

A history of the case study

Sexology, psychoanalysis, literature

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and Alison Lewis

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Introduction

Birgit Lang, Joy Damousi
and Alison Lewis

A History of the Case Study represents a critical intervention into contemporary debate concerning the construction of knowledge which – after Michel Foucault’s elaborations on modern discourses of power – considers the medical case study in particular as an expression of new forms of disciplinary authority. This volume scrutinises the changing status of the human case study, that is, the medical, legal or literary case study that places an individual at its centre. With close reference to the dawning of ‘sexual modernity’ during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to ideas about sexual identity in the period immediately before and after the fin de siècle, the following chapters examine the case writing practices of selected pioneers of the case study genre.¹ Alertness to the exchange of ideas between the empirical life sciences and the humanities is key to *A History of the Case Study*.

Defined by desire to unravel the mystery of human sexuality and the depths of the human condition, the case study can be linked to the modernist project itself. Indeed, the case study can be defined as one of modernity’s vital narrative forms and means of explanation. *A History of the Case Study* builds on our earlier edited collection, *Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge*, and outlines how case knowledge actively contributed to the construction of the sexed subject.² The present volume tells the story of the medical case study genre in a historically and geographically contingent manner, with a focus on Central Europe, extended also to the USA. The lives of individual brokers of case knowledge are pivotal to this book, as is the task of mapping their agency and interventions. ‘Brokers of case knowledge’, however, can be shown to include newly emerging sexual publics, as well as members of professional elites (psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and jurists) and creative writers.

These practitioners took up case studies as a representational practice so as to demonstrate or classify a new phenomenon or pathology; to register a deviation from existing knowledge; to raise questions concerning the meaning of a given example (and by implication its explanatory framework); and to disseminate specialist knowledge to reading publics.

In this context, case studies regularly became sites of reinterpretation and translation, sometimes of resistance. There resulted a range of case modalities. Such ‘incarnations of case studies’ across different social and disciplinary contexts came to encompass published psychiatric, sexological and psychoanalytic case studies of individuals, as well as case study compilations; unpublished medical notes and juridical case files; autobiographical or journalistic case studies; and fictionalised or fictional case studies (‘case stories’). All of these iterations of the case study are inseparable from the history of three fields or kinds of knowledge: sexology, psychoanalysis and literature.

The case study pioneers at the centre of our investigation all participated and were actively involved in discourses connected to the disciplinary sphere of medicine, and especially to the psychiatric realm: Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing embraced patient narratives in an attempt to quantify what he could not measure – the sexual paradigm he presupposed. Psychoanalysts, the majority of whom were trained physicians, used the case study genre to reconceptualise the role of creative genius in the light of new scientific and medical insights, or to explore newly urgent socio-political questions, as did Viola Bernard in her analysis of race. State prosecutor Erich Wulffen was able to revitalise the judicial case study genre through the new field of forensics, an imbrication of legal and medical discourse. Physician-writers Oskar Panizza and Alfred Döblin developed new literary cases that incisively commented on specific case writing practices. Each of these writers exemplifies a new language and paradigm, often in competition with other case writers, through which to explore challenges that presented themselves in their time and in their respective fields. An aim of this volume is to chart the emergence and development of the case study in historical terms, and through the medium of biography.

Definitions of the case study

For the key modern theoretician of the case, André Jolles, case studies belong to the very archetypes of narration.³ Two distinct features define the discursive possibilities of the case study genre: the intrinsic element of judgement; and the ‘abductive’ or ‘guessing’ nature of the case study, which can be used in both inductive and deductive styles of reasoning.⁴

Case studies are examples or instances that can be used either to illustrate a rule or a norm, or to signal a deviation from it.⁵ In turn, readers of case studies in varying professional, cultural and historical contexts measure the examples or singular events against the norm. In what Umberto Eco would have called ‘closed’ case studies, clear discursive rules exist within well established fields of knowledge and power, such as the judicial system or institutional religion.⁶ These fields shape the structure and wording of a case study, but also presume certain values and beliefs on

the part of the readership. A case study simultaneously lends itself to re-interpretation, because the genre ‘hovers about’ – to cite Lauren Berlant’s phrase – ‘the singular, the general, and the normative’.⁷ In comparison with ‘closed case studies’, ‘open case studies’ manipulate their readership in more subtle ways, and with greater insight about their readers, as seen in some psychoanalytic and literary case studies discussed herein. They exploit the genre’s tendency towards undecidability, which introduces ongoing ambiguity and provides the condition for the ever-shifting nature of the case study.

In this study, the focus on possibilities for reinterpreting a case study is key; the ‘slippery’ quality of the genre is highlighted, as a result of the volume’s vantage point with regard to the example of the history of sexuality. After Foucault, the case study genre has been identified predominantly as an anchor for new forms of disciplinary authority.⁸ Scholars of homosexual and transgender history have made an invaluable contribution to revising this narrative, as part of an attempt to restore agency to those subjects who voluntarily embraced sexological discourse.⁹ Yet case studies were powerfully in play beyond the milieu of specific sexual counterpublics (a term from both Michael Warner and Berlant).¹⁰ Their wider workings in relation to a broader history of medical, legal and literary knowledge have not been analysed; neither has the agency of case writers. This volume contributes to the historiography of sexuality by contextualising the preferred case modality of historians of sexuality: the juridical case file. In her study of the ‘passing’ as male of Hungarian count/ess Sandor/Sarolta Vay, Dutch scholar Geertje Mak underlines the subversive nature of juridical case files, in which are gathered a range of statements that are free of editorial intervention and which do not necessarily present a clear conclusion at the end.¹¹ The cacophony within the historical juridical case represents a more evocative and open case modality than the typical sexological case, with the editing process seemingly reduced to a minimum, although manipulations of the reader still take place. The seemingly open nature of juridical case writing traditions also prevails in Foucault’s case compilations, most famously in *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, published in French in 1978 and in English translation two years later. Here, the task of judgement is apparently left to the reader, framed only minimally by the editor-author. The case is not presented through the lens of a sexological expert seeking to present the ‘true’ sex of the human subject in question.

Foucault’s Barbin case begins with the subject’s autobiographical account, moves on to the historical dossier – including a timeline of the course of events, two accounts of sexologists and a handful of newspaper articles and surviving personal documents – and ends with ‘A Scandal at the Convent’, the English translation of a literary account by the German writer Oskar Panizza. Thus, Foucault moves from the intimacy of Barbin’s autobiography to the depersonalisation of the medical case

study, in order to ambiguously challenge his readers' propensity to find a single truth defining sexuality.¹² The apparent disjunction between autobiographical confession and the clinical language of the medical case studies disquiets the reader, who is left with the knowledge that Barbin's autobiography was literally cut short by sexologists. That Foucault himself edited the sexological case studies in order to present his publication in this way, and in doing so separated autobiography from the sexological frame narrative, is mentioned only in passing. The trajectory of Foucault's compilation clearly takes the reader from a subjective to an objective, less authentic mode, which in turn serves to exemplify Foucault's hypothesis clearly: whatever is fundamental to Barbin's sex, it is not the truth.

Foucault understood that the epistemological nature of case writings always gravitates towards a truth; his writings demonstrate his mastery of the case study genre and its predisposition towards a truth. He ingeniously creates a platform from which to launch his theories of sexuality by capitalising on the confusion that arises in the reader when faced with a range of case studies. Combined with the ongoing interest of historians of sexuality in juridical case files as a valuable resource that 'can take the researcher beyond the crime itself into the social and cultural worlds in which the act took place', Foucault's generic intervention epitomises the strengths and limits of the juridical approach.¹³ He subverts the juridical case study form, retains its evocative and open aspect, and minimises its powers of judgement in order to question – with a little additional editorial effort – sexological case writings as well.

Separating the juridical case files from the narrowly defined context of the court, and opening the genre to new enquiries is a commendable and necessary task for historians of sexuality. Yet it seems ironic that during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the subjects on trial, as well as the newly forming sexual public or audience for such case studies, often preferred the medical discourse to the punishment of the law. The former was less judgemental, readily accessible and even more risqué. The analysis of the human case study undertaken in this book provides the history of sexuality with a more complex account of how the sexological case was differentiated and disseminated within and across different fields of knowledge, as well as its transnational diffusion during the course of the twentieth century. Of course, the case study predates this history.

A brief history of the medical case study

Traditionally in medicine, case notes and case studies have been used to develop new categories for disease patterns. In accordance with Ludwik Fleck's notion that the fundamental problem of medical thinking lies in the need to find laws for irregular phenomena, psychiatrists such as

Krafft-Ebing sought such laws.¹⁴ Carol Berkenkotter describes how, within psychiatry, both the move away from mainstream scientific discourse, and the central role of case histories in setting the discipline's professional discourse, produced an increasing emphasis on individual stories.¹⁵ Ivan Crozier has noted that psychiatrists learned to interpret case studies as part of their doctoral training and that the choice to publish specific case studies represented their efforts to position themselves in a dynamic new field of knowledge.¹⁶ By comparing similar cases, psychiatrists created concepts and categories in an attempt to classify patients and their non-normative – or non-reproductively oriented – desires and behaviours.

In these developments, the medical case study became the key form of writing, since it was singularly capable of summarising the patient statement as well as the doctor's assessment. Krafft-Ebing, for instance, arguably used the mode of the medical case study to order his thoughts on the narrative presented by a given patient, editing, omitting and evaluating what was said, while embedding this knowledge into his own theories of sexual taxonomy. The fact that the early study of sexuality was based primarily on the oral or written testimony of patients controlled their statements, but also privileged them. This underlines the possibility of patient agency, and also better explains patients' desire to participate in the Foucaultian 'perpetual spirals of power and pleasure' that defined sexological discourse.¹⁷ In other words, the exploration of sexuality became a widely anthropological project, with a propensity to reconceptualise and rewrite patient statements.

Such a 'narrative turn' constituted a veritable shift away from the body, and presented numerous opportunities and challenges, including the potential for a new interdisciplinarity. Previously, case studies had functioned as a means of conveying and containing medical knowledge about patients' bodies (notably about their sexual anatomy). Now the focus on testimony and truth-finding forced psychiatrists like Krafft-Ebing to think more deeply about the evidentiary value of their sources. The same concern with testimony and truth-finding also made the medical case study attractive to a range of disciplines and fields of knowledge that relied on the spoken and written word, such as psychoanalysis and literature. The fact that medical interest in sexuality in the nineteenth century was 'intrinsically linked to forensic medicine' – as Harry Oosterhuis has forcefully stated – meant, furthermore, that the human case study was situated at the intersection of medical and legal discourses.¹⁸ At the advent of sexual modernity, the accessibility of case vignettes in medical case study compilations also proved compelling for lay readers, who were more and more willing to engage with the world around them, and with literary works, through a new scientific paradigm that suited their needs with respect to identity formation.

By the 1890s the global base of psychiatry had shifted from France to the German-speaking world. This shift influenced those institutional practices that were affecting the range of emerging case modalities.

Case writings in France traditionally allowed for a greater permeability between different fields of knowledge. The legal situation in Germany and Austria, as well social and religious taboos, shaped distinctive disciplinary-based case modalities: in Germany and Austria literature had traditionally provided another way of examining ‘pathological’ case studies.¹⁹ Yet in German-speaking Central Europe in the late nineteenth century, *belles-lettres* rarely explicitly portrayed sexual feelings or sexual activity, and did so mostly through suggestion. Sophisticated intellectual debates about sexuality remained sporadic, even for the most revered literary case modality, the German novella. Early psychiatrists regretted such limits in representation, and by 1900 researchers working in the life sciences controversially used the lives of certain creative writers and other ‘cultural greats’ to illustrate psychiatric illness to a lay audience. Due to the powerful nature of medical discourse, literature responded to this medicalisation most vehemently, by means of satire. The proponents of such mockery included: German playwright Frank Wedekind, whose polemic poem ‘Perversität’ (‘Perversity’) was originally titled ‘Krafft-Ebing’; contrarian Viennese cultural critic Karl Kraus; and German entertainer Otto Reutter, whose satirical ‘Hirschfeld song’ (1908) made fun of the classificatory ambitions of sexologists and psychiatrists. Panizza’s *Psichopatia criminalis* (1898) represents the most poignant example of such a satire, in that he ridiculed the implications of the psychiatrists’ will to classify, and used the formal elements of the medical case study to subvert its meanings. Only after the First World War did writers embrace the empathetic potential of the medical case study with greater self-confidence.

The democratisation of Central Europe coincided with the peak and downfall of the case study in its medical guise after 1918. The dissemination of academic and expert knowledge to specific target audiences and, for the first time, to a mass audience returned to the genre a new sense of urgency and morality. Yet this new accessibility coincided with a wider shift in the life sciences away from the case study as an important methodological means; the result was a broad decline in the respectability of the genre. Pedagogical warnings from academic experts lost their appeal. The criminal and sexed subjects who had been the focus of the human case study for three decades now wrote and published their own cases, and found a keen readership. As elaborated in Chapter 4 of the present volume, the authors of such autobiographical texts included master thief and con man Georges Manolescu and convicted sex offenders, such as the paedophile teacher Edith Cadivec. Their autobiographical accounts could include a self-aggrandising romanticisation of sex and crime, and thus helped to foster cultural anxieties, particularly among liberal academic experts. In a politically unstable democratic milieu where the scope for effective censorship was limited, caught between profanisation and moralisation, the liberating and empowering potential of the case study became largely neglected during this period.

In the turbulent times of the inter-war years, the case modality with the most consistent methodological and academic formation remained the psychoanalytic case study – a distinct variant of the medical case study. After ambiguous beginnings, and a need to separate from psychiatric modes of reasoning, psychoanalysis came into its own as a discipline at this time. However, in the 1930s the overwhelming majority of Central European practitioners were forced into exile, from which most did not return, a pattern that continued throughout the Second World War. From 1945 onwards, the case study as a genre was conspicuously mobilised in numerous contexts, and notably in the USA, where a more open approach to sexuality helped to promote studies by Alfred Kinsey, and William Masters and Virginia Johnson.

Sexology

The rise of the human case study was shaped by two crucial and inter-related circumstances: its medical origins and its geography. The genre's prestige was underpinned by the high social status accorded to the spheres of medicine and psychiatry in Germany and Austria in the late nineteenth century. Always concerned with respectability, in their moralising discourses the middle classes focused on decency and avoided excessively detailed descriptions of sexual matters (with the exception of avant-garde theatre, which frequently pushed the limits of respectability to the brink). Erotic and pornographic writing flourished, but was published in private editions; both kinds of writing were usually censored, and on the same grounds. Within this broader discursive context, sexological case studies presented by far the most respectable framework for the depiction of sexual behaviour, even though their predominant focus on non-normative sexual conditions and identities was generally embedded in a larger forensic discourse of criminality.

Edited by medical experts, these historical case studies of sexual pathologies functioned, like medical case studies today, as an attempt to 'control the subjectivity of the observer-narrator and to stabilise and evaluate the encapsulated narrative of the patient who is its object'.²⁰ The closed form of the sexological case study compilation underlined the respectable nature of the undertaking. Here, case narratives – presented through the threefold structure of anamnesis, personal enquiry and diagnosis – illustrated newly emerging sexological and psychiatric theories. Since bodies did not 'speak' (at least before the onset of hormonal research), and fieldwork included sometimes insurmountable moral and practical difficulties, psychiatrists were obliged to give new levels of credibility to their patients' own statements and words. As a consequence, psychiatrists' carefully edited summaries of medical case notes were often interspersed with autobiographical material sourced directly from their patients, or from correspondents.

The formalised configuration of sexological case studies, as well as their presentation in case compilations, adhered to the structure of medical discourse and served, therefore, to rebut criticism from other medical disciplines. The quoted autobiographical materials provided rich evidence of explorations into emerging sexual subjectivities, which included some quite explicit and potentially sexually arousing passages for their readers. The subjects of these case studies sought legitimisation for their sexual preferences, life choices and identities. As Klaus Müller highlights in his account of the historical writings of male ‘inverts’, these individuals presented their autobiographical writings to sexologists voluntarily, and often expressed a desire to aid German science.²¹ As mentioned above, Foucault has ascribed such desire to the workings of ‘perpetual spirals of power and pleasure’ between sexology and its informants.²² However, sexological case studies provided for an array of emerging sexual subjectivities, subjectivities that were judged by, but also legitimised through, the respectable medical framing narrative. Hence reading offered an opportunity for recognition but also – and this was feared by sexologists and their patients – for sexual arousal. Readers’ reinterpretations of particular passages written in the first person in turn influenced sexological thought, as seen with reference to Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, who was categorised as a masochist by some of his masochist readers. This readership reinterpreted Sacher-Masoch’s novellas; their interpretation was then valorised through sexological discourse, and contemporaneously by cultural historians of sexuality, making the readers’ views more socially acceptable at the time.

Psychoanalysis

The most powerful innovation in scientific knowledge of the human subject in the second half of the nineteenth century came from psychoanalysis. If sexology created a new platform for modern subjectivities, psychoanalysis made the relationship between analyst and patient the central scene of the (talking) cure and offered a new understanding of the reading public at large. Different from psychiatry and sexology, psychoanalysis reflected on the idealising trends of the German public in a sophisticated manner, and regularly expressed the fear that expert deliberations on genius and creativity would be interpreted as a defamation of national idols. Psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel sought to counter resistance to such interrogation in 1912:

Until recently the maxim prevailed that the image of a great artist needs to be conveyed in an untainted form to posterity. Biographers saw their main task in removing dark chapters – or what they conceived to be dark chapters – from the life of their ‘hero’ and to convey an image of impeccable shine. We nearly retained a gallery of great human beings, a Valhalla of farouche gods, had not the accounts of one artist or the other, just like

their works, taught us from time to time that geniuses – be they inventors, philosophers, founders of religions, poets and artists – are only human beings, with all their mistakes. What they lost in scope, they won in love and deepened insight.²³

While analysts used the case study more self-reflexively than psychiatrists, both were vividly aware of the genre's persuasive hold as an instrument of projection and objectification. The heated nature of debates concerning artists and creativity in psychoanalytic circles owed much to the identification of psychoanalysts with creative artists. Sigmund Freud himself considered these tendencies in the German readership by developing a new case modality, the dialogic-psychoanalytic case study, which considered fragments of the life and oeuvre of creative minds. The impetus for Freud's variant of the case study was partly his wish to avoid causing offence to his middle-class readership.

Psychoanalysis was conceptualised as a life science; like literature, psychoanalysis was considered to stand astride the presumed divide between science and arts, and so it provided a bridging link between the two fields of psychiatry and literature. In the history of psychoanalysis, the years 1906–14 engendered what Frank J. Sulloway has called, by way of criticism, a literary style of reasoning.²⁴ While psychoanalytic case studies decisively differed from their psychiatric counterparts, the scientific self-image of psychoanalysis is undeniable. John Forrester, in his pioneering article 'Thinking in cases', best describes how psychoanalysis created 'a new way of telling a life in the twentieth century, a new form for the specific and unique facts that make that person's life their life; and at the same time, it attempts to render that way of telling a life public, of making it scientific'.²⁵ Received more positively than implied by Freud, psychoanalytic approaches were incorporated into other disciplinary fields, while also meeting some resistance. Overall, psychoanalysis pioneered the case study as a methodological approach and produced 'an authoritative form that is distinctly interdisciplinary, profound and enduring'.²⁶ In the USA, the period between 1945 and 1965 witnessed the rapid rise of psychoanalytic psychiatry. By the mid-twentieth century, psychoanalysis was becoming well accepted; increasing numbers of psychiatrists with medical backgrounds, were beginning to train in this approach.²⁷ Psychoanalytic writings found expression in the popular arena through films, literature and magazines, and over this period ideas from Freud's writings and his immediate circle of adherents found expression in many cultural forms.²⁸

Literature

Most recently among historians of sexuality as well as literary scholars, debate about the making of sexual modernity has emphasised the interplay between the realms of science and those of literature and cultural

history. While literature played an important role in the formation of sexological knowledge in England and France, the role of literature in the German lands has been understood differently.²⁹ French writers of the nineteenth century had already observed that the modern age urgently needed to anchor its literature in real life and to document modern maladies. The sickness of their era was hysteria, and writers such as Gustave Flaubert plumbed this topic for a voracious readership.³⁰ In German-speaking Central Europe the mere perusal of Krafft-Ebing's medical case study compilation *Psychopathia Sexualis* was feared to have 'psychopathic effects' on some readers. This is at least in part attributable to the belief of medical elites that masturbation had a detrimental influence on the mental health of individuals. Thus it is hardly surprising that Krafft-Ebing originally hesitated to include references to literary works in his oeuvre. Between 1886 and 1890 he discussed literary works and their authors – such as the Marquis de Sade or Jean Jacques Rousseau – only when other, mostly French sexologists had cited them beforehand.³¹ Krafft-Ebing also remained within the bounds of bourgeois sexual respectability by avoiding references to the plethora of erotic fiction that could have provided a useful source for his studies. Such material – whether relatively respectable works of erotic fiction marketed to middle-class men; pulp fiction; saucy romance novels or photographs – was available to wide segments of the male population in the late nineteenth century through the black market in erotica and pornography.³²

Initially, the moral division in the German-speaking world between erotica and *belles-lettres* prompted a turn to satire among literary writers. The most provocative example of such satire, Panizza's *Psychopatia criminalis*, represents the inversion of the case study genre. However, by the early twentieth century, bourgeois forms of cultural expression needed to adapt so as to contend with newer maladies and social ills. As the privileged cultural form of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, literature faced challenges from many quarters, challenges that an 'empirical turn' could not adequately address without a more radical reinvention of the parameters of literature itself. In the modern metropolis, the writers of *belles-lettres* found themselves confronted by the great complexity and interconnectivity of life forms, and with competing and multiplying forms of knowledge about these life forms. Any attempt to make sense of the many innovations in science and the arts felt daunting.

Indeed, especially since the rise of naturalist movements, writers of literature experienced immense pressure to move with the times. Each successive new movement or style that emerged in the first two decades of the twentieth century – expressionism, Dada, surrealism and the avant-garde – sought to address the many economic, political and social crises of the era in different ways. Expressionism, which dominated the literary scene in the years from 1910 to 1925, was advocated as a corrective to naturalism, challenging perceptions of reality far more radically than before. In the words of Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch, the predominant

way all writers adapted material from real life for literature was ‘by smashing it’: ‘the prevailing world no longer offers them a representable illusion which may be fashioned into a story, but just emptiness and inside this some mixable rubble’.³³ Both naturalist and expressionist writers had striven to incorporate the latest findings from disciplines as disparate as medicine, psychiatry, sexology, criminology and the law. As was typical in the aftermath of the First World War, writers were unsure of the future of literary markets and of what increased competition from other media might mean for their livelihoods. In this rapidly modernising field, the case study genre arguably became for a brief time ‘the answer’ to ‘the problem’ that literature had become. Yet in the process of espousing this answer, the resultant literature became almost incomprehensible, shaped by an anxiety, if not a neurosis, about shoring up each work’s epistemological foundations. Literature became a laboratory, a humanistic corollary to the laboratories of other life sciences from which it borrowed some of its inspiration. Still, in taking on the empirical world, as well as the worlds of fiction and make-believe, literature came almost entirely unstuck.

Joe Cleary has contended that the collapse of the European imperial world brought about the collapse of the Anglo-French literary world system. Until the First World War, Paris and London were the uncontested centres of world literature; bourgeois realism and the advent of the novel were considered the supreme achievements of world literature. According to this view, the ‘breakup of the old London- and Paris-centred literary world-system’ sparked a concomitant crisis of realism.³⁴ By far the greatest threat to realism, and hence to the dominant literary world system, came from the newer fashion of modernism. As Cleary points out, interestingly, the major theorists of the modern novel of the early twentieth century – as well as its main detractors – all came from the semi-periphery of the literary world system. Georg Lukács was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Erich Auerbach hailed from Berlin, Mikhail Bakhtin from Oryol in Russia. Most of them cast this aesthetic crisis in catastrophic and even apocalyptic terms. Due to their personal experience of collapsing empires and regimes, these theorists and critics could not help but view the downfall of realism as the passing of a literary style. Moreover, in all but one of their accounts, modernist literature had itself become symptomatic of a more global, far-reaching trend of declining morality and value systems.³⁵ The antidote they envisaged was to turn the clock back to an earlier mode of representation based on realism and mimesis. For example, Auerbach praised the more moderate modernist Virginia Woolf over the more radical Irish modernist James Joyce, because of Woolf’s ability to portray with ‘realist depth’.³⁶ Lukács pitted Joyce, Döblin and Robert Musil unfavourably against Alexander Pushkin and Thomas Mann. He argued that Joyce and Döblin displayed ‘a morbid preoccupation with the perversely atypical’, while Mann and Pushkin confronted the spiritual problems of the German and Russian peoples.³⁷ Although Bakhtin’s account of the rise and fall of realism differs

from those offered by Auerbach and Lukács, his work, too, in the view of Cleary, is ‘in the throes of the terrific European and world crisis that had erupted with devastating effect in World War I and would erupt again, even more violently, in World War II’.³⁸

The return to realism that many intellectuals from Central Europe imagined as the answer to modernity’s aporias involved a rethinking of the relationship between the arts and sciences. It required writers to undo the strict division of natural sciences from the arts or humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*), which, although a hallmark of the age, cultural historians today commonly regard as obsolete. In recent years, European literary scholars such as Ottmar Ette have emphatically stressed literature’s affinity with the life sciences. Ette describes literature as an ‘experimental dynamic space’ that is concerned with the social aspects of life, that is, our ‘knowledge-of-living-together’ (*ZusammenLebens-Wissen*).³⁹ Bernhard J. Dotzler argues in a similar vein. He remarks that literature itself can be an ‘exploratory practice’, in multiple senses of the term.⁴⁰ Latterly, rather than seeking the points of intersection between the human and the natural sciences, literary scholars have been keen to explore the particular ‘poetology of knowledge’ that supports literary knowledge in distinction to other forms. Before discussing ways in which the various writers and thinkers discussed in this volume grappled with these questions, it is worth recollecting that all literature simultaneously conveys knowledge and processes it.⁴¹ As Dotzler affirms, nonetheless, not all knowledge is science.⁴²

A History of the Case Study begins in Chapter 1 with an exploration of the influence of literature on both sexology and psychiatry in the early history of these fields during the late nineteenth century, an era in which human case studies were used to stabilise knowledge and to dismantle it. That chapter investigates the agency of the sexual public, and the indirect power wielded by these readers and patients of sexology in defending the truth of sexological case writings. Through the works and the figure of Sacher-Masoch, the chapter considers how during this period medical case studies functioned as sites of reinterpretation by doctors, and by sexological patients and other members of an emerging sexual public. Sacher-Masoch’s literary case study, his novella *Venus im Pelz* (*Venus in Furs*), constitutes the first fictional account of what became known as masochism; readers’ reinterpretation of the novella demonstrates how an emerging sexual public reappropriated an alleged biographical truth about the author. Ian Hacking – who has described himself as a ‘philosopher of the particular case’ – speaks of the ‘looping effect of classifying human beings’; Hacking’s phrase expresses how ‘classifying changes people, but the changed people cause classifications themselves to be redrawn’.⁴³

Chapter 1 describes such a looping effect and exemplifies how a newly forming sexual public, valorised through medical discourse, created an important epistemological shift in sexologists' thinking about authors.

Chapter 2 turns to another discipline that was crucial to the formation of the modern sexual subject: psychoanalysis, which was in the 1890s and into the early decades of the twentieth century a discipline 'in the making'. The chapter investigates how psychoanalysis and its proponents co-opted and adapted the medical case study as an extant and authoritative rhetorical form through which to forge a new mode of enquiry. Like sexologists, psychoanalysts were keen advocates of the case writing method, adapting techniques and writing styles from medical case histories and also from literature. Psychiatrists as well as psychoanalysts in the German-speaking world explored the discursive connection between insanity and creativity.

Additionally, Chapter 2 examines how psychoanalysts sought to incorporate and adapt sexological pathographies into psychoanalytic thought. Responses within the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (WPV) to Isidor Sadger's psychoanalytic biographies of writers and their works fuelled a debate that directly contributed to Freud's development of psychoanalytic case writing. Much of Freud's thinking about artists and writers can be found in the works of Otto Rank. Freud advised Rank, and collaborated with him while Rank was theorising the creative personality for his book *Der Künstler (The Artist)*, first published in 1907; the collaboration continued for many years. Freud took the debate concerning creative genius to a new methodological level. He concluded that – as intensive discussions within the WPV had shown – the life and work of artists, like the life and work of any patient, could not be encapsulated in a single case study. Rather, the psychoanalytic method could represent only a certain aspect of a patient's life. This finding freed the case study genre from its biographical focus and made it a site of explanation rather than mere illustration.⁴⁴

Late nineteenth-century and fin-de-siècle writers first engaged with the case study genre in its psychiatric and psychoanalytic manifestations by means of satire, as recounted in Chapter 3. The chapter contrasts the interpretative powers of modern sexual publics and professional elites with the agency of the writer. It does so through enquiry into Panizza's satirical and delusional negotiation of the boundaries between the two 'cultures' of art and science (*pace* C. P. Snow). Panizza's first exposure to the case study genre was in the context of his training as a psychiatrist. More than a decade before Freud's elaborations on the psychoanalytic case, Panizza made the human case study a central form in his literary oeuvre. Panizza's case writings encompass two modalities through which literature engaged with the case study genre: he fictionalised actual patient case studies and he parodied medical case writing in his biting anti-psychiatric work *Psichopatia criminalis*. Panizza's engagement with the case study genre remains haunted by his own unruly psyche. During his psychological

decline towards the end of his literary career Panizza withdrew from writing fiction. His case writings took the shape of cultural historical studies of topics related to his progressively more delusional inner world, and so they contributed to the process of Panizza's self-destruction. A short investigation into the way that psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic case studies enabled literary satire concludes the chapter.

A History of the Case Study also investigates the widely neglected field of juridical sexology, Chapter 4 showing how Wulffen's works incorporated literary knowledge into a legal and criminological framework. The chapter focuses on the pedagogical imperatives of legal reform and on Wulffen's recourse to the case study genre so that he might appeal to various coexisting professional, literary and mass audiences. His professional investment in the case study makes for a telling illustration of the rise and fall of the genre in the first decades of the twentieth century, when the increasing dissemination and accessibility of case modalities beyond the professional realms of the clinic and the court led to a change in its status. In order to popularise issues of legal reform, Wulffen exploited the accessible nature of the case study genre in an attempt to reach a wider audience, and he wrote some of the first published expert case studies that addressed both a professional and an educated public. While Wulffen's expert case studies were highly successful during the Wilhelmine era, the same approach and model for case writing met a more critical audience after 1918. Wulffen embraced the challenge of a new democratic environment by writing implicitly didactical popular crime novels. However, eventually his criminal subjects literally 'wrote back' after their sensationalised trials, using case studies in an attempt to narrate their own versions of events. The accounts of these criminals-turned-writers were often more marketable, influential and financially successful than the accounts by sexological or legal experts such as Wulffen. Thus the popularisation of sensationalist case studies written, for instance, by perpetrators of crime, was an important factor in the case study genre's loss of respectability.

After the First World War, realist literature continued to be informed by new configurations of knowledge around the criminal and pathological self. This is witnessed in Chapter 5, which concentrates on works by Döblin, a medical doctor and a main representative of the 1920s New Objectivity aesthetic movement in Germany. Other authors were preoccupied with questions of social justice, but Döblin was particularly interested in gender relations and sexually motivated violence. He represented these by drawing on contemporary psychoanalytic and sexological discourses about masochism and sadism. Many of Döblin's main characters were convicted criminals and he fashioned himself in his autobiographical writings as a literary Jack the Ripper. This coincided with the publication, for the first time, of convicted criminals' autobiographical accounts of their own lives outside the spheres of the clinic and the public of the court.

Authors with a background in the law or medicine, whose professional engagement brought them into close proximity with real criminal

cases – writers such as Wulffen and Döblin – found themselves well placed to capture the imaginations of an increasingly educated and well informed reading public. The latter had developed an appetite for shocking crime stories based on empirical cases. In the lead-up to the outbreak of the First World War, writers in major cities such as Berlin, Vienna and Munich had begun to tackle several of the pressing social problems of the age, and after the war many continued to focus on war-related problems such as war trauma, shell-shock and sexually motivated violence. Readers' interest was heightened by additional anxieties of the age concerning society's decadence and the perils of accelerated modernisation and urbanisation. Somewhat to their surprise, doctors and judges also found themselves in competition with an unexpected source of knowledge about the criminal underworld. This competition was provided by the latest craze in first-person accounts penned by the con men and criminals themselves. Possibly, the writer of middlebrow to highbrow literature with insider knowledge of crime still had some advantage over criminals, but he or she needed to find fresh ways to seize the attention of an audience. If there was an unmet demand for criminal material, then Döblin, practising as a social welfare doctor in one of Germany's most seductive and dangerous metropolises, was well placed to respond.

Chapter 6 discusses the use of the psychoanalytic case study in a very different and modern form, drawing on the dramatically different historical context of post-war American politics and society, and the civil rights movement. The writing and experience of Viola Bernard, a psychoanalyst of German-Jewish background, is the subject of Chapter 6. Bernard's history allows for a close examination of the transnational and transcultural aspects of sexuality and psychoanalysis in connection with the case study genre. The chapter describes a set of circumstances in which case writing from one discipline was brought to bear directly on a landmark juridical case, and demonstrates how the wide dispersal of the rhetoric of the case study within the public domain can be placed in the service of a socio-political cause. Rather than an examination of a case modality *per se*, here the theme is a case study 'in formation'. The issue of race is brought into the expert purview of psychoanalysis, and Bernard is involved in assisting the development of a highly topical and transformative case study narrative about black subjects for and within the African-American community. Through the figure of Bernard, Chapter 6 points to the challenges involved in publicly advocating case studies that have immediate, appreciable consequences for redefining a long-institutionalised 'norm' such as racial segregation. As such, the chapter sustains the approach taken in earlier ones, referencing an individual's pioneering case writing with an attunement to its radical implications.

Laura Doan has recently argued that, for the historian of modern sexuality, the ways 'in which the normal might be seen as jostling against ... existing discourses of morality and class-inflected notions of respectability' can represent a major challenge.⁴⁵ The analysis of the case study

genre presented in this volume contributes to a more multifaceted understanding of the formation of knowledge and the agency of case writers. The reinterpretation and circulation of knowledge undertaken by those foregrounded in the following chapters did not take the form of the case by chance. John Frow has argued that the work of genre ‘is to mediate between a social situation and the text which realizes certain features of this situation, or which responds strategically to its demands’.⁴⁶ Case studies exemplify a norm and are measured against other norms by their readers in varying professional, cultural and historical contexts. For this reason they are bound more tightly to their interpretative framework than other genres.⁴⁷ They can often be found at the forefront of knowledge formation, since they have the ability to poignantly epitomise deviation from a presumed norm. At the same time, they rely on a framework of interpretation, however exploratory; changing frameworks and immediate historical contexts, in turn, may gravely alter or compromise the given interpretation of a case study’s meaning. *A History of the Case Study* highlights this vital, generative aspect of the case study genre.

Notes

- 1 See Harry Oosterhuis, ‘Sexual Modernity in the Works of Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Albert Moll’, *Medical History*, 56 (2012), pp. 133–55; Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).
- 2 Joy Damousi, Birgit Lang and Katie Sutton (eds), *Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
- 3 See André Jolles, *Einfache Formen. Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1930), pp. 171–99.
- 4 On the ‘abductive’ nature of the case study see Charles S. Peirce, ‘Lectures on Pragmatism. Lecture VI. Three Types of Reasoning’, in Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (eds), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. V* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 151–79, p. 171.
- 5 Jolles, *Einfache Formen*, p. 185.
- 6 Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 7.
- 7 Lauren Berlant, ‘On the Case’, *Critical Inquiry*, 33:4 (2007), pp. 663–72, p. 664.
- 8 John Forrester, ‘If p, Then What? Thinking in Cases’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 9:3 (1996), pp. 1–25, pp. 11–12.
- 9 See for example Ivan Crozier, ‘Pillow Talk: Credibility, Trust and the Sexological Case History’, *History of Science*, 46:4 (2008), pp. 375–404; Klaus Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen sprach eine Stimme so laut: homosexuelle Autobiographien und medizinische Pathographien im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Rosa Winkel, 1991); Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebbing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- 10 Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, ‘Sex in Public’, *Critical Inquiry*, 24:2 (1998), pp. 547–66.
- 11 Geertje Mak, *Doubting Sex: Inscriptions, Bodies and Selves in Nineteenth-Century Hermaphrodite Case Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 63.
- 12 Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p. xi.

- 13 Stephen Robertson, 'What's Law Got To Do With It? Legal Records and Sexual Histories', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14:1/2 (2005), pp. 161–2.
- 14 Ludwik Fleck, 'Some Specific Features of the Medical Way of Thinking (1927)', in Robert S. Cohen and Thomas Schnelle (eds), *Cognition and Fact: Materials on Ludwik Fleck* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1986), pp. 39–46, p. 39.
- 15 Carol Berkenkotter, *Patient Tales: Case Histories and the Uses of Narrative in Psychiatry* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), pp. 29, 103.
- 16 Crozier, 'Pillow Talk', p. 380.
- 17 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 45.
- 18 Oosterhuis, 'Sexual Modernity', p. 133.
- 19 See, for example, Vernon A. Rosario, *The Erotic Imagination: French Histories of Perversities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 20 Kathryn Montgomery Hunter, *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 166.
- 21 Müller, *Aber in meinem Herzen*, pp. 327–8.
- 22 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 45.
- 23 The English translation of this passage is by the author of this chapter. The original German reads: 'Bis vor kurzer Zeit galt noch der Grundsatz, das Bild eines grossen Künstlers müsse der Nachwelt fleckenlos erhalten bleiben und die Biographen sahen ihre Hauptaufgabe darin, dunkle Punkte – oder was sie für dunkle Punkte hielten – aus dem Leben ihrer „Helden“ zu entfernen und das Bild in tadellosem Glanze der Nachwelt zu überliefern. So hätten wir fast statt einer Galerie grosser Menschen eine Walhalla mit unnahbaren Göttern erhalten, wenn nicht Aufzeichnungen des einen oder anderen Künstlers, ebenso wie seine Werke, uns von Zeit zu Zeit belehrt hätten, dass Genies, ob sie nun Erfinder, Philosophen, Religionsstifter, Dichter oder Künstler sind, auch nur Menschen mit allen Fehlern der Menschen sind. Was sie an Distanz eingebüsst haben, haben sie an Liebe und tieferem Verständnis gewonnen'. Wilhelm Stekel, *Die Träume der Dichter. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung der unbewussten Triebkräfte bei Dichtern, Neurotikern und Verbrechern (Bausteine zur Psychologie des Künstlers und des Kunstwerks)* (Wiesbaden: Bergmann, 1912), pp. 15–16. The standard English translation of Stekel's work omits this passage. See Wilhelm Stekel, 'Poetry and Neurosis: Contributions to the Psychology of the Artist and of Artistic Creative Ability', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 10 (1923), pp. 73–96, 190–208, 316–28, and the final instalment in *Psychoanalytic Review*, 11 (1924), pp. 48–60.
- 24 Frank J. Sulloway, 'Reassessing Freud's Case Histories. The Social Construction of Psychoanalysis', *Isis*, 82 (1991), pp. 245–75, p. 265.
- 25 Forrester, 'If p, Then What? Thinking in Cases', p. 10.
- 26 Joy Damousi, Birgit Lang and Katie Sutton, 'Introduction: Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge', in Damousi, Lang and Sutton (eds), *Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge*, pp. 1–12, p. 5.
- 27 Nathan G. Hale, *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States: Freud and the Americans, 1917–1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 246.
- 28 Hale, *The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 276–99.
- 29 See Heike Bauer, *English Literary Sexology: Translations of Inversion, 1860–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Anna Katharina Schaffner, *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- 30 See Janet Beizer, 'Emma's Daughter: Femininity, Maternity, and "Mothersickness" in *Madame Bovary*', in Suzanne Nash (ed.), *Home and Its Dislocations in Nineteenth-Century France* (Albany: New York Press, 1993), pp. 265–83, p. 266.
- 31 In the case of the Marquis de Sade, Krafft-Ebing seems especially dismissive. In the first edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis* he calls de Sade a monster, and refers to him merely for reasons of exhaustiveness, since de Sade is repeatedly quoted

- by French writers. See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis. Eine klinisch-forensische Studie*, 1st edition (Stuttgart: Enke, 1886), p. 44. By the fourth edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis* the original seven-line reference to de Sade has grown to two short paragraphs and an extensive footnote that gives a summary of the nobleman's life. Krafft-Ebing mentions de Sade's literary works only in passing, and describes them as 'obscene novels oozing wanton and cruelty', pointing to the fact that they were later burned. See Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 4th edition (Stuttgart: Enke, 1889), pp. 49–50.
- 32 Paul English, *Geschichte der erotischen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Püttmann, 1927), pp. 272–4.
- 33 Ernst Bloch as quoted in Georg Lukács, 'The Playful Style', in *Essays on Thomas Mann*, trans. Stanley Mitchell (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), pp. 98–134, p. 102.
- 34 Joe Cleary, 'Realism after Modernism and the Literary World-System', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 73:3 (2012), pp. 255–68, p. 261.
- 35 Cleary, 'Realism after Modernism', p. 256.
- 36 Cleary, 'Realism after Modernism', p. 256.
- 37 Cleary, 'Realism after Modernism', p. 256.
- 38 Cleary, 'Realism after Modernism', p. 257.
- 39 Ottmar Ette, 'Vorwort', in Ottmar Ette (ed.), *Wissensformen und Wissensnormen des ZusammenLebens: Literatur – Kultur – Geschichte – Medien* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), pp. i–vii, p. vi.
- 40 Bernhard J. Dotzler, 'Wissen in Geschichten: Zur wechselseitigen Erhellung von Literatur, Medien und Wissenschaft', *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 32:4 (2009), pp. 319–28, p. 319.
- 41 Dotzler, 'Wissen in Geschichten', p. 319.
- 42 Dotzler, 'Wissen in Geschichten', p. 319.
- 43 Ole Jacob Madsen, "'I am a philosopher of the particular case": An Interview with the 2009 Holberg Prizewinner Ian Hacking', *History of the Human Sciences*, 26:3 (2013), pp. 32–51, p. 39; Ian Hacking, 'Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-Face Interaction', *Economy and Society*, 33:3 (2004), pp. 277–302, p. 279.
- 44 Sigmund Freud, 'Ratschläge für den Arzt bei der psychoanalytischen Behandlung (1912)', in Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke, chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud, in collaboration with M. Bonaparte, E. Bibring, W. Hoffer, E. Kris and O. Isakower, vol. VIII (London: Imago, 1991), pp. 376–87, pp. 379–80; Sigmund Freud, 'Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, with Anna Freud, Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, vol. XII (London: Hogarth Press and Institute for Psychoanalysis, 1964), pp. 109–20, p. 113.
- 45 Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 188.
- 46 John Frow, *Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 14.
- 47 Jolles, *Einfache Formen*, p. 179.