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categorically applied in a decontextualized manner, to the detriment of the very literatures they represent. In his closing arguments, Coutinho poses several enlightening questions that challenge these narrow-minded practices and spearhead change within the field.

This volume of essays—appropriately complete with an indispensable list of bibliographical sources—successfully examines and validates the polyphonic distinctiveness of Latin America’s many literatures within the broader scope of Western literature. Moreover, Coutinho problematizes Latin America’s slow course toward legitimacy as one characterized by neo-colonialist biases imposed from without, as well as blind acceptance of international theories from within. In their intelligent presentation, these concise essays dispel any lingering bias toward Latin American literature as occupying a peripheral place in the field. For lovers of the many literatures that constitute Latin America, this smart volume is a welcome addition to the contemporary field of comparative literature(s).

Marguerite Itamar Harrison  
*Smith College*

*Chinese Dreams: Pound, Brecht and Tel quel.* By Eric Hayot. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003. xv + 220 pp. Cloth \$49.50.

The field of East-West comparative studies has a long and eventful history, intertwined with shifting agendas in geopolitics and national interests of Asian countries, the U.S.A., and a number of European countries. It has also undergone a number of crises since the days of its earliest advocates such as Earl Miner, Alfred Owen Aldridge, Qian Zhongshu, and Irving Babbitt. With the rise of China as an economic power in the global market at the turn of the twenty-first century, a significant amount of energy in scholarly work has been redirected to some of the most familiar yet contested “China” questions, such as “How is Chineseness constructed?” “What are the intrinsic characteristics of Chinese culture?” and ultimately “Who authorizes knowledge about China and what are its values?” However, attempts to answer

these questions are complicated by common stereotypes that make China an ultimate, mysterious other that fascinates and sustains continued social and literary imaginaries. One such stereotype, as exemplified by Jonathan Spence's work that Eric Hayot critiques in *Chinese Dreams*, is that "the curious readiness of Westerners for things Chinese" seems to have existed "from the beginning" and has curiously "remained primed" by unending offerings from China (quoted in Hayot, vii).

The modern formations of this unnatural readiness is Eric Hayot's point of departure for analyses of what he terms "Chinese dreams," seemingly naïve yet complex fantasies manufactured by Ezra Pound, Bertolt Brecht, and the members of *Tel quel*, the Parisian avant-garde journal including Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, and Philippe Sollers, among others. Hayot's subject matter, as implied by the ambiguous book title, is neither China proper nor Western nations and cultures; at stake is not authenticity in cultural translation or representations of otherness, but the circumstances of interactions between these two sets of ideas and lives of individual authors who have experimented with these exchanges. *Chinese Dreams* chronicles the obsessive dreaming about China in twentieth-century America, Germany, and France. It excavates the modern Western configurations of China's "referential stability" (viii–ix) and "ontological stability" (181). Hayot considers both the texts and their Western contexts, such as Brecht's translations of Chinese poems and the reception of those poems, as well as the Telquelians' aesthetic shift before and after their 1974 trip to China. The book also examines the authorizing mechanism of these individual knowledge systems concerning the "dream-space China" and the "dreaming subject" known as the "West." The book challenges—with theoretical sophistication and close readings—the assumption that Chineseness has remained a crystallized concept throughout history. Special attention is given to the variations of various constructs of "China" (vii) and the "West" (xii).

Acknowledging the fluidity of cultural identities and the multiplicity of cross-referencing acts in reading and writing, *Chinese Dreams* redefines "China," the "West," and the intricacies of their literary relations. Throughout the book, "China," be it the Maoist China that fascinated but ultimately beguiled Julia Kristeva or the classical China that was central to Pound and Brecht's aesthetic programs, is treated as a way of knowing the world. Hayot uses the proper name "China" to signify "a particular epistemological formation" (183) and a set of ideas related to the geocultural space known as China. Thus defined, "China" restores the long-suppressed voice to the intertextuality of various "Chinas" embedded in the texts Hayot studies. It also enables Hayot to approach well-studied subjects from fresh and exciting perspectives, to "learn something *from* the texts, not just something *about* them" (xiii).

By addressing not just ethical but aesthetical issues in dreams about Chinas, *Chinese Dreams* calls into question the problematics of “which China?” as a category of critical inquiry. While attending to historical specificities of each text, Hayot resists being bogged down by the texts’ own histories in order to avoid saturating the stereotypes with specificity. His shrewd analysis of the pleasure of dreaming is framed by larger questions about the origin of such obsession and desire. Throughout the book Hayot seeks answers to the question “Why China?” which is a key to re-interpret Western avant-garde writers’ aesthetics. As such, *Chinese Dreams* is a book on the history of “China” rather than a book on the history of China proper. Hayot uses the term sinography (205, n9) to describe the study of the history of “China” as it is “written into the fabric of Western life and thought.” While sinology means the study of China, sinography means both the “writing” of “China” and how writings about China constitutes itself “as a *form* of writing and as a *form* of Chineseness” (185).

A good example of how one does “sinography” is chapter two where Hayot analyzes various problems in the reception history of Brecht. Worthy of separate mention is Hayot’s treatment of Brecht’s “China” poems and coinage of alienation effect that is believed to have been inspired by *jingju* [Peking opera] in general and by Mei Lanfang’s Moscow performance in particular. Hayot argues that while Pound “produced a China for his readers that was not only believable but compelling,” Brecht does quite the opposite (74–75). Hayot points out the curious silence on Brecht’s part regarding his position in appropriating China despite his many works related to China. Unlike Pound and Kristeva who write about things Chinese and simultaneously write extensively about their own relationship to “China,” Brecht does not provide any clear statement of his life long interest in Chinese aesthetics and philosophy. It is difficult to retrieve a coherent vision of China even from such works as the “Alienation Effects” essay and his “China” poems. Hayot believes that this is a willful choice on Brecht’s part. By being silent, Brecht takes an active position on “what it means to represent China in the West” and refuses the position readily available to his predecessors and contemporaries (75; 86–88; 100–101). “Brecht and China,” and “so and so and China” for that matter, as worn subjects thus acquired new perspectives and meanings.

A lucid and accessible book, *Chinese Dreams* is an important contribution to the field of East-West comparative studies, Asian studies, and modernism. Its structure makes it a pleasure to read for both scholars and students of literature. The book’s broad scope and defined historical period of interest also make it a suitable textbook for upper-division undergraduates and graduate students. It joins such ground-breaking works as Timothy

Weiss' recent book, *Translating the Orient* (2004), Yunte Huang's *Transpacific Displacement: Ethnography, Translation, and Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (2002), Haun Saussy's *The Great Walls of Discourse* (2002), Robert Kern's *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem* (1996), and Zhaoming Qian's *Orientalism and Modernism* (1995). While Weiss, Qian, and Kern, among others, are predominantly concerned with the legacy of Edward Said's delineation and critique of Orientalist practices, Hayot is not as concerned about the political meanings of the texts in question. *Chinese Dreams* transcends the worn questions of Orientalism and political meanings of imagining cultural others. On the other hand, most books by scholars from the People's Republic of China on related subjects are informed—implicitly or explicitly—by nationalist principles, such as Zhang Xiping's *Zhongguo yu ouzhou zaoqi zongjiao he zhexue jiaoliu shi* (A history of early religious and philosophical exchanges between China and Europe, 2001), Zhang Hong's *Kuayue Taipingyang de yuhong—Meiguo zuojia yu Zhongguo wenhua* (Rainbows across the Pacific—American writers and Chinese culture, 2002), and Wei Maoping, Ma Jiabin and Zheng Xia's *Yiyu de zhaohuan—Deguo zuojia yu Zhongguo wenhua* (The call of the exotic land—German writers and Chinese culture, 2002), among others. Most of them concentrate on historical specificities and demonstrate a Sinocentric attitude toward cross-cultural exchanges and influence. These studies come to predictable conclusions that positive images of China are accurate and authentic, while negative images of China can only result from the biases of ill-informed outsiders and therefore inauthentic. Knowing that cultural relativism and such debates about authenticity is futile, Hayot takes a completely different route, but he does not deny that some of the texts he examines harbor undesirably Orientalist attitudes. He acknowledges the worn critique of their obvious Orientalism, but immediately moves on to extrapolate traces of development of Western avant-gardism from the texts that represent a collective desire. The book does not provide definite answers to the question about whether Pound's "Chinese" poetics or Brecht's performance theories distort the original, real China. Hayot is clearly not concerned about the compilation of Chinese historical facts or the accuracy of European representations of China, because "the West is no more the same every time it interacts with China than China is when it interacts with the West" (ix). *Chinese Dreams* is thus able to interpret anew the age-old stories about Western encounters with "China."

Alexander C.Y. Huang  
 Pennsylvania State University