

Paradox of Cultural Identity in Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976)

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to scrutinize Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. The present paper sheds light on the complexities of modern autobiography. Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* is an unconventional form of autobiography, and this may reflect her unconventional journey of self-discovery. It also demonstrates a set of development stages of the Hong Kingston. To be more accurate, Kingston went through many stages in order to find her identity. Achieving this, she fought against two sides: Eastern and Western. She rebelled against her Chinese tradition and the American racism. Therefore, this study poses a number of questions as follows: Firstly, how do Chinese Americans establish their cultural identity? Secondly, how did Kingston establish her identity as a Chinese woman? Thirdly, what is the meaning of 'silence' in Kingston's journey of self-discovery?

Keywords: Maxine Hong Kingston, Autobiography, Paradox of Identity, Racism, Chinese-American Identity.

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Introduction

The beginning of the Chinese American literature occurred in the 19th century at the time Chinese workmen immigrated to America. In 1970, a new generation of Chinese American writers emerged to convey their voice and express themselves. Maxine Hong Kingston is one of the most prominent Chinese American writers who received great international acclaim. Despite her few works, she has a vital role in the Chinese-American literature.

The Chinese American literature explores such themes as racism and pessimism. The notion of self-identity is based upon the difference between Chinese and Chinese-American identity. Despite the fact that the Chinese-American literature supports Chinese ethnicity, many writers try to separate themselves from their origins.

The Chinese Americans seek to impart the real spirit of Asian-American tradition and culture. Various Asian-Americans believed that they are responsible for debunking their stereotypes. They experience all forms of discrimination, including inequality and marginalization. In addition, they want to merge into the American society, and prove that Easterners are not inferior to Westerners.

Hong Kingston was born and brought up in the United States of America. Therefore, she knew China only by means of the mass media and the stories told by her mother. Due to the fact that the images which Kingston comprehended are not first-hand;

rather, she re-formed her identity by means of her imagination. In her autobiography "*The Woman Warrior*," the literary depiction of Kingston "hunts the reader's attention with its mysticism and the reader bewildered to see the difference between the reality and fantasy. Kingston appears to be a strange, deep narrator in *The Woman Warrior*" (221).

She is sometimes totally absorbed into a tale of someone else. In the fairytale of Fa Mu Lan in the chapter "White Tigers", the heroine of the fairytale is a projection of Kingston herself. However, the chapter "At the Western Palace" does not include the pronoun 'I' at all. This is very strange for an autobiography. This chapter also gives an account of her aunt Moon Orchid.

Shirley Rose considers *The Woman Warrior* "a progression of highly dramatized narratives building on each other as they depict a mounting conflict between cultures" and maintains that Kingston employs "her autobiography as a way to bridge two cultures and their separate versions of reality" (12). She adds that the goal of Kingston is "not to reconcile one to another or subordinate one to another" but "to give equal validity to both through articulation" (12). As Rose put it, because Kingston blends "what is accepted as American reality with Chinese myth and American myth with Chinese reality, readers begin to see that reality is mythically constructed" (12)

It is important to mention in this context that Kingston is so rebellious against, mostly, everything. She fights against the

patriarchal system of her Chinese culture and the discrimination of the American practiced on the Easterners like her. Sohayib Malkawi makes it crystal that the “repudiation of the feminine colors the spirit of Maxine throughout her memoir, which she writes, above all, as a challenge to her mother’s dictum against telling her stories” (45). As a symbol of the whole Chinese people, Kingston rebels against her mother. In her own words, Kingston announces her rebellion: “‘you must not tell anyone,’ my mother said, ‘what I am about to tell you’” (4).

Part I: Departing on the Quest.

The quest for self-identity in Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* seems to be a journey with an end and a beginning. The departing point is when the hero realizes the bad need to know the reason of his/her presence in the world. Such awareness is often incited by the power of language.

Kingston’s ancestral aunt was the woman who did not talk; she was like a shadow of silence. Kingston describes her as a person who “kept the man’s name to herself throughout her labor and dying; she did not accuse him that he be punished with her. To keep her inseminator’s name she gave silent birth” (11). The words of revenge, which are inscribed on her back, are her task in the war. She writes: “The reporting is the vengeance . . . not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words” (53). Such words give a justification of her fight against the baron. “‘You’ve done this,’ I

said, and ripped off my shirt to show him my back. "You are responsible for this" (44).

In such a view, the sword woman is a "spokesman", making use of her words as a sword. Therefore, her battle is a battle of words whereby she proves her personality: "From the words on my back, and how they were fulfilled, the villagers would make a legend about my perfect filiality" (45).

The voice represents an important motif in the novel. In this respect, Yu Min Chen writes: "*The Woman Warrior* reveals a constant internal debate about the definition of "a voice" and how to have a voice, about the anxiety and desire to reclaim the legitimacy for definition. The initial silence is the dead and unknown opening up of space allow for Kingston's dramatic self-performance in *The Woman Warrior*" (5).

Brave Orchid, Kingston's mother, is depicted as a woman warrior and her story is told in the chapter "Shaman". As a young girl, Orchid attended medical school. After she finished her study, she came back to her village as a doctor. This story portrayed Orchid as a heroic story-teller and a defeater of ghosts. She had the ability to speak to the "Sitting Ghost" when she was in medical school. She once cast a spell to ward it off.

In her daughter's stories, Orchid is a strong "woman warrior", fighting against ghosts. She was also a skillful doctor. However, she is, in real life, a laundress who used to fear the "ghosts." In fact, these ghosts were humans of different races. On

one side, Orchid taught her daughter the Song of Fa Mu Lan as well as her astonishing life story. On the other side, she always insulted women in her speeches. She always said such proverbs as "Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds" "There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls"; "When you raise girls, you're raising children for strangers"; "Break the women with their tongues". There is even a Chinese word for female "I" which also means "slave" (45-46).

Brave Orchid forced Kingston into holding the idea that when the latter was a child, the former cut a piece of Kingston's tongue. Therefore, her tongue could be more fluent in speaking languages. This surgery nevertheless made her a girl who has no ability to speak in public for long. It is noteworthy to mention that the silence of the girl is psychological. Her mother used to dodge the question whenever she was asked about her daughter's tongue-cutting.

Kingston took her knowledge about China from the mother's "talk-stories" because the former was born and raised in America. The mother taught the girl that Chinese used to sell and buy girls. Kingston thus has a deep aversion for China: "I did not want to go to China. In China my parents would sell my sister and me. My father would marry two or three more wives. . . I did not want to go where the ghosts took shapes nothing like our own" (99). However, Kingston came back to America and found that her "American life was such a disappointment" (45).

Belonging to an ethnic minority, Kingston considers herself to be an outsider in a limbo state. She was torn between two worlds: China and America. Moreover, neither of these worlds was a home of hers. Such a sense of homelessness is a parallel of Jean-Paul Sartre's feeling of "parentlessness". Kingston's search for self represents the search for a homeland and her national identity. According to Suzanne Juhasz, "it is as a Chinese-American woman that Kingston seeks to define herself" (15).

Kingston seems as if she were two individuals: Chinese and American. Sometimes, she speaks with the voice of Americans; sometimes, she speaks with the voice of the Chinese. "She plays," Yuan Shu argues, "a double role here..... Kingston serves as an insider informant telling an authentic story about her own ancestral culture and society. On the other hand, to the Chinese and Chinese-American readership Kingston assumes the position of a privileged first-world woman in investigating and speculating upon the tragedy of a third-world subaltern... (208).

Part II: The Progression of the Search for Self.

In the literary works that deal with quest for anything (identity, knowledge, love...etc.) the most important thing is the process of the search in itself. The same goes for Kingston's work that the present study discusses. Examining this work closely, it is found that the search for the self is so related to the learning of language. Kingston is concerned with introducing the forming of

selfhood by means of language experiences. The quest for identity reflects a primary psychological need. Any human needs an identity in connection to other individuals. Moreover, humans always try to associate themselves with a certain culture.

Yael Tamir writes:

“The quest for identity is a quest imbued with a hope to find a home, a group to identify with, and often a cause to fight for. It is marked by self-reflection, by the readiness of individuals to make radical changes in the way they perceive themselves as well as in their relations with others. Individuals can, as a result of such a reflective process, choose to retain the identity they held before the process began, they can reject this identity and assimilate in a new culture or "renew their identity"- i.e., adopt the national, cultural identity their forefathers held.” (The Quest for Identity 17)

It can be said that the quest for identity shows that identity is not only related to destiny but it is also a result of re-creating of one's self. There are a number of strategies of asserting one's identity. For instance, assimilation is the most prominent image of an individual who is absorbed into a host culture. Such individuals

experience a process of discovering what is beyond their identity forced upon them.

Individuals are forced to conform to one cultural and social atmosphere. They determine the identity according to a range of principles introduced to them by numerous factors. This means that preferring a particular identity does not happen randomly. Kingston believed that language is the most important method of expressing a person's self. She then demonstrates her quest for an identity in the image of a quest for the power of language. The novel is produced in the form of story-telling.

Being a woman in a host culture, Kingston's mother was forced to assert her native culture's norms. Such a strategy enables her to preserve her Chinese heritage. However, the daughter felt that she was a person who has no identity. She is neither American nor Chinese. This is one of the main problems that confront immigrants, especially the second-generation.

Kingston feels that she is different from her American colleagues. Likewise, she feels that she does not belong to her relatives. As a woman whose roots are Chinese, she faces many challenges to fit into the American society. She has to get rid of such Chinese qualities as their loud speaking voice. These qualities are not suitable for the American standards of beauty and femininity.

In addition, one of the difficulties that Kingston confronted is that she had no direct experience with her cultural identity. She

was only told about her Chinese heritage. When she wrote her autobiography, she had never visited China. Therefore, she spoke of something that she only heard about.

Part III: “If you don’t talk, you can’t have a personality” (*The Woman Warrior*, 180).

The tales narrated by Kingston’s mother are the main source of the autobiography *The Woman Warrior*. Her mother was a doctor and a midwife. Going to America, she became a laundrywoman. Feeling an outsider, she always wanted to return to China. To preserve her identity as a Chinese, she used to teach her children "myths, tales, and family history. In a totally different cultural atmosphere, Orchid managed to implant the Chinese spirit into her children. Brave Orchid’s tales spoke of the patriarchy of the Chinese culture.

This traditional way of narration is greatly reflected in mother’s "talk-stories.” The narrator says: "At last I saw that I too had been in the presence of great power, my mother talking-story (20). On another note, Kingston knows two languages. However, both failed her. "I have so many words . . . "chink" words and "gook" words too . . . that they do not fit on my skin" (53).

The chapter "White Tigers” demonstrates the myth of Fa Mu Tan narrated in the first person. The fact that the pronoun "I" turns from referring to the author to the mythical heroine Fa Mu Lan indicates a very strong identification between them. The reason why they are akin to each other is as follows: “The

swordswoman and I are not so dissimilar. May my people understand the resemblance soon so that I can return to them. What we have in common are the words at our backs" (53).

Kingston felt shameful due to the fact that her Chinese society used to insult females. As a child, Kingston cried to express her resentment. Later, she took a defensive attitude and rejected any thing which her society imposed on women. She refused to be submissive and abused. In her childhood, Kingston screamed at her mother: "I'm not a bad girl." Actually, what she wanted to say is, "I'm not a girl"(46). In addition, she suffered from "a stubborn dumbness" during her study in kindergarten.

She rejected to be integral in the Chinese society, and then she tried to assimilate into the American culture in order to find herself. She faced many challenges in her way of assimilation because she belonged to an ethnic minority. She was so abused and discriminated against for being Eastern. The Westerners insulted her in many ways such as calling her as 'nigger yellow.'

In this way, Kingston regarded herself as a female fighter against the Western racists. In such glowing words, she clarifies that her war is unique: "If I took the sword, which my hate must surely have forged out of the air, and gutted him, I would put color and wrinkles into his shirt" (49). Having no sword, Kingston does not do anything except to whisper back in the "unreliable voice" of a "bad, small-person" (48).

It is worth mentioning that the voice plays an important role in the narration. Her voice is described as a sound of "a pressed-duck's" (92). There is a number of "recounted in Kingston's autobiography shows some unspeakable" or "unaskable" matters. The first chapter exposes a family secret: "You must not tell anyone, "my mother said, what I am about to tell you" (1). The Chinese culture is characterized with the idea of preserving secrets.

The following dialogue demonstrates such a matter:

[Mother]: "I didn't say you were ugly."

[Daughter]: "You say that all the time."

[Mother]: "That's what we're supposed to say that's what Chinese say. We like to say the opposite."(203)

It is necessary to mention that the notion of 'silence' indicates various meanings in America and China. "The Chinese say 'a ready tongue is an evil'" (Kingston 164). In addition, the narrator can recall the violent act of cutting the daughter's tongue. The Chinese people believe that 'the cutting of the tongue' has much to do with female castration. By way of illustration, if a female stays silent, she manages to be a female in the truest sense of the word. According to the Chinese culture, an exemplary girl is the one who is delicate and talks a little. The narrator thinks that her mother cut a piece from her tongue. She asks her as follows:

“Why did you do that to me, Mother?”

“I told you.”

“Tell me again.”

“I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied.

Your tongue would be able to move in any language.

You’ll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another.

You’ll be able to pronounce anything.

Your frenum looked tight to do those things, so I cut it.” (164)

It is worth mentioning that Americans are called in the novel as the Ghosts. Starting from childhood, Kingston feels the hidden walls between the Chinese and the Western ghosts, and that explains the subtitle of her book: "A Girlhood among Ghosts" - the childhood memories amidst the influence of the Western ghosts. The language barrier faced by the young Kingston further alienates her from the Americans. Born and raised in a traditional Chinese family, the young Kingston does not speak good English and could hardly express herself in an English-speaking America. (Wing-Yan 11)

It should be added that ghosts are a symbol of the suppressed histories of China. The ancient history of China seems to be a ghost which haunts Kingston. She is unable to forget the misery of the myogenic oppression on the females in China. The

ghosts of the killed, submissive, and foot-bound women constantly haunt Kingston.

In addition, the ghost of the no name aunt still means a lot to Kingston despite her death many years ago. As told by Kingston in *The Woman Warrior*, ... ! Vly aunt haunts me - her ghost drawn to me because now, after fifty years of neglect, I alone devote pages of paper to her" (Wing-Yan 22).

The narrator says: "There were secrets never to be said in front of the ghosts, immigration secrets whose telling could get us sent back to China" (183). Moreover, the members of the Chinese community took different names in front of the Americans, "keeping the real ones with silence" (5). Due to such an atmosphere, young Kingston thought that "the silence had to do with being a Chinese girl" (66). She also believed that talking is what differentiates the sane from the insane. In her own words, she says: "I thought talking and not talking made the difference between sanity and insanity. Insane people were the ones who couldn't explain themselves" (186).

All the insane characters that the novel shows, are women. They are as follows: the old woman "who died happy, sitting on the steps after cooking dinner," the Crazy lady who was killed by the people of the villagers, the witch Pee-A-Nah, and 'Crazy Mary' who was imprisoned in a mental hospital (186-189).

Likewise, Moon Orchid, Kingston's aunt, had mental disorders. Going to the United States of America, she met her

former husband and that was a cause for a breakdown of her life. She felt that she was a submissive wife, and a person who had no ability to express herself. Her husband considered her to be saying that she was unable to speak with the “American guests.” Therefore, she “opened and shut her mouth without any words coming out” (152).

She could not claim her legal rights, nor accuse her unfaithful husband, because she had no words. Having no words, she was unable to gain her rights from her oppressive husband. To her, the only home was the mental hospital where she told her sister, Kingston’s mother, the following: “We understand one another here. We speak the same language, the very same. They understand me, and I understand them” (160). It can thus be said that the main crisis of Kingston’s aunt comes out of her incapacity of talking.

Srima Nandi thinks that “Moon Orchid’s ‘silence’ and inability to protest against her ‘American’ husband brings to light the Chinese patriarchal approach to women remaining obedient and yielding” (412). She sheds some light on the ‘yin’ theory and how it is reflected in the novel. She clarified that “the yin/yang duality determined the role of men and women in traditional China. Women are ‘yin’ and men are ‘yang.’ She goes on demonstrating the duality as the following: “Yin is soft, yielding, receptive, passive, reflective, calm, and silent, whereas yang is

hard, dominating, active, and assertive and bold. Her meekness and subdued nature makes her silent” (412).

Moon Orchid has no ability to keep up with her new American experience. She is stubborn and struggles to speak in front of her ‘American’ husband. She is unable to find her voice and ‘talk back’ to claim her rights. On one of her conversations with Arturo Islas, Kingston says: “Moon Orchid is soft, feminine, and she goes mad. I think people of various cultures go mad in specific ways” (Islas 29). The wide cultural and social gap which she felt in the United States of America seems to be so frightening for her. She felt that language is like a barrier and she has no ability to satisfy the needs of her ‘American’ husband. One of the causes of the cultural barriers is Orchid’s inability to speak English.

Kingston regarded herself as a person who lives in “an adventurous world” saying that “there were adventurous people inside my head to whom I talked” (189). Kingston wanted her sister to tell her if she also talked to people "that [were not] real insider [her] mind.” (*The Woman Warrior* 190).

The Chinese always consider the Westerners as ghosts, but ironically, the Chinese people have some ghost-like qualities themselves. First of all, ghosts are mostly silent, like Say Goong's ghost and the sitting ghost, they appear and disappear without saying a word. Their silence echoes with the Chinese virtue of silence. Secondly, in Kingston's works, the representation of

ghosts is always related to China. All the real ghosts (the spirits of dead people) in Kingston's works originate in China like the sitting ghost which comes from To Keung School of Midwifery in Canton, the ... Sit Dom Kuei" (Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, 83) appear in one of the bridges in China, the ghosts of Say Goong and Mad Sao's mother disappear after going back to their original place, China (Wing-Yan 26).

On a different note, Kingston often had a nightmare where she saw a baby who has no anus. Symbolically, this baby is her linguistic disability; he has no a hole from which he can discharge. In the same way, she has no way out to 'express' or 'impart' her ideas in public. She had "congestion of words. She says: "As a child, I pictured a naked child sitting on a modern toilet desperately trying to perform until it died of congestion"(86).

According to Eakin, "the "holeless baby" functions as a symbolic analogue for Kingston's anguished view of discourse as necessary to the survival of the self" (263).

Among the characters, there is a clam Chinese girl who can be considered the Kingston's alter ego. In other words, she is a mirror of Kingston's incapability and weakness. The heroine screams at her: "If you don't talk, you can't have a personality." These screams express Kingston's anger at herself. Moreover, the heroine tormented and battered the girl so violently, and such

violence is no more than self-torture. The girl was reluctant to say anything.

In her Master thesis “Queering Hegemonies of Gender and Cultural Identity Through a Critical Adaptation of Maxine Hong Kingston's Novel *The Woman Warrior*” (2010), Julia Salvador writes:

“As the scene progresses, the narrator, sees herself in the new Chinese girl and does not want to be “Othered” even further. The narrator struggles to find home-spaces of identity, as she is punished for not speaking English as loudly and as perfectly as her classmates do. She is ridiculed and disciplined for the ways in which her body fails to perform an American identity that is accepted and appropriate. The narrator ashamed for her “Othered” identity, has internalized notions of cultural self-hatred, marginality, and inferiority” (67).

Nevertheless, the girl’s desire to speak became more intense. She made a list of all her mistakes, and wanted to show it to her mother. These things are “The true things” about her and to “stop the pain in [her] throat” (197). “If only I could let my mother know the list, she . . . and the world . . . would become more like me, and I would never be alone again” (198).

The mother rejected her daughter's frank confession and considered it "madness", and "craziness." Due to this violent reaction, Kingston came back to her seclusion and solitude. However, she had managed to free from her cultural and familial ties.

Part IV: The Discovery of Self-Identity.

In *The Woman Warrior*, the theme of individuation is so related to the process of self-quest. The definition of self is to be determined by individuation. The heroine's home resembles the main source of the heroine's being. In "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe", the last chapter of the novel, Kingston clearly shows the way in which she proved her individuality by means of language. Furthermore, she tolerated her heritage and family by the craft of writing.

It is true that Kingston's concept of female individuality refers to a new image of individuality in the Western tradition of autobiography. Kingston, nonetheless, never goes against the concept of individuality itself. She arranges the discourse of individuality as a way to strive against the Chinese misogynic system, and then she would be able to assert her identity in the American society.

It should be noted that the last chapter gives a summary of the entire book. This means that all the complexes come to an end, on one hand; the heroine finishes the journey of her self-quest. In this chapter, the girl finally managed to solve the

complex of her silence, replying to her mother: “my throat burst open, I stood-up, talking and burbling. I looked directly at my mother and at my father and screamed” (201).

The girl proclaimed her desire to leave home: “I’m going away anyway, I am.” She added confidently: “I can make a living and take care of myself...Not everybody thinks I’m nothing. I am not going to be a slave or a wife” (201).

Although Kingston is an adult, she is only able to flee away from home. The idea that she always catches a cold when she goes home reflects that she suffers from her familial abuse, albeit unconsciously. When she gets rid of her mother’s domination, she begins to comprehend the "talk-stories" in a new way:

I don’t want to listen to any more of your stories; they have no logic. They scramble me up. You lie with stories. You don’t tell me a story and then say, "This is a true story, “or “This is just a story. I can’t tell the difference. I don’t even know what your real names are, I can’t tell what’s real and what you make up. (202)

She asserts her identity as an American rather than a Chinese. The first step she took was to leave home. In her own words, she speaks of this experience:

“I had to leave home in order to see the world logically, logic the new way of seeing. I learned to think that mysteries are for explanation, I enjoy the simplicity.

Concrete pours out of my mouth to cover the forests with freeways and sidewalks. Give me plastics, periodical tables, dinners with vegetables no more complex than peas mixed with diced carrots. Shine floodlights into dark corners: no ghosts.” (204)

Kingston was always hesitant to go to China. She was afraid of the gap between the imagined and the real view of China. Another reason is the rumor she hears about China. As she suggests in *The Woman Warrior*: Whenever my parents said “home”, they suspended America. They suspended enjoyment, but I did not want to go to China. In China my parents would sell my sister and me. My father would marry two or three more wives (92).

Kingston had aversion to America, too. As discussed earlier, ghosts are a symbol of America and China at the same time. Ghosts are a symbol of the bad aspect of Kingston's American life. In Keung School of Midwifery in Canton, the ghost talks about the cultural crisis confronted by Brave Orchid when she immigrated to the United States of America. This sitting ghost tries to taste of the blood of Kingston's mother. In such a manner, it shows the terrible influence of the American discrimination and racism on the first-generation Chinese immigrants.

“In *The Woman Warrior*, there are numerous connotations of the Westerners as ghosts, including Moon Orchid's Americanized husband and his second wife. When Moon Orchid

turns mad, she is haunted by the Mexican ghosts, which symbolize her being haunted by the cultural alienation in America.” (Wing) 25

Her mother thought that tongue-cutting would enable young Kingston to speak any language as a way of taking refuge from being an “Other.” The narrator establishes the sense of shame in the souls of the oppressed people. In other words, Kingston’s mother is convinced that she is inferior and needs to speak the Western language (English here) so as to be well qualified and privileged. The narrator tries to conform to the Western standards. Therefore, she begins to hate whatever thing that reminds her of being a vulnerable ‘other.’

The narrator tells the audience:

I looked at her and I HATED her. I HATED her silence. I HATED her China doll haircut. I HATED being seen next to her. I HATED that she reminded me of my own quiet self. Surely the others would remember my own awkward silence. I could not let this happen. (p.24)

Conclusion

It can be concluded that changes in Kingston's character are so complex and intricate to the degree that her autobiography is not traditional at all. Her character is round (i. e. many changes happen to her along the novel.) Kingston develops from a young girl who confronts great obstacles of speaking to an adult woman who finds a way out through which she lets her countless words

appear on paper. She also grows from someone scared by the ghosts of her mother's talk-stories to a person who can carefully see the dark corners of her past. What is the most important is that she grows from a frustrated and sad daughter to an independent adult who can compose a poetic autobiography about herself.

Kingston uses a number of voices to explore her concepts. She seeks to convey the crisis of her identity as a person who cannot assimilate into any culture. She cannot be totally faithful to the American culture nor can she be loyal to her Chinese heritage. When a reader examines closely the novel, he or she finds that Hong Kingston (the narrator) is sometimes disobedient. Moreover, she sometimes verbally insults her violent mother. In addition, she is intelligent and creative, so she became later a novelist. In the chapter "No-Name Woman", Kingston creates stories about her aunt who has no name. It is worth mentioning that she is a victim and a victimizer at the same time. Sometimes, she is insulted and abused by the discriminating Americans; other times. It is she who oppresses and torments a miserable, silent girl.

It is essential to know that *The Woman Warrior* is different from traditional autobiographies, in that in *The Woman Warrior* the pronoun "I" functions as an instructor to the text itself. Due to the fact that the pronoun "I" changes, the novelist is not trustworthy to give the most faithful information.

By way of illustration, the whole account of the confrontation in the chapter "At the Western Palace" came down to Kingston through many people. In other words, she herself did not witness the confrontation; rather, she was told by someone who was in turn told, too. Thus, such a narrative account is mostly untrue, or, at least, inaccurate. As the novel comes to a close, Kingston makes it crystal clear that she is unable to differentiate reality from fiction. What is important is the concepts that she seeks to convey.

As for Kingston's attitude towards her status as an outsider, she harbors grudge for her Chinese heritage because it constantly reminds her of being vulnerable and marginalized. She hates herself as a Chinese, and such a thing is reflected in her treatment of the people of her community. For greater illustration, young Kingston uses her Chinese classmate as a scapegoat in which she practices the oppression she experiences, verbally or otherwise. In other words, this bullied girl is a symbol of all oppression, racism, marginalization that young Kingston experiences. The narrator (Kingston herself) feels furious, so she commences to punish and discipline the girls of her Chinese community for being weak and helpless in front of the American society.

Finally, the narrator succeeds in proving herself in a foreign culture. She challenged all the difficulties that both cultures (i. e. Chinese and American) impose on her. In other

words, Kingston can be oppressed and discriminated by the two cultures due to her ethnicity and gender. On one side, she is Asian and 'Yellow', so the Western society looks down upon her as inferior. On the other side, she is a female and the Chinese society oppressed females. For further study, the researcher recommends a study on how gender and ethnicity can operate simultaneously to create a more complex system of discrimination.

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مفارقة الهوية الثقافية في رواية المرأة المحاربة للكاتبة هونغ كينجستون

ملخص

الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو التدقيق بشكل واضح في المرأة المحاربة للكاتبة هونغ كينجستون. تلقي هذه الورقة الضوء على تعقيدات السيرة الذاتية الحديثة. وتعد رواية المرأة المحاربة للكاتبة هونغ كينجستون شكل غير تقليدي للسيرة الذاتية، وقد يعكس هذا رحلتها غير التقليدية لاكتشاف الذات. كما يوضح مجموعة من مراحل التطوير للكاتبة. ولكي نكون أكثر دقة، مرت كينجستون بمراحل عديدة من أجل العثور على هويتها. ولتحقيق ذلك، قاتلت الجانبين: الشرقي والغربي. كما تمردت على تقاليد الصين والصينية والعنصرية الأمريكية. لذلك تطرح هذه الدراسة عددًا من الأسئلة على النحو التالي: أولاً، كيف يؤسس الأمريكيون الصينيون هويتهم الثقافية؟ ثانياً، كيف أثبتت كينجستون هويتها كامرأة صينية؟ ثالثاً، ما معنى "الصمت" في رحلة كينجستون لاكتشاف الذات؟ الكلمات المفتاحية: ماكسين هونغ كينجستون، السيرة الذاتية، مفارقة الهوية، العنصرية، الهوية الصينية-الأمريكية.