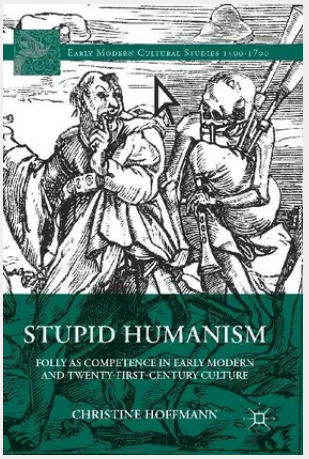
Hoffmann

Stupid Humanism

Folly as Competence in Early Modern and Twenty-First-Century Culture

This book frames the undeniably copious 21st-century performances of stupidity that occur within social media as echoes of rhetorical experiments conducted by humanist writers of the Renaissance. Any historical overview of humanism will associate it with *copia* —abundance of expression—and the rhetorical practices essential to managing it. This book argues that stupidity was and is a synonym for *copia* , making the humanism of which *copia* is a central element an inherently stupid philosophy. A transhistorical exploration of stupidity demonstrates that not only is excess still the surest way to eloquence, but it is also just the kind of spammy, speculative undertaking to generate a more generous and inventive comprehension of human and nonhuman relationships. In chapters exploring the rhetorics of memes, attack ads, public shaming blogs, clickbait and gifs, *Stupid Humanism* outlines the possibilities for a humanism less invested in the normative logics that enshrine knowledge, eloquence and linear development as the chief indicators of an active, articulated selfhood and more supportive of a program for queer knowledge, trivial pursuits, anti-social ethics and the curious relationships that form around and in response to abundance of expression.

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