



Unexpected Affinities: Reading Across Cultures (Alexander Lectures)

Zhang Longxi

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East-West comparative literature is a field of study that has seen tremendous growth in recent years. In this pioneering study, renowned scholar Zhang Longxi offers a much-needed reappraisal of the thematic and conceptual similarities that unite literary and cultural traditions in the East and West. An expanded version of the lectures he gave as part of the Alexander Lectures Series at the University of Toronto in 2005, *Unexpected Affinities* emphasizes affinity over difference and explores the relationship between East and West in terms of cultural homogeneity (with shared literary qualities as its signposts), challenging the traditional boundaries of cross-cultural study and comparative literature as a discipline.

Throughout *Unexpected Affinities*, Zhang emphasizes the validity of East-West studies through concrete examples and a wide range of references not only to literature, but to religious and philosophical texts as well. Zhang insists that certain critical insights come solely from the cross-cultural perspective of East-West studies, and that without going beyond the limited horizon of a single literary tradition, we will not attain the broad vision of human creativity in all its richness and diversity. Clear, concise, and engaging, *Unexpected Affinities* will appeal to students of comparative literature and Asian studies, as well as to readers interested in the global implications of art and culture.

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