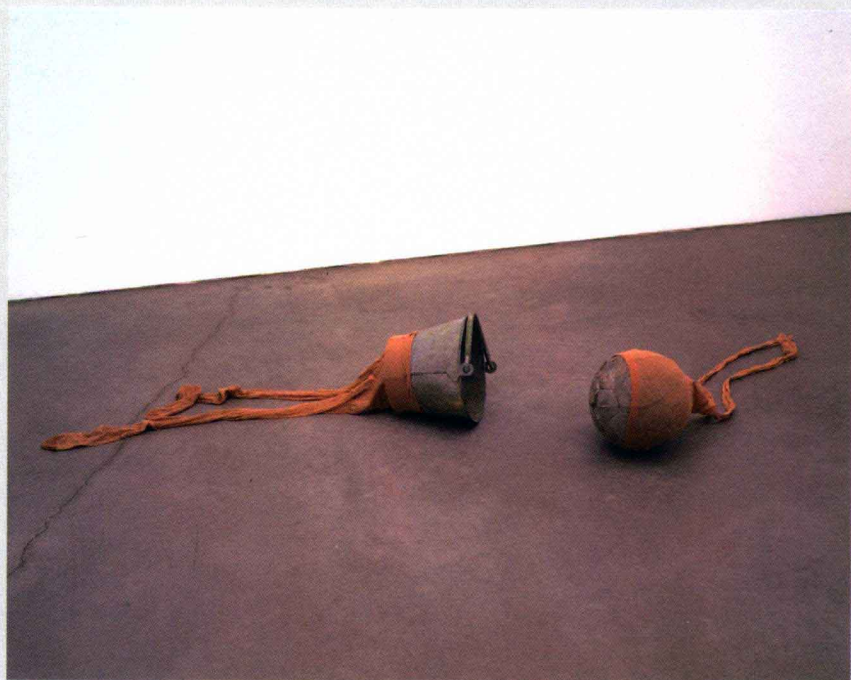


MODERNIST EROTICISMS

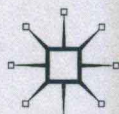
EUROPEAN LITERATURE AFTER SEXOLOGY



EDITED BY
ANNA KATHARINA SCHAFFNER AND SHANE WELLER



PALGRAVE STUDIES IN MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE



Modernist Eroticisms

European Literature after Sexology

Edited by

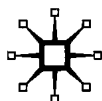
Anna Katharina Schaffner

and

Shane Weller



palgrave
macmillan



Selection, introduction and editorial matter © Anna Katharina Schaffner & Shane Weller 2012

All chapters © contributors 2012

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2012 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978–1–137–03029–0

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

Series Editors' Preface

Many of the most significant European writers and literary movements in the modern period have traversed national, linguistic and disciplinary borders. The principal aim of the Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature series is to create a forum for work that takes account of these border crossings, and that engages with individual writers, genres, topoi and literary movements in a manner that does justice to their location within European artistic, political and philosophical contexts. Of course, the title of this series immediately raises a number of questions, at once historical, geo-political and literary-philosophical: What are the parameters of the modern? What is to be understood as European, both politically and culturally? And what distinguishes literature within these historical and geo-political limits from other forms of discourse?

These three questions are interrelated. Not only does the very idea of the modern vary depending on the European national tradition within which its definition is attempted, but the concept of literature in the modern sense is also intimately connected to the emergence and consolidation of the European nation-states, to increasing secularization, urbanization, industrialization and bureaucratization, to the Enlightenment project and its promise of emancipation from nature through reason and science, to capitalism and imperialism, to the liberal-democratic model of government, to the separation of the private and public spheres, to the new form taken by the university, and to changing conceptions of both space and time as a result of technological innovations in the fields of travel and communication.

Taking first the question of when the modern may be said to commence within a European context, if one looks to a certain Germanic tradition shaped by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), then it begins as early as the first 'theoretical man', namely Socrates. According to this view, the modern would include everything that comes after the pre-Socratics and the first two great Attic tragedians, Aeschylus and Sophocles, with Euripides being the first modern writer. A rather more limited sense of the modern, also derived from the Germanic world, sees the *Neuzeit* as originating in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Jakob Burckhardt, Nietzsche's

colleague at the University of Basel, identified the states of Renaissance Italy as prototypes for both modern European politics and modern European cultural production. However, Italian literary modernity might also be seen as having started two hundred years earlier, with the programmatic adoption of the vernacular by its foremost representatives, Dante and Petrarch.

In France, the modern might either be seen as beginning at the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, with the so-called 'Querelle des anciens et des modernes' in the 1690s, or later still, with the French Revolution of 1789, while the Romantic generation of the 1830s might equally be identified as an origin, given that Chateaubriand is often credited with having coined the term *modernité* in 1833. Across the Channel, meanwhile, the origins of literary modernity might seem different again. With the Renaissance being seen as 'Early Modern', everything thereafter might seem to fall within the category of the modern, although in fact the term 'modern' within a literary context is generally reserved for the literature that comes after mid-nineteenth-century European realism. This latter sense of the modern is also present in the early work of Roland Barthes, who in *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) asserts that modern literature commences in the 1850s, when the literary becomes explicitly self-reflexive, not only addressing its own status as literature but also concerning itself with the nature of language and the possibilities of representation.

In adopting a view of the modern as it pertains to literature that is more or less in line with Barthes's periodization, while also acknowledging that this periodization is liable to exceptions and limitations, the present series does not wish to conflate the modern with, nor to limit it to, modernism and postmodernism. Rather, the aim is to encourage work that highlights differences in the conception of the modern – differences that emerge out of distinct linguistic, national and cultural spheres within Europe – and to prompt further reflection on why it should be that the concept of the modern has become such a critical issue in 'modern' European culture, be it aligned with Enlightenment progress, with the critique of Enlightenment thinking, with decadence, with radical renewal, or with a sense of belatedness.

Turning to the question of the European, the very idea of modern literature arises in conjunction with the establishment of the European nation-states. When European literatures are studied at university, they are generally taught within national and linguistic parameters: English, French, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Slavic and Eastern European, and Spanish literature. Even if such disciplinary distinctions have their

pedagogical justifications, they render more difficult an appreciation of the ways in which modern European literature is shaped in no small part by intellectual and artistic traffic across national and linguistic borders: to grasp the nature of the European avant-gardes or of high modernism, for instance, one has to consider the relationship between distinct national or linguistic traditions. While not limiting itself to one methodological approach, the present series is designed precisely to encourage the study of individual writers and literary movements within their European context. Furthermore, it seeks to promote research that engages with the very definition of the European in its relation to literature, including changing conceptions of centre and periphery, of Eastern and Western Europe, and how these might bear upon questions of literary translation, dissemination and reception.

As for the third key term in the series title – literature – the formation of this concept is intimately related both to the European and to the modern. While Sir Philip Sidney in the late sixteenth century, Martin Opitz in the seventeenth, and Shelley in the early nineteenth produce their apologies for, or defences of, 'poetry', it is within the general category of 'literature' that the genres of poetry, drama and prose fiction have come to be contained in the modern period. Since the Humboldtian reconfiguration of the university in the nineteenth century, the fate of literature has been closely bound up with that particular institution, as well as with emerging ideas of the canon and tradition. However one defines it, modernity has both propagated and problematized the historical legacy of the Western literary tradition. While, as Jacques Derrida argues, it may be that in all European languages the history and theorization of the literary necessarily emerges out of a common Latinate legacy – the very word 'literature' deriving from the Latin *littera* (letter) – it is nonetheless the case that within a modern European context the literary has taken on an extraordinarily diverse range of forms. Traditional modes of representation have been subverted through parody and pastiche, or abandoned altogether; genres have been mixed; the limits of language have been tested; indeed, the concept of literature itself has been placed in question.

With all of the above in mind, the present series wishes to promote work that engages with any aspect of modern European literature (be it a literary movement, an individual writer, a genre, a particular topos) within its European context, that addresses questions of translation, dissemination and reception (both within Europe and beyond), that considers the relations between modern European literature and the other arts, that analyses the impact of other discourses (philosophical,

political, scientific) upon that literature, and, above all, that takes each of those three terms – modern, European and literature – not as givens, but as invitations, even provocations, to further reflection.

Thomas Baldwin
Ben Hutchinson
Anna Katharina Schaffner
Shane Weller

Notes on Contributors

Emily Apter is Professor of French, English and Comparative Literature at New York University. Her major publications include *André Gide and the Codes of Homotextuality* (1987), *Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-Century France* (1991), *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse* (co-edited with William Pietz, 1993), *Continental Drift: From National Characters to Virtual Subjects* (1999) and *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (2006). Awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship (2004) and a Mellon Grant (with Jacques Lezra, 2011).

Thomas Baldwin is Senior Lecturer in French and Co-Director of the Centre for Modern European Literature at the University of Kent. His publications include *The Material Object in the Work of Marcel Proust* (2005), *The Flesh in the Text* (co-edited with James Fowler and Shane Weller, 2007), *The Picture as Spectre in Diderot, Proust, and Deleuze* (2011) and *Text and Image in Modern European Culture* (co-edited with Natasha Gorogian and Margaret Rigaud-Drayton, 2012).

Michael Bell, FBA, is Emeritus Professor of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, where he is also an Associate Fellow of the Centre for Research in Philosophy, Literature and the Arts. His numerous books cover topics from the Enlightenment to modernity, including myth, primitivism, the cult of sentiment, the metaphysics of modernism, and authority in education, along with single-author studies of D. H. Lawrence and Gabriel García Márquez.

Elizabeth Boa is Emeritus Professor of German at the University of Nottingham. Her publications include the monographs *The Sexual Circus: Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion* (1987) and *Kafka: Gender, Class, Race in the Letters and Fictions* (1996). Essays include 'Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*: Bourgeois Patriarchy and fin de siècle Eros', in Michael Minden (ed.), *Thomas Mann* (1995); 'Global Intimations: Cultural Geography in *Buddenbrooks*, Tonio Kröger and *Der Tod in Venedig*', *Oxford German Studies*, 35 (2006); and 'The Aesthetics of Disgust in *Der Zauberberg*', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 58 (2009).

Daniela Caselli is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (2005) and *Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes's*

Bewildering Corpus (2009). She has published articles on Samuel Beckett, literary theory, modernism and gender. She is the editor of *Beckett and Nothing: Trying to Understand Beckett* (2011) and co-editor, with Steven Connor and Laura Salisbury, of *Other Becketts* (2001). With Daniela La Penna she has also co-edited *Twentieth-Century Poetic Translation: Literary Cultures in Italian and English* (2008).

Lisa Downing is Professor of French Discourses of Sexuality at the University of Birmingham. She is the author and editor of numerous books and papers on gender and sexuality studies, the history of discourses of sexuality, and literature, film and critical theory. Major publications include: *Desiring the Dead: Necrophilia and Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (2003), *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault* (2008), *Queer in Europe: Contemporary Case Studies* (co-edited with Robert Gillett, 2011) and *The Subject of Murder: Gender, Exceptionality, and the Modern Killer*, forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press in 2013.

Ben Hutchinson is Professor of European Literature and Co-Director of the Centre for Modern European Literature at the University of Kent. Publications include the monographs *Rilke's Poetics of Becoming* (2006), *W. G. Sebald. Die dialektische Imagination* (2009) and *Modernism and Style* (2011), as well as the edited volumes *Rainer Maria Rilke's 'The Book of Hours'* (trans. Susan Ranson, 2008), *Archive: Comparative Critical Studies*, 8:2–3 (with Shane Weller, 2011) and *A Literature of Restitution: Critical Essays on W. G. Sebald* (with Jeannette Baxter and Valerie Henitiuk, 2012). Awards include an Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship (2005–7) and a Phillip Leverhulme Prize (2011).

Jean-Michel Rabaté is Vartan Gregorian Professor in the Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania. Co-founder and curator of Slough Foundation (Philadelphia), he is also a senior editor of the *Journal of Modern Literature*. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he has authored or edited more than thirty books on modernism, psychoanalysis, contemporary art and philosophy. Recent titles include *1913: The Cradle of Modernism* (2007), *The Ethic of the Lie* (2008) and *Etant donné: 1) l'art, 2) le crime* (2010).

Ritchie Robertson is a graduate of the universities of Edinburgh and Oxford. He was a Fellow and Tutor in German at St John's College, Oxford, from 1989 to 2010, when he became Taylor Professor of German at Oxford. His books include *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature* (1985), *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature, 1749–1939* (1999), *Kafka: A Very*

Short Introduction (2004) and *Mock-Epic Poetry from Pope to Heine* (2009). In 2004 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He is a director of the Oxford Kafka Research Centre.

Anna Katharina Schaffner is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature and Co-Director of the Centre for Modern European Literature at the University of Kent. Her publications include the monographs *Sprachzerlegung in historischer Avantgardelyrik und konkreter Poesie* (2007) and *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850–1930* (2012), as well as articles on Dada, David Lynch, Franz Kafka, Frank Schulz, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and Thomas Mann.

Shane Weller is Professor of Comparative Literature and Co-Director of the Centre for Modern European Literature at the University of Kent. His publications include the monographs *A Taste for the Negative: Beckett and Nihilism* (2005), *Beckett, Literature and the Ethics of Alterity* (2006), *Literature, Philosophy, Nihilism: The Uncanniest of Guests* (2008) and *Modernism and Nihilism* (2011). Edited volumes include *The Flesh in the Text* (with Thomas Baldwin and James Fowler, 2007), *Samuel Beckett's Molloy* (2009) and, with Ben Hutchinson, *Archive: Comparative Critical Studies*, 8:2–3 (2011).

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Series Editors' Preface</i>	viii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	xii
Introduction	1
<i>Anna Katharina Schaffner and Shane Weller</i>	
1 Innocent Monsters: The Erotic Child in Early Modernism <i>Elizabeth Boa</i>	23
2 D. H. Lawrence: Sex, Love, Eros – and Pornography <i>Michael Bell</i>	44
3 Grazing with Marcel Proust <i>Thomas Baldwin</i>	63
4 Seasick in the Land of Sexuality: Kafka and the Erotic <i>Anna Katharina Schaffner</i>	80
5 Polymorphous Eroticism in the Early Plays of Hans Henny Jahnn <i>Ritchie Robertson</i>	105
6 From the Erotic to the Obscene: Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i> <i>Jean-Michel Rabaté</i>	123
7 Towards a Unisex Erotics: Claude Cahun and Geometric Modernism <i>Emily Apter</i>	134
8 'The "Indecent" Eternal': Eroticism in Djuna Barnes's <i>Nightwood</i> <i>Daniela Caselli</i>	150
9 Decomposition: Georges Bataille and the Language of Necrophilia <i>Shane Weller</i>	169
10 Sexual Perversion as Textual Resistance in the Works of Rachilde and Monique Wittig <i>Lisa Downing</i>	195

vi *Contents*

11	Modernism and the Erotics of Style <i>Ben Hutchinson</i>	213
	<i>Bibliography</i>	232
	<i>Index</i>	246

List of Illustrations

4.1	Maurice Besnaux, <i>Le Gourmand</i> (1906)	83
7.1	Claude Cahun, <i>Untitled</i> (1928)	135
7.2	Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, <i>Untitled</i> (undated)	137
7.3	Claude Cahun, <i>Que me veux-tu? (What Do You Want from Me?, 1928)</i>	138
7.4	Claude Cahun, <i>Untitled</i> (c. 1929)	147

Introduction

Anna Katharina Schaffner and Shane Weller

Sexology, psychoanalysis and the reconceptualization of sexual deviance

In the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the conception of human sexuality underwent radical transformation. Within the rapidly expanding field of sexology, and in line with the increasing secularization of modernity, forms of sexual behaviour that deviated from the perceived norm – heterosexual genital intercourse in the service of procreation – came to be conceived in biological and psychological rather than ethico-religious terms; that is, as pathological rather than immoral. Those who were adjudged to exhibit the symptoms of so-called sexual ‘perversion’ – including homosexuality (or ‘inversion’), sadism, masochism, fetishism, voyeurism and necrophilia – became medicalized subjects whose morbid conditions could be scientifically identified, analysed and, according to some sexologists, even cured.

Attempts to categorize the various forms of sexual deviance peaked in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by a proliferation of predominantly German and French studies in the field of *scientia sexualis*, most notably Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886).¹ As Michel Foucault argues in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (1976), however, this project backfired spectacularly: rather than containing the spread of perversion and thus preventing what was seen as the possible corruption not just of the individual human body but also of the body politic, works such as Krafft-Ebing’s, by naming and classifying the various forms of sexual deviance, in fact facilitated their discursive proliferation.² Furthermore, as Foucault argues, by imposing labels such as ‘invert’, ‘masochist’ or ‘fetishist’ on the subjects in

question, the sexologists transformed what had previously been mere behaviours into sexual identities. In effect, the sexologists invented the homosexual, the masochist, the fetishist and a host of other perverse types who, significantly, would soon go on to populate in ever greater numbers naturalist, decadent and, above all, modernist literature. The discursive traffic was, however, far from being simply one-way. Just as sexological and psychoanalytic works impacted on the literary imagination, so literary examples of perversion influenced the sexologists. Krafft-Ebing, for instance, drew on a wide range of literary texts to support his arguments, the works (and the reputation) of the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (1869) playing particularly important roles in sexological concept-formation. As is well known, Freud, too, drew extensively on the literary, not least for the naming of his core concept: the Oedipus complex.³

Most of the early sexological studies either embraced biological (or what might now be seen as biopolitical) models, positing degeneration and the inheritance of contaminated genetic material as the origin of sexual perversion, or else argued that the particular cultural conditions of modernity, and the adverse effects of a decadent culture in rapid decline, were responsible for the perversions that they encountered and sought to classify. In the case of the latter interpretation, Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892–3) proved to be a powerful influence. It was only with the publication in 1905 of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that a theory transcending the innate–acquired binary emerged. Undoubtedly the single most influential work ever written on the subject of the perversions, and drawing substantially on earlier works in the field of sexology, Freud's *Three Essays* rejected both the notion of biological determinism and the degeneration paradigm, shifting the emphasis onto the terrain of Oedipal struggles in childhood and arrested psycho-sexual development.

In the first of the *Three Essays*, on 'The Sexual Aberrations', Freud sets out to redefine homosexuality, sadism, masochism, fetishism, voyeurism and exhibitionism as deviations of the sexual drive from its natural object, namely 'the union of the genitals in the act known as copulation'.⁴ At the time, the most contentious aspect to Freud's theorization of the perversions was his sexualization of the child. No less important was his infantilization of the pervert: for Freud, sexual perversion is essentially a form of arrested development. Arguably his most radical move, however, was to present sexual perversion as common to all human beings at a certain stage in their ontogenetic development. At the outset, according to Freud, the sexual drive consists

of polymorphously perverse partial drives. If all human beings have to pass through a perverse phase, then perversion is in effect normalized. To be sure, Freud aims to maintain a clear distinction between normal and abnormal sexual activity; and yet his argument nonetheless weakens this very distinction. Perversion, then, becomes very much part of who we are, no longer something that can be assigned to some 'other' who has, for one reason or another, simply deviated from the path of healthy psychological development. Furthermore, by identifying neuroses such as hysteria, obsessive-compulsive tendencies and phobias as the consequence of repressed desires, Freud radically expands the domain of perversion within the adult population. Lastly, by introducing the notion of sublimation, Freud insists upon a direct connection between perversion and all forms of cultural achievement, not least art and literature: in his 1908 essay 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming', Freud presents the artist as a figure who has the power to render his or her own perverse desires of interest – which is to say, a source of libidinal pleasure – to others.

It would be difficult to overestimate the impact of Freud's theory of the perversions on modernist literature. He placed Eros at the very heart of human experience, positing it as the force behind civilization itself, and writers in the early decades of the twentieth century could scarcely simply ignore his reconceptualization of human sexuality – even if, like D. H. Lawrence, they did not necessarily accept his arguments. Of course, Freud was not working in a cultural vacuum; he drew heavily on the work of predecessors in the sexological field. Moreover, if he influenced literary modernism, Freud may be considered a modernist in his own right, committed as he was to establishing psychoanalysis as a discourse that could make sense of an increasingly disenchanted modernity.⁵ The various transformations in the conception of human sexuality, and thus of the erotic, that occurred in both sexology and psychoanalysis at this time were closely related to specifically modern socio-cultural developments, including secularization, industrialization and urbanization, capitalism, the advent of scientism and positivism, and rapid technological advances, not least in the field of communication. Like that of other modernists, Freud's relation to modernity was ambiguous: on the one hand, his reconceptualization of human sexuality, and in particular of sexual deviance, was very much part of the Enlightenment project out of which modernity had sprung; on the other hand, his vision of modernity was, like that of many of the European literary modernists, far from unremittingly positive.

When conceptions of sexuality change, literary representations of the erotic will tend to reflect these changes, either by embracing them or by engaging critically with them. This is certainly the case with modernism, in which sexuality and erotic experience play a central role, and in which the heritage of sexology and psychoanalysis is very much in evidence. Diverse forms of sexual desire are at the heart of many of the major avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century, especially expressionism, Dada and surrealism, and they are no less present in the work of the major European modernists, including Guillaume Apollinaire, Djuna Barnes, Georges Bataille, André Gide, Radclyffe Hall, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, Michel Leiris, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, Marcel Proust, Rainer Maria Rilke, Arthur Schnitzler, Paul Valéry and Frank Wedekind. While there are numerous important differences in the ways in which the erotic is explored in the work of each of the above writers, there are also a number of important shared characteristics that permit the theorization of a specifically modernist writing of the erotic.

The specificities of modernist literary eroticism

It is possible to identify at least five principal characteristics specific to European modernist literary engagements with the erotic. While not all of these characteristics will necessarily pertain to a given literary work or œuvre, or be shared by all modernist writers, they nonetheless offer a general framework within which the particularities of a given writer or work might be located. In European modernism: (1) the erotic tends to be privileged as a realm of existential significance; (2) the emphasis is primarily on deviant sexual desires and the so-called sexual perversions, with the distinction between 'pathological' and 'normal' forms of sexuality frequently being challenged; (3) representations of the erotic tend to be more explicit than in romantic, realist and naturalist works, with the difference between the erotic and the obscene often being deliberately blurred; (4) the attitude taken towards the erotic is often ambivalent, and on occasion results in ambiguities at the level of representation; and (5) the erotic is apparent not only at the level of content, but also, and no less importantly, at that of literary form or style.

Underlying each of these characteristics is a concern with the relation between mind and body, materiality and immateriality, the biological and the psychological. In the modernist literary engagement with the erotic, one encounters a sustained attempt not merely to challenge the Cartesian division between mind and body, but to achieve