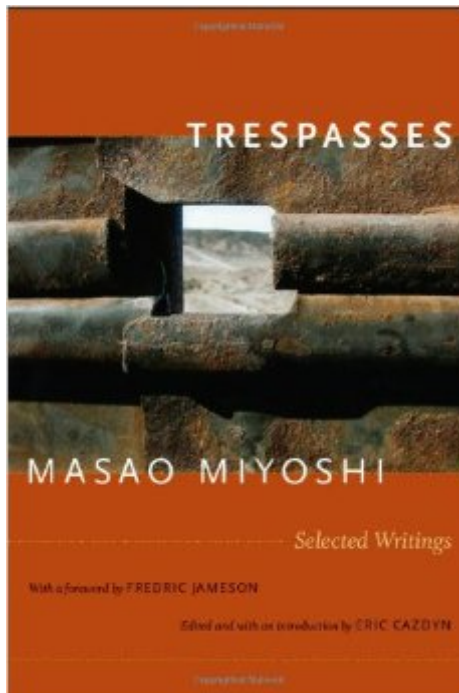


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Trespasses: Selected Writings (Post-Contemporary Interventions)



Synopsis

Trespases presents key writings of the Tokyo-born literary scholar Masao Miyoshi, one of the most important postwar intellectuals to link culture with politics and a remarkable critical voice within the academy. For more than four decades, Miyoshi worked outside the mainstream, trespassing into new fields, making previously unseen connections, and upending naive assumptions. With an impeccable sense of when a topic or discussion had lost its critical momentum, he moved on to the next question, and then the next after that, taking on matters of literary form, cross-cultural relations, globalization, art and architecture, the corporatization of the university, and the threat of ecological disaster. Trespases reveals the tremendous range of Miyoshi's thought and interests, shows how his thinking transformed over time, and highlights his recurring concerns. This volume brings together eleven selections of Miyoshi's previously published writing, a major new essay, a critical introduction to his life and work, and an interview in which Miyoshi reflects on the trajectory of his thought and the institutional history of modern Japan studies. In the new essay, "Literary Elaborations," he provides a masterful overview of the nature of the contemporary university, closing with a call for a global environmental protection studies that would radically reconfigure academic disciplines and merge the hard sciences with the humanities and the social sciences. In the other, chronologically arranged selections, Miyoshi addresses cross-culture relations between Japan and the United States, English literary studies in Japan, and Japan studies in the U.S., as well as the organization of urban space and the integrity of art and architecture in aggressively marketed-oriented environments. Trespases is an invaluable introduction to the work of a fearless cultural critic.

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Customer Reviews

Masao Miyoshi's ideas are always beyond his time by at least a couple of decades. A personal friend and contemporary of such figures as Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Frederic Jameson, and David Harvey, Masao's ideas are no less powerful than these intellectuals. Masao Miyoshi has a cogent grasp of the major issues of the time and he spares no one for their irrelevance/inadequacy in his hilarious critiques. He mocked his close colleagues at UC San Diego's Department of Literature, vividly characterizing them--if I could remember correctly--as 'a bunch of boring PCs'. Masao draws amazing links between the privatization of the university, extreme identity politics, de-facto intellectual relativism, academic careerism and opportunism, the works of Levi-Strauss and Foucault, global warming and environmental crisis, political division of the left, the rise of area and cultural studies, the erasure of gold standards, postmodern art exhibits, etc. etc. etc.--and put these modern developments in a humorous yet rigorous historical perspective. He advocates not fragmentary solutions to these problems but a wholesale, unified overturn of culture, institutions, and materialistic way of life. What readers will enjoy about this book is that it is fascinatingly empirical: you will find the best facts used in the most creative ways to either uncover or resolve contradictions. He possesses a great gift in displaying global contradictions from personal experience in the academy. A number of pieces have been published elsewhere before, but they tend to be very dispersed. This book weaves together many pieces he wrote during his lifetime, and it includes one piece, "Literary Elaborations," that was previously unpublished. Although I have been following his works for a number of years, it is not until I read this book that I started to understand what/who Masao Miyoshi was. I highly recommend this book for anyone who cares about the world and wants to make a coherent sense of it.

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