

From the Editor

2009 Max Kade Article Prize

Thanks to the continued generosity of the Max Kade Foundation, we recently awarded the annual prize for the best article in *Modern Austrian Literature*. Members of the journal's editorial board selected the 2009 prizewinner from among the fifteen articles that appeared in volume 41. The public announcement of the award occurred at this year's annual symposium of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association in Atlanta. Following a lovely meal for all conference participants on the patio of the historic Houston Mill House on the Emory University campus, I had the pleasure of presenting the \$1,500 2009 *Modern Austrian Literature* Kade Article Prize to Lorraine Markotic for her essay "Melancholy and Lost Desire in the Work of Marlen Haushofer." The article appeared in volume 41, number 1.

Lorraine Markotic holds an interdisciplinary position at the University of Calgary, Alberta. She is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Humanities and teaches in the Departments of Philosophy, English, and German, and in the Program of Comparative Literature. Professor Markotic's publications include articles on Lou Andreas-Solomé, Ingeborg Bachmann, Freud's *Dora*, Friedrich Nietzsche, and psychoanalytic theory and criticism. Her work has appeared in major journals in Canada, Europe, and the United States. Professor Markotic's current projects include a study of Nietzsche's ethics and an examination of the seductive aspects of Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser*.

In "Melancholy and Lost Desire in the Work of Marlen Haushofer," Markotic draws on concepts of melancholy as articulated by Freud and Kristeva as well as on Lacan's understanding of mourning and desire. She uses this work, in turn, to argue that Haushofer's texts present us with a concept of melancholy that is not the mourning for a specific—or even a vague—object, but for lost desire. Professor Markotic explores this dynamic in a number of Haushofer's works, including *Die Tapetentür* (1957), *Die Wand* (1963), and *Die Mansarde* (1969).

The members of the editorial board had many words of praise for the theoretical sophistication and intricate textual analysis contained in the prizewinning article. I include here a sample of their comments:

This is a well-argued piece that illuminates Haushofer's work in a highly original way. What is more, theory and literature are brought into dialogue, with the fictional texts used retroactively to modify the theories that are initially adduced to account for them. The conclusion, in which the author says something genuinely illuminating about the sources of the pleasure that is derived from reading melancholic texts, is both interesting and valuable.

The author really does cover a great deal of ground—both in mapping out the developments in how psychoanalytic theorists have understood melancholy and also in illustrating her theory on how melancholy is manifested in Haushofer. She argues very convincingly that Haushofer's writings also provide a new dimension to understanding melancholy as the mourning of lost desire.

First, Marlen Haushofer is a rather understudied author in relation to the quality of her work. Second, the seeming simplicity of Haushofer's prose seduces many interpreters into not approaching her work with the necessary theoretical depth. The essay at hand is a welcome exception to both the ignorance and the inaccurate attention paid to her work. This essay provides a viable and convincing explanation of the general sense of loss that one encounters across the different texts written by Marlen Haushofer, a loss that textual, socio-historical, and biographical approaches cannot account for sufficiently. The difficult body of theoretical work chosen by Markotic is in turn enlightened by the reading of the primary texts. The article is very well written, lucid, and complex.

You can read this year's prizewinning article in *Modern Austrian Literature* 41.1 or on the journal's website, where you will find Lorraine Markotic's essay along with the articles of the four previous Max Kade Article Prize winners.

The members of the editorial board and I extend our heartiest congratulations to Lorraine Markotic for her prizewinning work. We also hope that you will consider submitting your outstanding manuscripts to *Modern Austrian Literature* so that you may join the list of future Max Kade Article Prize recipients.

Craig Decker