

## I. Introduction

An American autobiographer, novelist, journalist and short story writer, Maxine Hong Kingston, was born in 1940 in Stokton, California, from China born parents. She, being an in-born intelligent, imaginative and creative person, commenced to move her artistic hands in the literary field since her early age. *The Woman Warrior*, which was published in 1976, won the National Book Critic's Circle Award and made her literary celebrity over night. Then, in 1980, her second book, *China Men*, was published as a sequel to *The Woman Warrior*. And, in 1989, she published her first novel *Tripmaster Monkey: His fake Book*.

Her novel *The Woman Warrior* is comprised of five sections of separate stories and the links between them are oblique and subtle. In first section she has depicted the traditional male dominated society of women with the help of many western stereotypical images, being based on her mother's talk stories. The second section "White Tiger" tells the story of the woman warrior. In it the woman warrior learns fighting and running skills from all the animals in the care of two old people. When she finishes her learning she comes back in her village and takes her father's place in battle. She becomes famous and beloved leader of an army and meets her husband. However the story does not have any historical background. It is quite imaginative, and whatever the images and symbols are used are stereotypical images. And most of the images present in this imaginary world are wild, supernatural and traditional.

The third section "Shamans" describes Kingston's mother's life as a doctor in China. And the Chinese world which she has depicted is seen rooted into traditional and supernatural matters. Her mother has to struggle with ghosts. However, the story does

not correspond with the then Chinese society, and there is no solid support to say that it is realistic story. Instead, it depends on the talk stories of writer's mother and traditional myth. But why the writer has focused on these traditional and ancient aspects of Chinese society is very important to evaluate.

The section four "At the Western Palace" illustrates the Chinese tradition of having multiwives, wives' dependent position and Chinese men's indifference to their uneducated women after having new American wives. It assures us that Kingston intentionally has presented the Chinese marriage tradition very much chauvinistic and male dominated. However, the images and symbols used to depict the society are ancient.

The section five "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe" reveals some Chinese traditions. For instance, cutting tongue, and unfolding knot etc. It shows the Chinese culture very much backward and conservative. However, there might be many positive and advanced cultural phenomena prevalent in Chinese society. They are avoided on purpose.

And her second book *The China Men* steeped in historical details and it is set in early California and Hawaii. It details the male influences on her life. It describes the lives of men in her family who come to America.

Moreover, the book, in its technique of presenting imaginative and stereotypical images, is not so far from *The Woman Warrior*. Even in this book, negative aspects of ancient Chinese society imposing them as being the realistic illustration of modern Chinese society.

And her first novel *Tripmaster Monkey* is a picaresque novel set in San Francisco area during the 1960s. Wittman Sing, the protagonist of the novel, is a fifth generation Chinese American. He, like many of Kingston's characters, struggles to escape racism as he grows and questions the world around him. Even the world of this novel depicts the bias presentation of the Chinese world. It exposes the Chinese culture as uncivilized, undeveloped, wild and exotic, whereas the American culture has been presented as civilized, modern and developed. And the Chinese people who have migrated America, are treated as inferior to Americans. They are presented to be suffering from racism.

As far as the styles and techniques are concerned, her works cross the boundaries between genres, dictions, styles, and fact and fiction. Especially, her two works *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men* are neither autobiographies nor fiction. Instead, they are highly imaginative non-fiction prose. In collage of style and form, in the amalgam of language and content, in the combination of Chinese myths, family history, American individualism and rebelliousness, Kingston defines herself as a Chinese American.

As many reviewers claim, Kingston includes too many nonspecific memories for the book to be considered anything but fiction. Kingston also admits that the main sources of information for the books are her mother's tales and her father's reticence along with her own memories and imagination. She defends her techniques, however. She says that the book is not specifically an autobiography but it combines truth and fiction in an autobiographical form.

Specially, *The Woman Warrior*'s appeal cuts across a wide variety of academic disciplines, attracting both those interested in stories of cultural displacement and alienation. For scholars of autobiography her story represents an important break from

past writings; her complex, multilayered and quasi-fictional narrative ties in the face of traditional autobiographies which tend to follow a liner-chronological pattern and maintain a stable narrator an 'I' throughout. Her memoir, on the other hand, is a blend of voices and styles, often contradictory that use many of the techniques of postmodernism: ambiguity, incoherence, pluralism and irony.

Moreover, her technique includes the use of many binary images but stereotypical ones. For example, she has described Chinese culture as traditional whereas American culture as modern. She presents the Chinese culture as old uncivilized, wild, exotic, male chauvinistic and inferior whereas American culture as modern, advanced, civilized independent and superior. She has derived this technique from American writers. This technique is very much popular among orientalist writers.

Many critics have observed many techniques in this text. And, as far as its plot is concerned, it is very difficult to simplify because each section acts as a separate story and the links between them are oblique and subtle. And, each section has its own plot, which symbolizes her technique of unity in diversity. This book has added and incorporated various elements from other myths to create an entirely new fantasy. The story of fa-mulan is a good example of it. Besides, her mother's style of narrating story, her way of constructing myths and reconstructing Chinese history are really influential. Moreover, her novel *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* is also not far from her above techniques and styles of writing.

Some critics, however, have lauded Kingston's fanciful description and poetic diction through which she has successfully represented her fear and wonder concerning Chinese legacies. Contextually, Jane Kramer, as cited by Bhumiraj Bista, remarks, "The

text shocks us out of our facile rhetoric, past the clichés of our obtuseness back to the mystery of a stubbornly utterly foreign sensibility. Its sources are dream and memory myth and desire. Its crises are crises of heart in exile from roots that terrorize and bind it” (1). Furthermore, Kingston’s writing is often cited for its melody and poetry.

Gloria Chun, in his article “The High Note of the Barbarian Reed Pipe,” argues, “Kingston’s defenders praise the way she skillfully uses elements from ancient Chinese myths to create fabulous and exotic tales which claims are no longer Chinese but American” (91). Obviously, her tales, despite she derives from the Chinese myths, are American tales rather than the Chinese ones.

As multiplicity of the meaning is an inherent feature of a literacy text, *The Woman Warrior*, too, has evoked varied and divergent responses from many readers, critics and scholars. Some critics have evaluated it from feministic perspective, some from cultural perspective and some from linguistic perspective. Gigi Jasper, in his article “No Name Woman”, comments on the opening chapter of the book in this way: “It is an attempt to give voice to the voiceless” (5). The critic approaches the text from feministic perspective. So, he indicates the critical condition of the aunt of the narrator, who had been suffering from many social injustices. However, he believes that the narrator provides her voice through this story. Deborah Humsher argues that this novel “is a bridge between autobiography and fiction” (98).

Similarly, Reedway Dasenbrook, a critic as well as author, studies it from cultural perspective. He says, “Maxine Hong Kingston is a multicultural writer” (56). He further says that this work allows readers a range of cultures. He attributes the meaningfulness of *The Woman Warrior* to the reader’s effort to understand. According to him, Maxine

Hong Kingston has told a story to create her own unique cross-cultural Chinese American reality and myth. Similarly, another critic as well as writer Leslie Rabine analyses this book as a mixture of the cultures in this manner: “Kingston has double ambivalence to American culture” (472).

Likewise, Elaine Kim, an author as well as critic, in his book *Visions and Fierce Dreams*, comments on *The Woman Warrior* in this way: “*The Woman Warrior* depicts the reconciliation between the Chinese and American culture” (145). According to him, the Chinese immigrants and American born people are mixed and have formed new culture, which is Chinese American culture.

Similarly, David Leiwei Li, in his work “Naming of Chinese American”, argues, “*The Woman Warrior* is a text of cultural identity” (497). According to him, the text has described the amalgamation of two cultures, which is neither Chinese nor American, rather it is a Chinese American, which is the identity of Chinese American people as well.

Similarly, the researcher Bhumi Raj Bista, in this text, perceives cultural interface between two cultures: “*The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston is an account of the encounters between Chinese and American cultures which depicts the trials and tribulation of a formal Chinese American growing up on California” (IV).

Likewise, Ken-Fong Lee, as cited by Gloria Chun, studies the text from the linguistic perspective and compares it with the feministic perspective. Here, he compares the translation of the language with social position of woman. He says, “Feminism and translation studies share some similar concerns about ‘secondariness’, about how the

‘canon’ is established and about how cultural differences are represented” (1). Here, he says that the translated language and women have similar position in society.

Similarly, Chuck Eliot, critic as well as writer of Knopf publishing, in an interview with Gloria Chun, comments, “Well, first novels are hard to sell I knew it would stand a stronger chance of selling well as nonfiction autobiography. And it could have been called anything else” (4). So, according to him, apparently this novel can be put under the category of nonfiction autobiography, however, it can be something else if one tries to place it somewhere vividly.

Likewise, Robert Elbaz, as quoted in Chun, comments on it in this way:

“[A]utobiography is fiction and fiction is autobiography. Factual truth is irrelevant to autobiography with regard to this kind of highly imaginative nonfiction prose” (3). Here he defines this novel as an autobiography in the context of imagination. He says that although the novel is full of imagination and imaginary stories yet it falls under the category of autobiography.

Moreover, other writers, Nellie Wong and Suzie Wong, as cited by Gloria Chun, say, “*The Woman Warrior* is the definite voice for the new Chinese American post sixties perspective” (19). Here, the writers evaluate this novel from the cultural perspective and think that this novel consists of definite voice for Chinese-American post sixties perspective. Likewise, the writer Kingkok Cheung, as quoted in Chun’s article, says, “The text is about breaking the silence” (20). Here writer comments the text from the feministic perspective and addresses it as the women’s manifesto, which unfolds the sufferings, dominations and exploitations over the women and their awareness of it.

Likewise, the historian Sylvia Sunn Minnick, as cited by Chun, expresses, “I find no instance where the practice of foot binding was reinstated in the history of Stockton. Kingston harps on the foot binding as if it were on extent custom” (14). Here, the critic argues that Kingston floats in her imagination overlooking whether it was real or not. Similarly, another critic Gayle K. Fujita Sato, in her article “Ghosts as Chinese-American Constructs in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*,” expresses her opinion in the following words: “The ghost ‘Hitchhike’ is the adjuster that puts the entire cultural fabric signified by ghost into perspective” (211). He comments that the narrator never gives exact translation for Hoshi Kuei (ghost) for the entire cultural flavour of China is rooted into it. Similarly, in another context, the same critic argues about the novel in this way: “For Kingston an ethnic approach starts with a definite culture that is not tentatively situated someplace in between, but named and located as Chinese American” (Ghosts 195). She argues that she disagrees with this perspective of Kingston. It is true that a definite culture is located in Chinese America but it does not contradict the concept that Chinese America is somewhere in between. She further says that ‘in-between-ness’ is not static referent but a process of hybridization.

Likewise, another critic Samia Mehrez, as cited by Ken-Fong Lee in his article “Cultural Translation and the Exorcist: A Reading of Kingston’s and Tan’s Ghost Stories”, puts his suggestive comments in this way: “This text makes the English language foreign to its own monolingual native speaker” (130). He comments the text from the point of view of translation. He says that because of the translation, this text has become the foreign text to the monolingual native speaker. Similarly, the researcher Bhumi Raj Bista cites the opinion of critic Jane Kramer about this text in this way: “*The*



*Woman Warrior* is a brilliant memoir. It is about being Chinese like *The Portrait of the Artist* is about being Irish” (5). Kramer considers this text as a writer’s recall of her past experience which is presented in an artistic way. According to her it unfolds the Chinese life and culture lively. Similarly, Bhumi Raj Bista, in his research work, cites judgment of *The New York Times Book Review* in this way: "Maxine Hong Kingston writes with bitter and relentless love. Her voice is (...) as clear as the voice of Tsai yen who sang her sad angry songs of China to the barbarians. It is as eloquent as any artist’s” (5). It clearly denotes that she (Kingston) is a realistic writer; she is not only imaginative and fictional but artistic and factual also.

Likewise, Bhumi Raj Bista claims that Kingston herself sees the book as a celebration of Chinese American man and says, “I sing the Chinese American from top to toe” (Blauvelt 1). Similarly, in the same dissertation, the writer as well as critic William MC Pherson says, “The woman warrior is a strange, sometimes savagely terrifying and in the literal sense, wonderful story of growing up, caught between two highly sophisticated and utterly alien cultures” (5). Here, his comment glorifies and admires Kingston’s way of giving authenticity to her art by pondering on the cultures. Bhumi Raj Bista argues that “*The Woman Warrior* (...) a reminiscence of growing up in a Chinese-American cultures where oriental myth and occidental reality somehow blended Kingston as an American born chinese daughter is skillfully able to assimilate both the cultural extremities” (5). Here Kingston is presented as a writer of cultural hybridity. Besides, other writers, who comment on *The Woman Warrior*, are Guerin et al:

This well-known book at first inspired confusion in the Chinese American literary community: was it a critique of narrator or an unapologetic

statement about what it means to grow up as a Chinese American woman.

The fact it was sold as nonfiction tended to support the later motion despite Kingston's disclaimer. (268)

This statement of the writers portrays the present text as nonfiction. They also foreground the difficulties the women have to undergo while growing up in the male chauvinist Chinese society. Likewise, in an interview, Kingston herself, comments on the male-chauvinism mentioned in the book in this way: "When I was growing I was very aware of anti-female feeling, very affected by the stories of women slavery in China. So I decided to write them in *The Woman Warrior*" (14). It shows that Kingston was planning to write this novel against the male chauvinism prevalent in the Chinese culture.

In this manner, it is quite obvious that the present text has been studied from different perspectives. The present study aspires to study the orientalist images prevalent in the text. It will also explore how the Kingston, through the orientalist perspective, represents Chinese culture as the 'other' to the western culture.

The discourses like Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Foucauldian discourse on power and truth will form the theoretical tools for the analysis of the text. Finally, the present study, with the help of the scrupulous textual analysis based on the aforementioned theoretical tools, will seek to prove that Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Woman Warrior* consists of the stereotypical images about the Chinese people and their culture.

## II. Theoretical Tools

### **Orientalism: Othering the East**

In general, the term ‘orientalism’ derives its meaning from the word ‘orient.’ The word ‘orient’ simply denotes the geographical division of the world. In other words, it just implies the opposite direction or pole of the west. In this regard, the people, who have been living in the east, are known as the oriental (Eastern) people. And, the intellectuals who are specialist over the orient and oriental civilization, are known as orientalist whereas their occupation is regarded orientalism.

Moreover, the term orientalism is most closely associated with Edward Said. He, as a postcolonial and cultural critic, has used this term to refer to the historical and ideological process whereby false images of and myths about the eastern or oriental have been constructed in various western discourses. In the introduction to his seminal book *Orientalism* (1991), Edward Said says, “Anyone who teaches, writes about or researches the orient is orientalist and what he or she does is orientalism” (2). This definition assures that that the orientalism is an academic project, which deals with orient and oriental people. Likewise, according to Edward said, orientalism as an academic discipline emerged in the late eighteenth century and has since assembled an archive of knowledge that has served to perpetuate and reinforce western representation of it. So, it also can be said that orientalism is a discipline by which the orient has been approached systematically as a topic of learning, discovery and practice.

Furthermore, Edward said, in his book *Orientalism*, says, “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the ‘orient’ and the ‘occident’” (2). This definition is more expansive and can accommodate

as diverse group of writers as classical Greek playwrights Aeschylus (524-455 BC), Medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-335), French novelist Victor Hugo (1802-85) and German Social scientist and revolution Karl Marx (1818-83).

Similarly, in the same book Edward Said says, “Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the ‘orient’” (3). This definition is demonstrative of its amorphous capacity as a structure used to dominate and authorize the orient. These above three definitions illustrate how orientalism is a complex web of representations about the orient. Specially, the first two definitions embody the textual creation about the orient, while the latter definition illustrates how orientalism has been deployed to execute authority and domination over the orient. Anyway, all of them are interrelated, particularly since the domination entailed in the third definition is reliant upon and justified by the textual establishment of the orient that emerges out of the academic and imaginative definition of orientalism. Therefore, it is said that the orient does not correspond to the geographical location. Besides, the orient is said to have been formed by the west or it is said to have been born out of the western imagination. So, on this ground, it can be said that orientalism never represents the orient and the oriental people’s reality. Instead, it limits and overlaps oriental reality through the imposition of imagination, myths, false opinions, hearsays and prejudices generated by influential scholars. So, it would not be exaggeration to say that the orientalism is the western estimation and the imagination of the east (orient), which ever lies beyond eastern reality.

Therefore, the critic Gloria Chunn, in his “The High Note of the Barbarian Reed Pipe: Maxine Hong Kingston,” says, “Orientalism refers to discourse about the East which remains rooted in the western imagination, packaged and disseminated by the

publishing industry and perpetuated in academic institutions dominated by western civilization” (88). So, it is said that orientalism is not a fair attempt of the west to approach the orient. The west never perceives the oriental reality. And, it seldom represents the oriental values, norms, and the entire ideologies. Instead, orientalism is the exhaustive attempt of the west to prove the orient inferior to the west with the help of imagination, myths, stereotyped images and talk-stories.

Besides, the west has implicated many other devices to achieve their goal of governing the orientals. One of them is the construction and accommodation of images of the orient. In general, an image denotes a visual, physical representation of something or mental picture of some visible thing or things.

M.H. Abrams, in this connection, says, “An image is a picture made out of words” (121). But, according to Ross Murtin and Supryia M. Ray, “Image usually refers to an artistic representation of the visible world and to the mental impressions conjured up by such a representations” (166).

Furthermore, here, the image embodies the mental imprint or stamp of the west about the orient. Most specifically, images come out of the western imagination of the orient. The orientalist, who is known as the special agent of the west, accommodate many images about the orient created by the west. They are traditional, conservative, wild, exotic and inferior. However, it is very obvious that these images do not correspond with the oriental, cultural artifacts. Most of them are false, groundless and imaginary. And, their existence always lies beyond the oriental reality. So, the images, which are constructed and imprinted in western mind as stereotypes, never represent the oriental reality. On this ground, it also can be said that the orientalism is a system of

misrepresentation. Maybe that is why Edward Said says, “Orientalism is a system of representation formed by a whole of forces that brought the orient into western learning, western consciousness and later western Empire” (202-203).

Moreover, orientalism resides at the periphery of the western movement of constructing false images. However, the salient fact of the orientalism is not whether the images of the orient corresponds or not with the oriental reality. Rather, it is the western effort to expose themselves as superior to the orient because the concept of superiority underlies the presence of oriental inferiority. And, on this ground, the occidentals (westerns) regard their inevitable presence to lead the orient to represent the orient or to govern the orient.

Besides, another important device of the west is the stereotyping of the images of the orient. Here, the stereotype means a fixed idea or image that many people have regarding a particular type of person or thing and it is not often true in reality. Moreover, according to Edward Said, the stereotyping of images embodies the western perspective of the orient that the orient is static, fixed and unchangeable. This biased concept of the west always underlies the western desire of dominating or ruling the orient. Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism*, says, “Orientalism assumed on unchanging orient, absolutely different from the west” (96). So, it is obvious that the west always underestimates oriental reality and wants to show them superior. In “The High Note of the Barbarian Reed Pipe: Maxine Hong Kingston”, Gloria Chun argues, “The history which is created by western about the East is not true history. Rather it is the historical stereotype.” (89). On this ground, it can be said that orientalism is the western design of stereotyping the orient and oriental civilization. Similarly, Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, in his

dissertation, says, “The stereotype has a primary concern of imperial and colonial ethos of marginalization and discrimination in colonial discourse” (7). This definition gives us ground to think that the stereotyping underlies the western quest for superiority.

Moreover, the west always supposes that the orient is dark, mysterious, romantic exotic, inferior and soon. Like the west, the orient also changes and develops. And, it is possible that the west is changing more rapidly than the orient. It shows that the western stereotype of the orient is not fair and reasonable. It is biased and prejudiced. Besides, it is essential to mention that the orient is not stamped with positive images but with the negative images: dull, uncivilized, savage, wild, traditional, and what not. And, the west never keeps them back to say that these are stereotypical images of the orient. On this ground, the west always claims its inevitable presence in the orient, and then interprets and disseminates the open or hidden hegemony of the west over the orient is reasonable and for the sake of the orient. Obviously, this is the political ideology of the west.

Moreover, another noticeable device implicated by the west is construction of the binary between the occident and the orient as ‘self’ and ‘other’ respectively. The ‘self’ denotes the west and ‘other’ denotes the orient. In general, the word binary implies a combination of two things, a pair or dual. And, the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure says that “signs have meaning not by a simple reference to real objects but by their opposition to other signs” (23). According to Saussure, while signs mean by their difference from other signs the binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible: sun/moon, man/woman, birth/death and such oppositions. Each of this opposition represents a binary system. Similarly, Ross Murfin and Supriya M Ray in *The Bedford Glossary of Critical Literary Terms*, cite Jacques Derrida in this way: “People in

western culture tend to think and express their thoughts in terms of contrary pairs” (32). Likewise, Edward Said, one of the most prominent postcolonial critics, in *Orientalism* argues that the division of the world into east and west has been constructed over centuries, and this division expresses the fundamental binary division, which enables the west to deal the orient. So, on the ground of these above given definitions, we can say that the west, by creating binaries like civilized and primitive, good and evil, backward and forward, human and bestial, advanced and returned, superior and inferior, teacher and pupil, doctor and patient, new and old, modern and traditional and developed and so on between the west and the orient, has defined the western superiority over the orient. And, on the ground of this hierarchy, the west legitimates its authority over the orient.

Moreover, the orientalist, who are known as the special agents of the west often, use these binaries to increase the hierarchy between the orient and the west; between the western ‘self’ and oriental ‘other.’ But all these binaries do not correspond with reality. These are the west formed binaries that give the ground to the implication of western ideology. Ideology simply denotes the sets of beliefs especially one held by a particular group that influences the way people behave. And here ideology refers to the western ideology that the west is superior and it has authority to govern the orient. So, the writer Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray argue in the following way:

Ideology is set of beliefs underlying the customs habits and practices common to a given social group. To members of that group, the beliefs seem obviously true natural and even universally applicable. They may seem just as obviously arbitrary, idiosyncratic and even false to those who adhere to another ideology. (164)



Similarly, Edward Said argues that the west is the actor and the orient is the passive reactor. The west is spectator, the judge and jury regarding every fact of oriental behaviour. It is obvious that the west is in the position to create ideologies about the east. Likewise, referring to Althusser, Hans Bertens says, “Ideology is the dominator of a set of ruling beliefs and values through coercive power” (88). It, therefore, is obvious that the goal of western ideology is to govern the orient, to dominate the orient and to exploit the orient. However, the modern orientalism as expounded by Edward Said accepts the shift of European ideology to American hegemony over the rest of the world after the Word War II.

Most commonly, hegemony denotes one nation’s dominance or dominant influence over the other. This term is most closely associated with the Italian Marxist critic Antonio Gramsci, who has used this term to refer to the process of consensus formation and to the pervasive system of assumptions, meaning system and values-the web of ideologies. In other words, hegemony shapes the way things we see. What they mean, and therefore what reality is for the majority of people within a given culture. Pointing to Antonio Gramsci, Hans Bertens, in his *Literary Theory: The Basics*, says, “The hegemony is the domination of a set of ruling beliefs and values through ‘consent’ rather than through ‘coercive power’” (88). On the ground of these definitions, it can be said that the colonial and imperial authority of Europe slightly changed into American hegemony. And unlike in imperialism and colonialism of Europe, America emerges as a western will to power to govern the orient.

In spite of these, another important orientalist task of the west is the division of the west and the east as ‘self’ and ‘other.’ According to Kumal Pd. Bhattarai, “The

discourse of colonialism is the construction of otherness” (16). It shows that it is imaginary. In common sense, the ‘other’ is anyone who is separated from one’s self. As in binary terms, self is self because it is not other. The presence of other is essential to define the presence of self. Now, west regards itself ‘self’ and the ‘orient’ as other. According to Edward Said, “The universal practice of designation in one’s mind is a familiar space. Which is ‘ours’ and unfamiliar space ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs’ is a way of arbitrary” (54). This definition also underlies the division of the world in terms of ‘self’ and ‘other.’

Moreover, this division has become more helpful to the western colonialists and imperialists. The destiny of colonizer and imperialist is formulation of ‘other’ image through the identification of otherness. That is why the division of the world into ‘self’ and ‘other’ embodies the western’s attempt to define their self-assumed higher and superior position in the world. And, the west has created the other to define itself. Its derivation of its own identity through the division of world into self and other underlies the western passion for governing the orient.

Furthermore, the oriental subject is characterized as ‘other’ through discourse such as primitivism as a means of establishing the binary separation of the west and the orient asserting the naturalness and primary of the western culture and world view. And, in his dissertation, Deepak Shrestha says, “The discriminations between ‘the self’ (we) and ‘the other’ (they) and the representation of all the others as outside excluded and inferior create the European culture’s hegemony over the non-European” (57). On this basis, we can assert that the division of the world into the self and other embodies the western hegemony over the orient. According to Deepak Shrestha, the westerners’

division of the cultures into self and other represents the western quest for power as well as their belief of superiority over the eastern people.

Similarly, the definition of the term (other) as used in current post colonial theory is rooted in the Freudian and post Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity most notably in the work of the psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan. His use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other' (the capital one) and the 'other' (the small one). According to Lacan, the other-with the small 'o' designates the other who resembles the self, which child discovers when it looks at the mirror and becomes aware of itself as separated being. In terms of orientalism, it can refer to the oriental others who are marginalized by western discourses identified by their difference from the center and perhaps cruelly become the focus of anticipated mastery by western 'ego.'

Likewise, the other-with the capital 'O' has been called the *grande-audre* by Lacan. It is the great other, in whose gaze the subject gains identity. The symbolic other is not a real interlocutor but can be embodied in other subjects such as the mother or father that may represent it. Here, this other can be compared to the western discourse or the west itself in two ways. Firstly, it is the term in which the oriental subject gains a sense of his or her identity as somehow 'other' dependent, and secondly, it becomes the absolute pole of address, the ideological framework in which the oriental may come to understand the world. In western discourse the subjectivity of the oriental is continually located in the gaze of western or occidental other, the *grand-audre*. Subjects may be interpolated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing function of the western power concurring with descriptions such as 'we' western.

Moreover, another term named 'othering' was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which western discourse creates 'other' where as other corresponds to the focus of desire or power in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded or mastered' subject created by the discourse of power. 'Othering' describes the various ways in which the western discourse produces its subjects. Spivak, as cited by Hans Bertens, thinks that "othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing is established at the same time as its colonized others are produced as subjects" (171). We can say that the orientalism is the process of creating an image of other to identify or designate the 'orient.' The construction of other image helps the west to define its place as self. In this connection, Deepak Shrestha regards "orientalism as the discourse of the west about the East designates the long term images, stereotypes and general ideology about the orient as other" (51). So, a constitutive otherness of an essentialist character and the construction identity in every age and every society involve establishment of opposites and 'others.' Therefore, the existence of the orient lies in the western imagination. Now, we can even say that the orientalism imposes limits upon the oriental beliefs and ideas. That is why it is supposed that the orientalism includes the entire western activities over the orient. And the orientalists are regarded as the special agents of western power. So, Edward Said says that "only an occidental could speak of orientals, for example just as it was the white man who could designate and name coloreds or non whites" (228). The above definition can be supported with Deepak Shrestha's statement: "Westerners think and try to make believe that west is the source of life" (59).

Moreover, orientalism can be described as a western discourse to govern the orient. But it is important to know what the discourse is. In our general understanding, the word discourse is a social language created by particular cultural conditions at a particular time and place, and it expresses a particular way of understanding human experience.

Furthermore, a discourse draws attention to the role of the language as the vehicle of ideology. Deepak Shrestha, in his dissertation, says, “Discourse is an instrument of power a means of governing the other” (61). Likewise, Michael Foucault says, “Discourse embodies the power struggle, it is a violence that we do to things” (50). So, on the ground of these definitions, we can say that orientalism is the discourse of the west about the east. Likewise, according to new historicists, no discourse by itself can adequately explain the complex culture dynamics of social power for there is no monolithic spirit of an age, and there is no adequate totalizing explanation of history. There is instead a dynamic unstable interplay among discourses; they are always in the state of flux, overlapping and competing with one another in any number of ways at any given point of time.

Besides, no discourse is permanent and discourse wields power for those in charge, but they also stimulate opposition to that power. This is the one reason why new historicists believe that the relationship between individual identity and society is mutually constitutive: on the whole, human beings are never merely victims of an oppressive society for they can find various ways to oppose authority in their personal and public lives. They further say that even the director of a small country does not wield

absolute power on his own. To maintain dominance, his power must circulate in numerous discourses.

Similarly, in the view of Michael Foucault, power can function only when there is circulation among power, knowledge discourse and truth. According to him, for the application of power, there should be the knowledge about the nature of power which is only possible by the interplay of language or discourse. And as the knowledge disseminated by the discourse it changes into the truth and truth establishes the power. Here, in the context of orientalism, we can find the same type of power relation between the orient and the occident. If we know the occidentals or westerns are the persons who want to impose their power over the orient. But their power functions not in vertical order and no western directly comes to dominate the eastern. Instead, they have constructed many images of the orient through which they establish knowledge about the orient. Then through the means of written or spoken discourses they disseminate them and establish them as truth that makes them powerful. And again this ideology of the west changes into universal truth through the means of discourse constructed in the western texts or broadcasted by western media. So, it would not be wrong to say that the orientalism is a discourse which makes the west superior to the orient. All the time all knowledge, however, can not be objective can not demonstrate the particular spirit of time because no knowledge can be understood in isolation from the web of discourses. According to Foucault, discourse is a kind of cluster of knowledge or in another words a discourse is a loose structure of interconnected assumptions that make knowledge possible. In his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault says, “A discourse

is a series of sentences or propositions and it can be defined as a large group of statements that belong to a single system of formation” (107).

Therefore, here the orientalism itself is a kind of discursive formation or discourse. And according to the researcher Deepak Shrestha, “Foucault’s main thesis is that the discourse is involved in power” (48).

Obviously, it is important to know how orientalism functions in the field of literature or the relationship between the orientalism and literature. As we know, literature is a written text which is formed out of many devices of language. Besides, it has its own world which is formed of many events and instances whereas orientalism is an attempt of implicating western ideology over the orient. In this sense, literature plays the role of vehicle by converting the western ideology to the orient. However, it can not be said that all literary works play the role of vehicle to convey the western ideology. There are many writers, who are orientals by birth as well. But they have been playing the role of western agents by associating themselves with western ideology. Some of them are Nirad C. Chaudhari, R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Samrat Upadhyaya, Maxine Hong Kingston. Nirad C. Chaudary, in his book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, has described the Indian civilization rooted into English civilization. He, being prejudiced to Indian culture and civilization, has described it as the fall of Aryan civilization (now English Civilization). Dipankar De Sarkar, in his criticism “Literature-India: A Hundred Years of Gratitude for Literary Tiger”, says that “it’s just that Chaudhari- an iconoclast and controversialist- is a man many Indians love to hate. In the past, his writings have been berated as pro-British and anti-Indian” (3).

Similarly, Samrat Upadhaya, an emerging US based Nepali writer, has described Nepali culture from western perspective. In his *Arresting God in Kathmandu*, a collection of short stories, he, while describing the culture of Kathmandu, has used many stereotypical images constructed by the west. And, similarly in his work, *Imaginary Homelands* and *Satanic Verses*, India born writer Salman Rusdie has created the image of the east as uncivilized, traditional and savage. So, it can be said that the literature is supreme device of orientalism to orientalise the orient. Edward Said says, “Orientalism the generic tem that I have been employing to describe the western approach to the orient; oreintalism is the discipline by which the orient was approached systematically as a topic of learning discovery and practice” (73).

Literature has become very much helpful to create the false and imaginary image of the orient on the one hand, and it has become successful to make many eastern people accept western ideology as their reality on the other hand. Literature has played the vital role for the orientalisation of the orient and empowerment of the western ideology and because of it the oreintalism is regarded as an academic discipline. Obviously, the writers, who succumb to the western culture, create stereotypical images about the east and the eastern people. These images enable these writers to portray the east as exotic, irrational, wild, barbaric, feminine and what not. This kind of portrayal of the east through such images, in turn, establishes the east as the other to the west and thus enables the west to manipulate the east.



### III. Textual Analysis

#### Representation of Chinese Culture as the 'Other' in *The Woman Warrior*

Maxine Hong Kingston is a daughter of China born parents. In this regard, she has a close relationship with China and Chinese culture. And, certainly it is the cause why she is more interested in China and Chinese culture. In her childhood days, she used to be keen to know Chinese culture. She used to listen to her mother's talk stories, myths, legends and many supernatural stories about China.

Moreover, being American born child, she was associated with American culture, too. Thus, she, on the one hand, was fond of listening to Chinese stories and she liked to be associated with American culture, on the other hand. Therefore, when she was in school, she used to think about herself in this manner: "If I made myself American pretty so that five or six Chinese boys in the class fell in love with me, every one else-the Caucasian, Negro and Japanese boys would too" (12). Later, Maxine Hong Kingston did not remain as a common woman; she developed herself as a writer. As a writer, the western audience regards her as a true representative of the orient (Chinese) culture. However, she does not accept it. Nevertheless, she has applied western constructed stereotyped images to describe China and Chinese culture. Certainly, she thinks that her prestige, success and popularity depend on the judgment of western (American) audience.

Moreover, she wrote the novel in favour of Americans because she, in their eyes, is the true representative of Chinese people. So all the time her prime aim is to make the western audience happy, and to make them feel proud of being Americans or westerners by reducing the eastern culture into an exotic 'other' through the construction of binary between the Chinese culture and the American culture. In the beginning of the novel,

Kingston presents her mother's talk in this way: "[Y]ou must not tell anyone what I am about to tell you" (3). This talk of her mother shows that there was female restriction in China. No one can speak the truth although they have known it well.

Similarly, while describing her early experience of her family especially the illegal pregnancy of her sister in law, the mother of the speaker says, "The village had also been counting on the night the baby was to be born, the village raided our house" (3). It shows that there was no sense of humanity in Chinese people. Instead, they are aggressive and wild. Similarly, her mother describes the sad story of her aunt in this way:

At first they threw mud and rocks at the house. Then they threw eggs and began slaughtering our stocks. We could hear the animals scream, their deaths, the roosters, the pigs at last great roar from the ox familiar wild hens flared in our night windows; the villagers encircled us. Some of the faces stopped to peer at us, their eyes rushing like search lights. The hand flattened against the panes, framed heads and left red prints. (4)

Obviously, Kingston's mother has depicted an event of the Chinese world, where men do not remain as men; society does not remain as society. It gives the image that Chinese are ones, who are many steps higher in cruelty than the wild beasts. Moreover, in these lines, the people of a Chinese village have attacked the sister-in-law of the narrator because her act of having illegal child was the immoral in the society. Similarly, in a same talk story of her aunt, her mother says, "Their knives dripped with the blood of our animals. They smeared the blood on the doors and walls" (4). Anyone who reads these lines easily can jump into the conclusion that Chinese are not human beings but the blood sucking monsters. They are the cruel killers. In the same story of her sister-in-law

Kingston's mother says, "When they left, they took sugar and oranges to bless themselves. They cut pieces from the dead animals. Some of them took bowls that were not broken and clothes that were not torn" (5). These lines show that Chinese are looters and nothing else. Otherwise, they would not take the things of her family. Likewise, in another part of the same story, the narrator or her mother says: "Don't let your father know that I told you. He denies her. Now you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born. The villagers are watchful" (5). Having read these lines anyone can hastily claim that in china there is no freedom to women. They are treated as silent beings. And, people are ready to sacrifice their sisters, daughters or any female members of their family members. They are ready to forget them but they are not ready loose their hollow belief of social prestige and dignity. It shows that Chinese are conservatives. Further, her mother says, "They both gave orders: she followed. If you tell your family I'll beat you. I will kill you be here again next week" (7). These lines make it clear that there is no equality between men and women. The male always dominates the female. Chinese people are biased and prejudiced towards women. And, the women are exploited in china. Chinese males are savage and wild like the males of Yanomamo society as it has been described in "The Savage Male" by Marvin Harris:

By the time a typical Yanomamo male reaches maturity, he is covered with the wounds and scare of innumerable quarrels, duels, and military raids. Although they hold women in great contempt Yanomamo males are always brawling over real or imagined acts of adultery and broken promises to provide wives. Yanomamo women are also covered with scars

and bruises, mostly the result of violent encounters with seducers, rapists and husbands. (171)

Obviously in Yanomamo society, males are savage. They are not worthy to be called human beings, and Kingston also portrays such kind of savagery on the part of the males in the novel.

Similarly, in another context, Kingston says, "The Chinese hide their names; sojourners take new name when their lives change and guard their real names with silence" (5). These lines also imply that Chinese are liars. They are liars. And at the same time they are hesitant as well. They are afraid of disclosing their reality. Likewise, while describing the manner of Chinese people, she even marks the speech of the Chinese immigrants and says, "The immigrants I know have loud voices unmodulated to American tones even after years away from the village where they called friendships out across the field" (11). Here, she has compared the Chinese voices with Americans and she has says that Chinese voices are louder to Americans. It shows that Chinese are more uncivilized than Americans. Chinese are the wild people, who even can not speak politely. And, in another context while describing her mother's talk stories, Kingston says, "But the hungry, greedy tired of planting in a dry soil had been forced to leave the village in order to send too money home." (13). It gives an image of China, which is the country of poverty. Neither have they food to eat nor clothes to wear. They are living with poverty. For their livelihood, they have to go America and have to send money back home. So, the condition of their poverty does not improve as it is described in the essay, "What is poverty?" by Jo Goodwin Parker: "Poverty is an acid that drips on pride until pride is worn away. Poverty is chisel that chips on honor until honor is worn away"

(103). So, like the condition of Jo Goodwin Parker, the Chinese people are without pride and honour. The true identity of Chinese is their poverty and greed. And, again, Kingston recalls her mother's talk story in this way: "Don't tell anyone had an aunt your father doesn't want to hear her name. She has never been born. I have believed that sex was unspeakable and words so strong and fathers so frail that aunt would do my father mysterious harm" (15).

These lines imply that in China sex is dealing with morality and social dignities where moral and social dignities are stronger than humanity. Chinese are ready to forget an important member of their family but they are not ready to lose their social dignity. It shows that Chinese are hypocrites and pompous. In the similar context, while describing the Chinese attitude to suicide, especially the suicide committed by drowning themselves into water, Kingston notices the description of her aunt's suicide and presents her mother's description in this way. "The Chinese are always very frightened of the drowned one. Whose weeping ghost wet hair hanging and skin blossomed waits silently by the water to pull down a substitute" (16). These lines denote that Chinese are frightened with dead body which can do no more harm to them. Surprisingly, they are afraid of non-living beings. And, it can be said that Chinese do not believe in the reality. Instead, they believe on supernatural things like on spirits or ghosts.

Similarly, while concentrating on the same story of her aunt Kingston says: "If my aunt had betrayed the family at a time of large grain fields and peace, when many boys were born and wings were being built on many houses, perhaps she might have escaped such severe punishment" (13). This extract clearly depicts the existing condition of poverty, violence and gender discrimination in China. It reveals that if the Chinese villagers were

not poor, aggressive and biased to women they would not attack her aunt. They would not compel her to commit suicide.

Thus the main intention of the Kingston is to present China and Chinese as inhuman, barbaric and uncivilized. So, in this process, she recalls the story of her grandfather which as told her by mother, she says: "My grandfather was different from other people crazy ever since the little Jap bayoneted him in the head. He used to put his naked penis on the dinner table and laughing" (11). Through these lines, Kingston wants to convey that Chinese are shameless and crazy. They move naked like the beasts in the jungle.

Likewise, in the same chapter, Kingston notices the identity of Chinese from the talk story of her mother and presents them in this way: "Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, now do you separate what is peculiar to Childhood to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked you growing with stories from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?" (6).

Here, she has displayed the image of Chinese culture as insane, poor, and their culture is like movies, whereas the American culture are different or opposite to it.

Kingston fetches many negative images from Chinese myths and Chinese stories told to her by her mother. And, with the help of these images, she presents China as inferior to America and Chinese as inferior to Americans.

Similarly in the second chapter "White Tigers", the mother of the speaker describes women as supernatural creature in the passage below:

It was a woman who invented white crane boxing only two hundred years ago. She was already an expert pole of fighter, daughter of a teacher trained at the shao-lin temple, where there lived an order of fighting monks. She was combing her hair, one mooring when white crane alighted outside her window. She teased it with her pole which it pushed aside with a soft brush of its wing. Amazed she dashed outside and tried to knock the crane off its perch. It snapped her pole in two. (19)

Here, Kingston has presented her mother's story of a woman, in which the woman is presented as a supernatural character. It shows that Chinese take supernatural thing as their reality. They float with wave of supernaturalism and imagine themselves to be supernatural. However, it lies always beyond the boundary of reality. It shows Chinese unrealistic and imaginative.

Similarly, Kingston says that her mother used to tell her supernatural story all through out the day. She says it also that sometime she used to get slept listening the story and used to get waked up listening the story. Her mother told her plenty of stories and it made Kingston that China is the country of stories. Obviously, she wants to present China as an unrealistic, supernatural or exotic. All these stories, myths and supernatural stories do not give any sense to modern scientific values and norms of America. So on this ground china always means opposite to America. According to her, the Chinese run after the myth and fiction whereas Americans run after the reality or cause and effect.

Kingston says ahead that Chinese believe in the story of Fa Mu lan. It is a supernatural story. It teaches one to be a warrior. Even Kingston because of her

attachment with mother can not escape the magic of supernatural story of Fa Mu lan and imagines to be a woman warrior and she becomes the world winner in her imagination. However, in reality it does not keep any importance.

Moreover, in the process of describing Chinese attitude towards woman Kingston says, “The families are glad to be rid of women. Girls are maggots in the rice. It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters” (43). These lines clearly denote that in China there is no place for women. In China, women are not regarded as human beings. Instead, they are regarded less important than insects like maggots and birds like geese. It shows that Chinese are conservative, traditional, prejudiced and biased towards women. Similarly, noticing a villager’s statement to women, the narrator feels that “feeding girls is feeding cowbirds” (46). This line also displays the Chinese culture of dominating women, misbehaving and misinterpreting the women. Similarly, in another paragraph, Kingston claims that “there is a Chinese word for the female ‘I’ which is slave” (47). This line denotes that in China women are regarded as slaves. Likewise, in the process of describing Chinese political system, Kingston says, “The communists gave axes to the old ladies and said go and kill yourself. You are useless” (50). These lines also indicate that Chinese rulers are cruel. They don’t have love towards the helpless old people. They give more priority to the economic benefit of the country rather than to the humanity itself.

Likewise, while describing the Chinese myth of a warrior woman, Kingston says. “If I couldn’t eat perhaps I could make myself a warrior like the sword woman who drives me” (48). This statement also clarifies that Chinese people love to be warriors or fighters. They like to be avengers or rebels rather than to be cooperative. Although



Kingston herself intends to be a warrior being influenced by Chinese myths, she, by perceiving things from the western eyes, implies that Chinese are warriors and they have deep love for fighting.

In chapter “Shaman”, she recalls her mother's experience of opening the mental tube brought by her mother coming home from study:

When I open it, the smell It flies out, a thousand year old bat flying heavy headed out of the Chinese caverns where bats are as white as dust a smell that come from long age, far back in the brain. Crates from canton Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan have that smell too. Only stronger because they are more recently come from the Chinese. (57)

These lines symbolize that China is not modern. It is old because its smell belongs to the cavern bats of four thousand years ago whereas America is modern.

In the same manner, Kingston describes her mother in this way: “She has spacy eyes as all people recently from Asia have. Here eyes do not focus on the Camera. My mother is not smiling Chinese do not smile for photographs” (58). Through these lines, Kingston has attempted to present her mother Chinese or ‘other’ and to herself American or ‘self’. Besides, she depicts her mother as a hesitant, who represents the whole Chinese people:

My mother is not soft, the girl with the small nose and smile under lip is soft my mother is not humorous, not like the girl at the end who lifts her mocking chin to pose like Girl Graduate. My mother does not have smiling eyes, the old woman teacher (Dean Wool) in front crinkles

happily, and the one faculty member smiles in the western suit smiles westerly (...) She is intelligent, alert, pretty I can't tell if she is happy.  
(59)

As we know, Kingston has presented her mother as 'other' or Chinese and herself as 'self' or American. Through her Chinese mother and description of her manner and behaviour, Kingston wants to reveal that Chinese people are desperate, frustrated, nervous, angry and what not. That's why they look old even in their young age. At the same time, she describes Americans to have been happy, content and persons without hesitation and nervousness.

While interpreting another photograph of her mother Kingston says, "In this picture too my mother's eyes are big with what they held-reaches of oceans beyond china, land beyond oceans. Most emigrants learn the barbarians directness how to gather themselves and stare rudely into talking faces as if trying catch lies" (59).

Let's look how prejudiced Kingston is to the Chinese people how negatively she looks at China and Chinese people. She describes her mother's photograph taken in America: "In America my mother has eyes as strong as boulder, never once skittering off a face, but she has not learned to place decorations and phonograph needles, nor has she stopped seeing land on the other side of the oceans now her eyes include the relatives in China" (59).

Through this description, Kingston has tried to differentiate her mother from the main American culture. According to her, the American life is advanced and comfortable whereas Chinese life is traditional and difficult. Likewise, while discussing on the photographs Kingston asked her mother and asks "why you have fingerprints on our

forehead and mother replies her, your first uncle did that. I disliked the unsureness in her voice” (60). Here, Kingston’s comment pushes her mother away from the line of Americans. It implies that Chinese are not confident.

Through these lines, Kingston presents as Chinese as superstitious people:

In China there was time to complete feelings. As my father had done, my mother left the village by ship. There was sea bird painted on the ship to protect it against ship wreck and winds. She was in luck. The following ship was boarded by river pirates who kidnapped every passenger and even old lady. (61)

At the same time, she presents the perilous life of Chinese because of dishonest Chinese, who are pirating through the river. It also gives negative image about China and the Chinese people.

Likewise, Kingston describes her mother as a fighter against ghost and the society of her mother as ghost haunted in this extract " May be my mother's secret place was the room in the dormitory which was hunted. Even though they had to crowd the other rooms, none of the young women would sleep in it” (64). She recalls her mother’s experience with ghost and her attitude with ghost Kingston in this way: "My mother said that perhaps it was an animal spirit that was bothering your house, and your grandfather had something to do with chasing it off” (65). Having observed these lines, anyone can say that the China is a place of ghost, whose existence, however, is denied by the American science. Kingston, while recalling her mother’s experience with ghost, says that her mother was told about ghost and in the beginning she did not accept it and she was told to search the ghost by a girl in this way: “If you are so sure why don’t you go

out there and take a look?" (66). It shows that Chinese are traditional, conservative and superstitious people. In her story, Kingston's mother told Kingston that her friends were afraid of ghosts. They used to be afraid of even a small crick of sound. They were frightened with ghosts and while waiting for sitting Ghosts, Kingston's mother addresses ghost in this way, "There is no pain you can inflict that I can not endure. You're wrong if you think I'm afraid of you; you're no mystery to me. I've heard of you sitting Ghosts before. Yes, people have lived to tell about you. You kill babies, you cowards" (70). Although modern America does not accept the existence of ghost, the Chinese believe in the existence of ghosts.

In another dialogue Kingston's mother says, "In case I lost any of myself, I want you to call me back. I was afraid and fear may have driven me out of my body and mind. Then I will tell you the story" (71). It shows not only the fear of Kingston's mother, but it shows the fear of all Chinese as well. Likewise, Kingston's mother Brave orchid recalls her meeting with ghost in this way:

Suddenly a full grown sitting Ghost loomed up to the ceiling and pounced on top of me. Mounds of hair hid its claws and teeth, no true head no eyes, no face so low in its level of incarnation it did not have the shape of recognizable animal. It knocked me down and began to strangle me. It was bigger than a wolf, bigger than an ape, and growing I would have stabbed it, I would have cut it up, and we would be mopping blood this morning but a sitting Ghost mutation-it had an extra arm that wrested my hand away from the knife. (72)

These lines clearly denote that Chinese believe in ghosts. She further describes her feeling about her encounter with the ghost: "At about 3 A.M. I died for a while. I was wandering, and the world I touched turned into sand. I could hear wind but sand did not fly. For ten years I lost my way. I almost forgot about you, there was so much work leading to other work and another life like picking up coins in a dream ..." (72).

Through this reading, we can conclude that Kingston presents the Chinese culture as ghost haunted as R.K. Narayan does in his book *The English Teacher* by making his protagonist Krishna talk with his dead wife and his dead wife responds him in this way: "I think I look the same person as on earth. Only free from ailments, ills and cares. You remember I used to have a sort of pain at the waist, even that I do not have now. My dress tonight is shimmering blue interwoven with light and stars. I have done my hair parted on the left" (132). She presents her mother's more attend to ghost in this way: "The danger is not over. The ghost is listening to us right now, and tonight it will walk again but stranger. We may not be able to control it if you do not help me finish it off before sundown. This sitting Ghost has many wide black mouths. It is dangerous. It is real" (74). So, while reading this kind of description of ghosts, it is that Kingston presents Chinese not only as traditional, supernatural and ghost-haunted but as ghost themselves, because they can talk with ghost.

Moreover, Kingston has not left any stone unturned in her attempt to present the Chinese culture inferior to the American culture. She, therefore, recalls her mother's statement about Chinese ladies in this way: "The old ladies in China had many silly superstitions" (76). Similarly, comparing Chinese dress up with American, Kingston presents her mother's recollection in this way: "My mother wore a silk robe and western shoes with

big hills, and she rode home carried in a sedan chair. She had gone away ordinary and come back miraculous, like the ancient magicians who came down from the mountains” (76). In these lines, Kingston says that American dress up is far more advanced, charming and magical than the Chinese dress up. So, she argues that when her mother walked wearing an American dress and the Chinese villagers gathered around her to look at. And while the villagers were gazing in their surprise, her mother replied, “They have no idea how much I’ve fallen coming to America” (77). Through this description, Kingston admires the American culture. Her assessment of American culture is that it is far more standard than the Chinese culture.

Kingston describes her mother’s experience about the fortuneteller in this way:

She let a fortuneteller read the whirls on her fingerprints; he predicted that she would leave china and have six more children. ‘Six’ he said is the number of everything. You are such a lucky woman. Six is the universe number. The four compass points plus the zenith and the nadir are six. There are six low phoenix notes and six high, six worldly environments, six senses, six virtues, six obligations, six classes of ideograph, six domestic animals, six arts, and six paths of metempsychosis. (77-78)

Having read these lines, normally we can get two ideas: one is that she would leave China. It means China is not good so, she was leaving it because we know that fortuneteller predicted something about the person regarding psychology and ideas prevailed in current society. Secondly, it shows that Chinese, unlike Americans, believe in fate rather than in the work. We can say that through this description, Kingston admires modern America instead of the traditional China. In the same chapter, Kingston

presents the dreadful situation of girls, who are sold by their parents: "Among the sellers with their ropes, cages and water tanks were the sellers of little girls. Sometime just one man would be standing by the side of the road selling one girl. There were fathers and mothers selling their daughters whom they pushed forward and then pulled back again" (79). These lines describe depressing situation of girls in Chinese culture or in Chinese society. It reminds one of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal":

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity and even. When they come to this age they will not yield above 31 or 31.2s.6d at most on the exchange, which can not turn to account either to parents or Kingdom the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value. (179)

However, one thing is different between them. The description of Jonathan Swift is ironical and to some extent imaginary whereas the description of Kingston's mother is realistic. For among the girl buyers Kingston's mother, herself, is one. The situation of the girl selling market has been described in such a harrowing and shocking way: "Open your mouth she said and examined teeth. She pulled down eyelids to check for anemia. She picked up the girls wrists to sound their pulse which tell everything" (80). It seems that Kingston's mother was not buying girls. She was buying vegetables. And her close examination of girls reminds us of vegetable buyers in the market. By poking at the superstition existing in Chinese society, Kingston says. "If it has really been new years, she would have had to shut herself up in her own house. Nobody wants a doctor's visit in the first days of the year" (84).

In another context, too, Kingston presents a comparison her mother makes China and America in terms of the development: “In china the bridges are nothing in Brooklyn and San Francisco. This one was made from rope, laced and knotted as if by magpies” (87). Kingston’s mother describes the Chinese food in this way:

Do you know what people in china eat when they have the money?” my mother began. They buy into a monkey feast. The eaters sit around a thick wood table with a hole in the middle. Boys bring in the monkey at the end of a pole. Its neck is in a collar at the end of the pole, and it is creaming. Its hands are tied behind it. They clamp the monkey into the table, the whole table fits like another collar around its neck. Using a surgeon’s saw, the cooks cut a clean line in a circle at the top of its head. To loosen the bone they tap with the tiny hammer and wedge here and there with a silver pick. Then an old woman reaches out her hand to the monkey’s face and up to its scalp, where she tufts some hair and lifts off the lid of the skull. The eaters spoon out the brains. (92)

This description of Kingston’s mother about Chinese way of eating monkey is really cruel and heinous. Kingston, by foregrounding such an eating habit, portrays the grey area of the Chinese civilization. In order to present the Chinese culture wild and inferior, Kingston puts forward an instance of killing an old, crazy, innocent lady, described to her by her mother in this way:

Some one took the crazy lady’s cup and threw it at her. It broke at her feet. Are you a spy? Are you they asked her (...) A large stone rammed her head, and she fell in a flutter (...) The villagers closed in. Somebody



held a fragment of glass under her nostrils. When it clouded, they  
pounded her temples with the rocks in their fists until she was dead. (96)

Certainly, these lines present the Chinese people as inhuman and savage. Although the Chinese people, too, are human beings, they can not be called human beings proper as they are as barbaric and savage as wild beasts. This is what Kingston wants to persuade her audience about the Chinese people. Likewise, while talking with her mother Kingston says: “I did not want to go china. In china my parents would sell my sisters and me. My father would marry two or three more wives, who would spatter cooking oil on our bare toes and lie that we were crying for naughtiness. They would give food to their own children and rock to us” (99). Look! How dreadful situation about China she creates. How shrewdly she has depicted China as uncivilized land through the manipulation of the images derived from myths and talk stories!

Kingston's mother narrates the pace of time in China and America in the passage below:

Time was different in china. One year lasted as long as my total time here; one evening so long, you could visit your women friends, drink tea, and play cards at each house, and it would still be twilight. It even got boring nothing to do but fan ourselves. Here midnight comes and the floor's not swept, the ironing's not ready, the money's not made. I would still be young if we lived in china. (106)

It is sure that this description makes the American audience happy because they get the chance to think that they are so forward, quick and advanced they are busy and so their time is moving fast whereas Chinese are backward, traditional and passive so their time is moving slowly. In this connection, her mother tells her to be laborious in these words:

“It’s a good thing I taught you children to look after yourselves. We are not going back to China for sure now” (106). This statement not only exposes the determination of Kingston’s mother, it exposes the keen desire of Kingston to stay in America as well. So she often asks her mother whether they have to go back China or not. And, she tries to convince her mother that it does not make much difference whether they live in America or China. So, as they are already in America, she urges her mother to stay in America. She says: “We belong to the planet now, mama. Does it make sense to you that if we were no longer attached to one piece of land, we belong to the planet? Wherever we happen to be standing, why that spot belongs to us as much as any other spot. Can we spend the fare money on furniture and cars? Will American flowers smell good now?” (107). These lines depict the very much negative image about China and Chinese people including Communist rulers of China. Reading these lines, it becomes conspicuous that Kingston has sought every folly and loophole of China and Chinese described in myths, legends, supernatural stories, her mother’s talk stories, and with the help of her imagination she wants to write a new story so that Americans would admire her. Besides, she has highlighted western constructed images about Chinese. She often presents her mother’s talk in this way, “Chinese are mischievous” (107).

In another chapter “At the Western Space”, too, Kingston describes many negative images about Chinese people. Her mother, Orchid, says, “Her American children could not sit for very long. They did not understand sitting. They were wandering feet” (113). It shows that Kingston has included these lines not to show American children restless. Instead, she has intended to display the idea that there is freedom in America. Even the American children get freedom, which is unlikely to be

found in China. Her mother scolded children in this way: "Her American children had no feelings and no memory" (115). This comment on American children does not present them as people suffering from amnesia. Instead, it presents them to be tension free or out of nervousness. However, the Chinese children are nervous and sad with scarcity and poverty. Likewise, in her comment on her sister Brave, she argues, "She will have learned to wear western clothes" (116). Kingston has presented this comment to show that the American civilization is universal, which should be followed by Chinese. Brave Orchid's mother, the mother of narrator, told her sister Moon Orchid to ask her husband "why he never came back to China when he got rich" (129). Apparently, these lines denote that Brave Orchid did not like America. She believed that Chinese should get back in their country after they got rich. However, the question why Moon Orchid's husband did not come back to China bears the implied meaning that no Chinese likes to be back in their place after taking the taste of American life. For America bears more freedom, more modernity and more wealth to them than China does. They, therefore, don't like to get back to China.

Similarly, while describing Moon orchid, the narrator comments on her in this way: "She felt accomplished a great deal by folding towels. She spent the evening observing the children. She liked to figure them out. She described them aloud. Now they are studying again. They read so much. It is because they have enormous quantities to learn, and they are trying to be savages" (140). These statements tell us about Moon orchid, who has just come to America to meet her husband. She is illiterate and knows nothing. That is why she feels proud as she knows how to fold towels. She thinks that the children of her sister are studying a lot to have knowledge in order to be free from

savages. By using this type of feeling of Chinese woman, Kingston intends to tell us that Chinese are uncivilized. They even don't know how to fold towels. Maybe Kingston has expected that these sorts of matter make American laugh and feel themselves proud to be Americans. Kingston describes compares and contrasts the empress of the west and the east in the extract below:

The Empress of the west would connive for power, but the empress of the East was good and kind and full of the light. You are the Empress of the east and empress of the west has imprisoned the earth's emperor or in the western palace. And you, the good empress of east, come out of the dawn to invade her and free the emperor you must break the strong spell she has cast on him that has lost him the east. (143)

It is a story told to Moon Orchid by Brave orchid, the mother of the narrator. Literally, the word empress denotes the woman or wife and the word emperor denotes the man or husband. Moreover, in implied sense, the empress symbolizes the culture. The implied intention of the Kingston is to expose the western culture more powerful and advanced. This is why it is more charming to the eastern. And it is the cause that Chinese don't like to come back to China from America once they reach America.

That is why while teaching her sister, Moon Orchid to be beautiful, Brave Orchid presents her ideas in this way: "Why don't you disguise yourself as beautiful lady? I brought lipstick and powder too. And at some dramatic point you pull off the wig and say. 'I' am Moon orchid" (145).

Here Brave Orchid is teaching her sister to be beautiful and romantic in front of her husband so that she could attract him towards her. This sort of idea clearly accepts

the advanced culture of America. Brave Orchid is Americanising her sister Moon orchid. So, Kingston's idea of showing American culture superior to the Chinese culture is fulfilled in this way. In the response of her sister's question, Moon Orchid says, "Oh, I'm so scared. I can't move. I can't do that in front of all those people-like a stage show. I won't be able to talk. And sure enough, her voice was fading into a whisper" (150). Kingston presents Moon Orchid as a representative of Chinese women. She is nervous and she has lost her confidence. She is scared of talking in front of her husband and other persons. It shows that Chinese are backward.

Moon orchid's husband responds in this way: "In this country a man may have just one wife" (153). It shows that America is very much civilized country where a man can not marry two women. While talking with his wife husband of Moon Orchid says that "you go live with your daughter. I'll mail you the money I've always sent you. I could get arrested if the American knew about you. I'm living like an American" (153). Through these comments of Moon Orchid's husband, Kingston has shown the cultural hierarchy between Chinese culture and American culture. Because of the cultural superiority and civilization, Moon Orchid's husband can not accept her as his wife in America. He thinks that she "would never fit into an American household" (153). The separation between Moon Orchid and her husband, therefore, is the result of cultural hierarchy.

In the last chapter "A Song for A Barbarian Reed Pipe," too, Kingston has presented many false images about Chinese people and Chinese culture. And she thinks "if I had lived in China, I would have an outlaw knot maker" (164). Through these lines, Kingston presents Chinese culture as traditional one. And, their tradition of Knot making

symbolizes their way of making life complex and complicated on the one hand, and it presents Chinese superstitions on the other hand. She further describes another tradition:

May be that is why my mother cut my tongue. She pushed my tongue up and sliced the frenum. Or may be she snipped it with a pair of nail scissors. I don't remember her doing it only her telling me about it, but all during childhood. I felt sorry for the baby whose mother waited with scissors or knife in hand for it to cry and then when its mouth was wide open like a baby bird's cut. The Chinese say a ready tongue is an evil.

(164)

Through these lines, Kingston presents China as a traditional and superstitious country. This tradition of cutting a frenum of a girl supposing a ready tongue to be evil presents China and Chinese culture prejudiced, uncivilized, and short sighted, too. Moreover, it also can be said that Chinese are pompous and hypocritical rather than realistic, humanitarian and factual.

Kingston, in this connection, remembers her childhood days: "I made motions and even made some jokes I drank out of a toy saucer when the water spilled out of the cup, and everybody laughed, pointing at me, so I did it some more. I didn't know that Americans don't drink out of saucers" (166). Kingston accepts herself to be an uncivilized because of the influence of Chinese tradition. She thinks that Chinese tradition did not teach how to drink water. But the American taught her.

She contrasts the Chinese 'I' to the American 'I' and by that means she contrasts Chinese to American language: "I could not understand 'I'. The Chinese 'I' has seven strokes intricacies. How could the American 'I' assuredly wearing a hat like the Chinese

have only three strokes, the middle so straight?" (166). Kingston wants to portray the Chinese language as crude, unmodified and unsophisticated language. Through language, too, Kingston creates the binary between Chinese and American culture.

Kingston, throughout the present novel, has used many negative images to portray China and Chinese culture as traditional, conservative, superstitious, wild, savage, cruel, inhuman, poor, male-chauvinistic, ghost haunted, exotic, biased, prejudiced, unrealistic, dependent and above all seems to be necessary in order, for her, to define mainstream America culture as modern, civilized, realistic, rational, affluent, kind, sociable, humane and above all superior to the Chinese.

These images, however, are not grounded into the reality of the present China. They are historically stereotypical images of Chinese constructed by the west. And, they are rooted into the Chinese myths, supernatural stories, legends and talk stories narrated to Kingston by her mother, father and her relatives. Obviously, no image corresponds to the Chinese reality. In this sense, the novel holds no significance to Chinese people. However, it holds more significance to American and American people. It undermines the Chinese a lot so that Americans could feel proud by defining themselves as superior 'selves' in opposition to the inferior Chinese 'others.' In this connection, the novel, though Kingston has accepted as a non-fictional autobiography, is not less fictional than any supernatural stories.

Anyway, normally all these images are the parts of language and language itself is a kind of discourse as Michel Foucault says that a discourse is a good means to expand the knowledge all over the world and to establish the knowledge as truth. With the help of these countless binary images, Kingston has created many discourses about the

position of Chinese culture as the 'other' to American culture. For example, American culture is superior to Chinese. This sort of discourse expands the knowledge all over the world that Chinese are inferior to Americans. After the expansion of the knowledge, it changes into the truth, which makes American superior to China. At the same time, it has certainly created the inevitable presence of America in China to rule China regarding their so called most essential role to civilize China, to teach Chinese and to make them independent, modern, rational, human, and above all civilized apparently. However, in the name of the civilizing Chinese, America suppresses, dominates exploits and plays the arbitrary role of despite the consensus of Chinese. In short, America imposes its hegemony over the Chinese culture.



#### IV. Conclusion

The present dissertation attempts to study Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Woman Warrior* to observe whether Maxine Hong Kingston is an orientalist in terms of her use of popular but stereotypical images of China and Chinese culture constructed by westerners for many years.

When we ponder over the plots of the novel we find that the sources of the novel are talk stories of writer's mother, her father's reticence, folklores, myths, supernatural stories, her own memories and imagination. These sources provide us ground that the images like extremely patriarchal, barbaric, authoritarian, uncivilized, irrational backward and so on are not rooted into the reality of China. Obviously, they do not correspond to the Chinese culture. Thus they do not represent Chinese culture in reality. These are historical stereotypes constructed to create binary opposition between the west and the east. Definitely, the binary is very important in constructing ideological meaning with the help of discourse. The west baked images about Chinese culture perform the role of linguistic artifact or interaction in the form of discourse. And through the interplay of discourse, Kingston has extended the knowledge that Chinese culture as inferior and exotic whereas American culture as rational and civilized. And this knowledge circulated through the discourses like this novel assumes the position of truth.

Moreover, it is obvious that Kingston, by assimilating herself to the western culture or by accepting the mainstream western culture as 'self', has used the aforementioned images to create a negative portrayal of Chinese culture. It, for the orientalist like Kingston, is necessary to define mainstream American in a positive light as the civilized, rational, advanced and humane and modern.

Moreover, this study, with the scrupulous illustration of many stereotypical images prevailing in the text, attempts to reveal whether the text holds the evidences enough to support the hypothesis assumed by the present study. The text, as the illustrations show, consists of many evidences, which clarify that Maxine Hong Kingston has placed herself at the service of the western culture.

For the writer Chinese patriarchy embodies the very anti-thesis of freedom, which is superfluous in America. She, in the process of exaggerating the male chauvinism of Chinese society, claims that in China her parents would sell her sister and her, too. Kingston, however, is too myopic to see how the horrid stories and anti-women sayings have the root in American orientalist view of China. She, as a result, perpetuates the very racism she purports to challenge. She, of course, has brought to the issue of the oppression as well as exploitation of the women under the patriarchal Chinese culture to the foreground. She reveals that the women are treated either as objects or as animals in the traditional and barbaric Chinese society. Viewing the Chinese women in this way, the protagonist aspires to become an American feminist. However, she appropriates this analysis of the Chinese patriarchal culture in order to prove the superiority of the American culture over the Chinese culture. In the civilized world of America, too, life is certainly more complex than the dinners with perfectly round peas and diced carrots. And, the speaker needs solace from her mother's Chinese stories which have no logic as they scramble her up. And, the very identity of American culture depends on the perpetuation of the orientalist discourse.

Having been influenced by the talk stories of women slavery in China, Kingston decided to write about them in *The Woman Warrior*. Although she qualifies her

statements about Chinese patriarchy by saying that it belongs to the past, she speaks as if there were uninterrupted pipeline transference of Chinese patriarchy to America. Her perception of the women in China is largely based not on her experience but on the horrible stories and sayings she had heard. In accepting the veracity of such stories about China, she only perpetuates stereotyped history. Thus presenting herself the 'oriental' 'orientalist', she confidently argues that she did very little historical research in the process of writing this novel. She has disclosed the fact that she, as an artist, has a right and freedom to twist or change the stories. Obviously, Kingston's novel is rooted not only in her mother's talk stories, father's reticence, myths, folklores and her imagination, but also in the groundless abstracts about China and Chinese culture, which have been restructured and rewritten to satisfy the palate of western audience. Certainly, Kingston has not written this novel to depict Chinese reality. She has rather written it to present China and Chinese culture as inferior, exotic and other in the eye of American audience so that they could be proud to be Americans, on the one hand, and it could provide a good license to Americans to impose their hegemony over the Chinese culture, on the other hand. Though Kingston is a daughter of China born parents, she, being anxious to western admiration and rewards, on the one hand, and to be assimilated to this culture, on the other hand, has performed the role of orientalist by presenting Chinese culture as barbaric and exotic 'other' in contrast to the rational, modern and civilized American culture as 'self.'

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