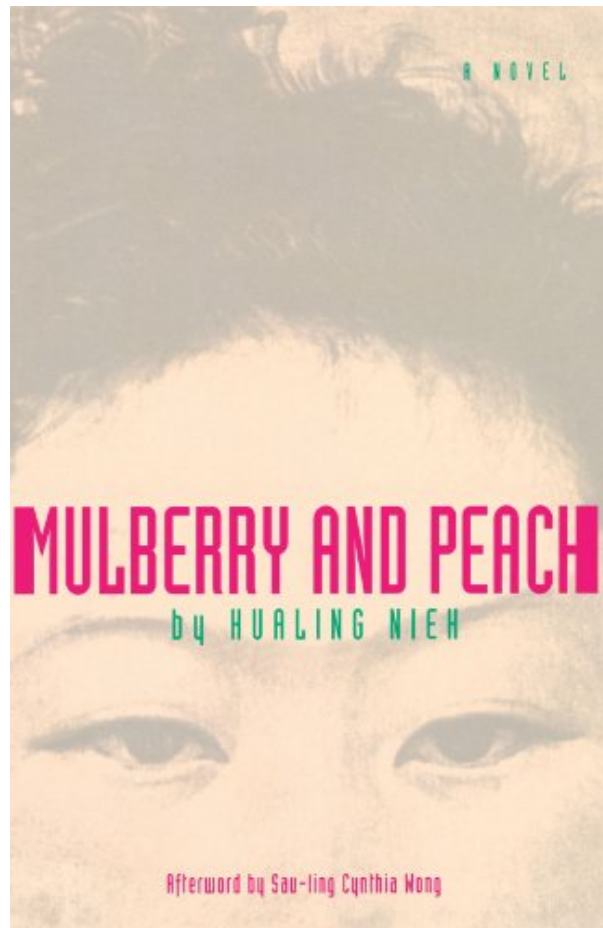
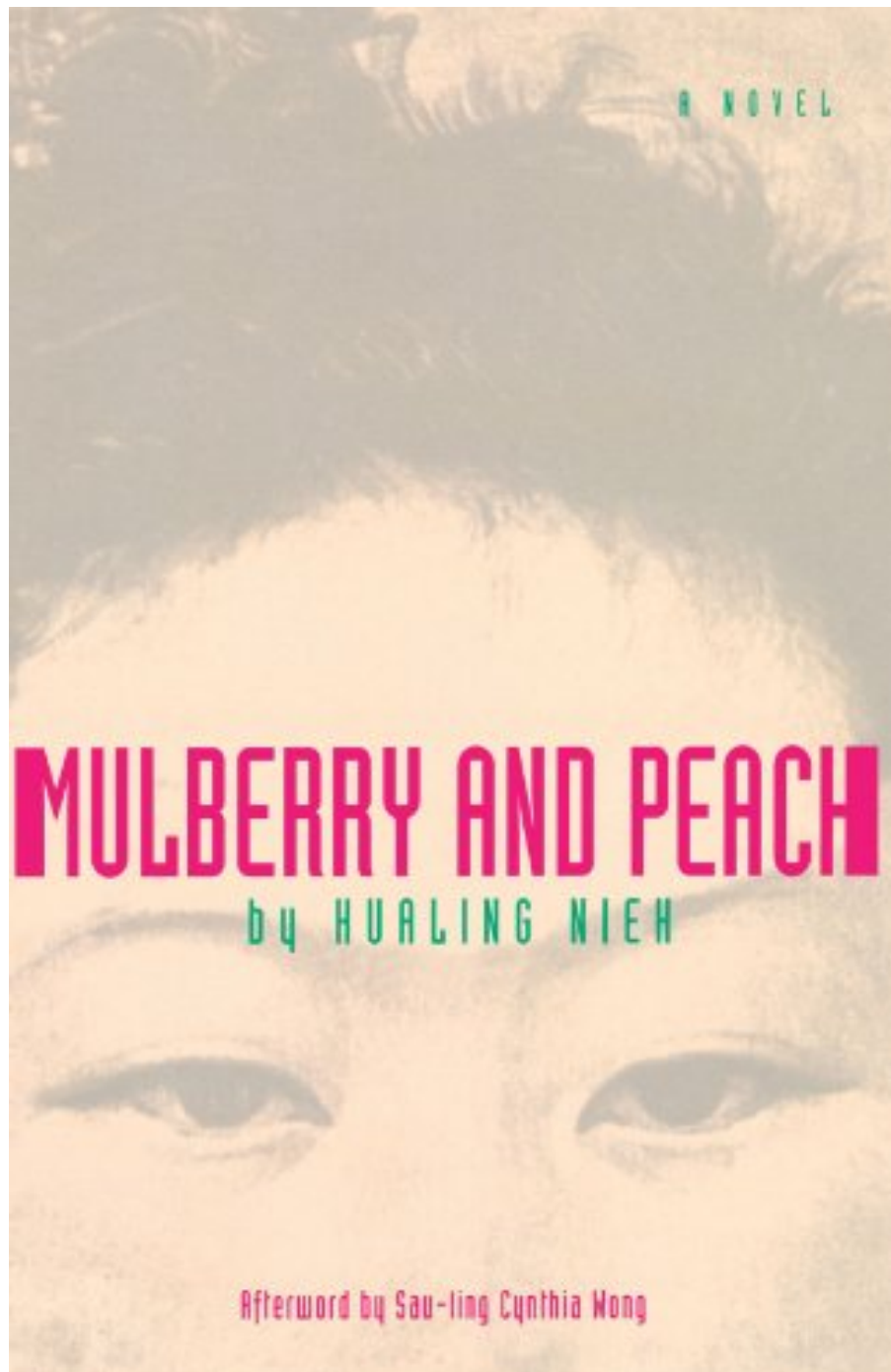


# MULBERRY AND PEACH: TWO WOMEN OF CHINA BY HUALING NIEH



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This extraordinary novel, winner of a 1990 American Book Award, recounts the story of two women—Mulberry and Peach—who are really one. Mulberry is a young woman who has fled the turmoil of postwar China to settle in the United States. Unable to forget the terrors she has witnessed or resolve the conflicts between her new life and her old, she develops a second personality: fearless, tough-talking, sexually uninhibited, Peach. While Mulberry clings to her cultural and ethical roots, Peach renounces her past to embrace the American way of life with a vengeance.

Brilliantly innovative in style, *Mulberry and Peach* offers a rare women's perspective on the upheavals of modern China, and presents an unforgettable portrait of the pain of cultural dislocation and the anguish of psychological disintegration.

- Sales Rank: #1081597 in Books
- Brand: Brand: The Feminist Press at CUNY
- Published on: 1997-01-01
- Original language: Chinese
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.40" h x .60" w x 5.40" l, .36 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

## Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Found this to be so poorly written that it hurt my brain and I resented losing the time I spent just trying to give it a chance. Save your money. Catherine

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Sisyphean Systems Psychic Splyt

By Bob Newman

Wars and violent politics separate millions from their families, homes, and traditions. The disrupted roam the world---from the immigrant ghettos of North America and Australia to the jungles of the Congo or the deserts of Sudan. Bearing this life involves great pain, great forbearance, and internal strength. Not everyone, especially not those who have a penchant for thinking, can stand the strain. Twentieth Century history is filled with injured wanderers and millions who fell by the wayside, couldn't make that psychological leap from stability to instability, from a known world to an unknown one. MULBERRY AND PEACH describes the orbit of one such unlucky planet, a Chinese woman who leaves home gambling on a trip to freedom from the Japanese invaders during World War II. She winds up aboard a river ship marooned on rocks in the raging Yangtze River with a disparate cast of fellow castaways. She leaves the Nationalist south for Beijing, only to be surrounded by the Communist besiegers who ultimately take the city, from which she flees south again, then to Taiwan. None of her companions fit into any new visions of the world, none have real understanding of the times. In Taiwan, she ends up hiding out in an attic for years, the wife of her Beijing lover, now turned embezzler of government funds on the lam. She has a daughter who grows up

a fugitive. Eventually, the woman comes to the USA, where her complex political and sexual past catches up with her. The faceless minions of the INS are hot on her trail. Cruelty, indecision, sexual vacillation, continual separations....her endless search for self and stability cracks. She invents Peach, a second, schizophrenic persona, denying any identity with Mulberry. The book ends in mental shipwreck as it began with a physical one.

I found Nieh Hualing's novel interesting due to Mulberry's slow descent into madness and schizophrenia, the intrusion of dreams, diaries, and strange visions or imaginings. The first fifty-odd pages are clearer; all subsequent chapters get murkier and more abstract, just as if a person were sliding into insanity. Very effective. Chinese literature from post-revolutionary China often deals with class struggle, anti-Communist feelings, or straightforward lives of the common people. This is an entirely different sort of Chinese novel in a very modern, strikingly written style. You may say that you couldn't follow the plot. It is not so much a plot-novel but a cry, a dream, or a trajectory into the mental pits. The amount of symbolism that a literary critic could trace here is astounding. Mirrors of mirrors with a few distorting images thrown in among them. The duality (or is it schizophrenia ?) abounds. Japanese vs. Chinese, Communist vs. Nationalist, men vs. women, tradition vs. modernity, legal vs. illegal, American vs. Chinese, reality vs. dream, written vs. spoken, on and on. Questions arise. What is it to have no home ? What is it when you are a stranger, an outcast wherever you go ? Is the process a sisyphian one like emptying the sea with a spoon ? Some survive, but some go mad. Do you have to be mad to survive ? These are questions you may ponder on reading this interesting novel.

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