

Call for Papers

The Surplus of Culture: Sense, Common-Sense, Non-Sense

September 16th-20th, 2009

Ustroń, Poland

http://www.fil.us.edu.pl/ibacl/pl_konferencje.php

This conference is designed as a forum for interdisciplinary dialogue on the cultural and literary aspects of Sense (and meaning, as in philosophy), Common-Sense (and everyday life or the quotidian or just ordinary) and Non-Sense (as in the discourse on the absurd, meaningless, the comical, the funny, etc). Culture and literature have always been most inspiring sites to address the idea of the sens-ical or the sens-u-ous, the common-sens-ical (ambiguous as the word "sense" can be) and the non-sensical which, from medieval times or the Renaissance to the present, have been ubiquitous in discourse. The conference debates will circle round but will not be limited to the following questions: What knowledge is necessary for the reader to bring to the text to understand its sense/meaning? In what ways may the meaning of the text be regarded as stable (unstable)? What are full evaluative arguments that assess the works of art, in a broad sense: formal, literary, moral, aesthetic, etc? What is the sense of the work of art as opposed to or concurrent with its meaning? What is the unique sense of the work of art if at all? What is the source of sense?

The (non)sensical will address topsy-turvyness, absurdity, theories of humor, humor and cultural differences, humor and art of translation, riddles, children's humor, multivalence, word games in literature, the grotesque, parody, satire, the carnivalesque, the effect of nonsense caused by an excess of meaning, etc. What are the forms of nonsense writing in various genres or types of literature such as romantic verse, travel writing, short story, lyric poetry, natural history, journalism, to name a few? Is nonsense funny because it does not make sense, or because of various techniques and devices that are employed in this type of writing? What is the absurd, the nonsensical and the exaggerated? Why are philosophers and linguists fascinated with nonsense?

Common sense is often juxtaposed with reasoning and rationality; the commonsensical and the rational are defined as "two distinctive features of the common cognitive architecture" (Renee Elio). As Barry Smith puts it, "Common sense is on the one hand a certain set of processes of natural cognition - of speaking, reasoning, seeing, and so on. On the other hand, common sense is a system of beliefs or the world of objects to which the processes of natural cognition and the corresponding belief-contents standardly relate". For the Catholic apologist, John Henry Newman, in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, common sense is vital to the Illative Sense, "the power of judging and concluding, when in its perfection."

The conference debates will address all of the aforementioned issues and many others to inquire into the sense/common-sense (or non-sense) of contemporary literary and cultural studies, whether European, American, Afro-American, Asian, Asian-American, Australian, Caribbean, New Zealander and others, the presentation of which will be most welcome.

We invite a wide range of voices, historical, critical and theoretical papers that will address the above aspects (in a narrow or broad sense of the terms). The conference portions will be inaugurated by plenary lectures followed by papers no more than twenty minutes in length to be presented in concurrent sessions (each session featuring three papers).

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Please forward 300-word abstracts, including title, professional affiliation, addresses (especially e-mail), phone number, and audio-video requirements by **April 15, 2009**. Electronic submissions are highly encouraged. Papers should be delivered in English.

Send proposals as a MS Word attachment to: **surplus.conference2009@gmail.com**