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The Pregnant Body: Biography, Gender and Embodiment in the Plays of Friedrich Hebbel

Jahrestagung 2019 „Contrast and Complementary Figures for Portraiture and Biography“
Vortrag Dienstag, 2. Juli, 17.00 Uhr

Abstract

Despite technological innovations, still the female body is the beginning of every human biography. In my talk, I will examine this intersection of pregnancy, gendered life writing and embodiment in the play *Maria Magdalena* of 19th century German author Friedrich Hebbel. In his text the pregnancy of the not-married bourgeois woman Klara puts the female - and especially the pregnant - body in contrast to the male, public body. In the beginning of the play Klara's body and her pregnancy seem to be invisible on stage. Klara's suicide, however, places the female body in the center of the attention and offers therefore a different - more visible - perspective on the literary presentation of body, gender and biography.

