

Workshop: Humanities, Sciences and Arts (Berlin 23–25 Apr 10)

Antje Papist-Matsuo

Interdisciplinary Discourse

Call for papers

Workshop Master-Disciple Relationships in the Interdisciplinary Discourse

Part 2: Humanities, Sciences and Arts

23rd -25th April 2010

FU Berlin

Department of History and Cultural Studies

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The many different relationships between master and disciple constitute an influential and universal moment in human society. Even if the forms and characteristics of specific individual master-disciple relationships differ greatly according to period and region and the prestige accorded to them in the East and West, the relationships contain a high degree of culturally constitutive and integrating content over and beyond regional, cultural and historical variations. Here the transmission of knowledge and skills, traditions and competence plays a central role. In theoretical considerations of masters and teachers, the concept of the master is clearly distinct from that of the teacher. While the teacher's role is to educate and equip students with skills and knowledge, the master, on the other hand, is predominantly defined by the emotional bond he arouses in his disciples.

Indeed, although the figure of the master exerts a fascination over his disciples and attracts them to him in part by virtue of his knowledge and wisdom, the true force of his persona lies in much more ambiguous qualities, often characterised as spirituality and charisma.

To date there has been no interdisciplinary academic research on the theme of master-disciple relationships in time and space. For this reason the multiple workshop will explore the incidence of this relationship in societies and its theoretical considerations in widely different cultural, religious, historic and social contexts. Here the focus of the workshop will be on continuities, shifting and caesuras in the relationship from ancient times to the present day. Whereas a first workshop taking place in November 2009 will deal with masters and their disciples in the areas of religion and philosophy, the focus of this workshop will center on the various traditions in the humanities, social sciences and arts (for example fine art, architecture, theatre, music, film, martial arts), on (artisan) craftwork and on literature.

In all these areas, master figures and their disciples have had an influential role in shaping cultural developments. The rise of schools, traditions and epochs founded on a charismatic master-figure demonstrates not only how significant the teaching of this (secret) knowledge is, it can also throw light on the positions the disciples held in their respective societies and the importance their relationship to the master had for them in shaping their entire lives. In East Asian traditions especially, the custom of passing down knowledge underlies the student's often lifelong attempt at self-completion and self-perfection. Also to be considered are the mechanisms involved in forming master-disciple relationships. This will focus on the one hand on the master's criteria in selecting those followers chosen to receive his teaching, limiting the number of disciples who surround him. On the other hand, it will focus on the role the disciples play in solidifying the master's legitimacy. The societal ramifications of this reciprocal relationship are also to be examined in various cultural and historical contexts, as are the concepts of "charisma" and "spirituality", which are repeatedly used to characterize master figures. Another challenge for this workshop is to constitute a more pronounced formulation of the term "disciple" and its correspondence and differentiation with terms like "student", "follower" or "apprentice". The range of workshops is expressly addressed to young academics, in order to offer them a platform for discussions and to encourage them to exchange views and information on past and future research projects, methodical questions and possible interdisciplinary links. The workshop languages are German and English. Papers from all disciplines will be considered, not only from the social sciences and humanities, but also from the natural sciences. Scholars of ancient and modern history, philology, literary, cultural and religious studies, theatre, film and media studies, art history, philosophy and theology, sociology and political science, psychology and education are

welcome as well as colleagues from the natural sciences and (history of) medicine.

The papers should ideally fit in thematically with one of sections. Please e-mail your abstract (max. 500 words) along with a brief outline of your intentions concerning the theme, a CV (1-2 pages) and a list of publications, not forgetting your institutional affiliation, your full postal address, telephone number and e-mail address to:

MasterDisciple@geschkult.fu-berlin.de

The deadline for submitting abstracts is 20st December 2009.

We plan to publish a selection of the workshop papers. Manuscripts should be submitted before the middle of March 2010. More precise information on the detailed workshop programme will shortly be announced.

Reference:

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