

Anne Chang

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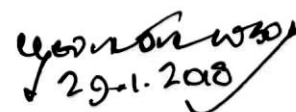
French Orientalism

Are Indology and Sinology to be considered as the epitome of the "orientalistic" approach to India and China which has prevailed in Europe (and more specifically in France) ever since the Enlightenment period? This question has been raised again and again, and is still central in contemporary critical re-examinations of the validity of "Oriental" studies as they are being practiced in academic circles throughout the world even now. The present lecture will attempt to trace the origins and constitution of Indian and Chinese studies as specific disciplines in the new institutional context of modern European universities starting from the 19th century. As we shall see, this process of "invention" was concomitant with, and contraposed to, the constitution of professional philosophy as a distinctive academic field which has everything to do with the construction of a European identity, rejecting "the Orient" into a convenient, non-philosophical, "otherness". Two centuries later, in our present day and age, such constructions still persist, not only in our academic institutions, but also in our intellectual representations which therefore need to be re-examined in a critical historical light.

Anne Cheng holds the Chair of Chinese Intellectual History at the Collège de France in Paris. She was trained in European and Chinese intellectual history at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, at Oxford and Cambridge in Great Britain, and at Fudan University in Shanghai. After an academic career as a research fellow at CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research), then as a Professor at INALCO (National Institute for Oriental languages and Civilizations), she was elected to the Collège de France in 2008.

Her main publications include a complete French translation of the Confucian *Analects*, a *Study of Han Confucianism* and a *History of Chinese thought* which has won several awards and has been translated into numerous languages. She has also authored a great number of articles and chief-edited several collective volumes on Chinese philosophy and Chinese thought, past and present. Since 2010, she has been directing a bilingual series of works written in classical Chinese and translated into French at Belles Lettres in Paris.

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