

The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society
and
The Wood County Public Library
present

“Mental Illness as Cultural Problem
with Examples from Modern Austrian Literature”

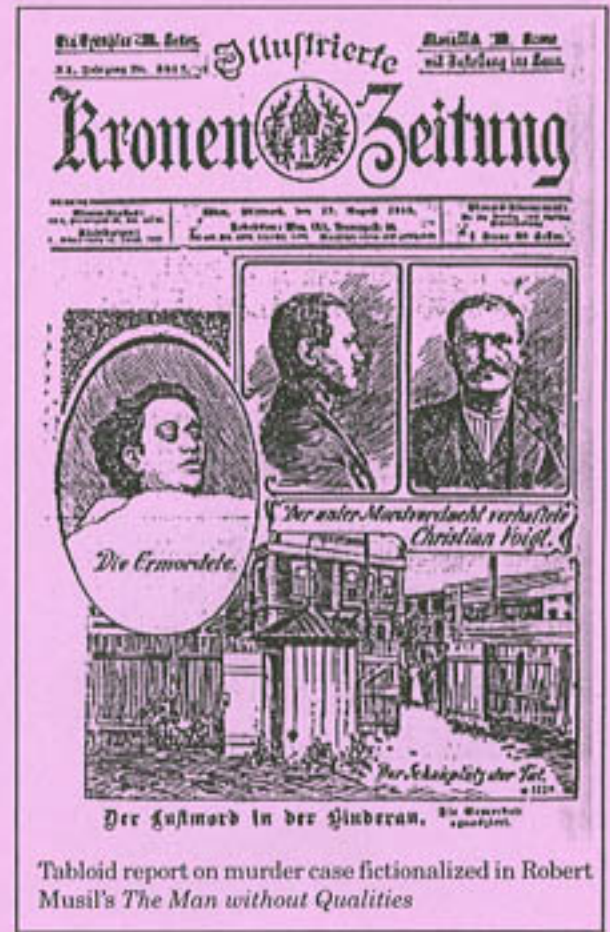
A Presentation by
Geoffrey C. Howes

Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages,
and Fellow, Institute for the Study of Culture and Society

What does it mean to say that mental illness is a cultural problem? People use words like “crazy,” “nuts,” “wacko,” “psycho,” “mad,” or “insane” without necessarily thinking about what they really mean. We keep our fear of mental illness at bay by using these words to make fun of behavior we think is odd. But we don’t usually think that these words also classify people who have been diagnosed with mental disorders. There is no middle ground between everyday facetious language and the professional, technical language of psychiatry. This failure of language reflects the failure of our culture to accommodate people with mental disorders as complete human beings with a right to dignity.

After a brief reflection on the language of mental illness, Professor Howes will read from several works of modern Austrian writing as examples of how literature can present the problem of mental illness without either belittling or pigeonholing characters who have mental disorders.

Bowling Green State University



Sunday,
November 16, 1997
Wood County
Public Library
2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Free and open to the public.
Refreshments will be provided.
Call 372-0585 for more information.