KINGSTON'S "THE WOMAN WARRIOR": MYTHS AND CULTURAL BIGOTRY

The Woman Warrior: Mitler ve Kültürel Bağnazlık

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Abstract

Myths, which narrate a common belief or explain some natural phenomena refering to supernatural beings or imaginary people, are known to be the traditional stories that have been transmitted from the ancient times to the present. These traditional stories are considered as history of societies and they serve to explain the world view of these societies. Though they are supernatural, illogical, incoherent and unreasonable, yet a considerable number of peoples, especially peoples from the eastern part of the world, still shape their worldviews in line with them. Hence, it is likely to suggest that this reliance on myths is the most important factor among the other parameters which pave the way to cultural bigotry and generate culture clashes. From this point of view, written by Maxine Hong Kingston, a renowned Chinese-American writer who was born in America, The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts is likely to be considered as an autobiographical novel which depicts its author's struggles with such myths embeded in her Chineese heritage. In this respect, taking in consideration Kingston's The Woman Warrior which depicts its author's own life, this article aims to put forward how myths are likely to drive a society into cultural bigotry which leads the members of that society to have to struggle with various senses of alienation each of which eventually deracinates the self from its origin when faced with different cultures.

Key Words: Kingston, Myths, Culture Clash, Cultural Bigotry, Traditional Story.

Öz

Toplumların, doğayı veya doğa olaylarını anlamlandırmak için hayalî insanlar veya doğaüstü varlıklara atıfta bulunarak ortaya çıkarttığı mitler, eski zamanlardan günümüze kadar varlıklarını sürdüren geleneksel anlatılar olarak bilinirler. Bu geleneksel anlatılar toplumların tarihi olarak da kabul edilir ve bu toplumların dünya görüşlerini açıklamaya hizmet ederler. Her ne kadar doğaüstü, mantıksız, tutarsız ve akıldışı olsalar da yine de birçok toplum, özellikle de doğu toplumları, dünya görüşlerini bu mitlere göre şekillendirmiş ve şekillendirmektedirler. Mitlerin kültürel bağnazlığı ortaya çıkaran faktörlerin başında geldiği varsayılabilir. Bu varsayıma dayanarak, mitlere dayalı yaşam ve dünya görüşlerine sahip toplumların bireylerinin farklı kültürler ile karşılaştıklarında kültür çatışması yaşamalarının kaçınılmaz olacağı da ileri sürülebilir. Bu bağlamda bu makale; Çin asıllı Amerikalı yazar Maxine Hong Kingston'ın çocukken annesinden duyduğu mitlere dayalı hikâyeler üzerine kurguladığı ve Çin kültürüne özgü mitlerden kaynaklanan kültürel bağnazlığın yeni bir kültür ile karşılaşan bir kız çocuğunun kendi kültürü ve Amerikan kültürü arasında gelgitler yaşamasına neden olduğunu anlatan The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts adlı otobiyografik romanından yola çıkarak, mitlerin kültürel bağnazlığı ortaya çıkaran nedenlerin başında geldiğini, bu bağnazlığın da yeni kültürlerle karşılaşan toplum bireylerinin kendi kültürlerine Melvin Seaman'in beş kategoriye ayırdığı yabancılaşma formlarında yabancılaşıp kültür çatışmaları ile mücadele etmek zorunda kaldıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kingston, mitler, kültür çatışması, kültürel bağnazlık, geleneksel anlatılar.

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Introduction

There has been an ongoing debate regarding the definition and function of the terms 'myth' and 'culture'. Hence; Myths, ideologies, legends and folk-tales are sometimes confused with each other and they are used interchangeably. However; they are different from each other. Myths are known to be the traditional narrations about supernatural beings or imaginary people that narrates a common belief or explains some natural phenomenon. These traditional narrations are accepted as history and serve to explain the world view of a people. According to Lauri Honko, a historian of religions, a myth "expresses and confirms society's religious values and norms, it provides a pattern of behavior to be imitated, testifies to the efficacy of ritual with its practical ends and establishes the sanctity of cult" (1984, p.49). Though myths are defined as the World-view or norms and pattern of behaviours of societies, yet they differ from ideologies, legends and folk-tales. Ideology, as Richard Slotkin defines, is the abstraction of the system of beliefs, values, and institutional relationships that charactirize a particular culture or societies, whereas myth is the body of traditional narratives that exemplifies and historicizes ideology. They are stories drawn from history, and they have been acquired through usage over many generations (1986, p.70). Slotkin further suggests that "through the process of traditionalization, historical narratives are conventionalized and abstracted, and their range of reference is extended so that they become structural metaphors containing all the essential elements of a culture's worldview" (1986: 70). Thus, as Slotkin goes on, the language of myth shifts the focus of the society from a secular worldview to archetypal patterns of life (1986, p.70). While Slotkin underlines the difference between myth and ideology highlighting that myth precedes ideology, Jeppe Sinding Jensen brings to the fore the definitions made by Ake Hultkrantz and William Bascom. As Jensen quotes, Hultkrantz defines the term myth as an epic narrative dealing with figures belonging to such supernatural sphere as cosmic beings, gods and sprits (2016: 9). Hulkrantz also adds that the action of the narrative takes place in a remote prehistoric period, but in principle the event is still of topical interest. The scene of the drama is as a rule another world than our own: heaven, the underworld or an unknown country. (2016, p.9). According to Hulkrantz, as Jensen quotes, "the myth gives instruction concerning the world of the gods, ..., it confirms the social order and the cultural values [that it obtains], and [since] it is sacred, it is intended to be embraced with belief and reverence" (2016, p.9). Jensen additionaly suggests that William Bascom has defined myth, legend and folk tales. According to Bascom, as Jensen quotes, myths are prose narratives which, in the society they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the World was much as it is today (2016, p.9). Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction (2016,p.9). Thus, relying on Hulkrantz and Bascomn, Jensen claims that myths are distinguished from legends and other folk-stories not only by the aspect of belief and reverence but also by timeframe. To Jensen, while "myths relate to and about 'the time before time', legends pretend to be about matters taking place in historical time" (2016, p.10). To sum up, one can suggest that the distinguishing feature and characteristic attribute of the term 'myth' is its 'sanctity' and its 'remoteness' from the present. Considering the definitions made by the scholars mentioned above, one also can assume that in a remote time (which is considered the time before time), a man or men from a certain society had reasoned and come to some certain conclusions on some certain issues (e.g., questions of origin as how the World was created; source of the hierarchies such as gender, nobility, caste; ethics and justice, etc.), then; in time, these conclusions become sacred meta-narratives for the descendants of

that society. Thus, the culture of the society is formed in line with those sacred meta-narratives, in other words in line with myths.

Well! Now let's have a look to What the term culture is. What does it mean? Though it is known to be the living style of a society, one is likely to be surprised by the number of various definitions when s/he searches. Thus; according to Helen Spencer-Oatey, in 1952, two American antropologists revealed that there were 164 different definitions of the term culture (2012, p.1). She suggests that Mahadev L. Apte summerized this plethora of definitions saying that "Despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature" (2012, p.1). To give a few definitions; Hofstede defines the term to be "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (1994, p.5). David Matsumoto and Linda Juang defines the term culture as being "the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next" (2012, p.16). As for The British antropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, culture is "[the] complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1871, p.1). The dictionary of Merriam Webster defines the term as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time"3 It seems that although there exist numerous nuances, most of the definitions underline that culture is a certain way of living and that way of living differ from one group to another or from one society to another society.

As for culture conflict, The dictionary of Merriam Webster defines it as "the conflict of behavior patterns and values that results when different cultures are incompletely assimilated."4 When people coming from different geographical territories who carry different values, beliefs and customs come close to each other, the interaction between them inevitably create a tension at different scales. As Jonathan H. Turner puts it; "differences in cultural values and beliefs place people at odds with one another" (2006, p.87). Michele Le Baron, in her article titled *Culture and Conflict,* states that;

Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of self and other. Though cultures are powerful, they are often unconscious, influencing conflict and attempts to resolve conflict in imperceptible ways. (2003, para. 1).

From this quote, one can infer that the interaction between two individuals from different cultures creates some unconscious conflicts. These conflicts generally work against the ones from the minority groups who had to migrate from their ancestral lands for better life conditions. Consequently, they are the members of minority groups who have to exert to find resolutions between the two conflicting cultures. It is likely to assert that all the conflicts emerge during the process of searching for resolutions. Nevertheless it is difficult to claim that all searches last with resolutions. Because, in many cases, especially in the cases of the selves from the cultures which heed mythic codes sacred, the selves can not

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3Culture.   (n.d.).   Retrieved   April   12,   2018,   from   https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture
4Culture   conflict.   (n.d.).   Retrieved   April   12,   2018,   from   https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture conflict

find any resolutions and they shrink into their cultural ghettos in which conflicts with the majority culture are preserved and remained unsolved.

Reading The Woman Warrior from this point of view, one can find many indications that Kingston herself has experienced such cultural conflicts which compelled her to reconcile the culture of her parents and the culture that she was born in. As E. D. Huntley writes in his book *Maxine Hong Kingston: A Critical Companion,* Kingston was born in Stockton, California in 1940 as the third child of a Chineese couple and the eldest child of six children born in America (2001, p.1). Huntley continues that Kingston's father, Tom Hong, a well educated man in classical Chineese philosophy and poetry, emigrates from China to America in 1925. Unable to make use of his education in America, Tom firstly starts to work in a gambling hall and later as a share holder of a laundry (2001, p.1). Kingston's father, unlike the other Chineese workers, stays permanently in America and after working for fifteen years in America he manages to bring his wife to America where they settle and raise their children (Huntley, 2001, p.3). As Kingston was born in a neighborhood most of whom were Chinese emigrates, she first gets acquainted by a language called Say Yup, a dialect of Cantonese which was widely spoken by the neighborhood (Boyntown & Malin, 2005, p. 321). So she speaks chinese at home and with her friends from the same neighborhood which also is called Chinatown. Emigrants coming from China keep on living in their rituals and cultural behaviours. As Huntley quotes from Seshachari, the neighborhood or the enclave that Kingston was born in was consisted of racially diverse working class people some of whom are black, some of whom are Mexicans and Filipinos (2001, p. 4). In such a multicultural community in which ethnic groups tend to seclude themselves from the others, as Huntley claims, Kingston, besides being faced with the need to dodge the attacks from the gangs of the other ethnicities, also experiences the shame of being called Chinaman (2001, p. 4). Like most of the other second generation immigrants, Kingston, too, experiences confusion regarding American and Chinese culture. Burdened with this confusion, she attends school in California and later after graduation from high school she goes to the University of California from which she graduated in 1962. Maxine's parents, like most of the other immigrants families, unconditionally aspire to have Maxine learn her Chinese culture. From Kingston's interviews one can infer that Kingston's mother has a strong influence on her. She aspires that her daughter Maxine remain firstly Chinese. So her mother often tell her talk-stories from Chine in order to instill in her the beliefs, traditions, and customs of her native country. These stories are told to act as lessons on how the Chinese people were and should be. Thus, Kingston grows up both with Chineese culture at home and American culture outside the home. So one can find the effects that both culture have left on Kingston when s/he reads her books.

The Woman Warrior is the memoir of Maxine Hong Kingston's experience growing up as a first-generation Chinese American. In it, she tells the stories of several other women to reveal the struggles and issues that have affected her own life. In telling their stories, she is telling her own stories because Kingston herself may likely be considered as a compilation of all the women in her book (Jhajharia & Beniwal, 2012: 255). It is about the stories that Kingston heard from her mother while growing up in America. Kingston's The Woman Warrior, which depicts its author's own life, is an autobiographical novel that puts forth how myths are likely to drive a society into cultural bigotry which leads the members of that society to have to struggle with various senses of alienation when faced with different cultures. Melvin Seeman, in his paper On the Meaning of Alienation, tries to put the complex structure of alienation into an order by a five-fold classification:

Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Normlessness, Social Isolation and Self- Estrangement (1959, p. 783).

Powerlessness, as Seeman asserts, refers to "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks" (1959, p. 784). Devorah Kalekin-Fishman makes a clear definition regarding the concept of powerlessness saying: "A person suffers from alienation in the form of 'powerlessness' when [he]/she is conscious of the gap between what [he]/she would like to do and what [he]/she feels capable of doing" (1996, p. 97). Powerlessness, then, can be interpreted as the perception that the individual does not have the means to achieve his goals.

Meaninglessness, according to Seeman, refers to "the individual's sense of understanding events in which he is engaged" (1959, p. 786). He goes on saying that "meaninglessness is characterized by a low expectancy that satisfactory predictions about the future outcomes of behaviour can be made. ...where the first meaning of alienation refers to the sensed ability to control outcomes, this second meaning refers essentially to the sensed ability to predict behavioural outcomes" (1959, p. 786). In other words meaninglessness refers to an individual's failure to appreciate the purpose of his/her work. Individuals experience this feeling when they are unable to see the relevance of a particular social norm to their current lives. In this respect, meaninglessness is closely tied to powerlessness, and it shows the indication of nihilism. Seeman argues, "We may speak of high alienation, in the meaninglessness usage, when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met" (1959, p. 786).

Seeman defines normlessness, the third variant of the alienation theme, as having been derived from Durkheim's description of 'anomie'. He asserts that "in the traditional usage, anomie denotes a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior" (1959, p. 787). In other words, normlessness refers to a situation lacking effective norms or in which individuals assume that unacceptable behaviors are required for success.

Seeman classifies the fourth type of alienation as social isolation which refers to the detachment of intellectuals or writers from popular cultural standards. In other words it refers to one who has become estranged from his society and the culture it carries. Kalekin-Fishman asserts that social isolation refers to "The feeling of being segregated from one's community" (1996, p. 97). Dwight G. Dean also articulate in his article titled Alienation: Its Meaning and Measurement that social isolation, may also be traced to Durkheim's conception of anomie, which includes "a feeling of separation from the group or of isolation from group standards" (1961, p. 753).

The final type of alienation is the sense of self-estrangement. Self-estrangement -also called self-alienation- involves dissatisfaction with oneself or losing intrinsic satisfaction with one's work. Seeman explains self-estrangement as: "...the worker who works merely for his salary, the housewife who cooks simply to get it over with, or the other directed type who acts "only for its effect on others" all these (at different levels, again) are instances of self-estrangement" (1959, p. 790). Kalekin-Fishman explains this type of alienation in a smilar way saying: "Self-estrangement is the psychological state of denying one's own interests – of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying, activities [...]"(1996, p. 97). In this regard, self-estrangement can simply be identified as the individual's dissatisfaction with the activities s/he is expected to

performe. To be alienated in this sense is to be aware of a discrepancy between one's ideal self and one's actual self-image.

Considering Kingston's life from which The Woman Warrior is fictionalized, one can find many hints that Kingston has experienced most, if not all, types of Seeman's classification. The Woman Warrior is consisted of five chapters. Considering the fact that the book narrates her life, It is likely to assert that from her childhood on Kingston continuously has had to be in struggle with those types of alienation mentioned above. At the end of each chapter, the protagonist, namely Kingston, narrates the cultural conflicts which lead her to be alienated from her Chineese culture.

The first chapter of The Woman Warrior is titled *No-Name Woman*. It fictionalises a real life story that she had heard from her mother. The story is about an aunt from her father's family who had been ostracised from the family because of committing adultry while her husband was working in America to earn money and supply a better life for his family. Kingston names this chapter *No Name Woman* since her aunt's real name has never been mentioned by the family. When the villagers learn that a married woman has become pregnant from another man and has given birth to a child, they attack the family's home on the night of the baby's birth, the village destroys the family home, killing the animals in the farm, shattering the food, and rubbing the walls with chicken blood. Later, her mother finds that No Name Woman and her newly born child are dead in the well. After telling the story Kingston's mother warns her saying: " Dont let your father know that I told you. He denies her. Now that you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you. Don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born. The villagers are watchful"(Kingston, 2010: 5). It is obvious that Kingston had been much influenced by this incident. Having been grown up in America, it is likely for her to be confused, because such an incident would have not the same result in America. As she wrote a section on this incident, she might have tried to understand her aunt's situation. Her aunt is married but has been away for long from her husband. In patriarchal societies it is very likely that a man forces a woman into intercourse eventhough the culture prohibits. So, how does a culture (the villagers, her aunt's family) attempts to punnish the woman only without any legal inquiries? What about the man who might have forced the woman? Would the same incident cause the same result in America? How does the villagers find the right to punnish the woman? Would such an intercouse last with the same result in a culture that respects the rule of law? It is likely that all of these questions might well have dragged Kingston to feel a sense of alienation in the form of meaninglessness for her Chineese culture.

The second chapter of The Woman Warrior is titled *White Tigers*. In this section the narrator talks about her childhood. She imagines herself as a version of the legendary Chinese woman warrior, Fa Mulan, who, having learned the warrior's arts from an elderly couple who were hundreds of years old, raises an army and topples the corrupt government. After her battles, she takes up the traditional woman's roles of mother and wife. To the extent that Kingston tells her experiences of her childhood, one can infer that she had been despised and pushed to the second plan because of the cultural code assuming that "there is no profit in raisng girls. Better to raise geese than girls"(Kingston, 2010, p. 46). In this chapter Kingston tells the readers that her American life has been such a disappointment (2010, p. 45). Although she gets straight A's, her mother does not seem to have been proud of her. Instead she wants to tell her a story about a girl who saved her village (Kingston, 2010, p. 46). Her mother's indifference leads her to feel that she has to do something big and fine, or else her parents would sell her when they made their way back to China. The common perception of her parents and neighbours is that:

"feeding girls is feeding cowbirds" (Kingston, 2010, p. 46). Kingston goes on saying that their neighbours who were also from China shook their heads when they see her and her sister because of their being girls. Thus, it is a shame for the parents to take the girls out together. Kingston remembers that on Saturday mornings their great uncle would call the children to go shopping with him, but upon seeing that the girls are dressing to acompany him he would roar on the girls saying 'No girls' (Kingston, 2010, p. 47). It is obvious that all these childhood memories that push the girls back had led Kingston to experience a sense of alienation in the form of self-estrangement. Self-estrangement, as explained above, is the psychological state of denying one's own interests – of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying, activities. Though Kingston is a hardworking student getting the highest grades among her peers, her parents remain indiffirent to her success. Her mother is not satisfied with her high grades. Instead of being proud of her daughter, she tells her the story of a mytical figure. It is natural that a school girl feels a culture clash when she is confronted with different attitudes of the two cultures towards the girls.

In *Shaman*, the third story, the narrator describes her own mother's life in a Chinese medical school. Mixing fantasy and autobiography, she fictionalises her mother's physical and mental struggles with spirits and ghosts. In this chapter, Kingston's mother Brave Orcid goes to a medical school in China to become a doctor. She has a degree of midwifery with a great success. She also gains a positive impressions on her school friends since she struggles and defeats a ghost that bothers the school and the students. On returning to her village, hearing that she has defeated a ghost, the villagers welcome her as if she were a shaman who has the ability to cure the diseases and to daunt the ghosts. But it is interesting that though she has been welcomed as a respected doctor who has the ability to cure the diseases and to daunt the ghosts in her village, when she migrated from China to America she can not work as a doctor. she is a doctor in China, she can support herself and manage a life for herself as a respected and powerful woman, she can have a job of her own. In America, however, she has to work first in a laundry and then in a tomato field. This incident shows the difference between the two culture. It is likely to assert that such a fictionalization may be considered as an indication that Kingston feels an alienation in the form of 'social isolation' which refers to one who has become estranged from his society and the culture it carries. Social isolation as Kalekin-Fishman also asserts is "the feeling of being segregated from one's community" (1996, p. 97). Dwight G. Dean also articulates that social isolation, may also be traced to Durkheim's conception of anomie, which includes "a feeling of separation from the group or of isolation from group standards" (1961, p. 753). At the end of this chapter, one reads that Kingston visits her parents. Her modher, Brave Orkid is not happy with her life in America because it is very difficult to work in a laundry and then in tomato fields. The reader also learns that though they are not content with their current life, they will never go back. Kingston's mother Brave Orchid also asks her daughter to come and live with them again, but Kingston says she can not come back because there are too many ghosts that bother her.

In the fourth chapter, *At the Western Palace*, she describes her aunt Moon Orchid's mental breakdown after she emigrates to the United States from China in order to find her separate husband. Kingston, in this section, tries to exhibit some of the familial characteristics of her Chineese culture. Their handling the familial or health problems is narrated through her real aunt's Moon Orcid's struggles to find her husband. Seeing that her husband is married with another woman and does not want to accept her she goes into madness. By portraying Moon Orcid as foolish, awkward, socially clueless, and

completely unable to support herself financially, Kingston heighlights the gap between the two culture. On the one side, a married woman is left behind for many years by her husband who migrates to a new culture for a better job. Though the husband regularly sends money to his wife, it seems that he has married another woman in America. Though she was betrayed, Moon Orcid prefers to remain voiceless since she has been raised in Chinese culture in which women have not their own words. On the other hand, Brave Orcid who has migrated to America long before Moon Orcid, still is keen to live with the Chineese traditions that are portrayed as having been derived from old sayings or cultural myths. She insists that her sister Moon Orcid go to her husband and demand that she is the first wife, so she has the right, acording to Chineese culture, to raise the second wife's children and tell the second wife that she is her slave (Kingston, 2010, p. 147). Moon Orcid's daughter tries to contact her father, but the father does not accept to see her in a strict manner. Upon Brave Orcid's insistence, Moon Orchid eventually agrees to go to Los Angeles, the city where her husband lives, to ask for an account from her husband who left her thirty years ago and married another woman. Though the husband remarried in America, yet he regularly sent money to Moon Orkid while she was in China. Brave Orcid, her sons, Moon Orcid, her daughter and another one take the road to L.A. in a car driven by Brave Orcid son (Kingston, 2010, p. 138) On the way to Los Angels, Brave Orchid tells talk-stories about a Chinese myth of an Emperor with four wives. According to the myth one of the Emperor is imprisoned by one of his four wives called the Empress of the West in the Western Palace. So, as the myth claims, it is a duty, a mission for the Empress of the East to rescue her husband from the Empress of the West (Kingston, 2010, p. 142). Towards the end of the chapter, when Moon Orcid loses her mental health, Brave Orcid, dismissing the modern medical drugs, brings her to her home and tries her own remedies. Through portraying such incidents, Kingston seems to imply how she had to tackle with the absurdities that her mother and her aunt (who are portrayed as being tightly bound to their cultural rituels) are obsessed with. So it is likely to assert that she might have experienced a sense of alienation in the form of normlessness. Normlessness, as explained above, refers to a situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior" (Seeman, 1959, p. 787). In other words, normlessness refers to a situation lacking effective norms or in which individuals assume that unacceptable behaviors are required for success. Her Chineese social norms no longer satisfy her social expectations. Her mother's insistence on old Chineese norms and behaviours and the outcomes of those attitudes might have led Kingston to have the feeling that her Chineese norms can not efficiently satisfy her needs in a society that initiates reason and logic.

Conclusion

Kingston's story reveals the difficulties of growing up a first-generation Chinese-American. While reading the book, one can find the feelings of displacement and alienation within most of the sentences. It is likely to assert that the narrator, namely Kingston, is ambivalent between two mostly, if not completely, different cultures which embed different values. She can not feel completely American because of both her physical appearance and her parents expectations that she must not dismiss her Chineese customs and traditions. she also can not feel completely Chinese either. As Jhajharia & Beniwal state, "Kingston, like so many other immigrant children, must build an identity for herself between two worlds that do not completely accept her. She must deal with the self-controlled customs of her Chinese heritage as well as the more liberal, tolerant aspects of America" (2012, p. 254). So, one can say that Kingston has to find a way to weave the two culture within her own identity. The main conflict that Kingston

faces is the difficulty of reconciling what she has been taught at home and what she encounters outside of the home. On the one side, she struggles and tries to give meaning to the Chinese customs and traditions that her mother force her to obey, on the other side she has to learn the cultural norms of a completely different society. So she has to overcome both the conflicts arising from her mother and the conflicts arising from the society that she aspires to be a member.

It is natural that when an individual from a certain society migrates to a cultuarlly different society, s/he instinctively compares the living style of the society that s/he migrated. In the long run, s/he develops an attitude and adopt a reaction which spans between nativism and appropriation. There occur some other characters (such as mimic characters, hybrid characters, ambivalent characters, assimilated characters, etc.) between the edges of nativism and appropriation. No matter what the migrant adopts, yet s/he subconsciously feels a sense of inferiority, since by chosing one s/he subconsciously admits that it is s/he who has to align her/himself with the terms and codes of the mainstream. It is most likely that Kingston herself has experienced such a process. She is full of the sense of revenge for her Chineese culture which has pushed the femininity back of the masculinity because of some certain myths that have been carried from the remote times. By writing such an autobiographical novel which seems to dismiss the odd characteristics stemmed from the myths that her Chineese culture still heed, one can assert that she instinctively tries to take her revenge. Although it seems that She has reconciled the two conflicting cultures to create for herself a life that is rich in both Chinese heritage and American culture, one can see the scratches (types of alienations) that occured in her soul and self in the process of reconciliation of a culture full of myths and a culture relied on social behaviours blossomed from science, reason and logic.

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