3rd Annual Marginalised Mainstream Conference

DISGUISE

28–29 November 2014 Senate House, University of London

Keynote speakers:
Dr Bronwen Thomas (Bournemouth University)
Dr Naomi Braithwaite (Nottingham Trent University)

In 2014, the 3rd annual Marginalised Mainstream conference will consider the varieties, motivations, and meanings of disguise. From secret identities to theatrical performances, from fictional fabrications to factual concealment, disguises of all sorts are part of mainstream culture. This event will explore various manifestations of disguise in popular fiction, media, and culture that have previously been academically marginalised.

Fictional instances of disguise range from Scooby-Doo to Superman, and have a long history in theatre, novels, and film. Factual disguise can also impact mainstream media, whether it be the subtle advancement of a concealed agenda in gay fiction of the 1960s, the academic impact of the Sokal hoax in the 1990s, or J. K. Rowling’s recent attempt to publish pseudonymously. Textual disguises, such as that of the murderer of Roger Ackroyd or the identity of Keyser Söze, retain the power to shock.

The motif of disguise appears in fiction and film, in real life and virtual reality. The prevalence of such masking and unmasking poses pressing questions for popular culture: when does disguise reveal as well as conceal? How do marginalised genres or media subtly alter mainstream opinions, while masquerading as mere amusement? How do changing fashions, in clothes, in texts, or in tastes, affect the ability to create disguises? Is critical marginalization an attempt to ‘disguise’ the value of the mainstream?

This year’s conference seeks new perspectives on the operation and meanings of such masking and unmasking in fiction, media, performance, other cultural productions.

We invite abstracts focusing on literature, cultural studies, art history, film studies or other disciplines. Subjects could include, but are far from limited to:

- Fictional secret identities (spies, superheroes, criminals)
- Role-playing games or narratives
- Theatricality
- Pseudonyms
- Forgery
- Parody
- Re-purposing genres
- Genre-crossing
- Undercover agendas
- Subversion of narrative expectations
- Deceptive focalization
- Dramatic irony

It goes without saying that writers, texts or topics need not be canonical. In addition, we actively encourage papers discussing writers, texts and visual media that engage with mainstream cultures from around the world.

Panels will follow the format of three 20-minute papers followed by questions.

Please send abstracts of no more than 350 words by Friday 30 May 2014. Please email abstracts and a cover sheet including your name, university, contact information, plus a brief biographical paragraph about your academic interests or any enquiries to:

hello@marginalisedmainstream.com

If you are applying for a visa or funding and need a response sooner than 1 July, please submit your abstract by 2 May, and note your early notification needs in your submission.

Organisers: Brittain Bright, Emma Grundy Haigh and Sam Goodman
Website: www.marginalisedmainstream.com