

From the Editor

2010 Max Kade Article Prize

One of the more gratifying aspects of editing *Modern Austrian Literature* is the annual opportunity to reflect upon and recognize the outstanding scholarship that has appeared in the journal. Thanks to the continued generosity of the Max Kade Foundation, the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association recently awarded its 2010 Max Kade Prize for the best article in *Modern Austrian Literature*. The members of the journal's editorial board selected this year's winner from among the eighteen articles comprising volume 42 (2009). Selection criteria included the originality of the thesis, the clarity of the theoretical perspective, the author's ability to situate the argument within the field, the stylistic sophistication, and the wider applicability of the findings. While it is rarely easy to select only one article from among so many exceptional essays, this is the charge presented to the journal's editorial board.

The results of the editorial associates' deliberations were made public during this year's particularly lively symposium of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association in Vienna, Austria. At the symposium's *Empfang* at the *Heurigenrestaurant* Fuhrgassl-Huber—during which the symposium participants were treated to bountiful amounts of traditional Austrian cuisine and seemingly endless carafes of Austrian wine (and water)—I had the pleasure of announcing that Robert Lemon was selected to receive the \$1,500 2010 Max Kade Article Prize for his essay “Imperial Mystique and Empiricist Mysticism: Inner Colonialism and Exoticism in Musil's *Törleß*.”

Robert Lemon received his Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures from Harvard University in 2005 and is currently Assistant Professor of German at the University of Oklahoma. His publications include essays on ethnology and ethnocentrism in Kafka's “In der Strafkolonie,” China and Austria in Hofmannsthal's and Kafka's orientalist fictions, and the relevance of ancient history for Kafka. He is currently completing a book manuscript examining orientalism as self-critique in the Habsburg fin de siècle.

In “Imperial Mystique and Empiricist Mysticism: Inner Colonialism and Exoticism in Musil's *Törleß*,” Lemon begins his analysis of Musil's 1906 novel by considering the extent to which one can productively apply postcolonial theory to Habsburg studies. His exploration of various instances of “inner colonialism” in *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* exposes the paradoxes of Austro-German imperialism and demonstrates how Musil's text undermines notions of Austro-

German and Western European cultural supremacy. He concludes his article by considering how other works by Musil, Max Brod, and Hermann Broch reveal similar self-critical tendencies.

The members of the editorial board praised the theoretical complexity and far-reaching textual analysis evidenced in Lemon's article. Here is a representative sample of their comments:

This essay combines theoretical sophistication with considerable breadth and nuance. It possesses a well-structured argument and is very well written. The essay makes intelligent use of postcolonial theory and offers a convincing critique of several critical stereotypes. It is a subtle and thoughtful essay and a pleasure to read.

I found this essay very useful as a (fairly infrequent) example of scholarship that navigates issues of exoticism, orientalism, and generally the construction of otherness in a nuanced, perceptive way. By this I mean a mode of analysis that treats its "object" (in this case, Musil's *Törleß* and "Tonka") not as a document witnessing single-mindedly to the distorted fantasies that undergird the asymmetrical power dynamics of (hegemonic) self and (subaltern) other, but rather as a question mark and a potential challenge to prevalent assumptions regarding specific ideological paradigms (the depiction of Austro-German/Czech relations around 1900). I found the essay valuable for its evenhanded, open-minded analyses of texts and concomitant discussion of relevant historical and theoretical frameworks.

A marvelous essay using postcolonial theory in a novel way to promote a novel thesis, namely, that Austrian writers actually subvert the notion of German superiority in describing Czech (female)/Austrian (male) relations when they seem to underwrite it.

You can read this year's prizewinning article in *Modern Austrian Literature* 42.1 or on the journal's website, where you will find Robert Lemon's essay along with those of the five previous Max Kade Article Prize winners.

The members of the editorial board and I extend our heartiest congratulations to Robert Lemon for his prizewinning work. At the same time, we hope you will consider submitting your outstanding scholarship to *Modern Austrian Literature* so that you may be among the list of future prize recipients.

Craig Decker