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Reconciliation into Chinese American Culture in
The Woman Warrior by Maxine Kingston:
an In-depth Study of the Characters

*A dissertation submitted to the department of English in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for a Master Degree in Literature, Civilisation and Language
Teaching.*

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Dedication

Every accomplishment requires self-efforts and motivation from people
who matter

I dedicate this thesis to the closest people to my heart

To

The ones who kept faith in me, who lifted me up whenever feeling like
giving up, who accepted me for the way I am and loved me
unconditionally; *my parents*

To

My sisters and brothers; *Khawla, Kawther, Islem and Ihab* for their
prayers, tenderness and cheerful character

To

All my friends for their understanding and encouragement in my many
moments of depression, for always finding a shoulder to lean on. I
cannot list all your names here, but you are always in memory.

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General Introduction

Chinese American literature is a collection of works that are frequently written by American born writers of Chinese immigrant ancestors. This coexistence of two different worlds: Chinese and American made them living in a serious cultural clash. By immigrating to the US, the Chinese shifted from a society that prioritizes the community over the individual to a liberal society that believes in the individual's own good, which made the process of raising children hard to manage and require much effort. The American born children oftenly bear the burden to preserve their ancestor's heritage. Such heavy load created a kind of stressful atmosphere around Chinese American children and caused them a sense of anxiety and confusion. Chinese American writers express this shared issue in many literary works.

One of the potential figures of Chinese American literature is Maxine Hong Kingston. She was born on 27 October 1940 in Stockton, California to Chinese immigrant parents who were well-educated and interested in poetry, songs and folktales of their village. Kingston inherited the love of literature from her family to be a lecturer and a creator of many influential pieces of writing including fictional and nonfictional ones. (Abrams 27, 28)

Kingston wrote many valuable pieces of writing including *The Fifth Book of Peace*, *The Woman Warrior*, *China Men*, *Tripmaster Monkey* and *Hawai'i One Summer* respectively. This study sheds the light on her book *The Woman Warrior*.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts is a written composition of five chapters prepared by Kingston in 1976. As Kingston stated in

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New York Times interview, *The Woman Warrior* could be considered a half of ‘one big book’ where the other half is *China Men* in which the former is about the female members of the family while the latter is about the male ones. (qtd. in Oh 45) *The Woman Warrior*, as a literary work, helped in solidifying the reputation of the Asian American writing community. It deals with ethnicity¹ and gender at a wider range. It proved its success in that it is found in almost all English studies curriculum.

Another point is that it opened a great debate about its genre. On the one hand, it gained awards for nonfiction works in addition to the many critics and readers who consider it as an autobiography; how Kingston grew up as Chinese American. The same work, on the other hand, is considered as a fictionalized novel due to the great myths of Fa Mu Lan and Ts’ai Yen where a whole chapter is devoted for each. In this context, Cynthia Wong claimed in her study of the novel, “*The Woman Warrior* was marketed with a "Non-fiction" label on its cover, but in the detractors' view much of the book is fiction” (7). In this respect, the book is praised for Kingston’s ability to find a midway between fiction and nonfiction.

The Woman Warrior is a novel that interested many writers to base their works on it. These works deal with the major issues that serve the topic of my dissertation. A variety of books, journals, articles and dissertations offer some answers to the main questions to facilitate reaching the objectives of this study. The questions are around Chinese Americans’ integration, the difficulties of growing up in America in a Chinese household, the outcomes of the displaced position, the effect of the mother’s

¹ A fusion of traits that belong to a group—shared values, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviors, experiences, memories, and loyalties. Often deeply related to a person’s identity.

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stories on her daughter, And the daughter's reaction towards her hyphenated position and how her reaction is reflected within her characters.

To reach the objectives of this study, a variety of sources is to be consulted. Among those sources we can mention Erika Lee's article " The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Race Gatekeeping, 1882–1924" (2008). Also the one of Kate Hooper and Jeanne Batalova "Chinese Immigrants in the United States" (2015), in addition to others that served much in offering the historical background of Chinese in America (the first chapter) and to give a context for the study.

Going profoundly with the study, we have Monica Chiu's book *Filthy Fiction: Asian American Literature by Women*, and the *Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature* by Seiwoong Oh (2007), which offered us general overview about the novel. Also Dennis Abrams' book *Maxine Hong Kingston* helped much in knowing important details of Kingston's life as a hyphenated writer. More intensely with the research, Judith Oster's *Crossing Cultures* (2003) was a very serving book to clarify the blur surrounding the topic... Moreover, important themes of the novel are tackled by different scholars and researchers like Shuang Sun's "Interpreting Silence and Voice in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*" (2009), Dingming Wang's work "Enhanced Tragedy Changing Point of View in *The Woman Warrior*", "ANALYSIS *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*" (1976) that is a collection of twenty one critics' points of view, in addition to others that I will mention all along the present work.

Numerous recent works advance a serious debate on Kingston's personal stand. Among the many critics, we have chosen the essayist and playwright Frank

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Chin who expressed his opposition to *The Woman Warrior* claiming that it distorts the original Chinese myths. In other words, he is accusing Kingston of unfaithfulness towards her Chinese heritage. Furthermore, he called the book a ‘fake’ one that serves a racist state’s art. (ANALYSES 12) but critics missed the point that literature is not a matter of classification but of keys to success. For that, this study came to show that Kingston did not omit her Chinese heritage and similarly she cannot deny her American present.

The aim of my research is to show that *The Woman Warrior* is not a question of American or Chinese because in every chapter and in every detail we find the mix between the two as this study will show, which is the secret of its success and resonance. A qualitative approach is to be used on a content-based method through handling a general analysis of the overall situation then thorough analyses of the characters will be done to fully attain our aim.

This thesis is divided into three chapters each holds subtitles. The first chapter “Historical Background of Chinese in America” holds four sections. Section one provides an idea about when and why Chinese came to America, and it surveyed the ups and downs of their situation there. The second section deals with Americans’ reactions including the government as a first subsection while the second is entitled presents the major positive governmental actions towards this minority after WWII. The third section describes their integration which was not trouble free. Then, the last section presents the ways Chinese Americans resisted devaluing and racism.

Second chapter “Cultural Confusion in *The Woman Warrior*” contains four parts. The first one deals with the definition of culture and its position in the study since it is the major concern of this research. The second section provides a summary

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for the whole novel while the third is about “The Quest for Belonging and its Main Reasons” since this quest is about culture’s belonging as well. Then it comes the last section to tackle the contribution of the mother stories in her daughter’s confusion; between oppressing and strengthening narratives. The last chapter is concerned with the analyses of the characters; it provides a separate section for each to wipe any blur surrounding them.

Chapter One:

Historical Background of the Chinese in America

To tackle issues, which are related to the Chinese minority in America, and to be able to understand their literary works, we deemed it appropriate to study the history of this minority in the United States. For this purpose, this chapter will be devoted to the historical background of Chinese Americans including the waves and reasons of Chinese immigration to the United States. This chapter will also discuss Americans' attitudes towards Chinese Americans by means of concrete illustrations, in addition to the integrating process of these minority members within the American society. It is these issues around which this chapter is organized. Each of the previously mentioned issues is to be discussed in a separate section.

A. Waves and Reasons of Chinese Immigration to the United States

The reasons why Chinese Americans immigrated to the United States are no less diverse than their ethnic origins. They could be wealthy entrepreneurs hunting for better economic status or low skilled workers seeking only to survive. Regarding the multiplicity in terms of origins, Chinese-speaking residents in the U.S.A came from China, Taiwan, Vietnam and other Southern Asian countries. While the diversity of their motives and conditions will be discussed in this section.

When Chinese immigrants arrived to the United States, they faced a completely new environment. First, they were forced to cope with new people, a new culture, new social norms, and an entirely different lifestyle. Second, their inexperience and lack of knowledge of a new continent, the overseas Chinese found

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life difficult there. This situation worsened because of white men's discrimination that made the Chinese living in America unbearable. Therefore, their lives in the United States shifted from being an idealized dream of financial sufficiency to be a nightmare portrayed in the harsh reality of immigrants' life.

Chinese immigration to the United States might be divided into three main waves; each wave with its own timing, reasons, and characteristics. The first wave might be linked to the Pre Exclusion Era, it extended from the 1830s to the 1880s. In the 1830s, the Chinese came to Hawaii seeking job opportunities. They were recruited for the sugar industry, but what really fascinated this wave were the fields of gold during the California Gold Rush. In addition, they were employed in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860s. (Huang, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature* 43). In this context, Alicia J.Campi indicates that Chinese immigrants referred to the United States at that time as the 'Golden Mountain'² where they came in large numbers to work as miners. Then they worked constructors and contributed in the building of the intercontinental railroad. In addition to those factors, there were other political reasons in their homeland that justify their immigration to America.

The political status of China was unstable at both the national and the international level. On the national level, there was the civil war that took place in China, known as the Taping Rebellion³, lasted from 1851 to 1864. It was defined by many as the most destructive civil war in human history. On the international level,

² It was first a nickname for San Francisco's Chinatown due to the fields of gold existing there then it became a metonymy for the United States.

³ In the 1960s, the United States faced both foreign and domestic pressures to change its nation-based formula, which was regarded as a system that discriminated based on an individual's place of birth. Abroad, former military allies and new independent nations aimed to delegitimize discriminatory immigration, naturalization and regulations through international organizations

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the Opium Wars⁴ was another reason why many Chinese left China for America. ('The Chinese in America- Immigration and Legalized Discrimination: 1785-1905')

From 1850 to 1920, Chinese in America worked as farmers, miners, storekeepers. In other words, they worked low-skilled jobs because they require no training or in-depth knowledge of English, as Hooper and Batalova explained in their article. In the same article, it is mentioned that in the 1850s, the political upheaval was an important pushing factor for the Chinese to leave their homes, escaping the political turmoil of protests and riots of that time, which was reflected in the society through people's uncomfortable status due to the Opium Wars and persecution that they suffered from.

What goes in parallel with the sociopolitical instability is the economic urgency. China at that time passed through very bad financial circumstances that resulted in food shortage. The latter led to the death of millions. Subsequently, this disaster was the reason behind the arrival of thousands of Chinese immigrants to the United States only to seek temporary work chances. Although the wages were low, it was a big deal for them. In simple words, the first wave of Chinese immigrants was seeking peace and simple ordinary life because of the political instability that resulted from the Opium Wars, and economic unrest; poverty was a major characteristic of life in China mainly for the reason that the British dominance expanded its tentacles over the country. These were the major reasons behind the first wave of Chinese immigration to the United States.

The second wave landed in the late 1800s. It can be referred to as the Exclusion era wave (1882-1943). Though the Chinese Exclusion Act marked this era,

⁴ War between Great Britain and China from 1839 to 1842 as a conflict over the opium trade; it ended with the Chinese cession of Hong Kong to the British.

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the Chinese flow to America did not stop. Migration to the United States was considered a necessity for survival due to political and economic reasons. In terms of politics, European and American Imperialism are accused of bringing instability to the whole country because of the high-imposed taxation in addition to the unequal political and economic trade role of China in comparison to its European and American partners. Another reason, concerning economy, is the global expansion of Capitalism⁵ that took place in the nineteenth century and since these immigrants were chiefly people whose main goal was making wealth, the principles of this system fitted them. Capitalism was a big deal for Chinese because the more they work the more they will succeed and get money and Chinese are accustomed to the hard work. (Chan 5)

From a social perspective, by the ninetieth century, there was a drastic rate of unemployment in China caused by the overpopulation problem. Subsequently, this led to social unrest resulting in series of rebellions and a huge wave of immigration confronted America. As economic and political states grew more hopeless in the homeland in the early twentieth century, migration to the United States was the only way to collect money to enhance their families' situation and theirs in the future. For example, their families in China were living a miserable life where in some villages like Toisan, Kung Yick people were starving to death. Moreover, what made the situation worse were the natural disasters and the prompt increase of population that might be classified under domestic factors that urged Chinese citizens to migrate to America for minimal accomplishments. (Chan 6)

⁵ An economic system based on the private ownership of means of production in which there is no intervention of the government. It is determined by competition in the market.

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Another point regarding this wave is that its members were mostly men and they lived in communities that later became known as ‘bachelor societies⁶’ (6). This is mainly due to the Chinese Exclusion Laws that allowed only native-born citizens and merchants’ Chinese wives to enter to the US land and it prohibited them to marry women of another race in California. Most of these immigrants engaged in restaurant and laundering businesses.

Afterwards, the third wave arrived to America in the late twentieth century. This wave of Chinese migration was mostly composed of students and scholars (Zhang 6). In a similar vein, Kate Hooper and Jeanne Batalova offer a similar opinion stating, “China is now the principal source of foreign students in US higher education” (2). This confirms what Hui Zhang said and proved that Chinese minority students represent a generous portion in comparison to the other minorities whose main aim and reason for immigration to the United States was enhancing their education.

It is known that American universities became the dream of most students in the world believing that it is the best in enhancing the educational level. In addition, Chinese are very known for their seriousness and hard work, for that they succeeded to represent the largest portion of foreign students in US.

Another factor that might be classified as a secondary reason is the phenomena that are always linked to China, which are the natural disasters. China is vastly known for its sensitive location and exposure to the serious disasters, for instance earthquakes, drought and flooding that the government could not find solution to. (“The Chinese in America- Immigration and Legalized Discrimination: 1785-1905”)

⁶ A term applied to many of America’s Chinese communities during the time of Chinese exclusion when the sex ratio among Chinese in America was as high as 14 men for every woman.

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For that, Chinese immigrated to America searching for peace and shelter where they can live in, due to the many times they lose their properties because of those disasters. Throughout time, the Chinese American population raised to be the second largest foreign-born group in America after Mexicans numbering more than 435.062 in 1970; as Min Zhou and Rennie Lee affirmed. (6)

In the late 1970s, the phenomenon of Asian immigration to the US changed effectively and the flow was strangely rising, mainly because of two reasons: the first was the official approval of the Immigration and Nationality Act amendments of 1965, which is considered as a seminal turning point in history. The second was the end of the Vietnam War⁷. Therefore, various waves of Asian immigrants entered the United States. They were chiefly from China, Philippines, and other countries. During the sixties, there were around 43,000 immigrants entering each year and it achieved 160,000 immigrants in the seventies. Guiyou Huang claims that in the 1970s, America underwent a nursing shortage and a lack of technically trained personnel in the computer industry; thus facilitating the immigration was the best option to fulfill those deficiencies. (Huang, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature* 43). Progressively in the eighties, there were 274,000 immigrants per year. (S. Lee 9) Continuously, the ethnic Chinese population increased to a noteworthy extent. Empirically speaking, the statistics says that in a short period of a decade between 1980 and 1990, the Chinese minority in the United States augmented from 812,000 to 1.645,000. (Wong 16)

Concerning the characteristics of this wave (the third), one may say that after 1965, Chinese immigrants were dissimilar to the previous waves in terms of skills,

⁷ A cold war conflict of 20 years, it started from 1955 where southern Vietnamese asked for help from America and France against the indigenous. This war marked enormous loss of lives of Vietnamese and Americans.

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goals and intentions. The recent immigrants are predominantly skilled “Today’s Chinese immigrants are known for creating jobs ... Given that about one-third of Chinese immigrants are college graduates, many are valued workers in mathematics, science and technology” (Campi 5). Moreover, what distinguishes the recent immigrants is that they were relatively well off in addition to their high level as Alicia Campi confirms, “many residents of these new China-towns are wealthy professionals” (4).

Those are the three waves of Chinese immigration to the United States with their distinctive motives and issues. For some, immigration is still taking place especially in recent time when this phenomenon is no more seen like before; it became habitual and ordinary topic.

Concerning the Chinese immigrants’ living, in terms of land and society, the time Chinese got to the American land they first settled in the rural areas, however later they lived in the urban cities as New York, San Francisco and Boston. Laundries were among the service sector jobs that they joined in America (Xie and Goyette 4). They chose to live separately from the American society in their ethnic communities. As a result, communication rarely took place between the American and the Chinese minority even children did not learn the English language (4). This is what prevented their life from being an easygoing one. They encountered many obstacles towards a normal life, where almost of those obstacles are the outcomes of the Americans’ negative attitudes towards them. For that, the next section shall be about whites’ attitudes and feelings towards this minority.

B. The Mainstream's Attitudes towards Chinese Immigrants

Due to the gain of permanent residence in the United States of America by Chinese immigrants, their children became Chinese Americans who managed to build up a new life with their own heritage. Despite this gain the dominant group did not welcome those newcomers. Several conducted researches had proved the fact that a lot of pressures and various discrimination forms were the characteristics of Chinese Americans' atmosphere. In few words, racial violence and irrational hostile attitudes frustrated their living standards, in addition to the anti-Chinese sentiment that grew steadily to repress their existence. Expressions like "The Chinese are upon us. How can we get rid of them? The Chinese are coming. How can we stop them?" were uttered by all Americans (E. Lee 36). This dislike did not stop at laymen's level but stretched to include the government as well.

B.1. The Government's Role in Legalizing the Discrimination

The American government passed many legal restrictions against Chinese Americans to constitute a variety of racial inequalities in the American society. The least inequality was the imposed taxes especially in California since it was the first destination of this minority ('The Chinese in America- Immigration and Legalized Discrimination: 1785-1905'). From the various instances, we can cite a good representative example that Matthew W. Klinge gives, "in 1853, the newly created Washington territorial legislature barred Chinese from voting; later legislation enacted poll taxes and restrictions on testifying in court cases against white" (5). That is to say, the Chinese minority was marginalized and by depriving them from the voting right, even their existence is denied. On the same idea, Klinge affirms that congress

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has great effects in the forming of racial stereotypes and limiting Chinese labors' immigration by disseminating the restrictive law.

Another well-known example is the Chinese Exclusion Act⁸ that was passed in the 6th of May 1882 that barred any Chinese to enter the United States and "it was the first time [that] US immigration policy singled citizens of a particular nation for wholesale discrimination" as Phil Tajistu Nash declares (qtd. in Campi, 1). The fuel of this act was the negative attitudes resulting from the anti-Chinese movement that had begin in the West, and the debates surrounding Chinese immigration. This act marks a permanent part of American history, it continued through a series of renewals until its repeal in 1943. (E. Lee 4, 5)

Some critics think that this repeal (the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act) was not the end of the discrimination as Erika Lee and other historians confirm; due to its legacy prolonged to shape immigration control and most importantly race relations completely through the twentieth century (7). In this course, the Chinese immigrants were seen by many, as victims of a policy of expulsion, beginning in the 1880s, when the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act closed the door on further immigration. In addition, concerted efforts were made to encourage those in the country to leave. ("Assimilation and Pluralism" 53)

For that reason, the act is considered as the starting point of Chinese sufferance and misery. Furthermore, the low economic status of America made the natives more hostile towards Chinese immigrants all what the latter faced was segregation, prejudice and discrimination especially in the work place. (Klinge 7)

⁸ "The 1882 legislation is unique in U.S. immigration law because the Chinese were singled out by name thereafter, as 'aliens ineligible for citizenship' – hereafter no Chinese will be admitted to naturalization. Preemptively barred from the possibility of citizenship. That's even bigger than excluding a people just from entry." - Connie Young Yu, historian

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We can conclude that actions of discrimination in all senses, by individuals or by groups, are responsible for the racial inequalities and difficulties that the nation confronted. To illustrate, “early Chinese and Japanese immigrants were segregated in jobs that whites shunned, such as laundry and dangerous menial work on the railroads”. A more risky example is that “some were subjected to mob violence and murder” (S.Lee 7). Furthermore, in 1913, the inhabitants of California refused to accept the Chinese as residents with them in the same town, claiming that it is considered as another oriental invasion. (E. Lee 37-38)

For that, one can infer that race functioned greatly in determining where coloured or the yellow race must settle and whom they marry. The Chinese Americans underwent several bad experiences that included severe accidents of street attacks and home burglaries especially those living in Chinatown as the DePaul University of Chicago inspected. (58)

The racial intolerance was very clear in Chinese Americans everyday life including education, residency, in addition to the difficulty to be hired all along the United States history. The Chinese were badly treated because of the negative and hostile attitudes. The mistreatment did not stop at stereotyping⁹ and segregationist deeds; but xenophobic nativism led many Americans to be violent and aggressive. A good example concerning residency issues would be the first and the foremost massacre that took place in Los Angeles in 1871, where 21 (others said 18) Chinese were killed at once, which was the largest mass lynching in American history, where all the Asian settlements were burned, subsequently, all the residents leaved their

⁹ A stereotype is a preconceived notion especially about a group of people. Most of the stereotypes are based on race or sex.

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towns (Xie and Goyette 16). Another famous case is the massacre of 1877 in San Francisco, where four Chinese residents were killed.

In this context, a worth mentioning event would be the one that happened in 1885, when the whites beat their Chinese neighbors. In response to this unbearable behavior, Chinese Americans were forced to go away from some cities. Tacoma is one of those cities where the residents forbade Chinese to live or even enter to their area, this action took place in November 3rd of 1885, in which all the Chinese were forced out from their homes and stores. At that time, a large number of around 700 Chinese were excluded and their businesses were boycotted in a period of a year. Moreover, the incident was repeated a year later in different cities such as Seattle and Olympia in which the Chinese residents were treated roughly and their dignity was injured in several ways. (Klinge 12)

An indefinitely large number of Chinese live in San Francisco, this seems logical since it was their first destination where they settled in the Gold Rush area. Chinatowns, nine times out of ten, comprise the impoverished Chinese Americans; they came mainly from Southern China. Unlike Taiwanese who are taken up as rich in comparison to the former. As it is known, Chinatowns are districts of a city or town in a country other than China, in which there is a large concentration of Chinese residents. As the word Chinatown indicates, the residents really try to make a separate town where they develop their own businesses, ethnic organizations and all what is agreed upon among them. Furthermore, Chinese founded their own media including numerous Chinese-language newspapers and magazines, not only that, but also English newspapers like China Press, Chinese Daily News and Sing Tao Daily. (Zhou and Kim 8)

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In North America, the first Chinese language newspaper was published in San Francisco in 1854 under the name of Golden Hills News. American missionaries who were working with the Chinese workers are the ones who established it (Yang 3-4). Overall, Chinese residents created those Chinatowns to withdraw peacefully and to avoid intense contact with Americans. Thus, Chinese Americans' related problems would decrease. But unfortunately, this was not the definite solution in which learning process also was perturbed.

Like other areas, education could not escape the segregation and the discrimination that the Chinese were suffering from. A living example is the Chinese school that San Francisco has established in order to disallow Chinese children to go to any other public school and this followed the case of Tape vs. Hurley¹⁰ where California court ordered the enrollment of Chinese students. ("School Integration and Asian Americans" 1)

In terms of the health care and treatments, CAPES (Chinese American Psychiatric Epidemiology Study) shows that from a number of 1747 Chinese Americans, there is an insignificant percentage of 6 percent who took advantage of medical clinics for recovery. In fact, there are two reasons for this unnoticeable rate. The first is that Chinese are widely known for their Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which is intensively relied on, especially by the ancestors (or it will be offensive for them). Another reason is the low-wages jobs that the Chinese are engaged in, which do not afford health insurance. Accordingly, TCM will be the best alternative if not the one and only for the prevention, treatment, and management of illness. ("Immigration: Challenges for New Americans" 3)

¹⁰ A landmark court case in the California Supreme Court in which the court found the exclusion of a Chinese American student from public school based on her ancestry unlawful.

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As concerns work difficulties, Chinese immigrants were very eager to work in any condition including farming, mining, peddling and storekeeping. And as their numbers increased, they were hired in place of Caucasian workers which raised negative vibes towards Chinese (Chinese made up 90% of the whole laborers who work on the Central Pacific Railroad building) and what angered the natives more is that when they went on strike; Chinese (strike-breakers) occupied their posts. Subsequently, in 1924 the National Origins ¹¹Act came to restrain immigration from Asia (except Philipinos). The citizenship of forbidden immigrants numbered around 107000. (Xie and Goyette 8)

Chinese labour was more recommended in comparison to nativists because the former get less than the latter; thus, it would be great for business owners not only about cost cutting but also in terms of the good quality of the work. Chinese workers went on strike because of this unfair and unjustifiable criterion ('The Chinese in America- Immigration and Legalized Discrimination: 1785-1905'). After all discriminatory actions that covered all their life issues, the Second World War came to overturn the matter for Chinese good.

B.2. World War II Effects on Governmental Discriminatory Decisions

Americans' attitudes towards Chinese immigrants fully changed after the United States' engagement in the Second World War. Japan was a common enemy for America and China that is why they became allies in World War II. The feelings of sympathy and gratitude were not only at the level of the people but it went over to

¹¹ A law that restricted the immigration of Southern and Eastern Europeans and practically excluded Asian and other nonwhites from entry into the US. The government then only allowed 2 percent of that population into the nation. Also the act completely barred immigration for all those whom the Supreme Court prohibited from obtaining US citizens, specifically Asians.

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include the government as well. The Chinese were welcome with big heart to the United States. For that, the reaction was not only the repeal of the Exclusion Act but it was clear in other three separate acts.

First, the 1943 Magnusson Act¹², which is considered to be the official end of Chinese exclusion. It permitted Chinese in United States to be naturalized citizens¹³ and the immigration of Chinese coming to the United States was placed on quota basis. Second, the War Brides Act which was enacted in 1945. It provided help to the Chinese women who are married to American citizens to easily enter the United States lands to join their husbands (Zhou 172). The third is the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, which was enacted when the communist system came to power in China (i.e. in 1949). This act allowed Chinese (coming from the area under the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China, excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) to move into the United States soil. (Chua 29, 30)

At the beginning, Chinese laborers did not intend to stay in the United States of America but later they found that it is a good place to enhance their life conditions due to the availability of work chances (Campi1). For certain, this decision of staying for a lifetime requires their integration within the American society.

C. The Integration Process

As a matter of fact, Chinese Americans showed their capacity to desegregate to an extent within the mainstream society. All along their existence in the US, they gained a considerable number of rights in a trial to be in the same rank with

¹² This act was sponsored by the Washington state senator Warren G. Magnuson and signed by President Franklin Roosevelt; this act established an annual quota of 105 Chinese immigrants. It did allow the Chinese to apply to become naturalized citizens for the first time.

¹³ Someone being given citizenship by a country by virtue of conveyance rather than by right of birth.

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Americans. To demonstrate, a good example would be Judy Chu who was the first Chinese American woman who worked in government that is to say, neither race nor gender was put into consideration despite the sensitive profession. Correspondingly, Grace Meng¹⁴ the Chinese American who succeeded to be the representative of the politically heavy American state of New York. (Tong 1)

As Zhang thinks, the use of English language is of crucial importance in view of the fact that it is the language of the host country, and thus, it will help the Chinese minority to be easily accepted and assimilated in the host society (16). Assimilation¹⁵ is the prior condition to have a position in the society. Before gaining a position in the American society, one should gain first the trust of Americans; that he belongs to them and cares about their goods as they do, which is quite normal.

Furthermore, the process of globalization¹⁶ was able to bring Chinese language to the American university curriculum. That is to say, it became as important as other languages. Another significant factor is the growth of Chinese residents in the American land, which made whites more curious and admired by their Chinese culture and language (Zhang 28, 29).

Indeed, as it is mentioned before, China is the primary source of foreign students in America due to their high qualifications. For this reason, it is found that many Chinese are holding intellectual professions such as professors, computer scientists and those who work on technology development. Therefore, they gained

¹⁴ is an American lawyer and a Democratic member of the United States House of Representatives, representing New York's 6th congressional district in the New York City borough of Queens, and she is also current Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee.

¹⁵ A process whereby a minority group gradually adapts to the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture and customs.

¹⁶ Action or procedure of international integration of countries arising from the conversion of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture. Among the basic aspects of globalization, we have migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge.

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superior status in the American society (Zhang 35). Despite this huge positive change, there is a number of racial boundaries that still exist and serve in hindering the development of the Chinese ethnic communities. In other words, there is an abstract line that restricts Chinese from adopting the customs and attitudes of the dominant culture. (Ibid).

For instance, those immigrants who came from mainland China are less integrated in the American society compared to those who came from Taiwan and Hong Kong either socially or economically speaking. This is because Taiwan and Hong Kong were more exposed to English and thus their way of thinking and culture. To overcome those problems, the new generation of immigrants went to American schools and focused on mastering the English language and they did their best to be equally treated with natives. (Wong 2)

Despite the fulfillments (that are seen trivial and exceptions) and the constant resistance, Wong believes that unfortunately, Chinese in America remained seen as “foreign”. They were always strangers to United States’ citizens. All of the anti-Chinese sentiments, the laws of immigrants’ limitation, and the injustice that they faced in residency, work and other sectors clearly confirm that. Even in the mid-twentieth century, Chinese Americans resided in isolated urban communities far from the normal American life (Wong 6).

These circumstances went against the Chinese psyche in general, they were always harassed, had identity problems, cultural issues and stereotyped as the model minority. This did not stop at identity dilemma and sense of loss but some of them surrendered their professions in academic institutions. (Lau 57)

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However, Chinese with higher levels had more chances to be assimilated in the American society. In addition, the mastery of English was very important; it helped much in the integration of Chinese in schooling, in the work place, and in the society at large. (Tu 117)

Militarily speaking, the era between 1960s and 1970s was the era of militant Asian movement that resulted from the accumulation of certain matters. First, the Vietnam War in which the goal of America's intervention in the war was questioned, it was seen as an unjust pointless war (Abrams 8). Second, the demand of special studying programs for ethnicities, in addition to the severe poverty existing in the neighborhoods like San Francisco's Chinatown.

To sum up, the integration process was a complicated issue that cannot be answered by yes or no because the circumstances change and as the history is not static, the judgment about the Chinese integration into the American society is changeable too.

D. Chinese Americans' Resistance to Discrimination

Not very different from other minorities in America, the Chinese as an ethnic group came at first as "sojourners"¹⁷. Their intention was to make fortune and turn back to the motherland so that they can live a well-regarded life. However, when their wish did not come true, they decided to be permanent residents. Subsequently, the Chinese population increased in America, this deranged Americans, and put the Chinese ethnicity in the crosshairs. Hatred and anger were the reactions of natives.

¹⁷ People that migrate from their homeland to another country or region to find employment and enhance their livelihood but then, returns to their native country and families.

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This hatred rose to a high degree that caused physical harm and even murders of Chinese by the obstinate criminal groups.

Despite the hard situation, Chinese Americans did not surrender but rather continued to resist all kinds of discrimination through different methods and techniques militarily, politically, and intensively through literature. Intellectuals found that literary works would have larger effect on people all around the world; also, it would be a lasting one, passed from generation to another so that the youth generation will not accept to be inferior or the like.

A working example that serves to illustrate the unity and insistence of Chinese Americans on the right of equality would be the work stoppage of 1867, when all of them protested for the low wages and the long hours of work, in addition to the bad conditions that they worked in in the railroad fields of work. Moreover, what fueled their anger is watching whites who did easy tasks in less work hours and for ten dollars better than Chinese workers. This group action marked one of the largest strikes of the nineteenth century (“the Chinese in America- Immigration and Legalized Discrimination: 1785-1905”)

A different type of resistance is through the pen. In addition to documents and articles, literary works written by Chinese Americans also reflect much of their experiences, feelings and the bad treatments that they have received in America and their glorious deeds as well. They were striving for better if not equal conditions. Their main goal was to spread the notion of equality as a must all over the world and to prove that they have heritage, which is praiseworthy.

Additionally, the clash between American and Chinese cultures was and is a major theme in Chinese Americans writings where we find both, what is related to

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America; lights, big cities, open mindedness,...and what is related to China; patriarchal tradition, conservatism about clothes, customs, beliefs, and so forth.

In the light of what we have discussed in this chapter, Chinese Americans can be split into two trends: those who succeeded to be assimilated into the American society and those who could not get integrated, living in their own world, isolated from Americans and American way of living.

According to sociology, assimilation might be interpreted to be the adoption of customs and attitudes of the dominant culture by a minority group while nationalism might be described as the opposite of the former; it is the faithfulness to the nation of origins through sticking to its culture including beliefs, knowledge facts, norms, ideas, behavior etc. However, this study aims to prove that even those who were successfully assimilated in the host society and attained good position in it did not surrender their heritage including Chinese culture with its traditions, values, oral literature and so forth (Zeng 13).

A good figure that represents the assimilation process would be Maxine Hong Kingston. Her success in America is very evident, in which she lectures Creative Writing at Berkeley (University of California). In addition, she gained many awards including “the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, the PEN West Award for Fiction, an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Literature Award, and a National Humanities Medal from the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as the rare title of “Living Treasure of Hawaii” (Kingston 2). She was also awarded the 2013 National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama.

All in all, this chapter has dealt with the history of Chinese from the first moment they put their feet on the American land including the first, second and the

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third wave. The first wave landed around the 1850s their main immigration reasons were the bad circumstances they suffered from in China. The second wave came to America in the late 1800s in which their seminal motive was making wealth. The third and the last one was merely composed of students whose focal aim is to improve their educational level, it marked the recent era of the late twentieth century. The next section has presented the Americans standpoint towards those immigrant Chinese which was very negative at the beginning; they were referred to as 'cheap slaves' by most Americans because they took their jobs. In addition, the government was influenced by the public opinion in which it enacted many restrictive laws of Chinese immigration. Moreover, real examples are given concerning the racial intolerance towards them.

Then I have spotted the light on the Second World War as a bold move in the change of the American attitudes where their hatred was shifted to Japanese because of the Pearl Harbor attack. Other discussed points are the integration process which was necessary to survive, however, this process was not easy but required the immigrants' resistance which is portrayed in several ways. The last tip was about assimilation and nationalism as a crossroad that every member of a minority passes through exemplifying with Maxine Hong Kingston and her work. One can mark the bravery and fortitude of the Chinese minority despite the numerous obstacles they faced they represent the largest and the most successful minority in the United States' land.

Taking into consideration that *The Woman Warrior* is one of the famous works of Chinese Americans that dealt with their in-between situation, and that it opened a great debate about assimilation and nationalism concepts, its analysis is seen

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as worth doing. For this purpose, the next chapter shall be devoted to its analysis concerning the cultural confusion it contains.

Chapter Two:

Cultural Confusion in *The Woman Warrior*

-History and literature can act as a twin set of lamps revealing together what each singly would not have the power to illuminate- American Quarterly

This chapter comes to mark the shift from history to literature in the direction of showing that literature is able to present us the issue as a universal humanitarian case that stimulates the audience emotions and feelings, a case that pushes the world to live the experience with the concerned minority and evokes people's sympathy. As a primary step, this chapter shall be concerned with the definition of culture, then, a general overview about the way culture is presented in the work shall be given, with regard to the displaced¹⁸ position of Chinese American women as a main factor. Later, the summary of the book shall be given to have an overall understanding of *The Woman Warrior*. Afterwards, the quest for belonging is to be tackled as a major theme since identity and culture are two faces of the same coin. In addition, the main reasons of this belonging quest shall be presented because they are going to clear much of the blur surrounding the topic.

A. Culture and its Significance within the Study

Before treating the issue of cultural confusion in *The Woman Warrior*, defining culture is fundamental to the perception of what is dealt with in this study. Culture, as a concept, is highly affected by its historical track and its use in everyday life issues, for that, we cannot have a fixed or universal definition. From a historical

¹⁸ Being put out of the usual or original place either voluntarily or not. Displacement in the current study is in the form of Diaspora.

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perspective, the word's origin is of the Latin word "cultura" it goes back to the age of Enlightenment when it was used to mean the cultivation of the land, than by the passage of time, it broadened its field to encompass the cultivation of the mind. It was added to the French dictionary in 1718 but it was always approached to a specific field; for instance, scientific culture, literary culture, artistic culture, and the list goes on and on. (Weld Khelifa 6)

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the terms culture and civilization started to appear together as pairs and even nowadays, they are found in many temporal texts and discussions used interchangeably. Despite that the two terms belong to the same domain; they differ in meaning. In this context, Thomas Mann came to confirm this idea by a very expressive illustration, he claimed that there is no doubt that before six centuries Mexico had a culture but can we call it a civilized nation in that age? The only nation that can be considered "civilized" before two thousand years is China (Weld Khelifa 25). In simple words, culture is the deep spirit of the nation while civilization is the concrete development of that nation.

At the present time, culture can be seen from different perspectives. From a sociological perceptiveness, culture can be defined "the socially transmitted knowledge and behavior shared by some group of people" (qtd. in Birukou et al 3). This quotation comes to declare that culture is an all-embracing term that includes the knowledge of a certain group of people including their religion, ideologies, literature, music, art, and all sorts of information, in addition to their social behaviors and attitudes that are passed from a generation to the next.

Moving to the anthropological perspective, Sapir comes to define culture "the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of

our lives” (qtd. in Birukou et al 4). Sapir wants to highlight the importance of culture in affecting both our thinking and our deeds, thus, it will shape our entire lives.

Out of the anthropological and sociological thought, Roheim, in 1934, attempts to define culture from a psychological perspective in which he states: “by culture we shall understand the sum of all sublimations, all substitutes, or reaction formations, in short, everything in society that inhibits impulses or permits their distorted satisfaction” (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 60). From this quotation one can understand that culture can explain all individual deeds, behaviors and way of thinking, it is similar to a map that the individual has in mind that he constantly tries not to deviate of it to achieve an internal satisfaction. In this vein, Sigmund Freud associates culture with ego-ideal, this seems logical given that culture is the collection of beliefs and principles agreed upon by the society, so this collection works as a perfect standard to follow and this is what the super ego attempts to do. (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 104,105)

However, the case study of this research is about a displaced minority who has its own societal characteristics (i.e. culture) in mind but it lives in a place of different characteristics and here lays the core of the present study. This situation becomes the talk of the time due to the spread of the immigration phenomenon and mass communication in addition to the appearance of globalization process that results in an age of multiculturalism.

As many hyphenated¹⁹ writers, Kingston’s novel is basically based on her experience as a Chinese American woman. For that, it is found that her work is highly

¹⁹ Describes those persons who are considered to be the link between two cultures, it was inspired from the use of the hyphen for example Asian-American, African-American...

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characterized by disorientation and in-betweenness²⁰, or in other words, confusion about her identity and culture since she is an American-born writer of a Chinese origin. The personae in the novel, and so Kingston, attend American school and use their language, and both Kingston and the narrator are highly admired by the American way of thinking and self-expression and more importantly, the way they equalize between man and woman.

On the other side, whenever Kingston looks in the mirror, the undeniable physical characteristics are always present to remind her of her Chineseness, including her straight black hair, her small eyes with the epicanthic fold, in addition to being a yellow-skinned person. The physical appearance is not the only Chinese thing in them but the ideological factor also contributes in the confusion feelings, which is reflected in her book *The Woman Warrior* through the mother's constant stories that are a strong testimony of their Chineseness. This confusion is mainly due to the conflicts existing in the writer's psyche, between the current nation and the land of origins, between what the American society shows and what the mother tells and wants. In fewer words, their displacement emphasizes their dislocation and thus their confusion. Kingston's construction of her identity is perceived as changing and unsteady in view of the fact that the character is in a constant process of evaluating and discussing differences between her Chinese and American cultures.

For that, *The Woman Warrior* is considered as the pioneering work that gives life, vivacity, and popularity to Chinese American literature. Not only China but also it extends to represent the whole continent. "what is now called the 'Asian-American literary canon' however had its meaningful beginning with the publication of Maxine

²⁰ An in-betweenener is a person who is between two extremes, or two contrasting conditions.

Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* in 1976, which depicts her life as a girl growing up in California" (Oh VI). In order to have a short glimpse on the novel, the summary of the novel is required for the goal of helping the readers to grasp the main ideas.

B. The Summary of Maxine Hong Kingston's Book *The Woman Warrior*

As Dr Samuel Johnson stated in his book *Preface To Shakespeare*: "Particulars are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed" (qtd. in Hutchinson and Waters 5). For that purpose, we deemed it appropriate to devote this section for the summary of the novel.

Generally speaking, the text comprises of five chapters that shift each time between her family stories and the Chinese mythological references that make the narrator's life highly conspicuous. Both fiction²¹ and nonfiction serves for one aim, which is making the strong Kingston of today; in other words, it might be read as a *Bildungsroman*²². Similarly, we cannot call it an autobiography due to the myths that it includes.

Kingston opens the novel with a secret story her mother told her about. This opening chapter is about her father's sister who committed a suicide by drowning herself and her baby into the family's well because she committed adultery when her husband was abroad. Moreover, in view of the fact that they live in a small village; the villagers knew about her and went to her family house breaking and stealing everything, and they savagely killed their animals. Apparently, the aunt could not resist the scandal and killed herself.

²¹ The classification of a story or similar work that is derived from imagination.

²² A German word that means a novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education about the maturing of a young protagonist.

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The narrator tries several times to sympathize with her paternal aunt creating for her more than a few versions of how the affair went on. The first version is that she was forced by one of the villagers, reminding us that in China the woman has no right to say no, thus she obeyed him silently. Another justification is that it is not fair that people are blaming her for not being faithful to a man who married her only in terms of ceremonies and went immediately to America to make fortune. In addition, the narrator anticipated that she fell in love with someone but unfortunately, this one did not keep faithful. Another suggestion is that while no strangers are in the village, he may be one of the protesters who came to destroy the house or even he might be the organizer of the attack. It is no secret that Kingston wants to say that her aunt was only a victim of the patriarchal society. The name of the aunt is never mentioned due to her unforgivable sin, for this reason, the chapter is entitled 'No Name Woman'.

The second chapter is entitled 'White Tigers', the narrator tells us about her childhood fantasy, a legendary heroine named Fa Mu Lan who lead her people to victory in the battle by taking her father's place in army. The narrator was highly influenced by this legend to the degree that she imagined herself leaving home at seven to be taught to be a warrior by a martial couple who resides in the mountain. After seven years of training, she could return home to defeat the barbarians and the baron. This glory made her family and her people proud of her. After becoming a great warrior, she returned to her normal life to be a wife and a mother. The white tigers refer to the tigers that Fa Mu Lan took the challenge to fight in the mountains.

'Shaman' is the name of the third chapter, which is about the mother's passage from a normal woman to a highly regarded doctor, including her scholarship in a Chinese medical school. This scholarship is about modern medicine in the ancient Chinese way that highly depended on memorization. The mother or Brave Orchid was

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brilliant in her field she was always in service to help her classmates. This chapter dealt also with her life in the United States after immigration.

While learning in the medical school, the students including Brave and her colleagues were living in a campus. After spending a good time, the girls discovered that one of the rooms is haunted due to the strange sounds they hear. In this atmosphere of fear, Brave Orchid decided to take up the struggle against the ghost by spending nights in the same room. Indeed, she really met it and she was able to defeat it. 'Shaman' is a dragon lady that signifies the mother's power. The entire chapter is about the mother's scholarship and heroism as an intelligent fearless ghost-fighting woman, a woman that was able to be a former physician before going to America.

Moving to the fourth chapter 'At the Western Palace', which deals with Brave Orchid's sister Moon Orchid. This chapter may serve as a contrasting episode for the previous chapter; shifting from the strong charismatic woman to the weak and shy Moon Orchid. As Brave's husband, Moon Orchid's husband went also to America fishing for wealth. Nevertheless, he stayed in America for a long time without sending for her or even asking about her. After a while, Brave sent for her sister to join her in America, and then she insisted on her to go to her husband though she knew that he took a second wife.

Despite Moon's unwillingness and fear of being refused, Brave could convince her to go with her to Los Angeles to meet her husband. After arriving there, they found that his house is transformed into medical neurosurgery office and his assistant was his new wife. As Moon expected she was harshly refused by her husband. She could not resist the shock and she got a mental breakdown that later caused her death. Los Angeles is highly westernized in comparison to the other

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American states and the office of her husband referred to as a palace, for that, this chapter is entitled 'At the Western Palace'.

'A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe' is the title of the last chapter. This chapter is about the Chinese mythical poetess Ts'ai Yen, the author of 'Eighteen Stanzas for a Barbarian Reed Pipe'. A barbarian tribe captured Ts'ai Yen for twelve years in which she married one of the tribe chiefs and she gave birth to two children. She always felt alienated²³ and odd in that tribe, her one and only outlet was singing about China to barbarians²⁴. Though they do not understand Chinese, they feel her sorrow, loneliness and discontent through her poems.

By describing Ts'ai Yen's situation, Kingston referred to herself as well and the conflicts she experienced while living in a Chinese household in America. She faced difficulties in expressing herself outside and even to her parents, which is natural under such circumstances. The narrator devoted a great section of this chapter for her childhood experiences in the United States. In this chapter, Kingston for the first time shouted on her mother blaming her for her silence and submissiveness due to her confusing stories.

All in all, *The Woman Warrior* succeeded to be widely recognized for its power and beauty in which one may find that the book is highly appreciated for its courageous content including the various interesting stories and she knew well how to address multiple audience.

²³ Alienation is a social and psychological concept that is characterized by a high degree of isolation and low degree of integration within the mainstream common values.

²⁴ There is a tradition in China that foreigners are called "barbarians" probably because Chinese culture is one of the earliest civilizations (Sun 61).

C. The Cultural Confusion and its Main Reasons

Identity and culture are inseparable items in literary studies in which whenever we talk about one item we find ourselves referring to the other. In this regard, Kathryn Woodward stated, “Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions which we might adopt” (2). This quotation confirms the idea that identity and culture go hand in hand. Identity formation or construction can by no means work without the representations of culture and this is reciprocal for culture as it is referred to by many as part of identity. In the same spirit, Guiyou Huang classified hyphenated identity under cross-cultural issues (*Columbia Guides to Literature* 183).

In the same context, Anthony P. Cohen states, “‘Culture as identity’ thus refers to the attempt to represent the person or group in terms of reified and/or emblemized culture. It is a political exercise, manifest in those processes, which we frequently describe as ‘ethnic’, the components of which are referred to as ‘symbols’” (4). Cohen intends to say that culture and identity can be referred to as a number of symbols that are attributed to a person or group for the goal of defining them. This person or this group of people is of an ethnic belonging.

There is no doubt that identity is a significant theme in *The Woman Warrior* but what was great in it is how she could construct an identity within the very contradictory trends. The writer’s dilemma was not only about choosing to be either Chinese or American; but being a female made the issue harder where she has to choose either to keep silent and to continue her life as a traditional woman. In other words, to be a housewife and a mother taking care of her husband and feeding and

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breeding her children; or to be a strong woman who has a voice and who lives for her own success and prosperity.

The author's family played a major role in the dilemma she is living. According to the most recent researches, there are five types of Chinese American families in the United States (Conway 156). This idea challenges the paradigm that all Chinese are living the same experience.

The first type is the traditional family where its members share the same beliefs and traditions that of their native land, they are born there and live in Chinatowns in America with little exposure to the Western culture. That is to say, there is no place for cultural conflict. The second is the cultural conflict family; this type consists of China-born parents and their American-born descendents, where misunderstanding will certainly take place between the two generations. The third is the bicultural family. In few words, they are exposed to both Eastern and Western cultures equally and use both languages. The fourth type is the 'Americanized' family; all of its members are born and raised in the United States, their means of communication is the English language only. The last one is the interactional family; this family is characterized by a high degree of Americanization that extended to intermarriage and interethnic dating (Conway 156,157).

Through the reading of the novel, one can easily detect that the narrator's family belongs to the second type, 'the cultural conflict family'. Brave Orchid; the narrator's mother was born and raised in China than she immigrated to America following her husband where she gave birth to the girl who narrates. This family's experience contributed to a great extent in the psychological status of the narrator where the conflict is always evident.

The quest for belonging is consistently recurring all along the novel. Ever since this quest is largely attributable to racism and sexism and in view of the fact that all the characters of the novel are female; a short examination of the female minority circumstances is needed to have clear and complete image of the situation. Chinese American women had different opportunities to work in America, in which it is found that the illiterate women were able to work in America as cooks and keepers of laundries. Unlike the educated category, who was not very different from the Chinese men. The latter succeeded in different practical fields and so women. “female students also choose courses that would be useful in their future career” (Huping 73).

At first glance, this seems purely positive for the Chinese women as this position gives them the chance to be independent and self-fulfilled. This role is totally new for this section of society, women shared the responsibility with their husbands to earn money to survive and they were able also to have a voice amidst the society. Simultaneously, this contradicts what the woman is accustomed to be in the patriarchal Chinese society, where she was enslaved by men either fathers or husbands and silenced by all means. Even in her house, she is not the ruler of her own family but the mother in law (Huping 83).

In this case, it is natural that women tend to be free, far from the cruel oppression. However, unfortunately their inclination would be hindered by the discrimination that they receive from Americans, at the same time when they return to China they find the sexist oppression. This troublesome situation will always push Chinese female minority to question their belonging. This quest is continually present in the literary works of this minority, they are trapped between what is American and

what is Chinese as Amy Ling referred to them as “between worlds” writers, a very expressive adjective that represent their loss and uncertainty²⁵.

The double segregation that the coloured females suffered from strengthened the confusion of culture. Being a yellow person and a woman meant to fight against racist and sexist marginalization and oppression. As a consequence, the Chinese American women fell into the trap of contradiction, they found themselves standing against Americans because of their racist deeds that tend always to under represent Chinese Americans. At the same time, they are fighting the patriarchal China for underestimating them for being women. From a close perspective, they are rejected by both nations. The reason for China to refuse them is being a woman while the reason for America is being of Chinese descent.

Deborah L. Madsen thinks that the best solution for this female minority is to have a voice and to be able to express themselves freely claiming their wants and rights in which she states: “[the] triumph over the cultural conflicts she suffers can only be presented through the telling of it” (218). As it is known, in clinical psychology treatments, telling or reporting the problems is proved to be the best tool to heal and to restore to health. Therefore, to overcome the disturbance of conflicts of culture in literature the author should narrate it.

From the above discussion, one might conclude that cultural confusion has, in addition to others, two important reasons that are racism and sexism. In addition, one might say that the displacement resulted in severe problems portrayed in social disintegration and thus, it caused psychological problems of loss and uncertainty. However, next to the negative aspects, this displacement has positive effects as well.

²⁵ Amy Ling *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry*

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The most important one lies in their creative aesthetic count that they add to the body of literature. In this vein, Kathie Birat and others express their gratitude for their dislocated position that enabled them to be creative in which they acknowledged “dans ces situations de dislocation complexe; on relève aussi une effervescence d’ordre culturel aboutissant à des productions littéraires et artistiques nouvelles, fruits de déplacement et de transfert inédits” (Birat, Scheel and Zaugg 2).

From this quotation, one might deduce that displaced women writers are not only satisfied with their position but also proud of it due to the newness and originality it brought to them in terms of literature, which in return lead to their reputation all over the world. Kingston’s work proves utterly the credibility of this vision in which she was able to convert her societal complexities and struggles into a groundbreaking success in literature. The writer could find a midway to tackle the old Chinese traditions and way of life and the liberal culture of America as well.

Another positive effect might be the strong personality that they will acquire due to the hardships that they encountered through the process of growing up as Chinese Americans. In other words, despite the dual oppression, they did not surrender but rather insisted on resistance, and thus, they were able to achieve different fulfillments. Another good point is that this in-betweenness allowed them to have access to both worlds that resulted in having a considerable knowledge of both worlds’ cultures. In this regard, Salman Rushdie stated:

displaced writers are so well-qualified to speak for the present age, because more thoroughly than most of the rest of us, they have been forced by their cultural experience to accept the contradictory, multifarious nature of contemporary reality, to recognize how limited

and arbitrary how inadequate to experience, any particular language or culture always is. (qtd. in Cook 137)

Rushdie also praises the displaced situation of writers because it allows them to deal with all sorts of issues with critical thinking since they were forced to accept two contradictory cultures. This ability of handling different issues without restricting oneself to boundaries of politics, religion, national belonging, or to any specific ideologies is of crucial importance especially in this age of multiple trends and views.

Minorities are able to see things from different perspectives since they belong to two quite dissimilar and even contradictory cultures that each one considers the other as wrong, and thus, their vision will not be blurred by any means. At the psychological level, living between two different worlds pushes the person to adopt two personalities; one for each, for the goal of satisfying both sides.

In a trial to attain this end, Chinese American women went along with what Saw-ling Cynthia Wong termed “projection and repression” (78). Projection means to project and show the wanted talk and behavior to the people of that milieu while the same behaviors and speeches will seem inadequate for the people of the contradictory culture, consequently; repression and hiding would be necessary and require the projection of what seeks admiration of the second group. For that, it is found that Chinese American women are permanently doing the shift between their two halves.

The sense of dislocation was each time reinforced by sexist and racist incidents. For this reason, Chinese women writers decided to share their experience with all its sufferings and also the challenges that they went through. Their aim was not personal or local but rather universal. By expressing themselves, they are supporting all dislocated women all over the world and those texts remind them that

they are not alone. What made these pieces of writing different from autobiographies and biographies is the successful and harmonious mix of fiction and nonfiction, which helped much in their reputation.

D.The Mother Stories Contribution to the Cultural Struggle

All what is above is about the dislocation as a major reason for the confusion the protagonist is experiencing, but what was further frustrating is the confusion that was close to her, far from the outside door. The mother; Brave Orchid was the major source of confusion. This sense of confusion was transmitted through the mother's stories that draw heavily on contrasts; some of them serve to strengthen her daughter, pushing her to be a warrior. While other stories function to silence the protagonist and to transmit the message that women are inferior creatures that should only follow the instructions and that they have no right to claim. Mainly, Brave Orchid's main goal of her talk-stories in the novel is to teach her children life lessons (Sun 58). Not only the oral talk stories of the mother were the confusing issue about her but also her life details were contradictory.

The mother who is described as a "champion talker" (Kingston 202) is the same woman who seemed to contribute in silencing women by saying at the very beginning: "You must not tell anyone ...what I am about to tell you" (3). This woman also said that the aunt should not be talked about at all but at the same time, she is putting in the picture her story. She told her the story of her aunt to obey the rules to be a wife and slave and similarly she told her stories of heroines encouraging her to be a strong figure and to mark her era. Brave Orchid she herself broke the traditions by being a doctor in the Chinese society, which was an unusual career in that time. At the beginning, Kingston was very frustrated and confused about what the

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mother wants exactly from her, but later on, Kingston knew well how to use this “conflation” in her writing to be a very successful narrative technique. This technique is very evident in her book *The Woman Warrior* in which she mixes what is real with the unreal, the Chinese with the American, and her own imagination with the mother’s talk stories. (Lim and Ling 173)

The protagonist is highly influenced by her mother and this is very evident in which all the chapters are her talk stories. The five chapters are wavering between stories of strong female characters and weak women. For certain, the episodes devoted for the strong characters like Fa Mu Lan, Ts’ai Yen, and also the mother (to some extent) aim to show what women can do. Also they challenge the belief that women are inferior and that their role is only about being a sexual object and a wife that serves her husband and later a mother who sacrifices her life for her children.

Moving to the narratives of the submissive characters that emphasize the inferiority of women, those characters surrendered to the wants of their patriarchal society where they fortify the stereotypes fabricated on women like being passive, weak, and creatures of illogical thinking. Through the telling of the passive and obedient characters’ stories No Name Woman and Moon Orchid, the narrator exposes how daring women (who acted for their own good; following their desires and inclinations) met their awful fate either dying or going insane.

Kingston seeks to fight sexism and racism in her novel she is refusing to be looked down upon. In so doing, she chose to transmit the stories of well-known legendary women in which she made some changes to fully attain her aim. The first is Fa Mu Lan; the literal epic warrior that the title of the book is referring to. She is a model of women’s strong will and power. This model inspired Kingston to be a

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warrior too to defy sexism and racism. The author's main purpose of retelling Fa Mu Lan's myth was to present her personal source of inspiration to women all over the world to be motivated as well. The second is Ts'ai Yen. Ts'ai Yen's story is of crucial importance given that she is a warrior too but with words as Kingston is.

However, Kingston's main intentions of telling the stories of the submissive characters are exposing the Chinese traditions and most importantly presenting the other side (next to strong characters) that contributed in her cultural confusion. At the same time, Kingston does not aim to confuse her readers too because she did not follow the way her mother was narrating due to Kingston's emphasis on fighting sexism not reinforcing the stereotypes stamped on women. Another reason why Kingston tells her narrative in an intricate manner as Deborah L. Madsen believes:

To Kingston, life itself does not always conform to a simple structured narrative with a neatly defined beginning, middle, and end. Instead, she feels that life is more complicated than that: Life itself is confused and convoluted, with no easily defined beginnings or ends, and writing that attempts to show truth should reflect that confusion. (qtd. in Abrams 61)

Out of simplicity and clearness, Kingston wants her work to be 'real', especially that the book is about a life that requires growing up. Of course, the latter was and will never be smooth or it will miss the very principle of the process of growing up, which is changing and developing. Thus, Kingston finds that the best way to reveal the truth is to narrate the lived confusion.

The Woman Warrior is a feminist book that attempts to achieve women's union and solidarity and that aims to defeat racial and gender injustice in all manners

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as the narrator presented (through the word and the sword). Through this work, the narrator tries to end women's silence and shame for just being a female.

As a conclusion, this chapter has dealt with the evolution of the concept of culture until its temporal definition, then culture's relation to the current study or in other words, how culture is dealt with within minorities. Moreover, to understand well the issue, the summary of the novel has been presented including the five chapters. Then, a thorough discussion about the quest for belonging has taken place including the reasons of their situation (the family's type, sexism, racism, displacement, dislocation and the mother stories). In addition to the results of their displacement that can be split into two sections; positive (at the aesthetic level, including the innovative and unique writing) and negative one (at the psychological level, portrayed in loss and uncertainty). The last part has dealt with the way the mother's stories were confusing in an attempt to pave the way for the next chapter. The next chapter will be about presenting detailed analyses of the major characters to wipe away any sort of obscurity and to attain our goal of the study, which is presenting the cultural confusion through the characters, and how this confusion is solved.

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Culture Reconciliation through Characterization

This chapter brings to light how Kingston's cultural confusion is revealed through the contradiction of her characters and what was the result. On the one hand, Kingston is celebrating her Chinese heritage through the retelling of the heroine stories; the warrior Fa Mu Lan and the poetess Ts'ai Yen, and at the same time, she is referring to the passive Chinese women who were victims of the patriarchal society due to their weak and silent reactions. The five chapters of the novel can be read separately in which they follow a certain order. Kingston's choice of the order was incredibly purposeful, in which she was zigzagging from passive character to a brave one until the end of the book so that the confusion would be presented in no way better.

Another important point concerning the order is the position of "Shaman"; the chapter devoted for the mother that is put in center for a number of reasons. The First one is to symbolize that the mother is the core of confusion because all the stories are of Brave Orchid. Second, it is no secret that the first chapter of No Name Woman reveals the negative image of woman, and that the second; the one about Fa Mu Lan, exposes the positive image. While the third chapter, can be held from different perspectives. At the beginning, the mother represents a strong woman who was able to be a brilliant physician in TCM before going to America, another action that proved her strength and bravery is when she defeated the ghosts she found in the campus she was living in. However, later Brave Orchid abandoned her career to

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follow her husband to America; she left everything behind for the sake of her husband. This act is a strong figure of the patriarchal society.

Another incident that is considered as negative point is Brave's inability to assimilate into the American society and this became evident when she insisted on her sister to recommend her right as a first wife stating: "You just go to your husband's house and demand your rights as First Wife" (313). In the Chinese traditions, the first wife takes the upper hand in controlling the house whereas the new wife will be like her servant. That is to say, despite the many years that Brave Orchid spent in America, she did not realize that the Chinese culture is widely different from the American one in marriage affairs, in other words, she still believes in the Chinese norms missing that they lost their credibility on the other half of the globe. Another sign of her disintegration is her inability to communicate with Americans because of her weak English in which she asks her daughter to translate. For that, it is confusing whether to classify her within the positive or the negative representations of females.

After this chapter, Kingston continues the wavering by passing to Moon Orchid as a passive character than the turn came to the strong Ts'ai Yen. Furthermore, when something is put in the center or described to be the center of something, it means that it is the focal point of the matter; as it is known, *The Woman Warrior* is a book about the growing up of the narrator as Chinese American. Normally this process of maturing includes education as a major basis of development but this was not the case of the narrator who sees that her mother is the central point to her psychological development, she was the central point of her maturing. In this regard, Judith Oster sees that "the stories Maxine hears at home nourish her, give her "food"

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for her own growing creativity, her own separate needs as a woman and as an artist, a point that her critics seem to miss” (144) and this confirms the above discussion.

King-Kok Cheung points out: “[the] mother nurtures the narrator’s ability to entertain contradictions . . . to see truth as multidimensional, and to escape from the scientific authority that sets empirical truth and the voice of reason above the promptings of the imagination.” (qtd.in Oster 244)

This quotation aims to say that the mother could decide from the beginning what kind of stories to tell, to make her daughter grew up on so that the daughter will follow without questioning because the matter would be clearer. However, on the contrary Brave Orchid preferred to present contradictory events to make her daughter think, imagine, interpret and analyze to come with her own conclusion. In addition to that, the mother wants to make her daughter know that there is no absolute truth and that any issue should be held from different dimensions. The contradictions and the mix were not only at the level of chapters but within each one, as it will be demonstrated.

A. Fa Mu Lan

In the second chapter of the novel “White Tigers”, Fa Mu Lan succeeded to erase the passive image attributed to women as submissive and weak creatures, and she proved that she could be better than man through defeating him in the battlefield. This chapter gave a new version of the soft gender; females are no more passive and obedient as they are accustomed to be represented. This chapter challenges the gender stereotypes and ironic views toward females.

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In fact, Fa Mu Lan is a combination of the real myth of Hua Mulan and Kingston's fantasy. Hua Mulan is the protagonist of the "Ballad of Mulan²⁶" who replaced her old father in the war against Tartars for twelve years. All along her fighting journey, she changes her appearance and dresses like a man to hide her gender. Mulan proved her power through the numerous victories she won. Like Hua Mulan, Fa Mu Lan defeated the baron and the giant. In addition, what is common between them is that both heroines unveiled their gender by the end of the war. (Wang 11)

Fa Mu Lan's people proposed to her to hold a high official position but she refused in favor of her familial atmosphere including her husband and her child. The writer was attracted to the myth of Fa Mu Lan at a very young age than it came the time to include it in her personal writing. Kingston's adoption of this legend is not something new in which many animations, films, poems, and other artistic genres adopted it due to its success and special effect. Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* is one of those works that draw on myth. Nevertheless, Kingston liked to add her own touch for the goal of drawing the image she wants to pass to her readers.

The real legend emphasizes the victories, the wars and the battles she gains. While in the novel, the training the narrator went through in the mountains gained the major emphasis, which is purely of her imagination. In addition, the white tigers and the martial teachers who became Fa Mu Lan's surrogate parents are of Kingston's fantasy.

²⁶ A literary Chinese ballad or a fourteen stanzas poem that is based on oral tradition, it is composed by an anonymous writer between 420 and 589 A.D. in the Northern and Southern Dynasties in China (Li 1188).

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Mainly Kingston added the training to convey the message that women too can achieve a good position but this happens only through the hard work and the strong will. Another significant element that Kingston added is the normal life that is portrayed in the family including her beloved husband and her child. This situation is different from the real heroine's position who did not marry. Mainly Kingston intends to show that the domestic life has nothing to do with the woman achievement, also to show the dual power that woman have in comparison to man. Another positive point is that it demonstrates that women are not obliged to choose but they can be both a charismatic person and a homemaker.

Another difference between the real legend and Kingston's Fa Mu Lan is the motive for fighting. Kingston's main goal of the second chapter is to present a perfect model to follow. For this purpose, Kingston changed the fact that the heroine took her aging father place out of his obedience i.e. the father was the accommodator. In contrast, in Kingston's text the decision was hers, it was the outcome of the sympathy she felt towards the peasants who had been mistreated by the landowners (ANALYSIS 4). Thus, her push was the revenge for her people and this strengthens her independent position. Probably Kingston wanted to avoid any sign of patriarchy within her model that she always dreamt to be.

Another alteration is the tattooing episode. This episode is inspired from another famous old story, the one of Yueh Fei (also known as Ngai Fei), a heroic male general in the Sung Dynasty, whose mother marked his skin with a motto on his back (four ideographs) wanting him to be loyal to his country (Lim and Ling 177). Probably the writer's intention of this alteration is to prove that all what man can do, woman also can do it. In addition, it alludes to the ability of women resistance that

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does not differ from men's. also Kingston sees that this conflict is not only a physical one but also verbal in which she states: "The swordswoman and I are not so dissimilar.... What we have in common are the words at our backs.... The reporting is the vengeance-not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words. And I have so many words" (62-63).

Kingston did not train herself on martial arts but rather on art of writing; she combined what she saw in her studies in America with the art of storytelling that she learned from her mother preparing herself for a battle for proving the self.

All Kingston's alterations tend to intensify women's power and to end gender discrimination (Wang 12). Fa Mu Lan is transformed to be Kingston's wish fulfillment fantasies and to fit in the contemporary historical context where women are equal to men. Concerning this issue, Naoko Sugiyama claimed that the several roles the courageous warrior was able to perform attributed a new image to women where Fa Mu Lan was to be a warrior, a wife and a mother.

The scenes of Fa Mu Lan victory were narrated in a very allusive manner her first enemy was the giant whom she cut his leg and head in front of his army "the fighting around me stopped as the combatants eyes and mouths opened wide in amazement...[they] pledged their loyalty to me" (Kingston 41). This woman could frighten all the soldiers and could kill their leader as well which is considered a big loss for the latter.

For the goal of eradicating all the anti-female prejudice, those scenes are described in that manner; the next victory was the one over the baron. The narrator exposed the discussion that took place between her and the baron mainly to show that after unveiling her gender to him he started mocking on her telling her the quote that

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she hates “It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters” (Kingston 45). And this mockery led to his immediate death. Her instantaneous reaction may be interpreted to mean a sign of women’s capacity to triumph over the gender stereotypes.

Another good example is when she liberated the locked up women she found in dark rooms they were too weak, hungry and bound feet. Fa Mu Lan helped them and gave them food to recover... (Kingston 46, 47). This incident clearly signifies women’s solidarity and also proves Kingston’s wants of supporting women. It also clarifies why Kingston sees herself not very different from Fa Mu Lan in which she reported “the swords woman and I are not so dissimilar” and she adds “the ideographs for revenge are “report a crime” and “report to five families”. The reporting is the vengeance – not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words” (53).

This passage shows how the line between fiction and nonfiction is blurred, both intertwine in one narration that demonstrates how the narrator inherits the warrior spirit from Fa Mu Lan and becomes a warrior so that she can take revenge through writing (Ambiguity in *The Woman Warrior* 220). Kingston challenge is to present her work to be an inspiration for women all over the world to rise above all inferiorizing factors.

To put it in a nutshell, one might deduce that Kingston succeeded to draw a new world that meets women’s wish; Fa Mu Lan is a source of hope to the soft gender that initiates their path towards recognition. In ‘White Tigers’, Kingston presented a new myth that derives its details from different sources yet it is still resonant with the original Chinese myth. In addition, she succeeded to make an ideal balance between communal duties and individual wants by satisfying her people and proving that she is

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a strong leader. This combination says it all; that Kingston is trying to make a balance between the Chinese and the American culture.

B. Ts'ai Yen

Kingston devoted her last chapter to the legendary female poetess Ts'ai Yen. Ts'ai Yen is "the first great woman poet" in China as VanSpanckeren claims (45). She is a girl who was kidnapped by a barbarian tribe (the Huns) where she was forced to marry one of their chiefs she also gave birth to two children, then after a period of twelve years she returned home. She was kidnapped from her father's house at the age of twenty-two after being widowed at a young age. (Wong 8)

In contrast to Fa Mu Lan; the narrator's childhood fantasy, Ts'ai Yen's legend is passed on to the narrator when she was mature as she stated "here is a story my mother told me, not when I was young, but recently, when I told her I also talkstory" (Kingston 206).

Ts'ai Yen could not assimilate into the Huns tribe, thus she felt always alienated, odd and that she does not fit in the environment she is in. Her only outlet was expressing herself through poems and songs with the barbarian's music where they use a reed pipe that attracted the poetess.

Yan Gao affirmed that Ts'ai Yen composed at least three poems of her story but no one of them might be attributed to be absolutely hers (43). Her songs are bursting with "anxiety, lamentation and sorrow of exile" (Gao 43). The first two poems are entitled 'Lamentation' but they differ in terms of the verse form, while the third one is given the title of 'Eighteen Stanzas for a Barbarian Reed Pipe' from which the title of the chapter is derived.

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Probably, Kingston chose the mythical character Ts'ai Yen because of her trust in language capacity in prevailing over estrangement and over the traditional boundaries as well, taking into consideration that Ts'ai Yen was illustrious for her outstanding capacities in verbal expression and music, in addition to being eminent intellectual.

Next to Fa Mu Lan, Ts'ai Yen is considered also a warrior but her fight is of another type and so her weapon; Ts'ai Yen's weapon was the words. One night the poetess Ts'ai Yen heard the barbarians blowing reed pipes. After a while, she started singing in a way that matches the music.

Out of Ts'ai Yen's tent, which was apart from the others, the barbarians heard a woman's voice singing... a song so high and clear... Ts'ai Yen sang about China and her family there. Her words seemed to be Chinese, but the barbarians understood their sadness and anger. (Kingston 186)

Ts'ai Yen's voice was too attractive and full of emotions in which all the barbarians were listening to her and feeling her sorrow despite their incomprehension of the Chinese language. After twelve years of imprisoning Ts'ai Yen was liberated and she abandoned the barbarians and also her children who were not very different from the barbarians in which they do not use the Chinese language properly despite that she attempted to teach it to them secretly (Berner 80). Sometimes they even laugh at her when she tries to communicate with them in Chinese. (Oster 244)

Ts'ai Yen went to her home country holding with her the songs she invented during her far away days that were later transmitted from one Chinese generation to another. For this and other reasons, Kingston employs the legend of Ts'ai Yen "as a

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symbolic metaphor to her own process of finding her own voice and identity” (Sun 61).

From one angle, Kingston and Ts'ai Yen share the belief that words are of an extreme power, and through voicing and expressing themselves, they prove their existence not only prove it but impose it. Ts'ai Yen could be silent and submissive thus, no one will know about her story and she will be among the forgotten oppressed women who died in silence. But fortunately Ts'ai Yen fought using words, only her voice prevented her from being never heard about and it also enabled her to be the famous Ts'ai Yen she is currently. Another common point is that the same way Ts'ai Yen mixed between the Chinese lyrics and the barbarian flute music, Kingston did in which she used the English language and the American principles to express the Chinese myths and traditions.

From another perspective, Ts'ai Yen might be considered a symbol for the mother. This view seems more adequate in view of the fact that Brave Orchid is a China-born woman who lives in America thus the attribution of the sense of alienation will be more appropriate to her. However, instead of composing Chinese poetry, Brave Orchid tells Chinese talk-stories for her children. In the same chapter ‘A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe’, the mother does inadequate acts that do not fit in the American society for instance, she speaks too loud in open places. The narrator each time gets embarrassed in the public places; this proves that the mother could not get familiar with the American way of living despite the many years she spent in the United States. Another confirming act that Brave Orchid feels the same alienation is the incident of the pharmacy when the mother withdraws asking her daughter to translate to the pharmacist.

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Ts'ai Yen's sense of alienation was fueled by her inability to speak with people surrounding her. This situation reminds the readers of the mother's position; in this context, Judith Oster pointed out: "Ts'ai Yen, as victim, suffered by being forced to live among barbarians just as Brave Orchid suffered in coming to America and in being misunderstood by her children" (144).

One can sum up saying that Ts'ai Yen's story gives two main pieces of advice or morals; the first is to have a voice whatever were the circumstances, one should express himself to show his existence and power. Kingston attempts to encourage women all over the world to be strong and never to surrender to the wishes of others. The other gained moral is to do a kind of compromise between the two cultures, this hint is clearly present in Ts'ai Yen's story and this quotation from Kingston's book illustrates well the issue " [a song] that has been passed down to us is 'Eighteen Stanzas for a Barbarian Reed Pipe', a song that Chinese sing to their own instruments. It translated well" (Kingston 186). Here a new type of song appeared that reconciliates criteria from both the barbarian tribe and the Chinese community, this instance signifies what Kingston is doing in *The Woman Warrior* particularly, and in her works in general. Kingston did not abandon her origins' heritage but she rather devoted the entire five chapters for stories of Chinese basis. Moreover, at the same time, she did not deny that she is an American-born woman who lives her life within Americans for that the stories are told from an American perspective in which it is found that the western concept of feminism is very evident right from the start.

In order to overcome all kinds of frustration, uncertainty, loss and all psychic troubles one should act intelligently to be able to survive and to live in peace. Kingston followed Ts'ai Yen's path by forming a unique artistic form that

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reconciliates both cultures and similarly differs from both. And so her belonging, she belongs to both but can never be judged as a pure American or pure Chinese.

C. No Name Woman

Among the stifling talk stories of *Brave Orchid* is *No Name Woman* tragic narrative. *No Name Woman* is the narrator's aunt whose name is forbidden to mention due to her illegitimate child. according to some critics ,such as Monica Chiu, agree on the fact that unnamed characters symbolize their inability to stand against an organism that goes against their desires. Among those critics, we find Monica Chiu who claimed, "In American literature, unnamed female figures are so (un)marked in order to highlight their inefficacy in changing a system inimical to them" (53). Indeed this is exactly what happened to the narrator's paternal aunt, she could not do anything towards the patriarchal village she was living in. At the end, she surrendered to her awful fate by drowning herself and the newborn baby in the family well.

Brave Orchid's aim of this story was to educate her daughter the way she sees as right, the way a Chinese girl must be, and this is demonstrated in the narrators saying, "Whenever she had to warn us about life, my mother told stories that ran like this one[no name aunt], a story to grow up on" (Kingston 5).

. For this reason, just after the narrator's puberty, the mother told her "now that you have started to menstruate what happened to [No Name Woman] could happen to you- don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never born. The villagers are watchful" (Kingston 13). From *Brave's* perspective, she is warning her daughter through rude words to make her aware of the danger of her aunt's sin and thus she would be more cautious in her life. However, apparently the

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mother forgot an episode, that her daughter is a US-born, so the Chinese way of thinking would be inadequate for her.

For sure, as an American adolescent she would ask why to consider the villagers' opinion? and why the villagers attacked her aunt's house? in addition to many other questions. As an American-born daughter, Kingston did not want to continue what her ancestors have done to her aunt. They accused her of being guilty without questioning the truth, without giving her the minor right of expressing herself. Even after her suicide, they are refusing to forgive her or talk about her, they simply erased her name and her entire life just to carry on as she never existed before, which is the most brutal punishment. For that, Kingston's book came to allow No Name Woman to become central rather than being at the margins.

Unlike *Brave Orchid* who lays emphasis on the punishment in her story, Kingston rather focused on the psychic world of the aunt. Her description was barely imaginative; the narrator described her physical appearance from pulling out the unwanted hair "the string twisted together catching the little hairs. Then she pulled the thread away from her skin, ripping the hairs out neatly, her eyes watering from the needles of pain" (9) to her clothing and fashion in terms of forms and colors (Sun 51). In addition, the narrator tries to justify her aunt's situation putting each time an assumption that is full of details, which reinforces the fact that Kingston's imagination is an all-encompassing one.

Kingston in her book stated, "Some man had commanded her to lie with him and be his secret evil. . . . His demand must have surprised, then terrified her. She obeyed him; she always did as she was told" (6). Kingston tries to say that how the patriarchal society is expecting from a creature that is accustomed to always say 'yes'

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to men to refuse now what she is ordered. I.e. she is blaming patriarchy for making people blind towards the truth. She said that both men are alike (her husband and the rapist) “they both gave orders” (7). In addition he threatened by killing her if she tells anyone, for that, she surrendered without claiming. When she discovered her pregnancy, She found herself neither able to talk herself out of being raped nor to announce her innocence afterwards (Lim and Ling 167). The narrator sees that her aunt was a victim from the beginning, in which she was married to a man that she barely knows “just to make sure that every young men who went ‘out on the road’ would responsibly come home” (11).

Kingston suggests also that the aunt might be a lover. Her pregnancy was out of love “She looked at a man because she liked the way the hair was tucked behind his ears, or she liked the question mark line of a long torso...soft voice, slow walk” (8) the narrator described every detail about how the aunt prepared herself to date her secret lover. In this case, the aunt’s act of silence is out of care towards her lover where Kingston states, “She kept the man’s name to herself throughout her labor and dying; she did not accuse him that he be punished with her. To save her inseminator’s name she gave silent birth.”(11)

For that, voicelessness is found to be a major theme in the first chapter, how the protagonist is hushed even after her death. The narrator wants to say that being silent means death and she expressed this clearly in the last chapter claiming, “If you don't talk, you can't have a personality... You’ve got to let people know you have a personality and a brain” (180). For Kingston, voicing meant existence, she is warning women never to accept to be hushed by any means. Their own existence is prior to any orders.

D. Moon Orchid

Moon Orchid is the narrator's aunt on her father's side who stayed in China waiting for her husband to invite her to join him in America. Moon's husband, like many other Chinese men, went to America to make fortune to be able to invite his family to join him there. Unfortunately, he did not do what is expected from him. For thirty years, he was just sending money to Moon and her daughter without showing the intention to bring them with him and what was worse is that "He never writes letters" (131). After this period, Brave brought her sister with her in America at the age of sixty-eight.

Despite that, Moon and Brave are true sisters, they might be considered as opposites in character, Moon is a woman of little witness as it is described all along the book. Brave after the long period they did not meet, she discovered that Moon is of the same mental capacities stating that Moon "wasn't very bright, and she had not gotten any smarter in the last thirty years" (130).

Haylay Struzik in her analysis of the novel *The Woman Warrior* "*The Woman Warrior: The Silence Creation of a Third Space*" (2015) sheds lights upon the aunt Moon Orchid. She faces a very difficult case, when she decided to come to the United States (unfamiliar place), and face the rejection of her husband (unfamiliar situation). The Chinese heritage and culture are considered as a source of identity and culture for Moon Orchid, and the fact of being in the United States makes a very harsh effect on her life. Though, Moon Orchid meets with her family in the United States, but she did not meet with her voice and agenda. She feels alienation and separation especially when she gets very closer to her husband's place in Los Angeles. The situation was

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complicated more when she has not any decision to take and no courage to face her fate. One may say that Moon Orchid lost herself and her voice in the United States.

Moon Orchid's sister; Brave Orchid plays a huge role in the process of isolating this figure. Brave Orchid used her nights and days to push her sister to take an action towards her situation; like how to deal with the new wife and with her missed husband. Meanwhile Moon Orchid's husband silenced her existence by not telling his American wife about her (155 Struzik). Her husband saw her as a threat to his new Americanized life, he succeeded to be a successful neurosurgeon in his own private property in Los Angeles where English was his only means of communication. Furthermore, he took a new American wife and gave birth to two children. So Moon will only ruin his new state, for that, from the first sight he yelled at her asking, "what are you doing here?..." but Moon could say no word because of the shock.

In addition to that, the foreignness of the American culture makes a special shift; Moon Orchid lacks the ability to speak English fluently. Thus, she reinforced her silence. She is considered as a total oddity in the American society, even with her sister and nieces she behaves in a strange manner. Moon was very pleased to offer her sister a hand-made woolen silk dress but the reaction was not what Moon expected "Now where would I wear such a fancy dress?... Give it to one of the children." While for the children, she brought some jewelry but Brave commented, "They're too young for jewelry. They'll lose it." (298). Her deeds were seen as inadequate and strangely strange to all people there.

She was always lost and indecisive even towards her life issues. When Brave asked her what to do in her husband affair, she simply answered, "I don't know. Do we have to do something?" (124).

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Moon Orchid's influence is manifested in her chant about list of images. The difficult match between the American and the Chinese culture is one form that could explain the harsh silence and hard situation of Moon Orchid. She never leaves China psychologically, hence she constructs this chant, and she pushes her Chinese-American siblings to act in a conscious ways. Moon Orchid uses the chant as a way of failing to integrate the two worlds. Because she was unable to interpret the whole life of her relatives, we can mention here the culture, history, and the whole sphere of the life style

Due to her constant silence and fear, the maternal aunt failed to assimilate into the new atmosphere she joined in America. Her failure led to her death after passing by a state of insanity. She lost "her husband, her family identity, and, eventually, her mind" as Paul W. McBride stated (qtd. in. ANALYSIS 18). Moon in the novel portrays the cultural shock that may lead to craziness and death. Kingston wants to demonstrate that one should adapt himself to the environment he is in or the end would be a terrifying one.

General Conclusion

Writing in a multicultural situation mirrors a multiplicity of experiences especially when it comes to Chinese American literary works. What made Chinese American literature flourish, are the second-generation writers mainly due to their vivid and honest exposition of identity crisis and cultural clash in addition to other issues that are related to hyphenated writers.

This thesis came to tackle culture in Maxine Hong Kingston's book *The Woman Warrior* (1976). The latter exposes the stories of five female Chinese characters that influenced the narrator in a huge way. Being an American born female in a Chinese household made it difficult for the writer to quickly establish a clear basis for her culture and identity. For that, a cultural confusion is clearly reflected in most hyphenated writers' works but the difference is in the way this confusion will be solved.

All the characters contributed in Kingston's accomplishment and we can say all of them are strongly associated with her experience as an American Chinese citizen. The two aunts, no-name woman and Moon Orchid, terrified her of silence which lead to death and insanity. She learned that whatever were the circumstances, she should make her voice heard to prove her existence and sanity. While the two other characters: the warrior Fa Mu Lan and the poetess Ts'ai Yen, succeeded to be her fantasy, they made her imagine that her life is a battle too and she proved her victory through her remarkable academic success. (what made Kingston feel herself in a battle is that both fighting and writing are accustomed to be men preoccupations). Kingston through the voice and the pen could progress "from retarded pupil to

General Conclusion :

"straight A" student, and finally to writer" (Lim and Ling 172). If she surrendered her battle she would be forgotten as her aunts are (if she did not devote pages for them).

As a result of the analyses, one might conclude that the question of culture or identity in Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* cannot be answered by being Chinese or American but she now invents tales that sustain and affirm neither her Chinese nor her American belonging but her Chinese American identity. Her hybridity is clearly reflected in her work. There is no dichotomy of Eastern and Western criteria but rather there is a delicate variation, a variation of Maxine Kingston. After her long complicated life journey, Kingston decided to neither abandon her Chinese heritage nor to leave her American present but to do a kind of reconciliation, a reconciliation that makes her benefit from both cultures. In other words, she preferred to learn from history to strengthen her personality with the positive aspects and to take profit from others' experiences and mistakes because they are free life lessons for wise people.

Kingston went beyond the expectations to satisfy both her ancestors and her present being portrayed in her career. Her Chinese ancestors will be proud of her because she is still attached to her heritage. In addition to her remarkable success, that she achieved in America as a well-known writer whose books are among the best sellers due to her modern techniques and modifications that made the Chinese talk stories fit in the American context and this makes Americans appreciate her. In addition, Kingston won herself; she behaved as her mind guided her. Out of her environment, she was able to reconstitute a culture that differs from both Eastern and Western worlds; a Chinese American culture.

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Abstract:

Abstract:

The Chinese American literature is a very fruitful field of study. It shares many themes with the other minor and Diaspora literature like racism, sexism and the quest for identity, but it presents its originality through the writing style, techniques and the reflection of the Chinese culture, which is rich with superstitions and unique traditions. One of the masterpieces in Chinese American literature is *The Woman Warrior* by the contemporary writer Maxine Hong Kingston, which exposes stories told to the narrator by her mother. This research aims to shed light on the cultural confusion the writer went through in her life as it is presented in this book. In addition, it explains how Kingston's position as a hyphenated writer is always present all along her work. This thesis also goes thoroughly to analyze each character separately(qualitative research) to show the way Kingston reconciliates both her present American culture and the Chinese culture transmitted by her mother through storytelling to reconstitute her own. In other words, how she reaches a sense of the self and accepted her hybrid culture and identity.

Key Words: Chinese American literature, Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, cultural confusion, reconciliates, hybrid culture, identity.

Résumé :

La littérature américaine Chinoise est un domaine d'étude prolifique. Elle traite des mêmes thèmes tels que le racisme, le sexisme et les problèmes d'identité que la littérature issue d'autre minorité ethniques ou de la diaspora. Elle se distingue des autres littératures par son style, ses techniques littéraires ainsi que par ses références à la culture Chinoise riche en superstitions et traditions uniques. Un des chefs d'œuvres de cette littérature *The Woman Warrior* (La Guerrière), écrite par l'auteur contemporain Maxine Hong Kingston. Elle présente des histoires que la mère de l'écrivain lui a racontées. L'objectif de cette étude est de mettre en lumière la confusion culturelle que l'auteur a vécue au cours de sa vie telle qu'elle est présentée dans ce livre. De plus elle montre comment la position double culturelle de l'écrivain Kingston est présente toute au long de son œuvre. Cette thèse analyse séparément et minutieusement chaque caractère (recherche qualitative) afin de montrer comment l'auteur concilie son actuelle culture Américaine et la culture Chinoise que sa mère lui a transmise à Travers les histoires qu'elle lui a racontées pour construire sa propre culture. En d'autres termes Comment parvient-elle et comment elle accepte son identité et sa culture hybride.

Mots clés :

Littérature Américaine Chinoise, Maxine Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, Confusion culturelle, Reconstruction, Culture hybride, Identité.

ملخص المذكرة

الأدب الأمريكي الصيني هو مجال دراسة مثير جدا، يتشارك مع عدة مواضيع من أدب المغتربين، مثل التمييز العنصري وعدم المساواة بين الجنسين والبحث عن الهوية، لكنه يبرز أصالته من خلال أسلوب الكتابة وتقنيات وانعكاسات الثقافة الصينية الغنية بالخرافات والأساطير وتقاليدها المميزة، وكوادة من التحف الأدبية في الأدب الأمريكي الصيني " المرأة المحاربة " من تأليف الكاتبة المعاصرة ماكسين كينغستون، والتي تعرض قصص سرديت للمؤلفة من طرف والدتها.

يهدف هذا البحث الى تسليط الضوء على الارتباك الثقافي الذي عانت منه في حياتها كما جسدهت في هذا العمل .علاوة على ذلك فإن هذا الكتاب يشرح موقفها كمؤلفة مزدوجة الثقافة دائما حاضر في كل أعمالها. هذه المذكرة تحلل كل شخصية على حدى وبشكل لحظي ومنفصل " البحث النوعي " والتي تصور طريقة كينغستون في دمج كل من ثقافتها الأمريكية المعاصرة الصينية المنقولة اليها من خلال قصص والدتها لتشكيل عملها النهائي، أو بطريقة أخرى كيف تصل إلى معنى الأنا وتقبل ثقافتها وهويتها الهجينة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الأدب الأمريكي الصيني، ماكسين كينغستون، المرأة المحاربة، الارتباك الثقافي، إعادة بناء، الثقافة الهجينة، الذات