

THE 11th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ISSEI
International Society for the Study of European Ideas
in cooperation with
University of Helsinki, Language Centre

28 July – 2 August 2008

Language and the Scientific Imagination

It is rare nowadays to see any fruitful dialogue between the Humanities and Science. In the first half of the twentieth century philosophers like Russell and Whitehead, following the Kantian tradition, were the main interlocutors in the debate about modern science. By the end of the twentieth century, under the influence of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, the dialogue of philosophy had switched from science to literature. This dialogue within the humanities eventually issued in Cultural Studies. What is needed is a new approach of the Humanities to Science and Technology. The "two cultures" depend on each other, for human beings give sense to their lives both by doing (Science) and by telling stories (Language).

The 11th conference of ISSEI, to be held at the University of Helsinki in 2008, invites scholars from various disciplines such as History, Politics, Literature, Art, Philosophy, Science, and Religion, to examine and redefine the scope of interdisciplinary dialogue.

The conference is divided into five sections:

- 1) History, Geography, Science**
- 2) Economics, Politics, Law**
- 3) Education, Women's Studies, Sociology**
- 4) Art, Theater, Literature, Culture, Music**
- 5) Language, Philosophy, Anthropology, Psychology, Religion**

29 July 2008

Futurism and the Technological Imagination

Co-Chairs:

Marja Härmänmaa, Senior Lecturer of Italian, University of Helsinki

Günter Berghaus, Senior Research Fellow, University of Bristol

The development of technology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries changed the ways in which reality was perceived and thus led to the birth of different kinds of artistic movements that tried to interpret the essence of the new and rapidly changing world. Some of the most remarkable examples of the scientific imagination in arts and literature were offered by the Futurist movement, founded in 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. From Italy it quickly spread into different parts of the world, where it had such profound and manifold repercussions that Renato Poggioli spoke of a "futurist moment" as a characterizing feature of this period.

The desire to renovate the form and content of arts and literature, in order to make them suitable vehicles of expression in the new era of the machine, led to a glorification of technology and made this a common and salient feature of Futurism.

This session of ISSEI 2008 deals with Futurist movements in different countries and examines their relationship to technology both on an ideological level and with regard to their artistic languages. The papers address topics such as:

- Technology and literature
- Technology and the visual arts
- Technology and theatre
- Technology and music
- "Multiplied man" and the aesthetics of the machine
- Futurism and life in the modern metropolis

Speakers:

1. Dr. Serge Milan, Université de Nice, "Futurism and the New Human Sensibility"
2. Prof. Roger Griffin, Oxford Brookes University, "The Multiplication of Man: Futurism's Modernist Quest for Transcendence through Technology"
3. Prof. Emilio Gentile, Università "La Sapienza" di Roma, "Mario Morasso and technology"
4. Prof. Matteo D'Ambrosio, Università di Napoli Federico II, "From Futurism to Electronic Literature, through the neo-Avant-Gardes"
5. Ms. Jessica Palmieri, Pratt Institute, NY, USA, "Marinetti, Marionettes, and the Machine Age"
6. Ms. Vera Castiglione, University of Bristol, "Belgian Futurism and the technological epic"
7. Dr. Pierpaolo Antonello, University of Cambridge, "Bruno Munari and Futurism"
8. Prof. Natalia Baschmakoff, University of Joensuu, Finland, "Organicism vs Technicism in Early Russian Futurism"
9. Dr. Günter Berghaus, University of Bristol, "Innovation on the Futurist Stage: From Mechanical to Electronic Theatre"
10. Dr. Marja Härmänmaa, University of Helsinki, "The Futurist Naturalist Movement"