

Attendance is imperative for the student if he/she wishes to enjoy the course, profit from it and earn a good grade. Note that attendance and participation make up 15% of your final grade. Make-up examinations will be given exclusively under exceptional circumstances (medical emergency, family crisis, natural disaster).

Disability Resources and Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/ (412) 383-7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Academic Integrity Policy

Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below from the February 1974, Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz or exam will be imposed.

The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty, and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve — without penalty — reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty. Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom, February 1974