ABSTRACT

This study examines how language and multiculturalism affect the search for identity and home. In my search for an appropriate text, I found that most works by Chinese-Americans were about experiences of exile or diaspora. I didn't feel any connection to those texts, but Brenda Lin's Wealth Ribbon: Taiwan Bound, America Bound met my needs perfectly. First of all, Brenda Lin and I are almost the same age. Second, both of our family histories span the Japanese occupation period and global era. Therefore, I decide to explicate the ambivalent feelings that are caused by identity and home questing through Brenda Lin's novel. In Wealth Ribbon: Taiwan Bound, America Bound, Lin illuminates her family history from the Japanese occupation of Taiwan up to the year 2000, and also reveals the ambivalent situations encountered by three generations of her family. The most important characteristic of Lin's family is that each of the three generations lives in a milieu of multiple languages and cultures all the time. Lin and her family are able to respect different cultures because of their multicultural environment. However, this multicultural environment also causes contradictions in their search for identity and home. This study is grounded in the effects of language on the search for identity and home. After the introduction, the relationships between language, culture, thought, and identity are illustrated in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, I elaborate on the dilemma of living in-between caused by multilingualism and multiculturalism. Brenda Lin's rediscovery of her selfhood and home through storytelling, travel, and translation is discussed in Chapter Four. In the end, in addition to summarizing the paper, I propound some new ideas about culture and identity. In the 21st century, under the influence of globalization and the Internet, it's impossible not to be affected by different languages and cultures. Taiwanese cannot avoid the plight and ambivalence of living in-between. In the process of studying Brenda Lin's Wealth Ribbon, I learned that cultural barriers cannot be removed. Nonetheless, we can reconcile with cultural confrontations through understanding and by respecting different cultures. With regard to the ambivalent feelings caused by multiple identities, if we can rid ourselves of the quest for a stable identity and fixed home, reconcile with cultural conflicts, and find balance between differences, then we probably can keep ourselves from running into the swamp of ambivalence. The world is dynamic, and so are human beings. Human beings absorb information and grow day by day. What we can do is harmonize the variations and bravely face changes and difficulties.

Keywords : identity、language、multicultural、hybridity、ambivalence、home

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