

‘EXILE, SECRECY, AND CUNNING’¹: CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND HYBRIDITY IN MAXINE HONG KINGSTON’S *THE WOMAN WARRIOR*

Chutima Pragatwutisarn²

Abstract

*This article discusses the construction of Chinese-American identity in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*. Kingston’s book reveals the role of story-telling in the construction of ethnic (and gendered) identity as the author narrates her personal experiences through the reconstruction of myths, legends, and ‘talk stories’ she inherited from her mother. The method Kingston uses to make sense of these stories is that of translation. Translation refers to a performance of ethnic and gendered identity in Kingston’s narrative. Here the complex identity known as Chinese-American is not an accumulation of discrete, distinct cultures, ‘Chinese and American’. As a result of translating between these different positions, Chinese-American in Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior* designates a new identity, one that exposes the fictions of any closed categories, either Chinese or American. This process of self-definition is represented in terms of Kingston’s*

¹ In explaining how she has the courage to break the silence, Kingston mentions these three terms, cunning, secrecy, and exile (see Perry, 1993:18).

² Lecturer, Department of Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

rewriting of stories of her ethnic culture in an attempt to reclaim them as her own and to make their meaning relevant to her American context. This Chinese-American identity as a product of discursive practice transcends the monolithic conception of Chinese and American cultures. It is in Kingston’s struggle to find her own voice that she tentatively combines the two cultures and reconciles herself with her mother.

Introduction

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston is about the construction of Chinese-American identity as a process of translation. My usage of the term ‘translation’ underscores the importance of linguistic practice in constituting cultural identity. Cultural identity, despite shared and recognizable characteristics among people of the same group, must be translated or recreated in order to be useful for members of the next generation.³ Culture interpreted through the method of translation, then, is not of fixed origin, but a dynamic process of exchange and negotiation out of which emerges a reinvention of cultural identity.

In Kingston’s text, translation is more than simply a play on signification irrelevant to a specific historical context. For Kingston, cultural identity as translation is a necessity rather than a choice, emerging from her experience of cultural displacement and alienation. Kingston subtitles her fictional autobiography ‘Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts’. ‘Ghosts’ is a key metaphor she uses to

³ Michael M. J. Fischer (1986:195), for example, argues, ‘ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual’.

describe the experience of cultural alienation. The term is applied to alien, insubstantial, invisible beings, both humans and spirits. The landscape of Kingston's girlhood is haunted by 'ghosts' — stories of women who live in exile not only physically but culturally and psychologically. Of these women, the successful ones are those who know how to 'translate' themselves to overcome their ghostly existence. Translation understood in the context of displacement is a method whereby a displaced person can 'unghost' herself by transforming absence and invisibility into meaning and identity.

I

Translation implies that an 'interruption' has occurred, that something has been — to borrow Homi Bhabha's term — 'blasted out of a homogeneous continuum', (1992:48) forcing a production of meaning across, instead of within, cultural boundaries. Yet the fact that language is a translation from one to another also suggests the relationship between linguistic signs and the continuation of meaning. Disjunction and association are two integral elements of translation, rendering it a complex and ambiguous process.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use the term 'deterritorialization' to describe the crisis of totality as a postmodern phenomenon that takes place in the realm of language and literature. Caren Kaplan (1987:188) notes that their usage of the term describes 'the effects of radical distancing between signifier and signified. Meaning and utterances become estranged'. A sense of security once made possible by the unity between signifier and signified now gives way to a state of confusion, an effect of cultural alienation. Translation then becomes necessary when

the production of meaning within a safe space called home is no longer possible. As Deleuze and Guattari (qtd. in Kaplan, 1987:188) ask, 'How many people live today in a language that is not their own?', reminding us of linguistic deterritorialization in this age of displacement, exile, and mass migration. However, translation as recuperation of meaning is not simply a process of returning to our origin. Deterritorialization, even as it produces alienation, also gives freedom for imagination to express 'another potential community, to force the means for another consciousness and another sensibility' (see Kaplan, 1987:190). Living in translation then, involves both perils and possibilities that make a translator feel like a secret agent in a foreign territory.

My focus on a postcolonial approach to translation is a response to a call made by Bhabha (1992:48) for 'reinterpreting and rewriting the forms and effects of 'older' colonial consciousness from the later experience of cultural displacement that marks the more recent, postwar histories of the Western metropolis'. Translation in my discussion is more than just an exercise of linguistic skills. It is a way of living for minority people whose experience of cultural alienation makes it necessary for them to translate themselves from the outside in.⁴ A massive migration of nonwhite people to a Western metropolis may lead us to believe that the binary between us/them, underwritten by the notion that permanently ties a culture to a

⁴ See Paul Jay (1997:405-31) and his application of translation methods to the reading of Carlos Fuentes's 'The Two Shores'. Though different in context, Jay's approach to translation is similar in several aspects to my reading of Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*.

fixed terrain, will soon be wiped away. Yet the experience of many immigrants and their descendants who literally are there and still find themselves as alien and exotic as ghosts belies such an optimistic view. The distinction between the domestic and the exotic is an example of how the West is still unable to accept that their culture is never pure and unified but that is heterogeneously constituted from the very beginning.

An individual may deploy a strategy of translation to challenge the claim of a permanent link between space and culture by illustrating how meaning is produced 'across', rather than 'within', cultural boundaries. Living in translation does not lead one to reject cultural difference. Instead, our shift of context, signified by the *trans* prefix of translation, is a condition for our alternative way of thinking about the issues of space and identity by recasting the notion of difference in what Gupta and Ferguson (1997:16) call 'common, shared, and connected spaces'. Viewed in the light of postcolonial translation theory, American culture is not 'white' but always already 'colored', consisting of black, white, red, yellow, and brown. White history is simply an originary translation from this realm of heterogeneity. There remain several undocumented or ghostly peoples whose stories need to be translated. Just as Anglo-centric writers translate America out of their European-ness, *The Woman Warrior* represents the author's translation of America out of her Chinese-ness.

II

Kingston (in 'Cultural Misreading by American Reviewers', 1982:58) claims that '*The Woman Warrior* is an American Book', and yet she makes extensive use of traditional Chinese sources in her narrative.

On what basis, then, does the author make such a claim? How do we make sense of the Chinese elements in the text? And finally, how do we understand the paradox of Chinese-American identity portrayed in Kingston's autobiography? Sidonie Smith (1987:150) makes the very interesting point that '*The Woman Warrior* is an autobiography about women's autobiographical storytelling'. As suggested by Smith, what concerns Kingston is not the telling of her life story but how that story is constituted in the telling. In this article, I will focus on how Kingston validates the 'American-ness' of her experience and narrative, using translation as her storytelling strategy.

One trope for the author's *bildung* in *The Woman Warrior* is 'talk stories'. As Kingston (1989:5) tells us in the opening chapter, her mother tells her 'a story to grow up on'. Kingston inherits the life stories of women from her mother's 'talk stories' and turns those stories into a means to understand her own identity. What makes story telling and consequently the construction of identity complex processes is that the narrative act in Kingston's text occurs in a transnational/translational space.⁵ The absence of immediate origin as a point of reference within this space causes the daughter to be conscious and self-reflexive about the constructed nature of reality. Kingston (1989:5) notes that her mother tells her American-born children stories about China in order to '[test] our strength to establish realities'. Just as meaning is identified with a process rather than a product of signification, what matters is not what culture signifies (content) but what is signified by culture (construction).

⁵ I borrowed the term transnational/translational from Homi Bhabha (1994).

The transnational/translational context of talk stories conditions the way narratives are told by the mother and transformed by the daughter. In order to make sense of her mother's talk stories, Kingston finds it necessary to translate them into her American context, using the troping strategy of translation which both separates her from and links her to her mother. Kingston's art of translation is found in her recreation of China from her mother's talk stories and her negotiation between two cultural codes: Chinese and American. Constituted by both cultures, Kingston (1989:5) finds it necessary to 'figure out how the invisible world [of China] fits in solid America'. As a daughter of Chinese immigrants, Kingston has never been to China and must rely on her mother's talk stories as a major source of authority for her knowledge about China. However, Kingston's translation of her mother's talk stories is not simply a shift of meaning from one context to another. Translation makes 'real' the ghostly China of her mother's talk stories by fleshing it out from her concrete experience in America. Chinese elements in the text are a product of translation as a mode of cultural exchange. They address an American context and become part of the American experience.

Kingston (see Boelhower, 1991:98) uses troping strategies of translation to 'smuggle in' experience outside of what is considered 'normative' American life. However, Kingston does not use troping strategies to facilitate her assimilation into mainstream American culture. She not only translates Chinese into American culture but also turns American culture into something new. Kingston's appeal to her readers to view her book as 'American' should be understood within this context of translation. Kingston's creation of 'China'

in her text represents a new way of looking at American culture from her ethnic background rather than from an Anglo-American perspective. At stake for Chinese-Americans is to claim Americanness for their experience and culture by using the method of translation. Here Kingston is capable of inhabiting American culture in order to disrupt it from within. Her art of translation involves maneuvering American language to give voice to her experience and desire. As she (qtd. in Rabinowitz, 1987:182) states in an interview: 'I am trying to write an American language that has Chinese accents [...]. So, in a way I was creating something new, but at the same time, it's still American language, pushed further'.

III

Kingston begins her autobiography with a narrative of the Other — the story of No Name Aunt — and shows how the meaning of her identity is derived from that narrative. The narrative itself is Kingston's reconstruction of her mother's 'talk stories' about an aunt in China whose adultery provokes an attack from the villagers upon the family household and leads the aunt to drown herself and her illegitimate child in the family well. Although *Brave Orchid* uses her narrative about No Name Aunt to define the 'real' for her daughter, her narrative cannot obliterate its traces of translation. *Brave Orchid's* narrative originates from a transgression of the father's injunction to silence. 'You must not tell anyone,' *Brave Orchid* tells her daughter, 'what I am about to tell you' (1989:3). *Brave Orchid's* citing of the father's law as a final authority further displaces the law from its origin because her enforcement of the law 'Don't tell' is made possible by violation of its authority.

Although No Name Aunt's story takes place in China before Kingston was born, Brave Orchid seems to have no difficulties in applying the logic of the story to her American daughter's situation. The story, told at the onset of Kingston's menstruation, is used to discipline the daughter's female sexuality. Brave Orchid warns her daughter, 'Now that you start to menstruate, what happened to [the aunt] could happen to you' (1989:5). From her mother's story, Kingston learns that a failure to abide by the law can result in the erasure of her name — 'as if you had never been born' (1989:5). The aunt whose name is forbidden was punished for her belief that she 'could have a private life, secret and apart from [the community]' (1989:13). Brave Orchid's mode of storytelling reinforces her intention. Following the principle of 'Necessity',⁶ Brave Orchid is careful to delimit details of the aunt's story and focuses only on the aunt's transgression of patriarchal law and its consequences. Kingston assures us that her mother tells her 'once and for all the useful parts' (1989:6). Brave Orchid withholds from her daughter 'irrelevant' details of how the aunt becomes pregnant — her desires and intentions that lead to her pregnancy. Not unlike those villagers who raid the family household, Brave Orchid considers individual desires to be dangerous to a community that 'depended on one another to maintain the real' (1989:12-13).

As an American-born daughter, Kingston must figure out how her mother's narrative about the aunt in China fits into her American context. The transnational/translational context of talk stories enables her to link gender with

ethnicity. For Kingston, the limits not only mean an opportunity to write beyond the ending. The absence of details about No Name Aunt in Brave Orchid's narrative propels Kingston's imagination to project what may have happened to her aunt on the other side. By fleshing out Brave Orchid's skeletal narrative about the aunt, Kingston produces not just one but several versions of the aunt's story. The aunt may be a rape victim but Kingston notes, 'Women in the Old China did not choose. Some man had commanded her to lie with him and be his secret evil' (1989:6). It is also possible that her aunt is a rebel but, in that sense, her family 'expected her alone to keep the traditional ways, which her brothers, now among the barbarians could fumble without detection' (1989:8). In Kingston's narrative strategies, 'Necessity' and 'Extravagance' are not opposites: the latter is constitutive of the former. Kingston's art of translation is a means to restore the 'Extravagance' of desires — her own desire, her aunt's desire, and female desire — into the symbolic or 'Necessity' of her mother's 'talk-stories'.

Kingston learns from the story of No Name Aunt that the real challenge to patriarchy does not lie in a reversal between inside and outside. For Kingston, the aunt's is a story about the crossing of gender boundaries, and the perils and possibilities it brings. Patriarchal order is dependent on a communal consent for establishing the real. By creating her own 'roundness', embodied by her pregnancy, the aunt engenders her own law which threatens to substitute for the old one — that of patrilineal heritage. Her transgression causes her to be an outlaw — both beyond and outside of the law. The aunt can enjoy her freedom and individuality at the expense of losing protection from her family and community. Her unbound desire causes her to be in danger of losing the meaning of her

⁶ See Sau-ling Cynthia Wong (1993:18-76) for a discussion of Necessity versus Extravagance in Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*.

identity. Kingston imagines how her aunt, overcome by agoraphobia, seeks refuge in the family's pigsty where she gives birth to her illegitimate son 'to fool the jealous, pain-dealing gods, who do not snatch piglets' (1989:14). Being outside, then, is as dangerous and threatening to the integrity of identity as being confined by law.

Kingston's rewriting of the story of No Name Aunt is part of her effort to 'unghost' her aunt whose name has been erased from the family genealogy. Although Kingston claims her aunt to be her 'forerunner' in exile, she is afraid of becoming a ghost herself or her aunt's substitute. At the end of her narrative, Kingston expresses fear and anxiety: 'I am telling on her, and she was a spite suicide, drowning herself in the drinking water. The Chinese are always very frightened of the drowned one, whose weeping ghost, wet hair hanging and skin bloated, waits silently by the water to pull down a substitute' (1989:16). Making her aunt real by establishing kinship with her can be dangerous if Kingston fails to distinguish herself from her female ancestor. In reconstructing the aunt's story, Kingston positions herself in between her mother's Necessity and her aunt's Extravagance. This position enables Kingston to 'unghost' her Aunt while preventing herself from turning into a ghost substitute. As a result, she imagines several versions of her aunt's story to see how she can use the story to understand her own position in an American context. By shifting the narrative focus from female victimization by patriarchal law to female potential to negotiate with the law, Kingston can come to terms with both her aunt and her ethnicity.

IV

In 'White Tigers', Kingston recalls her mother telling her the story of Mu Lan — a girl who volunteers to fight for her father and after the battle returns to settle in her village. The story is a vehicle for Brave Orchid to locate home, Chinese culture, and community for her daughter. However, for Kingston, the story of Mu Lan is more than just a reminder of her place. Kingston tells us, '[my mother] said I would grow up a wife and a slave, but she taught me the song of the woman warrior, Mu Lan. I would have to grow up a warrior woman' (1989:20). Kingston learns from her mother to distinguish her gender roles by means of opposition as she is given the choice of growing up to be either a warrior woman or a wife and a slave. However, Mu Lan in Kingston's 'White Tigers' is already a translation of her mother's story into a personal myth. In 'White Tigers', Kingston redefines the meaning of 'home' and that of gender identity by locating them in the translational/transnational context.

Kingston's reproduction of the Mu Lan story in 'White Tigers' illustrates her attempt to use Chinese myth to locate home in the context of America. Kingston revises this cultural myth into an interlinear text, linking Chinese with American cultures, her mother's talk stories with her own invention. As Kingston tells us,

Night after night my mother would talk-story until we fell asleep. I couldn't tell where the stories left off and the dreams began, her voice the voice of the heroine in my sleep. And on Sundays, from noon to midnight, we went to the movies at the Confucius Church. We saw the swordswomen jump over houses

from a standstill; they didn't even need a running start (1989:19).

The story of Mu Lan is a product of different sources and hence a new myth. It is diverging from and yet resonant with its 'original' Chinese myth. The story is a reflection of Kingston's Chinese-American experience which must be read dialogically.

The mythic world in 'White Tigers' is an embodiment of Kingston's creative reconstruction of the 'original' Chinese myth. In this fluid, changing world of myth, the boundaries are not clear: the bird looks like 'the ideographs for 'human''; the cloud, 'the dragon's breath'; the world is gray, 'like ink wash' with 'everything so murky' (1989:20). The fusion between fact and fantasy makes it possible for Kingston to identify herself with the protagonist, Mu Lan, who follows a mysterious bird into a magical world where she is trained by a mythic couple to be a 'warrior woman'. The lessons Kingston learns from this mythic couple include both physical and philosophical training. Her lesson begins with the art of camouflage, and after five years of training Kingston claims, 'I could copy owls and bats, the words for 'bats' and 'blessing' are homonyms' (1989:23). She learns that 'Every creature has a hiding skill and a fighting skill a warrior can use' (1989:23-24). The ultimate goal of this training is to see the world in translation. The last and most important lesson — the dragon lesson — is described as 'wisdom' (1989:28). The couple instructs her, 'You have to infer the whole dragon from the parts you can see and touch', because 'dragons are so immense, [you] would never see one in its entirety' (1989:28). The complexity of dragons can be understood only in a particular context: 'The dragon lives in the sky, ocean, marshes, and

mountains [...] Sometimes the dragon is one, sometimes many' (1989:29). Each is unique and at the same time a translation of one another. Nothing is entirely original and yet each translation of the dragon is never the same. The paradox is crucial, enabling Kingston to see the world as complex, consisting of different layers of meaning, each of which overlaps and yet remains distinctive, unique, and contextual. From the dragon lesson, Kingston develops a special insight: 'I learned to make my mind large, as the universe is large, so that there is room for paradoxes' (1989:29).

The influence of the Mu Lan myth on Kingston's identity is underlined by the title of her memoir *The Woman Warrior*. The story provides for Kingston an opportunity to explore gender roles cross-culturally and to explore the possibility of a mythic resolution to her own conflicts as a female Chinese-American. The 'wisdom' of the dragon lesson is part of the protagonist's training to be a successful warrior woman who can straddle the two fault lines. For Kingston, Mu Lan is a potential role model and an alternative to No Name Aunt. If No Name Aunt's transgression situates her outside of the community, in 'White Tigers' crossing is a double strategy — a condition for returning home in a more effective way. Mu Lan decides to stay with the mythic couple and even prolongs her training so that she can successfully avenge her family and community. 'White Tigers' is clearly a girl's wish-fulfilling fantasy of leaving home but her exile from home, family, and community is 'both self-liberating and community-serving' (Gilead, 1988:56). In 'White Tigers,' Kingston continues and revises the motif of exile in 'No Name Woman' by restoring her desire for community. During her exile, Mu Lan also risks becoming 'a ghost' but finally returns home 'healthy and strong'

(1989:31). Once she returns to her village, her parents have a welcome party for her as if she were 'a son' (1989:34). Also, the villagers recognize her worthiness as a warrior woman and entrust her with their 'real gifts' — their sons (1989:36). During her battles, Mu Lan combines her physical and mental strength to successfully fight her enemies, both human and non-human. Her liberation of the community from a tyrant baron restores peace and order but also creates an outlaw band of women who break down the social constraints of gender roles by fusing the categories of wives, slaves, and warrior women.

Kingston's rereading of the Mu Lan myth is always contextual. Although Kingston recognizes the potential of the mythic figure Mu Lan, she also makes her wear 'men's clothes' because 'Chinese executed women who disguised themselves as soldiers or students, no matter how bravely they fought or how high they scored on the examinations' (1989:39). Finally Kingston differentiates herself from Mu Lan when the possibilities of myth give way to the social constraints of gender roles. The ending of the Mu Lan myth in which the protagonist returns home to become a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law reminds Kingston of how the Chinese myth is specific to its historical context and functions within that context. The translatability and untranslatability of the Chinese myth into her context is linked with Kingston's positioning both inside and outside of the Chinese tradition. Kingston finds it difficult to directly apply Mu Lan's myth to her American context. The difference between Chinese and American values makes the Chinese myth lose its significance in the American context. Kingston must figure out how the 'perfect filiality' of the Chinese myth fits into America's emphasis on individual

achievement. The gaps between these two values make the universal claim of myth questionable. Also, there is a difference between Chinatown in America and the Chinese village in China. While Mu Lan is praised by her villagers who 'would make a legend about [her] perfect filiality' (1989:45), what Kingston hears in Chinatown is a devaluation of women: 'Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds'; 'Better to raise geese than girls'; 'When you raise girls, you're raising children for strangers' (1989:46). Unlike Mu Lan, who returns home, Kingston, disappointed by her villagers' misogynist attitudes, says, 'I could not figure out what was my village' (1989:45). Moreover, Kingston realizes how useless the heroism of the Chinese myth becomes when applied to an American context. Unlike Mu Lan — a successful warrior woman in China — Kingston loses her jobs in her 'battle' with her racist bosses, and fails to reclaim her family's farms from the Communists, and to rescue her family's laundry in New York and California. The untranslatability of Mu Lan exposes the limits of the Chinese myth when applied to an American context.

If Kingston laments that she does not do well as a swordswoman, in her reconstruction of the Fa Mu Lan myth she successfully demonstrates how to make use of the Chinese myth in an American context by claiming for herself the role of a wordswoman. For Kingston, the shift of cultural context makes it necessary to create a new myth to validate her experience in this new context. As a wordswoman, Kingston turns fighting into writing and martial arts into literary art in order to recognize the potential of the past and bring it to bear in the present. Kingston claims, 'The swordswoman and I are not dissimilar. What we have in common are words at our backs' (1989:53). Both Fa Mu Lan and

Kingston are inscribed by the Father's words. However, Kingston is capable of redefining patriarchal discourse for her own purposes by transforming linear myth into interlinear text — a model of translation that challenges both authorship and the authority of the traditional myth. The Chinese myth in the 'White Tigers' section is Kingston's revision of the mythic story of 'perfect filiality' into a narrative that strikes a perfect balance between individual desires and social expectations. The task of the swordswoman is always double: she participates in myth not simply as a bearer but also a maker of myth. Through a double strategy of translation of Chinese myth into American context, Kingston manages to continue and redefine the female gender roles she inherits from traditional Chinese culture.

V

If 'White Tigers' is about a lesson of translation Kingston learns from myth, in 'Shaman' she shows how that lesson is applied to real life through her mother's experience of displacement and alienation. 'Shaman' consists of two parts describing Brave Orchid's life, first in China and then in America, both constructed by her daughter. Like Mu Lan, Brave Orchid leaves home for her education. At Keung School of Midwifery in China, she had two years of freedom from the 'servitude' of being someone else's daughter-in-law, enjoyed the privacy of having her 'own room', and finally returned home as a successful scholar, recognized and honored by the villagers. The story presents an image of Brave Orchid as a mythic hero who combines personal adventures with social obligations.

'Shaman' continues the motif of exile explored in the previous two chapters.

Brave Orchid's displacement and her strength to overcome it are illustrated by the extraordinary stories about ghosts narrated to her daughter. At medical school, Brave Orchid earns her reputation as both a successful scholar and ghost fighter. She volunteers to sleep in the 'ghost room' because 'She could make herself not weak' and '[d]anger was a good time for showing off' (1989:67). In the ghost room, Brave Orchid encounters a Sitting Ghost — a silent, formless, unknown creature with a paralyzing power to make her mind and body weak and exhausted. The Sitting Ghost is clearly Brave Orchid's projection of fear and anxiety due to her loneliness and displacement. Earlier, she tells her daughter about her journey to the medical school: 'I sailed alone [...] to the capital of the entire province' (1989:61). Dislocated from her family, Brave Orchid may be afraid of being lost, unknown, and forgotten by her relatives in the village and her own husband in America. At a time of crisis caused by disjunction between the exteriority of place and the interiority of the mind, she externalizes the ghost inside her.

Brave Orchid uses her verbal cunning to drive away the Sitting Ghost. She imaginatively enumerates different ways of getting rid of the Ghost: naming it 'a hairy butt boulder' (1989:70), denying its existence: 'There are no such things as ghosts' (1989:71), and even planning to cook it for her breakfast. Students at the medical school also help Brave Orchid bring her frightened spirit back home by chanting familiar places and names to her. They sing, 'Return, daughter of New Society Village, Kwangtung Province. Your brothers, and sisters call you. Your friends call you' (1989:71). Brave Orchid tells them that in her dream her spirit wandering far from home, is lost in a vast desert. The danger of her encounter with

the ghost is the possibility of her becoming a ghost substitute. The ghosts' 'true state', says Brave Orchid, is 'weak and sad humanity' and 'No matter what, don't commit suicide, or you will have to trade places with the Wall Ghost' (1989:72). Only when Brave Orchid has located herself does she get rid of the Ghost — the fear and anxiety being a result of her displacement and deterritorialization. However, Brave Orchid's spirit was already displaced from home because the chanting of the medical students relocated her spirit to a new place amongst a community of women at Kueng School of Midwifery.

In Brave Orchid's story, home is not a stable place; it is already invaded by alien beings or ghosts. However, the ghost stories also illustrate Brave Orchid as a 'capable exorcist' who can turn her experience of living between worlds and conflicting realities into practical ways of surviving the vulnerabilities of displacement. Through the reconstruction of her mother's narrative and life, Kingston learns to deal with conflicts and contradictions. For Kingston, Brave Orchid is a sensible and yet superstitious woman. The mother who brings 'science' to her village also tells stories about ghosts. To be a capable exorcist is indispensable for Brave Orchid's professional success as a midwife-doctor. In fact, her mother's career requires that she supplement science with superstition 'should [her] patients be disappointed and not get well' (1989:74). A capable exorcist, Brave Orchid combines excess and extravagance with necessity and self-restraint. Kingston claims, 'My mother could contend against the hairy beasts whether flesh or ghost because she could eat them and she could not-eat them on the days when good people fast' (1989:92). Kingston claims that a famous ghost-fighter in history is also a big eater, and 'my

mother won in ghost battle because she can eat anything' (1989:88). To be able to eat anything is a necessity, but it also implies extravagance because she can eat all things.

Brave Orchid's shamanistic power is illustrated not only by her battle with ghosts but also by her dealing with her fear and anxiety of displacement in the ghost country, America. In other words, Brave Orchid's narrative about her extraordinary adventures is itself a product of her displacement — her way to create home in America. 'China' is reconstituted by the mother who has already immigrated to America where she is no longer a doctor who always dresses in 'a silk robe and western shoes with big heels' and where she instead becomes a deprived immigrant who carries 'a hundred pound of Texas rice up-and downstairs,' works from morning until midnight 'sorting out dirty clothes' in the laundry, and at the age of eighty dyes her hair to ask for a job in the tomato fields. Unable to return home physically, Brave Orchid constructs home through narrative as a form of homecoming. The 'China' evoked in Brave Orchid's narrative is not the 'real' one; it is rooted in Chinese culture but functions in the context of American experience. By projecting her narrative of home in an 'extravagant way', Brave Orchid can make the 'necessity' of her life in America bearable. Displacement usually intensifies narratives of home, and in this case Brave Orchid's extraordinary narrative about home in China compensates for the necessity of her lived experience in America.

Kingston recognizes both the limits and the creativity of her mother's stories. The power of Brave Orchid's 'talk stories' to relocate her daughter's displaced spirit back home in China is ambiguous because the immigrant mother and her American-born

daughter do not share the same home. Kingston says, 'Not when we were afraid, but when we were awake and lucid, my mother funneled China into our ears. [...] I am to return to China where I have never been' (1989:76). While China is 'real' to Brave Orchid, who tells her daughter, 'Someday, very soon, we're going home' (1989:98), for Kingston China is a home of 'impossible dreams' (1989:76). Brave Orchid's 'real' China is for her American born daughter a landscape full of ghosts. As a child, Kingston is haunted by the baby ghosts Brave Orchid has told her about. Also, the monkey story her mother tells to 'a homesick villager' turns into a nightmare for the daughter. Displacement deterritorializes the meaning of home, causing Brave Orchid's narrative of home to be ambiguous because it can be both healing and haunting for her daughter.

Although during her childhood Kingston is warned by her mother to avoid ghosts (such as Taxi Ghosts, Bus Ghosts, Police Ghosts), the adult Kingston finds it necessary to 'leave [home] and go again into the world out there which has [...] no ghosts of little old [Chinese] men' (1989:101). Brave Orchid's narrative about ghosts loses its power to draw the boundaries between home and outside, and to confine her daughter within the home. Unlike Brave Orchid's narrative, where China is still a point of reference but no longer a unified center, Kingston's home is in America and she can make it 'real' by translating the ghostly China into solid American life. Brave Orchid's 'real' Old World and Kingston's 'real' New World signify the difference in translation of home between the immigrant mother and her American born daughter.⁷

⁷ According to Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong (1991:149), Chinese-Americans 'have to

Kingston titles the chapter about her mother 'Shaman'. The term acknowledges her mother's power as a 'capable exorcist' but possibly refers to Kingston herself who also imitates her mother's role for her self-constitution. In establishing her identity through her relationship with her mother, Kingston finds it necessary to recognize her mother's strength and weakness. The ghost country is alien and confusing to the immigrant mother who, once a 'capable exorcist', is now old and has 'lost [her] cunning' (1989:107). By identifying herself with her mother, Kingston is also vulnerable to being a ghost in her own country America. The mother sitting on a chair beside her bed, says Kingston, is 'a sad bear, a great sheep in a wool shawl' (1989:100). The image of the mother projected by the daughter is similar to that of the Sitting Ghost projected by Brave Orchid. By leaving home, Kingston recognizes how close she is to her own mother who before her also leaves her parents' home. Overcome by guilt, Kingston makes an excuse for leaving home, saying, 'The gods pay [my mother] and my father back for leaving their parents' (108). Such recognition makes it possible for Kingston to place her mother and herself within the heritage of those female ancestors whose stories teach her the perils and possibilities of living in exile.

contend with three, not two, systems: 'ideal' Old World values as presented (by parents who fancy themselves guardians of a beleaguered culture); 'real' Old World as actually mediated (by these same parents, American by adoption, who are rooted enough in America to produce children); and 'real' New World as seen from the vantage point of Americans by birth'.

VI

In 'At the Western Palace,' Kingston tells a story of her aunt, Moon Orchid, who emigrates to America and, unable to adjust to the alien environment, becomes mentally unstable. Moon Orchid's traditional lifestyle — deep-rooted, home bound, and protected — is no preparation for her move to a new country. For thirty years, Moon Orchid, living alone in Hong Kong after her husband emigrates to America, has waited for her husband to ask her to join him in America, but he never does. Rootedness in Moon Orchid's case is linked with social expectations of traditional gender roles. A faithful follower of 'traditional ways,' Moon Orchid is among those 'deep-rooted women [who] were to maintain the past against the flood, safe for [their husbands'] return' (1989:8).

Kingston does not romanticize the experience of exile. As illustrated by her narrative of Moon Orchid, exile is a tragic, violent experience caused by 'the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home' (see Said, 1990:357). The meaning of identity once secured in the safe space of home begins to falter when the identification between 'the self and its true home' falls apart during exile and displacement. In Moon Orchid's case, the Old World of China and its tradition provide her with substance and solidity in life. Uprooted from home, Moon Orchid finds herself unable to focus, drifting away and disintegrated. She strews paper dolls all over Brave Orchid's place, pokes around the house, and becomes easily distracted by small things. Moon Orchid 'never understood the gravity of things' (1989:118), never knows how to integrate her life amid fragmentary and contradictory elements. Her Chinese femininity renders

her 'a lovely, useless type' in America — not unlike those gifts, including paper cutout dolls, flower sticks, jewelry, and a silk dress she has brought from home. When put to work in the laundry, she cannot endure the heat and stuffy working conditions. She is not quick at learning how to do things, is frivolous with her work, and cannot concentrate on whatever she does.

Displacement exposes the false illusion of a coherent, unified identity. The shift of cultural context makes it necessary for a person to re-establish meaning by negotiating with a new environment s/he comes into contact with. However, Moon Orchid, says Brave Orchid, 'certainly was not imaginative' (1989:144). Moon Orchid is unable to change stories or create new ones for a new social context. Upon her arrival in America, Moon Orchid appears to be curious about the alien environment she finds herself in and tries to make sense of it. She identifies each of Brave Orchid's children by matching them with the description Brave Orchid has given her in her letters. However, naming becomes difficult for Moon Orchid when a correspondence between sign and its referent is no longer present.

Unable to make sense of the cultural difference she encounters, Moon Orchid opts for the security of home as a familiar script for her reading of an alien world. She naively translates difference into sameness by reading cultural difference through her cultural script of home. Moon Orchid's singularity is no preparation for her to encounter paradoxes and contradictions. She is confused by Brave Orchid's children because, 'savage' as they are, being 'raised away from civilization', they still know a lot about China (1989:134). Moon Orchid is equally surprised when Brave Orchid complains that her children are 'demure'

although their manner of looking straight at someone's face is 'rude' and 'accusing' to her (1989:135). For Moon Orchid, home as a site for the production of meaning is made possible by her denial of difference and contradiction as part of her experience of immigration. More importantly, Moon Orchid's desperate attempt to recuperate home, already displaced and vanished, is a sign of her failure to take homelessness as home.

Brave Orchid shares with Moon Orchid her nostalgia for home in China and her desire to re-inscribe home into the cultural space of American experience. It is Brave Orchid who arranges for her sister to come to America in order to claim her estranged husband and who imagines the drama of encounter between husband and wife, using Chinese tradition as her cultural script. At one point, Brave Orchid urges her sister to claim her right as her husband's first wife. She tells Moon Orchid: 'We know his address. He's living in Los Angeles with his second wife, and they have three children. Claim your rights. Those are *your* children. He's got two sons. *You* have two sons. You take them away from her. You become their mother' (1989:125). Brave Orchid's ignorance of cultural difference produces a humorous effect. Her translation of American experience into Chinese tradition ceases to be a mode of cultural exchange; instead, it is a means to recuperate the past in the absence of the origin or home in the contemporary American scene. Brave Orchid's drama, in other words, is produced in a fictional space of home stuffed with plastic decorations (plastic tangerines and oranges, plastic vases) in her reminiscence of the 'real' home forever lost in China.

Brave Orchid also applies the Chinese myth of the Emperor's Four Wives to Moon

Orchid. During their ride to Los Angeles to claim Moon Orchid's husband, Brave Orchid tells her sister the story:

A long time ago, [...] the emperors had four wives, one at each point of the compass, and they lived in four palaces. The Empress of the West would connive for power, but the Empress of the East was good and kind and full of light. You are the Empress of the East, and the Empress of the West has imprisoned the Earth's Emperor in the Western Palace. And you, the good Empress of the East, comes out of the dawn to invade her land and free the Emperor. You must break the strong spell she has cast on him that has lost him the East (1989:143).

Unable to establish her own narrative, Moon Orchid assumes the role of the Empress of the East that Brave Orchid has interpreted for her. However, as they finally arrive in Los Angeles, the Chinese myth told by Brave Orchid becomes irrelevant to the urban, modern life of the city with its traffic jams, air pollution, high-rises, and concrete pavements. Just as the Chinese myth begins to lose its spell, Brave Orchid finds herself incompatible with the modern life of American city. Away from home, she feels carsick, gets dizzy from the traffic, and tired by the heat. Brave Orchid's illusion gradually gives way to reality. She discovers that the palace is a doctor's office with an expensive-looking waiting room, the Emperor is a brain surgeon who 'was smart enough to learn ghost ways', and the Empress of the West is an innocent, young and pretty American wife (1989:149). Although Brave Orchid insists on seeing the whole event as

'Chinese business', she is sensible enough to instruct her son to 'speak English' so that Moon Orchid's husband will accompany him to the car (1989:151). The subsequent encounter between the two sisters and the estranged husband breaks the spell of the Chinese myth on American life. As the husband tells them, 'You became people in a book I had read a long time ago' (1989:154). The husband is not the one who is spellbound as in the Chinese myth of Emperor. Instead he (re)casts the spell on Brave Orchid and her sister by fixing them in the mythic past, separate from and irrelevant to his contemporary American life.

Moon Orchid's encounter with her husband exposes the false illusion of China as a cultural script for understanding the alien world. Moon Orchid's husband reminds her of how irrelevant she is in the modern American context: 'It's a mistake for you to be here. You can't belong. You don't have the hardness of this country' (1989:153). Once a familiar Chinese husband, he himself has transformed into a 'ghost': an Americanized doctor in an American dark suit who marries an American wife, welcomes American guests, and speaks the American language. With her realization of China as a false script for the alien world, Moon Orchid's life falls apart, disintegrates, and fragments. She becomes paranoid about the 'Mexican ghosts' who, in her imagination, follow her and try to kill her. Moon Orchid's 'Mexican Ghosts' are similar to Brave Orchid's 'Sitting Ghost' — both are the projection of disintegrated self under the crisis of deterritorialization. Unlike Brave Orchid, Moon Orchid does not know how to translate herself in order to create a new script for her life. When Moon Orchid becomes insane, her discourse ceases to include variety. As Brave Orchid tells her children, '[...] sane

people have variety when they talk-story. Mad people have only one story that they talk over and over' (1989:159). Moon Orchid's madness is a warning against the return to original oneness since China as home is no longer accessible. Moon Orchid's desire to restore home rather than create a new one causes her to be irrelevant to and incompatible with her real lived experience in a new social context. In madness, Moon Orchid shrinks away and retreats from the outside world. She is enclosed in her home and later in a sanitarium where she finally dies.

Not until the next chapter does Kingston let us know that the Moon Orchid story is an embellishment of what she has heard from her sister who in turn learnt about the story from a brother who actually drives Brave Orchid and Moon Orchid to Los Angeles. Kingston says, 'His version of the story may be better than mine because of its bareness, not twisted into designs' (1989:163). Kingston's reproduction of Moon Orchid's story in an elaborate form is part of her effort to come to terms with her bicultural background as Chinese American. She learns from Moon Orchid's story that the difference between a traditional Chinese wife and her Americanized husband causes them to be ghosts to each other. Recognizing her own possibility of becoming a ghost in either culture, Kingston assumes the role of an outlaw knot-maker in reconstructing her aunt's story:

Long ago in China, knot-makers tied string into buttons and frogs and rope into bell pulls. There was one knot so complicated that it blinded the knot-maker. Finally an emperor outlawed this cruel knot, and the nobles could not order it anymore. If I had

lived in China, I would have been an outlaw-knot-maker (1989:163).

In her reconstruction of Moon Orchid's story, Kingston continues a thread of Chinese tradition that binds her with her female ancestors. A 'knot-maker', Kingston is also an outlaw, twisting the thread of her ethnic identity into complex, elaborate designs in order to move beyond the limits of traditional Chinese culture and to avoid the tragic ending of Moon Orchid's story.⁸ By 'translating' her aunt's story into elaborate designs, Kingston, in other words, resists a simple return to the origin that would make her irrelevant to her American experience and would consequently subject her to ghostly existence. An outlaw knot-maker, Kingston uses her creative imagination to combine the threads of traditional Chinese culture with those of foreign elements from her American context. In an interview, Kingston described how she relies on American forms of story telling for her embellishment of Moon Orchid's story.⁹ The hybridity of Moon Orchid's story — a combination of Chinese myth and American comedy — is a mode of cultural translation Kingston uses

⁸ In an interview, Kingston (see Fishkin, 1991:791) compares the role of a writer to an outlaw knot maker: '...I think it was prescriptive and predictive in that forms of what I write are all intricate inventions. I think in every one of my books I had to create a new way of telling what I had to say. And I feel that I break through pigeonholes of what's fiction and what's nonfiction, of what an autobiography is'.

⁹ Kingston (see Chin, 1989-1990:58) says, 'I liked ['At the Western Palace'] because it really fell into place as a classic short story shape. And actually what gave me a lot of help was thinking of 'I Love Lucy'.

in order to overcome the fear and anxiety caused by her precarious position as a Chinese American who is subject to the ever present risk of ghosthood.

VII

In her last chapter, Kingston explores in detail her acculturation into Chinese American life through the process of translation. Kingston begins her account with a story of her mother's cutting her tongue: '[My mother] pushed my tongue up and sliced the frenum or may be she snipped it with a pair of scissors. I don't remember her doing it, only her telling about it, but all during my childhood' (1989:163-64). The event symbolizes a rift between the child and the native tongue. Contrary to Brave Orchid's claim that she cuts her daughter's tongue in order to make her a master of any language, Kingston describes the painful and arduous process of learning English as her 'second language'. As Kingston says, 'When I went to kindergarten and had to speak English for the first time, I became silent' (1989:165). Her silence, which has lasted for three years, is so thick that she covers all her paintings with blackness: 'I spread them out (so black and full of possibilities) and pretended the curtains were swinging open, flying up, one after another, sunlight underneath, mighty operas' (1989:165). For Kingston, silence hides a multiplicity of voices and Kingston's search for her own voice is predicated on her capacity to translate this silence into song.

The difficulty of articulating a bicultural identity is the result of a social conception of difference in terms of division and separation. Kingston's says, 'I could not understand 'I'. The Chinese I has seven strokes. How could the American 'I', assuredly wearing a hat like the Chinese,

have only three strokes, the middle so straight?' (1989:166). The Chinese 'I' and the American 'I' are alien to each other when each is understood within the other context. Kingston finds that the two cultures that constitute her identity appear so different that 'I' becomes a puzzle to her. Kingston's internalization of social division between Chinese and American culture leads her to reject Chinese culture. Her denial of the Chinese tradition is represented by the violent act of her torturing a young Chinese girl. For Kingston, the girl is the Other, an embodiment of China she struggles to differentiate herself from. However, Kingston's identity is always already part of Chinese tradition: Kingston hates her because they are so much alike and at the end of the torture scene, Kingston, 'sniffing and snorting,' in her tearful crying, turns into 'liquid' like the girl (1989:181). Rather than having a positive exchange with the Chinese part of the self, Kingston simply rejects it and in doing so she dangerously rejects part of her own identity. After the torture scene, Kingston falls into 'a mysterious illness'. Kingston's silent and secluded life during the period of her illness is quite similar to that of Moon Orchid, whose mental illness is an extreme form of singularity. Cultural translation is never an easy integration or assimilation into sameness. Kingston's 'mysterious illness' is a reflection of her suffering from the split personality that prevents her from establishing a positive exchange between two cultures.

For Kingston, being a Chinese American is not a matter of choosing between Chinese and American cultures, either of which may reduce her to ghosthood. Kingston's landscape of her childhood is haunted by crazy women who cannot create their own narratives for self-narration. Crazy Mary is a woman who cannot 'translate' and turns

to silence: 'Her parents often said, 'We thought she'd be grown but young enough to learn English and translate for us'' (1989:187). What Kingston can hear from this crazy woman is only 'growls [and] laughs' (1989:187). Another crazy woman is Pee-A-Nah who embodies a name which 'does not have a meaning' (1989:188). Insane women are living like ghosts: 'houses with crazy girls,' says Kingston, 'have locked rooms and drawn curtains' (1989:187). Pee-A-Nah is also known as a witchwoman and like ghosts has 'a short memory' (1989:188). Both Crazy Mary and Pee-A-Nah are finally locked in crazyhouses and forgotten. Kingston's inarticulateness due to her ambiguous positioning in both Chinese and American cultures drives her to a fear of insanity. Kingston thinks that she is also the crazy one in her family and in her nightmares she sees herself as a ghost — a 'vampire'.

Following *Brave Orchid*, Kingston draws from language its power of naming to overcome the fear and anxiety of ghosthood. She creates a list of items she wants to confess to her mother: 'I had grown inside me,' says Kingston, 'a list of over two hundred things I had to tell my mother so that she would know the true things about me and to stop the pain in my throat' (1989:197). Kingston's confessional outpouring is both naïve and promising because she tries to make sense of what seems confusing and inexplicable to her although her mother says that she does not hear it correctly. Kingston's challenge to her mother's 'talk stories' is part of her effort to claim her own narrative for establishing her realities. She ends her childhood confession by telling her mother:

And I don't want to listen to any more of your stories; they have no logic. They scramble me up.

You lie with stories. You won't tell me a story and then say, 'This is a true story,' or, 'This is just a story'. I can't tell the difference (1989:202).

Overwhelmed by Brave Orchid's 'great power' of naming realities for her daughter, Kingston redefines her mother's narratives to establish realities in her own context. For Kingston, her claim to individuality is not an easy separation from her ethnic culture. Instead, it represents her effort to find another perspective for her to look into the past and see things more clearly. 'The simple explanation', says Kingston, 'makes it less scary to go home [...]' (1989:205). At the point when Kingston seems to claim her American individuality by leaving home for education, and by rejecting her mother's narrative authority, she paradoxically returns to her 'roots' and strengthens her ties with her ethnic community. As she says, 'What I'll inherit someday is a green address book full of names [of her relatives in China]' (1989:206).

The ultimate goal of translation to produce a trans-cultural identity is finally achieved in the last story where Kingston acknowledges her mother's influence in teaching her how to talk stories. Kingston writes, 'Here is a story my mother told me, not when I was young, but recently, when I told her I also talk story. The beginning is hers, the ending, mine' (1989:206). Kingston's reconciliation with her mother takes place in an inter-subjective space of narrative that foregrounds the importance of translation in the constitution of her Chinese-American identity. Kingston's own narrative is that of Ts'ai Yen. According to Chinese history, Ts'ai Yen is the name of a Chinese poetess who was kidnapped by barbarians and forced to

spend several years in exile before returning to her homeland in China. In her translation of the story, Kingston manages to concentrate in one figure two different predicaments of both herself and her mother. Like Ts'ai Yen, both Kingston and her mother are artists because they can transform the pain and suffering of exile into creativity. Although the story of Ts'ai Yen is applicable to Brave Orchid, who is living among the 'barbarians' and in 'exile' from her native home in China, Kingston's translation also enables the story to make sense in her own context.

Ts'ai Yen is not only Kingston's translation of a classical Chinese story, but itself a story about translation. In Kingston's version, Ts'ai Yen's song, created by the art of translation, combines the barbarians' rhythm with the Chinese language. Ts'ai Yen composes her song during her exile and after listening to the barbarians' music. A product of shared sensibilities, the 'Song' is available for both Chinese and barbarians to sing together. The story of Ts'ai Yen symbolizes Kingston's search for her self-definition as Chinese American by creating her own narrative that transcends the limits of Chinese and American cultures. Similar to Ts'ai Yen, who 'sang about China and her family there' in her exile, Kingston combines two functions of a sensitive listener and a creative author to construct her narrative of self-constitution as a form of crossover between herself and her mother. The story—both Ts'ai Yen's 'Song' and Kingston's narrative — 'translates well' because it is conditioned by a rethinking of difference as the one existing *in relation to* the other: the Barbarians' rhythm and the Hans' language, the Chinese and American cultures.

The interethnic harmony, made possible by artistic creation, is an imaginary resolution to racial conflicts. In other words, Kingston suggests through 'A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe' that reconciliation of two different elements into perfect harmony is a possible thought not yet achieved in reality. Self-constitution through the process of translation does not take place once and for all. It is a dynamic process of continuous exchange between various and conflicting discourses that constitute our identity. Kingston's final statement 'It translates well' is an anti-ending because narratives do not entirely drive away ghosts. At stake for her construction of Chinese American identity is how to live creatively with conflicts and contradictions. As Kingston says, 'I continue to sort out what is just my childhood, just my imagination, just my family, just my village, just movies, just living' (1989:205).

Conclusion

From the stories of women in her family Kingston learns of both successes and failures of translation and her reconstruction of their stories is part of her effort to overcome her own fear of ghosts by creating a new myth to establish meaning of her identity as 'Chinese-American'. This process, Kingston makes clear, is not an individual enterprise. For Kingston to overcome her fear of ghosthood, she must translate the stories of her female ancestors into a contemporary American context. Kingston's project of translation should be understood in the wider context of claiming America for Chinese-Americans whose identity, like a ghost, has not been recognized in their homeland. 'Chinese-American' in Kingston's book refers to a new geography of identity constituted across cultural boundaries by the method of translation.

This new identity is unique and yet recognizable, a product of how cultural identity renews itself through translation that both preserves and creates something new.

References

- Boelhower, William. 1991. The Making of Ethnic Autobiography in the United States. In *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. by Paul John Eakin, pp. 97-123. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Locations of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1992. Freedom Basis in the Indeterminate. *October* 61: 48-57.
- Chin, Marilyn. 1989-90. A Melus Interview: Maxine Hong Kingston. *MELUS* 16.4: 57-74.
- Fischer, Michael M. J. 1986. Ethnicity and the Postmodern Art of Memory. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, pp. 194-233. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fishkin, Shelley Fusher. 1991. Interview with Maxine Hong Kingston. *America Literary History* 3.4: 782-91.
- Gilead, Sarah. 1988. Emigrant Selves: Narrative Strategies in Three Women's Autobiographies. *Criticism* 30.1: 43-62.

- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson (eds). 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jay, Paul. 1997. Translation, Invention, Resistance: Rewriting the Conquest in Carlos Fuentes's 'The Two Shores'. *Modern Fiction Studies* 43.2:405-31.
- Kaplan, Caren. 1997. Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse. *Modern Fiction Studies* 43.2:405-31.
- Kingston, Maxine Hong. 1982. Cultural Misreading by American Reviewers. In *Asian and Western Writers in Dialogue*, ed. by Guy Amirthanayagam, pp. 56-65. Hong Kong: Macmillian.
- Kingston, Maxine Hong. 1989. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Childhood Among Ghosts*. New York: Vintage.
- Perry, Donna (ed.). 1993. An Interview with Maxine Hong Kingston. In *Backtalk: Women Writers Speak Out*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Rabinowitz, Paula. 1987. Eccentric Memories: A Conversation with Maxine Hong Kingston. *Michigan Quaterly Review* 14.1:177-87.
- Said, Edward. 1990. Reflections on Exile. In *Out There*, ed. by Russell Ferguson and others. New York: MIT Press.
- Wong, Sau-Ling Cyntia. 1991. Immigrant Autobiography: Some Question and Approach. In *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. by Paul John Eakin, pp. 49-68. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Wong, Sau-Ling Cyntia. 1993. *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

