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Eighteenth-century France saw the emergence of so-called indecent paintings from the likes of Jean-Antoine Watteau and Jean-Honoré Fragonard, as well as the proliferation of erotic etchings -- the...

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The Erotic Imagination Vernon A. Rosario "Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, or outright lunatics," the physician and journalist Max Nordau cautioned in 1893, "they are often writers and artists." Indeed, without writers and artists, medical experts in theeighteenth and nineteenth centuries would not have had much of the material on which they based their theories of sexual perversions. Thus it was that Rene Descartes could be diagnosed as a fetishist, because of his inordinate attraction to cross-eyed women, Gustave Flaubert as a hysteric, becauseof his hypersensitive imagination, and Emile Zola ("the novelist of the quivering nostrils") as an epileptoid degenerate, olfactory fetishist, and sexual psychopath, because of the suspicious richness of odors emanating from the pages of his books. Drawing upon the writings of literary figures such as Diderot, Rousseau, Zola, Flaubert, and Huysmans, and physicians and psychologists such as Tardieu, Binet, and Charcot, Vernon Rosario argues that the modern idea of the perverse first emerged in late 18th-century France and was shapedlargely by the strange confluence of medical writings, patient confessions, and literary narratives. Beginning with the shocking revelations of masturbation and masochism in Rousseau's Confessions, and the widespread public alarm over the "fatal convulence" of the "solitary vice," The EroticImagination illuminates precisely how various forms of eroticism came to be classified as perversions. Rosario takes the reader through a dizzying proliferation of "pathologies"--including the bizarre theories which enabled doctors to identify homosexuals, or "inverts," according to bodily stigmata,to the "uterine fury" of nymphomania, to an astonishing range of hysterias, fetishes, and erotomanias until finally only marital, reproductive sex survived as normal. Such "perversionification" of sexual desire attempted to close off and regulate those erotic expressions seen as threatening to thesocial order, national population, military power, and the supremacy of will and reason. In each case, Rosario argues, the original culprit of deviant behavior was identified as the imagination--a perilous site beyond surveillance, highly susceptible to the salacious effects of literature, whereirrational associations might take root and usurp the 'reality' of conventional sexuality. What emerges most compellingly from Rosario's study is the anxiety produced by the erotic imagination and the elaborate, often desperate theoretical fabrications designed to contain it. Filled with extraordinary case studies and written in prose that is as lively and entertaining as it is insightful, this book offers both a history of the erotic imagination and its narrative expressions, as well as a fascinating mirror in which our contemporary ambivalence aboutsexuality--from the acrimonious rhetoric of family values to censorship of pornography and hostility towards gays--takes on surprising new significance.

Deconstruct changing representations of homosexuality with this important new work of cultural criticism! Homosexuality in French History and Culture explores episodes, patterns, and images of same-sex attraction in France from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, from the essays of Michel de Montaigne to pride parades in contemporary Paris. This groundbreaking book documents the ways homosexuality has been named, experienced, regulated, understood, and imagined. During these centuries, homosexuality has been stigmatized as a sin, crime, or disease, and denounced as a threat to social order and national identity. Yet the rhetoric of condemnation has always co-existed with the reality of toleration. This groundbreaking collection analyzes the ways in which persecutions, as well as differences within minority sexual subcultures, have highlighted stereotypes and anxieties about class and age differences, gendered roles, and separatism. Homosexuality in French History and Culture offers historical and literary studies based on a wide variety of sources, including: novels, plays, and poetry gossip and satires police reports medical texts travel literature newspapers and periodicals memoirs Homosexuality in French History and Culture combines fresh, creative re-interpretation of familiar texts with exciting new explorations of neglected historical episodes and cultures. It is a landmark of meticulous scholarship and rigorous theoretical analysis, and a vital resource for scholars of queer theory, French history and culture, and literary criticism.

From Occitan poetry to Francophone writing produced in the Caribbean and North Africa, from intellectual history to current films, and from medieval manuscripts to bandes dessinées, this History covers French literature from its beginnings to the present day. With equal attention to all genres, historical periods and registers, this is the most comprehensive guide to literature written in French ever produced in English, and the first in decades to offer such an array of topics and perspectives. Contributors attend to issues of orality, history, peripheries, visual culture, alterity, sexuality, religion, politics, autobiography and testimony. The result is a collection that, despite the wide variety of topics and perspectives, presents a unified view of the richness of French-speaking cultures. This History gives support to the idea that French writing will continue to prosper in the twenty-first century as it adapts, adds to, and refocuses the rich legacy of its past.

The turn of the twentieth century represented a crossroads in the French experience of modernization, especially in regard to ideas about gender and sexuality. Drawing together prominent scholars in French gender history, this volume explores how historians have come to view this period in light of new theoretical developments since the 1980s.

Brings into relief a critical relationship between the female mind and body that is essential to understanding the discursive position of the turn-of-the-century woman writer. This book includes novels that confront this mind/body problem through a wide variety of styles and genres that challenge conventional fin-de-siecle notions of femininity.

What did it mean to call someone "eccentric" in nineteenth-century Paris? And why did breaking with convention arouse such ambivalent responses in middle-class readers, writers, and spectators? From high society to Bohemia and the demi-monde to the madhouse, the scandal of nonconformism provoked anxiety, disgust, and often secret yearning. In a culture preoccupied by the need for order yet simultaneously drawn to the values of freedom and innovation, eccentricity continually tested the boundaries of bourgeois identity, ultimately becoming inseparable from it. This interdisciplinary study charts shifting French perceptions of the anomalous and bizarre from the 1830s to the fin de siècle, focusing on three key issues. First, during the July Monarchy eccentricity was linked to fashion, dandyism, and commodity culture: to many Parisians it epitomized the dangerous seductions of modernity and the growing prestige of the courtesan. Second, in the aftermath of the 1848 Revolution eccentricity was associated with the Bohemian artists and performers who inhabited 'the unknown Paris', a zone of social exclusion which middle-class spectators found both fascinating and repugnant. Finally, the popularization of medical theories of national decline in the latter part of the century led to decreasing tolerance for individual difference, and eccentricity was interpreted as a symptom of hidden insanity and deformity. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including etiquette manuals, fashion magazines, newspapers, novels, and psychiatric treatises, the study highlights the central role of gender in shaping perceptions of eccentricity. It provides new readings of works by major French writers and illuminates both well-known and neglected figures of Parisian modernity, from the courtesan and Bohemian to the female dandy and circus freak.

This electronic version has been made available under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-ND) open access license. This collection tells the story of the case study genre at a time when it became the genre par excellence for discussing human sexuality across the humanities and life sciences.It is a transcontinental journey from the imperial world of fin-de-siècle Central Europe to the interwar metropolises of Weimar Germany and to the United States of America in the post-war years. Foregrounding the figures of case study pioneers, and highlighting their often radical engagements with the genre, the book scrutinises the case writing practices of Sigmund Freud and his predecessor sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing; writers including Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and Alfred Döblin; Weimar intellectuals such as Erich Wulffen and psychoanalyst Viola Bernard. The results are important new insights into the continuing legacy of such writers and into the agency increasingly claimed by the readerships that emerged with the development of modernity.

An examination of how bodies and sexualities have been constructed, categorised, represented, diagnosed, experienced and subverted from the fifteenth to the early twenty-first century. It draws attention to continuities in thinking about bodies and sex: concept may have changed, but hey nevertheless draw on older ideas and language.

"It has come to be widely accepted that 'sexuality' as we know it took shape at the end of the nineteenth century. This is when Krafft-Ebing asserted that "sexual feeling is really the root of all ethics, and no doubt of aestheticism and religion," and Havelock Ellis declared sexuality to be the "central problem of life." Yet however self-evident Ellis's claim about sexuality might seem the act of placing something at the center is the consequence of insistent cultural work that engages with competing views about bodies and indeed about the "life" of society. This volume examines how this work was carried out and what resulted from such efforts."--BOOK JACKET.

Examine how a community of support in Nineteenth-Century Paris became a blueprint for modern sexual identity! A unique social history, Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris is a valuable addition to the growing field of gay and lesbian studies. The book examines the interaction between the city's male homosexual subculture and Parisian authority figures who attempted to maintain political and social order during the early years of the French Third Republic by using laws against public indecency and sexual assault to treat same-sex sexuality as a crime. Faced with a constant cycle of surveillance, harassment, and arrest, the city's gay men survived the hostile urban environment by forming a community of support that had a widespread and lasting influence on the development of modern sexual identities. Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris is based on a statistical analysis of more than 800 working-class and middle-class men who were arrested or investigated by Parisian police between 1873 and 1879. Their stories, presented through long and short case studies, represent nearly 2,000 names recorded by police in "Pederasts and Others," a ledger detailing the arrests of male homosexuals for public offenses against decency and other minor offenses. (The term "pederast" identified those suspected of same-sex sexual activity, not the modern definition that indicates homosexual relations with a minor.) The ledger entries reveal specific habits, attitudes, values, and characteristics about these men that set them apart--the same traits that identified them as part of a community based on their behavior and relationships. Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris examines: the forces of authority the laws regarding same-sex sexual behavior the role of the police the role of the magistrates the role of the doctors the common characteristics of the city's male homosexual subculture the sexual behaviors of the Paris underground the geography of the subculture and takes an expanded look at three case studies: "A Decadent Aristocrat and A Delinquent Boy" "Pederasts, Prostitutes, and Pickpockets" "Love and Death in Gay Paris" Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris also includes tables, appendices, and maps linked to statistical data. The book is an essential resource for historians, sociologists, sexologists, criminologists, and other scholars working in the fields of gay and lesbian studies, urban studies, social and cultural history, and French history.

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