



Brown University Department of
German Studies

COLLOQUIUM

**The Magical Mechanical:
Automata and the Fantastic in
literature.**

**E.T.A. Hoffmann's Olympia and
Alfred de Musset's Blandine**

Friday

March 6, 2009

4:30pm

190 Hope Street, Library

ULRIKE KÜCHLER

Graduate Exchange student - Eberhard-Karls University Tübingen



"A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature" – Already in early 19th century literature, Enlightenment philosophy's hypothesis of an incommensurability of nature's causality and events that violate it, faces a narrative synthesization. The underlying literary process reveals the interdependencies between the magical and mechanical and comes to effect in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (1817) and Alfred de Musset's *Les Amours du Petit Job et de la Belle Blandine* (1842). The presentation explores the tangents of the magical and the mechanical in the narratives. It is indicated that both concepts do not operate as oppositions, but, what first seems to be an oxymoron, the magical mechanical, turns out to especially allow for the Fantastic in literature.