

## Culture, Ethnicity, and the Female Personality in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

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### Abstract

This present critique of Maxine Hong Kingston's memoir falls under the rubric of multi-ethnic study of the literature of the United States. In this essay, close attention has been paid to the manner in which the Chinese-American writer has interwoven the elements of myth, folklore, and personal history to gain an insight into her ethnic and cultural origins. Kingston draws upon the memory of her own childhood and youth to supplement the information provided by her mother. "Talk-story" by the mother fuels the imaginative recreation of the immediate past, and personal and autobiographical portions of the memoir are intertwined with mythopoeic recreation of the distant past in Kingston's "re-telling" of the mother's stories. Scrutiny of the formal artifice employed in the construction of *The Woman Warrior* reveals it to be a hybrid "auto-fictography" in which techniques of the novel are used to modify the reader's reaction to potent socio-cultural and historical traditions and taboos. Kingston's awareness of her ambiguous status as a Chinese-American generates the impulse to analyze and comprehend the psychologically complex motivation of the narrator-girl.

**Keywords:** Chinese-American, Talk-story, Old Country, Narrator-girl, No Name Woman.