

CfP: *Sexuality, Eroticism, and Gender in Austrian Literature and Culture*
Annual Conference of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association,
April 13-15, 2007, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

In the early 20th century, the metropolis of Vienna was a major hub of artistic and cultural activity in Central Europe, where also a diversity of influential discourses on sexuality and gender contended and flourished. This is evident in the portrayal of problematic sexual relationships in fin-de-siècle literature, e.g. in the works of Arthur Schnitzler and Peter Altenberg, Karl Kraus's *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* or Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter*, in the beginnings of academic sexology (Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Salomon Krauss, and others), in the activities of Rosa Mayreder and the early women's movement, in the eroticism of the art works of Gustav Klimt, and Egon Schiele, or in Alfred Kubin's grotesque fusion of *eros* and *thanatos* in his early graphic pieces, and last but not least in the popular novel of the time (*Josefine Mutzenbacher*; Hugo Bettauer). Early stages of this interest in sexuality as a literary topic are already noticeable in the second half of the 19th century – for example in the works of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch or Hans Makart – as they were anteceded by the erotic culture of Josephinism in the late 18th century.

However, the themes of sexuality, eroticism, and gender resurface in the literature and culture of the Second Republic: e.g. in the “happenings” of Viennese *Aktionismus*, the *OrgienMysterienTheater* of Hermann Nitsch, and the video works of Valie Export, in the feminist discourse in Austrian literature from Ingeborg Bachmann to Marlen Haushofer, Elisabeth Reichardt, and Elfriede Jelinek, in the beginnings of an autobiographically based queer writing (e.g. Josef Winkler), in the *Fäkaliendramen* of Werner Schwab, and in Austrian film (by Franz Novotny, Michael Haneke, Ulrich Seidl, and others).

The planned conference intends to offer a varied selection and analysis of the themes and problems of sexuality, eroticism, and gender in Austrian literature and culture, providing a view of cross-currents and interconnecting traditions. Interdisciplinary approaches to literature as well as submissions from colleagues in related fields – such as (Art) History; Philosophy; Media, Theatre, Film and Cultural Studies; Sociology; etc. – are welcome. Possible questions could be:

- o How are sexuality and gender depicted in Austrian literature, theatre, film, and the arts? What is the *Stellenwert* of the eroticized/ gendered body in the genres mentioned?
- o What is the position/ function of eroticism within Austrian literature/culture at a given period of time?
- o How are the 3 title categories of our conference used as metaphors/ allegories for Austrian society, culture, and identity?
- o What are the relations between academic, medical, legal, and philosophical discourses on sexuality and eroticism in literature/the arts/culture/society?
- o What is the relation between heterosexuality, alternative sexualities, or other "taboo categories" in literature, arts, and culture? How do sexual subcultures affect mainstream culture and majority norms?
- o How have these categories been politicized or used in political rhetoric?
- o What is the issue/position of pornography in Austrian society? What is the relation between literature/arts and pornography in Austria? Or between eroticism and pornography?
- o Why (and how) has Austria developed a special “culture of the scandal” which makes a certain use of sexuality/eroticism as a provocation (e.g. on stage, in film scandals etc.)?

Please send a 400-500 word abstract and a one-paragraph bio to: malca2007@gmail.com

Conference languages will be English and German. Proposal deadline: October 30, 2006

On behalf of the organizing committee: C. Ruthner, U of A. More info: www.malca.org or www.mlcs.ca