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Bill Schlotter

UCSB Conference to Probe Religious Thinking of Jacques Derrida

Best known as a literary theorist and as the father of deconstruction, philosopher Jacques Derrida also has devoted much of his career to the contemplation of religion.

A conference to examine Derrida's religious thinking -- "Irreconcilable Differences? Jacques Derrida and the Question of Religion" -- will bring an international field of scholars and Derrida himself to the University of California, Santa Barbara, Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 23-25.

One of the most influential contemporary philosophers, Derrida will attend conference panels and deliver the keynote address, "Vivre 'ensemble,' -- Living 'together'" at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 23 in UCSB's Campbell Hall.

Derrida's talk and the conference panels, held in the McCune Conference Room (Room 6020) of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building, are free and open to the public. For planning purposes, advance registration is requested and can be made by contacting the conference Web site, www.religion.ucsb.edu/projects/irreconciledifferences/main_page.htm.

Born in colonial French Algeria, Derrida first came to prominence in 1967 when the publication of three books -- "Speech and Phenomena," "Writing and Difference," and "Of Grammatology" -- cast him as a leading critic of Western metaphysics.

Since then, his work -- 45 books translated into more than 22 languages -- has influenced thinking in diverse academic disciplines around the world. His current academic positions are professor of philosophy at the École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales in Paris; distinguished professor of philosophy, French and comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine; visiting professor at New York University; and visiting professor at the New School University in New York.

Derrida has written extensively on religious difference and the significance such differences hold for peace and conflict in the modern world.

He has taken stands on world issues including South African apartheid, the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Algerian civil war, French immigration laws, the death penalty, and civil rights. His UCSB talk will cover the possibilities for togetherness, identity, violence, and forgiveness in our 21st century world.

Presenting their views on Derrida's religious thinking will be scholars from the United States, Canada, France, and the Netherlands. Topics to be discussed are "Differences -- Within and Without," "Forgiving -- the Neighbor, the Enemy," "Judging -- Extremes," and "Digital Mediations: Religion, Science, Technology." Discussions will touch on many world religions.

The conference -- the first to consider Derrida's religious thinking -- will begin at 2 p.m. Thursday (Oct. 23) with remarks by UCSB faculty organizers Thomas Carlson, an associate professor of religious studies, and Elisabeth Weber, a professor of Germanic, Slavic, and Semitic studies. A complete schedule appears on the conference Web site.

Related Links

[Derrida Conference Web Side](#)

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edge of the Pacific Ocean.