

A study of Moa Dun in Brenda Lin's *Wealth Ribbon: Taiwan Bound, America Bound*

張瓊丹、任世雍

E-mail: 345146@mail.dyu.edu.tw

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

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction 1.1 Introduction 1.2 An Overview of Brenda Lin and *Wealth Ribbon* 1.2.1 About Brenda Lin 1.2.2 The Historical Background of Brenda Lin's family 1.3. An Overview of *Wealth Ribbon* 1.3.1 Summary of *Wealth Ribbon* 1.3.2 The Significance of *Wealth Ribbon* Chapter II: The Relationships between Language, Culture, Thinking, and Identity 2.1 Language and Culture 2.2 Language and Thinking 2.3 Language and Identity Chapter III: The Dilemma of "Living-in-Between" 3.1 Who I Am 3.1.1 National Identity 3.1.2 Social Identity 3.2 Where Is My Homeland? Chapter IV: Brenda Lin's Rediscovery 4.1 Through Story-telling and Dialogue 4.2 Through Travelling 4.3 Through Writing and Translations Chapter V: Conclusion Works Cited

REFERENCES

Works Cited "An Overview of Social Identity Theory." Darrel Victor. 22 Nov. 2010. <http://www.helium.com/items/1635034-social-identity-theory> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. Aronowitz, Stanley. "Reflection on Identity." *The Identity in Question*. Ed. John Rajchman. NY: Routledge, 1995. 111-27. Bacho, Peter. Cebu. Seattle: University of Washington P. 1991. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin. London: University of Texas Press, 1981. ---, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984. Bauman, Zygmunt. "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity." *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 1996. 18-36 Beecher, Henry Ward. *Language Quotes, Quotations*. 2008. 12 Dec. 2010. < <http://www.quotationpark.com/topics/language.html> > Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Bonvillain, Nancy. *Language, Culture, and Communication: The Meaning of Messages*. NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996. Brainy Quote. 2001. 17 Jun. 2011. <

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/heraclitus107157.html> > Campomanes, Oscar V. "Filipinos in the United States and Their Literature of Exile." *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*. Ed. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Amy Ling. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1992. 49-78.

Campomanes, Oscar V. and N. V. M. Gonzalez. "Filipino American Literature." *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature*. Ed. King-kok Cheung. NY: Cambridge UP, 1997. 62-124.

Chen Yi (Kuomintang). 28 Feb. 2010. Wikipedia. 13 April 2010

Condon, John C. *Cultural Barriers*. Tokyo: Nan Yun Tan, 1979.

Cupach, W. R. and Imahori, T. T. "Identity Management Theory: Face Work in Intercultural Relations." *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication*. Ed. William B. Gudykunst. CA: Sage Publications, 2005.

Davis, Rocio G. "Ninotchka Rosca's State of War and Jessica Hagedorn's Dogeaters: Revisioning the Philippines." *Ideas of Home: Literature of Asian Migration*. Ed. Geoffrey Kain. Michigan: Michigan State UP, 1997. 115-27.

DeHay, Terry. "Narrating Memory." *Memory, Narrative, and Identity*. Ed. Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr. and Robert E. Hogan. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994. 26-44.

Dicker, S.J. *Language in America: A Pluralist View*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, Ltd., 1996.

George, Rosemary Marngoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction*. NY: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Gudykunst, William B. *Asian American Ethnicity and Communication*. CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

Hall, Edward Twitchell. *The Silent Language*. NY: Doubleday, 1959.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Community: Culture, Identity and Difference*. Ed. J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222-237. . . . , "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London: Sage, 1996. 1-17. . . . , "Old and New Identity, Old and New Ethnicities." *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. Ed. Anthony D. King. London: Macmillan, 1991. 41-68. . . . , "Minimal Selves." *Identity: The Real Me*. London: ICA, 1987. 44-46.

Huntely, E.D. *Amy Tan: A Critical Companion*. London: Greenwood Press, 1998.

Josselson, Ruthellen. *Finding Herself: Pathways to Identity Development in Women*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1983.

Juhasz, Suzanne. "Maxine Hong Kingston: Narravite Technique & Female Identity." *Contemporary American Women Writers: Narrative Strategies*. Eds. Catherine Rainwater and William J. Scheick. Lexington: Kentucky UP, 1985. 173-189.

Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996.

Morley, David and Robins, Kevin. *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Liao, Ping-chun. "In Quest of Identity in Gish Jen's *Mona in the Promised Land*." *Diss. National Changhua U of Education*, 2001.

Lin, Brenda. *Wealth Ribbon: Taiwan Bound, America Bound*. IN: University of Indianapolis Press, 2004.

Ling, Amy. *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry*. NY: Pergamon P, 1990.

Lipsitz, George. "'Home Is Where the Hatred Is': Work, Music, and the Transnational Economy." *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. Ed. Naficy Hamid. NY: Routledge, 1999. 193-212.

Morse, Margaret. "Home: Smell, Taste, Posture, Gleam." *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the politics of Place*. Ed. Naficy Hamid. NY: routledge, 1999. 63-74.

Pace, Michelle. "The Role of 'Political Dialogue': A Dialogic Understanding of European—Mediterranean Relations." *Second Pan-European Conference Standing Group on EU Politics*. Bologna, 24-26 June 2004.

Peters, John Durham. "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon." *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. Ed. Naficy Hamid. NY: Routledge, 1999. 17-41.

Pinney, J.S., "A Three-Stage Model of Ethnic Identity Development in Adolescence." *Ethnic Identity: Formation and Transmission Among Hispanics and Other Minorities*. Eds. Bernal M.E. and Knight G.P. NY: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London, Granta Books, 1991.

Rycroft, Charles. "Identity." *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 1995. 76-7.

Samovar, Larry A., Richard E. Porter, and Edwin R. McDaniel. *Communication between Cultures*. CA: Thomson, 2007.

Sanga, Jaina C. *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors*. London: Greenwood, 2001.

Sapir, Edward. "Language, Race and Culture." Chapter 10 in *Language: An introduction to the study of speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1921. 207-220. 2007. 11 Dec. 2010.

http://www.brocku.ca/MeadProject/Sapir/Sapir_1921/Sapir_1921_10.html

Shih, En-huei. "Transgressing the Boundary-The Third Space in Salman Rushdie's *East, West*." MA thesis. National Chengchi University, 2005.

Shih, Lan-ping. "Identity Crisis and Quest for Home/Homeland in Peter Bacho's *Cebu*." MA thesis. National Changhua U of Education, 2001.

Smith, Alfred G. *Communication and Culture: Reading in the Codes of Human Interaction*. New York: Holt, 1966.

Smith, Anthony D. *National Identity*. Reno: U of Nevada P, 1991.

Smith, Steve. "Dialogue and the Reinforcement of Orthodoxy in International Relations." *International Studies Review*. 5 (1). 141-143. 2003.

Social Identity Theory. 7 Sep. 2010. 22 Nov. 2010.

Stoddart, Laura, ed. *Up to the Garden Path: A Little Anthology*. London: Orion, 1999.

Tan, Chee-Beng. "Nation-Building and Being Chinese in a Southeast Asian State: Malaysia." *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II*. Ed. Jennifer W. Cushman and Wang Gungwu. Hong Kong UP, 1988. 139-164.

Tanno, D. and A. Gonzales. eds. *Communication and Identity Across Cultures*. CA: Sage Publication, 1998.

Tuan, Mia. *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1998.

Wang, Li-Ya. "Culture, Language and Self in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Bonesetter's Daughter*." MA thesis. Chinese Culture U, 2004.

Wang, Jennie. "An Interview with Shirley Geok-lin Lim." *Speaking of the Short Stories: Interviews with Contemporary Writers*. Ed. Farhat Iftekharuddin, Mary Rohrberger and Maurice Lee. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997. 153-65.

Wealth Ribbon: Taiwan Bound, America Bound Essays. University of Indianapolis Press. 26 April 2010

Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Massachusetts: Merridam-Webster, 1986.

What Is Social Identity Theory? 19 Oct. 2010. 22 Nov. 2010.

Wolf, Diane L. "Family Secrets: Transnational Struggles among Children of Filipino Immigrants." *Sociological Perspectives* 40.3 (1997): 457-82.

Woodward, Kathryn. Ed. *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage Press, 1997.