

**Re-mapping the City:
Ethnic Space in Maxine Hong Kingston's
*Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book***

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Abstract

This essay re-evaluates Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* in the light of Foucauldian spatiality. It examines how diaspora communities resist ghettoization with an emphasis on critiquing the racialization of space. The protagonist, Wittman Ah Sing, born in the Chinatown of San Francisco, endeavors to transcend the confines of Chinatown by actively participating in mainstream society. Being a deviant, Ah Sing challenges dominant discourse and cultivates an interstitial space by adopting a strategy of renaming. Apart from that, he manages to re-map a new cityscape of multicultural America by reading in a train westward, a symbolic act that combines the act of reading with the crossing of boundaries to re-invent a new tradition of American literature. In the end, returning to Chinatown, Ah Sing the flâneur encourages his kinfolk to represent themselves with a brand new image.

By creating a character like Ah Sing, Kingston adds an unlooked-for color to the spectrum of American literature. In spite of that success, avoiding the lure of representation and the binarism of assimilation/alienation and thereby working toward a commitment to Saidian worldliness remains a challenge for Chinese American studies.

Key Words: City, Kingston, space, heterotopia, Foucault