



# **Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850-1930 (Modernism and...)**

*Dr Anna Katharina Schaffner*

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The second half of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century saw a growing preoccupation with sexual perversion: in particular homosexuality, sadism, masochism, fetishism, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Charting the intellectual history of the construction of the perversions in German, French and English sexology in this period, Anna Schaffner explores the decisive role played by literary representations of deviant sexualities in the formation of sexological knowledge. Just as sexologists, including Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Alfred Binet, Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, Iwan Bloch and Sigmund Freud, relied upon the literary, so major modernist writers such as Georges Bataille, Franz Kafka, D.H. Lawrence, Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust were in turn influenced by sexological conceptions. Focusing on the interdisciplinary exchanges between literature and sexology, Schaffner illuminates the pivotal role these modernists played in re-evaluating the perversions and paving the way for the transformation of the idea of sexual deviance into that of sexual difference.

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