

# French Center of Excellence Presents Nicolas Idier – “Why Was I Chinese?”



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Thursday, October 24, 2024

4:00pm– 5:00pm

Thompson Library Multipurpose Room 165

“Why was I Chinese?” To answer this question, the French writer Philippe Sollers uses literature as a personal experience: “what brought me to China was literature, that is to say my personal experience?” (*Improvisations*, 1991) From the 18th century to the present day, China is nothing less than the Dream of the Red Chamber of French literature, but is this a mere exoticism, a way of looking at a supernatural body from another galaxy, or does it have deeper, more real and fundamental repercussions on the very language of French literature?

Secret room from *The North China Lover* by Marguerite Duras to *Le Lys d’Or* by Philippe Sollers, winding of time in the poems of Victor Segalen, Paul Claudel and Saint-John Perse, historical and political violence from André Malraux to Simon Leys: China is a strong segment of French-writing literary psyche. Between dream and reality, from the Red Chamber to the Red China, has China created a mutational identity in French literature aka what is the role of China in the maturation of a multilingual contemporaneity?



More information & RSVP



*Nicolas Idier*



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