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# Deranged doctors and panicked patients: the doctor-patient relationship in fin de siècle literature

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## Description

**Title:** Deranged doctors and panicked patients: the doctor-patient relationship in fin de siècle literature

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[Arthur Schnitzler](#)

**Abstract:** This project explores literary representations of the doctor-patient relationship around 1900. Research in the English context has focused on the binary construction of Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde to reveal fragmented protagonists and polyphony as a strategy to mark this conflict. I draw on this research to examine medical narratives in German and Scandinavian literary texts. I focus on the following three areas: 1) the doctor-patient relationship around 1900, 2) the social tensions between doctor and patient due to economics, class, media, politics and, most importantly, gender, 3) the narrative structure of voice. Close readings with particular attention to these three areas indicate the breakdown in the doctor-patient relationship. This conflicting relationship involves the doctor's act of writing as a way to introspectively view the self. This writing creates a subjective look at both himself and his patient. The doctor's voice, polyphony, and meta-discourse on writing offer other perspectives to explore not only the main protagonist in modernism, but also the literary doctor-patient relationship at 1900. Each chapter concentrates on texts from the German and Scandinavian tradition: Hjalmar Söderberg's *Doktor Glas* (1905), Arthur Schnitzler's *Flucht in die Finsternis* (*Flight into Darkness* written 1917), Franz Kafka's "Ein Landarzt" ("A Country Doctor" written 1916-17), and Amalie Skram's *Professor Hieronimus and På St. Jørgen* (published together as *Under Observation* 1895).

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