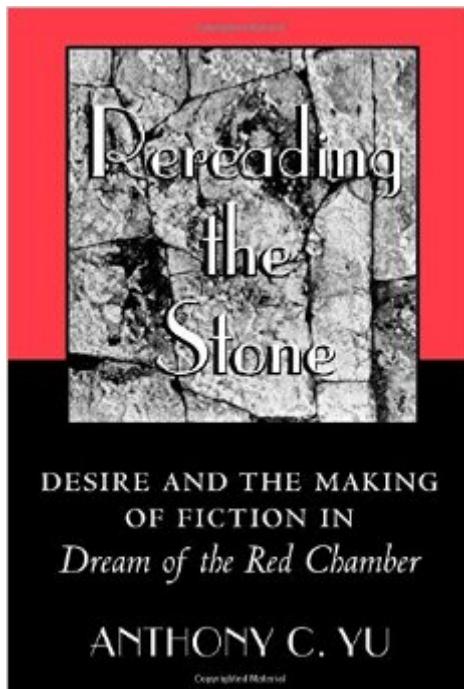


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Rereading The Stone: Desire And The Making Of Fiction In Dream Of The Red Chamber.



Synopsis

The eighteenth-century Hongloumeng, known in English as Dream of the Red Chamber or The Story of the Stone, is generally considered to be the greatest of Chinese novels--one that masterfully blends realism and romance, psychological motivation and fate, daily life and mythical occurrences, as it narrates the decline of a powerful Chinese family. In this path-breaking study, Anthony Yu goes beyond the customary view of Hongloumeng as a vivid reflection of late imperial Chinese culture by examining the novel as a story about fictive representation. Through a maze of literary devices, the novel challenges the authority of history as well as referential biases in reading. At the heart of Hongloumeng, Yu argues, is the narration of desire. Desire appears in this tale as the defining trait and problem of human beings and at the same time shapes the novel's literary invention and effect. According to Yu, this focalizing treatment of desire may well be Hongloumeng's most distinctive accomplishment. Through close readings of selected episodes, Yu analyzes principal motifs of the narrative, such as dream, mirror, literature, religious enlightenment, and rhetorical reflexivity in relation to fictive representation. He contextualizes his discussions with a comprehensive genealogy of qing--desire, disposition, sentiment, feeling--a concept of fundamental importance in historical Chinese culture, and shows how the text ingeniously exploits its multiple meanings. Spanning a wide range of comparative literary sources, Yu creates a new conceptual framework in which to reevaluate this masterpiece.

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Customer Reviews

I recently purchased this book because I've read it in the past and will need to make reference to it (though I have pretensions of scholarship, this is not a scholarly review!). I enjoy reading everything written by Anthony Yu. In Re-Reading I appreciate his detailed analysis and his direct comment on religious elements in Honglou Meng (Dream of the red chamber). Anthony Yu is willing to take on the broad community of scholars to make his particular points of emphasis and in Re-Reading I feel he especially allows for a closer sympathy to the characters of the novel and their engagement with their own destinies. Some may feel the theory to be a little steep but I feel the whole discussion helps me personally to work through what I see in the novel.

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