

I find it interesting—and significant—that the concept/ term "critical appropriation" was already prominent in my thinking/ speaking in my essay, "Toward a New Theism" (1966). The very first sentence of this essay reads: "If anything is clear, it is that no religious tradition can long continue to be a vital source of faith and life unless it is critically appropriated in each new historical situation" (*Theology in Crisis: A Colloquium on the Credibility of "God"*: 3).

No less interesting—and significant—I find, is the evidence this same essay also provides of just how deeply rooted in my thinking/ speaking is my explicit polemic against treating the religious tradition as "a nose of wax, to be twisted and turned into whatever shape the exigencies of the present situation seem to demand." Thus the first sentences of the very next paragraph read: "Yet no less evident is that any such theological criticism has its bounds. What makes any religious tradition a tradition is that it has an essential meaning or motif which can be criticized as inessential only by abandoning rather than appropriating the tradition itself" (3 f.).

8 February 2009