

GENDER AND MODERNITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its Legacy

University of Ottawa

Date: May 16-18, 2008.

Location: Univ. of Ottawa.

Please send individual abstracts
(max. 500 words) and suggestions
for panels to both conference

organizers:

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Deadline for receiving the abstracts
and panel proposals:
September 15, 2007.

Since the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's dissolution in 1918, its memory and legacy have been, by turns, suppressed, contested, and continuously re-evaluated in the countries emerging in its wake. The fall of Communism in 1989, followed by the gradual integration of the region into the European Union has prompted a resurgence of interest in the Monarchy's impact on the political, social, and cultural fabric of the countries of Central and East-Central Europe. It has also led to the rediscovery – and in many cases restoration – of its rich heritage of urban and cultural modernization and the rebuilding of the once-existing ties between institutions, communities and individuals across borders, a process sometimes coloured by nostalgia or tainted by resurgent nationalisms and political considerations.

This conference aims to make a contribution to the field of Habsburg studies by exploring the complex connections between modernity and gender while also raising awareness of the field's importance in Canada.

One of the focal points of fin-de-siècle modernist debates in Austria-Hungary concerned gender, the re-shaping and re-configuring of sexual roles and identities, of femininities and masculinities. These debates, often linked to discussions of cultural crisis and decadence, reveal the anxieties and identity crises inherent in a multi-ethnic empire operating in a web of many centres and peripheries. Modified by a succession of conservative, liberal, radical right-wing, and Communist ideologies and regimes that ruled the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy during the rest of their turbulent 20th-century history, these notions have taken on a new dimension in the post-Communist period, and continue to impact gender roles and identities and the cultural symbolisms associated with them.

The conference seeks to bring together scholars who explore the history and continuities of these debates on gender and modernity in Central and East-Central Europe. We invite scholars from a wide range of fields and approaches, from those working in social and gender history to historians of literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the visual and performing arts. We especially welcome interdisciplinary approaches and contributions exploring the transnational and trans-border networks of Austria-Hungary, both during and after the Monarchy's historical existence, as well as contributions focusing on the Monarchy's Southern and Eastern border areas. By casting a geographically and methodically wide net, we hope to emerge with a better understanding of notions of gender and modernity spawned in Austria-Hungary and their lasting impact and resilience into the 21st century, thereby contributing to a clearer definition of the Monarchy's social and cultural impact.

The conference will take place at the University of Ottawa between May 16-18, 2008. It is co-sponsored by the *Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies*, University of Alberta. The conference organizers will also apply for a conference grant to the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*. While we may be able to contribute to participants' travel costs, we still encourage them to seek funding from their home institutions. The conference languages will be English and French. We invite suggestions for individual presentations as well as panels of three presentations.