

Fragmented Identities in the Third Space: Hybridity, Chinese American Identity, and the American Frontier in *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*

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Abstract

This study analyzes the portrayal of fragmented identity in C Pam Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* (2020) through Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of the Third Space and hybridity. The novel dramatizes the position of Chinese Americans caught between inherited cultural memory and the nineteenth-century American frontier, and it therefore offers rich material for the study of identity construction. Lucy and Sam are read as characters whose displacement, in-betweenness, and cultural conflict place them in an interstitial space where identity and belonging are continually negotiated rather than inherited. The study also examines how Zhang uses gold, bones, and the tiger to figure fragmented and hybrid identity, and how the novel's perspective, tense, and chronology support that reading. It employs qualitative textual analysis and close reading, with Bhabha's framework as the main analytical lens. The analysis finds that the novel undermines essentialist understandings of identity by presenting identity as relational, fluid, and formed through displacement and cultural engagement, and that fragmented identity arises from the interplay of displacement, cultural conflict, in-betweenness, and hybridity. The study concludes that Bhabha's notions of hybridity and the Third Space remain useful for reading the experience of people caught between cultures.

Keywords: Hybridity, Third Space, Fragmented Identity, Cultural Conflict, Displacement, In-Betweenness, Chinese American Literature

Introduction

As mobility, globalization, and cultural contact unsettle older certainties, identity can no longer be treated as a fixed inheritance. It is increasingly

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understood as a process shaped by history, culture, politics, and negotiation (Rahman et al., 2024, p. 2). Hall describes identities as always incomplete and constantly under construction through representation, history, and culture (2015, p. 223). Questions of identity and belonging have accordingly moved to the center of literary discourse.

Postcolonial theory examines how identity is formed under colonialism and in its aftermath (Ashcroft et al., 2003, p. 1). Even where formal colonization has ended, the ideologies it produced continue to shape culture, society, and representation. Young describes postcolonialism as concerned with the effects of colonial power on culture and identity after political independence has been gained (2016, p. 2). Under such conditions identity becomes unstable and fragmented, because individuals must reconcile several cultural and political backgrounds within themselves.

Fragmented identity is especially pertinent to immigrant and diasporic experience. Here identity can no longer be seen as static and uniform; it becomes fluid and divided from any single cultural background (Biswas, 2025, p. 242). Diasporic people are not handed a coherent identity. They must negotiate between different cultural affiliations and historical memories. Fragmentation, in this sense, is not only the product of cultural dislocation but an ongoing negotiation of identity across cultural backgrounds (Bhandari, 2022, p. 107). Modern immigrant literature returns to this experience repeatedly, presenting identity as something constructed through displacement and cultural conflict rather than something inherited ready-made.

Homi K. Bhabha addresses cultural identity and postcolonial subjectivity in *The Location of Culture* (1994), where he develops the concept of the Third Space. The concept counters the binary logic of culture and identity by locating the production of meaning in the interstices where cultures are negotiated (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). For Bhabha, identity does not rest on a pure cultural origin. It arises from the negotiation and translation of different cultural traditions. The Third Space underlies his account of cultural hybridity, the formation of new cultural identities where two cultures converge.

C Pam Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* (2020) offers an alternative view of American West mythology by taking up the perspective of Chinese immigrant families. Set during the California Gold Rush, the novel addresses the neglect of immigrant experience in classic frontier tales, which usually foreground white

settlers. It follows Lucy and Sam, the children of Chinese immigrants, and raises questions of migration, racism, discrimination, memory, culture, and identity. Living between Chinese and American contexts, Lucy and Sam negotiate and renegotiate who they are. By reinterpreting the frontier from the position of marginalized subjects, the novel creates a significant space for investigating the relation between hybridity and identity formation.

This study reads *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* through Bhabha's Third Space and hybridity. It argues that the novel constructs a fragmented notion of identity out of displacement, negotiation between cultures, and in-betweenness. Through the situations of Lucy and Sam, it shows how hybridity produces identities that remain in flux within the settler colonial context of the American West. Because the frontier setting is part of what produces this fragmentation, the analysis also considers how the novel's form and its reworking of the frontier shape the identities it depicts.

The study contributes to postcolonial literary criticism by applying Bhabha's framework to contemporary Chinese American literature, and to Asian American literary studies by tying the formation of fragmented identity to the novel's reimagined frontier.

Significance of the Study

Existing research on *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* has concentrated mainly on race, Chinese exclusion, labor exploitation, historical erasure, and settler colonialism. Much less attention has gone to how fragmented identities are constructed in spaces of cultural hybridity. By applying Bhabha's theories of hybridity and the Third Space to Zhang's novel, this study contributes to the growing literature on postcolonial identity, hybridity, and immigrant writing. It treats identity formation as a multifaceted and continuing process involving displacement, in-betweenness, and cultural conflict.

The study also contributes to postcolonial literary criticism and Asian American literary studies. It shows that Bhabha's theory remains analytically useful for understanding how fragmented identities form in the American West as a settler colonial society, and it connects that formation to the novel's narrative choices and its rewriting of the frontier myth.

Review of the Literature

Scholarship on postcolonial identity generally holds that identity is fluid and continually changing under the pressure of migration, cross-cultural encounter, and unequal power. Bhabha's ideas of hybridity and the Third Space have been central to that discussion. Research on *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* has so far concentrated on race, discrimination, immigration, exploitation, labor, and the historical marginalization of Chinese immigrants (Hunziker, 2022, p. 22; Reis, 2021, p. 253). Less work has considered fragmented identity and in-betweenness in relation to Bhabha's hybridity and Third Space. This review therefore moves from Bhabha's theory and its critics, to hybridity in diasporic and Asian American writing, to existing criticism of Zhang's novel.

❖ Bhabha's Third Space and Its Critics

Bhandari argues that the Third Space remains important for understanding identity in multicultural societies because it can subvert cultural boundaries and generate hybrid identities (2022, p. 171). Bhandari also criticizes Bhabha's theory for concentrating on cultural negotiation and psychology at the expense of class oppression and economic issues. On this view, hybridity theory explains how identities are formed but cannot adequately account for the other forms of inequality that shape postcolonial life (Bhandari, 2022, p. 180). The criticism bears directly on a reading of Zhang's novel, in which labor and extraction cannot be separated from questions of belonging. The present study therefore uses the Third Space to describe how identity is negotiated, and it keeps the economic and legal conditions of frontier life in view as the setting in which that negotiation takes place.

❖ Hybridity in Diasporic and Asian American Writing

Studies of other diasporic texts show how widely hybridity has been used to read fragmented identity. Malik et al. read Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a case in which hybridity grows out of cultural and political conflict, especially after the events of 9/11. The protagonist's identity fragments as he is torn between Eastern and Western ideologies (Malik et al., 2021, p. 51). They conclude that Third Space identity is fluid and is reconstructed in response to social and political reality, so that fragmented identity appears as an effect of postcolonial cultural negotiation. In "Cultural Hybridity and Identity Reconstruction: A

Diasporic Study of Soniah Kamal's *Unmarriageable*," Ahmed et al. argue that identity is constantly reconstructed in the interaction of South Asian and Western cultures, and they emphasize that diasporic identities are negotiated through adaptation and resistance (Ahmed et al., 2026). Taken together, these studies suggest that hybridity is both productive and destabilizing: it enables cultural change while fragmenting identity.

Within Asian American studies, Lowe's *Immigrant Acts* makes hybridity, together with heterogeneity and multiplicity, central to the analysis of Asian American culture, and it relates the position of Asian immigrants to their legal and economic exclusion from the nation (Lowe, 1996). That concern connects hybridity to the history of Chinese exclusion that Hunziker examines in relation to Zhang's novel (2022).

❖ Existing Research on *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*

Criticism of the novel has centered on race, exclusion, labor exploitation, and historical erasure. Reis argues that the novel shows how Chinese immigrants have been excluded from mainstream American history (2021, p. 253), and reads the relation among labor, land, and belonging in the American West from an economic and social perspective on exploitation. Reis does not, however, bring hybridity or the Third Space into the discussion.

Hunziker discusses Chinese exclusion and settler colonialism in the novel and places Chinese immigrants as outsiders in relation to American national identity (2022, p. 22). The article shows how exclusion and colonialism work to produce displacement and to shape belonging. Reis and Hunziker both attend to historical and political dimensions of the novel. Fragmented identity, displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness, by contrast, have received little attention in relation to Bhabha's notion of hybridity and the Third Space, and the processes through which identity becomes unstable are consequently less well understood.

Scholars of postcolonial identity have offered several interpretations of hybridity. Some point to identity fluidity and transcultural identity, while others emphasize the alienation, dislocation, and instability that hybridity can cause (Bhandari, 2022, p. 180; Shamshad & Hashmi, 2022, p. 22). Bhabha's theory has been applied to South Asian, African, and diasporic literatures, but few studies have used the ideas of

hybridity and the Third Space to analyze Chinese American literature such as *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*. The existing scholarship examines historical exclusion, racism, and sociopolitical conditions without giving much attention to the characters' fragmented identity, displacement, and in-betweenness in the context of hybridity and the Third Space (Hunziker, 2022, p. 22; Reis, 2021, p. 253). This study addresses that gap by investigating how cultural conflict, in-betweenness, and displacement contribute to fragmented identity, through the framework of hybridity and the Third Space and through the novel's symbolic and formal practices.

Methodology

❖ Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative approach based on textual analysis to examine the fragmented identities portrayed in Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*. An interpretive method suits a study concerned with how identities are constructed, negotiated, and unsettled under conditions of hybridity. Unlike quantitative approaches, which focus on measurement and statistics, qualitative textual analysis is suited to the interpretation of meaning, narrative, and symbol in literary works.

❖ Data Sources

The primary source is Zhang's novel *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* (2020), the central object of analysis. The secondary sources include Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), which is the principal theoretical text, and scholarly materials such as journal articles, dissertations, and criticism on postcolonial studies, hybridity, the Third Space, identity construction, diaspora studies, and Chinese American fiction.

❖ Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in three steps. First, the novel was read closely for passages in which a character's sense of home, inherited knowledge, recognition, or belonging is placed under pressure. Second, these passages were grouped under the study's three analytical categories, which are displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness, and under the three recurring symbols of gold, bones, and the tiger.

Third, each passage was interpreted through Bhabha's concepts, with attention to diction, perspective, and narrative tense as well as theme.

Bhabha's terms are operationalized as follows. Hybridity is identified where characters hold, or are caught between, cultural meanings that cannot be reduced to a Chinese or an American origin. The Third Space is identified where meaning, knowledge, or belonging is visibly negotiated and left unresolved rather than settled on one side. Displacement and cultural conflict, which are not Bhabha's own concepts, serve as the sociocultural conditions in which these negotiations occur.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws on Bhabha's postcolonial theory as set out in *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha holds that neither culture nor identity is static; both emerge through negotiation and interaction in zones of cultural contact. His theory rejects essentialism by treating identity as dynamic and relational, and as continually changing and under construction. The study uses his theories of hybridity and the Third Space to analyze fragmented identities in *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*. Because his approach has been criticized for underplaying material inequality (Bhandari, 2022, p. 180), the analysis reads negotiations of identity alongside the economic and legal conditions of frontier life.

❖ Hybridity

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha opposes the view of culture as static and homogeneous. He holds that cultures are continually formed through interaction, negotiation, and translation among multiple cultural traditions (Bhabha, 1994, p. 39). He contends that "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37), which suggests that cultural meanings are always open to reinterpretation and change. Hybridity is therefore a useful term for discussing fragmented identity in postcolonial and diasporic situations, where identity is shaped by displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness.

❖ The Third Space

The Third Space is the site where cultural meanings are negotiated and formed through interaction. Meaning is not fixed but develops in the space between existing

cultural meanings. Bhabha writes, "It is that Third Space, though un-representable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (1994, p. 37).

❖ Displacement and Cultural Conflict

Displacement and cultural conflict are not Bhabha's concepts, but they are significant in postcolonial and diaspora studies, and they form the sociocultural context in which hybridity is produced. Displacement is caused by migration, exclusion, racism, and alienation from one's cultural context. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin describe displacement as creating conditions in which people must negotiate between their cultural heritage and a new reality (2003, p. 9). Cultural conflict arises when differences in cultural values and beliefs produce tension between people. Hall holds that cultural identities are constructed through history, culture, and representation and not from any fixed cultural essence (2015, p. 222).

❖ In-Betweenness and Fragmented Identity

In-betweenness is a state of being between cultures, identities, and modes of belonging without full identification with any one position. In Bhabha's theory it is related to the Third Space, a place where identity comes from negotiation and not from purity or origin (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). Hall argues that identities should be understood as processes of "becoming" and not "being," because they are continually constructed and reconstructed through representation and history (2015, p. 225). On this basis, the study argues that the identities of Lucy and Sam emerge through a continuous negotiation of cultural meanings and affiliations within the Third Space as Bhabha describes it (1994, p. 37), and that displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness play an important part in forming fragmented identity in the novel.

Analysis and Discussion

This section analyzes Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* through Bhabha's Third Space in order to show the fragmented character of identity in the novel, its uncertainty, and its hybridity. It considers displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness as manifestations of the Third Space, then turns to the novel's symbols, its narrative form, and its reworking of the frontier.

❖ Displacement and the Formation of Fragmented Identities

Displacement is a leading source of fragmented identity in *How Much of These Hills Is Gold*. Reflecting on her family's constant movement, Lucy asks, "What's home mean when they moved so often into shacks and tents that stank of other people's sweat?" (Zhang, 2020, p. 24). The question unsettles the usual assumption that home is a place of safety and belonging. Zhang's words "shacks" and "tents" mark the family's life as transient, and the phrase "stank of other people's sweat" suggests that these dwellings were never theirs but unfamiliar places they happened to occupy. Because Lucy puts the question as one about what the word means, rather than as a statement of loss, the line shows home itself becoming unstable for her.

Continual displacement of this kind prevents Lucy and Sam from attaching themselves to a place and, with it, from developing a stable cultural identity. The situation corresponds to Bhabha's claim that "the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (1994, p. 37). Their identity is negotiated and not inherited, which is what the Third Space designates: a position between the culture they carry from their ancestors and the American frontier, where identity remains uncertain and open to negotiation.

Displacement in the novel is therefore more than physical movement. It produces cultural disruption and, through that disruption, fragmented identity. In the siblings' constant search for a home, Zhang shows identity itself to be unstable and always subject to negotiation.

❖ Cultural Conflict and the Formation of Fragmented Identity

Fragmentation in the novel is caused not only by physical displacement but also by contradictory cultural systems and worldviews. Lucy and Sam take over traditions of memory and culture from their Chinese background, yet they are also exposed to the rational, documentary discourse of the American frontier. The contradiction appears in the different attitudes that Lucy and Ba take toward reality. When buffalo appear in the forest, Lucy remembers, "The books say buffalo are extinct in these parts," but "Ba says what a man knows to be true is different from what he reads" (Zhang, 2020, p. 28).

The two positions rest on different grounds. The books record historically acknowledged fact, while Ba trusts memory and personal experience. Ba's view also reaches the reader through Lucy's recollection of him, so the conflict is staged inside her own consciousness and not simply between two characters. The novel does not make either position authoritative. It exposes the limits of absolute truth and presents knowledge as something negotiable. The conflict between textual and memory-based knowledge divides Lucy between two ways of seeing the world, and since neither is portrayed as definitive, she does not wholly embrace either culture. Her identity is created through continuing negotiation, which contributes to its fragmented nature.

In Bhabha's account of the Third Space, identity is formed through ongoing negotiation and not derived from a single cultural background. The Third Space, he writes, "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37), and new meanings are formed within it. Lucy and Sam negotiate between their Chinese origins and American culture without being fully involved in either. Cultural conflict thus does more than mark the difference between two cultures; it helps construct a fragmented identity.

❖ **In-Betweenness and the Fragmentation of Identity**

In-betweenness is another key source of fragmentation in the novel. It is evident in Sam's gender ambiguity, which Lucy registers when she observes that "Sam's body was androgynous still, prized by a father who wanted a son" (Zhang, 2020, p. 18). The word "still" presents the ambiguity as a state that is expected to end, and "prized by a father who wanted a son" ties it to Ba's desire and not to Sam's own. Sam's identity has thus formed under contradictory expectations and not within any single social category. Sam understands himself as a boy, yet society does not fully recognize that identity, and he is left in a liminal position between socially constructed categories of gender.

The novel does not treat identity as predetermined. It treats it as negotiated under conflicting expectations. In this respect Sam's identity resembles what Bhabha says about the Third Space: identity is negotiated there and not determined by cultural or social boundaries (Bhabha, 1994, p. 36). Sam's experience illustrates how overlapping cultural and social identities produce a fluid and fragmented sense of

self and not a fixed one. It also supports the novel's larger point that identity fragments when individuals cannot fit prescribed categories.

Narrative Symbols Representing Hybridity and Fragmentation

❖ Gold and the Illusion of Belonging

Gold is a symbol of longing and aspiration, and of an illusion of belonging. It first appears in the landscape itself, where the hills are "scorched gold" (Zhang, 2020, p. 10). The word names a color and a promise of wealth together, although "scorched" already tempers the promise with damage. As the story proceeds, it becomes clear that for the outsiders of frontier society the promise is an illusion.

In terms of Bhabha's hybridity, Ba exists in an uneasy position, at once participating in the frontier and excluded from it. He takes part in its economic and social processes but receives no recognition for his contribution. Gold therefore becomes a symbol of the inability to gain acceptance and not an opportunity. This denial of acceptance further disrupts the family's identity. Here the negotiation of identity is tied directly to the economic conditions that Bhandari finds missing from Bhabha's account (2022, p. 180).

❖ Bones and Disrupted Cultural Transmission

Bones are another significant symbolic element, and they indicate a disrupted process of memory and cultural transmission. As Ba explores the hills, he uncovers fossils: "The pick pries bones from the rocks of the hillside; the shovel digs them" (Zhang, 2020, p. 73). The present tense gives the labor an immediacy. Rather than mining gold, Ba digs for the remains of extinct creatures. The motif of extinction recurs here, since the books earlier declare the buffalo extinct while Ba insists on what he knows.

This symbolic action embodies Bhabha's view that the meaning of culture has no fixed point of origin or essence but is always recreated through negotiation (1994, p. 37). Bones represent how impossible it is to possess a total cultural identity. Identity instead comes from fragments of memory and history that must continually be put together again.

❖ The Tiger as a Representation of the Third Space

Of the novel's symbols, none represents the fluidity of cultural meaning better than the tiger that Ma draws in the doorway of each new house. Zhang writes that "Ma's tiger is like no other tiger Lucy has seen, a set of eight lines suggesting the beast only if you squint. A cipher" (2020, p. 43). The phrase "if you squint" leaves part of the work of recognition to the viewer, so the image exists only through interpretation.

The tiger represents the incomplete transfer of cultural memory. Even though Lucy and Sam understand its importance, they cannot wholly revive the original cultural system from which it draws its significance. The symbol therefore stays between presence and absence and between familiarity and unfamiliarity. According to Bhabha, cultural significance is generated through constant negotiation and not from any fixed origin (1994, p. 37). The tiger acts as a representation of this in-between space because its meaning remains fluid and open to negotiation.

❖ Narrative Form, Perspective, and Fragmentation

The novel's formal features reinforce the fragmentation described above. In the passages discussed in this study, the narration stays close to Lucy's perception: Lucy asks what home means, Lucy remembers Ba's words, Lucy notes Sam's body, and Lucy sees the tiger that Ma draws. Cultural knowledge therefore reaches the reader already filtered through a single young consciousness. Ba's authority is relayed secondhand, and Ma's tiger is described by someone for whom it remains a cipher. Inherited meaning never appears in an original form; it arrives already interpreted, which is how Bhabha's notion of cultural translation operates at the level of narration (Bhabha, 1994).

Tense does related work. The passages quoted above move between past and present. The account of Sam's body ("was androgynous still") is retrospective, while Ba's digging and Ma's drawing are rendered in the present tense. The shift keeps the family's history from settling into a single temporal register, and it reinforces the sense that the past is neither finished nor fully recoverable.

The novel's chronology is also fragmented. Because the family's history is not laid out in a straight line, the reader has to assemble it from pieces, in the way the siblings must assemble an identity from fragments of memory and history. Form

and theme thus converge: the reading experience itself becomes a process of negotiation and reconstruction, and not of receiving a coherent whole.

❖ The Frontier Reimagined

The Third Space in the novel is also a historical space, the American frontier. Classic frontier narratives locate national identity in white settlement. Zhang's decision to tell the story through the children of Chinese immigrants unsettles that center, and the analysis above shows several elements of the frontier myth being turned around. Gold, which promises prosperity, brings exclusion. The books' record of the frontier, in which the buffalo are extinct, is set against Ba's knowledge from memory. The land is dug for bones and not for gold.

These reversals tie fragmented identity to the frontier setting. Hunziker's account of Chinese immigrants as outsiders to American national identity (2022, p. 22) and Reis's reading of their exclusion from mainstream history (2021, p. 253) help explain why. A national narrative that withholds recognition leaves no ready place in which to belong, so identity must be negotiated in the interstices that the narrative leaves open. The Third Space, read this way, is not an abstract cultural zone but the position that results when a national story denies recognition. This also answers, in part, Bhandari's concern that Bhabha's theory neglects material conditions (2022, p. 180).

Findings

Identity fragmentation in *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* occurs mainly through displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness. The conflict between Chinese cultural values and American frontier society prevents Lucy and Sam from identifying with either culture. In-betweenness is portrayed not as a transitional phase but as an enduring feature of identity construction.

Zhang uses symbolism to develop the themes of hybridity and fractured identity. The symbols of gold, bones, and the tiger reinforce these themes by illustrating exclusion, disrupted cultural memory, and the instability of cultural meaning. Together they suggest that identity is not passed down as one coherent unit but is negotiated continually through displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness.

The novel's narration, which stays close to Lucy's perception, and its shifting tense and fragmented chronology reinforce this representation by presenting inherited meaning as already interpreted and the past as incompletely recoverable. The reworking of the frontier myth links the fragmentation of identity to the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from the national narrative.

The results show that *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* depicts the construction of fragmented identity through the interplay of displacement, cultural conflict, in-betweenness, and hybridity. They also indicate that Bhabha's theories of hybridity and the Third Space provide an effective framework for analyzing identity formation and negotiation in contemporary Chinese American literature.

Conclusion

This study has analyzed the portrayal of fragmented identity in C Pam Zhang's *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* through Homi K. Bhabha's theories of the Third Space and hybridity. The experiences of Lucy and Sam show that identity in the novel is presented not as static and cohesive but as dynamic and constantly negotiated. The novel thereby contradicts essentialist ideas of identity and treats belonging as a process and not a fixed condition.

The analysis shows that displacement, cultural conflict, and in-betweenness work as interconnected forces that contribute to the fragmentation of identity. The hybridity of the novel appears as neither cultural harmony nor synthesis but as a state of instability and negotiation. Fragmentation is therefore presented not as something to be resolved but as a continuing condition of diasporic life within Bhabha's Third Space.

Using Bhabha's theory, the study shows that *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* contributes significantly to the discourse of identity construction in contemporary Chinese American literature. Instead of offering a simple, binary view of identity, the novel reveals the inadequacy of using a single cultural affiliation to measure belonging. Identity emerges as a continuing process of negotiation shaped by historical exclusion and cultural contact. The study is limited to one novel and one theoretical lens, and its findings concern this text. Further work could test them against other Asian American novels of the American West and against approaches that give more weight to class and material history.

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