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Utopian Visions of Madness in Austrian Literature

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Utopian Visions of Madness in Austrian Literature

Dr. Geoffrey C. Howes

Professor in German, Russian and East Asian Languages

In this lecture, Dr. Howes examines a persistent topos in Austrian literature, mental illness. Mental illness in Austrian literature is seen in the face of oppressive conditions and institutions as a rebellion against the limitations of social, political, familial, and gender roles. However isolating it may be, madness seems to inflict less suffering than conformity and it creates a space for freedom and individuality. This lecture examines how literary texts by the Austrian writers Arthur Schnitzler, Robert Musil, Ingeborg Bachmann, Thomas Bernhard, and others probe the utopian possibilities of madness and find their limits.

Geoffrey C. Howes, a professor in German, Russian and East Asian Languages, has taught at BGSU since 1986. His research specialization is Austrian literature and culture, and he has published over thirty articles on various Austrian authors and topics. He was co-editor of the journal *Modern Austrian Literature* from 2000-2005, and he has coordinated the Max Kade Writer-in-Residence program at BGSU. He has translated and published texts by a number of German-language authors into English. His ICS project is the culmination of many years of work exploring the representation of madness in Austrian literature.

Tuesday, February 12

2:30 pm

BTSU 315

Dr. Howes's lecture is part of the 2012-2013 ICS Faculty Fellows Lecture Series.
All events are free and open to the public. For more information call (419) 372-0585.