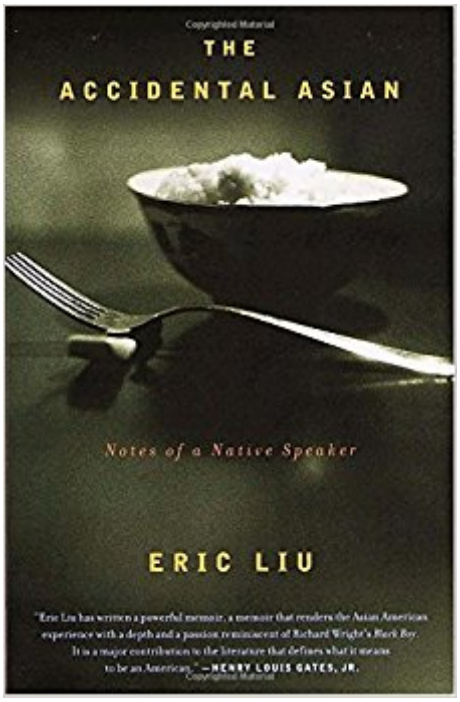
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The Accidental Asian: Notes Of A Native Speaker



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Synopsis

Beyond black and white, native and alien, lies a vast and fertile field of human experience. It is here that Eric Liu, former speechwriter for President Clinton and noted political commentator, invites us to explore.In these compellingly candid essays, Liu reflects on his life as a second-generation Chinese American and reveals the shifting frames of ethnic identity. Finding himself unable to read a Chinese memorial book about his father's life, he looks critically at the cost of his own assimilation. But he casts an equally questioning eye on the effort to sustain vast racial categories like Ã¢â ¬Å“Asian American.Ã¢â ¬Â• And as he surveys the rising anxiety about China's influence, Liu illuminates the space that Asians have always occupied in the American imagination. Reminiscent of the work of James Baldwin and its unwavering honesty, The Accidental Asian introduces a powerful and elegant voice into the discussion of what it means to be an American.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a second-generation Chinese-American, Eric Liu has grown up with an awkward relationship to race and ethnic identity. He can follow a conversation in Chinese, although he would have problems if he tried to take part in it; as for the written language, he is functionally illiterate. He would be the first person to question which of his personality traits are "Chinese" or "American," "Asian" or "white," or none of the above, and The Accidental Asian is, in fact, a rigorous self-examination--not merely about the costs and benefits of assimilation, but about whether assimilation should even be viewed in those terms. Whether he's recalling his adolescent frustration with "Chinese hair" that just

wouldn’t permit itself to be styled, examining the history of Chinatown, or pondering the mixture of fear and fascination with which China is viewed by Americans, Liu writes with admirable personal intensity. It doesn’t matter whether you consider The Accidental Asian to be a memoir or a batch of interconnected essays; once you’ve read it, you will be forced to consider for yourself what place, if any, race has in America today (but even more so tomorrow). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this candid, well-crafted memoir, Liu, a former speechwriter for President Clinton, explores his identity as a second-generation Chinese American. Although he was raised to assimilate, Liu recalls that his discomfort as an adolescent when trying to fit in was problematical because his hair and skin tone marked him as different from those around him. He also shares haunting memories of traveling to China and visiting his grandmother in Manhattan’s Chinatown, events that engendered ambivalent emotions both of alienation from and attraction to his heritage. Liu’s concerns about the concept of "Asian American," which he regards as based on physical characteristics rather than shared ethnicity, are rendered thoughtfully, as are his positive feelings about intermarriage. (His wife is a white Southerner with a Jewish grandmother.) He is impassioned, however, about the fallout from a scandal surrounding the activities of democratic fund-raiser John Huang. When Liu calls New York Times columnist William Safire "a Jew and defender of Jews" for unfairly stereotyping Asian Americans because of Huang’s questionable actions, this strikes a discordant note. Author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I, too, am Chinese American. And like Mr. Liu, I, too, make my living as an author. Yet I’ve never been able to cogently put into words all my feelings -- and ambivalence -- about being an American-born Chinese as splendidly as Mr. Liu has done. Page after page, while reading this book, I would think: "My god, this is EXACTLY what I’ve thought. This is exactly what I’ve experienced!" It’s as though I was reading about a male version of myself. It was both thrilling and immensely reassuring to know that I am not the only Asian American who is proud and happy to be an American, yet at the same time feels confused about what exactly "Chinese-ness" means. It is also refreshing to hear from another ABC who has experienced a relatively sunny American childhood and has no need to go through life with a chip on his shoulder -- yet who knows that that sunny American experience can also turn on a dime into something frightening and threatening.This was a touching book, full of grace and wisdom, and it held great personal significance for me. Thank, you,

Mr. Liu.

Very fast shipment. Great book. I would recommend to anyone who is thinking about it. I had to order for a class but was impressed.

wife liked it

Great Condition thank you!

I liked the book for its change in pace with all the other Asian American Novels I have read. This book points out the importance of identifying yourself more as a person than that of American, Asian, or even Asian American. This book ties with my feelings towards being Asian American and how it seems to have a weight of responsibility and expectation, but that in the end I would choose my own path and believe in my own self to create change in the world.

For a young writer (28) who learned English as a second language, Mr. Liu's mastery of words excited my interest in his later writing.Additionally, I had the great good fortune to hear him speak at the University of Tennessee recently, when he was a guest at a Freshmen Gathering called 'Adventures of the Mind'. All in-coming freshmen were required to read this novel. He spoke of the students being 'second generation' people: away from their homeland, learning a new language (of college, the academic world), of making new friends, etc. Then he touched on opportunities; questioning one's own values; finding one's niche in the world... all themes in his book.I especially enjoyed THE ACCIDENTAL ASIAN, purchased through Books, and look forward to read more of Eric Liu's writing, now that he is in his forty's.

A lot of people who, based purely off of their names & reviews whining about how his book is Anti-White, I can only assume are white, are missing point of the book!Stop looking for ways to victimize yourself because this book isn't about YOU as a white person.Liu talks about white White America shaped him as he grew up.How he wanted to fight those stereotypes.How America should no longer be White.What a lot of white people (just the ones who hate it when minorities get a chance to speak) miss is that when all we want is a chance to be just American.All we want is a chance to be able to be express our culture while also being American.It's always Chinese-American. Japanese-American.And yet Irish-Americans are allowed to just be

Americans?All we want is to be able to express ourselves without being tied down to strictly Asian-Ameicnas because guess what? Asians who are American, but don't express their Asian culture should be able to just identify as American.They should be able to do so without stereotypes.This book talks about how there's injustice, but it also talks about how Liu fought it in his own way.If it a way I would've done it? No.But does he have a lot of good points about how America is?Yes.

Many Asian American autobiographies/memoirs/etc focus around the 1st generation experience, so it was interested to read a 2nd generation person's experience with assimilation, cultural reconciliation, and more. Found myself relating to Liu in several instances but also questioning his perspectives in other. Liu is honest in his storytelling, acknowledging his misconceptions as he struggled with his Asian American identity.

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