

EUN-JEUNG LEE, "Anti-Europa". *Die Geschichte der Rezeption des Konfuzianismus und der konfuzianischen Gesellschaft seit der frühen Aufklärung. Eine ideengeschichtliche Untersuchung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Entwicklung.* (Politica et Ars 6). Münster / Hamburg / London: Lit Verlag, 2003. xiii, 699 pages, € 55.90. ISBN 3-8258-6206-2

This monumental book sports one of the longest titles ever to adorn a German *Habilitationsschrift*. What the title leads us to expect is a topical study on German views of Confucianism since the late seventeenth century. What we actually get is almost an encyclopedia of European relations with China from "High Qing" onwards. This is fortunate in the sense that a single volume now provides a panoramic overview of German perceptions of China within their changing contexts. On the other hand, the recurring chapters on *historische Hintergründe* tend to be superficial and hardly ever contribute to a better understanding of the authors and texts under discussion. The study attempts to go beyond conventional *Ideengeschichte*, but in the last instance it fails to achieve a balance between the reconstruction of arguments and their insertion into patterns of contact and orders of knowledge. Innovative approaches such as the analysis of discourses (*Diskursanalyse*) or the study of political and social "languages" as pioneered by J.G.A. Pocock are beginning to reveal their limits. Eun-Jeung Lee, however, does not even accept the challenge of such a "new intellectual history".

One of the consequences of such a studied conservatism is the absence of any material previously unknown. The authors treated in this book are the usual "suspects": Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Christian Wolff, Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx and Max Weber. In addition, a few minor classics, none of them completely forgotten as writers on China, receive careful attention: the cameralist polemicist Johann Heinrich Gottlieb von Justi, the universal historians of the Göttingen school (Johann Gottlieb Gatterer, August Ludwig Schlözer, Christoph Meiners) and, finally, as the last and most recent entrant into the charmed circle of the great interpreters of China, Karl August Wittfogel. Other writers are barely visible, only tantalizing glimpses are permitted into the world of sinological scholarship, and very little is said about *Religionswissenschaft* and *Religionsgeschichte*, those novel disciplines of the age of *Historismus*.

Given this austere restriction to a narrowly and conventionally defined canon of outstanding authors, a final judgement on *Anti-Europa* rests on the quality of Eun-Jeung Lee's reading of the classical texts. In this respect, she can hardly ever be faulted. Her knowledge of the sources is impeccable, and she chooses her secondary references carefully and with great discrimination. On occasion, she loses patience with one of the masters. Her chapter on Max Weber amounts to a demolition job – somewhat unjust in places, but a healthy an-

tidote to an uncritical adulation of the great man. Of special interest is the discussion of Wittfogel's work, especially his highly original *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* (1931), a reworking of Ferdinand von Richthofen's data in the light of Marx and Weber. The trouble is that Wittfogel has too little to say about Confucianism – and he does so, as Lee acknowledges, in a somewhat superficial way – to really warrant his inclusion in a study of the “reception” of that world-view.

As the book makes abundantly clear, there have been numerous conceptions of Confucianism throughout European intellectual history and they have served a wide variety of argumentative purposes. The general trajectory of value judgements on Confucianism closely follows the well-known shift from “Sinophilia” to “Sinophobia” – crude terms here wisely used with circumspection. This is not surprising, and we are left with a confirmation of what we suspected in the first place. Eun-Jeung Lee would have strengthened her case and enlivened her book by referring to Lionel M. Jensen's *Manufacturing Confucianism* (1997) – a strange omission from her comprehensive bibliography. While Jensen's spectacular claim that “Confucius” was an “invention” of Jesuit priests may be grossly exaggerated, his constructivism makes an important methodological point and casts new light on the meaning of China as “Anti-Europa”.

The most original and most important part of the study is chapter IV, a discussion of the thesis of “Confucian capitalism” as it emerged around 1980. Here, Eun-Jeung Lee is able to draw on her own earlier work. Much maligned Confucianism was once more transformed in Western eyes: this time from an obstacle to progress and development to their very precondition. German authors, apart from Oskar Weggel (rightly castigated for the shallowness of his notion of *Metakonfuzianismus*), have not taken part in this debate to any significant extent. Strictly speaking, the chapter therefore transcends the thematic frame of the book. However, we should be grateful for a penetrating discussion which admirably points out the obnoxious consequences of an all too simple “culturalism”. It would not be unwise, that is the final message, to forget Samuel Huntington and to return to Leibniz' ecumenical vision.

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WANG GUNGWU, *The Chinese Overseas. From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy*. Cambridge (Mass.) / London: Harvard University Press, 2002. 148 pages, £ 10.50. ISBN 0-674-00986-X (pb)

This book by the renowned author Wang Gungwu who has devoted much of his life to the study of Overseas Chinese provides a comprehensible and interesting overview of the most important aspects of Chinese migration overseas. Each of the three chapters of the book is based on lectures delivered by the author at Harvard University in 1997.