(p.xi) Acknowledgments

In *Ravelstein*, his artfully tender roman à clef about Allan Bloom, Saul Bellow writes that “love of scandal makes people ingenious.” Just where this genius resides, of course, remains delightfully ambiguous, shared as it is between writers who might encode their secrets in novels and readers seeking to recover—indeed, even invent—fact from fiction. *The Art of Scandal* uses that strangest of genres, the roman à clef, to trace this errant creativity in so unlikely a collection of places as Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Freud’s examining room, Ottoline Morrell’s sumptuous estate at Garsington, and even British courtrooms. In ranging so widely, of course, I accrued many debts to those who listened patiently, argued sharply, and so often gave unselfishly of their time, talents, and ideas. In a scholarly study about skillfully hidden identities, I do want to name those often unintentional collaborators as openly as I can. So scattered a list of thanks cannot discharge my debts to them, but it can suggest just how much of this book belongs to them.
Unfortunately, the two most important debts I owe must remain anonymous. The first is to some intrepid bibliographer who over a decade ago posted a query to the first modernism listserv. It asked the list’s readers to post the titles of any romans à clef published in the first half of the twentieth century. The subsequent replies surprised me with the sheer number of books that fit this description, and my own love of scandal set me reading my way through them. Unfortunately, I cannot locate that original posting, though remain grateful for this relatively simple question that kept me thinking about these books for so long. The second anonymous debt I owe is to the many students, non-majors all of them, whom I first taught in graduate school. I remember talking with my fellow section leaders, lamenting the fact that we had to drum so ceaselessly into the heads of our (p.xii) students the fact that characters in fiction were not real people and needed therefore to be treated as textual effects rather than historical subjects. The problem, I only gradually found, is that the harder I tried to convince my wisely skeptical students of this critical truism, the less certain I became of it myself. These students unknowingly taught me to be a better reader, and this book about that troubled line between fact and fiction is my own belated attempt to answer the questions they so shrewdly put to me.

In following the strangely intermittent life of the roman à clef, I found myself venturing into often alien intellectual terrain, places I might not have dared without the close contact between faculty a smallish place like the University of Tulsa allows. Chuck Adams patiently led me on an extremely useful journey through the law library and, thanks to his own work on civil procedure, helped reveal the artful complexities of defamation law. Bob Spoo also provided crucial help on libel law while providing an ideal model for how to work between law and literature. When my interests turned from case law to case studies, Elana Newman too provided invaluable help, sounding out her own colleagues to help me trace that still fuzzy moment when medical writers began concealing the names of their patients behind pseudonyms like “Dora.” Laura Stevens and Kate Adams also provided invaluable ideas and bibliographies. Such casual kindnesses as these made this book far stronger and more ambitious than it otherwise would have been.
I owe debts not only to these people, but to larger institutions and the often thankless work of administrators who make sure they function. My colleagues in English at the University of Tulsa all helped in ways large and small, as did my patient chair, Lars Engle, and my supportive dean, Tom Bendediktson. I’m also extremely grateful for the grants that made my research possible. The National Endowment for the Humanities, the South Central Modern Language Association, the Mellon Foundation, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, and the Oklahoma Humanities Council all provided significant awards funding my travel to distant archives where I could dig up dirt on any number of literary scandals. A series of faculty development grants from the University of Tulsa also proved invaluable, as did the feedback from the referees and colleagues who read these various grant proposals. Marc Carlson and Lori Curtis never ceased to amaze me with their command of McFarlin Library’s Special Collections, making it a joy to riffle through the papers of Rhys and Ellmann. Sandy Vice, our departmental secretary, helped me master the jujitsu of paperwork and administration and it’s only thanks to her that I could finish The Art of Scandal while serving as director of graduate studies. Similarly, Carol Kealiher tirelessly devoted herself to keeping good care of the James Joyce Quarterly, patiently fending for it during those times (p.xiii) when I needed to focus solely on writing. Similarly, Richard Black did an exemplary job managing the Modernist Journals Project as it continued to expand. To all of these people and institutions, I am deeply grateful for their humbling faith and unflagging generosity.
Acknowledgments

Over the last five years I have been extremely fortunate that so many people were willing to listen to the conference papers, lectures, and talks in which The Art of Scandal slowly took shape. Hard questions from these varied audiences led to hard thinking, whether about the precise kind of constraints libel law places upon writers or about the subtle differences between a salon and a coterie. The ideas here have been usefully tempered in crucibles ranging from undergraduate survey courses to lecture halls in Dublin, Cambridge, Santa Barbara, and Seattle. I’ve been fortunate as well in the readers who devoted their time to this manuscript at its varied stages of completion. As has always been the case, Bob Scholes helped me at every stage along the way, from a hastily compiled bibliography we built over lunch to his final reading that made me see some deep flaws I wanted so badly to ignore. The anonymous reader for this manuscript returned an astonishing report: nine single-spaced pages in length, it guided me through revisions large and small that made this thing clearer, more concise, and certainly better than it would have been. Similarly, Kevin Dettmar and Mark Wollaeger urged me to bring this book to completion while proving to be tough readers and thoughtful editors. I’m honored that they selected it to help launch the Modernist Literature and Culture series.

My deepest thanks, finally, are to those whose acts of generosity, inspiration, and support seemed the most casual—even though this book would have been impossible without them. Jen has always and again been the calm center of my life, from whom springs love and grace. She’s taught me to find a peaceful strength amidst the seeming chaos of our lives. And then there’s Zoë and Sophie. They’ve grown up with me always scribbling away on this thing in the background, patiently accepting my hours at the computer, a brief move to Austin, and my too frequent travels. Though never really certain about this book, so devoid of illustrations, adventure, and magic, they made sure I got it done. It’s for them. (p.xiv)