

Helga Schreckenberger  
University of Vermont  
[hschreck@uvm.edu](mailto:hschreck@uvm.edu)

Re-writing the Fin-de-Siècle: The Forgotten Vienna of Lilian Faschinger's *Wiener Passion* (1999)

My paper will analyze Faschinger's portrayal of life in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna by focusing on her choice of narrative voice and her choice of the historical facts and locations that are integrated into her narrative. By letting her protagonist, the Bohemian servant Rosa Hawelka, tell her own story through her memoir, Faschinger gives a member of a marginalized, oppressed group a voice and brings a forgotten existence to life. In addition, by integrating historical information about the "other," the hidden reality of the Vienna around 1900, Faschinger breaks with the monolithic and culturally elitist discourse about the Viennese Fin-de-Siècle which has recently been criticized by social theorists, Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner whose groundbreaking work *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt: Das andere Wien um 1900* serves as the theoretical starting point for this paper.

In this study, Maderthaner und Musner point to the existence of a different turn-of-the century-Vienna, the Vienna of the suburbs, of the lower socio-economic classes which consisted mainly of recent immigrant workers in search of a better life. This "other" Vienna, so Maderthaner and Musner, has been excluded from the cultural and historical discourse because it defied the neat symbolic representation of the city of the bourgeois culture. Lilian Faschinger's fictional character Rosa Havelka is a literary representative of exactly this „other Vienna“. Her experiences in this city reflect Maderthaner and Musner's paradigm of power and powerlessness, of indifference and suffering, and of emerging consciousness. As a Bohemian servant Rosa Havelka represents one of the many female migrant workers who made up the majority of the servants working in private households at the turn-of-the century. (Vgl. Maderthaner/Musner, 42) Like in her other works, Faschinger's main concern is for the precarious situation of women in a society that drives on their oppression. However, by embedding Rosa Hawelka's story within the historical, social and cultural context of what Maderthaner and Musner term "the other Vienna, Faschinger gives an individual story a broader meaning. *Wiener Passion* pays tribute not only to one marginalized life but to that of an entire social group whose contribution to the social and cultural development of Vienna has so far been excluded from the public discourse.