

MEARC seminar:

Dialogue and Appropriation: The Cross-Cultural Significance of the Kyoto School

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With commentary by Prof. Graham Parkes (University of Hawai'i)

Tuesday, 17th October 2006 - 15.00-17.00 (Lipsius, 148)

Abstract:

The modern Japanese philosophers known as the Kyoto School pioneered a bilateral philosophical dialogue between Eastern and Western cultures. In this paper I reflect on several hermeneutical as well as ethical and political issues central to the Kyoto School's cross-cultural philosophy. In particular, I focus on the tension between cultural appropriation and creative synthesis on the one hand, and dialogue and respect for irreducible cultural differences on the other. After an introductory section, I raise the question of whether and to what extent the cultural appropriation found in modern Japan can be compared with that found in ancient Greece. Next, I discuss

Karl Löwith's criticism of modern Japanese intellectuals for purportedly failing to "critically appropriate" Western thought, a failure he starkly contrasts with the Greco-European tradition of "making what is other one's own." I offer two critical responses to Löwith. First, he failed to take account of the Kyoto School and their significant attempts to navigate through the pendulum swing between deferential Eurocentrism and reactionary Japanism. Second, from the Kyoto School I glean both a critique of willful self-centered appropriation and intimations of a philosophy of cross-cultural dialogue, wherein cultural differences would neither be obliterated nor reified.



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

Registration is advised (but not essential):
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Further details are on our website:
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