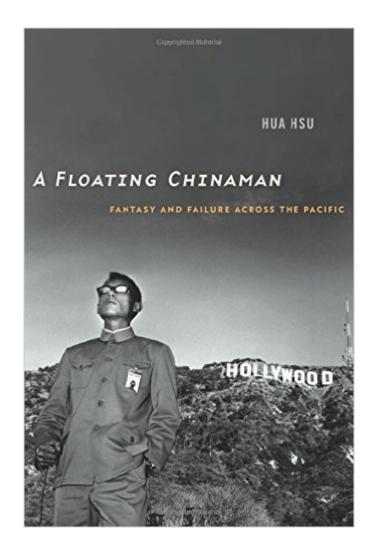
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A Floating Chinaman: Fantasy And Failure Across The Pacific





Synopsis

Who gets to speak for China? During the interwar years, when American condescension toward â œbarbarousâ • China yielded to a fascination with all things Chinese, a circle of writers sparked an unprecedented public conversation about American-Chinese relations. Hua Hsu tells the story of how they became ensnared in bitter rivalries over which one could claim the title of Americaâ ™s leading China expert. The rapturous reception that greeted The Good Earthâ •Pearl Buckâ ™s novel about a Chinese peasant familyâ •spawned a literary market for sympathetic writings about China. Stories of enterprising Americans making their way in a land with â œfour hundred million customers,â • as Carl Crow said, found an eager audience as well. But on the marginsâ •in Chinatowns, on Ellis Island, and inside FBI surveillance memosâ •a different conversation about the possibilities of a shared future was taking place. A Floating Chinaman takes its title from a lost manuscript by H. T. Tsiang, an eccentric Chinese immigrant writer who self-published a series of visionary novels during this time. Tsiang discovered the American literary market to be far less accommodating to his more skeptical view of U.S.-China relations. His â œfloating Chinaman,â • unmoored and in-between, imagines a critical vantage point from which to understand the new ideas of China circulating between the world warsâ •and today, as well.

Book Information

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