



THE IRVINE SEMINARS IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MODERNITY

2007-2008 Series

Susan BUCK-MORSS

Professor, Department of Government, Cornell University

“Universal History at the Edge of Culture”

Thursday, February 21, 2008

3:30-5:00 PM

Room 4250, SSPB (Anthropology Library)

Co-sponsored by the Department of Anthropology, Center for Ethnography, and Critical Theory Institute

Anthropology, in its classic sense, “makes the strange familiar, and the familiar strange.” The analysis of modern society places the emphasis on the second half of the formula, bringing attention to the cultural facets of phenomena usually taken to be a-cultural or universal. Anthropology highlights the contingency of those cultural forms, points out their limitations, and suggests other possibilities. By recognizing as arbitrary the divisions between the economic, political, social, psychological, and cultural, anthropology stands to make major contributions to the social sciences and humanities as they continue to explore their already-profitable interdisciplinary connections. It is in this spirit that the Department of Anthropology at the University of California at Irvine conducts the Irvine Seminars in the Anthropology of Modernity. We invite internationally recognized scholars to present works-in-progress and to engage in wide-ranging, open discussions about their work, its place in the social sciences broadly conceived, and its role in helping us to understand modernity as a cultural phenomenon.

Susan Buck-Morss is Professor of Political Philosophy and Social Theory in the Department of Government, Cornell University, and member of the graduate fields of Comparative Literature, German Studies, History of Art and Visual Studies, and the School of Art, Architecture and City and Regional Planning. Her books include *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh University Press, 2008), *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (Verso, 2003); *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (MIT Press, 2000); *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (MIT Press, 1989); and *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School* (Free Press, 1977; 2nd ed., 2002).✻