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Sommario/riassunto	America's preeminent intellectual historian of modern Japan inaugurates a challenging debate on the arbitrary cultural divisions of our world, and in the process sheds light on the troubling academic enterprise called ""area studies."" This is one of the first works to explore on equal footing the European and Japanese conceptions of modernity -- as imagined in the writings of Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin, as well as ethnologist Yanagita Kunio and Marxist philosopher Tosaka Jun.