

MEARC seminar:

'Overcoming Modernity': The Contradictions of Representing Japan.

Richard Calichman (CUNY)

With commentary by Sue Townsend (Nottingham)

Tuesday, 21st November 2006 – 15.00-17.00 (Lipsius, 148)

Abstract:

This presentation will focus on the infamous wartime symposium on "Overcoming Modernity." This symposium, held in 1942, brought together some of the leading figures in Japan in the fields of thought, the arts and science. Calichman reads the text of the symposium with particular attention to its notion of Japanese subjective identity. This identity is depicted as, in some sense, lost as the result of Japanese modernization; hence it is the task of "Overcoming Modernity" to restore this sense of identity. This presentation underlines some of the inconsistencies or contradictions inherent in this conception, which Calichman believes are related to the notion of representation.

Richard F. Calichman is Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the City College of New York, CUNY.

Calichman's PhD dissertation (Cornell, 2000: modern Japanese literature with premodern Japanese literature and modern Japanese history)

focused on the writings of the postwar Japanese Sinologist and thinker Takeuchi Yoshimi. His current research interests include modern Japanese literature and film, modern Chinese literature, philosophy and literary theory.

Recent, major publications include: *Takeuchi Yoshimi: Displacing the West* (2004); *What is Modernity: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi* (ed. and trans. 2005); *Contemporary Japanese Thought* (ed. 2005)

Sue Townsend is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Nottingham University.

Townsend's interests are in the intellectual/philosophical history of Japan 1868-1945; problems of war and memory in contemporary Japan; intersections between psychology and history.

Major publications include: *Yanaihara Tadao and Japanese Colonial Policy: Redeeming Empire* (2000) *Politics and Personality in Japan: Miki Kiyoshi's 'wanderings through the world of books' 1897-1945* (forthcoming)



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This Modern East Asia Research Centre Seminar will be held in Lipsius, 148.

Registration is recommended but not essential: info@mearc.eu

Further details are on our website: www.mearc.eu



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