

Title: *Lolita as homo sacer: Violence and Sacrifice*
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My analysis centers on rereading of violence in Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955) and its protagonist, Lolita as the embodiment of the tragic figure of *homo sacer*. According to Agamben (1998) *homo sacer* (sacred man/bare life) is an individual that is both outside and inside the law, and who may be killed but never sacrificed within the law. The person can be transformed into bare life (*zoe*/pure being outside of culture), only within the suspension of law known as the state of exception. In the state of exception the rights of the citizen are revoked and the individual loses any form of agency (right to law).

As *homo sacer* Lolita is a representation of bare life that is situated in a necessary state of exception created by Humbert. It is through the creation of the state of exception that Humbert was able to suspend all limitations on his power and establish a new political order in which his sexual and psychological fantasies could be played out. Created by Humbert, the state of exception was a place where Lolita as *homo sacer* was located and all types of violence perpetrated against her could occur. Lolita is a perfect example of a representation of bare life, residing in a camp of Humbert's creation in which he held power over her life. The essay specifically focuses on Lolita as *homo sacer* and the ways in which she was able to save herself: through flight and through bodily self-sacrifice.