

**UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ**

**LOST IN TRANSLATION?**

Translating multicultural style in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman  
Warrior*

**A Pro Gradu Thesis in English**

by

**Carla-Rose Häkkinen**

**Department of Languages**

**2006**

HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA  
KIELTEN LAITOS

Carla-Rose Häkkinen

LOST IN TRANSLATION?

Translating multicultural style in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

Pro gradu –tutkielma

Englannin kieli

Syyskuu 2006

120 sivua + 1 liite

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on tutkia tyyliä ja monikulttuurisuutta kiinalaisamerikkalaisen Maxine Hong Kingstonin teoksen *The Woman Warrior* (1976) suomentamisessa. Teoksen toinen luku on käännetty analyysia varten, mutta teosta ja sen taustaa tarkastellaan myös kokonaisuutena. Tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat: 1) Millainen on lähtötekstin tyyli? 2) Miten monikulttuurisuus ilmenee lähtötekstissä? ja 3) Miten tyyli ja monikulttuurisuus välittyvät kohdetekstiin? Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu lähinnä ns. ideologisesta sekä funktionaalista käännteoriasta. Tutkielman analyysiosiossa käsitellään myös kielitieteellisiä kysymyksiä.

Käännösanalyysin pääasiallisena metodina käytetään Christiane Nordin funktionaalista tekstianalyysimallia. Analyysin keskeisiä käsitteitä ovat tyyli, kulttuurispesifisyys, kotouttaminen, sekä kaksi eri vieraannuttamisen lajia (foreignization ja defamiliarization). Analyysi tarkastelee lähtötekstiä ja kohdetekstiä rinta rinnan, ja käännösratkaisuja perustellaan käännökseen skopoksen valossa.

Analyysin tulokset osoittavat, että lähtötekstin tyylille ominaisia piirteitä ovat ilmaisun lyhyys ja tiiviys. Tästä esimerkkinä ovat mm. yksi- tai kaksitavuisten sanojen sekä ellipsiksen runsas käyttö. Muita lähtötekstin tyylipiirteitä ovat mm. visuaalisuus, tyylillisten rekisterien vaihtelu, konjunktioiden vähyys ja epätäydelliset virkkeet. Monikulttuurisuus ilmenee 1) tekstin aihepiirissä, joka kattaa sekä amerikkalaiseen, kiinalaiseen että kiinalaisamerikkalaiseen kulttuuriin liittyviä ilmiöitä, 2) kiinalaisamerikkalaisissa sanoissa ja käsitteissä, sekä 3) lähtötekstin amerikkalaisiin ja kiinalaisamerikkalaisiin jakautuneessa lukijakunnassa. Analyysissä ilmeni myös, että tyyli ja monikulttuurisuus kietoutuvat teoksessa yhteen. Esimerkiksi eräät lähtötekstin tyylilliset piirteet, kuten väliviivan avulla muodostetut uudissanat, elliptiset lauserakenteet ja vähäiset konjunktiot, tulkittiin mahdollisiksi merkeiksi kiinan kielen läsnäolosta tekstissä.

Käännökseen arvioidaan välittävän lähtötekstin tyylilliset piirteet varsin hyvin. Myös monikulttuurisuus välittyi joiltakin osin, mutta esim. tekstin monikulttuurista lukijakuntaa ei kyetty toisintamaan kohdetekstissä. Sekä kotouttamisen ja vieraannuttamisen strategioita käytettiin käänöksessä sopivan kulttuurisen etäisyyden luomiseksi kohdetekstin ja sen lukijoiden välillä. Vieraannuttamisen ja kotouttamisen välinen ero osoittautui häilyväksi: sama tekstin kohta voitiin tulkita sekä vieraannuttavaksi että kotouttavaksi.

Asiasanat: tyyli. monikulttuurisuus. kiinalaisamerikkalainen kirjallisuus. ideologinen käänöstutkimus. kotouttaminen. vieraannuttaminen. funktionaalinen käännteoria.

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	<i>THE WOMAN WARRIOR</i> : BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTS	10
2.1	Chinese Americans	10
2.2	The Chinese American literary tradition	15
2.3	<i>The Woman Warrior</i>	20
2.3.1	Maxine Hong Kingston	20
2.3.2	Description of <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	21
2.3.3	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> in Chinese American literature	25
2.3.4	The audience and reception of <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	28
2.4	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> in literary criticism: two views	30
2.4.1	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> as multicultural literature	31
2.4.2	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> as a cultural translation	34
3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	37
3.1	Sociocultural /ideological translation theory	37
3.1.1	Ideology and discourse	38
3.1.2	Domestication and foreignization	39
3.1.3	Rewriting and manipulation	42
3.2	Functional translation theory and skopos theory	44
3.2.1	Functional translation theory	45
3.2.2	Nord's model in skopos theory	46
3.3	The skopos of my translation	49

4	TRANSLATION ANALYSIS	52
4.1	Application of Nord's model in the analysis	53
4.1.1	Translation problems vs. translation difficulties	56
4.1.2	Translation strategies	56
4.1.3	Style	58
4.1.4	Register	59
4.2	Lexical items	61
4.2.1	Short lexical items	61
4.2.2	Register	64
4.2.3	Irony	68
4.2.4	Adjectives and adverbs	70
4.2.5	Metaphors and similes	71
4.2.6	Verbs	74
4.3	Syntactic/sentence structural items	76
4.3.1	Ellipsis	77
4.3.2	Conjunctions	82
4.3.3	Fragmented sentences	86
4.3.4	Punctuation	88
4.4	Culturally specific items	91
4.4.1	Cultural distances	92
4.4.2	American items	96
4.4.3	Chinese American items	98
4.4.4	Chinese items	102
5	CONCLUSION	106
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	116
	APPENDIX 1: The source text and the target text	121

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is my translation of one chapter of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976) into Finnish and the description and analysis of both the source text and target text. The main focus of the study is on the stylistic features and the multicultural character of Kingston's text, and on how these were conveyed into Finnish in translation.

This thesis has two interconnected aims. Firstly, to produce a stylistically and ideologically 'adequate' translation of the source text, and secondly, to study the source text and the translation from the perspectives of style and multiculturalism. I proceed from the assumption that stylistic variation and multiculturalism are key features in *The Woman Warrior* and that my translation ought to convey these features. The main research problem that my thesis aims to solve is the question of how *The Woman Warrior*, a source text which is already mixture of stylistic and cultural elements, translates into the Finnish language and cultural context. In terms of translation theory, the question could be formulated as follows: what means and strategies can be used in producing a translation (target text/TT) with a similar effect as the original text (source text /ST)? Kingston's text displays a vast array of styles and narrative techniques, some of which are very sophisticated and idiosyncratic.

Stylistically, the translation of Kingston's text presents a fair challenge to the translator. The style could be characterised as 'economic' and 'laconic', and its special features are for example compactness of expression, frequent use of ellipsis and irony. Thus, more specific questions that come up in the translation analysis are for example the following: how to translate style that is characteristic of Kingston's prose – ironic, economic and elliptic? How can subtle changes in register, another key feature of *The Woman Warrior*, be conveyed in the TT? Translation strategies that were used in order to achieve these aims are discussed and I will also attempt to evaluate the TT from this perspective.

What is meant by the term 'culture' in this study follows mainly the usage current in cultural studies, where 'culture' is examined as a set of *shared meanings and practices*. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997: 1-2), separates between 1) the "traditional"

definition of culture as products of ‘high’ culture, 2) the “anthropological” definition, which sees culture as the “way of life” or “shared values” typical of a group, and 3) the definition of culture used in contemporary cultural studies, as “a process, a set of practices”. The last of these definitions suits the purposes of the present study best, since it understands culture as not only as a product, nor as something that happens “only in the head”, but also, and perhaps most significantly, as something that “organize[s] and regulate[s] social practices, influence[s] our conduct and consequently ha[s] real, practical effects” (Hall 1997: 3). Culture can be understood as a “conceptual map”, a way of representing the world, shared by a group of people (Hall 1997: 19). Language is another key term in discussions of culture, as it plays a key role in the construction and maintenance of ‘conceptual maps’ and thus is integral in the constitution of culture (Hall 1997: 19). The present study too views its subject - *The Woman Warrior* and its Finnish translation - as a cultural expression that both depicts certain social practices *and* participates in these practices. Cultural meanings and practices discussed in this study are, for instance, the meanings and concepts that are available in Chinese and in the English language, the role and practices of Chinese vs. American or ‘Western’ storytelling, or the meanings and manifestations of womanhood/femininity in the Chinese the American culture.

Cultural boundaries do not necessarily coincide with national or ethnic boundaries (although often they do). A culture can be shared by members of different nations and ethnic groups – of which the United States is a perfect example. Membership in a culture is bound up with the question of identity, or as Hall (1999: 39) prefers to speak of it, “identifications”. Thus, ‘culture’ in the present study should be understood to refer first and foremost to meanings and practices shared by people who call themselves ‘American’, ‘Chinese’ or ‘Chinese American’ or ‘Finnish’, not determined, though certainly affected, by citizenship or genealogical history/ancestral background. What is meant by culture in this study, then, is a certain group’s way of making sense of the world and is closely connected with identity (a sense of identification with and acceptance into a group or groups) and with a shared language as a means of representing the world.

Multiculturalism in *the Woman Warrior* refers to the presence of three different cultures in the text: American, Chinese and Chinese American. If culture is understood as

a set of meanings and practices shared by a certain social group, a multicultural society includes several sets of meanings and practices, not necessarily compatible with each other. As a text embodying three different cultural presences or voices, *The Woman Warrior* offers an image of a multicultural United States that differs from the one depicted in mainstream popular entertainment, revealing the many tensions and contradictions between Chinese, Chinese American and American cultures. The book is, among other things, an account of one individual's tough survival in a battlefield of mutual prejudice and mistrust between immigrants from China, their American-born children and 'the Americans'. The text lays out in the open the cultural confusion that many citizens of the United States have faced in the course of history and continue to do so. As it is with style, the presence of these different cultural elements can be perceived on many levels of the text. Examples of multicultural elements in the text are the use of Chinese lexical items, typically American expressions (e.g. slang) and concepts and meanings special to the Chinese American culture. The text also establishes a multicultural audience for itself by addressing Chinese American readers as a separate group, while being otherwise directed at the American reading public as a whole.

A pressing need to negotiate an identity that somehow reconciles the opposing forces within one's own cultural background has resulted, in Kingston's case, in a feat of literary imagination and skill. To quote Amy Ling (who quotes Emily Dickinson) on the literary success of Chinese American women authors: "the wounded deer leaps highest" (1990: 14). Both the hazards and possibilities inherent in multicultural experience are portrayed in *The Woman Warrior* in an uncompromising manner, which makes it very enlightening reading. Recent global events have proved how surprising the cultural and ideological effects of texts can be. Examples of extreme reactions are the *fatwa* placed (and subsequently lifted) on Salman Rushdie and the recent uproar caused by pictures of prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper. Also *The Woman Warrior* created controversy among some Chinese American critics for its portrayal of the Chinese and Chinese Americans. Even though Finnish readers are relatively detached from the sociocultural context of *The Woman Warrior*, the translation aims to be sensitive not only to linguistic and stylistic issues but also to the link between these issues and certain sociocultural discourses, and the possible implications of these connections to translation work. Examples of culturally oriented questions concerning the translation work are the

following: how should culture-specific terms, such as place names and measurement words, be translated in this particular text? What can Finnish readers be expected to know about American, Chinese and Chinese American culture? As with stylistic issues, the translation analysis will discuss the different means employed in the translation of multicultural items, and evaluate the results.

I chose to translate a part of *The Woman Warrior* because I found it important to produce something of my own for the thesis, to make it more of a practical task. Another motive for translating was to use translation as a form of literary scholarship, ensuring that I manage to say something concrete about what is *in* the text and what the text *does*, not only about theories. Translation turned out to be a powerful method of reading, interpreting and engaging with the text, a method that has the advantage of leaving a visible *trace* – the translation – that can be discussed. Translation made me read the text with closer attention than would have otherwise been possible and opened up perspectives, both theoretical and textual, that would not otherwise emerged.

The translation of Maxine Hong Kingston's work opens up a new territory for Finnish readers because her work has not been published in Finnish translation. For its own modest part, this thesis aims towards filling the gap, and to demonstrate that the text can evoke interest in Finnish readers too. Many other established authors writing from a 'multicultural' position in the United States or Great Britain have been translated into Finnish: Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy (writing in the British-Indian 'post-colonial' context), Toni Morrison, Amy Tan, Louise Erdrich (writing in the American 'ethnic' context). Maxine Hong Kingston would be, in my view, a natural addition to this list. Even though the aim of the translation work is not publication, the work has been done with an imaginary Finnish readership in mind, with the hope that the target text would function as a literary text in its own right in the Finnish language and cultural context.

Multiculturalism, the presence of several cultures, is becoming an increasingly visible characteristic of Western societies. The growing number and larger variety of immigrants is beginning to have an impact also on Finnish society, which has been slower to open its borders to immigrants than, for example, neighbouring Sweden. Finland has for a long time witnessed the pros and the cons of multiculturalism in the Anglo-American and European scene via newspapers and other media, and now seems



ready (or forced) to enter the scene itself. This is one of the reasons why *The Woman Warrior* could be interesting reading to Finns today, perhaps even more so than it would have been in the days of the book's original publication. We are not involved in the cultural negotiations and clashes of 1970's multicultural America, but some of us will be, or are already, involved in new kinds of cultural negotiations and clashes in today's Finland. In other words, Finnish society has its own points of comparison, if not similarity, to the cultural conditions depicted in *The Woman Warrior*.

The theoretical issues discussed in this thesis belong mainly to the fields of literary studies and translation studies. As to literary studies, I have previously read the *Woman Warrior* in the contexts of autobiographical, postmodernist and feminist literary theory, and these perspectives inform my reading of *The Woman Warrior*, although they are not extensively referred to. Two views more closely related to the topic of the present thesis, dealing with *The Woman Warrior* as multicultural literature and as a cultural translation, will be presented below as literary theoretical background for my reading of the text (in 2.4). As regards translation theory, I will be drawing from two different theoretical directions in the field, to meet two different, although interconnected, needs in the translation work. Firstly, the so called sociocultural or ideological translation theory seems most suitable for approaching the multicultural aspect in the translation of *The Woman Warrior*. Secondly, functional translation theory or skopos theory, more specifically Christiane Nord's model for translation-oriented text analysis, will be used for a more linguistically informed and pragmatic set of tools in the actual translation work and analysis. In addition to Nord's model, selected theoretical concepts from the fields of linguistics and stylistics will be used in the analysis of the ST and TT.

The structure of this thesis is such that section 2 presents some general and historical information on Chinese Americans and Chinese American literature, and a description of *The Woman Warrior*, its author and the original reception of the work. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework for translating *The Woman Warrior*, and the translation skopos. In section 4, the ST and the TT are analysed. The conclusion (5) discusses the results of the whole study: the implications of the translation analysis and the success of the translation from the point of view of the skopos defined for it. Appendix 1 consists of the ST and the TT running in two columns side by side.

## 2 THE WOMAN WARRIOR: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTS

For understanding multiculturalism in *The Woman Warrior* it is important to have some background information on Chinese American history and literary tradition. This is why this section provides some basic information of the history of Chinese Americans and Chinese American writing, focusing on aspects that have a bearing on *The Woman Warrior* as a literary work. The section proceeds into a brief description of the author Maxine Hong Kingston, an outline of the contents of *The Woman Warrior*, after which the work is situated into the context of Chinese American literature. The section closes with two approaches to *The Woman Warrior* from the field of literary studies: *The Woman Warrior* as a multicultural text and as a cultural translation.

### 2.1 Chinese Americans

It can be argued that American culture has been multicultural right from the beginning, since all of the inhabitants of America, excluding native Americans, are immigrants from various countries. The first European immigrants imported their own cultures and languages from Britain, France, and Spain, and the imported slaves and constant influx of immigrants from around the globe have ever since added their own elements into the whole. This is a feature of American culture that is not always very visible in American literature, films or other forms of cultural representation, but multiculturalism nevertheless exists and can hardly be denied today, as the United States continues to be the home of immigrant populations from all over the world.

Immigrants from China have settled mostly in the states of California, New York and Hawaii. People of Chinese ancestry are generally included, in the American classification of ethnic groups, under the umbrella term ‘Asian American’ (consisting of people with family roots in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, e.g. China, Japan, Philippine Islands, or Pakistan). In the year 2000, of the total American population, (281,5 million), 11,9 million (4,2 %) were ‘Asian American’ of which 2,7 million were of Chinese ancestry. In 2000 in Kingston’s home state of California, 12%

(4.2 million) of the total population were Asian American. (Barnes and Bennett 2002: 1, 3-5.)

The first Chinese immigrants to the United States arrived in the 1850's. They were gold-diggers, which gave America the nickname 'Gold Mountain' in Chinese (Ling 1990: 22). As the gold rush abated other work followed: railroad construction, factory labour or work at sugar plantations in Hawaii (He 1996: 45). The immigrants were almost exclusively male. The women stayed home, initially because of the Chinese tradition in which the wife should serve the husband's family, and later on also because of strict immigration laws that restricted the admission of the Chinese into the United States, and especially of Chinese women, "to prevent proliferation of an undesirable alien race" as Amy Ling puts it (1990: 13). In 1852, of the approximately 12 000 Chinese living in California, only 7 were women (Ling 1990: 13). The numbers grew slowly until the restrictions were lifted somewhat after 1943, and in 1954 the number of women of Chinese ancestry finally reached that of men in the United States (ibid.).

The early immigrants were typically from poor rural areas in Canton, Southern China. They brought with them traditional customs of Confucian philosophy, and the religions of Taoism and Buddhism (He 1996: 45). In Confucianism, which was the ideological groundstone for the Chinese empire for 2000 years, strict patriarchal hierarchies regulated all relationships: from the absolute authority of the emperor down to individual families, in which the father held the rule over the wife and children.<sup>1</sup> In traditional Chinese society, the Confucian repressive and devaluing attitudes towards women could take such extreme forms as foot-binding and female infanticide (Ling 1990:3-4) Women were not considered as individual beings, but as belongings of the male head of the family. For example, it was common and acceptable up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century to encourage widows to commit suicide after their husbands died (ibid).

The immigrants brought with them also folk traditions such as the Cantonese opera and an oral storytelling tradition, referred to in *The Woman Warrior* as 'talk-storying' (He 1996: 45). Talk-storying can be characterised as one of the "alternative cultures

---

<sup>1</sup> Confucius (551-479 B.C) classified women together with slaves and children, and was of the opinion that "[t]he aim of female education is perfect submission" (cited in Ling 1990: 3)

deeply embedded in the [Chinese] immigrants' daily life and traceable to their roots/routes across the Pacific" (1996: 45).

The Chinese population in America settled almost exclusively in the cities, where the Chinese were needed as cheap and hard-working labour (He 1996: 45-46). The Chinatowns of San Francisco, New York and other large cities became isolated enclaves of Chinese culture, in which the immigrants led their own lives.

American attitudes towards Chinese immigrants were markedly negative from the beginning. The Chinese were not welcome as immigrants but were considered a threat, coming as they did in large numbers, and typically keeping to their own customs and language. The Chinese were physically attacked, robbed or even lynched (He 1996: 47). The government took measures for keeping the Chinese from America by anti-immigration laws and many other restrictions on the lives of the Chinese immigrants. The public attitude towards the Chinese is made explicit for example in a report by a special Congressional Committee of 1876, in which the Chinese are claimed to be "loathsome in their habits [...] and vile in their morals" (cited in Ling 1990: 23). The report judged that the Chinese "did not assimilate with whites and never could become an integral and homogeneous part of the population" (ibid.).

Attitudes towards the Chinese warmed somewhat in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the Chinese emperor was displaced in a revolution led by Western-educated Sun Yat-sen in 1911. China became more open to Western influences and the Chinese began to be regarded as potential business partners. Before and after the Second World War the Chinese were allies against the Japanese, America's new enemy. However, attitudes cooled down again after the Communist takeover in China in 1949. There were and still are also many illegal Chinese immigrants in the United States (He 1996: 48), a fact that has probably added to their ill repute.

Besides racist legislation and violence, the Chinese immigrants were subject to heavy stereotyping from the part of the white majority. In the early years of the Chinese immigration, American people were generally ignorant of Chinese culture and history, which did not prevent them from having strong opinions of their 'racial characteristics'. The cultural stereotypes concerning the Chinese reach back to times before and places outside Chinese immigration to the United States, having their roots in the ethnocentric attitudes of Europeans in their contacts with people of other 'races' (He 1996: 45).

Ethnocentrism, the attitude in which one's own country and people are held as culturally/morally superior to other countries and peoples, is typical of all peoples, and becomes racism when it turns to fear and hatred of other people. Ethnocentrism and racism in relation to peoples of the Middle and the Far East (ranging from Egypt, India to China, Japan and other countries by the Pacific) has produced the phenomenon of Orientalism.<sup>2</sup> In the words of He (1996: 45), "Western Orientalism, which, inventing the Orient as its Other in order to consolidate the Self, was part of the European global conquest and colonization in the age of colonialism and imperialism".

Ling (1990: 18) points out that American attitudes towards the Chinese in general have "vacillated dramatically between admiration and contempt", prompted by changes in national economy and the global political scene. Along the same lines, He argues that

racial stereotypes began as a cultural deployment of rational practicality for whites to define and contain the "yellow" other. In the American racist discourse, Chinese identity was constituted through different uses and functions for the whites: while, morally and physically, they were the same as the animalistic and barbaric blacks and deserve the same fate as the American Indians, they were a source of more efficient labor than the blacks and cheaper than the white workers. (He 1996: 45)

The Chinese were useful and hard-working, but their efficiency evoked the fear that the Chinese, or the 'yellow peril' (a title of a 1904 novel by Jack London) would invade the United States and displace the white race (He 1996: 46).

Admiration and contempt can also be simultaneous, as it is part of the mechanism of Orientalism (and racism in general) to fear and desire the 'other' at the same time. Thus it is possible that in Orientalism, 'Eastern' people are both mystified and seen as inferior. For example, when Chinese women made their first appearance in the United States in the 1830's as curiosities brought over and put on display, the audience marvelled at their bound feet and exotic costumes (Ling 1990: 9). However, as immigrants to the United States, Chinese people tended to be seen as ugly, brutal, less than human, and definitely not welcome. As Ling (1990: 20) points out, the West has admired and desired Chinese cultural products for centuries – "porcelain, carpets, paintings, antiques, jade carvings and furniture", while Chinese immigrants have been seen as a "potential threat" – greedy, uncivilized and morally degenerated. Ever since the

---

<sup>2</sup> A term originally used by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978).

times of the opium wars in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, prostitution, drugs and crime had been associated with the Chinese (even though it was the British merchants who began to force opium inside Chinese borders in the first place). In the United States, the Chinatowns that Chinese immigrants formed inside the big cities were considered centres of “Chinese evil”, as “sites of opium dens, brothels, gambling houses, *tong* wars, and other criminal underground vices behind the quaint facade of lions and dragons and amid the strange smells of exotic drugs” (He 1996: 46).

As it is with the American racist stereotypes of African American people, the stereotypes of the Chinese as a race have a strong sexual dimension. While African American men have been imagined as hyper-masculine, Chinese American men have been feminized in the eyes of the white majority: not only women but also men have been considered “bowing, unobtrusive and amiable” (He 1996: 46). In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American popular imagination, the stereotypical ‘Chinaman’ was hard-working and clever, and secretive in his actions and motives. The Chinese woman was either a modest and perfectly submissive “Lotus Blossom” or an exaggeratedly sexual, treacherous “Dragon Lady” with long nails and a sinister look (Ling 1990: 10-11).

The stereotypes may have been affected by the fact that Chinese men in America customarily were forced to do ‘women’s work’. Menial work such as laundering, gardening and cooking was the only work Chinese Americans could get in the cities, and they also had to live in ‘bachelor communities’, since their wives and children were denied access to the United States (Ling 1990: 22, He 1996: 47). The stereotypical images of Chinese women may have already been created before any Chinese woman had set foot in America, by Western sailors’ sexual encounters with Chinese servant girls and prostitutes (Ling 1990: 12). In any case, as Ling (1990: 11) points out, prejudices tend to tell more about the perceiver than the object of perception, and fixed Orientalist images of Chinese people and culture tend to reflect the cultural ignorance, economic interests and fears of the Americans rather than the actual diversity of Chinese culture. The old prejudices are still alive, and new ones have been added: nowadays threats are also posed by the academic and economic success of Asian Americans in the United States (Ling 1990: 20).

As citizens of a 5000-year-old empire and culture, the Chinese took pride in their origins and entertained their own ethnocentric prejudices against the white majority. It

was common for the Chinese immigrants to see themselves as temporary ‘sojourners’, and indeed many came to the US to earn money and then returned to China, possibly making this trip several times (Huntley 2000: 3). Even the ones who stayed often clung to a nostalgia towards China and reproduced little Chinas-in-America in the Chinatowns. Immigrants from the same village settled as neighbours, formed communities and tried to lead similar lives as they had done in China. The geographical and cultural isolation of the first-generation immigrants is hardly surprising, given the contempt and outright aggression that the Chinese suffered in the United States. Fearing arrest and deportation, the Chinese immigrants, legal or illegal, often protected themselves from government officials by keeping their real identities secret and by falsifying immigration documents (He 1996: 27)

Chinese society went through a radical change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 2500-year old empire became first a National Republic in 1911 with the displacement of the emperor and then a Peoples’ Republic in 1949 in Mao’s Communist revolution. Particularly the latter revolution set out to vigorously eliminate Confucianism and society structures formed in the days of the empire (Ling 1990: 6). This led to the curious phenomenon that when some old cultural traditions had weakened or disappeared in China, they might still be found in a fossilized form among the Chinese immigrants in the United States (Ling 1990: 9). For example, the Confucian, repressive attitudes towards women began to alter in China already in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, initially influenced by Western Christian and later on by Communist ideas of education and equality for women (Ling 1990: 6-9). However, as Ling (1990: 9) points out, “the old ways die hard”, and particularly among the immigrants, insecurity and hostility in the new surroundings bound them to the past with strong ties. Thus, the first American-born generation was up against a Confucian, feudal “village mentality” that was widely removed both in terms of time and space from the surrounding American society as well as from contemporary Chinese society (ibid.).

## **2.2 The Chinese American literary tradition**

In the 1960’s the Civil Rights Movement swept across the United States. Also Asian Americans, Chinese Americans among them, became more vocal as a group, struggling

for acceptance as equal members of American society. The discovery of an Asian American literary tradition was a part of the ethnic awakening, and pioneering anthologies of Asian American writing were published in the 1970's. Today the best-known of them is *Aiiieeee!: An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* (1974), a joint project of four Asian Americans Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada and Shawn Hsu Wong (Huntley 2000: 55). Since the 1970's, the collection of literary material that had so far been scattered and largely forgotten has resulted in a gradual discovery of a literary tradition with shared concerns and themes. The entrée of successful and critically acclaimed authors such as Maxine Hong Kingston, Frank Chin, Henry Hwang and Amy Tan to the literary scene in the 1970's and 80's has established Chinese American literature as an independent sub-branch in the American canon. In the 1990's and afterwards, Asian American literature, including Chinese American literature, has proliferated further, new authors are emerging all the time, and new anthologies are being published (Wong 1993: 3).

Even though 'discovered' in the 1970's, Chinese American literature dates back to the early years of Chinese immigration to the United States, with creations such as the *Songs of Gold Mountain*<sup>3</sup>, which consist of poems written in Cantonese by Chinese immigrant labourers. The first Chinese American fiction was published by the 'grandmothers' of Chinese American literature, Edith and Winnifred Eaton (Huntley 2000: 49)<sup>4</sup> Even though the number of Chinese women living in America was very limited until the 1950's, early women authors were nevertheless more numerous and prolific than men. According to Ling (1990: 15), women were also more "authentic" in their writing, and largely responsible for creating a Chinese American literary tradition with a distinct voice of its own.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *Jinshan ge ji*, first published in Cantonese in 1911 and 1915. Published in English translation in 1987, see bibliography (Hom, M.K.).

<sup>4</sup> Edith Eaton (1865-1914) published as Sui Sin Far, Winnifred Eaton (1875-1954) as Onoto Watanna.

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that Chinese American men would not have not significantly contributed to the tradition. In addition to novels and non-fiction, Chinese American men authors have often specialized in drama. Important male authors are e.g. novelist Louis Chu (1915-1970), playwright, novelist and critic Frank Chin (1940- ), and playwright Henry Hwang (1957-).



Ling (1990: 16) explains the women's literary success with their oppressed position. The Chinese in America suffered a generally poor lot, and the women doubly so, since they were in an inferior position both to Americans and to Chinese men. A prolonged and severe repression resulted in writing that was authentic and strong, and provided an outlet for suppressed emotion. Ling writes:

Without doubt, the female sex is a liability in any patriarchy, and the ethnic minority female is triply vulnerable: as Chinese in an Euro-American world, as a woman in a Chinese man's world, as a Chinese woman in a white man's world. (1990: 15)

As described by Ling (1990: 32-36), even though Edith Eaton was 'Eurasian' (a somewhat antiquated term used for people of mixed ancestry, in Eaton's case, Chinese mother and English father) she chose to swim against the current and to emphasise her Chinese identity in a society that was very hostile towards the Chinese. Eaton was painfully aware of the denigrating attitudes of the Americans towards the Chinese immigrants and wrote newspaper articles in which she defended the Chinese against misconceptions and racial slurs. In her fiction she set out to represent the Chinese in a favourable light and to demonstrate their value and pride as ordinary human beings. Her life's work consisted of 'writing to right wrongs', and she was highly respected among fellow Chinese Americans for her tireless efforts in promoting their cause.

Edith Eaton's sister Winnifred took the very different route of adapting to the American attitudes and tastes of the times, created the exotic Japanese writing persona of Onoto Watanna for herself, and wrote very successful, formulaic romantic novels set in exotic, 'Oriental' places (Huntley 2000: 50). According to Ling (1990: 52), "[u]nlike the stories of Sui Sin Far, Onoto Watanna's novels do not so much challenge social myths as reinforce them". The careers of the Eaton sisters represent two veins in literature by Chinese Americans: the angry, culturally conscious writing to 'right wrongs' and the Orientalist subgenre in which the writer assumes the role of the "alien observer" or the "tourist guide" and entertains readers with the "exotic and quaint" customs of an alien race (Ling 1990: 36, 15-16). Works of the latter description were written by non-Chinese as well as Chinese authors, and enjoyed considerable commercial success among the Americans (ibid.). Other authors and texts that critics have placed in the "tourist guide" genre are for example Lee Yan Phou's *When I Was a Boy in China* (1887), Lin Yutang's

*Chinatown Family* (1948) and Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943) (Ling 1990: 16, Huntley 2000: 51,53).

After the Eaton sisters there were many other women authors, writing fiction and autobiography on their experiences in China as well as in the United States. The early authors were not representative of the typical Chinese immigrant who was working class and did not have the time or the education to write (Ling 1990: 13). The Eaton sisters, as many of the subsequent women authors, such as Adet and Anor Lin (daughters of Lin Yutang, and also known as Tan Yun, 1923-1971, and Lin Tai-yi, 1926-) Helena Kuo (1911-1999), Han Suyin (1917-) and Mai-mai Sze (1909-1992), came from multicultural backgrounds, often had a Caucasian father and Chinese mother, and though not necessarily wealthy, were well educated (Ling 1990: 14). Many led the cosmopolitan lives of diplomats, spending parts of their lives also in countries other than China or the United States, and were well versed both in the Chinese tradition and Christian, Western values (Ling 1990: 59). Before the 1940's the immigration laws were the least strict on Chinese diplomats, merchants, scholars, students, their wives and their children (Ling 1990: 24), which also explains why Chinese American women authors usually had cosmopolitan, educated backgrounds.

The cultural situation of the early Chinese American authors explains some of the shared characteristics in their work. Despite their relatively privileged position, the authors identified with the plight suffered by all oppressed ethnic groups, and described the difficulties of being Chinese in the United States. As Mai-mai Sze put it, "We're cause people, whether we like it or not." (Sze 1945, cited in Ling 1990: 14) Also a "between-world consciousness" has been a key feature in Chinese American writing from the beginning (Ling 1990: 108-120). For example Edith Eaton described her own life in 1909 as a precarious between-worlds-position between China and America:

After all I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality [...] I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left hand to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant 'connecting link'.  
(Sui Sin Far 1909, cited in Ling 1990: 32)

Helena Kuo wrote in an 1942 autobiography about her "happy but sometimes puzzling state of divided mind; the old Chinese mind and the new mind of the West" which sometimes made her feel "walking on the edge of a dangerous chasm" (cited in Ling

1990: 105). As these passages illustrate, the between-worlds position is at the same time perilous and productive: the between-worlds cultural identity may be vulnerable but it is also open-minded, capable of acting as a link or a bridge between two or more cultures.

Closely bound up with the ‘between-worlds position’ of Chinese Americans, translation has always been another key feature of Chinese American life and literature. Because Chinese Americans have been caught in the middle of two cultures and languages so widely removed from each other, translation has always played a crucial role in their lives. Practical acts of translation and interpretation have been performed by second-generation immigrants, often forced into the role of interpreter for their parents.<sup>6</sup> Many first or second generation Chinese American authors have engaged in translation of Chinese authors into English (e.g. Lin Yutang and his daughters, Helena Kuo), and some (e.g. Eileen Chang) have written in Chinese, and translated their own work into English (Ling 1990: 59, 64, 93).

In addition to the between-worlds consciousness, the Chinese American authors often portray another type of split condition, an ethnic “double consciousness”, seeing oneself through the other’s eyes, in this case the Chinese through Western eyes.<sup>7</sup> The Chinese self-image reflected via Western eyes is often extremely negative, even self-loathing. A Eurasian writer Diana Chang in *Frontiers of Love* (1956) describes a Chinese boy in terms that appear, as Ling points out, downright racist:

He had the features that Helen found so antagonising on some Chinese. Such small eyes (What’s the matter with you Chinese having such small eyes?), the kind of Chinese nose that looked stuffed and adenoidal, and such large, uneven white teeth. The cowlick made him look unkempt, indolent, unmannered as only the Chinese could be, what with their spitting out of tramcars, picking their ears at movies, belching at meals. (Chang 1945, cited in Ling 1990: 117)

Like the between-world consciousness, the double consciousness exhibits an awareness of two standards (in the above example, two beauty standards) that are often incompatible but which still must somehow be negotiated by the person who inhabits the in-between space. The above example shows that the Eurasian author is able to see the

---

<sup>6</sup> A fact bitterly noted e.g. in *The Woman Warrior* and also by Amy Tan (1990) in an essay titled ‘Mother Tongue’.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Double consciousness’ is a term originally used by African American writer W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) to characterize the African American sensibility.

Chinese with American eyes, to move between the positions of insider who is partly Chinese and the outsider who looks at the Chinese with curiosity, confusion or, as in the example above, repulsion.

To summarize, it can be argued that Chinese American history and Chinese American literature is full of stark contrasts, paradoxes and contradictions. It has been characterised by admiration and contempt from the part of the white majority in America, pride mixed with self-loathing within the Chinese American sensibility, and a linguistic as well as cultural negotiation and mediation between two cultures as widely different as Chinese and American.

### **2.3 *The Woman Warrior***

#### **2.3.1 Maxine Hong Kingston**

Maxine Ting Ting Hong (b.1940) was born in the Chinatown of Stockton, California, as the eldest daughter of Chinese immigrants from Canton. According to her own words, Kingston has been a writer since early childhood (Huntley 2000: 25). Kingston excelled at school, won scholarships, and went to study at the University of Berkeley, California. She studied English, graduated in 1962, married actor Earll Kingston and made a career as a teacher of English and creative writing in Hawaii and Berkeley. In her student times Kingston was politically active in the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation movements, and later on in the anti-Vietnam war movement.

*The Woman Warrior* was Kingston's first work, published in 1976, followed by *China Men* (1980) and *Tripmaster Monkey* (1989). Kingston has also published poetry, short stories, essays and other material, and her work has been translated into several languages, including Swedish and Danish. Her writing has won several literary awards, for example the National Book Critics Circle Award for *The Woman Warrior* in 1976, The American Book Award for *China Men* in 1981, and the PEN West Award for *Tripmaster Monkey* in 1989. President Bill Clinton awarded her the National Humanities Medal in 1997 for a life's work in promoting human values. She continues writing, the latest of her publications being *The Fifth Book of Peace* (2003).

### 2.3.2 Description of *The Woman Warrior*

Even though the present thesis contains the translation of only one chapter of *The Woman Warrior*, I shall next briefly describe the text as a whole. The structure of the text is such that themes introduced at the beginning recur in the subsequent chapters. Since my translation is based on my reading of the whole *The Woman Warrior*, it seems important to offer an account of the whole text.

*The Woman Warrior* is a mixture of autobiography, memoir and fictional narrative by an unnamed, first-person woman narrator who the reader nevertheless associates with the author Maxine Hong Kingston.<sup>8</sup> The autobiographical events are set in the United States of the narrator's childhood and young womanhood, but there are also many stories involving other members of the family and set in China or in United States before the narrator's birth. The genre of the memoir shows in that the narrator is often not an important figure or not a figure at all in the stories that are told of other women in the family. She narrates in ways that might be termed self-effacing and fragmentary: rather than attempting to offer a coherent and complete life story of herself, the narrative changes its focalisation and perspective to those of others many times and often abruptly.<sup>9</sup>

The work consists of five chapters, each containing, as it were, variations on a theme given in the chapter's title. The narrator's mother Brave Orchid is one of the common denominators for all of the chapters: Brave Orchid figures as the storyteller or 'story-talker' who has originally told most of the stories recounted in the text, as a character/protagonist in the stories, or both.

The narrator actively and openly 'rewrites' her mother's talk-stories. For example in the first chapter, a story of the father's sister, No Name Woman, is first told in the 'original' form after which the narrator launches on a series of hypotheses and

---

<sup>8</sup> This has led many critics to refer to the narrator as 'Maxine' (e.g. Ling 1990, Huntley 2000) which I find erroneous since the work is not, or not only, an autobiography, and that there is thus a distinction between the author and the narrator.

<sup>9</sup> Following Genette, narrative is understood here as "the narrative statement [...] that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events", "narrator" as the textual agent who produces the narrative (i.e. not the same as author) and focaliser as the "character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective" (Genette 1980: 25, 255, 186).

imaginative embellishments as to how the events could have unfolded. Such metafictional problematizations are typical of postmodern fiction (Hutcheon 1988). As Wong (1995: 195) puts it, “despite the first-person form, the narrator-protagonist lays no claim to referential advantage: the negotiations of her consciousness are foregrounded”. The same narrative gesture reoccurs in subsequent chapters and it can be named as the text’s “interrogative modality” (Wong 1995: 195). Wong adds that the text’s “governing rhetorical trope” is the “palinode, or the taking back of what is said” (ibid.).

‘No Name Woman’, tells the story of the narrator’s aunt who has committed suicide after giving birth to an illegitimate child. This story has been told to the narrator by her mother, with an injunction not to tell it to anybody else. By opening the whole narrative by the words: “Nobody must know what I am about to tell you” the narrator sets the contradictory tone for the whole narrative of *The Woman Warrior*. The act of telling the forbidden story is the first of the many rebellions of the narrator against the Chinese custom of obeying one’s parents. The story has been originally told with a moral purpose, to warn the daughter about sex and the results of shameful behaviour. By passing the story on, the daughter rebels against her Chinese upbringing which has made her believe “that sex was so unspeakable and words so strong and fathers so frail that ‘aunt’ would do my father mysterious harm” (*WW*, 21-22).

The second chapter, ‘White Tigers’ is the one that I chose to translate, since it contains the story of the woman warrior of the book’s title. It opens with an introductory passage in which the narrator reminisces about how her mother used to tell the children stories of Fa Mu Lan and other woman warriors. In a transitional passage, the narrator ‘becomes’ a little girl of seven, the woman-warrior-to-be. In a Chinese, fairy tale story-world, the girl follows a bird into the mountains and meets an old couple, who take her into a fifteen-year training to become a warrior. After seven years she goes through a survival test in the mountains of the white tigers, and after fifteen years she returns to her home village. Her parents tattoo words on her back of all the wrongs that she will set out to avenge. She takes her father’s place in battle against wrong-doers and collects an army of her own. Her husband joins her in battle, she gives birth to a son, and gives it to her husband for safekeeping. Finally the woman warrior marches to Beijing together with other generals to overthrow the emperor. After she has beaten the enemies, she returns

home and is celebrated as a hero. She assumes the traditional feminine role and becomes a member of her husband's family, working for them, bearing them children.

Again the narrator 'tampers' with story material that she has received from her mother. In addition to experimenting with narrative conventions, (shifting the *personality*, if not the *person* of the narrator) she invents new elements to the story of Fa Mu Lan (the marriage and the childbirth), and brings in other elements from the life of a real historical figure, Chinese war hero and general Yue Fei (the words on the woman warrior's back). The narrator also calls attention to herself by a couple of small but significant side comments which reveal the constructed nature of the China narrative. Otherwise the story is narrated mostly in a traditional story-telling vein that allows the reader the pleasure of illusory identification with a fantasy heroine.

The tone of the narrative changes dramatically from heroic and optimistic to disillusioned and sarcastic as the woman warrior story is followed by an account of the narrator's life and accomplishments in the 'real world' as a Chinese American woman. The section opens with the words "My American life has been such a disappointment", and proceeds to illustrate with a string of thematically connected anecdotes how the narrator has failed to live up to her family's expectations. The preceding woman warrior story serves as a frame of reference against which the narrator problematizes and subverts the traditional values and expectations of the Chinese. She complains that her success at school does not impress her mother, that the Chinese do not actually expect anything of value from girls, and that they have proverbs such as "Girls are maggots in the rice". Suffering from a confusion of contradictory expectations, she fails at being a traditional Chinese girl (she is bad at cooking and cleaning) as well as at acting as an "American-feminine" girl (no dates). She does nothing to correct the injustices suffered by her family in urban renewal and fails to stand up against racist bosses at work. Unlike the woman warrior, she has no magic abilities and she does not like fighting: "I dislike armies" (*WW*, 51). After demonstrating the many ways in which she has disappointed herself and her family, the narrator ends the chapter by stating that she nevertheless resembles the woman warrior at least in one respect: they both have wrongs and injustices inscribed on their skin – quite literally in the woman warrior's case and figuratively in the narrator's case.

In the third chapter ‘Shaman’, the narrator tells the story of her mother’s life in China prior to her immigration. While waiting for an opportunity to follow her husband to the United States, she has trained to be a doctor in a Western medical school in China. The narrative contains a great deal of Chinese material: legends, myths, anecdotes, customs and beliefs. The mother figures as a resourceful woman who suffers a dramatic descent on the social ladder when coming to the United States, not being able to practice her profession.

In the fourth chapter named ‘At the Western Palace’ the narrator changes from a first-person to a third-person narrator looking at the family from the outside, referring to what is ‘herself’ in other chapters as the “absent-minded and messy” eldest daughter (*WW*, 120). Also the focalization shifts, and alternates between the mother and Moon Orchid. Moon Orchid is a passive woman who is persuaded to come to America by her sister Brave Orchid, to reclaim a husband who has left China decades ago. Moon Orchid is completely incapable of adjusting to the new circumstances and finally goes mad and is put in a mental institution, where she dies.

The last chapter, “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe” returns to a first person autobiographical narrative and focuses on the narrator’s childhood fears of madness and her confrontations with her mother, language difficulties, and sexuality. The mother claims to have cut the fraenum of the narrator’s tongue at birth so that she would be fluent in all languages. The narrator, instead, speculates that this is possibly the reason why she has difficulties in speaking both Chinese as well as English. Difficulty of speech is connected in the narrator’s mind with fears of madness, for she thinks that “[i]nsane people were the ones who couldn’t explain themselves” (*WW*, 166). The narrator’s fears give rise to an intense hatred towards another Chinese girl, who is timid and never utters a word in public. The narrator tries to bully the girl into speaking by threats and physical violence. After this incident the narrator falls mysteriously ill and has to stay in bed at home for a year and a half. Another central incident involves a retarded boy who the narrator fears has been selected as her future husband. The stupid boy becomes a daily visitor to the family laundry, which finally drives the narrator into a fit of rebellion against her parents. The scene culminates in a massive verbal fight between the mother and daughter and the daughter’s resolution to leave home “in order to see the world logically” (*WW*, 182).



Like the third chapter, the final chapter closes, however, on a note of reconciliation. The narrator tells a story in which the beginning is her mother's and the ending hers. The first part is about how a great-grandmother once saved the whole family by insisting that they go to the theatre, even in dangerous times. With a linking phrase "I like to think that at some of those performances, they heard the songs of Ts'ai Yen", the narrator moves on to a story of Ts'ai Yen, a Chinese woman who is forced to exile from her own land and composes songs of "sadness and anger" among a barbarian tribe (*WW*, 186). The story, and the whole book, ends with a remark that when Ts'ai Yen was finally released to return to her homeland, her songs "translated well" into Chinese instruments (*WW*, 186).

### **2.3.3 *The Woman Warrior* in Chinese American literature**

The geographical and cultural boundary crossings and identity problems characteristic of the immigrant experience have often been reflected in Chinese American writing in representations of fragmented identities, in crossing genre boundaries, and in fragmented style and narration (Ling 1990: 109-113). These are all features of *The Woman Warrior* as well, which in literary historical retrospect can be seen to carry on a tradition of Chinese American women's writing about the authentic Chinese American cultural experience.

The between-worlds consciousness is omnipresent in *The Woman Warrior*, in the many observations that the narrator makes of the differences between Chinese and American culture and her own attempts to reconcile the differences in her own identity. There is a passage in *The Woman Warrior* in which the narrator dreams of being a weak link between China and America that must not be destroyed:

When I dream that I am wire without flesh, there is a letter on blue airmail paper that floats above the night ocean between here and China. It must arrive safely or else my grandmother and I will lose each other. (*WW*, 51)

The passage is reminiscent of Edith Eaton's comments above of giving her "right hand to the Occidentals and [...] left hand to the Orientals" (p. 18-19) in the hope of not being destroyed as the one in the middle. Like Edith Eaton, *The Woman Warrior's* narrator also expresses a cosmopolitan or global attitude, when she says to her mother: "We belong to

the planet now, Mama. Does it make sense to you that if we're no longer attached to one piece of land, we belong to the planet?" (*WW*, 99) The idea of belonging nowhere is typical of the immigrant's experience, but it has the positive side of belonging to the largest community possible: the whole world.

The narrator of *The Woman Warrior* also exhibits signs of 'double consciousness', painful awareness of how the Chinese look and sound to the Americans, and suffers from self-contempt as a result:

[The Chinese] turn the radio up full blast to hear the operas, which do not seem to hurt their ears. And they yell over the singers that wail over the drums, everybody talking at once, big arm gestures, spit flying. You can see the disgust on American faces looking at women like that. It isn't just the loudness. It is the way Chinese sounds, chingchong ugly, to American ears, not beautiful like Japanese sayonara words with the consonants and vowels as regular as Italian. We make guttural peasant noise and have Ton Duc Thang names you can't remember. (*WW*, 154)

It spoils my day with self-disgust when I hear my broken voice come skittering out into the open. It makes people wince to hear it. (*WW*, 149)

The torture incident in the last chapter in which the narrator attacks the quiet Chinese girl is also a sign of the narrator's self-loathing, projected onto a suitable target, a mirror image of herself. The characteristics that make the narrator hate her schoolmate so intensely are characteristics that she also has: timidity and difficulty of speaking. These are not necessarily drawbacks in the eyes of the Chinese, but the narrator is aware of the importance of having a 'personality' in American society which values an ability to talk and express oneself, and wants desperately to fit in. She seeks to erase the Chinese part of herself, in order to become 'normal':

To make my waking life American-normal, I turn on the lights before anything untoward makes an appearance. I push the deformed into my dreams, which are in Chinese, the language of impossible stories. Before we can leave our parents, they stuff our heads like the suitcases which they jam-pack with homemade underwear. (*WW*, 82)

Besides being angry at her own Chinese background and Chinese traits, the narrator also defends them. Like Edith Eaton, she uses her pen as her sword and carries on the tradition of 'writing to right wrongs' by exposing the racial discrimination suffered by her parents and herself in the United States. In this *The Woman Warrior* is also very much a product of its times, the 1960's and 1970's, which saw a rise in the 'ethnic pride'

among Asian Americans. Despite the fact that she is American-born and ambivalent about the Chinese element in herself, the narrator expresses fierce loyalty towards her parents and other family members:

To avenge my family, I'd have to storm across China to take back our farm from the Communists; I'd have to rage across the United States to take back the laundry in New York and the one in California. [...] A descendant of eighty pole fighters, I ought to be able to set out confidently, march down our street, get going right now. (*WW*, 50)

Even though *The Woman Warrior* is decidedly a key representative of Chinese American writing, Kingston was not aware of a Chinese American literary tradition prior to writing her first work. She has commented that the only Chinese American book that she had read before writing *The Woman Warrior* was *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945), an autobiography by Jade Snow Wong, American-born daughter of Chinese immigrants. Kingston has characterized her discovery of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as a crucially important experience which left her “flabbergasted, helped, inspired, affirmed, made possible as a writer” (Kingston in a letter to Ling, 1988, cited in Ling 1990: 120).

*Fifth Chinese Daughter* enjoyed big commercial success in its times and it has been regarded by some critics to participate in the Orientalist, ‘tourist-guide’ subgenre of Chinese American writing (Ling 1990: 120). Wong’s autobiography resembles *The Woman Warrior* in that it describes a young woman’s growing up Chinese American in California – in Wong’s case, the Chinatown of San Francisco. (Ling 1990: 120-121). However, it is traditionally Chinese in many respects: written in the third person (as is customary in traditional Chinese autobiography), reverent towards the father, and showing its discontent towards parents and some aspects of the Chinese tradition only between the lines (Ling 1990: 124). Compared to *Fifth Chinese Daughter* or other predecessors, *The Woman Warrior* is a modern, outspoken and angry book, not only towards racist Americans, but also towards one’s own Chinese ancestry (Ling 1990: 124). It can be argued that *The Woman Warrior*’s open ambivalence in the narrator’s attitude towards her own family and cultural background brought an entirely new element into Chinese American literature.

### 2.3.4 The audience and reception of *The Woman Warrior*

Maxine Hong Kingston entered the American literary scene in 1976, in the aftermath of the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation movements and in an atmosphere of heightened ethnic consciousness, also among Chinese Americans. *The Woman Warrior* became an immediate success both commercially and academically. It entered, and took part in transforming, the American literary canon, and continues to be one of the best-known, most widely taught works of literature in English studies around the world (Huntley 2000: 57). Publishers had been hesitant to accept the manuscript at all, and when it was finally accepted by Knopf, they were uncertain as to which genre it should be labelled (Huntley 2000: 24). Finally the work was labelled as non-fiction, and subtitled as a memoir, for easier marketing (ibid.). The first critics praised the work as highly original, poetic, mysterious, fierce and eloquent, characterising it for example as a "brilliant memoir", and a "wonderfully subtle reclamation of self" (Kramer 1976, Fifer 1978, cited in Huntley 2000: 14).

*The Woman Warrior* was welcomed by American-born Asian Americans as a source of identification and by feminists as a depiction of the sexism in both Chinese and American cultures. However, in addition to high acclaim, *The Woman Warrior* also gave rise to a considerable and lengthy controversy among Chinese American readers. Some critics accused Maxine Hong Kingston of 'selling out' to the American audience by offering them a piece of Chinese Orientalism. Kingston was accused of distorting Chinese myths, and of being overly subjective instead of objective about historical events. Benjamin Tong called *The Woman Warrior* a "fashionably feminist work written with white acceptance in mind" (Tong 1977, cited in Cheung 1990: 239). Frank Chin, critic, playwright and one of the editors of *Aiiieeeee!* was the most vocal and persistent antagonist in the controversy. Chin criticised Kingston and *The Woman Warrior* on several grounds: firstly, that the text was labelled as non-fiction when it was clearly fiction, secondly, that it portrayed Chinese culture as misogynist and thirdly, that Kingston was writing to please the white audience (Ling 1998: 112-113, Yuan 1999, Cheung 1990).

Chin's objections can be seen to spring from his project of validating traditional Chinese culture, particularly the 'masculine' tradition of heroic war literature, as

‘authentic’ and the Americanized versions as ‘fake’ (He 1996: 60, Ling 1990: 149-150). Accusations of ‘selling out’ to the white mainstream public also speak of Chin’s disgust for the “tourist guide” genre of Chinese American literature. Incidentally, it was the publisher’s, not Kingston’s choice to label *The Woman Warrior* as non-fiction (Huntley 2000: 24). As to Orientalism, Kingston herself (1982) has expressed a distaste for Orientalist depictions of Chinese Americans. On the whole, the accusations against *The Woman Warrior* turn a blind eye to what the narrator repeatedly underlines in the book: that she is culturally confused and alienated from what is really Chinese, trying to “work out what is Chinese tradition and what is the movies” (*WW*, 13).

Kingston has responded to the criticism her work has evoked. She has objected to the early reviews of *The Woman Warrior*, which even in their praise often reflected ignorant, Orientalist attitudes towards the author, the text and towards Chinese Americans in general (Kingston 1982). In reply to the accusations of distorting the Chinese tradition, she has pointed out that she is not claiming to reproduce, but is instead consciously *rewriting* Chinese myths, which “become American” in the process (Kingston 1991, cited in Yuan 1999: 302). For example, the woman warrior story of the second chapter “is not a Chinese myth but one transformed by America, a sort of kung fu parody” (Kingston 1982: 57). Kingston identifies herself primarily as an American “[b]ecause I was born in Stockton, California” and “also as a Chinese American woman” (1982: 58). She leaves out the customary hyphen from between Chinese and American because a hyphen would imply a “double citizenship, which is impossible in today’s world (1982: 60). Kingston also wishes to emphasise that as an author she is as American as Saul Bellow (who is Jewish American) or Kurt Vonnegut (German American): “I am an American. I am an American writer, who, like other American writers, wants to write the great American novel. *The Woman Warrior* is an American book.” (1982: 57-58).

Justified or not, the accusations against Kingston’s work and the whole controversy around *The Woman Warrior* demonstrate how cultural representations were (and still are) a hot political issue in the United States, and for ethnic minorities in particular, who have had to fight hard for a voice in the public sphere in the first place.<sup>10</sup> Although *The Woman Warrior* gave an enormous boost to Chinese American literature in the American

---

<sup>10</sup> The controversy continues to this day. For a concise account see e.g. Ling (1998: 112-113).

literary scene, it at the same time addressed issues that were touchy to a group with a newly found, precarious identity, and revealed its internal conflicts. Chinese Americans, who Kingston addresses in *The Woman Warrior*, were certainly reading and responding to *The Woman Warrior*, although some of them in ways that may have been unanticipated by the author.

#### **2.4 *The Woman Warrior* in literary criticism: two views**

In the days of its original publication, *The Woman Warrior* was a literary novelty in many respects: not only in its intimate and uncompromising representation of Chinese immigrants, Chinese Americans and American society, but also in its idiosyncratic and postmodernist blending of fiction with fact, history with fantasy, and autobiography with memoir and novel.<sup>11</sup> It has many characteristics that can be termed “postmodern”: for example historical situatedness, metafictional comments, and the narrator’s insider-outsider position (Hutcheon 1988: 41, 70-73).

*The Woman Warrior* has been an object of literary study from various angles, ranging from postmodernist (Hutcheon 1988) to Foucauldian (Quinby 1992) and feminist autobiographical (e.g. Juhasz 1985, Myers 1986, Fong 1986), to name but a few. Within the scope of the present study it is impossible to list the countless approaches and interpretations that Kingston’s work has inspired in literary studies worldwide. This subsection presents two views of the text from the field of literary studies that seem most useful for the present purposes: *The Woman Warrior* as a multicultural work and as a cultural translation. Besides defining what is meant by multiculturalism in the present thesis, the readings discussed here aim to shed more light on the cultural background of the text and identify some useful terminology. Besides presenting ideas by other critics, I will also refer to some of my own, related findings from *The Woman Warrior*.

---

<sup>11</sup> Kingston herself has remarked that in *the Woman Warrior* she is “not writing history or sociology but a ‘memoir’ like Proust” (1982: 64).

### 2.4.1 *The Woman Warrior* as multicultural literature

*The Woman Warrior* is often classified as a work of ‘multicultural literature’ and has been studied as such (e.g. Dasenbrock 1987, Cheung 1988, He 1996).<sup>12</sup> In his study of *The Woman Warrior* as a multicultural text, Dasenbrock defines multicultural literature as 1) “works that are explicitly *about* multicultural societies” and 2) “are implicitly multicultural in the sense of *inscribing readers from other cultures inside their own textual dynamics*” (1987: 10, italics added). Dasenbrock argues that “explicitly multicultural texts are also implicitly multicultural” (ibid.).

Concentrating on the implicit multiculturalism of *The Woman Warrior*, Dasenbrock’s discussion is centred on the concept of ‘ghost’ in the text. As Dasenbrock points out, in *The Woman Warrior* the Chinese use the word *ghost* in two meanings: 1) ‘foreigner’, a ‘non-Chinese person’, and 2) ‘spirit’, ‘dead person’. *Ghost* as ‘foreigner’ is a Chinese or Chinese American concept, a Chinese way of referring to people who are not Chinese. The second meaning of *ghost* in *The Woman Warrior* coincides more or less with the American (or Finnish) one, referring to “the soul of a deceased person, spoken of as appearing in a visible form, or otherwise manifesting its presence, to the living” (OED).

Thus, the word ‘ghost’ is used in *The Woman Warrior* in a larger and partly different meaning than normally in the English language. Once the reader grasps the cultural difference between the two meanings of the word *ghost*, a window opens to a worldview that differs from the mainstream American one. Dasenbrock states that

[t]o understand *ghost* in *The Woman Warrior*, non-Chinese readers need to understand the Chinese use of the word, which means that we must, momentarily at least, learn to see ourselves as ghosts. (1987: 14)

The double meaning of ‘ghost’ thus reveals how outsider’s and insider’s positions depend solely on one’s perspective, and challenges non-Chinese American readers to do extra work in extending their cultural horizons (1987: 16). As Dasenbrock points out,

---

<sup>12</sup> In dictionaries, the adjective ‘multicultural’ is defined as “pertaining to a society consisting of varied cultural groups” (OED) or “of, being, or designed for a combination of several distinct cultures” (*Longman Dictionary of the English Language*). Thus, ‘multicultural’ (as opposed to ‘bicultural’) implies that there are more than two cultures involved.

the double meaning of 'ghost' makes conspicuous the fact that *The Woman Warrior* is written for two audiences: the Chinese Americans who will have no trouble in understanding both meanings of *ghost*, and the non-Chinese Americans who will have to work at the Chinese meaning of the concept (1987: 14). Dasenbrock argues that this is an important feature of multicultural texts: they are intentionally difficult or unintelligible for a part of their audience and this constitutes a major part of their “meaningfulness” (1987: 12).

It is also my view that *The Woman Warrior* is a multicultural work, since there are traces of three cultures in *The Woman Warrior*: 1) the Chinese language and culture, 2) American English language and American culture and 3) Chinese American ‘language’ (or dialect) and culture. Chinese culture figures for example in the story material drawn from the Chinese tradition, conveyed to the narrator by her Chinese-born mother. There are accounts as well as indirect allusions in the text to historical events in China, mostly in connection with the narrator’s relatives and family members. There are also some Chinese words in the text that are not explained or only partially explained in English, such as ‘Ho Chi Kuei’ and ‘Sit Dom Kuei’ (*WW*, 83, 182). The English language and American culture are present in the standard American English that *The Woman Warrior* is mostly written in, in the many references to English and American culture, and in the narrator’s desire to assimilate to the values and behaviour of American society. The narrator also identifies ‘the Americans’ as a distinct group: there is e.g. “American-feminine” behaviour (*WW*, 49, 150). Finally, instances of Chinese American English, present in expressions such as *talk-story*, and the bicultural use of English words such as *ghost*, constitute a presence in the text that is not only Chinese or American but Chinese American, and is echoed by the narrator’s acts of translating linguistic and cultural items from Chinese to American and vice versa.

In addition to Dasenbrock’s example, another instance of implicit multiculturalism in *The Woman Warrior* is the narrator’s direct address to her Chinese American readers. Towards the end of the first chapter the narrator suddenly asks:

Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies? (*WW*, 13)



The question has different effects on the reader depending on whether they identify themselves as Chinese Americans or not. Chinese Americans are directly referred to as a group who the author/narrator has in mind and who are invited to engage themselves with the issues that the text is about. By contrast, the question momentarily shuts out or pushes away readers who are *not* Chinese American: they become conscious of their ‘outsider’ status. The narrator also makes it clear that she too is a Chinese American by using the pronoun ‘us’:

Those of us in the first American generations have had to figure out how the invisible world the emigrants built around us fits in solid America. (*WW*, 13)

Furthermore, the narrator makes a distinction between the American-born and the Chinese-born Chinese, the latter group being not ‘those of us’ but just ‘those’: “Those in the emigrant generations who could not reassert brute survival died young and far from home” (*WW*, 13). Thus, the readers can be 1) second generation Chinese Americans (‘us’), in which case they read these passages with an insider’s attitude; or 2) Chinese emigrants, who are not the same as the American-born Chinese but not ‘outsiders’ either; or 3) neither, in which case the readers are made aware of their outsider status.

Dasenbrock’s view of *The Woman Warrior* as an explicitly and implicitly multicultural work can be seen to touch on a key aspect of *The Woman Warrior*, and this is why the concepts will be used in my discussion and analysis of the text. However, as the narrator identifies with and participates in all the cultures that are represented in the text – American, Chinese and Chinese American – Dasenbrock’s definition of implicit multiculturalism in *The Woman Warrior* ought to perhaps be redefined slightly. Instead of inscribing readers from “other” cultures inside its textual dynamics, *The Woman Warrior* inscribes readers from *many* cultures, none of which are completely ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ since the text contains elements familiar to each. Maxine Hong Kingston has commented that the intended audience of *The Woman Warrior* is simultaneously all-embracing and “very specific”: it is on the one hand written to “everyone”, and on the other, to Chinese Americans (1987: 65). Kingston discloses that the text includes “puns for Chinese speakers only” and “some visual puns best appreciated by those who write Chinese” (*ibid.*). At the same time, there are references in the text to classics of English literature such as Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Shakespeare, best

recognized by “English majors” acquainted with “literary games” (ibid.). Thus, rather than establishing total either/or dichotomies of the form Chinese *or* American, *The Woman Warrior* can be seen to switch nimbly between various linguistic and cultural positions, finding points of identification as well as difference in each one of them.

To summarize, *The Woman Warrior* is about multicultural America (and therefore explicitly multicultural), as well as creates a multicultural audience for itself by establishing cultural affiliations and differences among its readers (and is therefore implicitly multicultural). However, it is questionable whether Dasenbrock’s double definition for multicultural texts applies to all cases. Can a text be multicultural even if it does not have a multicultural audience – in other words, can a text be explicitly, but not implicitly multicultural? What happens to a multicultural text in translation? These are questions that will be addressed in the translation analysis and in the conclusion of this thesis.

#### **2.4.2 *The Woman Warrior* as a cultural translation**

It was suggested above (p. 19) that translation has been an important phenomenon in Chinese American culture and literature from the very start. Maxine Hong Kingston too has characterised her writing as an act of “melding the Chinese and the Western experiences” and as such, a translation activity:

One thing I do is that I will say aloud conversations in Chinese, and at the same time I am on the computer or the typewriter writing and translating with my hands. My hands are writing English, but my mouth is speaking Chinese. Somehow I am able to write a language that captures the Chinese rhythms and tones and images, getting that power into English. I am working in some kind of fusion language, an American language that has Chinese tonalities and accents. [...] I feel that I have had to *translate a whole Eastern* culture and bring it to the West, then bring the two cultures together seamlessly. That is how one makes the Asian American culture. (Kingston, interview with Alegre and Welch, 2003, italics added)

With ‘translation’, Kingston clearly means here something else, and more, than the mere transfer of meanings from one language to another. She is referring to a very complex and creative activity that involves the transfer or ‘fusion’ of whole *cultures*, by means of writing. Kingston’s comment is of utmost interest for the present study, which aims to analyse the multicultural aspect of *The Woman Warrior*. Even though the translation analysis addresses also issues that belong to the realm of linguistics and stylistics, the

overall theoretical approach to translation in the present study comes from sociocultural translation theory and could be summarized, following Bassnett (1995: 12), as the whole process in which texts are communicated or transmitted from one culture to another.

Cultural theorists have also argued that multicultural situations require acts of *cultural* translation, which happen not only on the level of language but also in the realm of customs, beliefs and attitudes. It is possible to talk about “the translation of cultures”, to use Bhabha’s term, in connection with immigrant communities (1996: 54). Bhabha argues that the migrated community forms a “partial culture”, which is “the contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures” (ibid.).

In the case of the Chinese Americans, ‘contaminated yet connective’ seems particularly apt as regards the American-born generations. It is described in *The Woman Warrior* how the American-born children are viewed by their own parents as ‘ghosts’: uncivilized and strange because they are affected, contaminated, by American culture. As a symptom of ‘double consciousness’ even Chinese Americans themselves may look at the Chinese part of their identity as contamination, an element that should be erased so that ‘normal Americanness’ could be achieved. Cultural ‘contamination’ turns the American-born Chinese Americans into outsiders in both American and Chinese cultures, but also enables them to act as the ‘connective tissue’ between them, since they partially belong to both.

Thus, it is possible to approach *The Woman Warrior* (and perhaps Chinese American literature in general) as a text that is already a translation, not merely in the linguistic sense but also as a cultural translation.<sup>13</sup> The mother’s stories that the daughter retells in the text have originally been told in Chinese; they are products of the Chinese talk-storying culture; and their subject matter is Chinese legend, mythology, or ‘real’ events that have taken place in China. To render the mother’s Chinese oral narratives in the form of a literary work in English, for an American reading public, is an act of translation on at least these levels: from oral discourse to written, from Chinese language to English, from Chinese culture to American/Chinese American culture, and from private discourse to public.

---

<sup>13</sup> This is a view taken also by Yuan (1999) who analyses *The Woman Warrior* as a multi-layered and complex process of cultural translation in which Chinese stories, history and mythology are transferred into the English language and the American context.

The fact that the whole text ends with the words “it translated well” also places translation in the foreground. The ending invites a comparison between the Chinese poet Ts’ai Yen who wrote songs of “sadness and anger” while in exile in a foreign land, and the narrator, who experiences an alienation, a cultural exile, from both the Chinese and the American cultures. The closing story of the book draws a parallel to what the narrator has been doing throughout: translating from one culture and language (Chinese, Chinese American) to another (English, American), in the hope of establishing a link between them.

Translation also figures as an explicit theme in *The Woman Warrior*. The translated nature of the narrative is not hidden but foregrounded, drawing the reader’s attention to the fact that in multicultural situations, translation always occurs. The narrator is constantly looking for English translations for Chinese words, and often fails to understand them even with the help of dictionaries (*WW*, 182). The narrator also comments on a few occasions how difficult, or impossible it is to translate Chinese words and concepts into English, or vice versa. She complains that as a child she could not even understand such basic English expressions such as ‘I’ and ‘here’ because they differed so much from the Chinese ‘I’ and ‘here’ (*WW*, 150). The same difficulty extends to cultural practices, such as the mother’s strange Chinese customs that the daughter finds embarrassing and impossible to explain to the Americans. The narrator is forced to act as interpreter at department stores for her mother, a task that she profoundly detests (*WW*, 78).

In sum, as a cultural translation, *The Woman Warrior* can be seen to inhabit an in-between cultural space between Chinese and American culture, and to form a ‘connective tissue’ between them. This is also how the author has commented on her position as a Chinese American writer. In order to understand the specific means by which the cultural translation is achieved in *The Woman Warrior*, and how such a text ‘behaves’ in translation, it is useful to define some translation theoretical concepts next.

### 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Section 2 introduced Maxine Hong Kingston and *The Woman Warrior* in the context of Chinese American history and literature. Literary theoretical perspectives into reading the text as a multicultural work and as a cultural translation were presented. This section presents the theoretical framework for the translation and translation analysis of *The Woman Warrior*. The translation and translation analysis in this thesis are informed by two strands in translation theory: so called ‘sociocultural’ or ‘ideological’ translation theory on the one hand and functional translation theory on the other. Both perspectives were found necessary for the purposes of the present study, which is to produce an adequate translation and analysis of multiculturalism and style in *The Woman Warrior*. While sociocultural translation theory raises issues concerning the translator’s and reader’s attitude and ideological stance towards the source text and the target text, functional translation theory is useful in performing a detailed and systematic analysis of the linguistic aspects of the text that contribute to its style. In section 3.1, theoretical concepts central to sociocultural or ideological translation theory such as ideology, discourse, domestication, foreignization, manipulation and rewriting are defined and their relevance to *The Woman Warrior* as a source text are discussed. Section 3.2 outlines functional translation theory or ‘skopos’ theory as the pragmatic basis for the translation work and the translation analysis. Section 3.3 presents the skopos for the translation.

#### **3.1 Sociocultural / ideological translation theory**

In the last two decades sociocultural / ideological translation theory has begun to study and problematize ideological issues often previously disregarded in the practice of translation (e.g. Bassnett 1995, Lefevere 1985 and 1992, Hatim and Mason 1997, Venuti 1998). Questions asked in sociocultural and ideological translation theory are, for example, the following: What are the underlying values, ideological motives and goals that influence translations? What is the translator’s role and responsibility between two or more cultures and languages? How do certain ideological stances affect the translation

strategies that a translator adopts? How do certain translation strategies affect the ideological impact of a translation?

As mentioned above (p. 35), in sociocultural translation theory, translation is understood broadly as the whole process through which texts are communicated or transmitted from one culture to another (Bassnett 1995: 12). Thus, translation is not only a matter of linguistic transfer (a view traditionally taken by linguistically oriented translation theory, as well as in popular discourse about translation). Any translation can be studied from the perspective of sociocultural and ideological translation theory. However, the multicultural character of *The Woman Warrior* makes it a particularly interesting text to study from this perspective. Also the literary controversy created by *The Woman Warrior* points to the fact that ideological issues are of key importance in the reading of the text, and therefore cannot be disregarded in its translation either. As Hatim and Mason point out, there is no language that would be ideology-free: “*all* use of language reflects a set of users’ assumptions which are closely bound up with attitudes, beliefs and value systems” (1997: 144). Ideological translation theory proceeds from this assumption, and calls attention to the ways translation is affected by ideologies and also takes part in creating, sustaining or subverting ideologies.

### **3.1.1 Ideology and discourse**

Ideology can be defined in a number of ways, depending on the theoretical context. A ‘neutral’ or ‘descriptive’ way of looking at ideology is to understand it as “the tacit assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups” (Hatim and Mason 1997: 144). Thus, ideology is not restricted to fields such as politics or religion, but affects all areas of human activity, and is not necessarily about uneven power relations. A ‘critical’ definition of ideology is expressed for example by Fairclough (2003: 9), who contends that “ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation”. In the present study, ‘ideology’ is used in both senses: to refer to attitudes of social groups in a neutral sense and also in connection with phenomena that involve the establishment and contestation of power in society. A related term is ‘discourse’, which will be understood here as linguistic

activities in which ideologies are expressed, or, as Hatim and Mason (1997: 144) put it, “institutionalised modes of speaking and writing which give expression to particular attitudes towards areas of socio-cultural activity”.

Literature is one of the discourses in which ideologies speak, and translators are participants in literary discourse. This is why translation, too, always has ideological effects. Lefevere (1992: 2) argues that when the political, ideological and institutional construction of texts, authorship and literary canons are studied, translation assumes a powerful role. Translation is one of the key vehicles when it comes to the distribution of texts across cultures, and translation enables texts to gain spheres of global influence – consider for instance the global effects and significance of Bible translations.

### **3.1.2 Domestication and foreignization**

Translation theorist Lawrence Venuti has called attention to the workings of ideology in literary translation through his discussion of two opposite translation strategies, ‘domestication’ and ‘foreignization’. Venuti (1998) argues that in ‘domestication’ the source text is adapted to the linguistic structures, literary tastes, cultural knowledge and ideological attitudes of the target text language and readership. ‘Foreignization’, by contrast, is a practice that makes “the target language foreign to itself” by deviating from its rules and by bringing new concepts and attitudes to it (Elsworth 2001: 49).

All translation is fundamentally ‘domesticating’, in the sense that the aim of translation is to render a foreign text understandable to a domestic readership (Venuti 1998:82) However, translations can differ in their *degree* of domestication. Venuti criticises Anglo-American translation for being overly domesticating, to the extent of effacing the foreign and unfamiliar elements of the source text altogether, misleading the readers to think that they are reading ‘an original’, not a translation. In Venuti’s view, the language of translations should be such that it calls attention to the text’s translated nature:

A translator can choose to judge a translation good when it signifies the linguistic and cultural difference of that text for domestic constituencies. The ethical value of this difference resides in alerting the reader that a process of domestication has taken place in the translating, but also in preventing that process from slipping into an unreflective assimilation to dominant domestic values. (1998: 115)

Thus, by domesticating or foreignizing, the translator makes an ideological commitment to either “reinforcing or challenging dominant cultural codes” in the target culture (Hatim and Mason 1997: 145).

Venuti’s strong advocacy of foreignizing translation should be understood in the context of Anglophone literature, which is a dominant literature globally and is not particularly open to the influence of other languages and literatures. Translated literature has a marginal status in the Anglophone countries and translation strategies tend to be strongly domesticating (Puurtinen 2002: 90-91).<sup>14</sup> However, the situation can be different with smaller and less powerful language groups, which may be more receptive to foreign influences. For example, in Finland translated literature forms a substantial part of published literature yearly and readers are accustomed to the influence of foreign languages in texts (Puurtinen 2002: 90). As Hatim and Mason point out,

it is not domestication or foreignisation *as such* which is ‘culturally imperialistic’ or otherwise ideologically slanted; rather, it is the effect of a particular strategy employed in a particular socio-cultural situation which is likely to have ideological implications. (1997: 146)

Since translations are always products of particular times, places, and language pairs, also translations should always be studied in their particular context, including time and place of publication, the translator, the target audience, etc. (Oittinen and Paloposki 1998). There is no strategy that would be automatically ‘right’ for all translation, since a certain strategy can achieve very different ideological effects when employed in different situations. The ideologically conscious reader must always ask not only *what* translation strategies are being used in a text but also *why*, to what purpose.

One can even argue that questions of power and ideology are not always equally important in translation. Discussing her translation of a Danish poet Michael Strunge into English, Bente Elsworth (2001: 49) points out in criticism towards Venuti, that ‘minority’ does not always equal ‘colonial minority’, and not all cultures are involved in

---

<sup>14</sup> Venuti (1998: 160) quotes Unesco’s figures: in 1987 more than 32 000 titles of the total of 65 000 translated titles were translated from English. In the US in 1994, only 2.74 % (1 418 titles) of the total of 51 863 published titles were translations.



a power struggle with each other. Languages and cultures such as Danish are not very influential globally, but they enjoy hegemony in their own small and independent sphere. The Danish do not have a history of colonization or conflict with Britain or the United States. Thus, translation between such cultures can happen in relatively equal terms and can be seen as an “enriching meeting” rather than “disempowering dominance” (Elsworth and Jensen 2001: 49). Also Oittinen and Paloposki (1998: 387) voice the opinion that even though issues of power and politics are always involved in translation, they are not the only or the most important issues: “translation is more than that”.

Translation is indeed more than a communication of ideologies, and the significance of ideological issues varies from one text to another. As Fairclough (1997: 26) points out, some texts are more ideologically ‘loaded’ than others. In its Chinese American context, *The Woman Warrior* is certainly an ideologically loaded or sensitive text, judging by its controversial reception and the ensuing academic debate that continues to this day. However, in the Finnish context the situation is different. Finnish readers do not have a personal stake in the cultural representations of the text. They cannot, realistically speaking, identify with the text’s ‘us’ or ‘them’ and unlike the source text audience cannot, in all probability, be offended by its content either. Furthermore, even though *The Woman Warrior* is an award-winning best-seller in the American context, (and regarded ideologically suspect for that reason by some critics) it can hardly be called a product of American ‘cultural imperialism’ since it describes American culture from the viewpoint of an oppressed minority and addresses and criticises the ethnocentrism and sexism of mainstream American culture. The general relationship between English and Finnish as a SL and TL is relatively neutral. Even though Finnish is nowadays quite heavily influenced by English (which is a cause for concern for some) the influence is still a voluntary one.

Thus, more complicated questions concerning the translation work arise not from the relationship between Chinese American and Finnish culture but from the multicultural and translated nature of *The Woman Warrior* as a source text. If *The Woman Warrior* as a source text is already translated once, it is possible to search for traces of domestication and foreignization in it. For example, the word *ghost*, discussed by Dasenbrock as an example of multiculturalism in *The Woman Warrior*, can also be analysed as a domesticizing or foreignizing item in the ST. On the one hand, *ghost* is

domesticizing, since it translates a Chinese word and concept into English, and thereby brings a foreign concept within the reach of the non-Chinese American reader. On the other, *ghost* is also foreignizing in that it makes English ‘foreign to itself’ by modifying a familiar concept. Another example of domestication and/or foreignization in the ST is *talk-story*. Again a term referring to a Chinese concept is translated into English, which is a domesticizing as well as a foreignizing move: the word is in English, but contains a foreign element in its non-English pattern of word-formation. These and other specific instances of domestication and foreignization both in the ST and the TT will be discussed further in the translation analysis. In addition to the domestication and foreignization already present in the ST, the analysis addresses the question whether some other domesticating and foreignizing gestures can or should be made in the translation.

### 3.1.3 Rewriting and manipulation

Another central discussion in sociocultural or ideological translation theory revolves around the issues of ‘rewriting’ and ‘manipulation’. It is possible to speak of a school of ‘manipulation theory’ (Koskinen 2002: 377). In sociocultural or ‘manipulation’ translation theory, translation is studied in its historical context. The focus is not on the source text and its purposes but on the purposes of the target text, which are seen to primarily determine the specific forms that translations take. The researcher is interested more in the *differences* than in the similarities between the source text and the target text, and in studying the motives that have induced these differences (Aaltonen 2002: 388). Rewriting and manipulation are related concepts, both referring to the active role of the translator in creating the source text anew in the target language and culture, guided by certain ideological interests.

Lefevere studies translation as a form of ‘rewriting’<sup>15</sup>. Rewriting is, according to Lefevere (1992: 7), a far more influential form of writing than is generally acknowledged; a form of literary manipulation that is always ideologically as well as aesthetically motivated. Rewriters, including translators, manipulate words and concepts that “constitute power in a culture” (Lefevere 1985: 241).

---

<sup>15</sup> The other forms of ‘rewriting’ are interpretation, criticism, historiography, the compilation of anthologies and philology (1992: 233).

Lefevere (1985: 227-233) invites readers to analyse all literature, including rewriting and translation, as acting under certain constraints in society: “patronage” (the economic institutions that finance and support the production of literature), “poetics” (the current aesthetics, the literary forms and media available to writers), “universe of discourse” (the knowledge, objects and customs that are generally known among writers and readers of a given period), and “natural language” (linguistic norms). These constraints apply to all writers, and for rewriters, there is an added fifth constraint of “the original work”. Lefevere writes that

[R]ewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time” (1992: 8)

The constraints are not absolutely binding since writers can also choose to defy them (Oittinen 2002: 167). For some literary discourses, poetry for example, a degree of subversion is even expected (Puurtinen 2002: 91). Writers cannot, however, ever be completely disconnected from the constraints: even going against the grain implies a relationship with the values or practices that are being challenged.

As to *The Woman Warrior*, it was mentioned above (p. 29) that Kingston sees herself as a ‘rewriter’ of myths. Because of its multicultural, translated character, the text can indeed be seen as a rewriting and a manipulation of Chinese stories and other cultural material. *The Woman Warrior* is also quite forthright about its literary manipulation. The narrator by no means hides the fact that she uses creative license in her storytelling and modifies the styles and contents of the ‘original’ stories to fit her own aesthetic as well as ideological purposes. The narrator even confesses that she does not even consider herself properly acquainted with the tradition that she is dealing with, not knowing the difference between “the Chinese tradition and the movies” (*WW*, 13).

One can also view the relationship between the mother’s Chinese talk-stories and the narrator’s Chinese American rewritings as a dynamic between Lefevere’s ‘constraints’ and the rewriter. The mother’s original stories embody some of the ideological and poetological constraints that the daughter-rewriter struggles with – e.g. filial obedience, patriarchal ideology – but at the same time also provide the inspiration, subject matter, story-world and even stylistic elements for the rewritings. As Lefevere

(1992: 232-233) puts it, “the original is the locus where ideology, poetics, universe of discourse and language come together, mingle and clash”.

Analysing the situation of *The Woman Warrior*'s initial publication, it seems that Kingston's literary manipulation was successful. Even though the publishers hesitated at first, it turned out that the time was ripe in the United States of the 1970's for a postmodern, anti-racist, pacifist, Chinese American, and feminist work such as *The Woman Warrior*. Although the text was experimental, it was attuned to the times and seemed to hit the exactly right wave in the avant-garde of the 'ideological and poetological currents' of the times. In other words, as the ending of the book anticipated, 'it translated well'.

As to rewriting and manipulation in my translation of *The Woman Warrior*, the following questions can be asked: What are my ideological and poetological interests as a rewriter? What is the impact I wish to make with the rewriting? Do I want to protect the Finnish language from foreign influence? Or 'contaminate' it with *The Woman Warrior*'s version of American English? Do I wish to break linguistic norms? Or educate Finns about Chinese, American and Chinese American history? These are questions that will come up below in connection with the 'skopos' of my translation and also in the translation analysis.

### **3.2 Functional translation theory and skopos theory**

If sociocultural or ideological translation theory provides the framework in which it is possible to take into consideration some cultural and ideological aspects of reading and translating *The Woman Warrior*, functional translation theory offers a framework for the actual translation process and for the translation analysis, with emphasis on its stylistic aspects. Christiane Nord's version of the skopos theory provides a general framework as well as useful terminology for the preparatory, work and evaluation stages of a translation process.

Christiane Nord's functional model for translation (1991b), derives from the 'skopos' theory originally put forward by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer (1984). Functionality means that the theory focuses on the purpose that the target text aims to fulfil in the target culture. Functional translation theory in general is pragmatically

oriented, and so is Nord's model, which has been designed with special regard to students of translation. Therefore it provides a set of concrete and fully explicated steps for the translator to take in the process of any type of translation, literary or non-literary. In my study, Nord's model has been chosen to 'bring order to the chaos' – in other words, to function as a systematic framework for presenting the various types of problems, strategies, choices and findings that were involved in the translation work. Such a framework was found necessary because my experience of the actual process of translation is that it does *not* follow a linear, easily presentable format. Literary translation in particular is creative rather than mechanical, and in part even defies analysis and explanation. A detailed model helped in organising the various elements of the translation process into a readable structure.

### **3.2.1 Functional translation theory**

In functional translation theory, translation is seen primarily as an activity determined by its purpose, its 'skopos' (Reiss and Vermeer 1986:50). 'Skopos' can be defined further as the "prospective function [...] of the target text as determined by the initiator's needs" (Nord 1991b: 8-9). Thus, the functional approach is primarily interested in the receiving end of the translation process, the target readership, and only secondarily on the characteristics of the source text, or its function as defined by its author (*ibid.*). Nord (1991b: 35) argues that for the translator, the "communicative function is the decisive criterion for textuality, to which the semantic and syntactic features of the text are subordinate", since texts can be considered to have a communicative function – even if they are semantically incoherent or formally defective. The communicative functions of language and literature will be defined in this study as informative, expressive, imperative, phatic, aesthetic, and metalinguistic (Ingo 1990: 188-189). Nord (1991b: 32) stresses the point that text functions are not "text-immanent" but instead "established in and by the communicative situation".

Literary texts are usually seen to serve primarily an aesthetic and an expressive function (Ingo 1990: 189). Nord also discusses 'literariness' as a special, pragmatic quality in texts and a text function in its own right. Literariness means that the text's function is "to motivate personal insights about reality by describing an (alternative)

fictitious world” (Nord 1991b: 71). Readers identify texts as ‘literary’ also on the basis of “extratextual pre-signals” such as the author’s name, or text type designations (‘novel’, ‘short story’) on the book cover (ibid.). Thus, it can be argued that it is not the text as such, but the way it is received, that makes it ‘literary’. For example, if a text is published in a poetry anthology, it will in all likelihood be read as a poem. On the other hand, it is possible to take a page out of the telephone book and perform it as a poem. The key to the text’s function is the total environment of both its production and reception, and this is why the translator must take both into account.

Reiss and Vermeer (1986: 85) argue that in translation the end is more important than the means: it is more important to achieve the function defined for the target text than to carry out the translation in a certain way. As a consequence, functional translation theory does not swear by any particular translation strategies, but instead translation strategies vary according to the text’s skopos. Standards such as ‘equivalence’ or ‘accuracy’ are not pursued for their own sake, but only if the skopos, defined separately for each translation, calls for such aims. Rather than ‘equivalent’ or ‘accurate’, a good translation is ‘adequate’. The criteria for adequacy are defined differently for each situation, and indeed they always change according to the situation. A translation strategy that is perfectly adequate for one language and readership can be inadequate for another (Vehmas-Lehto 2002: 91). It should be noted that ‘adequacy’ does not automatically require that a translation is domesticizing – easy reading for the target language readers. Thus, in the case of literary translation, the translator may define adequacy, for instance, as a successful foregrounding of the text’s foreign features and interpretive difficulties for the target readership.

### **3.2.2 Nord’s model in skopos theory**

Nord has developed the skopos theory further by defining distinct steps that the translator takes in the translation process, listing issues that the translator must be aware of. In Nord’s model (1991b), the translation process begins by the translation assignment, issued by the translation’s initiator (who may also be the translator). On the basis of the initiator’s assignment, the translator defines the skopos of the target text in the target culture. The source language text is then analysed with the aim of defining “the

function-in-culture” of the source text (Nord 1991b: 21). The next step in the model is to compare the function-in-culture of the source text with the “prospective function-in-culture of the target text” and define the relationship between them (ibid.). At this point, the translator makes observations and choices that lead to an outline of the general translation strategy: what linguistic measures and means are needed in transferring the text from the source language to the target language? These means can be e.g. changes, additions, omissions, adaptations, with the desired result of a text that performs its defined functions adequately, though not necessarily similarly to the source text. The translation work is done in accordance with the skopos and lastly the adequacy of the final product is evaluated, and the necessary changes and adjustments made (Nord 1991b: 33).

Even though Nord presents the translation process as a series of distinct steps, she emphasises also that her model is a “looping model” (1991b: 32). This means that the process of translation is not perceived of as linear but circular. The translation process starts at the outcome, so to speak: the definition for the desired TT. In a circular movement, the translator then goes to the ST, analyses it and translates it, producing a TT that fits the skopos that was originally defined for it (Nord 1991b:32-34). In addition, there are smaller ‘loops’ occurring constantly in the process of the text analysis and the translation work, in which “at each step forward the translator ‘looks back’ on the factors already analysed, and every piece of knowledge gained in the course of the process of analysis and comprehension may be confirmed or corrected by later findings” (Nord 1991b:35). Thus, the translation process, as all processes involving interpretation, can be termed hermeneutic, a process in which the interpreter moves in a “circle of comprehension” (ibid.).

Nord characterizes her own concept of translation as “conventional” (1991b: 28) which means that in her view translation is an activity regulated by rules, norms and conventions that are dominant in a culture at a given time (1991a: 94,97). Also Reiss and Vermeer emphasise the fact that fundamentally, it is culture which produces texts by determining whether or not something is talked about, and *how* it is talked about (1986: 12-13).

Nord defines translation conventions as the “generally accepted forms of handling certain translation problems” and the “general concept of translation prevailing in a

particular culture community” (1991a: 100). One example of a translation convention is literary translation that “reproduce[s] the ‘strangeness’ of the original” by leaving source text proper names and forms of address untranslated (*ibid.*). A culture community may also have translation norms, which regulate by legislation or censorship what is “officially accepted as translation”, but often translation is self-regulating, relying on general tacit agreements on what translations should be, in other words, on convention (*ibid.*).

Connected to the norms and conventions of translation, there is one moral principle that Nord (1991a: 92) calls for, which is “loyalty”. In Nord’s (1991b: 29) view, the translator is morally bound both to the source text sender and the target text recipient. In other words, the translator is responsible for presenting the intentions of the source text’s author in the same light as they are in the source text, so that the target text readers are not misled (Nord 1991a: 91). This is because of the convention that in our culture readers normally expect translations to reflect the intentions of the source text’s author (Nord 1991a:94). If the translator departs from this convention without informing the readers, they will mistake the target text’s intention for the source text’s intention. Nord (1991a:95) does not mean that translators must always “do what everybody expects [them] to do”, but that they always should be aware of the conventions at play in the communicative situation and “at least inform the other participants of what has been done, and why”. Even though Nord (1991a:94) presents loyalty as a moral category, “indispensable in the relationships between human beings who are partners in a communication situation”, the motive for loyalty is explained in pragmatic terms: “the communicative act cannot be regarded as ‘functional’ [if] it is based on a false assumption”.

If no language is ideology-free, all theory reflects an ideology (or ideologies) too, whether it is *about* ideology or not, and whether it discusses its own ideological tenets or not (Koskinen 2002: 377). Even though the skopos theory does not touch on ideological issues very much it is by no means ideologically neutral. The philosophy informing functional translation theory could perhaps be termed as culturally relativist: the values and ethics guiding translation are culturally bound, never absolute. The pragmatic orientation and functionalism of the theory also reflect certain beliefs, values and attitudes about how the world works and *should* work (predictably, reliably, to a



definable purpose, conforming to social norms and conventions). An example of a very different, ideologically oriented approach to translation is feminist translation theory, which explicitly aims at political changes in society through subverting masculinist language use, making language speak for the interests of women in society (Koskinen 2002: 382).

However, whatever its own ideological tenets are, Nord's model and the skopos theory in general aims to provide a framework for the discussion of any kind of issues in translation, aimed as it is to cover all kinds of translation. As Nord points out, the skopos theory "as a *general* theory of translation [...] allows for the formulation of *any* translation scope for a particular original" (1991a: 93). It is also quite liberal when it comes to the values guiding the translator's work. The main concern is awareness of one's aims towards the target language readership, combined with a sense of loyalty towards the source text author/sender. For this reason, I find that ideological translation theory should be compatible with skopos theory. Furthermore, both theories concentrate on the target situation, call for an awareness of the translation situation as a whole, and stress the translator's active and responsible role in the process.

### **3.3 The skopos of my translation**

In the introduction, the general aim of my translation work was briefly outlined as a stylistically as well as culturally/ideologically 'adequate' translation of the source text. This subsection sets out to define in more depth the skopos set for the target text that I have produced.

In Nord's model, the definition of the target text skopos is the translator's first task, and the source text is read and analysed afterwards from the point of view of the intended skopos (1990b: 33). In the case of my thesis work, the process began in quite the opposite order. I had already read the source text a number of times and also analysed it from various angles before translation work started. Thus, my emphasis was heavily on the source text. On the other hand, the (largely unconscious) 'skopos' for the first translation sample was, basically, to get it accepted by a Finnish publishing house. It could be observed in retrospect that the result was a somewhat overly domesticizing or adapting translation strategy, manifesting itself in stylistic choices that were less

experimental than the source text's. The skopos for the new version required some redefinition, since the purpose of the work had changed and also I had gained more knowledge of translation theory.

As a literary text, the function of the ST is, in my interpretation, to move readers emotionally (expressive), to bring pleasure and enjoyment (aesthetic), to give voice to personal experiences (expressive), and to break new ground in American literature through experimentation with genre, style, narrative form and voice (aesthetic, metalinguistic). Even though it openly mixes fact with fiction, the ST also has an informative function in telling readers about Chinese Americans in the United States and about Chinese and American history, weaving personal histories together with larger historical events.

The ST's functions can also be assigned to the TT, of course with the important modification that the text addresses Finnish readers in 2006, not American readers in 1976. I find the ST relatively easily translatable to the current Finnish context, since it is not very old and its style, subject matter and narrative techniques are not completely alien (although perhaps unfamiliar) to the educated and multiculturally conscious target readership that I imagine for the TT. Thus, for the present translation project, adequacy means that the target text is what Nord (1991b:142) terms "function-preserving" or "equivalent". My aim is to reproduce the emotional and aesthetic/poetic effect of the source text – as I have experienced them. Moreover, my approach to the translation work can be termed 'conventional', since I wish to convey the intentions of the source text's author – as I understand them – in the target text. The approach might be different for some other source text, but I happen to find the aesthetic, cultural and ideological project of *The Woman Warrior* compelling and such that I wish to transfer into the TT.

As to how ideological factors influence the translator's work, Chesterman (1997:170) makes a useful distinction between 'macro' and 'micro-ethical matters' in translation. Macro-ethical matters include e.g. the aims of translation as intercultural action and the power relations between translators and clients, while micro-ethical matters concern the translator's action in the translation process, questions dealing with specific textual matters, and translation strategies. On the 'macro' level, my skopos includes an aim to rewrite Kingston's text in a way that transfers the source text's complex sociocultural context and its project of challenging cultural stereotypes and

ideologies. Even though *The Woman Warrior* is an award-winning, best-selling literary giant in the American context, (and regarded ideologically suspect for that reason by some critics) it can hardly be called a product of American ‘cultural imperialism’ as it addresses and criticises the ethnocentrism and sexism of American culture. An adequate transfer produces also in the TT reader an awareness of Chinese American culture and of cultural differences in multicultural United States in general.

On the ‘micro’ level, such a skopos demands, as the translation analysis below will demonstrate, for example the transfer of the ST’s idiosyncratic patterns of word-formation, the slightly ‘broken’ or ‘jarring’ rhythms of sentences, the many shifts in register, genre and degrees of formality and the shifts in cultural distance that the text establishes towards its audience. The aim is to produce a similar, slightly ‘foreign’ and ‘defamiliarizing’ effect on the reader as I believe the source text does. This requires a corresponding, though not necessarily in all instances identical, degree of linguistic norm-breaking and cultural foreignizing in the TT as there is in the ST.

In addition, one aim in my translation work is to watch out for two common ‘pitfalls’ of translators: ‘interference’ on the one hand and ‘explicitation’ or ‘growing standardization’ on the other. Toury (1995) has identified interference and explicitation as laws in translation. The law of ‘interference’ postulates that translations tend to bear traces of the source language and the source text both grammatically and stylistically (Toury 1995, cited in Chesterman 2000: 72). Thus, the law of interference predicts that, despite efforts to the contrary, there will remain traces of English syntax and Kingston’s typical turns of phrase in the translation. As was observed above (p. 39), there is a tendency in Finnish literary language to be interfered (‘foreignized’) by English expressions and structures, and readers are accustomed to the interference. Interference is thus perhaps even more likely to happen between English and Finnish than in the case of some other language pair, and should be monitored in the translation work.

Toury’s law of “explicitation” (1980) or “growing standardization” (1995) means that translators have a tendency to ‘explicate’ elements which are obscure or stylistically idiosyncratic in the source text, in order to make the TT reader’s position easier (Toury 1980, 1995, cited in Chesterman 2000: 71-72). As is pointed out by Chesterman (2000: 72), Lefevere (1992:107) refers to a similar phenomenon as a stylistic “flattening” that tends to happen particularly in the translation of poetry. Explicitation or growing

standardization are also of interest for my translation project. It can be predicted that the translation of *The Woman Warrior* will be a ‘flattened’ or ‘diluted’ version of Kingston’s style, even if it is one of my aims to convey the stylistic idiosyncrasy of Kingston’s text as fully as possible. Signs of explicitation and interference, and attempts to avoid them will also be taken up in the translation analysis below.

The skopos for the translation could be summarized as follows: to translate the second chapter of *The Woman Warrior* in a way that transfers its stylistic idiosyncracies and its multicultural elements into Finnish, for a Finnish readership. At the very least, I hope that the TT does not enforce stereotypes that the reader might have about the Chinese, the Americans and Chinese Americans, and if possible, subverts them; opens up new perspectives into cultural identities. My aim is also to produce a text that functions as a literary text in its own right in Finnish and is not overly bound up with the ST’s particular turns of phrase. In the conclusion, I will attempt to evaluate to what extent the translation succeeds in reaching its skopos.

#### 4 TRANSLATION ANALYSIS

This section sets off by defining further the particular use in which Nord’s model has been put in this analysis. Some additional concepts are introduced and defined as they are important to the discussion of the stylistic features of the ST and the TT. In the analysis that ensues, the translation of the second chapter of *The Woman Warrior* will be analysed and discussed, with the focus on the 1) lexical issues 2) syntactic / sentence structural issues and 3) culturally specific issues that arose in the process. Both the source text and the target text are investigated hand in hand. For each of the three analytical categories, general characteristics of the source text are outlined first, and then the analysis focuses, for each category in turn, on the problems and other issues that were found to be central in the translation work. The general framework and terminology for the analysis comes from Nord’s model for translation-oriented source text analysis (1991b), with some

deviations. Also the solutions to the translation problems will be discussed in terms of the translation strategies of familiarization/defamiliarization and domestication/foreignization.

#### 4.1 Application of Nord's model in the analysis

In her theoretical model, Nord offers the following set of questions to guide the source text analysis. The questions are based on the 'New Rhetoric formula' of text analysis, adapted by Nord to apply to translation. The first set of questions deal with the "extratextual" factors of the communicative situation in which the translator encounters the source text, and the second set of questions have to do with the "intratextual factors" of the communicative situation (1991b: 35-37). Nord's definitions of the textual factors are given in brackets after the questions.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1) | <i>Who transmits</i><br><i>to whom</i><br><i>what for</i><br><i>by which medium</i><br><i>where</i><br><i>when</i><br><i>why</i><br><br>a text<br><br><i>with what function?</i>  | (the sender, usually seen as the author)<br>(recipients)<br>(the sender's intention)<br>(the means of publication)<br>(place of text production /reception)<br>(time of text production/reception)<br>(the motive for communication)<br><br>(the purpose that the text fulfils in the concrete situation of production/reception) |
| 2) | <i>On what subject matter</i><br><i>does [s]he say</i><br><i>what</i><br><i>(what not) (presuppositions)</i><br><i>in what order</i><br><i>using which non-verbal elements</i><br><i>in which words</i><br><i>in what kind of sentences</i><br><i>in which tone</i><br><i>to what effect?</i> | (the title)<br>(content)<br>(composition)<br>(e.g. illustrations, typefaces)<br>(lexical features)<br>(sentence structure)<br>(suprasegmental features)<br>(relationship between a) sender's intention and text, b) recipient and text world and c) recipient and style) (Nord 1991b: 36.)  |

The 'extratextual' factors of *The Woman Warrior* have already been described (though not systematically analysed) above in section 2, in the descriptions of the author, the

narrative summary of the book, and depictions of Chinese Americans, Chinese American literature and the original reception of *The Woman Warrior*. The translation analysis here is directed at issues that correspond, by and large, with the last four of Nord's intratextual factors: the words, the sentences, the tone and the effect.<sup>16</sup>

The 'tone' (suprasegmental features), refers in Nord's model to textual features that have an impact on the prosody, intonation and rhythm: the "phonological image" of the text (1991b: 124,126). As Nord points out, these elements can function as stylistic devices in texts (1991b: 124). In *The Woman Warrior*, the most important suprasegmental elements were found to be some of its lexical features (short words, strong consonant clusters), syntactic features (e.g. ellipses), and punctuation. These features are not discussed separately as 'tone' but in connection with lexical and sentence structural issues in 4.1 and 4.2. As to the text's effect, Nord (1991b: 131-136) describes it as a threefold category. Firstly, it is the relationship between the sender's intention and the text, secondly, the relationship between the recipient and the "text-world" ("that section of the extralinguistic world [which is] verbalized in the text"); and thirdly, the relationship between recipient and style. The second relationship, between recipient and the text-world, will be discussed below with culturally specific issues (4.3), and the third relationship, between recipient and style, with the lexical and syntactic/sentence structural issues (4.2). The first relationship, between the sender's intention and the text, is also something that has already been discussed above (p. 29, 33-34) in connection with Kingston's own comments on her authorial intentions.<sup>17</sup> The narrator is not separated from the author or 'sender' of the text by Nord, which could be named as a defect in her model. Surely in literary translation it is important to analyse the characteristics and aims of the narrator, and distinguish them from those of the author. Even though the present study discusses Kingston's views and intentions, the narrator of *The Woman Warrior* is perceived to be a separate, textual entity.

---

<sup>16</sup> Non-verbal features, such as illustrations, special types of print, or other visual elements were not considered to figure prominently in the version of the source text I used.

<sup>17</sup> Nord (1991b: 131) points out that the history of the text's reception, outlined above in 2.3.4, is yet another issue and belongs not with the text's effect but in the category of time.

The translator's notes, a work diary kept during the first drafts of the target text, provide the major part of the research material for this analysis. The issues raised there are also the ones that this analysis focuses on. The work diary also determined the grouping of the material into the categories of lexical, syntactic/sentence structural, and culturally specific issues. Nord (1991b: 124, 132-33) does not present culturally specific issues as a separate object of textual analysis, but discusses them in connection with several factors, including lexical and sentence structural, but also with the tone and the effect of the text.

Nord's analytical model is very systematic and consistently argued, and there is no other reason for deviating from it here except a conscious decision to organise the subsections of the analysis around issues that emerged as central in the work diary. The analysis follows the structure of Nord's model most closely in the discussion of lexical and syntactic/sentence structural issues, but even there it is far less detailed and does not cover all the issues covered by Nord. In the analysis of culturally specific issues, Nord's model is also referred to, but the analysis is directed only to some key items that were found to be important in the target text. Thus, Nord's model was used in a 'backward' fashion: instead of conducting a source text analysis *prior* to the production of the target text, the target text, and ideas about it, had already roughly taken shape before systematic source text analysis. However, in the course of the source text analysis, a great deal of new findings about the ST were made as well, and this change in understanding affected the translation – which is one of the aims of Nord's 'looping' model. The analysis is indebted to Nord's thorough discussion of textual features that can or should be taken into account in analysing a source text. However, Nord's model is detailed to a degree that proved impossible to follow or document in full. Many of the findings that were made in the ST analysis had to be left unmentioned or only briefly mentioned here, otherwise the analytical part would have become simply too long.

In sum, the analysis aims to reflect the sequence of events in the translation and research process and only the main problems that emerged in it. Therefore the analysis must be termed a selective one, not a representation or a thorough application of Nord's model, nor a full report of the translation project.

#### **4.1.1 Translation problems vs. translation difficulties**

One possible approach to translation is to see it as work accomplished “in jerks”: periods of steady progress that are interrupted by translation problems (Chesterman 1997: 88). Translation problems can be defined as moments in the production of the target text that bring the work into a halt and require solution. Nord (1991b: 151) points out a difference between ‘proper’ translation problems and translation difficulties: translation problems are ‘objective’, translation difficulties ‘subjective’. Objectivity means that translation problems exist in texts regardless of the translator’s awareness of them, and they do not cease to be problems even in the hands of skilled translators. Translation problems can be caused for example by word play and allusions in the source text, differences in cultural conventions between ST culture and TT culture, or grammatical features of the source language that lack a counterpart in the target language – all items that must be dealt with in some way or another in the translation of a text. Translation difficulties, by contrast, have to do with the translator’s skills and specific work conditions, and therefore vary from one translator and situation to another. Lack of linguistic competence or tight deadlines are Nord’s examples of factors that often cause translation difficulties. What appears to be a problem to a beginner might prove to be only a difficulty, caused by lack of knowledge. In addition, one can perhaps argue that experienced translators are likely to identify more problems in texts than inexperienced ones, because they are more aware of all the various issues that need to be considered in a translation situation.

Chesterman’s characterisation of the translation process describes also the process documented in my work diary, with the reservation that sometimes it was difficult to separate between problems and other thought-provoking issues. The analysis below refers to translation problems, but also to other issues that are not perhaps problems, but ‘difficulties’ or simply issues that raised interesting perspectives to the translation work on the whole.

#### **4.1.2 Translation strategies**

In addition to general characterisation of textual features and identification of translation problems, the analytical discussion will make some references to the translation



strategies that were used in approaching the problems. Translation strategies are defined in this analysis, in accordance with Chesterman (1997: 89), as "forms of explicitly *textual* manipulation. They are directly observable from the translation product itself, in comparison with the source text." Strategies do not, therefore, include information searches, conversations with colleagues and friends, etc. which are also a part of the translator's work but cannot be seen directly in the text (ibid.).

Domestication and foreignization have already been defined as strategies that can be used in translation. A textual strategy that has been already referred to in connection with style and which will be discussed as a translation strategy in the analysis is defamiliarization. Originally used by the Russian Formalists and the Prague School linguists, defamiliarization refers to literary language that works against the "over-familiarity" of everyday language and "alienates or estranges" the reader (Wales 2001: 93). Any textual elements that make the reader aware of language as such and not only as a medium for communication are defamiliarizing, for example metaphors, unusual patterns of syntax or repetition (ibid.) In terms of translation, defamiliarization could be seen as a translation strategy that closely resembles foreignization, since both 'awaken' the readers to the linguistic medium and challenge them to do some extra interpretative work. In the analysis, the concepts of defamiliarization and familiarization are used for discussing stylistic choices, while foreignization and domestication are used for culturally specific issues.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies, the translation analysis will make references to others that were employed in creating the TT. Chesterman's (1997: 94-115) list of translation strategies, divided into syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies, provided a useful set of tools for the work, and helped identify and name solutions that had been made. Some of these will be briefly mentioned in the analysis. Perhaps the most important of these strategies for the translation work was compensation, which was employed a number of times to achieve desired stylistic effects. Compensation means that an item, structure, stylistic device etc. is used in the TT for the purpose of making up for its loss in another place in the text (Chesterman 1997: 115). An example of compensation would be the omission of a word play that cannot be translated in one place and deliberately inserting another word play in another place in the target text to make up for the loss. Chesterman (1997: 107) also makes a reference to domestication

and foreignization as forms of ‘cultural filtering’, a pragmatic translation strategy that also includes procedures such as “naturalization” vs. “exoticization” and “adaptation” vs. “estrangement”.

### 4.1.3 Style

As Nord points out, it is difficult to separate style as an independent feature in texts:

The effect of one stylistically relevant factor cannot be analysed in isolation from that of the others, particularly in the areas of lexic, sentence structure, and suprasegmental features, where the interaction of effects is so strong that it is sometimes very difficult to identify the effect of a single stylistic device. (1991b: 134-135.)

Indeed, stylistic issues emerged on all levels of the translation analysis – lexical, syntactic/sentence structural and cultural – and even though it is a central concept in this study, it was found difficult to separate style as an analytical category of its own. As Wales (2001: 370) points out, style is a widely-used concept in literary criticism but very difficult to define, and yields to a great number of meanings and uses. To begin with, on the most general level, it is 1) “the perceived distinctive manner of expression in writing or speaking” (Wales 2001: 371). Describing other uses of the concept in the fields of linguistics and literary criticism, Wales lists the following:

- 2) style as variation in language use, according to situation, medium or degree of formality (register, style-shifting, genres)
- 3) style as a sociolinguistic variable, connected to speech situation, role or social network
- 4) style as the language habits or idiolect of a particular period, text or author (the language of Jane Austen, the language of *Emma*)
- 5) style as a “choice of items, and their distribution and patterning”
- 6) style as deviation from a norm
- 7) style as a commodity or a product packaging (2001: 371-372.)

In the analysis below, style will be understood mainly as (4), the idiolect, the language characteristic to Maxine Hong Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*, or as (5), as a selection or preference of certain items over others from the general ‘pool’ of language. For the second meaning of style (2) other terms will be used, such as ‘register’, ‘degree of formality’, and ‘genre’ (Wales 2001: 371). Also definition (6), style as deviation from a norm, applies to some instances in the analysis, for example in cases where the ST is seen to deviate from the norms of standard written American English. To conclude, style

will not be used as a concept of aesthetic evaluation, but as a purely descriptive term (Nord 1991b: 84).

#### 4.1.4 Register

Register is one of the extratextual factors mentioned by Nord affecting lexis (1991b: 117). Register is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 21) as the kind of language use typical of a certain “context of situation”, the sum total of all the “extra-linguistic factors which have some bearing on the text itself”. Register can be defined as linguistic features that are commonly used in certain communicative situations, including both the “set of meanings” and “the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 23).<sup>18</sup>

Register, in turn, consists of the properties of ‘field’, ‘mode’ and ‘tenor’. Field refers to the “total event” of the communication, including subject matter. Mode is “the function of the text in the event”, including the channel of communication, genre and rhetorical mode. Lastly, tenor refers to the “type of role interaction [...] among the participants involved”. Tenor could perhaps be described in terms of the writer’s attitude towards the subject matter and towards the readers, which can range from familiar to distant, informal to formal, humorous/ironic to serious/sincere (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 22).

Even though *The Woman Warrior* is structured so that certain themes and narrative strands carry over the whole length of the text, each chapter of the work also forms a narrative whole of their own. Therefore it was judged feasible to translate only one chapter of *The Woman Warrior* for this thesis. The ST analysis concentrates on the translated chapter, but there will also be some references to other passages in *The Woman Warrior* to illustrate some aspect of the text. As Oittinen (2000: 172-173) argues, translations and translation strategies are (or should be) based on whole texts, not parts of them. The translator should not proceed from parts of the text to the whole, but form a reading of the whole text and define her/his strategies on the basis of that. Knowledge of the whole text will inform the translation of one part, and a decision made concerning

---

<sup>18</sup> Examples of register are “register of marine biology”, “newspaper register” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 22).

one part has an impact on the whole. In light of this notion, even though the references and examples in the analysis are mostly drawn from the translated chapter of *The Woman Warrior*, the ‘source text’ should in fact be understood to refer to the text as a whole.

It was mentioned above in connection with the translation skopos (p. 49) that the original impulse for translating a part of *The Woman Warrior* was to evoke the interest of Finnish editors. This probably affected my original choice to translate parts of the second chapter ‘White Tigers’, which contains the story of the woman warrior of the book’s title. Compared to the other chapters, the chapter makes for relatively easy reading for someone who is previously unacquainted with the book: the ‘fairy-tale’ section that opens the chapter is traditionally narrated and entertaining, while the ‘American’ section is rather humorous in its sarcastic remarks about the narrator’s experiences. For the thesis work, I considered the option of translating some other chapter too, or only some other chapter. These considerations were prompted partly by my suspicion that some of the other chapters contained more elements that might be termed ‘multicultural’ (Chinese words, Chinese American expression, descriptions of Chinese American culture etc.) and would thus be more pertinent to the topic of my thesis. Another reason for considering a change of chapter was Kingston’s (1982: 57) observation that the second chapter has received too much attention in the eyes of readers and critics, who, as she suspects, like it so much because of their preoccupation with “oriental fantasy”. For Kingston, the woman warrior narrative is not the most important one in the book, and does not represent its “climax” (ibid.). However, finally I opted for translating the parts of the second chapter that I had not previously translated, and revising the whole according to the new translation skopos. This was a practical decision (embarking on the translation of an entirely new chapter would have required a considerable amount of time and energy) also based on an assumption that the second chapter too should contain sufficient material for the purposes of the current research topic.

The second chapter of *The Woman Warrior* can be divided into two parts which function as mutually independent though related narratives, and which differ from each other also stylistically. The first part, which will be referred to as the woman warrior part, is the narrator’s imaginary narrative of her career as a Chinese woman warrior. The second part, the American part, is the narrator’s account of some events in her childhood and young adulthood in the United States, which are explicitly contrasted with the

woman warrior's successes. In the analysis below, page numbers in the examples refer to page numbers in Appendix 1, not in *The Woman Warrior*, unless otherwise indicated.

## 4.2 Lexical items

The lexical items that were considered notable in the lexis of the source text and discussed in this subsection are: 1) the general simplicity and shortness of the vocabulary used, contrasted with the occasional use of multisyllabic, often Latinate words, 2) changes in register created by the colloquial, even slangy words in the American part and old-fashioned, elevated words in the woman warrior part, 3) irony, 4) scarcity of adjectives and adverbials (with some instances of idiosyncratic and creative usage), 5) rhetoric figures of speech – mainly metonymy, metaphor and simile – which are used for stylistic and descriptive purposes, and 6) dynamic verbs.

### 4.2.1 Short lexical items

At first glance, the language in *The Woman Warrior* seems simple: the clauses and sentences tend to be short, not convoluted, and the amount of tricky, culture-specific vocabulary is fairly small, considering the multicultural character of the text. There are relatively few allusions to other texts. (The chapters also differ from each other – the second chapter of the book is not the most difficult one in this respect.) To begin with the general characteristics of the lexis in the source text, it can be said that the vocabulary used in *The Woman Warrior* is generally not very complicated or 'literary'. The language variety used is contemporary standard American English. As the source text is relatively recent, the translator need not make a decision about whether the language should be modernized or historicized. *The Woman Warrior* is clearly a new text, certainly placed in the era after the 1950's or 1960's. What also makes the translator's work easier is that the text does not include much special vocabulary or phrases bound to its historical time and place of publication. The relatively few instances of slang present no problems, since the slang is not 'specialized' – there are no special expressions of the 'hippie' generation for example. In comparison, the author's third book, *Tripmaster Monkey* (1989), would present very difficult, even insurmountable problems. It is packed with references and

allusions to the popular culture of the 1960's, abounds with culturally specific items related to American movies, celebrities, the hippie or drug culture of the times, etc.<sup>19</sup>

On the whole the language in *The Woman Warrior* is marked rather with the author's own idiolect than any regional or social dialect, although a few lexical items identify the text clearly as 'Chinese American' (discussed below, p. 100-102, as the Chinese American coinages in the text).

The general tendency in the text is to use short, monosyllabic or bisyllabic words (although there is some variation within and between the chapters). Below there are two passages, one taken from the woman warrior part and another one from the American part that illustrate the kind of lexis prevalent in the source text:

1) When I could point at the sky and make a sword appear, a silver bolt in the sunlight, and control its slashing with my mind, the old people said I was ready to leave. The old man opened the gourd for the last time. I saw the baron's messenger leave our house, and my father was saying, 'This time I must go and fight.' I would hurry down the mountain and take his place. The old people gave me fifteen beads, which I was to use if I got into terrible danger. They gave me men's clothes and armour. We bowed to one another. The bird flew above me down the mountain, and for some miles, whenever I turned to look for them, there would be the two old people waving. I saw them through the mist; I saw them on the clouds; I saw them big on the mountaintop when distance had shrunk the pines. They had probably left images of themselves for me to wave at and gone about their other business. (135)

2) The news from China has been confusing. It also had something to do with birds. I was nine years old when the letters made my parents, who are rocks, cry. My father screamed in his sleep. My mother wept and crumpled up the letters. She set fire to them page by page in the ashtray, but new letters came almost every day. The only letters they opened without fear were the ones with red borders, the holiday letters that mustn't carry bad news. The other letters said that my uncles were made to kneel on broken glass during their trials and had confessed to being landowners. They were all executed, and the aunt whose thumbs were twisted off drowned herself. Other aunts, mothers-in-law, and cousins disappeared; some suddenly began writing to us again from communes or from Hong Kong. They kept asking for money. (150)

The shortness and simplicity of the lexis does not perhaps constitute a 'proper' translation problem, but was nevertheless a factor that had to be taken into account in the translation work, and caused a great deal of revision throughout the process. In the final drafts of the translation, changes were still made in a conscious effort to 'keep it simple',

---

<sup>19</sup> For example, the protagonist's name, Wittman Ah Sing, is a word play on and allusion to the name of the American poet Walt Whitman, and also Chinese American playwright and critic Frank Chin.

and find shorter, more compact words. Below there are the examples of two translation versions with the lexical changes between them italicized:

3) Kun pystyin *loihtimaan* esiin *auringonvalossa välkehtivän hopeisen* miekan osoittamalla *sormellani* taivaalle ja hallitsemaan sen iskuja ajatuksen voimalla, vanhukset sanoivat minun olevan valmis lähtemään. Vanha mies avasi leilinsä *kannen viimeistä kertaa*. Näin paronin sanansaattajan lähtevän talostamme ja isäni sanovan: ‘*Tällä kertaa* minun täytyy lähteä *taistelemaan*.’ *Minä kiiruhtaisin nyt* alas vuorelta ja ottaisin hänen paikkansa. Vanhukset antoivat minulle viisitoista helmeäni, joita voisin käyttää joutuessani vakavaan vaaraan. He antoivat minulle miesten vaatteet ja sotisovan. Kumarsimme toisillemme. Lintu lensi yläpuolellani vuorta alas, ja jonkin matkaa näin kaksi vanhusta vilkuttamassa aina, kun käännyin katsomaan. Näin heidät sumun läpi; näin heidät pilvien päällä; näin heidät isoina vuoren laella, missä *männyt olivat kutistuneet pienempieniksi välimatkan vuoksi*. He olivat todennäköisesti jättäneet kuvajaisia itsestään minulle vilkutettavaksi ja menneet *jo itse toimittamaan* muita askareitaan.

4) Kun olin oppinut *taikomaan* esiin miekan – *auringossa välkkyvän hopeasalaman* – osoittamalla taivaalle, ja hallitsemaan sen iskuja ajatuksen voimalla, vanhukset sanoivat että olin valmis lähtemään. Vanha mies avasi leilin viimeisen kerran. Näin paronin sanansaattajan lähtevän talostamme ja isäni sanovan: ‘*Nyt* minun on lähettävä *sotaan*.’ *Oli aika* kiiruhtaa alas vuorelta ja ottaa hänen paikkansa. Vanhukset antoivat minulle viisitoista helmeäni, joita voisin käyttää jos joutuisin vakavaan vaaraan. He *ojensivat* minulle miesten vaatteet ja sotisovan. Kumarsimme toisillemme. Lintu lensi yläpuolellani vuorta alas, ja jonkin matkaa näin kaksi vanhusta vilkuttamassa aina, kun käännyin katsomaan. Näin heidät sumun läpi; näin heidät pilvien päällä; näin heidät isoina vuoren laella, missä *välimatka oli kutistanut männyt pieniksi*. He olivat todennäköisesti jättäneet *pelkät kuvajaiset* itsestään minulle vilkutettavaksi ja menneet *jo hoitamaan* muita askareitaan. (135)

Most of the lexical changes in the example above illustrate the process of lexical shortening and a general aim in the target text towards simplicity, shortness and clarity:

‘auringonvalossa välkehtivän’ → *auringossa välkkyvän*  
 ’tällä kertaa’ → *nyt*  
 ’minä kiiruhtaisin nyt’ → *oli aika*  
 ’männyt olivat kutistuneet pienempieniksi välimatkan vuoksi’ → *välimatka oli kutistanut männyt pieniksi*  
 ’menneet jo itse toimittamaan’ → *menneet jo hoitamaan*

There are also some changes in the opposite direction, in which the target text uses expressions that are longer and/or more descriptive than the ones in source text: *make [something] appear* → *taikoa esiin*, *gave* → *ojensivat*.

The above are examples of changes occurring strictly on the lexical level. However, a change in syntax and in lexis often went hand in hand: in fact, the interaction of several strategies became visible as soon as passages were analysed in more detail. The choice of a certain lexical item often necessitated a change in the syntax as well. For

example, a semantic change (from *to live* to *selviää*) caused a syntactic change in the following sentence:

- 5) It is possible, the old people said, for a human being to live for fifty days without water.  
 → Vanhukset olivat opettaneet minulle, että ihminen selviää ilman vettä viisikymmentä päivää. (127)

Also compounds could be used for condensing. Even though the result is not necessarily shorter, it is more compact and thus in line with the style of the source text (e.g. *on the thatch of a hut* → *olkikatolle*). Naturally, no matter what, the Finnish translation was bound to be longer in terms of concrete space since Finnish words are quite long on the average. This became evident when the source text and the target text were placed side by side. It was considered enough to achieve the effect of deliberate shortness and compactness of expression in the target text.

#### 4.2.2 Register

The passages above were chosen as typical in that they mostly contain vocabulary that could be termed ‘simple’. This is not an indication of limitations in the narrator’s (let alone the author’s) linguistic resources. The full range and creativity of the narrator’s vocabulary is exhibited by occasional flashes of multisyllabic, Latinate words (e.g. *hibernate, carnivore, opulent, self-immolation, transmigration, gestation, inaugurated, filiality*) and instances of creative language use (*machine-future, hating range*). A contrast between general simplicity interspersed with more conspicuous or creative expressions was, in my impression, one of the characteristics of the text’s idiosyncratic style and should also be present in the target text. The difference between ‘simple and short’ and ‘sophisticated and long’ can also be discussed in terms of register, which is one of the extratextual factors mentioned by Nord affecting the lexis (1991b: 117).

In addition to the shifts that occur in the source text on the whole, there is also a distinct difference in vocabulary between the woman warrior part and the American part. In terms of the three aspects of register defined above (Halliday and Hasan 1976), the ‘field’ in the woman warrior part could be defined as storytelling, the subject matter being Chinese history combined with legend and fiction. The ‘mode’ can be termed with the genre label ‘fairy-tale’ or ‘legend’. The tenor, as befits the genre, is quite formal and



archaic, and the attitude of the narrator towards the reader grows more distant and formal, even solemn, as the woman warrior matures and enters her public career. Lexically, the register is evident in the Latinate and/or archaic words, which make it obvious that the narrator has a serious attitude towards her role as a narrator, towards the subject matter and towards the recipients of the narrative (*relinquished, dethrone, marauders, inaugurated, loath, disband, accost*), while the words referring to magical phenomena (*water gourd, giant, genie*) place the narrative in a magical story world inhabited by warriors, flying swords, and giants.

By contrast, the American part opens in a distinctively different register: it is an anecdotal, autobiographical narrative and includes more colloquial, contemporary, even slangy words (using expressions such as *chink* and *gook, stupid racists*). On the whole, the vocabulary is even simpler than in the woman warrior part and the tenor could be described as informal or conversational:

6) My American life has been such a disappointment.  
 'I got straight A's, Mama.'  
 'Let me tell you a story about a girl who saved her village.'  
 I could not figure out what was my village. And it was important that I do something big and fine, or else my parents would sell me when we made our way back to China. In China there were solutions for what to do with little girls who ate up food and threw tantrums. You can't eat straight As. (146)

The lexical contrasts in register within and between the two parts of the second chapter were considered to be important to transfer also to the target text. Again this was perhaps not a problem but instead something to bear in mind. Usually there were equivalent expressions in the target language that could be easily found, for example *vinosilmä* and *keltanaama* for *chink* and *gook* (153). The general tenor of the woman warrior part is familiar from fairy tales, fantasy literature or legends and it was relatively easy to reproduce. The right tenor was sought by using old-fashioned, literary Finnish expressions such as *sotisopa* for *armour* (135), and *taistelun tuoksinaan* for *battle* (141). A slight problem that remains unsolved in the TT is that Finnish seems to lack equivalents for the solemn, Latinate words such as *relinquished* (137), *dethrone* (138), and *inaugurated* (143). Each of the translations seem too commonplace compared to the source text expressions (→ *suistamaan valtaistuimelta*, → *nostimme valtaistuimelle*, → *antoivat*).

In addition to being different from each other, both the woman warrior and the American part contain also internal variation in register. The general register is at times interrupted or mixed with elements that do not totally fit in, producing a slightly defamiliarizing effect. This type of subtle variation in register is typical of the narrative throughout *The Woman Warrior* and is a part of the text's tendency to keep the reader awake, never quite knowing what to expect next. Once a certain register has been established, it is disrupted by expressions or structures that seem slightly inappropriate for the surrounding context, and then the general mode and tenor are resumed as if nothing out of the ordinary has occurred. For example, a shift towards a more colloquial tenor happens at the beginning of the woman warrior part, where chocolate chip cookies and someone with an outsider's critical attitude towards the Chinese suddenly enter the Chinese story-world:

7) 'Have you eaten rice today, little girl?' they greeted me.  
 'Yes, I have,' I said out of politeness. 'Thank you.'  
 ('No, I haven't,' I would have said in real life, mad at the Chinese for lying so much. 'I'm starved. Do you have any cookies? I like chocolate chip cookies.')

A shift in the opposite direction, towards a more philosophical, abstracted and 'high literary' register, is made in the woman warrior's hallucination passage, in which the language turns more experimental and the content 'metaphysical':

8) I am watching the centuries pass in moments because suddenly I understand time, which is spinning and fixed like the North Star. And I understand how working and hoeing are dancing; how peasant clothes are golden, as king's clothes are golden; how one of the dancers is always a man and the other woman.  
 The man and the woman grow bigger and bigger, so bright. All light. They are tall angels in two rows. They have high white wings on their backs. Perhaps there are infinite angels; perhaps I see two angels in their consecutive moments.

The American part also includes variation in register. In the examples below, shifts in register are not reflected only in lexical items but also in the sentence structure, from simple and short to longer and more complex. Below, there are two examples of the type of variation that takes place throughout (italics added):

9) Even now, unless I'm happy, I burn the food when I cook. I do not feed people. I let the dirty dishes rot. I eat at other people's tables but won't invite them to mine, where the dishes are rotting.

If I could not-eat, perhaps I could make myself a warrior like the swordswoman who drives me. *I will – I must – rise and plough the fields as soon as the baby comes out. Once I get outside the house, what bird might call me; on what horse could I ride away?* Marriage and childbirth strengthen the swordswoman, who is not a maid like Joan of Arc. Do the women’s work; then do more work, which will become ours too. No husband of mine will say, ‘I could have been a drummer, but I had to think about the wife and kids. You know how it is.’ (148)

9) Vieläkin, ellen satu olemaan hyvällä tuulella, poltan ruoat pohjaan. Minä en ruoki ihmisiä. Jätän likaiset astiat tiskialtaaseen. Syön vieraiden pöydissä, mutta en kutsu heitä omaan keittiöni, jossa likaiset astiat homehtuvat. Jos osaisinkin paastota, voisin ehkä ryhtyä soturiksi, miekkanaiseksi, joka minuakin ajaa eteenpäin. *Minä nousen – on noustava – kyntämään peltoja heti, kun lapseni on syntynyt. Kunhan pääsen ulos neljän seinän sisältä, mikä lintu mahtaisikaan kutsua minua, millä hevosella voisın karauttaa tieheni?* Avioliitto ja synnyttäminen vahvistavat miekkanaista, joka ei ole neitsyt kuten Joan d’Arc. Tee ensin naisten työt, ja tee sitten lisää työtä, josta tulee myös naisten työtä. Minun mieheni ei koskaan joudu sanomaan: ‘Minusta olisi voinut tulla rumpali, mutta piti ajatella vaimoa ja lapsia. Sellaista elämä on.’ (148)

10a) Surely, the eighty pole fighters, though unseen, would follow me and lead me and protect me, as is the *wont* of ancestors. (150)

10b) Kahdeksankymmenen sauvamiekkailijan joukko seuraisi ja suojelisi minua varmasti, vaikkakin näkymättömästi, niin kuin esi-isillä on tapana. (150)

Example 9a) opens in a prosaic, informal register which is the general mode and tenor of the American part of the chapter. In this context, the expression “I will – I must – rise and plough the fields” and the question “Once I get outside the house...” stand out as rather elevated, and they refer to subject matter outside the American story-world. In example 10a), there is the archaic word *wont* instead of ‘as ancestors do’, ‘*tend* to do’ or are ‘*prone* to do’. The more elevated instances of language use in the American part can be understood as echoes from the preceding woman warrior part, in which the fairy tale as genre and the subject matter (heroic deeds and magical events) call for heightened expressions.

There is also a third register, not present in the woman warrior part but making an occasional appearance in the American part: that of feminist and/or political rhetoric:

11) Do the women’s work; then do more work, which will become ours too.  
Tehdään ensin naisten työt, ja sitten lisää työtä, josta tulee myös naisten työtä. (148)

12) Break the women with their own tongues!  
Lannistakaa naiset heidän omalla kielellään! (148)

13) Even now China wraps double binds around my feet.  
Kiina sitoo vieläkin jalkani kaksinkertaisin sitein. (149)

14) A descendant of eighty pole fighters, I ought to be able to set out confidently, march straight down out street, get going right now. There's work to do, ground to cover. Surely, the eighty pole fighters, though unseen, would follow me and lead me and protect me, as is the wont of ancestors.

Minun pitäisi lähteä reippaasti liikkeelle, marssia oitis kotikatuamme alas, olenhan kahdeksankymmenen sauvamiekkailijan jälkeläinen. Työtä ja valloitettavaa riittää. Kahdeksankymmenen sauvamiekkailijan joukko seuraisi ja suojelisi minua varmasti, vaikkakin näkymättömästi, niin kuin esi-isillä on tapana. (150)

Also these passages seem to be echoes from some other discourse, in which positive, dynamic imperatives are used for instigating action, from military rhetoric for instance.

As one can say about many features of the source text, the differences in register are not great, but they are there. To what extent the translation manages to convey the sudden and short variations in register is an open question. Perhaps not very successfully in the examples above – in example 9b) the translation seems clumsier than the source text, and in example 10b) the Finnish *on tapana* is more neutral in terms of register than *wont*. It is also questionable how successfully the translations in examples 11), 13) and 14) manage to convey the allusions to political activism (*get going right now, there is work to do, ground to cover*) or feminist rhetorics (*double bind*). Example 12) seems more successful in this respect, as well as the following example:

15) May my people understand the resemblance soon so that I can return to them.  
Huomatkoon kansani yhtäläisyytemme pian, jotta voisin palata heidän keskuuteensa. (153)

### 4.2.3 Irony

In addition to having a slightly defamiliarizing effect, the solemn echoes from the woman warrior part and the allusions to the discourse of political rhetoric serve to produce an ironic effect in the American part. Nord (1991b: 139) defines irony as a discrepancy between content and form. Understood in these terms, the irony can be said to reside in the contrast between the sincerity and ambition of the narrator's aspirations, expressed in the rather elevated registers of hero legend or political rhetoric (=form) and her failure in acting out these aims and aspiration in the 'real' world (=content).

In addition to the disruptive 'borrowings' from other registers, the narrative produces an ironic effect also through understatement, for example in the tragic story of the Second Aunt and Uncle:

16) He sat under a tree to think, when he spotted a pair of nesting doves. Dumping his bag of yams, he climbed up and caught the birds. That was where the Communists trapped him, in the tree. They criticized him for selfishly taking food for his own family and killed him, leaving his body in the tree as an example. They took the birds to a commune kitchen to be shared.

It is confusing that my family was not the poor to be championed. They were executed like the barons in the stories, when they were not barons. It is confusing that the birds tricked us. (151)

‘Confusing’ in the last paragraph could be substituted with ‘ironic’. In this passage, the irony is in the contrast between what the Communists said (=form) and what they did (=content). On the textual level the irony is created by the contrast between the simple and matter-of-fact fashion that these events are narrated in (=form), and the tragic content of the story. Irony was regarded an essential stylistic feature in the source text, and also a part of its message which could be summarized as ‘the world and people are full of paradoxes’. Things that do not make sense at all happen all the time, both inside families and on the bigger ‘stage’ of history. This is not something that is stated explicitly, but is implicit in the way the narrative lays out contradictions between what people want and what they do, what they say and what they do, and what they intend and what actually happens. The unemotional, laconic style in which these contradictions are narrated only underlines the irony. In the translation, caution was necessary so that the target text would not spell out the ironies by emphasising the discrepancies in the events or by trying to be ‘funny’ or ‘tragic’. Such explication would spoil the reader’s opportunity to infer the irony achieved by understatement. Thus some changes were made still in the final drafts of the translation to render the text more laconic and bare. Below are examples of an earlier version and the final version:

17) Setä istahti puun alle miettimään, ja silloin hän *äkkäsi* puussa pesivän kyyhkysparin. Hän heitti jamssisäkin kädestään, kiipesi puuhun ja pyydysti linnut. Puuhun hän myös jäi, kommunistien satimeen. Kommunistit syyttivät häntä itsekkyydestä, kun hän oli *mennyt ottamaan* ruokaa perheelleen, tappoivat hänet ja jättivät ruumiin puuhun roikkumaan varoittavaksi esimerkiksi muille.

On hämmentävää, että perheeni ei kuulunutkaan ylistettyihin köyhiin. Heidät teloitettiin aivan kuin satujen paronit, vaikka he eivät olleetkaan paroneita. On hämmentävää, että linnut huijasivat meitä.

18) Setä istahti puun alle miettimään, ja silloin hän *huomasi* puussa pesivän kyyhkysparin. Hän heitti jamssisäkin kädestään, kiipesi puuhun ja pyydysti linnut. Puuhun hän myös jäi, kommunistien satimeen. Kommunistit syyttivät häntä itsekkyydestä, koska hän oli ottanut ruokaa perheelleen, tappoivat hänet ja jättivät ruumiin puuhun roikkumaan varoittavaksi esimerkiksi.

On hämmentävää, että perheeni ei kuulunut ylistettyihin köyhiin. Heidät teloitettiin aivan kuten paronit, vaikka he eivät olleet paroneita. On hämmentävää, että linnut huijasivat meitä. (152)

The translation aims to achieve a similar degree of laconism as the source text, and for this reason the ‘colourful’, slightly humorous word *äkkäsi* was discarded as inappropriate and substituted with the neutral *huomasi*. *Mennyt ottamaan* in this context means approximately ‘was presumptuous enough to take’, and emphasises the irony of the situation, but such emphasis was finally considered unnecessary. For the same reason, the *-kaan* particles (expressing contrariness to expectation) were omitted.

#### 4.2.4 Adjectives and adverbs

A noteworthy point about the parts of speech (word classes) represented in the text is the scarcity of adjectives and adverbs. There are no ‘extra’ descriptive adjectives or adverbs in the sentences. Often there are none and practically never more than one per one sentence or clause. Moreover, the adjectives and adverbs tend to be plain, not conspicuous or unusual. For example, the tutors of the woman warrior in training are always referred to simply as ‘old’ (except once as “the old brown man and the old grey woman”, p. 129), and often there are very few adjectives and adverbs acting as attributes or complements for noun phrases.

19) I worked every day. When it rained, I exercised in the downpour, *grateful* not to be pulling sweet potatoes. I moved like the trees in the wind. I was *grateful* not to be squishing in chicken mud, which I did not have nightmares about so *frequently* now. (13113)

Other examples of the kind of simple attributes that are favoured in the text are: “a *leafy* branch of peaches (123), “the *ghostly* dark” (124), “the *powerful* walk into battle” (126) “*dry* rocks” (128) “a *cold* night” (128) “How *beautiful* you look’ [...] ‘How *beautiful* she looks” (137), “I mustn’t feel *bad*” (150) “[m]y parents felt *bad*” (151). The scarcity and simplicity of the adjectives and adverbs do not, of course, constitute a translation problem. Unlike nouns and verbs, adjectives and adverbs are usually grammatically dispensable elements in sentences (Greenbaum 1991: 29). The adjectives and adverbs, or the absence of them, could be translated as they are. However, and similarly to the use of

nouns, there are also instances of more idiosyncratic and creative usage of adverbs and adjectives in the text:

- 20) [t]he morning rose *perfectly* (127)
- 21) [t]he bird, now *gold* so close to the sun (123)
- 22) Oh, *green joyous* rush inside my mouth (127)
- 23) infinite angels (129)

The first two of these items were changed in translation from adverb to adjective (*perfectly* → *täydellinen*) and ‘noun-functioning-as-adjective’ to adjective (*gold* → *kultainen*). *Koitti täydellinen aamu* was considered to be idiosyncratic enough as an expression: *aamu koitti täydellisesti* was seen to be too strange for the Finnish reader. The same can be said about the second example: *lintu, kultaa auringon läheisyydessä* was considered to be too much of a breach of grammatical norm and thus the item was translated *lintu, auringon säteiden kultaama*. These translations were thus familiarizing.

#### 4.2.5 Metaphors and similes

The notable absence of adjectives and adverbs raised the question of how the source text nevertheless is very evocative and visual in its impact. In my impression, the effect is partly due to fact that the text does *not* offer much descriptive details, but instead leaves it to the readers’ imagination to form internal images of the characters and events. Another element in the visual information in the text is also its figurative language use, more specifically its rhetoric figures of speech. According to Nord (1991b: 114-115), rhetorical figures of speech, (e.g. metaphors, metonymies and similes) reflect the writer’s intention as regards the text’s “degree of originality”. The degree of originality of the figures of speech contributes to the stylistic effect that the text has on the reader. Not all metaphors, for instance, are equally effective: some are ‘dead’ and have become a part of everyday language. Furthermore, the effect of figurative language depends also on the context it appears in: a fresh figure in the midst of commonplace language calls attention to itself, but so does a dead metaphor or a cliché in an otherwise idiosyncratic or experimental text. Nord (1991b: 114) states that the use of lexical items in the source text can be regarded as intentional if the text challenges “the translator [...] to find out from

his analysis what interest and what purpose has induced the author to use precisely this expression, this figure, this word”.

Wales (2001: 250) defines metaphor as a figure of speech in which “one field or domain of reference is carried over or mapped onto another”. On the most simple level, metaphors are statements of the form “X is Y”, whereas in similes the claim is merely “X is *like* Y”. Thus, metaphors are “more forceful and dramatic” than similes, and go against the ‘maxim of quality’, in making a proposition that is not true (Wales 2001: 250, 329).<sup>20</sup> In addition to the ‘X is Y’ metaphors, there are also “extended metaphors” which are formed across longer stretches of text, affecting the text as a whole, giving it a “frame of reference” or “thematic coherence” (Wales 2001: 251).

As with other features of the lexic, it can be said that the rhetoric figures of speech in *The Woman Warrior* are not wordy or elaborate, but short and simple. This does not mean that they would be commonplace or dead – quite on the contrary, they have an original and fresh effect. There are not many metaphors in the text, but similes are prolific. The list below contains almost every metaphor (excluding extended metaphors) there are in the second chapter, but only a small sample of the total number of similes:

24) The mice and toads looked at me, their eyes *quick stars and slow stars*.  
Öisin hiiret ja rupikonnat katselivat minua – niiden silmät olivat *nopeita ja hitaita tähtiä*.  
(126)

25) When the mountains and the pines turned into blue oxen, blue dogs, and blue people standing [...].  
Kun vuoret ja männyt muuttuivat sinisiksi häräksi, sinisiksi koiriksi ja sinisiksi seisoviksi ihmisiksi [...] (124).

26) a sword [...], a *silver bolt in the sunlight* [...]  
auringossa välkehtivän *hopeasalaman* (135)

27) In dark and silver dreams I had seen him falling from the sky, [...], his *soul a star*.  
Tummanpuhuvissa ja hopeisissa unissani olin nähnyt hänet, *tähtieselun* [...]. (141)

28) “Girls are maggots in the rice.”  
”Työtöt ovat toukkia riisissä.” (144)

29) I was nine years old when the letters made my parents, who are *rocks*, cry.  
Olin yhdeksän, kun Kiinasta lähetetyt kirjeet saivat kivikovat vanhempanikin itkemään.  
(150)

30) [T]he clouds would grey the world *like an ink wash*.  
[P]ilvistä tulisi harmaita kuin mustekäsittelyn jäljiltä (123)

---

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the statements ‘your eyes are stars’ (metaphor) and ‘your eyes are like stars’ (simile).



- 31) The fire went down for a moment, *as if crouching in surprise* [...].  
Tuli laantui hetkeksi, *kuin yllätyksestä kyyristyen* [...] (128)
- 32) [S]uddenly I understand time, which is spinning and fixed *like the North Star*.  
[Y]htäkkiä tajuan ajan olemuksen, joka on sekä kieppuva että pysähtynyt *kuten Pohjantähti*. (129)
- 33) [T]he light would shine through my skin *like lace*.  
[I]honi läpäisisi valoa *kuin pitsi*. (136)
- 34) [T]he little fists shut *like buds* [...].  
[P]ikku nyrkit tiukasti kiinni *kuin kukan nuput* [...]. (142)
- 35) He sat square and fat *like a god*.  
Hän istui suorana ja pulleana *kuin jumala*. (144)
- 36) They blinked weakly at me *like pheasants that have been raised in the dark for meat*.  
He räpyttelivät heikosti silmiään *kuin pimeässä kasvatetut, pehmeälihaiset fasaanit*. (145)
- 37) [I] wrap my American successes around me *like a private shawl* [...].  
[K]iedon amerikkalaisen menestykseni ympärilleni *kuin yksityisen hartiahuivin* [...] (153)

As it happened, not all of the metaphors above could be translated as ‘x is y’ metaphors, but the figurative quality of the expressions could still be preserved. Some were changed into compounds (*tähtisielu, kivikovat*). This was motivated by factors in the overall syntax of the sentence in the first case, and in the second, also by my impression that the metaphor *vanhempani ovat kiviä* would sound too strange in Finnish, even though in the source text it does not. Other options would have been to reproduce the sentence structure of the source text but with an adjective complement (*vanhempani, jotka ovat kivikovia*), or use simile (*vanhempani, jotka ovat kovia kuin kivet*). However, *kivikovat vanhempani* is shorter and simpler than either of these, and also less of a commonplace than the simile. The point about the source text’s metaphor is, after all, that it is a fresh version of a more familiar figure of speech (‘hard as rocks’). The metaphor evokes concrete images of rocks, perhaps statues, while the corresponding simile is too familiar to evoke anything in particular. The second chapter also contains extended metaphors, for example an analogy drawn between storytelling/writing and warfare (also found elsewhere in the ST). It is mentioned, for example, that the Chinese have the same god for war and for literature, Kuan Kung (139). The narrator also points out that she as a storyteller is “not so dissimilar” to the woman warrior, because they both have “words at their backs” and the motive for action for both of them is “revenge” (153).

The translation of the similes posed generally no problems. Like the metaphors, the similes are simple, but many are original and evocative in their impact (e.g. *skin like lace*, *fists like buds*), and they serve the function of conveying descriptive, visual information.

#### 4.2.6 Verbs

Finally, the verbs in the source text were considered to be an interesting lexical feature and one that also contributes to the visual effect of the text. The verbs tend to dynamic rather than stative in function<sup>21</sup>, and evocative in content. Below are some examples of the dynamic, descriptive use of verbs in the source text, with their translations:

38a) [T]he colours and lights *shimmered* into a picture [...].  
 b)[V]ärit ja valot *muotoutuivat hohtelevaksi* kuvaksi [...]. (125)

39a) [G]old bells *shredded* into gold tassels that *fanned* into two royal capes that *softened* into lion's fur.  
 39b)[K]ultakellot *hajosivat* kultaisiksi tupsuiksi, jotka *aukenivat* kahdeksi kuninkaalliseksi viitaksi, jotka taas *pehmenivät* leijonan turkiksi. (129)

40a) If I took the sword, which my hate must surely have *forged* out of the air, and *gutted* him, I would put colour and wrinkles into his shirt.  
 b) Jos tarttuisin miekkaan, jonka vihani varmasti synnytti, ja iskisin sillä häneltä suolet pihalle, tulisi hänenkin paitaansa vähän väriä ja ryppyjä. (149)

Another notable feature of the verbs above is that they convey a great deal of information in one item instead of several. This is one of the factors contributing to the text's succinctness. Some of them convey even a metaphor in one word: e.g. hate *forges* a sword out of the air. Even though lexical condensation was the general aim in the target text, this type of verb proved difficult to translate in one word *while* conveying the same amount of information, as can be seen in the examples above. The strategies used are, on the one hand, expansion: *shimmered* → *muotoutuivat hohtelevaksi* and *gutted* → *iskisin [...]suolet pihalle*. This strategy lengthens the syntax but transfers the semantic content more fully. On the other hand, synonyms or paraphrases were used in *shredded into* →

---

<sup>21</sup> Dynamic verbs "introduce events", stative verbs "introduce a quality attributed to the subject or state of affairs" (Greenbaum 1991: 35). Examples of dynamic verbs are *to break (something)*, *talk*, *listen*, *sell*. Examples of stative verbs are *be*, *have*, and *hear*.

*hajosivat, fanned* → *aukenivat* and *forged out of the air* → *synnytti* which helped in keeping the syntax short but diminished or altered the semantic content somewhat.

It could be added that the dynamism of the action is reflected even on the phonological level in that strong consonants predominate over weak ones – plosives and fricatives over sibilants and laterals. This is not only a feature of the verbs but also of other word classes, and would represent, in Nord's classification a suprasegmental feature, contributing to a dynamic, even aggressive style of expression:

41) I plunged my hand into the gourd, making a grab for his thick throat, and he broke into pieces, splashing water all over my face and clothes. I turned the gourd upside down to empty it, but no little people came tumbling out.

Työnsin käteni leiliin tarttuakseni häntä kurkusta, ja hän hajosi kappaleiksi loiskuttaen vettä päälleni. Käänsin leilin ylösalaisin tyhjentääkseni sen, mutta yhtään pientä miestä ei vierinyt ulos. (134)

42) First I cut off his leg with one sword swipe, as Chen Luan-feng had chopped the leg off the thunder god. When the giant stumped towards me, I cut off his head.

Ensin katkaisin jättiläiseltä jalan yhdellä miekan sivalluksella, aivan kuin Chen Luang-feng ukkosenjumalalta. Kun jättiläinen nilkutti yhä minua kohti, iskin siltä pään poikki. (139)

It is questionable to what extent the translation manages to convey the dynamic, strong quality of the source text's lexis. This was certainly attempted, through the choice of words such as *singautin* (140), *viskelin* (142), *potkin vimmatusti* (142), *kalskahtivat* (142) and *sivalsin* (145). However, there was often only one feasible choice for translating a certain item, if one wanted to remain faithful to the exact meaning of the source text's item (e.g. *stumped* → *nilkutti*, 139). The importance of the phonetic aspect of the lexis fully emerged only in the translation analysis. The target text would certainly benefit from revision in this respect, using compensation as a strategy to ensure that the overall effect of the target text is phonetically strong. As it is, the target text seems to be slightly 'tame' compared to the source text.

To summarize, on the lexical level, shortness, evocative content, changes in register, items carrying visual information (metaphors, similes and dynamic verbs) and phonetic qualities of the words emerged as the most important issues. The stylistic effect created by these items could be described as compact, economic, laconic and dynamic, and as such, defamiliarizing, calling attention to itself. In the TT, the general strategy was to choose shorter lexical items over longer ones whenever possible. Also noun compounds could be formed in order to condense the style. Often changes on the lexical

level went hand in hand with changes in syntax. The main challenge was to find equally concise and dynamic words that would carry the same amount of visual information as the source text's words. The translation succeeded in this respect relatively well. The changes in register were caused on the lexical level by the occurrence of formal, solemn and old-fashioned words in a more informal or colloquial register or vice versa. This was found to be another crucial feature in the style, and one that created a slightly defamiliarizing effect. To reproduce the changes posed generally no problems, and approximately the same amount of defamiliarization could be achieved, although in some cases it proved difficult to find counterparts of an equally elevated register. This is not, however, necessarily a gap in the Finnish language but rather in the translator's vocabulary. The dominance of strong consonants in the source text were also considered important for the style, and an attempt was made to choose lexical items with plosives and fricatives for the target text as well (e.g. *pomppasin, singautin, sivaltelin, katkaisin*). In this respect the TT would probably still benefit from revision.

### 4.3 Syntactic/sentence structural items

The syntactic/sentence structural features of 1) ellipsis, 2) conjunction, 3) fragmented sentences and 4) punctuation will be discussed in this subsection. Punctuation, though it does not strictly speaking belong to the realm of syntax, will be discussed here because the punctuation patterns of the source text can be seen to bear a connection to the typical sentence structures.

To begin with some general remarks on the sentence and clause structure of the source text, one can say that the clauses and the sentences in the source text tend to be short. This has to do partly with the shortness of the lexical items and the scarcity of adjectives and adverbs that was discussed above. The passage below demonstrates how there are no 'extra' words in the sentences, which are structurally simple:

43) When I reached my village, my father and mother had grown as old as the two whose shapes I could at last no longer see. I helped my parents carry their tools, and they walked ahead so straight, each carrying a basket or a hoe not to overburden me, their tears falling privately. My family surrounded me with so much love that I almost forgot the ones not there. I praised the new infants. (135)

Typical sentence structure varies somewhat in different parts of the second chapter. Throughout, the sentence structures are varied and include all types of sentence: simple, complex, compound and mixed.<sup>22</sup> There is slight variation within and between the two parts of the narrative: in the woman warrior part, relatively short sentences, co-ordinated by *and* or *but*, dominate at first. When the woman warrior matures and goes to battle, the sentences become longer and more often mixed:

44) Our eyes locked until his height made me strain my neck looking up, my throat so vulnerable to the stroke of a knife that my eyes dropped to the secret death points on the huge body. (139)

In the American part, the sentences become again mostly co-ordinated or simple. Throughout, there is a tendency to juxtapose main clauses with semicolons or dashes instead of using co-ordinators or separating them with a full stop. In the translation, it was considered important to reproduce the variation in the sentence structures, since it is interpreted that they were a syntactic means by which the text reflected various states in the narrator's inner development.

#### 4.3.1 Ellipsis

A prominent feature in the sentence structure of the source text is ellipsis, "the omission of essential grammatical units that can be supplied by the hearer from the context" (Greenbaum 1991:106). Ellipsis is one of the cohesive devices used in texts, the others being reference, substitution and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 4). Cohesion, (except for lexical cohesion) is a sentence structural feature in Nord's model (1991: 118-119). According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion is not a structural, but a semantic concept: "it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text" (1976: 4). Ellipsis is "something left unsaid" but "understood nevertheless" and "an elliptical item is one which [...] leaves specific structural slots to be filled from elsewhere" (1976: 142-143). Below is one example of ellipsis from the source text:

---

<sup>22</sup> Simple sentence consists of one main clause, complex sentence of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses, compound sentence of co-ordinate clauses and a mixed sentence of both subordinate and co-ordinate clauses (Wales 2001: 356).

45) I couldn't tell where the stories left off and the dreams began, *her voice the voice* of the heroines in my sleep. En erottanut mihin tarinat päättyivät ja mistä unet alkoivat; äidin ääni *muuttui* unieni sankarittarien ääneksi. (122)

The structural element 'missing' in this example is a predicate (*being / was / became*) from the second clause. This kind of ellipted sentence structure is very typical of the source text. It is a characteristic of the author's style also in her other works, and could be termed even as one of her 'trademarks'. Although the sentence above is not ungrammatical, it is perhaps slightly odd, due to the repetition *her voice the voice*. This creates a defamiliarizing effect, which, I believe, is intentional, and serves a stylistic purpose. Firstly, ellipsis shortens the clauses and contributes to an 'economic' style and secondly, the ellipted items leave holes in the text that interrupt the flow of the text.

Ellipsis is the sentence structural feature that figures most prominently in the source text as a whole and thus was taken as one of the key elements in the text's style. Below are examples of other ellipses in the text, with translations:

46) Even when I got used to that grey, I would only see peaks as if shaded in pencil, *rocks like charcoal rubbings, everything so murky*. [Verbless and subjectless clause, verbless clause.]

Sittenkin kun olisin jo tottunut harmaaseen, näkisin vain kuin lyijykynällä luonnosteltuja huippuja, hiilellä piirrettyjä kivenlohkareita, kaikki kovin synkeää. (123)

47) 'No, I haven't,' I would have said in real life, *mad at the Chinese for lying so much*. [Verbless, subjectless clause.]

En vielä, kiitos kysymästä', olisin oikeasti sanonut, *sillä* vihaan kiinalaisten alituisia valheita. (123)

48) The teapot and the rice pot seemed bottomless, *but perhaps not*, the old couple ate very little except peaches. [Verbless subjectless clause.]

Teepannu ja riisikattila näyttivät pohjattomilta, mutta *eivät ehkä sitä olleet*. Vanha pariskunta ei syönyt juuri muuta kuin persikoita. (124)

49) Snow lay on the ground, and snow fell in loose gusts - *another way the dragon breathes*. [Verbless and subjectless clause.]

Lunta oli maassa, ja lunta tuli taivaalta hajanaisina ryöppyinä – *silläkin tavalla lohikäärme hengittää*. (126)

50) The first days were gifts, *the fasting so easy to do, I so smug in my strength* that on the third day, *the hardest*, I caught myself sitting on the ground opening the scarf [...]. [Two verbless clauses, one verbless and subjectless clause.]

Kaksi ensimmäistä päivää olivat lahjoja. Paastoaminen oli helppoa, minä tyytyväinen omiin voimiini; *mutta* kolmantena, vaikeimpana päivänä yllätin itseni istumasta maassa, avaamasta huiviani [...]. (127)

51) On the fourth and fifth days, *my eyesight sharp with hunger* [...]. [Verbless clause.]

Neljäntenä ja viidentenä päivänä, *kun* nälkä oli teroittanut näköni [...]. (127)

52) Oh, green joyous rush inside my mouth, my head, my stomach, my toes, my soul – the best meal of my life. [Fragmented sentence consisting of verbless clauses.]  
 Oi, *mikä* vihreä riemukas tulvahdus suussani, päässäni, vatsassani, varpaissani, sielussani – elämäni paras ateria. (128)

53) In quarries I could see its strata, *the dragon's veins and muscles; the minerals, its teeth and bones*. I could touch the stones the old woman wore – *its bone marrow*. [In the first sentence, three verbless and subjectless clauses. In the second sentence, a verbless and subjectless clause.]  
 Louhoksissa näin sen *eri* kerrostumat, lohikäärmeen verisuonet ja lihakset; mineraalit *olivat* sen hampaita ja luita. Kosketin kiviä, joita vanha nainen käytti koruina – lohikäärmeen luuydintä. (131)

54) [T]hey put down the weapons and waited quietly at the door, *open as if for guests*.  
 [Verbless subjectless clause.]  
 [I]hmiset laskivat aseensa ja odottivat hiljaisina, ovi auki kuin vieraita varten. (133)

55) The whole world lived inside the gourd, *the earth a green and blue pearl like the one the dragon plays with*. [Verbless clause.]  
 Koko maailma asusti vesiruukun sisässä, ja maa *oli* vihreä ja sininen pallo, lohikäärmeen leikkikalua. (135)

56) It hurt terribly – *the cuts sharp; the air burning; the alcohol cold, then hot – pain so various*. [Five verbless clauses.]  
 Se sattui kauheasti – terävät viillot, polttava ilma, *ensin* kylmä, sitten kuuma alkoholi – niin monenlaista kipua. (136)

The examples above are by no means a complete list of all the numerous ellipses in the source text, but they hopefully suffice to illustrate the frequency at which the source text uses ellipsis. What can be said of the translations, in turn, is that they tend to insert ‘the missing parts’ of the ellipted clauses: a conjunction (*sillä* in example 47, *kun* in 51), the ‘missing verb’ (*olleet* in example 48, *olivat* in 53, *oli* in 55), a pronoun (*sitä* in example 48, *mikä* in 52) or some other item (*eri* in 53). The implicit was thus made explicit, and in some sentences even the semantic content was changed (insertion of *sillä* in example 47, *mutta* in 50, and *ensin* in 56).

The elliptic style of the source text was appreciated already in the first readings of the source text, and in accordance to the translation skopos, the aim in the translation work was to reproduce the ellipsis in the target text. However, my analysis revealed that in many cases ellipsis had been obliterated in the translation. The tendency to ‘fill in the gaps’ or ‘smooth out the rough edges’ was probably originally caused by an aim to please Finnish editors that would receive the translation sample and who might be put off by too much idiosyncrasy. I was not pleased to find that with such a crucial stylistic

element in the text, the translation showed signs of unnecessary familiarization, which I had determined to avoid in the translation.

Even after becoming conscious of the familiarization, it was not easy at all to change it. Finally, ellipsis caused the biggest changes in the transfer of the syntactic structures from ST to TT. In many places even after many efforts, it seemed that the ellipsis simply could not be preserved and some items had to be inserted. On the other hand, in some places it was possible to use the strategy of compensation and condense the syntax by some other means, or use ellipsis somewhere else where it could be more easily done. In the example below, both familiarization and compensation are illustrated:

57) They brought blue and white porcelain bowls filled with water and carp – *the bowls painted with carp, fins like orange fire*. [Two verbless clauses. ]  
He toivat sinivalkoisia posliinimaljoja, *joissa* uiskenteli karppeja – ja maljoihin *oli* maalattu hehkuvan oranssieväisiä karppeja. (137)

*Blue and white* could be condensed into *sinivalkoinen*, making use of the ease in Finnish to form compounds. (Presuming that what is meant in the ST are two-coloured bowls, not blue bowls and white bowls). *Porcelain bowls filled with water and carp* was changed into 'porcelain bowls in which carps were swimming about' (*posliinimaljoja, joissa uiskenteli karppeja*), which changes both the syntax and the semantic content somewhat. Also in the last clause, both syntactic and semantic changes have been made: a *be*-verb is added (*the bowls were painted*) and *carp, fins like orange fire* has become something like 'carp with glowing orange fins', again using a compound word (*oranssieväinen*). In other words, some items have been added to familiarize the sentence, but compounds on the other hand bring an element of compactness or even abruptness to the style.

To form compounds was not at first a conscious translation strategy, but merely a solution that emerged through a process of trial and error in sentences that did not seem to find a suitable form otherwise. The idea that the compounds could also be a part of a general strategy to compensate for other, expanded items and structures emerged in the translation analysis. The strategy was consciously employed in a couple of instances in the final versions of the translation:

58) The resin underneath flows in the swirling shapes of dragons.  
Pihka virtaa kaarnan alla kiemuraisissa *lohikäärmeahmoissa*. (131)



59) We wore our red clothes so that when we visited a village, we would look as happy as for New Year's Day.  
 Pukeuduimme punaiseen, jotta näyttäisimme yhtä iloisilta kuin *uudenvuodenjuhlijat* kyliin saapuessamme. (139)

Intratextual clues for explaining the economy of expression can be found in the narrator's references to how her mother tells stories. According to the narrator, economy of expression is a Chinese virtue: "[e]very word that falls from the mouth is a coin lost" (*WW*, 18). Economy is the guiding principle for the narrator's mother – also in the way she tells stories:

60) If I want to learn what clothes my aunt wore, whether flashy or ordinary, I would have to begin, 'Remember Father's drowned-in-the-well sister?' I cannot ask that. My mother has told me once and for all the useful parts. She will add nothing unless powered by Necessity, a riverbank that guides her life. (*WW*, 13)

Since many of the stories of *The Woman Warrior* have been told to the narrator originally by her mother, the ellipsis might reflect the mother's influence on the narrator's writing habits. Another, related motive for the ellipses could be that Kingston is in her writing looking for ways to 'translate' the rhythms of the Chinese language into English, as was discussed above (p. 34). Since the ellipsis strongly affects the rhythm of the sentences, and produces, in my opinion, a slightly 'non-English' effect, it is my suspicion that ellipsis is one of the means by which the author creates a Chinese American style by alluding to Chinese sentence structures.

A common means of representing 'ethnic speech' in literature is to use the kind of simplified or 'broken' English stereotypically associated with non-native and/or uneducated speakers of English. However, in the source text, (meaning *The Woman Warrior* as a whole) 'limited' or 'broken' English is used only once, despite the fact that the text contains a great deal of dialogue and quoted speech attributed to Chinese-born characters:

61) When the police came around asking questions, my father said, 'No read Japanese. Japanese words. Me Chinese.' (152)

This one instance of 'broken' English makes a striking impact since it one of a kind in the whole ST. It could be seen as another of the text's defamiliarizing gestures as it

suddenly reminds the reader of the kind of ‘fractured’ English that is stereotypically attributed to ‘foreign’ or ‘ethnic minority’ speakers. The fact that it is *not* used elsewhere may suggest that the narrator does not wish to participate in strengthening such linguistic stereotypes. By contrast, Amy Tan makes frequent use of ‘broken’ English in her novels, for example in *Joy Luck Club* (1989). Tan is, however, uneasy with the concept of ‘broken’ or ‘limited’ English as she points out in connection with her Chinese-born mother’s speech:

Like others, I have described [my mother’s speech] to people as ‘broken’ or ‘fractured’ English. But I wince when I say that. It has always bothered me that I can think of no other way to describe it other than ‘broken’, as if it were damaged and needed to be fixed, as if it lacked a certain wholeness and soundness. I’ve heard other terms used, ‘limited English’, for example. But they seem just as bad, as if everything is limited, including people’s perceptions of the limited English speaker. (Tan 1990: 305)

It is perhaps ideologically and culturally as well as stylistically significant that Kingston chooses mainly other means than ‘broken’ English for echoing the rhythms of Chinese. Kingston has commented that she has tried to create a style that represents Chinese speech “without having to invent an unreadable orthography” (Kingston 1987, cited in Huntley 2000: 35) or without “strange misspellings that make people sound stupid” (in interview with J. Ross, 1983, cited in Huntley 2000: 36). ‘Broken’ or ‘limited’ English complicates the reading process and often bears connotations of cultural inferiority and intellectual limitations, which Kingston might want to avoid in her writing.

### **4.3.2 Conjunctions**

In addition to ellipsis, the use of conjunctions was a cohesive feature that was considered to be important, and slightly problematic, in the translation work. There is a notable lack of both logical and temporal conjunctions in the source text, particularly in the American part, which contributes to the general minimalism of the sentence structure. In both parts of the second chapter, conjunctions are rather scarce and there is only a small variety of them. The connectives that are used are mostly the co-ordinators *and*, *but* and *or*. Any other conjunctives expressing logical relations are notably scarce, as for example *because* (8 instances), *that’s why* (1 instance) *though* (5 instances), *only* (1 instance) *however* (2 instances) *so that* (8 instances), *neither...nor* (1 instance), *besides* (1 instance) and *since*

(3). In the woman warrior part, the usage does not call attention to itself: conjunctions are used slightly more and with slightly larger variety than in the American part, and since the narrative proceeds logically and in chronological order, conjunctions are not so necessary for the reader's understanding in any case. By contrast, in the American part the absence of conjunctions is notable and like ellipsis, it is a factor in the laconic style. Both temporal and logical conjunctions are 'missing' from between paragraphs, sentences and clauses. It takes a longer passage than one paragraph of the source text to demonstrate properly this feature of the source text (conjunctions italicized):

62a) I went away to college – Berkeley in the sixties – *and* I studied, *and* I marched to change the world, *but* I did not turn into a boy. I would have liked to bring myself back as a boy for my parents to welcome with chickens and pigs. That was for my brother, who returned alive from Vietnam.

*If* I went to Vietnam, I would not come back; females desert families. It was said, 'There is an outward tendency in females,' which meant that I was getting straight As for the good of my future husband's family, not my own. I did not plan ever to have a husband. I would show my mother and father and the nosy emigrant villagers that girls have no outward tendency. I stopped getting straight As.

*And* all the time I was having to turn myself American-feminine, or no dates.

There is a Chinese word for the female *I* – which is 'slave'. Break the women with their own tongues!

I refused to cook. When I had to wash dishes, I would crack one or two. 'Bad girl,' my mother yelled, *and* sometimes that made me gloat rather than cry. Isn't a bad girl almost a boy?

'What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl?'

'A lumberjack in Oregon.' (148)

Instead of linking the statements with logical connectives such as *because*, temporal connectives such as *later on*, or some other items, the text puts the statements one after another without much explanation, leaving it to the reader to decipher the logic and order of events. To illustrate the logical and temporal gaps in the passage, I have rewritten it by adding conjunctions and other items that supply the 'missing' information (additions italicised):

If I went to Vietnam, I would not come back, *because* females desert families. It was said, 'There is an outward tendency in females' which meant that *women were meant to marry and join their husband's family, and thus* I was getting straight As for the good of my future husband's family, not my own. *When I was a child* I did not plan ever to have a husband. I would show my mother and father and the nosy emigrant villagers that girls have no outward tendency, *and* stopped getting straight As. *But later on* in college I was all the time having to turn myself 'American-feminine', or no dates.

There is a Chinese word for the female *I* – which is 'slave'. Break the women with their own tongues! *I did not want to become a slave, and therefore* refused to cook. When

*my mother told me to wash dishes, I was often clumsy and cracked one or two. 'Bad girl,' my mother would yell, and sometimes that made me gloat with pride rather than cry, since isn't a bad girl almost a boy? When people asked me: 'What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl?' I remember answering: 'A lumberjack in Oregon.'*

A number of other items could have been added, as for example some adjectives after 'American-feminine' to explain what the word means, while others could have been left out (e.g. *gloat with pride*, which is semantically repetitive). The additions spell out one of the ways I have come to interpret the text, but there are other possibilities. It is for example not at all clear from the source text that the narrator refuses to cook as a statement against 'slavery' (and not out of laziness) nor that it is the mother who makes her wash the dishes, or that she breaks dishes because of clumsiness, not on purpose ('I would crack one or two' allows for both interpretations). The rewriting above reflects one possible set of conclusions I have drawn as a reader, based on extratextual knowledge of the world (children will do the opposite of what they are told) and on intratextual clues from the source text as a whole (the narrator shows also other signs of being a 'freedom fighter' already as a child, the mother is portrayed as strict, and the narrator is described as "absent-minded and messy" (*WW*, 120).

As regards Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting (p. 42-43), the rewriting experiment was found to resemble the translation process, in the sense that in both one must decide what the text says and does *not* say, and translate/rewrite accordingly. No single version of the text can reflect a 'full image' of even one person's interpretation of it. The rewriting represents only one version from the many possible ones that the reader could construct on the basis of their knowledge of the text and knowledge of the world. Similarly to translation, the rewriting is formed on the basis of clues in the source text and its context on the whole, not only in one isolated instance.

Rewriting invited me to think carefully about what I believe is the logic running behind the laconic statements in the text. A new perspective to the text which opened fully to me only after the rewriting experiment is that since there *is not much* logic in the narrator's contradictory position, there cannot be many logical links between the ideas expressed. That nothing is causally explained is something that the narrator has been accustomed to in her childhood, as she comments that the mother "never explained

anything that was really important” and that the children “no longer asked” (*WW*, 112). In a sadly ironic fashion she comments on the unexplained behaviour of the Chinese:

I don't see how they kept up a continuous culture for five thousand years. Maybe they didn't: maybe everyone makes it up as they go along. If we had to depend on being told, we'd have no religion, no babies, no menstruation (sex, of course, unspeakable), no death. (*WW*, 166)

Conjunctions would clarify the text for the reader, but also destroy the possibility for ambiguity. Thus, adding connective items in the translation would be to render understandable something that is actually not supposed to be understandable at all, at least not in terms of logic, and alter not only the style but also the message of the text. To familiarize the text in this instance would be to miss an important aspect of the text and rewrite it in a way that is insensitive to the style of the ST.

It is also my impression that the lack of conjunctions in the source text slightly deviates from what a reader would expect in terms of cohesion established by conjunction. Corroboration for this intuition can be found e.g. from Hinds (1987: 143), who argues that there are “writer/speaker-responsible” and “reader/listener responsible” languages. Examples of the former are English and French, and of the latter, Japanese, Korean, and classical Chinese. Not referring to narrative fiction but to expository prose, Hinds states that

for English readers, unity is important because readers expect, and require, landmarks along the way. Transition statements are very important. It is the writer's task to provide appropriate transition statements so that the reader can piece together the thread of the writer's logic which binds the composition together. (1987: 146)

If Chinese is a “reader/listener responsible” language, it is possible to think that the lack of connectives is an imitation of Chinese written style, and thus a part of the author's project of imitating features of the Chinese language in English.

As the scarcity of connectives was perceived to be an important stylistic device, and possibly also a multicultural element in the ST, my translation strategy was mainly to follow the source text as closely as possible.

62b) Lähdin kotoa opiskelemaan collegeen Berkeleyhyn, Kaliforniaan, opiskelin ja muutin maailmaa marssimalla mielenosoituksissa, mutta en muuttunut pojaksi. Olisin halunnut palata kotiin poikana, jonka vanhempani olisivat toivottaneet tervetulleeksi paistettujen kananpoikien ja porsaiden kera. Ne olivat veljelleni, joka palasi hengissä Vietnamista.

Jos minä lähtisin Vietnamiin, en tulisi takaisin, sillä naiset jättävät oman perheensä. Sanonta kuului: 'naisissa on poispäin suuntautuva taipumus', mikä tarkoitti, että hankin pelkkiä kiitettäviä tulevan aviomieheni perheen hyväksi, en omani. Minä en suunnitellut koskaan meneväni naimisiin. Minä näyttäisin isälle ja äidille ja tunkeileville kyläläisille, että tytöt eivät suuntaudu poispäin. Lakkasin saamasta pelkkiä kiitettäviä.

Ja koko ajan minun oli muunnettava itseäni amerikkalais-naiselliseksi, tai muuten ei ollut toivoakaan treffeistä.

Kiinan kielessä yksi synonyymi naispuoliselle 'minälle' on – 'orja'. Lannistakaa naiset heidän omalla kielellään!

Kieltäydyin laittamasta ruokaa. Kun jouduin tiskaamaan, rikoin aina jotakin. 'Tuhma tyttö!' äitini huusi, ja joskus tulin siitä miltei ylpeäksi. Eikö tuhma tyttö ollut melkein poika?

'Mikäs sinusta tulee isona, tyttö pieni?'

'Metsuri.' (148)

However, in Finnish writing the stylistic effect of leaving out connective items is perhaps milder than in English. Mauranen (1993: 169) suggests, in reference to Hinds' distinction between writer and reader responsible languages, that Finnish writing is "tending towards the reader-responsible" more than English writing. Hence the Finnish reader may expect less explicit guidance from texts in the first place, and be therefore less affected by the small number of connective items in the target text.

### 4.3.3 Fragmented sentences

It was mentioned above that the co-ordinators *and* and *but* are frequently used in the source text. They are also regularly used to begin sentences, in both parts of the second chapter. The examples below feature fragmented sentences:

64) *But* I could not fly like the bird that led me here, except in large, free dreams. (126)

65) *And* I understand how working and hoeing are dancing; how peasant clothes are golden, as king's clothes are golden; how one of the dancers is always a man and the other woman. (129)

66) *But* at news of a body, I would find a way to get out; I had to learn about dying if I wanted to become a swordswoman. (152)

67) And they would not simply ask but have to talk-story too. (151)

68) And I had to get out of hating range. (153)

Fragmented sentences violate the rules of grammar, but they are 'allowed' for "experienced writers [who] can set a tone in their writing that allows them to violate the rules of punctuation" (Greenbaum 1991: 118). Fragmented sentences are common in

fictional description and narration, in which they can be used to represent informal speech or interior monologue/stream of consciousness (Greenbaum 1991: 119). They can contribute in creating an ‘artistic effect’ (Greenbaum 1991: 120). In the source text, the fragmented sentences seem to serve both functions: to represent inner, informal speech and to create an artistic effect. Together with ellipsis and the lack of conjunctions, the fragmented sentences create a stylistic effect of incompleteness and bring disruptions to the general flow of the prose.

It was easy enough to translate the fragmented sentences as they were in the source text. Finnish follows the same rules as English in this respect: sentences should not begin with co-ordinators, but in literary texts the rule can be broken to achieve an artistic or ‘spoken language’ effect.

The sentence structural features presented above – ellipsis, lack of connective items, and fragmented sentences – could be thought of as means by which the source creates a general effect of abruptness and slight incohesion. However, to define the source text as incoherent would be an exaggeration: rather, cohesion is achieved through other means than sentence structure. In all texts, cohesion is a “semantic relation” between two items in a text: “referring item and the item that it refers to” (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 5, 3). The semantic relation is created nowhere else than in the reader’s mind, and readers *are looking for* coherence in texts. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 23) point out that readers will go to great lengths to establish cohesion in texts: “[I]t is almost impossible to construct a verbal sequence which has no texture at all – [...] largely because we insist on interpreting any passage as text if there is the remotest possibility of doing so”. This is true of all texts, and applies perhaps particularly well to literary texts, which may make readers do ‘extra work’ in many respects, and readers are prepared to do this work. *The Woman Warrior* at least seems to be such a text, not because of masses of difficult material (complicated metaphors, obscure allusions or the like) but because of sparseness, the many holes in the text, that create ambiguity. The procession of sentences and paragraphs does make sense, but only if the reader is actively making associations between them.

Furthermore, even though there are practically no conjunctives, there is substantial lexical cohesion in the source text, caused by the recurrent themes and ‘key words’ that are used to signal these themes. According to Nord (1991b: 112), texts usually include

“key words [which] constitute isotopic chains throughout the text”. This means that some lexical elements are repeated and the repetition creates semantic relations between parts of the text, creating coherence (Nord 1991b: 87-88). In example 62a) above, such key words are *bird, sword, war, girl, women, fat, words, China* and *America*, also occurring elsewhere in the ST. Lexical cohesion within the passage is present in the reiteration of the words *girl* and *boy*, and in the collocations between *female, women, feminine, husband, boys, lumberjack*, and *Chinese* and *American*.<sup>23</sup>

Thematically, this passage ties together with many other passages in the source text that are about the contradictory expectations for girls and young women in Chinese, Chinese American and American cultures. The all-pervasive theme of war is also present in the form of the reference to Vietnam. Thus, one characteristic of the text’s style could be described as a tendency to create far-reaching links or ‘nodes’ across the text by repeating identical or systematically related lexical items in different contexts. In the translation, these links should be transferred, which means that the translators must ensure that the key words are not omitted or replaced by synonyms. This did not generally constitute a problem in the target text.

#### 4.3.4 Punctuation

In English, as in many other languages, punctuation has to observe certain rules (sentences must end with a full stop, exclamation mark or question mark, for example), while other rules are more flexible and allow for some ‘poetic license’. For example, punctuation can be used for creating rhythms and foregrounding some elements in the text (Nord 1991b: 124-125). In *The Woman Warrior*, punctuation deviates slightly from normal or ‘non-literary’ usage in that colon, semicolon and dash are much more extensively used. There does not seem to be a particular logic to the deviations, but there are some characteristic patterns. The most frequent one is the juxtaposition of coordinated clauses with semicolon or even several semicolons, sometimes combined with a colon. The semicolon, colon and dash (and comma) are frequently used to replace a

---

<sup>23</sup> Reiteration, the repetition of a lexical item, and collocation, occurrence of systematically related items, are the two types of lexical cohesion discussed by Hasan and Halliday (1976: 277, 284).



coordinator (*and, or, but*), another conjunction or a full stop. Often the use is unconventional, 'literary'. Particularly semicolons and dashes are used prolifically. Below are examples of usage of dashes, semicolons and colons typical of the source text:

69) She opened the roof: an autumn wind would come up, and the needles fell in braids – brown strands, green strands, yellow strands. (125)

70) The old woman waved her arms in conducting motions; she blew softly with her mouth. (125)

71) Not once would I see a three-legged toad, though; you need strings of cash to bait them. (126)

72) I had met a rabbit who taught me about self-immolation and how to speed up transmigration; one does not have to become worms first but can change directly into a human being – as in our own humaneness we had just changed bowls of vegetable soup into people too. (130)

73) Menstrual days did not interrupt my training: I was as strong as on any other day. (132)

74) I saw them through the mist; I saw them on the clouds; I saw them big on the mountaintop when distance had shrunk the pines. (135)

75) The depth and width of joy were exactly known to me: the Chinese population. (143)

76) Then I get bitter: no one supports me; I am not loved enough to be supported. (149)

Conversely, comma is sometimes used in places where one would perhaps expect a colon, a semicolon, or a conjunctive word:

77) At last I saw that I too had been in the presence of great power, *my mother* talking-story. (122)

78) In the brush drawings it looks like the ideograph for 'human', two black wings. (123)

The initial translation strategy was to follow the source text's punctuation as closely as possible. In terms of pragmatic strategies the aim was to retain in the target text the same degree of 'literariness' and idiosyncrasy as the source text has. In some sentences the punctuation was changed to follow more traditional usage, but these instances could be compensated for by adding some semicolons and dashes in other places, in imitation of the source text's punctuation style:

79) Olin tuntenut itseni rakastetuksi: rakkaus virtasi aikuisten sormista kun he tunkivat punaista rahaa taskuihimme.

I had felt loved, love pouring from their fingers when the adults tucked red money in our pockets. (132)

80) Leikin sotilaitteni kanssa; viskelin nuolia pronssiseen ruukkuun.  
I played with the soldiers, throwing arrows into a bronze jar. (142)

The punctuation can be seen to work together with the sentence structure in creating an abrupt, laconic style, since the use of semicolons, colons and dashes often coincides with the omission of conjunctions. The logical link between the statements is left ‘hanging in the air’ somewhat, and the rhythm of the sentence halts but does not stop completely at every colon, semicolon and dash. On the other hand, dashes, colons and semicolons bind sentences together and sometimes form long and complex sentence clusters. In this sense, the punctuation works against the tendency towards short and simple sentence structure, thus adding a balancing element to the general style.

In sum, as was the case with the lexical items, shortness was found to be a central stylistic feature on the syntactic/ sentence structural level. Particularly in the American part of the ST, the style could be characterised further as fragmentary, discontinuous, slightly jarring and halting in rhythm. Factors in this effect were found to be the frequent use of ellipsis, the scarcity and small variety of conjunctions, fragmented sentences and the punctuation habits peculiar to the text. Particularly ellipsis was perceived as a key element in the text’s idiosyncratic style. In the TT it was considered important to convey the defamiliarizing effect of the ellipses, but in some cases the Finnish equivalent was estimated to be ‘too strange’ and therefore the item was familiarized by adding the missing element in the clause. It is questionable whether the TT manages to convey the stylistic idiosyncrasy of the ST in this respect, or whether it is too adapting. It was suspected that the ellipses are also a multicultural feature in the syntax of the source text, alluding to Chinese rhythms of speech. However, it is improbable that the multicultural aspect of the ellipsis, if it indeed is there, carries over into the Finnish context.

Conjunctions are scantily used in the ST and the variety of conjunctions is small. This is another defamiliarizing feature that contributes to the discontinuous, jarring effect, both rhythmically and semantically. As with ellipsis, the reader must supply the ‘missing’ links between statements that stand apart, disconnected. It was noted that languages differ in the amount of explicit cohesion that readers expect from texts, and

that English is, in this respect, a ‘writer-responsible’ language, whereas classical Chinese is ‘reader-responsible’. Thus, the lack of conjunctions is defamiliarizing for the ST reader, and possibly also an echo of the Chinese style of composition, and therefore a multicultural element. As Finnish can be labelled as one of the ‘reader-responsible’ languages, the defamiliarizing effect of the missing conjunctions may be smaller than in the ST. Furthermore, the Chinese element will, in this instance as well, be lost in translation. On a thematic level, the scarcity of conjunctions was interpreted as one of the means by which the text reflects the many paradoxes and contradictions in the narrator’s Chinese American world: lack of continuity and logic is mirrored on the syntactic level in a lack of connective items.

As to the fragmented sentences, they contribute to creating an ‘artistic’ or ‘literary’ effect in the ST, and in the American part, also act as markers of informal, colloquial register. The fragmented sentences break up the flow of the text and are stylistically defamiliarizing. They were generally translated as they were, and the effect in the TT was found to be corresponding. Punctuation in the ST deviates slightly from normal or non-literary usage, in its prolific use of colons, semicolons and dashes to juxtapose clauses and sentences. This is another stylistic characteristic of Kingston’s prose, and affects the text’s rhythm. As the colons, semicolons and dashes often stand in the place of conjunctions in the ST, they contribute to the bareness and discontinuity of the style. On the other hand, they also lengthen the sentences, bringing to them a balancing element of complexity. Compared to the ellipses, the conjunctions, fragmented sentences and punctuation were easier to transfer simply as they were, and their effect in Finnish seemed to represent approximately the same amount of defamiliarization.

#### **4.4 Culturally specific items**

By culturally specific items, I will be referring to selected items in the source text that caused translation problems from the perspective of establishing appropriate cultural distance between Chinese, Chinese American, American and Finnish cultures. The issues discussed here belong (by and large) to the field of lexis in Nord’s model, but are discussed here as a category of their own and approached from the perspective of multiculturalism of *The Woman Warrior*, not primarily or only as lexical or syntactic

problems. Firstly the issue of cultural distances in the source text is discussed on a general level, after which the analysis proceeds to a discussion of American, Chinese American and Chinese items that were interesting or problematic in the ST and the TT.

#### 4.4.1 Cultural distances

All cultures have different ways of organising themselves, establishing limits and making sense of the world, and this is reflected in language use, including literature. Differences between cultures create distances between them. In translation, it is important to find out the degree of cultural distance existing between the "cultural environment of the subject matter" (Nord 1991b: 99) and the text's recipients, both the source text's recipients and the target text recipients. Usually cultural distance grows in translation: it is wider between the source text and target readership than between source text and source readership, unless the text has been written already with the target language readership in mind – which is rare in the case of literary texts. Thus, there are always items in the source text that will be familiar to the source text recipient, but unfamiliar to the target text recipient. In these instances, the translator needs to fix “the exact level or degree of strangeness or familiarity which is intended for the TT recipient” (Nord 1991b: 134). To achieve the appropriate distance, the translator uses pragmatic strategies, such as adaptation, domestication, translator’s comments, footnotes, etc.

A useful term in discussing culturally specific phenomena in communication is 'presupposition', one of the intratextual factors in Nord's analytical model, having to do with the *what and what not* the sender chooses to express in a text. Presuppositions are facts, concepts or beliefs that a speaker [or writer] assumes to share with the hearer [reader] and therefore does not explicitly refer to them (Nord 1991b: 97).<sup>24</sup> Nord states that normally in communication, senders and recipients rely on a social convention that "an utterance must be neither trivial nor incomprehensible" (ibid.). The sender judges in

---

<sup>24</sup>“The factors and conditions of the situation, [...] the realities of the source culture, [...] facts from the author's biography, aesthetic theories, common text types and their characteristics, metric dispositions, details of subject matter, motives, the topoi and iconography of a certain literary period, ideology, religion, philosophy and mythical concepts, cultural and political conditions of the time, media and forms of representation, the educational situation, of the way a text has been handed down" (Nord 1991b: 97).

each communication situation what needs to be communicated and what can be reasonably inferred by the recipient. As regards translation, information that does not appear in the ST because it is 'trivial' to the ST reader can be new, necessary information that the TT reader cannot be presupposed to have. Cultural distance can be measured in terms of the presuppositions a text makes, and the translator uses her/his knowledge of both the source culture and the target culture to estimate which of these presuppositions the TT readers can be expected to share.

As regards cultural distance, literary translation follows the same rules as any other type of translation, but has also some special characteristics (which affect the translator's strategies). Part of a text's information and effect may lie in its "hidden clues" (Nord 1991: 99), meant to be joyfully discovered by the reader. As Nord points out, "the translator must be aware of the fact that the explicitation of implicit information, especially in a poetic text, is bound to cause immense changes in the effect that the text will have on the recipient" (1991b: 96). For example, "in a literary text it is often not appropriate to use substitutions, explanatory translations or footnotes" (1991b: 99). The translator must perform a balancing act between transmitting important aspects of meaning of the source text to the target text reader, without 'ruining the reader's fun' by too much explanation. Some readers may even feel underestimated if items that they would have recognized and understood without explanation are spelled out for them in a literary text. In this respect, readers will of course differ both in attitudes and in their amount of background knowledge. The translator can merely attempt a compromise.

Literary texts, and more particularly, fictional texts, differ from everyday language use also in that they have a special relationship with reality. Although fictional texts include factual elements, they constitute imaginary or possible worlds that do not claim to *correspond* with reality (Wales 2001: 409). Fictional texts construct their own models of reality, which are related, to some extent or other, to existing 'realistic' models (Nord 1991b: 97-98). Thus, fictional models can be seen to be more distant for *all* readers (source text or target text alike) compared to 'normal reality', even though the subject matter may be more familiar for the source text readers. Readers are also aware of this feature of fictional texts: it is one reason for reading them and thus they are willing to do the 'extra work' required in the reading and interpretation process (or if not, they stop reading!). The worlds created by texts can range from being more to less realistic to

fictitious or utopian (Nord 1991b: 85). Moreover, as Nord points out, fictional texts often include more explicit information about the communication situation than factual texts, because they do not automatically assume to share a world with the reader (1991b: 98). This could mean that some of the work of ‘cultural explicitation’ may have already been done in the source text, and the translator need not intervene.

What is, then, the cultural distance in the case of *The Woman Warrior* between the source text and the source readers, and source text and target readers? Firstly, even though real cultural and historical contexts are referred to in the text, they can be seen as material in the text’s construction of a fictitious universe, or rather several universes. The worlds are connected to each other with the common denominator ‘Chinese’ – be it Chinese in China or Chinese in America – but what is ‘real’ about them is an open question. The narrator makes it clear in her many comments on the subject that memory, history, and storytelling can play many tricks on ‘reality’. For example, the Chinese-born parents’ representation of China to their children is not the same as ‘real’ China, but China as it used to be, or how the parents would like to remember it:

Those of us in the first American generations have had to figure out how the invisible world the emigrants built around our childhoods fits in solid America. (*WW*, 13)

The narrator’s representation of China, in turn, is based on the emigrants’ stories, and also on her own imagination, history, anthropology books and dictionaries, and movies, since she has never been to China. The fabricated nature of the worlds is made explicit by the narrator, who openly comments on how she cannot know the real facts of many of the events she narrates, and gives alternative versions to them. Secondly, the text also reaches out to the reader in that many of the items, both Chinese and Chinese American ones, are *not* presupposed to be known by the readers and are explicated, one way or another, in the text. For example, the fact that Kuan Kung is named as the god of war and literature (18) implies that this is a piece of knowledge the readers are not expected to have. Also the Chinese American concept FOB is explained to the reader:

They were all funny-looking FOB’s, Fresh-Off-the-Boats, as the Chinese-American kids at school called the young immigrants. (*WW*, 173)

In light of the openly constructed nature of the model of reality in *The Woman Warrior* it is possible to argue that the world represented in the text is for all readers equally distant, even though for some the subject matter is more familiar than for others. The fact that the text world is removed from *all* realities makes it not only distant but also "transculturally communicable" (Nord 1991b: 98). Although it contains references to particular places and times, it is also independent from them because it is clearly a construct of literary imagination. Nord suggests that in such a situation it is in fact "less probable that translation problems will arise" (ibid.).

The issue of cultural distance is complicated further by the text's multicultural character. *The Woman Warrior* is an interesting object of analysis in that it has (at least) two readerships: Chinese Americans, who are familiar with the realities that the text's fictional worlds are based on, and the other readers, who share *some* of this knowledge but are probably less familiar with or totally ignorant of other parts. I shall quote again the narrator's direct address to Chinese Americans (discussed above, p. 33, as an indication of the text's multiculturalism):

Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies? (*WW*, 13)

The question contains three presuppositions: 1) that there is a group identifiable as "Chinese Americans" 2) Chinese Americans are reading this book 3) Chinese Americans try to understand what things in them are Chinese, in other words, this is a problem for them. The question establishes varying degrees of cultural distance towards its readers, depending on whether they identify themselves as Chinese Americans or not. Chinese Americans are explicitly referred to as a group that the author/narrator has on her mind and invited to engage themselves with the issues that the text is about. By contrast, the question definitely implies a distance towards the readers who are not Chinese American. In this instance, they are made aware of their 'outsider' status, of not being Chinese Americans.

To summarize the discussion on the cultural distances in the source text, it can be said, firstly, that the ST establishes a certain degree of cultural distance towards *all* of its readers by being a fictional text, and by depicting an 'imaginary China' which does not

exist in the same particular form anywhere else than in *The Woman Warrior*. This is a factor that ought to make the translator's work easier, not more difficult. If the world constituted by the ST is to some degree unfamiliar and strange to its readers, the TT can, or even should, preserve this distance between text and reader. If the ST does not explicate some of its 'Chinese' items for the American readers, the TT does not need to do that either. On the other hand, in cases where the ST does explicate foreign items, the target text readers will benefit from the explications as well. Secondly, for Chinese American readers there is less cultural distance than for other readers, and this is a problem for the translator in that the text establishes a multicultural readership for itself that cannot be reproduced in the TT. Finnish readers do not have a personal stake in the cultural representations of the text: they cannot, realistically speaking, identify with the text's 'us' or 'them'. Unlike the source text audience, Finnish readers cannot, in all probability, be offended by its content either.

In this respect, the translator can probably do nothing except let go of this particular aspect of the text, since realistically speaking, there are no Finnish readers who could identify with the narrator's 'us'. However, while directly addressing Chinese Americans and with the same gesture excluding other readers, the text also succeeds in making *all* readers conscious of 'Chinese Americanness', whether or not they identify themselves as such. This is an element that will transfer in translation, and invite also Finnish readers to think about questions of ethnicity and cultural identity.

#### **4.4.2 American items**

Some presuppositions in the source text are shared by the American source text readers, and not by Finnish readers. Even though American culture is generally well-known in Finland, there are some references in the ST that will remain obscure to the Finnish reader if they are translated 'literally'. Examples of such items are *CORE* ('Congress of Racial Equality') and *NAACP* ('National Association for the Advancement of Colored People'). These organisations will not be familiar to the Finnish reader, and it does not make sense to translate the names of the organisations in full (this would make the sentence very clumsy and improbable as quoted speech), while the acronyms would not be understood by Finnish readers. In this instance, the text makes a clear presupposition



that the reader knows what *NAACP* and *CORE* refer to. In the TT, the translation is *rotujärjestöt* (28), which together with *boikotoivat* (28) hopefully gives the correct idea of the kind of anti-racist activity in question. In terms of strategies, the omission of the names of the organisations is domesticizing.

Another difficult item that has to do with racial issues in the ST is *nigger yellow* (28), an artist's paint. I have been unable to find the term in any dictionaries or other sources, nor find any firm explanation as to why *nigger* and *yellow* are combined in the name of a colour. Supposedly the term refers to a darkish but bright yellow.<sup>25</sup> It is my interpretation that whatever the origin of the word is, in the text it has the function of making the racist boss's comment doubly offensive to the narrator. *Nigger* is an offensive term in any case for the narrator, who believes in racial equality and bears sympathy for all racially oppressed groups. Combined with *yellow* the expression also suggests that the narrator's Chinese ancestry makes her also a 'nigger', since in American racist discourse it is possible to call any 'colored' people 'niggers' (the Chinese are 'yellow niggers', Indians are 'red niggers' etc). However, the expanded meaning of *nigger*, including all groups that are 'racially other' is not familiar to Finnish readers. *Neekerinkeltainen* would sound simply strange in Finnish, not only because of its unfamiliarity but also because *nigger* evokes the connotation *black*, not 'yellow'. Thus, the item was translated *neekerinmustaa*, which succeeds in conveying the offensive connotation of *nigger* but not the allusion to the narrator's Chinese roots.

The translation of measurement words are a common translation problem, and something that a translator must be consistent about, since they are items that clearly foreignize or domesticise a text. Foreign measurement words can cause a definite barrier to understanding, and the translator must decide whether it is more important to convey the meaning ('how long') or the message ('in the United States they speak of miles, not kilometres'). The measurement words in the source text follow Anglo-American usage throughout, and thus the Chinese woman warrior travels distances measured in *miles* and weighs things in *pounds* (135, 138, 131), and in the American part there is the

---

<sup>25</sup> One instance of usage could be found in a private letter from Sue McBeth (1890) to Kate McBeth at the home pages of the University of Idaho. 'Nigger yellow' is used to refer to a "bright" and "blazing" colour or an oil cloth. Reference kindly pointed out to me by "Marie" as an answer to my inquiry on a discussion forum on colour names (4 March 2006).

measurement word *ounces* (150). This is an instance in which I found myself tempted to deviate from the source text's usage and replace *miles* and *ounces* with Chinese measurement words, for reasons of foregrounding the cultural distance between text and reader. However, this would have altered the cultural distance between the text and the reader quite radically, since in the source text the distance is zero: miles and pounds are completely familiar to the American reader. One might think that in Finnish, the identical zero effect could be produced with European measurement words (kilometres and kilograms). But is it not rather strange if a Chinese woman warrior of an ancient legend speaks of kilometres? A more suitable choice in terms of the fairy tale register might be old Finnish measurement words such as *virsta*. In fact, any choice, be it Chinese *li*, American *miles* ('maili'), general European *kilometres* ('kilometri'), or old Finnish *virsta*, is bound to have a defamiliarizing and foreignizing effect and call attention to the text's translated nature: *li* (or any other Chinese measurement word) because it is foreign and unfamiliar, *mile* because it is foreign (although more familiar), *kilometre* because it is *not* foreign in an otherwise foreign context, and *virsta* because it is old and gone out of use. Finally, *miles*, *pounds* and *ounces* were chosen, to reflect the fact that the source text is an American narrative, told by an American narrator, even in places when it is seemingly about the 'real' China. The strategy could thus be termed foreignizing.

#### 4.4.3 Chinese American items

As was already discussed above (p. 31-32) a lexical item in the source text that has multicultural significations and also various connotations for readers of different cultural backgrounds is *ghost*. The word already appears in the subtitle (*Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*) and in the course of the text, is used prolifically and in various different meanings and contexts. It could be characterised as one of the "key words" that are integral in the interpretation of the text. Nord (1991b: 87-88, 112) argues that the key words "constitute isotopic chains throughout the text", which means that some semantic elements are repeated and the repetition creates semantic relations between parts of the text, creating coherence. *Ghost* is definitely one of the key words in the source text, and as such, it ought to be translated consistently with the same lexical item throughout, so that its presence is as pervasive in the target text as it is in the source text.

Thus, similarly to the narrator's direct address to 'Chinese-Americans', the word *ghost* is an indicator of the double audience of *The Woman Warrior*. As was pointed out above (p. 94), the target text cannot reproduce this 'split' in its readership. Also in the case of *ghost*, the Chinese meaning of the item will probably be equally strange for all Finnish readers, which means that the readers will be approximately at the same distance from the text in these instances as the non-Chinese readers are from the source text. However, the multicultural meaning of the item will transfer, because the Finnish reader, like the American reader, will understand that the word is used in two different ways.

The translation problem posed by *ghost* was a matter of choosing between three Finnish words for *ghost*: *haamu*, *aave* and *kummitus*. It is possible to find slight differences in the meanings of these three words, based on their etymologies: *haamu* is related to *hahmo*, (a 'figure' or 'outline'), *aave* is related to the verb *aavistaa* ('anticipate', 'predict', 'foresee') and has previously referred also to an *omen*, 'enne' (Toivonen 1955: 3-4, 46). Both of these words refer to a spiritual presence without a body and bear connotations of paleness, vagueness and immateriality. These connotations fit in well with the fact that *ghost* in the source text refers also to white people. *Haamu* is nowadays also used figuratively for disturbing feelings and memories associated with a person's past (one can speak of *ghosts of the past*). This is one of the meanings that the word 'ghost' also acquires in the ST in the context of the narrator's autobiographical reminiscing.

*Haamu* was finally chosen mostly because of its phonetic properties: unlike *aave*, *haamu* begins with a consonant. In this choice, I was affected by Nord's comments on the phonology of written texts: she states that even though written texts are "physically mute and inert on the printed page, the text may speak and 'act' eloquently by itself for the inner ear and the inner eye of the reader" (1991b: 124). *Ghost* appears only twice in the second chapter and in places where its phonetic qualities do not matter very much. However, *haamu* is repeated prolifically elsewhere in the ST, and for these emphatic repetitions a word beginning with a consonant was considered more suitable:

Taxi Ghosts, Bus Ghosts, Police Ghosts, Fire Ghosts, Meter Reader Ghosts, Tree Trimming Ghosts, Five-and-Dime Ghosts (*WW*, 90) → taksihaamut, bussihaamut, poliisihaamut, palomieshaamut, etc.

If read aloud, *haamu* would be easier to pronounce in a compound, particularly if the first part of the compound ends with a vowel (cf. *poliisihaamut* or *poliisiaaveet*).

Another key word in the source text is the verb and noun *talk-story* (also appearing in the form *talking-story* and *story-talker*, *WW*, 184). In the source text, it is used mostly in connection with the narrator's mother, who is, according to the narrator, a great storyteller who "marked [her] growing with stories" (*WW*, 13). The subject matter of talk-stories are fairy tales, myths, legends as well as real events in the family history, as for example the story of the 'No Name Woman' in *The Woman Warrior*.

It is pointed out several times in the source text that Chinese and American storytelling differ radically from each other. The narrator has come to recognize the difference between her mother's style of storytelling and the one at American school:

Things follow in lines at school. They take stories and teach us to turn them into essays. [...] And I don't want to listen to any more of your stories; they have no logic. They scramble me up. You lie with stories. You won't tell me a story and then say, 'This is a true story,' or, 'This is just a story.' I can't tell the difference. (*WW*, 180)

Thus, as is the case with ghosts, stories are different in different cultures. The narrator marks this difference by using two words: *talking-story* for the Chinese and *storytelling* for the American ways of telling stories. Apparently Kingston has borrowed *talk-story* from Hawai'ian pidgin English (Brownmiller 1977:214, cited at <http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/canam/kingston.htm>, University of North Carolina at Pembroke). This would be corroborated by the fact that such a concept indeed exists and refers to casual conversation and story-telling in Hawaii. When writing *The Woman Warrior*, Kingston lived in Hawaii which has a large Chinese American population. It is possible that the word is a Chinese-English hybrid, a calque from a Chinese word for storytelling.

The translation problem with *talking-story* lies in finding a Finnish word that would have a similar foreign, pidgin-sounding element in it. The possibility of making a new calque of the source text's word was considered – e.g. *puhua-tarinaa*, *tarinanpuhuminen*, *tarinanpuhuja*. Such a word would sound strange, but so does *talk-story* to the Anglophone reader. However, whereas *talk-story* is identified by the source text reader as strange and foreign-sounding, *puhua-tarinaa* would only sound strange.

An optional approach to the translation problem could be to translate *talk-story* in a way that marks the word as culturally significant and deviant from the mainstream term *storytelling*. Talk-storying is an oral, traditional form of storytelling, and possibly this could provide a clue for its translation. A similarly traditional phenomenon in Finnish culture would be the ancient Karelian folk song custom *runonlaulanta* ('rune singing'). Another approach to the problem would be to use slang, e.g. *iskeä tarinaa, heittää läppää*, to stress the oral, informal quality of talk-storying. That would, however bear a connotation of urban youthfulness, which might fit the young narrator but not her mother and the other Chinese storytellers. Yet another option would be dialect or colloquial style: for example *haastella* or *turista* which, conversely, might fit the older generation with a rural background but not the narrator. These options were interesting to think about, but were discarded since they would produce the wrong kind of cultural distance, being too 'Finnish' for the Chinese American context.

The translation problem posed by *talk-story* was finally solved by using a domesticating or adapting strategy, choosing the words *tarinoida* and *tarinoitsija* for *talk-story* and *story-talker* while using *kertoa tarinoita* and *tarinankertoja* for *storytelling* and *storyteller*. The distinction between the two terms in the source text is reproduced but in such an unobtrusive manner that will possibly escape the target text reader, and of course lacks entirely the foreign element. This creates a loss of special, multicultural signification in the text, which could perhaps be compensated for at another instance in the TT.

There are also other coinages and nonce-words in the source text that have a hyphen and a 'foreign ring' to them. In the second chapter, there are the words *rank-stalks*, *scar-words* and *not-eat*. In the translation of all of these items, the hyphen was lost, *Arpi-sanat* and *ei-syödä* did not sound particularly good, and they were translated simply as *arpisanat* and *olla syömättä*. As for *rank-stalks*, the whole item turned out to be very difficult to translate. It is not altogether clear what the item means, but it is my suspicion that it refers to stalks that are attached to a Chinese warrior's headgear and which exhibit their rank. This cannot be expected to be familiar to Finns and presumably not to the non-Chinese American ST readers either. The translation strategy that was resorted to is a loose paraphrase: *heidän kypäriinsä kiinnitetyjä ruokoja* ('stalks attached

to their helmets’) which loses the creative and foreign element in the source text, is not as compact, and does not convey the full meaning of the source text’s expression either.

By contrast, in one other instance it was possible to use Finnish creatively and form a hyphenated nonce-word in the style of the ST:

81) Miekat heiluivat auki-kiinni kuin hullut sakset [...].  
The swords opened and closed, scissoring madly [...]. (142)

This strategy could perhaps be employed in some other instances as well, if not in the second chapter, then possibly in some other part of the whole ST.

#### 4.4.4 Chinese items

In addition to items that can be said to belong to the American or Chinese American cultural context, there are items in the text that could be termed ‘Chinese’ – though with some reservation, as the source text does not claim to be an authority on the Chinese tradition. One of these items is *white crane boxing* (122). The source text defines it as a Chinese martial art invented by a woman, who (according to legend) learnt the skill by watching the movements of white cranes. The item is interesting from the point of view of cultural distances for a number of reasons. First of all, it is one of the few items in the second chapter that places the text as slightly ‘old’. Boxing is a term that Westerners used for Chinese martial arts in times when the only martial arts that were generally known were wrestling and boxing. Thus, *boxing* might be a term that readers in 1976 would have recognized as a reference to Chinese martial arts.<sup>26</sup>

The word *boxing*, however, does not evoke the correct association, since white crane boxing is not boxing at all in the European sense. As is usual in Chinese martial arts, there are no gloves, the body movements are different from boxing movements, and a long pole or some other weapon can be used.

In more modern terms, white crane boxing is a type of *wushu* – or, as Westerners have come to name these arts, *kung fu*. *Wushu* might be the most equivalent translation

---

<sup>26</sup> For this knowledge as well as other knowledge concerning the subject I am mainly indebted to martial arts practitioners at Finnish discussion forum potku.net on the Internet. My initial question and the ensuing exchange of ideas is accessible online (see bibliography, Caro).

for the item, since it is the general Chinese name for martial arts. However, *wushu* would probably be recognized only by a very small minority of Finnish readers and for the rest be a completely strange word. *Kung fu*, on the other hand, is familiar, and compared to *boxing* evokes a more appropriate image (Chinese, kicking and hitting and possibly using weapons), but is not an entirely correct term, because for the Chinese *kung fu* actually means *any* skill that has been acquired through years of arduous training, not only martial arts. As regards the kung fu movies (both Chinese and Hollywoodian), they offer an entertaining exaggeration and distortion of the more ‘genuine’ practices of *wushu*. One can here ask with the narrator of *The Woman Warrior*: “What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?”

Unlike any other item in the ST, *white crane boxing* requires a decision from the translator’s part, firstly, regarding modernization/historicization. Would there be grounds for choosing *nyrkkeily*, which would reflect usage current in the days of the source text’s publication? Has the author deliberately chosen to use *boxing* to familiarize the item for the American readers, or does the item reflect ignorance of the subject on her part? Another question concerns the item’s correspondence with ‘reality’: should the translator translate what the item ‘actually’ means (*wushu*), or use *kung fu*, which has the best potential for evoking a correct association in the average reader, although it means, strictly speaking, something different? If one wants to educate Finnish readers on the subject, *wushu* would be a suitable, foreignizing choice. The item could even be explained in a footnote or in a glossary of terms attached to the body of the text, which again would alter the distance between the reader and the text, calling attention to the cultural gap between Chinese and American (and Finnish) culture as well as to the text’s translatedness. If one wants to achieve fluency and (mis)understanding, *kung fu* is the best choice, and a less foreignizing one. Finally, *kung fu* was chosen because the function of the item in the source text is not to educate the readers about the ‘real’ Chinese tradition (otherwise it would not use *boxing*), nor to call attention to its translatedness as a source text, and therefore it is not necessary for the target text to do that either. *Nyrkkeily* would be domesticizing to the extent of evoking a completely wrong idea at least today, even if it did not in the 1970’s. It might actually defamiliarize or foreignize the item, because *kung fu* is the current cliché that best describes the Chinese martial arts, even if it is based on a misconception.

Another ‘Chinese’ item in the source text that turned out to be of interest is *Long Wall* (143). It is a very good example of the small but accurate gestures by which the text reveals cultural differences. The Long Wall is usually called the ‘Great Wall of China’ in English, and ‘Kiinan muuri’ in Finnish. However, in the ST the item is a translation into English of what the Chinese call *Wànlǐ Chángchéng*, the “10,000 Li long wall”. The reason why the source text uses *Long Wall* is, in my interpretation, to go against Western usage and underline the fact that the Chinese have their own, different name for their wall than the Westerners do, and moreover, since they look at it from the ‘owner’s perspective’, they need not call it ‘Chinese’. *Long Wall* in the source text is rather ingenious in that it will be unmistakably understood by the reader to mean the *Great Wall of China*, but is at the same time foreignizing and foregrounds the difference in perspective between the Chinese and the rest of the world. In fact, the whole passage is one of the moments in which the source text refers to ethnocentrism as not only an American or ‘white’ phenomenon, but a universal one. Also the Chinese are ethnocentric, regarding their own country and people as the centre of the world. When the woman warrior and her troops arrive at the northern border of China, they reach “the northern boundary of the world” (143).

*Long Wall* was translated as *Pitkä muuri*, to reproduce the defamiliarizing, foreignizing strategy already used in the source text. Venuti (1998: 82) argues that even though the task of translation is always fundamentally to domesticate, the translator “can choose to redirect the ethnocentric movement of translation so as to decenter the domestic terms that a translation project must inescapably utilize. This is an ethics of difference that can change the domestic culture”. This is what I believe the author is aiming at in making the slightly ‘decentering’ gesture of replacing the *Great Wall of China* not with *Wànlǐ Chángchéng* but with *Long Wall*: to help the readers see a foreign perspective to something that they may have thought was familiar.

An item that reveals how names can play a role in political history is *Peiping* (138, 143). Referring to the Chinese capital, the item could be translated as *Peking* or *Beijing* or even *Peiping*, which was the name of the city between the years 1928-1949.<sup>27</sup> *Beijing*,

---

<sup>27</sup> Both *Peking* and *Beijing* are currently approved by the Language Office of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. (Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus, 2003.)



the current as well as the old name for the city, means ‘northern capital’. The city was renamed *Peiping* (‘northern peace’) in 1928 by the Nationalist Kuomintang government after it won the Communist party in a struggle for power. The city lost its status as the capital and a new capital was established in Nanking. When the Communists took over in 1949, they renamed the city once again as Beijing and re-established it as the capital. The Kuomintang retreated to Taiwan and never acknowledged the new name and continued to call the city Peiping. *Peiping* is in fact a curious choice in the source text, since it refers to the city as the capital where the emperor resides, and this, historically speaking, cannot be correct. It is difficult to ascertain whether *Peiping* is an intentional reference to the historical period of 1928-1949, a mistake, or even an ‘intentional mistake’. On the whole, the peasants’ revolution in the woman warrior part does not refer to a specific, historical Chinese revolution but combines elements from, at least, the 1911 displacement of the Manchu emperor by Sun Yat-Sen (which was, like the woman warrior’s revolution, an uprising of the Han people, and involved the redistribution of lands) and the Communist Revolution in 1949 (alluded to by the references to red flags, scythes and hammers in the ST). As mentioned above (p. 23), the woman warrior story also contains elements from the life of general Yue Fei, a real historical figure from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, who fought in the service of the emperor, not against him. Thus, the text does not place the events firmly into one specific era in history. This creates a problem in deciding what the city ought to be called in Finnish. Finally, *Peking* was dismissed because it is a totally Western name for the city, given by Christian missionaries a century ago, and *Peiping* because it refers to a specific and short historical era which does not particularly fit in with the narrative events. In line with the translation of *Long Wall* as *Pitkä muuri*, the choice was finally *Beijing*, because that is, for the most part, what the Chinese have called the city.

To summarize the analysis of the culturally specific items in the ST, a division was made between American, Chinese American and Chinese items. The multicultural audience that the ST establishes for itself was found to be impossible to translate, since the TT cannot find for itself a similar double audience of 1) Chinese Americans, who are culturally closer to certain items in the text’s story world, and 2) other Americans who lack knowledge of these items. In general, the Finnish reader is probably less engaged with this aspect of the text, having no personal stake in the cultural and political issues

that the text addresses. However, what the TT can achieve is the transfer of the multicultural meanings of some of the concepts in the ST, (e.g. *ghost*, *Long Wall*) and thus foreground the issue of cultural difference. The American items were generally domesticized (*NAACP* and *CORE* → *rotujärjestöt*, *nigger yellow* → *neekerinmusta*), except for measurement words, which were foreignized (*maili*, *unssi*). The Chinese American items were generally domesticized (*talk-story* → *tarinoida*). Chinese items were both domesticized somewhat (*white crane boxing* → *valkoisen kurjen kung fu*, *Peiping* → *Beijing*) and foreignized (*Long Wall* → *Pitkä muuri*).

#### 4 CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to investigate the stylistic features and multiculturalism in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and in its translation to Finnish. The main object of analysis and discussion was the second chapter of the work and my translation of it. In a theoretical framework that was derived from literary studies, ideological/sociocultural translation theory and functional translation theory, stylistic and cultural issues in *The Woman Warrior* were analysed, with special attention to the translation strategies of domestication / foreignization and familiarization / defamiliarization.

In my own interpretation, influenced by readings by other critics, the ST as a multicultural work participates in an ideological project of strengthening 'Chinese Americanness' in the United States and raising readers' awareness of Chinese American identity and questions of cultural identity in general. The 'skopos' or purpose for the TT was defined as a 'function-preserving' or 'corresponding' translation. The aim was to translate *The Woman Warrior* in a way that conveys the idiosyncratic style and multicultural character of the ST to the TT. The author's intentions, or my personal interpretation of them, based on remarks made by the author, by critics and on my reading of the text, played an important part in the translation work.

At some stage in the translation process it began to seem that there were not enough translation problems for a sufficiently lengthy analysis. This is partly due to the long history of the translation project: the first drafts were made years ago with the very different aim of awakening the interest of a Finnish publisher. The *documentation* of problems began only when the translation was taken up again, after a long break, which means that many of the original problems had probably been forgotten. In the course of time, both the source text and the target text had become so familiar that ‘blindness’ to some problems was perhaps inevitable. It was also concluded that for a more substantial and balanced analysis, it would have perhaps been advisable to translate some other chapter of *The Woman Warrior* as well. For example the third chapter ‘Shaman’, which abounds in cultural references to China, would have given a great deal of difficult culturally specific material for the translator to grapple with.

However, despite the relative shortness and familiarity of the source text, translating *The Woman Warrior* was not particularly easy or straightforward either. There were certainly problems in the work, although they were perhaps of a different kind, or on a different level, than originally anticipated. Thus the assumption that the second chapter would offer enough material for the analysis was at least to some degree validated. The question that finally emerged as the guiding star in the translation work was: “How shall I represent the *subtleties* of the source text?” The second chapter of *The Woman Warrior* challenged the translator not so much with the quantity as the complex and subtle quality of its problems. In addition to the complexities caused by the text’s multicultural elements, the entries in the work diary suggested, and the text analysis confirmed, that many of the unresolved questions in the translation involved stylistic issues. The second chapter turned out to be particularly interesting in its lexical and syntactic elements, for example the subtle changes in register, the compact, dynamic and visual expression, and frequent use of ellipsis. These characteristics of the ST gave a slightly new focus for the analysis than what was originally planned: style emerged as another central object of analysis alongside multiculturalism. This motivated the introduction of more linguistically oriented theoretical concepts into the analysis, in order to complement the concepts of domestication and foreignization taken from sociocultural or ideological translation theory. Defamiliarization was also found to characterise the textual strategies in the ST, and was therefore adopted as a term for the analysis.

The stylistic subtlety of the ST perhaps resulted in too much concern for individual items and their successful translation. As Nord points out,

the translator [...] need not – and indeed must not! – transfer every single effect-producing feature as such, but, if this is required by the translation skopos, should transfer the global effect achieved by the particular combination of effect-producing features. (1991b: 135)

This was a difficult point to internalise, and the target text felt to be too dependent on the particulars of source text. A great deal of time was spent pondering on particular items or sentences. Both the translation work and the analysis perhaps went into too much hair-splitting detail and began to resemble poetry translation rather than prose translation. It would have been impossible to devote as much time on details if the ST had been longer. Also Nord's model in its meticulous attention to the translation process invited a pedantic approach to the work. However, in the last stages of the process things began to 'click', and I found myself to be more liberated from the particular turns of phrase of the ST. This improved the style of the TT considerably. I became more confident and creative in using translation strategies, no longer as worried about departing too much from the source text. In other words, the translation became less interfered by the source language and source text. The strategy of compensation in particular emerged as an important tool in creating a new style that 'works' in Finnish without being overly explicating or standardizing. Translation solutions that were seen to contribute to such a style were the use of noun compounds and hyphenated word coinages that were not in the ST. Thus it can be said that as regards style, the translation skopos defined for the TT was reached relatively well. The factors of interference and explicitation were recognized as factors in the translation process and could be counteracted to some extent. More work could still be done in order to achieve a style in the TT that would correspond to the economic and laconic style of the ST, and contain a corresponding amount of creative language use, for example in the form of coinages. As it stands now, the TT is, hopefully, approximately as defamiliarizing as the ST, and not a 'diluted' version of it.

The central objects of the translation analysis, style and multiculturalism, were also found to be interconnected. Maxine Hong Kingston has described her writing as a Chinese American "fusion language" with "Chinese tonalities and accents" (p. 34). Thus, some characteristics of the ST, such as hyphenated noun coinages and elliptic sentence

structures, the small number of connective items, fragmented sentences and deviating punctuation patterns, can perhaps be interpreted not only as markers of Kingston's individual style but also as echoes from the word-formation patterns, syntactic structures and rhythms of the Chinese language, creating a style that is distinctly 'Chinese American'. Hence some of the characteristics of the ST that were described as 'familiarizing' in the analysis, could equally well be termed 'foreignizing'. It is interesting to speculate on the connections between the Chinese language and Kingston's style, for example the visual and compact character of Kingston's prose and the ideographic Chinese language, but a proper exploration of such aspects of *The Woman Warrior* would require knowledge of the Chinese language. Nevertheless, on the basis of the author's own comments and the analytical findings in this study, it is perhaps possible to speak of the style of *The Woman Warrior* as a multicultural, Chinese American style. To investigate the matter further, the syntactic features of literary texts by other Chinese American authors could be studied and compared with *The Woman Warrior*. This could prove a fruitful line of investigation, since Chinese American literary texts have been found to have some shared stylistic features (e.g. Ling 1990). It is interesting to note here that Amy Tan has commented that in her writing, she tries to recreate the English that her Chinese mother speaks:

I wanted to capture what language ability tests can never reveal: her intent, her passion, her imagery, the rhythms of her speech, and the nature of her thoughts. (Tan 1990:309)

A study of the influence of the Chinese language on the style in Chinese American literature would, however, require sound knowledge of the Chinese language and culture. Another, related topic for further research could be a study of the Finnish translations of other works by Chinese American writers, the most well-known of which is Amy Tan (*Keittiöjumalan vaimo* 1992, *Ilon ja Onnen tarinat* 1994, *Sata salattua aistia* 1996, *Luutohtorin tytär* 2000). Such texts could also be compared with the translation in this study.

The ST's multicultural character and its domesticating and foreignizing strategies were perhaps less successfully reproduced than the stylistic elements and the defamiliarizing effects. Some aspects could be translated, while others were found to be too bound up with the cultural context of the ST to transfer into the Finnish context.

Dasenbrock's division between explicit and implicit multiculturalism, as well as the concepts of domestication and foreignization taken from ideological translation theory, proved helpful in the translation analysis. The explicit multiculturalism, the fact that *The Woman Warrior* is about Chinese Americans in multicultural America, is of course easy to transfer on the level of the text's subject matter and themes. Like the ST reader, the TT reader will become aware of distinctions between Chinese, American and Chinese American cultures, as these are explicitly addressed and thematized in the text. However, the source text's lexical and syntactic means of representing a Chinese American voice probably do not carry to the TT, since the ST is quite subtle in this respect. The TT may have a vaguely 'foreignizing' effect on the Finnish reader, but how this effect can be distinguished from the defamiliarizing stylistic effect is questionable, since the readers will hardly identify the 'foreign' element to be Chinese. (Echoes from languages culturally closer to Finns, such as English, Swedish and Russian, might have been easier to produce.) The implicit multiculturalism of the ST was found to be more or less 'lost' in the translation. The cultural split in the ST's audience between Chinese American and other readers, produced by the narrator's direct address to Chinese Americans, as well as by lexical items such as *ghost* and *talk-story*, cannot be reproduced among the Finnish readership, since there are probably no Finnish readers who would also belong to the cultural group of Chinese Americans. Moreover, in addition to the multicultural features of the text that I have been able to identify in the ST, there are others that have gone completely unnoticed, since Kingston has pointed out that she has included elements in the text that can be appreciated by Chinese speakers only (p. 33-34). These 'inside jokes' constitute yet another implicitly multicultural feature in the ST that separates between those readers who can locate the 'hidden clues' and those who cannot. Thus, in evaluation of Dasenbrock's argument (p. 31) that explicitly multicultural texts are always implicitly multicultural too, one can either conclude that this does not hold automatically true for all texts, for example not for multicultural texts that are translated, or alternatively that *The Woman Warrior* loses its multicultural character in translation. I would be inclined to take the first view: that the TT succeeds in being a multicultural text even though it does not transfer the implicit multiculturalism of the ST. However, *loss* of multicultural meaning seems to be inevitable in the translation.

As the culturally specific items and their translations were analysed from the point of view of domestication and foreignization in the translation analysis, the dividing line between the two strategies was found to be rather elusive. Since translation as an activity is always fundamentally domesticizing, Oittinen and Paloposki even suggest that foreignizing might be “an illusion which does not really exist” and instead one could speak of “different levels or dimensions of domestication” (1998: 386). The situation is complicated by the fact that texts often, or even usually, employ *both* foreignizing *and* domesticating strategies, consciously or unconsciously (Eskola 2002: 11, Koskinen 2000: 59). This is certainly true of both the ST and the TT in the present study. For example, the ST includes items such as *ghost* that are domesticating or familiarizing to Chinese American readers, while they create the opposite effect of foreignization and defamiliarization in a reader who is not Chinese American. As far as the TT is concerned, it was demonstrated in the analysis of measurement words and their translations that even one and the same item can have a foreignizing or a domesticising effect, depending on the reader’s perspective. For example, one can think that miles and pounds are foreignizing, because they are foreign to the Finnish language, but they are also domesticizing, because they are what the Finnish reader would expect to find in an Anglophone text. Particularly when the ST is a multicultural text, in which cultural distances between text and its readers change constantly as in a kaleidoscope, the task of determining the ‘correct’ amount of domestication and foreignization for each item is a task that cannot be performed routinely but requires sensitivity to each unique instance in the text. Furthermore, what is domesticizing or foreignizing, and how much so, varies from reader to reader, as was discussed in connection with the items *kung fu*, *wushu* and *nyrkkeily*: what is familiar to a martial arts practitioner is not familiar to somebody else, and conversely, what is familiar to the average reader may cause irritation in a reader who is more knowledgeable in a certain subject. Consequently, the translation of cultural items was found to be often an art of compromise. It also became apparent that domestication and foreignization were useful concepts for addressing phenomena of cultural distance in the ST and TT, but very much bound to the particular cultural and textual situation, and to the reader. Thus, important questions to be asked in connection with domestication and foreignization are ‘where’, ‘how much’ and ‘to whom?’

The findings made in connection with the concepts of domestication and foreignization clearly confirmed the view taken in functional translation theory according to which translation strategies are subordinate to the translation skopos. If the appropriate cultural distance between the TT and the reader is fixed in the translation skopos (as Nord recommends), translation strategies need to conform to the skopos, not the other way around. In the present case, a decision to always domesticize the culturally specific items would have resulted in a TT culturally closer to the reader than the ST is to the ST reader. For example, if *Long Wall* had been translated as *Kiinan muuri*, an important aspect of the ST's multicultural meaning, implying difference between the Chinese and the Western world views, would have been lost. On the other hand, a general decision to always foreignize would have also worked against a translation skopos that aims achieving a corresponding cultural distance. For instance, to translate the names of American organisations NAACP and CORE as they are, without domesticating them, would be to distance the TT reader from the text too much, since the function of the items in the ST is not foreignizing at all. In other words, the translation work confirmed that the context where a certain cultural item occurs, and the intended reader of the text, ought to determine the translator's decisions. However, it could be added here that even though the appropriate degree of domestication or foreignization is context-bound and cannot be fixed for entire texts, translations perhaps ought to show some consistency in their 'cultural filtering', since readers are quick to spot discrepancies in texts. Whether the present TT is consistent enough in its translation choices is difficult to determine, and is perhaps easier to judge by some other reader less entangled in the particulars of the translation process.

In the translation skopos, the ideological project of the ST was interpreted as an aim to strengthen Chinese American culture in the United States and to raise readers' awareness of cultural differences in general, and thus swim against the current of mainstream American culture. In Venuti's (1998: 82) terms, it can be argued that *The Woman Warrior* 'decenters' familiar cultural concepts in an attempt to "change the domestic culture". In this respect my view differs from that of some critics who contend that *The Woman Warrior* supports the distorted, Orientalist image that Americans and Western people in general have of the Chinese and Chinese Americans (e.g. Liu 1996, Huang 2002). In my opinion, *The Woman Warrior* is too open about its cultural



ignorance and confusion to be ‘guilty’ of Orientalism. Instead of creating simplified stereotypes that are characteristic of Orientalism, *The Woman Warrior* questions, ironizes and offers multiple perspectives to people and events. Since the skopos of the translation was function-preserving, the ideological aim for the TT was to produce a text that at least does not reinforce, and hopefully even problematizes, cultural stereotypes that the readers might have of the Chinese and Chinese Americans. The American controversy around *The Woman Warrior* and the ongoing ‘Orientalism’ debate demonstrate that such stereotypes existed in the United States in the late 1970’s and continue to do so. Whether or not they exist in a similar form in today’s Finland is another matter. On the one hand, exocitization of other (e.g. African or Asian) cultures is certainly a familiar discourse to Finns as well, but on the other hand, Finns are situated outside the tradition of British-American imperialism and perhaps share more characteristics with ‘the East’ than mainstream Anglo-American culture does. Moreover, contemporary Chinese American culture has also been brought over to Finnish readers, most famously in the translations of Amy Tan’s novels, but also in other texts.<sup>28</sup> A successful translation of the multicultural and ideological aspect of *the Woman Warrior* entails that the Finnish readers’ reactions to the text can somehow be anticipated. This requires from the translator, as Nord (1991b: 132) points out, “practical imagination” and a “great sense of responsibility towards the successful outcome of a social process”. As with other aspects of the text, this was found to be successful in some instances, while in others less so. (The item ‘Pitkä muuri’ is an example of a satisfactory translation in this respect.) For evaluating the cultural aspect of the TT it would seem particularly important to receive comments from other readers. Without feedback, it is difficult to ascertain whether the translation manages to cause similar effects of subtle revelation concerning the complexity of American and Chinese American culture in the reader as the ST produced in me. Thus, another possible topic for further research could be a reader-response oriented study of the impact of the ST or the TT on Finnish readers. Readers could be asked about their cultural conceptions about Americans, the Chinese and Chinese Americans before and after reading the text.

---

<sup>28</sup> Several other Chinese American authors translated into Finnish, for example Bette Bao Lord (*Kevätkuu* 1983, *Kiinalainen mosaiikki* 1991), Ha Jin (*Odotus* 2000), and Anchee Min (*Madame Mao* 2001, *Punainen Atsalea* 1994).

In general, the research method and the theoretical concepts employed in this study were found to suit their purpose relatively well. Nord's version of skopos theory provided solid guidelines for holding the analysis together, as well as some useful concepts, such as cultural distance, for the analysis. Concepts taken from linguistics and stylistics such as ellipsis, register, and defamiliarization, were helpful in identifying and discussing key aspects of the ST's style. Cultural or ideological translation theory, with its emphasis on the translator's important role as a rewriter of texts, made me as a translator more conscious of my own cultural and ideological position. The concepts of domestication and foreignization proved applicable for the analysis as well, even though they were found to be very much context-bound. It was my conviction before undertaking the study that 'big' cultural and ideological issues in literature are often best illustrated by specific examples from texts, and that such issues can be reflected on any textual level, phonology, punctuation, or the lexis for instance. The translation analysis confirmed my view: vague intuitions about what the text 'is doing' were given substance by findings about the lexical, syntactic, even phonological features of the ST. However, it is possible that the present study suffers from an overly wide theoretical background and fails to synthesize its various elements. If some further research were undertaken on a similar topic, it might be advisable to concentrate more on one particular line of research. The emphasis could shift towards a more linguistically and/or stylistically oriented analysis, adding elements that are included in Nord's model (1991b: 100, 106-107, 114) but overlooked in the present analysis, such as theme-rheme structure, use of non-finite constructions, text composition, or the use of rhetorical devices other than metaphor and simile. Such an analysis could include a cultural dimension and aim to explore whether *The Woman Warrior* is written in the Chinese American 'fusion language' referred to by Kingston, and if so, how the 'fusion' is achieved. The focus of research could equally well be shifted towards a more culturally or ideologically oriented study, in which case it would be interesting to investigate the 'cultural translatedness' of the ST further. Such an approach would call for an analysis of Kingston's source materials, how they are used in the ST, and how their 'translatedness' can be conveyed into the TT. Other chapters, or preferably the whole text of *The Woman Warrior*, ought to be included in such a study, in order to have a sufficient amount of research material. Since cultural or ideological translation theory is most interested in the target text – its

time, place, reception and readership – it would also be more fruitful to study a TT that has been published.

To conclude, it can be said that the critical and complex multiculturalism of *The Woman Warrior* poses a considerable challenge to its translator, and that some loss of multicultural meaning seems to be inevitable in the translation work. However, this need not be only a cause of difficulty or despair, but can also point to possible ways of compensating for the loss. Paradoxically, one of the ways to ‘respect’ *The Woman Warrior* in translation is, I think, to add a fair dose of playfulness and creative boldness in the translation work. In my own evaluation, the TT would still benefit from revision that would concentrate yet more on the creation of both stylistic idiosyncracies and foreignizing effects. This would resemble the way in which Kingston, a self-declared cultural translator, rewriter, and manipulator, deals with her own source materials: Chinese as well as American myths. The narrator in *The Woman Warrior* comments that in ancient China, she would have been “an outlaw knot-maker”; one whose knots were so complicated that they drove the emperor blind (*WW*, 147). The narrator is making an analogy to her own complicated stories that do not follow the rules of story-telling, and resist unravelling. In their resistance the stories frustrate the expectations of ‘the emperor’ (the American reading public? her own Chinese upbringing?). The resisting, ‘outlaw’ element of the ST creates much of the pleasure, the wit and the rebellious power of *The Woman Warrior*. If possible, the translation should leave the reader with a similar combination of unease and pleasure as reading *The Woman Warrior* for the first time left me. In any case, reading and translating *The Woman Warrior* has offered me a chance to add my own Finnish voice into the multitude of voices that *The Woman Warrior*, its contexts and subtexts, and its various translations into other languages already constitute, with the hope that like Ts’ai Yen’s song, it ‘translated well’.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Primary source**

Kingston, M. 1981 (1976). *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. London: Picador.

**Secondary sources**

Aaltonen, S. 2002. Kun Antto Puuronen Suomeen muutti: Kulttuurisidonnainen käännytystutkimus työvälteenä. In Mäkinen and Oittinen (eds.), 388- 406.

Barnes, J. and Bennett, C. 2002. *The Asian Population 2000: Census 2000 Brief*. [online]. (9 Jun 2006) <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf> .

Bassnett, S. 1995. *Teoksesta toiseen*. Ed. R. Oittinen. Transl..K. Helander, R. Kalvas, K. Koskinen, R. Kurkijärvi, J. Penttinen, T. Pohja and S. Rouhento. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Bhabha, H. 1996. Culture's In-Between. In S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 53-60.

Caro (Carla-Rose Häkkinen). "White crane boxing." Online posting. 16 Dec 2005. Potku.net. (6 Sep 2006) <http://www.potku.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2791> .

Chesterman, A. 1997. *Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Cheung, K. 1990. The Woman Warrior versus the Chinaman Pacific: must a Chinese American Critic Choose between Feminism and Heroism? In M. Hirsch and E. Keller (eds.), *Conflicts in Feminism*. London: Routledge, 234-251.

Dasenbrock, R.W. 1987. Intelligibility and Meaningfulness in Multicultural Literature in English. *PMLA* [online], 102 (1), 10-19. (9 Jun 2006) <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00308129%28198701%29102%3A1%3C10%3AIAMIML%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V> .

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. [online]. (6 Sep 2006) <http://www.bartleby.com/114/> . Bartleby.com, 1999.

Elsworth, B. and P. Holm-Jensen 2001. Translating Michael Strunge: A Danish-English Dialogue. In E.Lewis, G. Barnes, P. Holm-Jensen and L. Hanane Hajd-Moussa (eds.), *Translation and Multiculturalism*. Studies in Literary Translation 9. Norwich: Norwich Papers, 48-58.

- Eskola, S. 2002. *Syntetisoivat rakenteet käännessuomessa. Suomennetun kaunokirjallisuuden ominaispiirteiden tarkastelua korpusmenetelmillä*. University of Joensuu Publications in the Humanities, 30. University of Joensuu.
- Fairclough, N. 1997. *Miten media puhuu*. Transl. V. Blom and K. Hazard. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Fairclough, N. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Fong, B. 1989. Maxine Hong Kingston's Autobiographical Strategy in *The Woman Warrior*. *Biography* 12 (2), 116-126.
- Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse*. Transl. J. Lewin. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Greenbaum, S. 1991. *An Introduction to English Grammar*. Harlow: Longman.
- Hall, S. 1997. Introduction. In S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage, 1-11.
- Hall, S. 1997. The Work of Representation. In S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage, 13-64.
- Hall, S. 1999. *Identiteetti*. Transl. and ed. M. Lehtonen and J. Herkman. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Halliday, M.A. and R. Hasan 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hatim, I. and B. Mason, 1997. *The Translator as Communicator*. London: Routledge.
- He, S. 1996. Chinese American Literature. In A. Knippling (ed.), *New Immigrant Literatures in the United States: A Sourcebook to Our Multicultural Literary Heritage*. Westport: Greenwood. 43-65. Ebrary. University of Jyväskylä libraries. (9 Jun 2006) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10017899&ppg=65> .
- Hinds, J. 1987. Reader versus Writer Responsibility: A New Typology. In U. Connor and R. Kaplan (eds.), *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 141-152.
- Hom, M.K. 1992 (1987). *Songs of Gold Mountain: Cantonese Rhymes from San Francisco Chinatown*. [online]. Berkeley Oxford: University of California Press. <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft1p300458/> .
- Huang, Y. 2002. *Transpacific Displacement : Ethnography, Translation, and Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature*. Ewing: University of California Press. Ebrary. University of Jyväskylä libraries. (9 Jun 2006) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10048982&ppg=171> .

- Huntley, E. D. 2000. *Maxine Hong Kingston : A Critical Companion*. Westport: Greenwood. Ebrary. University of Jyväskylä libraries. (9 Jun 2006) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10005639&ppg=63> .
- Hutcheon, L. 1988. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory and Fiction*. New York: Routledge.
- Ingo, R. 1990. *Lähtökielestä kohdekieleen: Johdatusta käänntieteeseen*. Helsinki:WSOY.
- Juhasz, S. 1985. Maxine Hong Kingston: Narrative Technique and Female Identity. In Catherine Rainwater and William Scheick (eds.), *Contemporary American Women Writers: Narrative Strategies*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 173-189.
- Kingston, M. 1982. Cultural Mis-readings by American Reviewers. In G. Amirthanayagam (ed.), *Asian and Western Writers in Dialogue: New Cultural Identities*. London: Macmillan, 55-65.
- Kingston, M. 1990 (1989). *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*. New York: Vintage.
- Kingston, M. 2003. Maxine Hong Kingston after the Fire. Interview with Miel Alegre and Dave Welch, 3 December, 2003 [online]. (9 Jun 2006) <http://www.powells.com/authors/kingston.html> .
- Koskinen, K. 2002. Ekvivalenssista erojen leikkiin – käänntiede ja kääntäjän etiikka. In Mäkinen and Oittinen (eds.), 374-387.
- Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus. Home page. 16 Oct 2003. (2 May 2006) [http://www.kotus.fi/kielitoimisto/nimisto/usein\\_esitettyja\\_kysymyksia/peking.shtml](http://www.kotus.fi/kielitoimisto/nimisto/usein_esitettyja_kysymyksia/peking.shtml) .
- Lefevere, A.1985. Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm. In T. Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. London: Croom Helm, 215-243.
- Lefevere, A. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.
- Ling, A. 1990. *Between worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Ling, J.1998. *Narrating Nationalisms: Ideology and Form in Asian American Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ebrary. University of Jyväskylä libraries. (9 Jun 2006) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10086906&ppg=125> .
- Marie. "Re: Nigger yellow." Online posting. 4 Mar 2006. (19 May 2006) <http://express.colorcom.com/bulletinboard/postings/1141473276.4.228.228.12.html> .

Mauranen, A. 1993. *Cultural Differences in Academic Rhetoric: A Textlinguistic Study*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang.

Myers, V. 1986. The Significant Fictivity of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. *Biography* 9 (2), 112-125.

Mäkinen, P. and R. Oittinen (eds.) 2001. *Alussa oli käänös*. 2nd edition. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Nord, C. 1991a. Scopos, Loyalty, and Translational Conventions. *Target* 3:1, 91-109.

Nord, C. 1991b. *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. Transl. C. Nord and P. Sparrow. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Oittinen, R. 2002. Tekstilaji ja strategia: Ajatuksia kaunokirjallisesta kääntämisestä. In Mäkinen and Oittinen (eds.), 165-185.

Oittinen, R. and O. Paloposki 1998. The Domesticated Foreign. In A. Chesterman, N. San Salvador and Y. Gambier (eds.), *Translation in Context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 373-390.

Puurtinen, T. 2002. Käännösten hyväksyttävyyys. In Mäkinen and Oittinen (eds.), 82-94.

Quinby, L. 1992. The Subject of Memoirs: *The Woman Warrior's* Technology of Ideographic Selfhood. In S. Smith and J. Watson (eds.), *De/colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 297-320.

Reiss, K. and Vermeer, H. 1986. *Mitä kääntäminen on*. Transl. P. Roinila. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Said, E. 1995 (1978). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books.

Tan, A. 1990. Mother Tongue. In *Joy Luck Club* 1995 (1989). Ed. R. Andrews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 302-309.

Toivonen, Y.H. 1955. *Suomen kielen etymologinen sanakirja*. Helsinki: Suomalais-ugrilainen seura.

University of Idaho. Home page. (10 Jun 2006)  
<http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/mcbeth/suekateltrs/sk122590.htm> .

University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Home page. (10 Jun 2006)  
<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/canam/kingston.htm> .

- Vehmas-Lehto, I. 1999. *Kopiointia vai kommunikointia: Johdatus käännösteoriaan*. 2nd edition. Helsinki: Finn Lectura.
- Venuti, L. 1998. *Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London: Routledge.
- Wales, K. 2001. *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. 2nd edition. Harlow: Longman.
- Wong, J.S. 1945. *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. New York: Harper&Brothers.
- Wong, S. 1993. *Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Ebrary. University of Jyväskylä libraries. (9 Jun 2006) <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/jyvaskyla/Doc?id=10035773&ppg=1> .
- Wong, S. 1995. Sugar Sisterhood: Situating the Amy Tan Phenomenon. In D. Palumbo-Liu (ed.), *The Ethnic Canon: Histories, Institutions and Interventions*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 174-210.
- Yuan, Y. 1999. The Semiotics of China Narratives in the Con/texts of Kingston and Tan. *Critique* 40 (3), 292-303.



## APPENDIX 1: THE SOURCE TEXT AND THE TARGET TEXT

When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talking-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves. We could be heroines, swordswomen. Even if she had to rage across all China, a swordswoman got even with anybody who hurt her family. Perhaps women were once so dangerous that they had to have their feet bound. It was a woman who invented white crane boxing only two hundred years ago. She was already an expert pole 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 morning when a 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. Recognizing the presence of great power, she asked the spirit of the white crane if it would teach her to fight. It answered with a cry that white crane boxers imitate today. Later the bird returned as an old man, and he guided her boxing for many years. Thus she gave the world a new martial art.

This was one of the tamer, more modern stories, mere introduction. My mother told others that followed swordswomen through woods and palaces for years. Night after night my mother would talk-story until we fell asleep. I couldn't tell where the stories left off and the dreams began, her voice the voice of the heroines in my sleep. And on Sundays, from noon to midnight, we went to the movies in the Confucius Church. We saw swordswomen jump over houses from a standstill; they didn't even need a running start.

At last I saw that I too had been in the presence of great power, my mother talking-story. After I grew up, I heard the chant of Fa Mu Lan, the girl who took her father's place in battle. Instantly I remembered that as a child I had followed my mother about the house, the two of us singing about how Fa Mu Lan fought gloriously and returned alive from war to settle in the village. I had forgotten this chant that was once mine, given me by my mother, who may not have known its power to remind. She said I would grow up a wife and slave, but she taught me the song of the warrior woman, Fa Mu Lan. I would have to grow up a

Kun me kiinalaiset tytöt kuuntelimme aikuisten tarinoita, opimme että pelkäsi vaimoksi tai orjaksi päätyminen merkitsi epäonnistumista. Meistä voisi tulla sankarittaria, miekkanaisia. Miekkalainen kosti kaikille perhettään loukanneille, vaikka hänen olisi pitänyt raivata tiensä koko Kiinan halki. Ehkäpä naiset ovat joskus olleet niin vaarallisia, että heiltä on pitänyt sitoa jalat. Valkoisen kurjen nyrkkeilyinkin keksi nainen, kaksisataa vuotta sitten. Hän oli jo ensiluokkainen sauvamiekkailija, Shao-linin temppelimunkkien opettaman isän tytär. Hän istui kampaamassa hiuksiaan eräänä aamuna, kun hänen ikkunansa ulkopuolelle laskeutui valkoinen kurki. Tyttö alkoi härnätä lintua sauvallaan, mutta lintu hipaisi sen pehmeästi syrjään siivellään. Tyttö ällistyi, ryntäsi ulos, ja yritti sysätä linnun alas oksaltaan. Lintu katkaisi hänen sauvansa kahtia. Tyttö tunnisti suuren voiman läsnäolon ja kysyi valkoisen kurjen hengeltä, opettaisiko se hänet taistelemaan. Kurki vastasi huudolla, jota tämän kamppailulajin edustajat matkivat tänäkin päivänä. Lintu palasi myöhemmin tytön luo vanhan miehen hahmossa, ja opasti tyttöä taistelutaidossa usean vuoden ajan. Näin tyttö tuli lahjoittaneeksi maailmalle uuden kamppailulajin.

Tämä oli yksi kesymmistä, uudemmissa tarinoista, vain johdatus aiheeseen. Äitini kertoi muitakin, ja niissä seurattiin miekkanaisten seikkailuja metsissä ja palatseissa vuosikausien ajan. Joka ilta äiti kertoi tarinoitaan, kunnes nukahdimme. En erottanut mihin tarinat päättyivät ja mistä unet alkoivat; äidin ääni muuttui unieni sankarittarien ääneksi. Ja sunnuntaisin menimme konfutselaiskirkkoon elokuviin, joita näytettiin keskipäivästä yöhön saakka. Katsoimme miekkanaisten hyppivän talojen yli; heidän ei tarvinnut ottaa edes vauhtia.

Vihdoin tajusin, että minunkin lapsuudessani oli ollut läsnä suuri voima, nimittäin tarinankertojaäitini. Aikuisena kuulin kerran loitsun Fa Mu Lanista, työstä, joka otti isänsä paikan taistelussa. Muistin heti, miten lapsena kuljin äidin perässä pitkin taloa ja lauloin hänen kanssaan Fa Mu Lanista, joka taisteli kunniaakkaasti, palasi hengissä sodasta ja asettui asumaan kyläänsä. Olin unohtanut tämän loitsun, jonka äitini oli opettanut minulle, ehkä tietämättä, kuinka voimakas se oli. Hän sanoi, että minusta tulisi pelkkä vaimo ja orja, mutta opetti silti minulle

warrior woman.

The call would come from a bird that flew over our roof. In the brush drawings it looks like the ideograph for 'human', two black wings. The bird would cross the sun and lift into the mountains (which look like the ideograph 'mountain'), there parting the mist briefly that swirled opaque again. I would be a little girl of seven the day I followed the bird the bird away into the mountains. The brambles would tear off my shoes and the rocks cut my feet and fingers, but I would keep climbing, eyes upward to follow the bird. We would go around and around the tallest mountain, climbing ever upward. I would drink from the river, which I would meet again and again. We would go so high the plants would change, and the river that flows past the village would become a waterfall. At the height where the bird used to disappear, the clouds would grey the world like an ink wash.

Even when I got used to that grey, I would only see peaks as if shaded in pencil, rocks like charcoal rubbings, everything so murky. There would be just two black strokes – the bird. Inside the clouds – inside the dragon's breath – I would not know how many hours or days passed. Suddenly, without noise, I would break into a yellow, warm world. New trees would lean towards me in mountain angles, but when I looked for the village, it would have vanished under the clouds.

The bird, now gold so close to the sun, would come to rest on the thatch of a hut, which, until the bird's two feet touched it, was camouflaged as part of the mountainside.

The door opened, and an old man and an old woman came out carrying bowls of rice and soup and a leafy branch of peaches.

'Have you eaten rice today, little girl?' they greeted me.

'Yes, I have, I said out of politeness. 'Thank you.'

('No, I haven't,' I would have said in real life, mad at the Chinese for lying so much. 'I'm starved. Do you have any cookies? I like chocolate chip cookies.')

laulun Fa Mu Lanista, soturinaisesta. Minunkin oli ryhdyttävä isona soturinaiseksi.

Saisin kutsun kotimme yli lentävältä linnulta. Maalauksissa lintu on aivan kuin ihmistä tarkoittava kirjoitusmerkki: musta siipipari. Lintu lentäisi auringon edestä ja kohoaisi vuorille (jotka näyttäivät 'vuorta tarkoittavalta kirjoitusmerkiltä), halkaisten silmänräpäyksen ajaksi läpitunkemattoman, kiemurtelevan usvan. Olisin seitsemänvuotias sinä päivänä, kun lähtisin seuraamaan lintua kauas vuorille. Ohdakkeet repisivät kengät jalastani ja kivet raapisivat jalkani ja käteni verille, mutta minä vain kiipeäisin, katse tiukasti lintuun kohotettuna. Kiertäisimme korkeinta vuorta ympäri ja ympäri, koko ajan ylöspäin kiiveten. Sammuttaisin janoni joesta, joka tulisi vastaan yhä uudelleen. Lopulta olisimme niin korkealla, että kasvillisuus muuttuisi, ja kylämme läpi virtaava joki osoittautuisi vesiputoukseksi. Siinä korkeudessa, jossa lintu yleensä hävisi näkyvistä, pilvet muuttuisivat harmaiksi, kuin musteella värjäytyiksi.

Sittenkin kun silmäni olisivat jo tottuneet harmaaseen, näkisin vain lyijykynällä luonnosteltuja huippuja, hiilellä piirrettyjä kivenlohkareita, kaikki kovin synkeää. Olisi ainoastaan kaksi mustaa siveltimenjälkeä – lintu. Pilvien sisässä, lohikäärmeen henkäyksessä, en tietäisi enää, kuinka monta tuntia tai päivää oli kulunut. Yhtäkkiä, ääneti, astuisin sisään lämpimänkeltaiseen maailmaan. Siellä olisi uudenlaisia puita, jotka taipuisivat kohti vinoissa kulmissa, mutta yrittäessäni tähyillä alas nähdäkseni kyläni, se olisi kadonnut pilvien alle.

Lintu, auringon säteiden kultaama, laskeutuisi lepäämään majan olkikatolle, joka erottuisi vuorenrinteestä vasta kun linnun jalat koskettaisivat sitä.

Ovi avautui, ja vanha mies ja vanha nainen tulivat ulos kantaen riisi- ja keittokulhoja sekä lehtevää persikkapuun oksaa.

'Oletko syönyt riisiä tänään, tyttö pieni?' he tervehtivät.

'Olen, kiitos', sanoin kohteliaasti.

('En vielä, kiitos kysymästä', olisin sanonut oikeasti, sillä vihaan kiinalaisten allituisia valheita. 'Minulla on kamala nälkä. Oisiko teillä keksejä? Pidän suklaakekseistä.')

'We were about to sit down to another meal,' the old woman said. 'Why don't you eat with us?'

They just happened to be bringing three rice bowls and three pairs of silver chopsticks out to the plank table under the pines. They gave me an egg, as if it were my birthday, and tea, though they were older than I, but I poured for them. The teapot and the rice pot seemed bottomless, but perhaps not; the old couple ate very little except for peaches.

When the mountains and the pines turned into blue oxen, blue dogs and blue people standing, the old couple asked me to spend the night in the hut. I thought about the long way down in the ghostly dark and decided yes. The inside of the hut seemed as large as the outdoors. Pine needles covered the floor in thick patterns; someone had carefully arranged the yellow, green and brown pine needles according to age. When I stepped carelessly and mused a line, my feet kicked up new blends of earth colours, but the old man and the old woman walked so lightly that their feet never stirred the designs by a needle.

A rock grew in the middle of the house, and that was their table. The benches were fallen trees. Ferns and shade flowers grew out of one wall, the mountainside itself. The old couple tucked me into a bed just my width. 'Breathe evenly, or you'll lose your balance and fall out,' said the woman, covering me with a silk bag stuffed with feathers and herbs. 'Opera singers, who begin their training at five, sleep in beds like this.' Then the two of them went outside, and through the window I could see them pull on a rope looped over a branch. The rope was tied to the roof, and the roof opened up like a basket lid. I would sleep with the moon and the stars. I did not see whether the old people slept, so quickly did I drop off, but they would be there waking me with food in the morning.

'Little girl, you have spent almost a day and a night with us,' the old woman said. I the morning light I could see her earlobes pierced with gold. 'Do you think you can bear to stay with us for fifteen years? We can train you to become a warrior.'

'What about my mother and father?' I asked.

'Aioimme juuri istua ruokapöytään', vanha nainen sanoi. 'Mitä jos liittyisit seuraamme?'

He olivat sattumalta olleet juuri tuomassa kolmea riisikulhoa ja kolmea paria hopeisia syömäpuikkoja puupöydälle mäntyjen katveeseen. He antoivat minulle kananmunan, aivan kuin olisi ollut syntymäpäiväni, ja teetä, vaikka he olivat minua vanhempia, mutta minä kaadoin heille. Teepannu ja riisikattila näyttivät pohjattomilta, mutta ehkeivät sittenkään olleet. Vanha pariskunta ei syönyt juuri muuta kuin persikoita.

Kun vuoret ja männyt muuttuivat sinisiksi häriksi, sinisiksi koiriksi ja sinisiksi seisoviksi ihmisiksi, vanha pariskunta kutsui minut viettämään yöni majassa. Mietin pitkää paluumatkaa aavemaisen pimeyden halki ja päätin suostua. Maja oli sisältä avara, aivan kuin olisimme olleet ulkona. Lattiaa peitti männynneulasista tehty paksu kuvio; joku oli järjestellyt keltaiset, vihreät ja ruskeat neulaset huolellisesti niiden iän mukaan. Astuessani varomattomasti ja turmellessani jonkin viivan, jalkani kaivoivat esiin uusia maan värien sekoituksia, mutta vanha mies ja vanha nainen kävelivät kuvioden päällä niin kepeästi, ettei neulanenkaan liikahtanut.

Keskellä taloa oli kivi, jota he käyttivät pöytänä. Penkeinä oli kaatuneiden puiden runkoja. Yhdellä seinällä, itse vuoren seinämällä, kasvoi saniaisia ja varjossa viihtyviä kukkia. Vanha pariskunta peitteli minut juuri ja juuri itseni levyiseen vuoteeseen. 'Hengitä tasaisesti tai menetät tasapainosi ja putoat', nainen sanoi, ja peitteli minut silkkisellä höyhenin ja yrtein topatulla silkkikitillä. 'Oopperalaulajat, jotka aloittavat koulutuksensa viisivuotiaina, nukkuvat juuri tällaisilla sängyillä.' Pariskunta poistui. Ikkunasta näin heidän vetäisevän köydestä, joka oli heitetty puun oksan yli. Köysi oli sidottu kattoon, joka aukesi kuin korin kansi. Nukuin kuun ja tähtien valossa. En nähnyt menivätkö nainen ja mies nukkumaan, niin pian itse nukahdin, mutta aamulla he olivat minua herättämässä aamiaisen kera.

'Tyttö pieni, olet viettänyt melkein kokonaisen päivän ja yön kanssamme', vanha nainen sanoi. Aamun valossa näin, että hänen korvanlehdissään oli kultaiset korut. 'Voisitkohan jäädä tänne viideksitoista vuodeksi? Me voimme tehdä sinusta soturin.'

'Entä äitini ja isäni?', kysyin.

The old man untied the drinking gourd slung across his back. He lifted the lid by its stem and looked for something in the water. 'Ah, there,' he said.

At first I saw only water so clear it magnified the fibres in the walls of the gourd. On the surface, I saw only my own round reflection. The old man encircled the neck of the gourd with his thumb and index finger and gave it a shake. As the water shook, then settled, the colours and lights shimmered into a picture, not reflecting anything I could see around me. There at the bottom of the gourd were my mother and father scanning the sky, which was where I was. 'It has happened already, then,' I could hear my mother say. 'I didn't expect it so soon.' 'You knew from her birth that she would be taken,' my father answered. 'We'll have to harvest the potatoes without her help this year, my mother said, and they turned away towards the fields, straw baskets in their arms. The water shook and became just water again. 'Mama. Papa,' I called, but they were in the valley and could not hear me.

'What do you want to do?' the old man asked. 'You can go back right now if you like. You can go pull sweet potatoes, or you can stay with us and learn how to fight barbarians and bandits.'

'You can avenge your village,' said the old woman. 'You can recapture the harvests the thieves have taken. You can be remembered by the Han people for your dutifulness.'

'I'll stay with you,' I said.

So the hut became my home, and I found out that the old woman did not arrange the pine needles by hand. She opened the roof; an autumn wind would come up, and the needles fell in braids – brown strands, green strands, yellow strands. The old woman waved her arms in conducting motions; she blew softly with her mouth. I thought, nature certainly works differently on mountains than in valleys.

'The first thing you have to learn,' the old woman told me, 'is how to be quiet.' They left me by streams to watch for animals. If you're noisy, you'll make the deer go without water.'

When I could kneel all day without my legs cramping and my breathing became even, the squirrels would bury their hoardings at the hem

Vanha mies nosti juomaleilin pois hartioltaan. Hän avasi kannen ja etsiskeli katseellaan jotakin vedestä. 'Katsopa tuonne', hän sanoi.

Ensin näin vain niin kirkasta vettä, että sen läpi saattoi nähdä leilin seinämien kuidut suurennettuina. Pinnalla näin vain oman pyöreän peilikuvani. Vanha mies tarttui leiliin peukalolla ja etusormella ja ravisti kerran. Vesi heilahti, asettui, ja värit ja valot muotoutuivat hohtelevaksi kuvaksi, joka ei heijastanut mitään ympärilläni näkyvää. Leilin pohjalla näin äitini ja isäni tähyilemässä taivaalle, eli minuun päin. 'Se on siis tapahtunut', kuulin äitini sanovan. 'En uskonut sen käyvän näin pian.' 'Sinähän tiesit alusta saakka, että joku päivä hänet otettaisiin', isäni vastasi. 'Tänä vuonna täytyy nostaa bataatit ilman hänen apuaan', äitini sanoi, ja he kääntyivät pois peltoja kohti, olkikoreja kantaen. Vesi heilahti ja muuttui pelkäksi vedeksi jälleen. 'Äiti! Isä!' huusin, mutta he olivat laaksossa eivätkä kuulleet minua.

'Mitä haluat tehdä?' kysyi vanha mies minulta. 'Voit palata takaisin nyt heti, jos haluat. Voit mennä kotiin nostamaan bataatteja tai voit jäädä tänne luoksemme ja opetella taistelemaan barbaareja ja rosvoja vastaan.

'Voit kostaa kyläsi puolesta', vanha nainen sanoi. 'Voit palauttaa heille varkaiden ryöstämät sadot. Kansasi tulee muistamaan kuuliaisuutesi.' 'Jään luoksenne', sanoin.

Niin majasta tuli kotini, ja sain selville, että nainen ei järjestänyt männynneulasia käsin. Hän avasi katon, silloin nousi syksyinen tuuli, ja neulaset järjestyivät palmikoksi – ruskeiksi, vihreiksi, keltaisiksi suortuviksi. Vanha nainen heilutteli käsiään kuin orkesterinjohtaja ja puhalteli lempeästi ilmaa suustaan. Ajattelin, että luonto totisesti toimii eri tavoin vuorilla kuin laaksossa.

'Aivan ensimmäiseksi sinun on opittava olemaan hiljaa', sanoi vanha nainen minulle. He jättivät minut purojen varsille seurailemaan eläinten puuhia. 'Jos meluat, peurat jäävät ilman vettä.'

Kun kykenin istumaan aloillani koko päivän niin, etteivät polveni jäykistyneet ja hengitykseni pysyi tasaisena, oravat alkoivat haudata varastojaan helmoihini ja taivutella häntiään juhlallisen tanssin tahtiin. Öisin hiiret ja rupikonnat katselivat minua – niiden silmät olivat nopeita ja hitaita tähtiä. Kertaakaan en kuitenkaan nähnyt kolmijalkaista rupikonaa – niiden houkutteluun

of my shirt and then bend their tails in a celebration dance. At night, the mice and toads looked at me, their eyes quick stars and slow stars. Not once would I see a three-legged toad, though; you need strings of cash to bait them.

The two old people led me in exercises that began at dawn and ended at sunset so that I could watch our shadows grow and shrink and grow again, rooted to the earth. I learned to move my fingers, hands, feet, head, and entire body in circles. I walked putting heel down first, toes pointing outward thirty to forty degrees, making the ideograph 'eight', making the ideograph 'human'. Knees bent, I would swing into the slow, measured 'square step', the powerful walk into battle. After five years my body became so strong that I could control even the dilations of the pupils inside my irises. I could copy owls and bats, the words for 'bat' and 'blessing' homonyms. After six years the deer let me run beside them. I could jump twenty feet into the air from a standstill, leaping like a monkey over the hut. Every creature has a hiding skill and a fighting skill a warrior can use. When birds alighted on my palm, I could yield my muscles under their feet and give them no base from which to fly away.

But I could not fly like the bird that led me here, except in large, free dreams.

During the seventh year (I would be fourteen), the two old people led me blindfolded to the mountains of the white tigers. They held me by either elbow and shouted into my ears, 'Run. Run. Run.' I ran and, not stepping off a cliff at the edge of my toes and not hitting my forehead against a wall, ran faster. A wind buoyed me up over the roots, the rocks, the little hills. We reached the tiger place in no time – a mountain peak three feet from the sky. We had to bend over.

The old people waved once, slid down the mountain, and disappeared around a tree. The old woman, good with the bow and arrow, took them with her; the old man took the water gourd. I would have to survive bare-handed. Snow lay on the ground, and snow fell in loose gusts – another way the dragon breathes. I walked in the direction from which we had come, and when I reached the timberline, I collected wood broken from the cherry tree, the peony, and the walnut, which is the tree of life.

tarvitaan rihmaan pujotettuja kuparikolikoita.

Vanhukset ohjasivat minua harjoituksissa, jotka alkoivat aamunkoitteessa ja päättyivät illansuussa niin, että saatoin seurata kuinka varjomme kasvoivat ja kutistuivat ja kasvoivat taas, maahan juurtuneina. Opin liikuttamaan sormiani, käsiäni, jalkojani ja koko kehoani ympyröiden muodossa. Kävellessäni painoin ensin kantapään maahan, ja jalkateräni osoittivat ulospäin kolmenkymmenen, neljäkymmenen asteen kulmassa, muodostaen kahdeksikkoja ja ihmistä tarkoittavan kirjoitusmerkin. Astelin hitaasti polvet hieman koukussa kuin taisteluun käyvä soturi. Viidessä vuodessa vahvistuin niin, että pystyin hallitsemaan jopa silmäterieni laajenemista. Opettelin matkimaan pöttöjä ja lepakkoja – 'lepakko' ja 'siunaus' kuulostavat kielessäni samalta. Kuuden vuoden jälkeen peurat antoivat minun juosta vierellään. Kykenin hyppäämään kuusi metriä paikaltani, kuin apinat, jotka hyppelevät majamme yli. Jokaisella olennolla on jokin piiloutumisen ja taistelemisen keino, jota soturi voi hyödyntää. Kun linnut laskeutuivat kämmenelleni, osasin rentouttaa lihakseni niiden jalkojen alla niin, etteivät ne päässeet lentoon.

Mutta en pystynyt lentämään sen linnun lailla, joka minut johdatti tänne, muuten kuin avarissa, vapaissa unissa.

Seitsemännen vuoden aikana (kun täyten neljätöistä), vanhukset johdattivat minut silmät sidottuna valkoisten tiikerien vuorille. Kumpikin piteli minua olkapäästä ja huusi korvaani: 'Juokse. Juokse.' Minä juoksin, ja putoamatta alas kallionkielekkeltä ja lyömättä otsaani vastaan-tuleviin seiniin, juoksin yhä nopeammin. Nousi tuuli, joka kannatteli minut yli juurien, kivien, pienten kumpujen. Saavutimme tiikerien paikan tuossa tuokiossa – se oli vuorenhuippu metrin päässä taivaankannesta. Meidän piti kumartua.

Vanhukset heilauttivat minulle kerran kättä, liukuivat alas vuorenrintettä ja katosivat puun taakse. Vanha nainen, taitava jousiampuja, otti nuolen ja jousen mukaansa, ja vanha mies otti juomaleilin. Minun olisi selviydyttävä tyhjin käsin. Lunta oli maassa, ja lunta tuli taivaalta hajanaisina ryöppyinä – silläkin tavalla lohikäärme hengittää. Kävelin suuntaan, josta olimme tulleet, ja kun tulin puurajalle, keräsin kirsikkapuun, pionipensaän ja saksanpähkinäpuun – elämän puun – katkenneita

Fire, the old people had taught me, is stored in trees that grow red flowers or red berries in the spring or whose leaves turn red in the fall. I took the wood from the protected spots beneath the trees and wrapped it in my scarf to keep dry. I dug where squirrels might have come, stealing one or two nuts at each place. These I also wrapped in my scarf. It is possible, the old people said, for a human being to live for fifty days on water. I would save the roots and nuts for hard climbs, the places where nothing grew, the emergency should I not find the hut. This time there would be no bird to follow.

The first night I burned half of the wood and slept curled against the mountain. I heard the white tigers prowling on the other side of the fire, but I could not distinguish them from the snow patches. The morning rose perfectly. I hurried along, again collecting wood and edibles. I ate nothing and only drank the snow my fires made run.

The first two days were gifts, the fasting so easy to do, I so smug in my strength that on the third day, the hardest, I caught myself sitting on the ground opening the scarf and staring at the nuts and dry roots. Instead of walking steadily on or even eating, I faded into dreams about the meat meals my mother used to cook, my monk's food forgotten. That night I burned up most of the wood I had collected, unable to sleep for facing my death – if not death here, then death someday. The moon animals that did not hibernate came out to hunt, but I had given up the habits of a carnivore since living with the old people. I would not trap the mice that danced so close or the owls that plunged just outside the fire.

On the fourth and fifth days, my eyesight sharp with hunger, I saw deer and used their trails when our ways coincided. Where the deer nibbled, I gathered the fungus, the fungus of immortality.

At noon on the tenth day I packed snow, white as rice, into the worn centre of a rock pointed out to me by a finger of ice, and around the rock I built a fire. In the warming water I put roots, nuts and the fungus of immortality. For variety I ate a quarter of the nuts raw. Oh, green joyous rush inside my mouth, my stomach, my toes, my soul –

oksia. Tuli, kuten vanha pariskunta oli minulle opettanut, varastoitui puihin, jotka kasvattavat punaisia kukkia tai punaisia marjoja keväällä tai saavat syksyisin punaiset lehdet. Keräsin polttopuuni suojaisista paikoista puiden alta ja käärin ne huiviini, jotta ne pysyisivät kuivina. Kaivelin paikoista, joissa arvelin oravien käyneen, ja varastin pähkinän tai kaksi kustakin piilosta. Myös ne minä kiedoitiin huiviini. Vanhukset olivat opettaneet minulle, että ihminen selviää ilman vettä viisikymmentä päivää. Säästäisin juuret ja pähkinät raskaita nousuja varten, niihin paikkoihin joissa mikään ei kasva, tai sen varalta, etten löytäisikään takaisin majalle. Tällä kertaa ei olisi lintua, jota seurata.

Ensimmäisenä yönä poltin puolet polttopuustani ja nukuin käpertyneenä vuorenrintettä vasten. Kuulin valkoisten tiikerien hiiviskelevän nuotion takana, mutta en erottanut niitä lumilaukuista. Koitti täydellinen aamu. Kiiruhdin eteenpäin keräten taas mennessäni puuta ja syötävää. En syönyt mitään ja join vain nuotioni sulattamia lumia.

Kaksi ensimmäistä päivää olivat lahjoja. Paastoaminen oli helppoa, minä tyytyväinen omiin voimiini; mutta kolmantena, vaikeimpana päivänä ylläitin itseni istumasta maassa, avaamasta huiviani ja tuijottamasta pähkinöitä ja kuivia juuria. Sen sijaan että olisin jatkanut tasaista kulkua tai edes syönyt, ajelehdin unelmiin äitini laittamista liha-aterioista, munkin ruokavalioni unohtaen. Sinä yönä poltin melkein kaiken keräämäni polttopuun, unettomana, kasvatusten kuoleman kanssa – ellei nyt täällä, niin jonain päivänä. Yöeläimiä, jotka eivät käyneet talviunille, näkyi saalistamassa, mutta olin luopunut lihansyönnistä vanhan pariskunnan luona asuessani. En pyydystänyt lähellä tanssahtelevia hiiriä tai pöllöjä jotka lentelivät aivan nuotioni vieressä.

Neljäntenä ja viidentenä päivänä, kun nälkä oli teroittanut näköni, näin peuroja ja seurasin niiden reittejä aina kun tiemme kohtasivat. Missä peurat järsivät, keräsin sieniä, kuolemattomuuden sieniä.

Kymmenentenä päivänä, keskipäivällä, pakkasin riisinvalkeaa lunta kuoppaan, jonka jääpuikko oli minulle osoittanut erään kiven keskellä, ja kyhäsin nuotion kiven ympärille. Kuumentuvaan veteen laitoin juuria, pähkinöitä ja kuolemattomuuden sieniä. Vaihtelun vuoksi söin

the best meal of my life.

One day I found that I was striding long distances without hindrance, my bundle light. Food had become so scarce that I was no longer stopping to collect it. I had walked into dead land. Here even the snow stopped. I did not go back to the richer areas, where I could not stay anyway, but, resolving to fast until I got halfway into the next woods, I started across the dry rocks. Heavily weighed down by the wood on my back, branches poking maddeningly, I had burned almost all of the fuel not to waste strength lugging it.

Somewhere in the dead land I lost count of the days. It seemed as if I had been walking forever; life had never been different from this. An old man and an old woman were help I had only wished for. I was fourteen years old and lost from my village. I was walking in circles. Hadn't I been already found by the old people? Or was that yet to come? I wanted my mother and father. The old man and old woman were only a part of this lostness and this hunger.

One nightfall I ate the last of my wood but had enough sticks for a good fire. I stared into the flames, which reminded me about helping my mother with the cooking and made me cry. It was very strange looking through water into fire and seeing my mother again. I nodded, orange and warm.

A white rabbit hopped beside me, and for a moment I thought it was a blob of snow that had fallen out of the sky. The rabbit and I studied each other. Rabbits taste like chickens. My mother and father had taught me how to hit rabbits over the head with wine jugs, then skin them cleanly for fur vests. 'It's a cold night to be an animal,' I said. 'So you want some fire too, do you?? Let me put on another branch, then.' I would not hit it with the branch. I had learned from rabbits to kick backwards. Perhaps this one was sick because normally the animals did not like fire. The rabbit seemed alert enough, however, looking at me so acutely, bounding up to the fire. But it did not stop when it got to the edge. It turned its face once towards me, then jumped into the fire. The fire went down for a moment, as if crouching in surprise, then the flames shot up taller than before. When the fire became calm again, I saw the rabbit had turned into meat,

osan juurista raakana. Oi, mikä vihreä riemukas tulvahdus suussani, päässäni, vatsassani, varpaissani, sielussani – elämäni paras ateria.

Eräänä päivänä huomasin kulkevani pitkiä matkoja esteettä, kevyin kantamuksin. Ruokaa oli niin niukalti etten enää pysähtynyt keräämään sitä. Olin saapunut kuolleelle seudulle. Täällä ei ollut edes lunta. En palannut runsaammille seuduille, minne en kuitenkaan olisi voinut jäädä, vaan päätin paastota kunnes olisin puolimatassa seuraavaan metsään ja ryhdyin ylittämään kuivaa kivikkoa. Olin väsynyt kantamaan polttopuita selässäni, tuskastunut pisteleviin oksiin, ja siksi polttanut suurimman osan puusta voimia säästääkseen.

Keskellä kuollutta maata en enää tiennyt mikä päivä oli. Ikään kuin olisin kävellyt aina; elämä ei ollut koskaan ollutkaan muunlaista. Olin vain haaveillut vanhan miehen ja vanhan naisen avusta. Olin neljätoista ja eksynyt kylästäni. Kuljin ympyrää. Eivätkö vanhukset olleet vielä löytäneet minua? Vai oliko se vasta edessä? Halusin isän ja äidin luo. Vanha mies ja nainen olivat vain osa tätä eksymistä ja nälkää.

Yhtenä iltana söin viimeiset ruokani, mutta polttopuut riittivät vielä kunnon nuotioon. Tuijotin liekkejä, mikä toi mieleeni ajat kotona kun autoin äitiä ruoanlaitossa, ja aloin itkeä. Tuntui hyvin oudolta katsella kyynelten läpi tulta ja nähdä taas äiti. Nuokuin, oranssina ja lämpöisenä.

Valkoinen jänis hyppäsi viereeni, ja hetken aikaa luulin sitä taivaasta pudonneeksi lumipaakuksi. Jänis ja minä tutkailimme toisiamme. Jänikset maistuvat kananpojalta. Äiti ja isä olivat opettaneet minulle miten tapetaan jänis lyömällä sitä päähän viiniruukulla ja nyljetään se siististi turkiksi. 'Nyt on kylmä yö eläimelle', sanoin. Kaipaanko sinäkin vähän lämpöä? Lisätäänpäs uusi oksa.' En halunnut lyödä jänistä oksalla. Jäniksiltä olin oppinut potkaisemaan taaksepäin. Ehkäpä tämä jänis oli sairas, sillä normaalisti eläimet eivät pitäneet tulesta. Jänis vaikutti kuitenkin varsin valppaalta tuijottaessaan minua tarkasti ja loikkiessaan lähemmäksi tulta. Mutta se ei pysähtynyt tulen ääreen. Se käänsi kasvonsa minua kohti ja hyppäsi sitten tuleen. Tuli laantui hetkeksi, kuin yllätyksestä kyyristyen, ja sitten liekit roihahtivat korkeammalle kuin ennen. Kun tuli rauhoittui taas, näin jäniksen muuttuneen paistiksi, juuri sopivasti ruskistuneeksi. Söin sen, sillä tiesin jäniksen uhranneen itsensä minulle. Se oli tehnyt



browned just right. I ate it, knowing the rabbit had sacrificed itself for me. It had made me a gift of meat.

When you have been walking through trees hour after hour – and I finally reached trees after the dead land – branches cross out everything, no relief whichever way your head turns until your eyes start inventing new sights. Hunger also changes the world – when eating can't be a habit, then neither can seeing. I saw two people made of gold dancing the earth's dances. They turned so perfectly that together they were the axis of the earth's turning. They were light; they were molten, changing gold – Chinese lion dancers, African lion dancers in midstep. I heard high Javanese bells deepen in midring to Indian bells, Hindu Indian, American Indian. Before my eyes, gold bells shredded into gold tassels that fanned into two royal capes that softened into lion's fur. Manes grew tall into feathers that shone – became light rays. Then the dancers danced the future – a machine-future – in clothes I had never seen before. I am watching the centuries pass in moments because suddenly I understand time, which is spinning and fixed like the North Star. And I understand how working and hoeing are dancing; how peasant clothes are golden, as king's clothes are golden; how one of the dancers is always a man and the other woman.

The man and the woman grow bigger and bigger, so bright. All light. They are tall angels in two rows. They have high white wings on their backs. Perhaps there are infinite angels; perhaps I see two angels in their consecutive moments. I cannot bear their brightness and cover my eyes, which hurt from opening so wide without a blink. When I put my hands down to look again, I recognize the old brown man and the old grey woman walking towards me out of the pine forest.

It would seem that this small crack in the mystery was opened, not so much by the old people's magic, as by hunger. Afterwards, whenever I did not eat for long, as during famine or battle, I could stare at ordinary people and see their light and gold. I could see their dance. When I get hungry enough, then killing and falling are dancing too.

The old people fed me hot vegetable soup. Then they asked me to talk-story about what

lihastaan lahjan minulle.

Kun on kävellyt metsässä tuntikausia – ja pääsin vihdoon kuolleesta maasta metsään – oksat pimentävät kaiken, silmille ei löydy helpotusta mistään, ja alat keksiä omia näkyjäsi. Myös nälkä muuttaa sen, miltä maailma näyttää – kun syöminen ei ole tavanomaista, ei näkeminenkään ole. Näin kaksi kultaista ihmistä tanssimassa maan tansseja. He pyörivät ympäri niin täydellisesti että muodostivat yhdessä maapallon akselin. He olivat valoa; he olivat sulaa, muuttuvaa kultaa – kiinalaisia leijonatanssijoita, afrikkalaisia leijonatanssijoita. Kuulin heileitä jaavalaisia kelloja, joiden ääni syveni kesken soiton intialaisiksi kelloiksi – hindulais-intialaisiksi, Amerikan intiaanien kelloiksi. Silmiäni edessä kultakellot hajosivat kultaisiksi tupsuiksi, jotka puolestaan aukenivat kuninkaallisiksi viitoiksi, jotka taas pehmenivät leijonan turkiksi. Leijonanharjat kasvoivat korkeiksi suliksi, jotka loistivat – muuttuivat valonsäteiksi. Sitten tanssijat tanssivat tulevaisuuden – konetulevaisuuden – vaatteissa jollaisia en ollut ennen nähnyt. Katselen vuosisatojen vaihtumista hetki hetkeltä, sillä yhtäkkiä tajuan ajan olemuksen, joka on sekä kieppuva että pysähtynyt kuten Pohjantähti. Ymmärrän myös miten työ ja kuokkiminen ovat tanssimista; kuinka talonpoikien vaatteet ovat kultaa, kuten kuninkaidenkin; ja kuinka tanssijoista yksi on aina mies ja toinen on nainen.

Mies ja nainen kasvavat aina vain suuremmiksi, kirkkaiksi. Silkkaksi valoksi. He ovat suuria enkeleitä kahdessa rivissä. Heillä on suuret valkoiset siivet. Ehkäpä on olemassa äärettömiä enkeleitä; ehkäpä näen kahden enkelin peräkkäiset hetket. Niiden kirkkaus on minulle liikaa ja peitän enkeleiden tuijottamisesta kipeät silmäni. Kun lasen käteni silmiltäni ja katson uudelleen, näen yhden ruskean ja yhden harmaan hahmon – vanhan miehen ja naisen – kävelevän minua kohti mäntymetsästä.

Vaikuttaa siltä, että mysteeri raottui minulle pikemminkin nälän kuin vanhusten taikavoimien ansiosta. Siitä lähtien, aina kun paastosin pitkään, pystyin näkemään valon ja kullan tavallisissa ihmisissä tuijottamalla heitä. Näin heidän tanssinsa. Kun olen tarpeeksi nälkäinen, kuoleminen ja kaatuminenkin ovat tanssia.

Vanhukset syöttivät minulle kuumaa kasviskeittoa. Sitten he pyysivät minua tarinoimaan

happened in the mountains of the white tigers. I told them that the white tigers had stalked me through the snow but that I had fought them off with burning branches, and my great-grandparents had come to lead me safely through the forests. I had met a rabbit who taught me about self-immolation and how to speed up transmigration: one does not have to become worms first but can change directly into a human being – as in our own humaneness we had just changed bowls of vegetable soup into people too. That made them laugh. 'You tell good stories,' they said. 'Now go to sleep, and tomorrow we will begin your dragon lessons.'

'One more thing,' I wanted to say. 'I saw you and how old you really are.' But I was already asleep; it came out only a murmur. I would want to tell them about that last moment of my journey; but it was only one moment out of the weeks that I had been gone, and its telling would keep till morning. Besides, the two people must already know. In the next years, when I suddenly came upon them or when I caught them out of the corners of my eyes, he appeared as a handsome young man, tall with long black hair, and she, as a beautiful young woman who ran bare-legged through the trees. In the spring she dressed like a bride; she wore juniper leaves in her hair and a black embroidered jacket. I learned to shoot accurately because my teachers held the targets. Often when sighting along an arrow, there to the side I would glimpse the young man or young woman, but when I looked directly, he or she would be old again. By this time I had guessed that the old woman was to the old man a sister or a friend rather than a wife.

After I returned from my survival test, the two old people trained me in dragon ways, which took another eight years. Copying the tigers, their stalking kill and their anger, had been a wild, bloodthirsty joy. Tigers are easy to find, but I needed adult wisdom to know dragons. 'You have to infer the whole dragon from the parts you can see and touch,' the old people would say. Unlike tigers, dragons are so immense, I would never see one in its entirety. But I could explore the mountains, which are the top of its head. 'These mountains are also *like* the tops of *other* dragons' heads,' the old

siitä, mitä valkoisten tiikerien vuorella tapahtui. Kerroin heille, että valkoiset tiikerit olivat vaanineet minua lumessa, mutta olin karistanut ne kimpustani palavilla oksilla, ja isoisovanhempani olivat tulleet saattamaan minut turvallisesti metsien halki. Olin kohdannut jäniksen, joka opetti minulle uhrautuvaisuutta ja aineen kiertokulkua: ei tarvitse ensin muuttua madoiksi, vaan voi muuttua suoraan ihmiseksi – aivan kuten me inhimillisyydessämme olimme juuri muuntaneet kasviskeiton ihmisiksi. Tämä sai heidät nauramaan. 'Kerrot hyviä tarinoita', he sanoivat. Käy nyt nukkumaan. Huomenna aloitamme lohikäärmeoppitunnit.'

'Vielä yksi juttu', halusin sanoa. 'Näin teidät ja sen, kuinka vanhoja todella olette.' Mutta olin jo unessa; puheeni oli pelkkää muminaa. Halusin kertoa heille matkani viimeisestä vaiheesta; mutta se oli vain yksi hetki monien viikkojen joukossa, ja siitä kertominen voisi odottaa aamuun. Sitä paitsi vanhukset varmaankin tiesivät siitä jo. Tulevina vuosina, jos törmäsin heihin äkkiarvaamatta tai näin heidät silmänurkastani, mies näytti pitkältä, komealta nuorukaiselta mustine pitkine hiuksineen ja nainen oli nuori ja kaunis ja juoksenteli paljain sääriin puiden lomassa. Keväisin hän pukeutui morsiamen tavoin, mustaan kirjailtuun takkiin, katajanoksia hiuksissaan. Opin ampumaan tarkasti koska opettajani pitelivät maalitalu-luja. Tähdätessäni nuolen vartta pitkin näin usein syrjäsilmillä vilahduksen nuoresta miehestä tai naisesta, mutta kun katsoin suoraan, he olivat vanhoja taas. Tähän mennessä olin jo päätellyt heidän käytöksestään että vanha nainen oli miehelle enemmän sisar tai ystävä kuin vaimo.

Palattuani selviytymiskokeesta vanhukset opettivat minulle lohikäärmetaitoja, mikä kesti toiset kahdeksan vuotta. Tiikereiden verenhimon ja vihan matkiminen oli ollut minulle villi ilo. Tiikereitä oli helppo löytää, mutta tarvitsin aikuisen viisautta tunteakseni lohikäärmeet. 'Lohikäärme täytyy osata tunnistaa sen näkyvien ja kosketeltavien osien perusteella', vanhuksilla oli tapana sanoa. Toisin kuin tiikerit, lohikäärmeet ovat niin valtavia, että en koskaan näkisi yhtäkään kokonaisuena. Mutta voisin tutkia vuoria, jotka ovat lohikäärmeen päälaki. 'Nämä vuoret ovat myös *kuin toisten* lohikäärmeiden päälakia', vanhukset sanoivat. Kiipeillessäni vuorenrinteillä ymmärsin olevani kirppu, joka ratsastaa avaruuden halki, lohikäärmeen otsalla. Lohikäärme tuntui

people would tell me. When climbing the slopes, I could understand that I was a bug riding on a dragon's forehead as it roams through space, its speed so different from my speed that I feel the dragon solid and immobile. In quarries I could see its strata, the dragon's veins and muscles; the minerals, its teeth and bones. I could touch the stones the old woman wore – its bone marrow. I had worked the soil, which is its flesh, and harvested the plants and trees, which are its hairs. I could listen to its voice in the thunder and feel its breathing in the winds, see its breathing in the clouds. Its tongue is the lightning. And the red that the lightning gives to the world is strong and lucky – in blood, poppies, roses, rubies, the red feathers of birds, the red carp, the cherry tree, the peony, the line alongside the turtle's eyes and the mallard's. In the spring when the dragon awakes, I watched its turnings in the rivers.

The closest I came to seeing a dragon whole was when the old people cut away a small strip of bark on a pine that was over three thousand years old. The resin underneath flows in the swirling shapes of dragons. 'If you should decide during your old age that you would like to live another five hundred years, come here and drink ten pounds of this sap,' they told me. 'But don't do it now. You're too young to decide to live for ever.' The old people sent me out into thunderstorms to pick the red-cloud herb, which grows only then, a product of dragon's fire and dragon's rain. I brought the leaves to the old man and old woman, and they ate them for immortality.

I learned to make my mind large, as the universe is large, so that there is room for paradoxes. Pearls are bone marrow; pearls come from oysters. The dragon lives in the sky, ocean, marshes, and mountains; and the mountains are also its cranium. Its voice thunders and jingles like copper pans. It breathes fire and water; and sometimes the dragon is one, sometimes many.

I worked every day. When it rained, I exercised in the downpour, grateful not to be pulling sweet potatoes. I moved like the trees in the wind. I was grateful not to be squishing in chicken mud, which I did not have nightmares about so frequently now.

On New Year's mornings, the old man let

tukevalta ja liikkumattomalta siksi, että sen vauhti poikkesi niin paljon omastani. Louhoksissa näin sen eri kerrostumat, lohikäärmeen verisuonet ja lihakset; mineraalit olivat sen hampaat ja luut. Kosketin kiviä, joita vanha nainen käytti koruina – lohikäärmeen luuydintä. Olin työstänyt maata, lohikäärmeen lihaa, ja kerännyt kasveja ja kiivennyt puihin, jotka ovat sen karvoja. Kuuntelin sen ääntä ukkosen jyryssä ja tunsin sen hengityksen tuulessa ja pilvissä. Salama on sen kieli. Salama antaa maailmaan punaisen värin, joka on väkevä ja onnea tuova – sitä on veressä, unikoissa, ruusuissa, rubiineissa, lintujen punaisissa sulissa, punaisessa karpissa, kirsikkapuussa, pionissa, kilpikonnan ja sorsan silmien ympärillä. Keväisin katselin jokia, joissa näin heräävän lohikäärmeen kääntyilevän.

Kokonaisimmillaan näin lohikäärmeen silloin, kun vanhukset leikkasivat palan kaarnaa yli kolmetuhatta vuotta vanhan männyn kyljestä. Pihka virtaa kaarnan alla kiemuraisissa lohikäärmeahmoissa, vihvasti kieppuen. 'Jos haluat vanhoilla päivilläsi elää vielä viisisataa vuotta, tule tänne ja juo viisi litraa tämän puun mahlaa', he neuvoivat. 'Mutta älä tee sitä nyt. Olet vielä liian nuori päättämään ikuisesta elämästä.' Vanhukset lähettivät minut keräämään punapilviyrttiä, lohikäärmeen tulen ja sateen tuotetta, joka kasvaa vain ukkosmyrskyn aikaan. Toin lehdet vanhalle miehelle ja naiselle, ja he söivät niitä ollakseen kuolemattomia.

Opin avartamaan mieleni maailman-kaikkeuden laajuiseksi, jotta siinä olisi tilaa paradokseille. Helmet ovat luuydintä; helmet kasvavat ostereissa. Lohikäärme asuu taivaalla, valtameressä, soilla ja vuorilla; ja vuoret ovat sen kallo. Lohikäärmeen ääni jyrysee ja kalkattaa kuin kuparipannut. Sen henkäys on tulta ja vettä, ja joskus lohikäärme on yksi, joskus taas monta.

Työskentelin joka päivä. Harjoittelin kaatosateessa ja olin kiitollinen siitä, etten ollut kuokkimassa bataatteja. Liikuin kuin puut tuulessa. Olin kiitollinen ettei minun tarvinnut tarpoa kanankakassa, mistä en enää nähnyt painajaisia yhtä usein.

Uudenvuodenpäivän aamuina vanha mies antoi minun kurkistaa vesileilin sisään, jotta näkisin

me look in his water gourd to see my family. They were eating the biggest meal of the year, and I missed them very much. I had felt loved, love pouring from their fingers when the adults tucked red money in our pockets. My two old people did not give me money, but, each year for fifteen years, a bead. After I unwrapped the red paper and rolled the bead about between thumb and fingers, they took it back for safekeeping. We ate monk's food as usual.

By looking into the water gourd I was able to follow the men I would have to execute. Not knowing that I watched, fat men ate meat; fat men drank wine made from the rice; fat men sat on naked little girls. I watched powerful men count their money, and starving men count theirs. When bandits brought their share of raids home, I waited until they took off their masks so I would know the villagers who stole from their neighbours. I studied the generals' faces, their rank-stalks quivering at the backs of their heads. I learned rebels' faces, too, their foreheads tied with wild oaths.

The old man pointed out strengths and weaknesses whenever heroes met in classical battles, but warfare makes a scramble of the beautiful, slow old fights. I saw one young fighter salute his opponent – and five peasants hit him from behind with scythes and hammers. His opponent did not warn him.

'Cheaters!' I yelled. 'How am I going to win against cheaters?'

'Don't worry,' the old man said. 'You'll never be trapped like that poor amateur. You can see behind you like a bat. Hold peasants back with one hand and kill the warrior with the other.'

Menstrual days did not interrupt my training: I was as strong as on any other day. 'You're now an adult,' explained the old woman on the first one, which happened halfway through my stay on the mountain. 'You can have children.' I had thought I had cut myself when jumping over my swords, one made of steel and the other carved out of a single block of jade. 'However,' she added, 'we are asking you to put off children for a few more years.'

'Then can I use the control you taught me and stop this bleeding?'

'No. You don't stop shitting and pissing,' she said. 'It's the same with the blood.'

perheeni. He söivät vuoden suurinta ateriaa, ja minä ikävöin heitä kovin. Olin tuntenut itseni rakastetuksi: rakkaus virtasi aikuisten sormista kun he tunkivat punaista rahaa taskuihimme. Vanha pariskunta ei antanut minulle rahaa, mutta jokaisena viitenätoista vuotena he antoivat minulle yhden helmen. Kun olin avannut punaisen paperikääreen ja pyöritellyt helmeä sormissani, he ottivat sen talteen. Söimme munkkien ruokaa kuten aina muulloinkin.

Katsomalla vesiruukun sisään pystyin pitämään tarkasti silmällä miehiä, jotka minun oli määrä teloitaa. Lihavat ukot, katsojasta tietämättöminä, söivät lihaa, joivat riisiviinaa; lihavat ukot istuivat pienten alastomien tyttöjen päällä. Katsoin kuinka mahtimiehet laskivat rahojaan ja kuinka nälkää näkevät miehet laskivat rahojaan. Kun rosvot veivät ryöstösaaliita kotiin, odotin kunnes he riisuivat naamionsa, jotta näkisin ketkä kyläläiset varastivat naapureiltaan. Tarkastelin kenraalien kasvoja, heidän kypäriinsä kiinnitettyjä ruokoja. Tutkin myös kapinallisten kasvoja, heidän otsilleen sidottuja hurjia valoja.

Vanha mies osoitti minulle sankarien vahvuudet ja heikkoudet klassisissa taisteluissa, mutta sodassa kauniit, hitaat vanhat taistelut muuttuvat sekasorroksi. Näin erään nuoren soturin tervehtivän vastustajaansa – ja viisi talonpoikaa iski hänen kimppuunsa takaapäin sirpein ja vasaroin. Vastustaja ei varoittanut häntä.

'Epäreilua!' minä huusin. 'Pitääkö minun pärjätä huijareillekin?'

'Älä huoli', vanha mies sanoi. 'Et sinä mene lankaan niin kuin tuo harrastelijaparka. Näet taaksesi kuin lepakko. Pidättelet talonpoikia yhdellä kädellä ja surmaat soturin toisella.'

Kuukautiset eivät keskeyttäneet harjoituksiani: olin yhtä vahva kuin muinakin päivinä. 'Nyt olet aikuinen', vanha nainen selitti minulle ensimmäisten tullessa, vuorilla oleskeluni puolivälissä. 'Nyt voit saada lapsia.' Luulin haavoittaneeni itseni hyppiessäni kahden miekkani, teräksisen ja jadesta veistetyn, ylitse. 'Pyydämme sinua kuitenkin odottamaan vielä muutaman vuoden ennen kuin hankit lapsia', hän lisäsi.

'Voinko sitten käyttää sinun opettamaasi kontrollia ja lopettaa verenvuodon?'

'Et. Et lakkaa kakkaamasta ja pissaamasta', hän sanoi. 'Sama pätee vereenkin. Anna sen tulla.'

Let it run.' ('Let it walk' in Chinese.)

To console me for being without family on this day, they let me look inside the gourd. My whole family was visiting friends on the other side of the river. Everybody had on good clothes and was exchanging cakes. It was a wedding. My mother was talking to the hosts: 'Thank you for taking our daughter. Wherever she is, she must be happy now. She will certainly come back if she is alive, and if she is a spirit, you have given her a descent line. We are so grateful.'

Yes, I would be happy. How full I would be with all their love for me. I would have for a new husband my own playmate, dear since childhood, who loved me so much he was to become a spirit bridegroom for my sake. We will be so happy when I come back to the valley, healthy and strong and not a ghost.

The water gave me a close-up of my husband's wonderful face – and I was watching when it went white at the sudden approach of armoured men on horseback, thudding and jangling. My people grabbed iron skillets, boiling soup, knives, hammers, scissors, whatever weapons came to hand, but my father said, 'There are too many of them,' and they put down the weapons and waited quietly at the door, open as if for guests. An army of horsemen stopped at our house; the foot soldiers in the distance were coming closer. A horseman with silver scales afire in the sun shouted from the scroll in his hands, his words opening a red gap in his black beard. 'Your baron has pledged fifty men from this district, one from each family,' he said, and then named the family names.

'No!' I screamed into the gourd.

'I'll go,' my new husband and my youngest brother said to their fathers.

'No,' my father said, 'I myself will go,' but women held him back until the foot soldiers passed by, my husband and my brother leaving with them.

As if disturbed by the marching feet, the water churned; and when it stilled again ('Wait!' I yelled. 'Wait!'), there were strangers. The baron and his family – all of his family – were knocking their heads on the floor in front of their ancestors and thanking the gods out loud for protecting them from conscription.

(Kiinaksi sanotaan: 'Anna sen kävellä'.)

Koska en saanut olla perheeni parissa näin tärkeänä päivänä, vanhukset lohduttivat minua antamalla minun katsoa vesileilin sisään. Perheeni oli vierailulla ystävien luona joen toisella puolella. Kaikilla oli pyhävaatteet yllä, ja he ojentelivat kakkuja toisilleen. Oli hääjuhlat. Äitini puhui isäntäväelle: 'Kiitos, kun otitte tyttäreemme sukuunne. Hän on varmasti nyt onnellinen, missä tahansa hän onkin. Jos hän on elossa, hän palaa varmasti luoksemme, ja ja jos hän on henki, te olette antaneet hänelle sukuhaaran. Olemme hyvin kiitollisia.'

Niin, minusta tulisi onnellinen. Olisin täynnä heidän rakkauttaan minua kohtaan. Rakas lapsuuden leikkiverini olisi aviomieheni, joka rakasti minua niin paljon, että oli valmis ryhtymään henkisuulhaseksi minun takiani. Meistä tulisi hyvin onnellisia sitten kun palaisin laaksoon, terveenä ja vahvana, en minään haamuna.

Näin vedessä lähikuvan mieheni ihanista kasvoista – jotka valahtivat valkoisiksi kun yhtäkkiä paikalle kumisteli ja kalisteli joukko hevosmiehiä sotisovissaan. Väki tarttui rautapannuihin, kuumiin keittokattiloihin, veitsiin, vasaroihin, saksiin, mihin tahansa käsiinsä osuvaan, mutta isäni sanoi: 'Heitä on liikaa', jolloin ihmiset laskivat aseensa ja odottivat hiljaa, ovi auki kuin vieraita varten. Hevosmiesten armeija pysähtyi talolle; jalkaväki lähestyi kaukaisuudesta. Yksi miehistä, jonka hopeinen haarniska säihkyi auringossa, luki suureen ääneen käsissään olevasta kääröstä, ja hänen sanansa avasivat punaisen reiän mustan parran keskelle. 'Paroninne on luovuttanut tältä alueelta viisikymmentä miestä, yhden kustakin perheestä', hän sanoi ja nimesi perheet.

'Ei!' minä huusin vesileilin sisään.

'Minä menen,' tuore aviomieheni ja nuorin veljeni sanoivat omille isilleen.

'Ei', sanoi isäni, 'minä menen itse', mutta naiset pitelivät häntä kunnes jalkamiehet olivat ohittaneet talomme, vieden mieheni ja veljeni mukanaan.

Ikään kuin marssivien jalkojen häiritsemänä vesi sekoittui, ja kun se tyyntyi taas ('Odottakaa! Odottakaa!' minä huusin), se heijasti tunte-mattomia ihmisiä. Paroni ja hänen perheensä – koko perhe – takoivat päätä lattiaan esi-isiensä kuvien edessä ja kiittivät ääneen jumaliaan, jotka olivat suojelleet heitä kutsunnoilta. Katselin paronin

I watched the baron's piggish face chew open-mouthed on the sacrificial pig. I plunged my hand into the gourd, making a grab for his thick throat, and he broke into pieces, splashing water all over my face and clothes. I turned the gourd upside down to empty it, but no little people came tumbling out.

'Why can't I go down there now and help them?' I cried. 'I'll run away with the two boys and we'll hide in the caves.'

'No,' the old man said. 'You're not ready. You're only fourteen years old. You'd get hurt for nothing.'

'Wait until you're twenty-two,' the old woman said. 'You'll be big then and more skilful. No army will be able to stop you from doing whatever you want. If you go now, you will be killed, and you'll have wasted seven and a half years of our time. You will deprive your people of a champion.'

'I'm good enough to save the boys.'

'We didn't work this hard to save just two boys, but whole families.'

Of course.

'Do you really think I'll be able to do that – defeat an army?'

'Even when you fight against soldiers trained as you are, most of them will be men, heavy footed and rough. You will have the advantage. Don't be impatient.'

'From time to time you may use the water gourd to watch your husband and your brother,' the old man said.

But I had ended the panic about them already. I could feel a wooden door inside of me close. I had learned on the farm that I could stop loving animals raised for slaughter. And I could start loving them immediately when someone said, 'This one is a pet,' freeing me and opening the door. We had lost males before, cousins and uncles who were conscripted into armies or bonded as apprentices, who are almost as lowly as slave girls.

I bled and thought about the people to be killed; I bled and thought about the people to be born.

During all my years on the mountain, I talked to no one except the two old people, but they seemed to be many people. The whole world lived inside the gourd, the earth a green

possunnaamaa, kun tämä mässäsi, suu auki, uhratun sian lihaa. Työnsin käteni leiliin tarttuakseni häntä kurkusta, ja hän hajosi kappaleiksi loiskuttaen vettä päälleni. Käänsin leilin ylösalaisin tyhjentääkseni sen, mutta yhtään pientä miestä ei vierinyt ulos.

'Miksi en voi mennä tuonne nyt heti auttamaan heitä?' huusin. 'Karkaan poikien kanssa ja piileskelemme luolissa.'

'Ei,' vanha mies sanoi. 'Et ole vielä valmis. Olet vasta neljätoistavuotias. Haavoittuisit turhan takia.'

'Odota vielä kahdeksan vuotta,' vanha nainen sanoi. 'Sitten olet iso ja paljon taitavampi. Mikään armeija ei pysty estämään sinua; voit tehdä mitä haluat. Jos menet nyt, sinut tapetaan, ja siinä menee hukkaan seitsemän ja puoli vuotta meidän aikaamme. Riistät omalta kansaltasi sankarin.'

'Pystyn jo pelastamaan pojat.'

'Meidän kovan työmme tarkoitus ei ole vain kahden pojan, vaan kokonaisten perheiden pelastaminen.'

Niinpä tietysti.

'Uskotteko todella, että pystyn lyömään kokonaisen armeijan?'

'Silloinkin kun vastassasi on koulutettuja sotilaita, useimmat heistä ovat miehiä, kömpelöitä ja raskasliikkeisiä. Sinä olet etulyöntiasemassa. Älä ole kärsimätön.'

'Saat aina välillä katsoa vesileillistä miestäsi ja veljeäsi', vanha mies lupasi.

Paniikkini oli kuitenkin mennyt jo ohi. Tunsin puisen oven sulkeutuvan sisälläni. Olin oppinut maalla, kuinka lakata rakastamasta eläimiä, jotka joutuisivat teuraaksi. Aloin heti taas rakastaa niitä kun joku sanoi, 'Tämä jätetään lemmikiksi', vapauttaen minut ja avaten puisen oven. Olimme menettäneet miehiä ennenkin, serkkuja ja setiä jotka vietiin armeijoihin tai joista tuli oppipoikia, melkein yhtä alhaisia kuin orjatytöt.

Vuosin verta ja mietin ihmisiä jotka kuolisivat; vuosin verta ja mietin ihmisiä jotka syntyisivät.

Kaikkina vuorella viettäminäni vuosina puhuin ainoastaan kahden vanhuksen kanssa, mutta he tuntuivat monelta ihmiseltä. Koko maailma asusti vesileilin sisällä, ja maapallo oli vihreä ja sininen pallo, lohikäärmeen leikkikalua.

Kun olin oppinut taikomaan esiin miekan – auringossa välkehtivän hopeasalaman –

and blue pearl like the one the dragon plays with.

When I could point at the sky and make a sword appear, a silver bolt in the sunlight, and control its slashing with my mind, the old people said I was ready to leave. The old man opened the gourd for the last time. I saw the baron's messenger leave our house, and my father was saying, 'This time I must go and fight.' I would hurry down the mountain and take his place. The old people gave me the fifteen beads, which I was to use if I got into terrible danger. They gave me men's clothes and armour. We bowed to one another. The bird flew above me down the mountain, and for some miles, whenever I turned to look for them, there would be the two old people waving. I saw them through the mist; I saw them on the clouds; I saw them big on the mountaintop when distance had shrunk the pines. They had probably left images of themselves for me to wave at and gone about their other business.

When I reached my village, my father and mother had grown as old as the two whose shapes I could at last no longer see. I helped my parents carry their tools, and they walked ahead so straight, each carrying a basket or a hoe not to overburden me, their tears falling privately. My family surrounded me with so much love that I almost forgot the ones not there. I praised the new infants.

'Some of the people are saying the Eight Sages took you away to teach you some magic,' said a little girl cousin. 'They say they changed you into a bird, and you flew to them.'

'Some say you went to the city and became a prostitute,' another cousin giggled.

'You might tell them that I met some teachers who were willing to teach me science,' I said.

'I have been drafted,' my father said.

'No, Father,' I said. 'I will take your place.'

My parents killed a chicken and steamed it whole, as if they were welcoming home a son, but I had gotten out of the habit of meat. After eating rice and vegetables, I slept for a long time, preparation for the work ahead.

In the morning my parents woke me and asked that I come with them to the family hall. 'Stay in your nightclothes,' my mother said.

osoittamalla taivaalle, ja hallitsemaan sen iskuja ajatuksen voimalla, vanhukset sanoivat että olin valmis lähtemään. Vanha mies avasi leilinsä kannen viimeisen kerran. Näin paronin sanansaattajan lähtevän talostamme ja isäni sanovan: 'Nyt minun on lähdettävä sotaan.' Oli tullut aika kiiruhtaa alas vuorelta ja ottaa hänen paikkansa. Vanhukset antoivat minulle viisitoista helmeäni, joita voisin käyttää jos joutuisin vakavaan vaaraan. He ojensivat minulle miesten vaatteet ja sotisovan. Kumarsimme toisillemme. Lintu lensi edelläni vuorta alas, ja jonkin matkaa näin kaksi vanhusta vilkuttamassa aina, kun käännyn katsomaan. Näin heidät usvan läpi; näin heidät pilvien päällä; näin heidät isoina vuoren laella missä välimatka oli kutistanut männyt pieniksi. He olivat todennäköisesti jättäneet itsestään pelkät kuvajaiset minulle vilkutettavaksi ja menneet hoitamaan muita askareitaan.

Kun saavuini kylääni, isästä ja äidistä oli tullut yhtä vanhoja kuin noista kahdesta, joiden hahmoja en enää nähnyt. Autoin vanhempiani työkalujen kantamisessa. He kulkivat edelläni selkä suorana, kantoivat kumpikin koria tai kuokkaa keventääkseen minun taakkaani, ja vuodattivat salaa kyyneliä. Perheeni ympäröi minut niin runsaalla rakkaudella, että melkein unohdin ne, jotka eivät olleet paikalla. Ylistin uusia vauvoja.

'Puhutaan että kahdeksan tietäjää veivät sinut mukanaan opettaakseen sinulle taikojia,' sanoi pieni serkkutyttö. 'Sinut kuulemma muutettiin linnuksi, ja lensit heidän luokseen.'

'Jotkut sanovat että menit kaupunkiin ja rupesit prostituoiduksi', toinen serkku kikatti.

'Heille voi sanoa, että tapasin opettajia, jotka halusivat opettaa minulle tiedettä', sanoin.

'Minut on kutsuttu armeijaan', isäni sanoi.

'Ei, isä', vastasin. Minä otan paikkasi.'

Vanhempani tappoivat kanapojan ja keittivät sen kokonaisena, aivan kuin pojan palatessa kotiin, mutta minä en enää osannut syödä lihaa. Söin riisiä ja kasviksia ja nukuin pitkään, valmistautuen edessä olevaan työhön.

Aamulla vanhempani herättivät minut ja pyysivät minua tulemaan kanssaan suureen saliin. 'Jätä yöpaita päällesi', äitini sanoi. 'Älä vaihda vielä vaatteita. Hän piteli vesisoikkoa, pyyhettä ja kuumaa vesikattilaa. Isälläni oli viinipullo, mustepullo, kyniä sekä erikokoisia veitsiä. 'Tule mukaan', hän sanoi. He olivat lakanneet itkemästä tervetulo-

'Don't change yet. She was holding a basin, a towel and a kettle of hot water. My father had a bottle of wine, and ink block and pens, and knives of various sizes. 'Come with us,' he said. They had stopped the tears with which they had greeted me. Forebodingly I caught a smell – metallic, the iron smell of blood, as when a woman gives birth, as at the sacrifice of a large animal, as when I menstruated and dreamed red dreams.

My mother put a pillow on the floor before the ancestors. 'Kneel here,' she said. 'Now take off your shirt.' I kneeled with my back to my parents so none of us felt embarrassed. My mother washed my back as if I had left for only a day and were her baby yet. 'We are going to carve revenge on your back,' my father said. 'We'll write out oaths and names.'

'Wherever you go, whatever happens to you, people will know our sacrifice,' my mother said. 'And you'll never forget either.' She meant that even if I got killed, the people could use my dead body for a weapon, but we do not like to talk out loud about dying.

My father first brushed the words in ink, and they fluttered down my back row after row. Then he began cutting; to make fine lines and points he used thin blades, for the stems large blades.

My mother caught the blood and wiped the cuts with a cold towel soaked in wine. It hurt terribly – the cuts sharp; the air burning; the alcohol cold, then hot – pain so various. I gripped my knees. I released them. Neither tension nor relaxation helped. I wanted to cry. If not for the fifteen years of training, I would have writhed on the floor; I would have had to be held down. The list of grievances went on and on. If an enemy should flay me, the light would shine through my skin like lace.

At the end of the last word, I fell forward. Together my parents sang what they had written, then let me rest. My mother fanned my back. 'We'll have you with us until your back heals,' she said.

When I could sit up again, my mother brought two mirrors, and I saw my back covered entirely with words in red and black files, like an army, like my army. My parents nursed me just as if I had fallen in battle after

kyyneliä. Paha aavistaen haistoin hajun – metallisen, rautaisen hajun, aivan kuin naisen synnyttäessä tai suurta eläintä uhrattaessa, tai kun minusta vuoti kuukautisverta ja näin punaisia unia.

Äitini asetti tyynyn lattialle esi-isien eteen. 'Polvistu tähän', hän sanoi. 'Nyt voit riisua paitasi.' Polvistuin selkä vanhempiini päin, jotta kenenkään ei tarvinnut hävetä. Äiti pesi selkäni aivan kuin olisin ollut poissa vain päivän ja olisin vieläkin hänen pieni vauvansa. 'Me aiomme veistää koston merkit selkääsi', isäni sanoi. 'Kirjoitamme sinne lupauksia ja nimiä.'

'Minne tahansa menetkin, mitä vain tapahtuukin, ihmiset saavat tietää meidän uhrauksistamme', äitini sanoi. 'Etkä sinäkään koskaan unohda niitä.' Hän tarkoitti, että vaikka minut tapettaisiin, kuollutta ruumistani voitaisiin käyttää aseena, mutta me emme mielellämme puhu ääneen kuolemasta.

Isäni kirjoitti sanat ensin musteella, ja ne lepattelivät selkääni pitkin rivi toisensa jälkeen. Sitten hän alkoi leikata veitsellä: ohuita viivoja ja pisteitä varten hän käytti ohuita teriä, ja paksumpia varsia varten leveitä teriä.

Äitini kuivasi veren ja pyyhki haavat kylmällä, viiniin kastetulla pyyhkeellä. Se sattui kauheasti – terävät viillot, polttava ilma, ensin kylmä, sitten kuuma alkoholi – niin monenlaista kipua. Puristin polviani. Hellitin. Jännitys ei auttanut sen enempää kuin rentoutuskaan. Halusin itkeä. Ilman viidentoista vuoden koulutusta olisin kiemurrellut lattialla; minua olisi täytynyt pidellä paikallaan. Epäkohtien lista jatkui ja jatkui. Jos vihollinen nylkisi minut, ihoni läpäisisi valoa kuin pitsi.

Viimeisen sanan lopussa kaaduin kasvoilleni. Vanhempani lauloivat ääneen sanat, jotka olivat kirjoittaneet, ja antoivat minun sitten levätä. Äitini vilvoitteli selkääni. 'Pysyt luonamme kunnes selkäsi on parantunut', hän sanoi.

Kun pystyin taas istumaan, äitini toi kaksi peiliä, ja näin miten selkäni oli peittyneet mustien ja punaisten kirjainten riveihin, aivan kuin armeijaan, minun armeijaani. Vanhempani hoivasivat minua aivan kuin olisin uupunut taistelussa lukuisten voittojen jälkeen. Voimani palasivat pian.



many victories. Soon I was strong again.

A white horse stepped into the courtyard where I was polishing my armour. Though the gates were locked tight, through the moon door it came – a kingly white horse. It wore a saddle and bridle with red, gold, and black tassels dancing. The saddle was just my size with tigers and dragons tooled in swirls. The white horse pawed the ground for me to go. On the hooves of its near forefoot and hindfoot was the ideograph 'to fly'.

My parents and I had waited for such a sign. We took the fine saddlebags off the horse and filled them with salves and herbs, blue grass for washing my hair, extra sweaters, dried peaches. They gave me a choice of ivory or silver chopsticks. I took the silver ones because they were lighter. It was like getting wedding presents. The cousins and the villagers came bearing bright orange jams, silk dresses, silver embroidery scissors. They brought blue and white porcelain bowls filled with water and carp – the bowls painted with carp, fins like orange fire. I accepted all the gifts – the tables, the earthenware jugs – though I could not possibly carry them with me, and culled for travel only a small copper cooking bowl. I could cook in it and eat out of it and would not have to search for bowl-shaped rocks or tortoise-shells.

I put on my men's clothes and armour and tied my hair in a man's fashion. 'How beautiful you look,' the people said. 'How beautiful she looks.'

A young man stepped out of the crowd. He looked familiar to me, as if he were the old man's son, or the old man himself when you looked at him from the corners of your eyes.

'I want to go with you,' he said.

'You will be the first soldier in my army,' I told him.

I leapt on to my horse's back and marvelled at the power and height it gave to me. Just then, galloping out of nowhere straight at me came a rider on a black horse. The villagers scattered except for my one soldier, who stood calmly in the road. I drew my sword. 'Wait!' shouted the rider, raising weaponless hands. 'Wait. I travelled here to join you.'

Then the villagers relinquished their real gifts to me – their sons. Families who had hidden their boys during the last conscription

Valkoinen hevonen astui pihamaalle, missä olin kiillottamassa sotisopaani. Vaikka portit olivat tiukasti kiinni, sieltä se tuli, kuun puoleisesta ovesta – kuninkaallinen valkea ratsu. Sen satulassa tanssahtelivat punaiset, kultaiset ja mustat tupsut. Satula oli minulle juuri sopiva, ja siihen oli kaiverrettu kiemuraisia tiikeri- ja lohikäärmekuvia. Valkoinen hevonen kuopi maata lähtömerkkinä minulle. Sen kavioissa oli kirjoitusmerkki 'lentää'.

Olimme odottaneet vanhempieni kanssa juuri tällaista merkkiä. Nostimme hienot satulalaukut hevosen selästä ja täytimme ne lääkesalvoilla ja yrteillä, hiustenpesuun tarkoitettulla siniruoholla, paidoilla, kuivatuilla persikoilla. Sain valita, ottaisinko norsunluiset vai hopeiset syömäpuikot. Otin hopeiset, koska ne olivat kevyemmät. Aivan kuin olisin saanut häälahjoja. Serkut ja kyläläiset toivat kirkkaan oransseja hilloja, silkkipukuja, hopeisia kirjailusaksia. He toivat sinivalkoisia posliinimaljoja, joissa uiskenteli karppeja – ja maljoihin oli maalattu hehkuvan oranssieväisiä karppeja. Otin vastaan kaikki lahjat – pöydät, saviruukut – vaikka en mitenkään pystyisi kantamaan niitä mukanani, ja nappasin mukaan matkaa varten ainoastaan kuparisen keittoastian. Voisin käyttää sitä sekä ruoanlaittoon että syömiseen, eikä minun tarvitsisi etsiä sitä varten kulhonmuotoisia kiviä tai kilpikonnanukuoria.

Puin ylleni miesten vaatteet ja sotisovan ja sidoin hiukseni miesten tapaan. 'Oletpa sinä kaunis,' ihmiset sanoivat. 'Onpa hän kaunis.'

Nuori mies astui esiin väkijoukosta. Hän näytti minusta tutulta, ikään kuin hän olisi ollut vanhan miehen poika, tai vanha mies itse, kun häntä vilkaisi syrjäsilmillä.

'Minä haluan tulla mukaasi,' hän sanoi.

'Sinusta tulee armeijani ensimmäinen sotilas,' vastasin hänelle.

Pomppasin hevoseni selkään ja ihastelin sen minulle antamaa voimaa ja korkeutta. Samassa, kuin tyhjästä, paikalle laukkasi ratsastaja mustan hevosen selässä. Kyläläiset hajaantuivat sinne tänne, lukuun ottamatta ainoata sotilastani, joka jäi seisomaan rauhallisesti tielle. Vedin esiin miekkani. 'Odota!' ratsastaja huusi, nostaen aseettomat kätensä pystyyn. 'Odota. Tulin tänne liittyäkseni joukkoihisi.'

Sitten kyläläiset antoivat minulle todelliset

volunteered them now. I took the one their families could spare and the ones with hero-fire in their eyes, not the young fathers and not those who would break hearts with their leaving.

We were better equipped than many founders of dynasties had been when they walked north to dethrone an emperor; they had been peasants like us. Millions of us had laid our hoes down on the dry ground and faced north. We sat in the fields, from which the dragon had withdrawn its moisture, and sharpened those hoes. Then, though it be ten thousand miles away, we walked to the palace. We could report to the emperor. The emperor, who sat facing south, must have been very frightened – peasants everywhere walking day and night towards the capital, towards Peiping. But the last emperors of dynasties must not have been facing in the right direction, for they would have seen us and not let us get this hungry. We would not have had to shout our grievances. The peasants would crown as emperor a farmer who knew the earth or a beggar who understood hunger.

'Thank you, Mother. Thank you, Father,' I said before leaving. They had carved their names and address on me, and I would come back.

Often I walked beside my horse to travel abreast of my army. When we had to impress other armies – marauders, columns of refugees filing past one another, boy gangs following their martial arts teachers – I mounted and rode in front. The soldiers who owned horses and weapons would pose fiercely on my left and right. The small bands joined us, but sometimes armies of equal or larger strength would fight us. Then screaming a mighty scream and swinging two swords over my head, I charged the leaders; I guided the horse with my knees, freeing both hands for sword-work, spinning green and silver circles all around me.

I inspired my army, and I fed them. At night I sang to them glorious songs that came out of the sky and into my head. When I opened my mouth, the songs poured out and were loud enough for the whole encampment to hear; my army stretched out for a mile. We sewed red flags and tied the red scraps around arms, legs, horses' tails.

lahjansa – omat poikansa. Perheet, jotka olivat piilottaneet poikansa edellisten kutsuntojen aikaan, luopuivat nyt heistä vapaaehtoisesti. Otin ne, joita ilman perheet selviäisivät ja joilla oli sankarintulta silmissään, en nuoria isä enkä niitä, joiden lähtö särkisi sydämiä.

Me olimme varustautuneet paremmin kuin monet uusien dynastioiden perustajat, jotka marssivat pohjoiseen suistamaan keisaria valtaistuimelta; he olivat pelkkiä talonpoikia niin kuin mekin. Miljoonat olivat laskeneet kuokkansa kuivaan maahan ja kääntyneet pohjoista kohti. Istuimme pelloilla, joilta lohikäärme oli vetänyt pois kosteutensa, ja teroitimme kuokkamme. Sitten kävelimme palatsiin, vaikka tuhansien kilometrien päästä. Meillä oli keisarille ilmoitettavaa. Keisari, joka istui kasvot etelään päin, oli varmasti hyvin peloissaan – talonpoikien loputon virta kulki yötä päivää kohti pääkaupunkia, Bejingiä. Mutta dynastioiden viimeiset keisarit istuivat varmaan kasvot väärään suuntaan, sillä muuten he olisivat nähneet meidät eivätkä olisi antaneet meidän nähdä nälkää. Meidän ei olisi tarvinnut huutaa hänelle katkerina. Talonpojat kruunaisivat keisariksi talonpojan, joka ymmärtää maata, tai kerjäläisen, joka tuntee nälän.

'Kiitos, äiti. Kiitos, isä', sanoin lähtiessäni. He olivat kaivertaneet nimensä ja osoitteensa selkääni, ja minä palaisin vielä.

Laskeuduin usein hevoseni selästä ja kuljin sen vierellä, armeijani rinnalla. Kun halusimme tehdä vaikutuksen toisiin armeijoihin – rosvojoukkoihin, pakolaisiin, mestareitaan seuraaviin poikaporukoihin – nousin hevoseni selkään ja ratsastin edellä. Ne sotilaat, joilla oli hevosia ja aseita, tulivat vasemmalle ja oikealle puolelleni, mahdollisimman hurjilta näyttäen. Pienet joukkioit liittyivät meihin, mutta joskus yhtä vahvat tai meitä vahvemmat armeijat haastoivat meidät taisteluun. Silloin hyökkäsin johtajia kohti vimmatusti kiljuen ja kahta miekkaa pääni päällä heilutellen, ja päästin verenjanoisen armeijani ja malltamattomana tempovan hevoseni valloilleen. Ohjasin hevosta polvillani ja vapautin näin miekkakätteni, jolla sivaltelin vihreitä ja hopeisia renkaita kaikkialle ympärilläni.

Innostin ja ruokin armeijaani. Iltaisin lauloin heille voittoisia lauluja, jotka laskeutuivat minuun suoraan taivaasta. Kun avasin suuni, laulut tulvivat ulos niin kovaa, että koko leiri kuuli – ja armeijani

We wore our red clothes so that when we visited a village, we would look as happy as for New Year's Day. Then people would want to join the ranks. My army did not rape, only taking food where there was an abundance. We brought order wherever we went.

When I won over a goodly number of fighters, I built up my army enough to attack fiefdoms and to pursue the enemies I had seen in the water gourd.

My first opponent turned out to be a giant, so much bigger than the toy general I used to peep at. During the charge, I singled out the leader, who grew as he ran towards me. Our eyes locked until his height made me strain my neck looking up, my throat so vulnerable to the stroke of a knife that my eyes dropped to the secret death points on the huge body. First I cut off his leg with one sword swipe, as Chen Luan-feng had chopped the leg off the thunder god. When the giant stumped towards me, I cut off his head. Instantly he reverted to his true self, a snake, and slithered away hissing. The fighting around me stopped as the combatants' eyes and mouths opened wide in amazement. The giant's spells now broken, his soldiers, seeing that they had been led by a snake, pledged their loyalty to me.

In the stillness after battle I looked up at the mountaintops; perhaps the old man and woman were watching me and would enjoy my knowing it. They'd laugh to see a creature winking at them from the bottom of the water gourd. But on a green ledge above the battlefield I saw the giant's wives crying. They had climbed out of their palanquins to watch their husband fight me, and now they were holding each other weeping. They were two sisters, two tiny fairies against the sky, widows from now on. Their long undersleeves, which they had pulled out to wipe their tears, flew white mourning in the mountain wind. After a time, they got back into their sedan chairs, and their servants carried them away.

I led my army northward, rarely having to sidetrack; the emperor himself sent the enemies I was hunting chasing after me. Sometimes they attacked us on two or three sides; sometimes they ambushed me when I rode ahead. We would always win, Kuan Kung, the god of war and literature riding before me. I would be told

oli mailin levyinen. Ompelimme punaisia lippuja ja sidoimme punaisia riepua käsivarsiimme, jalkoihin, hevosten häntiin. Pukeuduimme punaiseen, jotta näyttäisimme yhtä iloista kuin uudenvuodenjuhlijat kyliin saapuessamme. Silloin ihmiset halusivat liittyä riveihimme. Armeijani ei raiskannut, otti vain ruokaa sieltä, missä sitä oli yllin kyllin. Missä kuljimmekin, toimme mukanaamme järjestystä.

Kun olin koonnut tarpeeksi suuren sotajoukon, rakensin sellaisen armeijan jolla saattoi hyökätä kokonaisesti lääneihin ja jahdata vesileilissä näkemiäni vihollisia.

Ensimmäinen vastustajani osoittautui jättiläiseksi, paljon suuremmaksi kuin se lelukenraali, jonka olin nähnyt vesileilin sisällä. Hyökkäyksen aikana erotin joukosta joukon johtajan, joka kasvoi kokoa juostessaan minua kohti. Katseemme nauliutuivat toisiinsa, ja tuijotin häntä silmiin kunnes hän oli niin lähellä, että minun oli pakko taivuttaa päätäni taakse. Kurkkuni oli nyt altis veitseniskulle ja laskin äkkiä katseeni alas, kohti jättiläisen salaisia kuolonpisteitä. Ensin katkaisin jättiläiseltä jalan yhdellä miekan sivalluksella, aivan kuin Chen Luang-feng ukkosenjumalalta. Kun jättiläinen niukutti yhä minua kohti, iskin siltä pään poikki. Siinä samassa se muuttui omaksi itsekseen – käärmeeksi – ja kiemurteli sihisten pois. Taistelu ympärilläni taukosi, ja osapuolet jäivät tuijottamaan meitä, suut ammoltaan. Jättiläisen taiait olivat rauenneet, ja nähdessään johtajansa olleen käärme, jättiläisen joukot vanhoivat uskollisuudenvalan minulle.

Taistelun jälkeisen hiljaisuuden keskellä katsahdin ylös vuorenhuippuja kohti; vanha mies ja nainen ehkä katselisivat minua sieltä ja olisivat iloisia, jos minä huomaisin sen. Heitä naurattaisi, kun he näkisivät vesileilin pohjalla pikku olennon iskevän heille silmää. Mutta vihreällä tasanteella, taistelukentän yläpuolella, itkivät jättiläisen vaimot. He olivat laskeutuneet alas kantotuoleistaan seuraamaan taisteluamme, ja nyt he syleilivät toisiaan ja itkivät. He olivat sisaruksia, kaksi pikkuruista keijua taivasta vasten, ja tästä lähtien leskiä. He olivat vetäneet esiin pitkät alushihansa kuivatakseen niihin kyyneliään, ja hihat lepattivat nyt suruisina vuorten tuulissa. Jonkin ajan kuluttua he nousivat istumaan tuoleihinsa ja palvelijat kantoivat heidät pois.

Johdin armeijaani pohjoista kohti, eikä minun tarvinnut juuri poiketa tieltäni; keisari lähetti

of in fairy tales myself. I overheard some soldiers – and now there were many who had not met me – say that whenever we had been in danger of losing, I made a throwing gesture and the opposing army would fall, hurled across the battlefield. Hailstones as big as heads would shoot out of the sky and the lightning would stab like swords, but never at those on my side. ‘On *his* side,’ they said. I never told them the truth. Chinese executed women who disguised themselves as soldiers or students, no matter how bravely they fought or how high they scored on the examinations.

One spring morning I was at work in my tent repairing equipment, patching my clothes, and studying maps when a voice said, ‘General, may I visit in your tent, please?’ As if it were my own home, I did not allow strangers in my tent. And since I had no family with me, no one ever visited inside. Riverbanks, hillsides, the cool sloped rooms under the pine trees – China provides her soldiers with meeting places enough. I opened the tent flap. And there in the sunlight stood my own husband with arms full of wildflowers for me. ‘You are beautiful,’ he said, and meant it truly. ‘I have looked for you everywhere. I’ve been looking for you since the day that bird flew away with you.’ We were so pleased with each other, the childhood friend found at last, the childhood friend mysteriously grown up. ‘I followed you, but you skimmed over the rocks until I lost you.’

‘I’ve looked for you too,’ I said, the tent now snug around us like a secret house when we were kids. ‘Whenever I heard about a good fighter, I went to see if it were you,’ I said. ‘I saw you marry me. I’m so glad you married me.’

He wept when he took off my shirt and saw the scar-words on my back. He loosened my hair and covered the words with it. I turned around and touched his face, loving the familiar first.

So for a time I had a partner – my husband and I, soldiers together just as when we were little soldiers playing in the village. We rode side by side into battle. When I became pregnant, during the last four months, I wore my armour altered so that I looked like a powerful, big man. As a fat man, I walked with the foot soldiers so as not to jounce the

perääni viholliset, joita metsästin. Joskus he hyökkäsivät kimppuumme kahdelta tai kolmelta suunnalta, joskus he taas väijyivät meitä edessäpäin. Me voitimme aina, sodan ja kirjallisuuden jumala Kuan Kung edellämme ratsastaen. Minustakin tulisi vielä monen tarun aihe. Kuulin joidenkin sotilaiden puhuvan – ja nyt joukossamme oli monia, jotka eivät olleet koskaan tavanneet minua – että aina, kun olimme olleet häviämässä, minä singautin käteni ilmaan kuin heittääkseni jotakin, ja vastustaja-armeija kaatui maahan, sikin sokin taistelukentälle. Taivaalta satoi päänkokoisia rakeita ja salammat iskivät kuin miekat, mutta ei koskaan minun puolelleni. He puhuivat minusta miehenä, enkä minä koskaan paljastanut heille totuutta. Kiinalaiset teloitivat sotilaana tai opiskelijana esiintyvät naiset, olivat he sitten taistelleet kuinka urheasti tai menestyneet kokeissa kuinka hyvin tahansa.

Eräänä kevätaamuna olin omassa teltassani työn touhussa, korjaamassa välineitä, paikkaamassa vaatteitani ja tutkimassa kartoja, kun kuulin yhtäkkiä äänen ulkopuolelta sanovan: ‘Kenraali, saanko luvan astua sisään?’ Teltta oli minulle kuin koti – en päästänyt sinne tunteettomia. Ja koska sotajoukossani ei ollut ketään perheeni jäsentä, kukaan ei koskaan tullut telttaani. Joentörmät, vuorenukeet, mäntyjen suojaisat verhot – Kiina tarjoaa sotilailleen kylliksi kohtauspaikkoja muutenkin. Avasin teltan oven. Siinä, auringonpaisteessa, seisoi mieheni, syli täynnä metsäkukkia minulle. ‘Olet kaunis’, hän sanoi, ja tarkoitti sitä. ‘Olen etsinyt sinua kaikkialta. Olen etsinyt sinua siitä päivästä lähtien, kun lintu vei sinut mennessään.’ Olimme kovin ihastuneita nähdessämme toisemme, kauan kadoksissa olleet, isoksi kasvaneet lapsuudenystävät. ‘Lähdin perääsikin, mutta sinä vain liu’uit kivikon tuolle puolen ja hävisit näkyvistä.’

Minäkin olen etsinyt sinua’, vastasin, ja teltta ympäröi meidät yhtä mukavasti kuin salainen maja joskus lapsena. ‘Aina, kun kuulin jostakin hyvästä taistelijasta, menin ottamaan selvää olitko se sinä’, sanoin. Näin, kun otit minut vaimoksesi. Olen niin iloinen, että otit minut.’ Hän itki riisuessaan paitani ja nähdessään arvet selässäni. Hän päästi hiukseni vapaaksi ja peitti niillä selässäni näkyvät sanat. Käännyn ympäri ja kosketin hänen kasvojaan – rakastin tuttua osaa ensin.

gestation. Now when I was naked, I was a strange human being indeed – words carved on my back and the baby large in front.

I hid from battle only once, when I gave birth to our baby. In dark and silver dreams I had seen him falling from the sky, each night closer to the earth, his soul a star. Just before labour began, the last star rays sank into my belly. My husband would talk to me and not go, though I said for him to return to the battlefield. He caught the baby, a boy, and put it on my breast. ‘What are we going to do with this?’ he asked, holding up the piece of umbilical cord that had been closest to the baby.

‘Let’s tie it to a flagpole until it dries,’ I said. We had both seen the boxes in which our parents kept the dried cords of all their children. ‘This one was yours, and this yours,’ my mother would say to us brothers and sisters, and fill us with awe that she could remember.

We made a sling for the baby inside my big armour, and rode back to the thickest part of the fighting. The umbilical cord flew with the red flag and made us laugh. At night inside our own tent, I let the baby ride on my back. The sling was made of red satin and purple silk; the four paisley straps that tied across my breasts and around my waist ended in housewife’s pockets lined with a coin, a seed, a nut, and a juniper leaf. At the back of the sling I had sewn a tiny quilted triangle, red at its centre against two shades of green; it marked the baby’s nape for luck. I walked bowed, and the baby warmed himself against me, his breathing in rhythm with mine, his heart beating like my heart. When the baby was a month old, we gave him a name and shaved his head. For the full-month ceremony my husband had found two eggs, which we dyed red by boiling them with a flag. I peeled one and rolled it all over the baby’s head, his eyes, his lips, off his bump of a nose, his cheeks, his dear bald head and fontanel. I had brought dried grapefruit peel in my saddlebag, and we also boiled that. We washed our heads and hands in the grapefruit water, dabbing it on the baby’s forehead and hands. Then I gave my husband the baby and told him to take it to his family, and I gave him all the money we had taken on our raids to take to my family. ‘Go now,’ I said, before he is old

Niinpä sain hetkeksi kumppanin – mieheni ja minä saimme taistella yhdessä aivan kuin jo lapsena, kun leikimme sotilaita kylässä. Ratsastimme rinta rinnan taistelun tuoksinaan. Kun tulin raskaaksi, muutin sosisopaani niin, että näytiin mahtavalta, lihavalta mieheltä. Laskeuduin ratsailta ja kuljin pulskana jalkaväen joukossa, jotta sikiö ei hölskyisi. Alastomana olin nyt todella oudon näköinen olento – selkä täynnä sanoja ja iso vauva etupuolellani.

Vetäydyin taistelusta vain kerran, silloin kun synnytin lapsemme. Tummanpuhuvissa ja hopeisissa unissani olin nähnyt hänet, tähtieselun, tulevan taivaasta joka yö hieman lähemmäksi maata. Juuri ennen synnytyksen alkamista viimeiset tähtisäteet laskeutuivat vatsani sisään. Mieheni jäi seurakseni eikä suostunut lähtemään, vaikka pyysin häntä palaamaan taistelukentälle. Lapsi syntyi hänen käsiinsä, poika, ja nostin lapsen rinnoilleni. ‘Mitä tälle tehdään?’, mieheni kysyi, pidellen kädessään napanuoran kappaletta. ‘Sidotaan se kuivumaan lippusalkoon’, vastasin. Olimme molemmat nähneet laatikot, joissa vanhempamme pitivät lastensa kuivattuja napanuoria. ‘Tämä on sinun, ja tämä sinun’, äiti kertoi meille lapsille, ja me ihmettelimme, miten hän saattoi muistaa mikä kuului kenellekin.

Sidoimme vauvan kantoreppuun ison sosisopani sisälle, ja ratsastimme takaisin taistelun kiivaimpaan tuoksinaan. Napanuora lensi tuulessa punaisen lipun kanssa ja me nauroimme. Yöllä teltassa annoin lapsen ratsastaa selässäni. Kantoreppu oli punaisesta satiininista ja purppuranvärisestä silkistä ommeltu; reppua kannatteli neljä leveää kasmirkuvioista hihnaa, jotka menivät rintojeni välistä ja vyötäröni ympäri. Kunkin hihnan päässä oli emännän tasku, jonka sisässä oli kolikko, siemen, pähkinä tai katajanoksa. Repun yläreunaan olin ommellut vauvan niskan suojaksi kolmionmuotoisen kangastilkun, joka oli keskeltä punainen ja laidoilta vaalean- ja tummanvihreä. Kävelin kumarassa, ja vauva lämmitti itseään minua vasten, hengitti samaan tahtiin kanssani, pikku sydän minun sydämeni lailla sykkien.

Kun lapsi oli kuukauden ikäinen, annoimme hänelle nimen ja ajelimme hänen hiuksensa. Mieheni oli onnistunut löytämään kaksi kananmunaa seremoniaa varten, ja värjäsimme ne punaisiksi keittämällä niitä punalipun kanssa.

enough to recognize me.’ While the blur is still in his eyes and the little fists shut tight like buds, I’ll send my baby away from me. I altered my clothes and became again the slim young man. Only now I would get so lonely with the tent so empty that I slept outside.

My white horse overturned buckets and danced on them; it lifted full wine cups with its teeth. The strong soldiers lifted the horse in a wooden tub, while it danced to the stone drums and flute music. I played with the soldiers, throwing arrows into a bronze jar. But I found none of these antics as amusing as when I first set out on the road.

It was during this lonely time, when any high cry made the milk spill from my breasts, that I got careless. Wildflowers distracted me so that I followed them, picking one, then another, until I was alone in the woods. Out from behind trees, springing off branches came the enemy, their leader looming like a genie out of the water gourd. I threw fists and feet at them, but they were so many, they pinned me to the earth while their leader drew his sword. My fear shot forth – a quick jabbing sword that slashed fiercely, silver flashes, quick cuts wherever my attention drove it. The leader stared at the palpable sword swishing unclutched at his men, then laughed aloud. As if signalled by his laughter, two more swords appeared in midair. They clanged against mine, and I felt metal vibrate inside my brain. I willed my sword to hit back and to go after the head that controlled the other swords. But the man fought well, hurting my brain. The swords opened and closed, scissoring madly, metal zinging along metal. Unable to leave my skysword to work itself, I would be watching the swords move like puppets when the genie yanked my hair back and held a dagger against my throat. ‘Aha!’ he said. ‘What have we here?’ He lifted the bead pouch out of my shirt and cut the string. I grabbed his arm, but one of his swords dived towards me, and I rolled out of the way. A horse galloped up, and he leapt on it, escaping into the forest, the beads in his fist. His swords fought behind him until I heard him shout, ‘I am here!’ and they flew to his side. So I had done battle with the prince who had mixed the blood of his two sons with the metal he had used for casting his swords.

Kuorin toisen munan ja pyörittelin sillä vauvan kasvot ja pään kauttaaltaan: silmät, huulet, nenän, posket, suloisen kaljun pään ja päälään. Minulla oli kuivattua greipinkuorta satulalaukussani, ja keitimme sitäkin. Pesimme päämme ja kätemme greipinkuorivedessä ja sivelimme vettä vauvan otsalle ja käsiin. Sitten annoin vauvan miehelleni ja pyysin häntä viemään lapsen oman perheensä luo. Annoin hänelle myös kylistä ryöstämämme rahat, jotka hän saisi viedä minun perheelleni. ‘Lähde nyt, ennen kuin hän alkaa tuntea minut.’ Lähetän lapsen luotani silmät vielä utuisina ja pikku nyrkit tiukasti suljettuina kuin kukan nuput. Pienensin vaatteitani ja muutuin taas hoikaksi nuorukaiseksi. Nyt tunsin vain oloni niin yksinäiseksi teltassa, että nukuin ulkona.

Valkoinen ratsuni kaatoi nurin sankoja ja tanssi niiden päällä; se nosti hampaillaan ilmaan täysia viinilaseja. Väkivahvat sotilaani nostivat hevoseni puiseen saaviin, ja se jatkoi tanssiaan kivirumpujen ja huilumusiikin tahtiin. Leikin sotilaitteni kanssa; viskelin nuolia pronssiseen ruukkuun. Ilveilyt eivät kuitenkaan huvittaneet minua enää yhtä paljon kuin sotaretkemme alkuaikoina.

Tuona yksinäisenä aikana, kun mikä tahansa korkea ääni sai maidon tihkumaan rinnoistani, minusta tuli huolimaton. Niittykukat houkuttelivat minua niin, että harhauin poimimaan niitä, ensin yhden, sitten toisen, kunnes olin yksin metsässä. Vihollinen hyökkäsi puiden takaa, oksien katveesta, ja heidän johtajansa oli kuin vesileilistä esiin loikannut henki. Puin heille nyrkkiä ja potkin vastaan vimmatusti, mutta heitä oli liikaa, ja he painoivat minut maata vasten. Johtaja paljasti miekkansa. Pelkoni syöksyi esiin – nopea, pistävä miekka joka heilui hurjasti, välkkyi hopeisena, jakeli iskuja mieleni ohjaamana. Johtaja tuijotti asettani, joka hyökkäsi hurjasti viuhuen, minkään käden pitelemättä, hänen joukkonsa kimppuun. Sitten hän nauroi ääneen; kaksi uutta miekkaa ilmestyi kuin tyhjästä, kuin hänen naurunsa paikalle kutsumina. Miekat kalskahtivat omaani vasten, ja tunsin metallin värähtelevän päässäni. Tahdollani ohjasin miekkani lyömään takaisin, käymään johtajan pään kimppuun. Vastustaja taisteli kuitenkin taitavasti, ja aivoihini sattui. Miekat heiluivat auki-kiinni kuin hullut sakset; metalli iski vasten metallia. En voinut jättää ilmamiekkani ilman ohjausta, ja kun

I ran back to my soldiers, and gathered the fastest horsemen for pursuit. Our horses ran like the little water horses in the surf. Across a plain we could see the enemy, a dustdevil rushing towards the horizon. Wanting to see, I focused my eyes as the eagles taught me, and there the genie would be – shaking one bead out of the pouch and casting it at us. Nothing happened. No thunder, no earthquake that split open the ground, no hailstones big as heads.

‘Stop!’ I ordered my riders. ‘Our horses are exhausted, and I don’t want to chase any farther south.’ The rest of the victories would be won on my own, slow and without shortcuts.

I stood on top of the last hill before Peiping and saw the roads below me flowing like living rivers. Between roads the woods and plains moved too; the land was peopled – the Han people, the People of One Hundred Surnames, marching with one heart, our tatters flying. The depth and width of joy were exactly known to me: the Chinese population. After much hardship a few of our millions had arrived together at the capital. We faced our emperor personally. We beheaded him, cleaned out the palace, and inaugurated the peasant who would begin the new order. In his rags he sat on the throne facing south, and we, a great red crowd, bowed to him three times. He commended some of us who were his first generals.

I told the people who had come with me that they were free to go home now, but since the Long Wall was so close, I would go see it. They could come along if they liked. So, loath to disband after such high adventures, we reached the northern boundary of the world, chasing Mongols *en route*.

I touched the Long Wall with my own fingers, running the edge of my hand between the stones, tracing the grooves the builders’ hands had made. We lay our foreheads and our cheeks against the Long Wall and cried like the women who had come here looking for their men so long building the wall. In my travels north, I had not found my brother.

seurasin katseellani taivaalla sätkiviä miekkoja, henki tarttui hiuksiini ja painoi tikarin kurkulleni. ‘Haal’, hän sanoi. ‘Mitäs täältä löytyy?’ Hän onki esiin helmipussin paitani alta ja katkaisi sitä pitelevän narun. Tarrasin hänen käsivarteensa, mutta silloin toinen miekka syöksähti minua kohti ja jouduin kierähtämään sen alta pois. Paikalle laukkasi hevonen, ja vastustajani hyppäsi sen selkään ja hävisi metsään, helmet kourassaan. Miekat suojelivat hänen selustaansa, kunnes hän huusi: ‘Tänne!’, ja miekat lennähtivät hänen vierelleen. Vastustajani oli prinssi, joka oli valanut miekat itselleen sekoittamalla kahden poikansa verta metalliin.

Palasin juoksujalkaa sotilaideni luokse ja keräsin yhteen nopeimmat ratsumiehet takaa-ajoa varten. Hevosemme rynnistivät kuin laineiden vaahtopäät. Tasangon tuolla puolen näimme vihollisen, hiekkapaholaisen, kiiruhtavan kohti horisonttia. Terävoitin katseeni niin kuin olin oppinut kotkilta, ja henki ilmestyi näkökenttäni. Se ravisti yhden helmen ulos pussista ja viskasi sen meitä kohti. Mitään ei tapahtunut. Ukkonen ei jyrähtänyt, maa ei revennyt, taivaalta ei satanut päänkokoisia rakeita.

‘Seis!’ huusin miehilleeni. ‘Hevosemme eivät jaksakaan enää, ja en halua jatkaa yhtään etelämmäksi.’ Loput taistelut voitimme kovalla työllä, hitaasti, ilman oikoteitä.

Seisoin viimeisen kukkulan laella ennen Beijingiä, ja näin teiden virtaavan kuin joet alapuolellani. Teiden välissä myös metsät ja tasangot liikehtivät, maa oli kansoitettu; Han-kansa, Sadan Sukunimen kansa, marssi siellä yhtenä rintamana, liput liehuen. Minä tiesin, mitä oli Onni: tarkalleen yhtä syvä ja leveä kuin Kiinan kansa. Monien vaikeuksien jälkeen muutamat miljoonat meistä saapuivat yhdessä pääkaupunkiin. Kohtasimme keisarin kasvoista kasvoihin. Teloitimme keisarin, puhdistimme palatsin ja nostimme valtaistuimelle talonpojan, joka aloittaisi uuden aikakauden. Hän istui valtaistuimella ryysyissään, kasvot etelään päin, ja meidän suuri, punainen kansanjoukkomme kumarsi hänen edessään kolmesti. Hän mainitsi nimeltä meistä muutamia, tärkeimpiä kenraaleitaan.

Annoin joukoilleni nyt luvan lähteä kotiin, mutta koska olimme niin lähellä Pitkää muuria,

Carrying the news about the new emperor, I went home, where one more battle awaited me. The baron who had drafted my brother would still be bearing sway over our village. Having dropped my soldiers off at crossroads and bridges, I attacked the baron's stronghold alone. I jumped over the double walls and landed with swords drawn and knees bent, ready to spring. When no one accosted me, I sheathed the swords and walked about like a guest until I found the baron. He was counting his money, his fat ringed fingers playing over the abacus.

'Who are you? What do you want?' he said, encircling his profits with his arms. He sat square and fat like a god.

'I want your life in payment for your crimes against the villagers.'

'I haven't done anything to you. All this is mine. I earned it. I didn't steal it from you. I've never seen you before in my life. Who are you?'

'I am a female avenger.'

Then – heaven help him – he tried to be charming, to appeal to me man to man. 'Oh, come now. Everyone takes the girls when he can. The families are glad to be rid of them. "Girls are maggots in the rice." "It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters."' He quoted to me the sayings I hated.

'Regret what you've done before I kill you,' I said.

'I haven't done anything other men – even you – wouldn't have done in my place.'

'You took away my brother.'

'I free my apprentices.'

'He was not an apprentice.'

'China needs soldiers in wartime.'

'You took away my childhood.'

'I don't know what you're talking about. We've never met before. I've done nothing to you.'

minä aion mennä vielä sitä katsomaan. Muut saisivat tulla mukaani, jos haluaisivat. Emme halunneet hyvästellä vielä kaiken sen jälkeen, mitä olimme yhdessä kokeneet, ja niin jatkoimme aina maailman pohjoisreunalle asti, mongoleja edellämme jahdaten.

Kosketin Pitkää muuria omilla sormillani, kuljetin kädensyrjäni kivien välissä, tutkin rakentajien kiviin jättämiä jälkiä. Painoimme otsamme ja poskemme Pitkää muuria vasten ja itkimme kuin naiset, jotka tulivat tänne aikoinaan etsimään muurinrakentajamiehiiän. En löytänyt veljeäni matkallani pohjoiseen.

Uudesta keisarista sanomaa kantaen palasin kotiin, ja jouduin vielä yhteen taisteluun. Paroni, joka oli määrännyt veljeni sotaväkeen, hallitsi yhä kyläämme. Sotilaani olivat jääneet joukostani siltojen ja tienristeysten kohdalla, joten hyökkäsin yksin paronin linnoitukseen. Loikkasin kaksinkertaisten muurien yli ja laskeuduin maahan miekat esiin vedettyinä, polvet koukussa, valmiina taisteluun. Kukaan ei tullut haastamaan minua, joten työnsin miekkani takaisin tuppeen ja vaeltelin ympäriinsä kuin vieras, kunnes löysin paronin. Hän oli laskemassa rahojaan, ja sormeili helmitaulua paksuilla, sormuksin koristetuilla sormillaan.

'Kuka olet?' Mitä haluat?' hän kysyi, ja kietoi kätensä rahojensa ympärille. Hän istui suorana ja pullukkana kuin jumala.

'Vaadin henkeäsi, maksuna rikoksista kyläläisiäni kohtaan.'

'En minä ole tehnyt sinulle mitään. Nämä rahat ovat kaikki minun ja olen ne ansainnut. En minä ole niitä sinulta vienyt. En ole koskaan nähnytkaan sinua. Kuka olet?'

'Olen tullut kostamaan kaikkien naisten puolesta.'

Silloin, taivas varjelkoon, hän yritti miellyttää, vedota minuun kuin mies miehelle. 'Noh, äläs nyt. Kaikkihan tyttöjä vievät kun vaan saavat. Perheet antavat heidät mielellään pois. "Työtöt ovat toukkia riisissä." "On parempi kasvattaa hanhia kuin tyttöjä." Juuri näitä sanontoja vihasin.

'Kadu tekojasi, ennen kuin tapan sinut', sanoin.

'Kuka tahansa olisi tehnyt samoin kuin minä. Sinäkin.'

'Sinä veit minun veljeni.'

'Minähän vapautan aina kaikki oppipoikani.'



'You've done this,' I said, and ripped off my shirt to show him my back. 'You are responsible for this.' When I saw his startled eyes on my breasts, I slashed him across the face and on the second stroke cut off his head.

I pulled my shirt back on and opened the house to the villagers. The baron's family and servants hid in closets and under beds. The villagers dragged them out into the courtyard, where they tried them next to the beheading machine. 'Did you take my harvest so that my children had to eat grass?' a weeping farmer asked.

'I saw him steal grain,' another testified.

'My family was hiding under the thatch on the roof when the bandits robbed our house, and we saw this one take off his mask.' They spared those who proved they could be reformed. They beheaded the others. Their necks were collared in the beheading machine, which slowly clamped shut. There was one last-minute reprieve of a bodyguard when a witness shouted testimony just as the vice was pinching blood. The guard had but recently joined the household in exchange for a child hostage. A slow killing gives a criminal time to regret his crimes and think of the right words to prove he can change.

I searched the house, hunting out people for trial. I came upon a locked room. When I broke down the door, I found women, cowering, whimpering women. I heard shrill insect noises and scurrying. They blinked weakly at me like pheasants that have been raised in the dark for soft meat. The servants who walked the ladies had abandoned them, and they could not escape on their little bound feet. Some crawled away from me, using their elbows to pull themselves along. These women would not be good for anything. I called the villagers to come identify any daughters they wanted to take home, but no one claimed any. I gave each woman a bagful of rice, which they sat on. They rolled the bags to the road. They wandered away like ghosts. Later, it would be said, they turned into the band of swordswomen who were a mercenary army. They did not wear men's clothes like me, but rode as women in black and red dresses. They bought up girl babies so that many poor families welcomed their visitations. When the

'Hän ei ollut mikään oppipoika.'

'Kiina tarvitsee sotilaita.'

'Sinä veit minulta lapsuuteni.'

'En ymmärrä, mistä puhut. En ole ikinä nähnytkaan sinua. Mitä minä olen sinulle tehnyt?' 'Tämän', sanoin, repäisin auki paitani ja paljastin hänelle selkäni. 'Tämä on sinun syytäsi.' Hän tuijotti säikähtäneesti rintojani, ja silloin sivalsin häntä miekalla suoraan kasvoihin ja toisella lyönnillä iskin häneltä pään poikki.

Sitten peitin taas vartaloni ja päästin kyläläiset sisään paronin kartanoon. Paronin perhe ja palvelijat piiloutuivat komeroihin ja sänkyjen alle. Kyläläiset raahasivat heidät pihamaalle kuulusteltaviksi, teloituskoneen viereen. 'Sinäkö ryöväsit satoni, niin että lapseni joutuivat syömään ruohoa?' kyseli eräs talonpoika silmät kyynelissä.

'Minä näin, kun hän varasti viljaa', joku todisti.

'Kun rosvot tulivat kotiimme ja piilouduimme olkikaton alle, näimme tuon riisuvan naamionsa.' Kyläläiset säästivät ne, jotka pystyisivät tekemään parannuksen. Muut teloitettiin. Heidät pantiin teloituskoneeseen, jonka terät kiertyivät hitaasti kaulan ympärille. Eräs paronin henkivartija pelastui viime hetkessä, kun joku huusi ääneen ratkaisevan todisteen, veren jo alettua vuotaa. Vartija olikin vasta tullut talon palvelukseen – vaihtokauppana lapsipanttivankia vastaan. Hidas teloittaminen antaa rikolliselle aikaa katua tekojaan ja valita oikein sanat, joilla todistaa muuttuvansa.

Kävin läpi koko talon etsiessäni syytettyjä oikeudenkäyntiin. Saavuin lukitulle ovelle. Mursin oven; sisältä löytyi naisia, kyyristeleviä, vikiseviä naisia. Kuului kimeitä hyönteisen ääniä ja askelten vipinää. He räpyttelivät heikosti silmiään kuin pimeässä kasvatetut, pehmeälihaiset fasaanit. Naisia ulkoiluttavat palvelijat olivat häipyneet, ja naiset eivät päässeet mihinkään sidotuilla jaloillaan. Jotkut heistä ryömivät pois päin minusta, vetäen itseään kyynärpäillä lattiaa pitkin. Näistä naisista ei olisi koskaan yhtään mihinkään. Kutsuin kyläläiset paikalle katsomaan, oliko joukossa kenenkään tyttäriä, mutta ketään heistä ei kaivattu. Annoin naisille riisäkit, ja he istuivat niiden päälle. He kierittivät säkit tielle. He harhailivat pois kuin aaveet. Myöhemmin huhuttiin, että heistä tuli soturinaisten joukkio, palkka-armeija. He eivät käyttäneet miesten vaatteita kuten minä, vaan ratsastivat punamustissa naisten puvuissa. He

slave girls and daughters-in-law ran away, people would say they joined these witch amazons. They killed men and boys. I myself never encountered such women and could not vouch for their reality.

After the trials we tore down the ancestral tablets. 'We'll use this great hall for village meetings,' I announced. 'Here we'll put on operas,; we'll sing together and talk-story.' We washed the courtyard; we exorcised the house with smoke and red paper. 'This is a new year,' I told the people, 'the year one.'

I went home to my parents-in-law and husband and son. My son stared, very impressed by the general he had seen in the parade, but his father said, 'It's your mother. Go to your mother.' My son was delighted that the shiny general was his mother too. She gave him her helmet to wear and her swords to hold.

Wearing my black embroidered wedding coat, I knelt at my parents-in-law feet, as I would have done as a bride. 'Now my public duties are finished,' I said. 'I will stay with you, doing farmwork and housework, and giving you more sons.'

'Go visit your mother and father first,' my mother-in-law said, a generous woman. 'They want to welcome you.'

My mother and father and the entire clan would be living happily on the money I had sent them. My parents had bought their coffins. They would sacrifice a pig to the gods that I had returned. From the words on my back, and how they were fulfilled, the villagers would make a legend of my perfect filiality.

My American life has been such a disappointment.

'I got straight A's, Mama.'

'Let me tell you a story about a girl who saved her village.'

I could not figure out what was my village. And it was important that I do something big and fine, or else my parents would sell me when we made our way back to China. In China there were solutions for what to do with little girls who ate up food and threw tantrums. You can't eat straight As.

When one of my parents or the emigrant villagers said, "Feeding girls is feeding cowbirds," I would thrash on the floor and

ostivat tyttölapsia ja toivat näin helpotuksen monelle köyhälle perheelle. Karanneiden orjatyttöjen ja miniöiden sanottiin liittyneen näihin noita-amatsoneihin. He tappoivat poikia ja miehiä. En koskaan itse kohdannut tällaisia naisia, enkä voi varmuudella sanoa onko heitä olemassa.

Oikeudenkäyntien jälkeen revimme esi-isien kuvat seiniltä alas. 'Alamme käyttää tätä isoa salla kyläkokouksiin', ilmoitin. Järjestämme oopperaesityksiä, laulamme ja tarinoimme yhdessä.' Kuurasimme koko pihamaan puhtaaksi; hädimme kaikki pahat henget ulos talosta savulla ja punaisella paperilla. 'Tämä on uusi vuosi', sanoin ihmisille, 'vuosi numero yksi.'

Palasin kotiin appivanhempieni, mieheni ja poikani luokse. Poikani oli vaikuttunut nähdessään paraateista tutun kenraalin edessään ja tuijotti minua, mutta mieheni sanoi, 'Tässä on äitisi. Tervehdi häntä!' Poikani innostui, kun mahtava kenraali oli myös hänen äitinsä, ja antoi hänen pidellä kypäräänsä ja miekkaansa.

Musta kirjailtu hääpuku ylläni polvistuini appivanhempieni eteen kuin morsian. 'Julaiset velvollisuuteni ovat nyt ohi', sanoin. 'Nyt jään tänne, viljelen maata, teen taloustöitä, ja synnyttän teille lisää poikia.'

'Käy ensin tervehtimässä vanhempiasi', sanoi anoppini, lämminsydäminen nainen. 'He haluavat toivottaa sinut tervetulleeksi kotiin.'

Äitini ja isäni ja koko klaanimme tulisivat mukavasti toimeen rahoilla, jotka olin heille lähettänyt. Vanhempani olivat hankkineet jo ruumisarkkunsakin. He uhraisivat sian jumalille kotiinpaluuni kunniaksi. Kyläläiset kertoisivat mahtavia taruja selässäni lukevista sanoista, siitä kuinka sanat kävivät toteen, ja siitä kuinka täydellisen kuuliainen olin ollut perhettäni kohtaan.

Elämäni Amerikassa on ollut suuri pettymys. 'Äiti, sain pelkkiä kiitettäviä!'

'Annapa kun kerron sinulle tytöstä, joka pelasti oman kylänsä.'

En saanut edes selville, mikä minun kyläni oli. Ja oli tärkeää, että saisin aikaan jotakin suurta ja hienoa, tai muuten vanhempani myisivät minut heti kun olisimme palanneet Kiinaan. Kiinassa oli omat ratkaisunsa siihen, kun pienet tytöt eivät tee muuta kuin syö ja kiukuttele. Kiitettävillä numeroilla ei ruokita ketään.

scream so hard I couldn't talk. I couldn't stop.

'What's the matter with her?'

'I don't know. Bad, I guess. You know how girls are. "There's no profit in raising girls. Better to raise geese than girls."'

'I would hit her if she were mine. But there's no use wasting all that discipline on a girl. "When you raise girls, you're raising children for strangers."'

'Stop that crying!' my mother would yell. 'I'm going to hit you if you don't stop. Bad girl! Stop!' I'm going to remember never to hit or scold my children for crying, I thought, because then they will only cry more.

'I'm not a bad girl,' I would scream. 'I'm not a bad girl.' I might as well have said, 'I'm not a girl.'

'When you were little, all you had to say was "I'm not a bad girl," and you could make yourself cry,' my mother says, talking-story about my childhood.

I minded that the emigrant villagers shook their heads at my sister and me. 'One girl – and another girl,' they said, and made our parents ashamed to take us out together. The good part about my brothers being born was that people stopped saying, 'All girls,' but I learned new grievances. 'Did you roll an egg on *my* face like that when *I* was born?' 'Did you have a full-month party for *me*?' Did you turn on all the lights?' 'Did you send *my* picture to Grandmother?' Why not? Because I'm a girl? Is that why not? 'Why didn't you teach me English?' 'You like having me beaten up at school, don't you?'

'She is very mean, isn't she?' the emigrant villagers would say.

'Come, children. Hurry. Hurry. Who wants to go out with Great-Uncle?' On Saturday mornings my great-uncle, the ex-river pirate, did the shopping. 'Get your coats, whoever's coming.'

'I'm coming. I'm coming. Wait for me.'

When he heard girls' voices, he turned on us and roared, 'No girls!' and left my sisters and me hanging our coats back up, not looking at one another. The boys came back with candy and new toys. When they walked through Chinatown, the people must have said 'A boy – and another boy – and another boy!' At my great-uncle's funeral I secretly tested out feeling

Kun vanhempani tai joku kyläläinen tokaisi: "Tyttöjen ruokkiminen on sama kuin pullasorsia ruokkisi', heittäydyin lattialle ja huusin niin kovaa, etten pystynyt puhumaan. Huusin vain.

'Mikä häntä vaivaa?'

'En tiedä. Pahansisuinen. Kyllähän nuo tytöt tiedetään. "Tyttöjen kasvattamisesta ei ole mitään hyötyä. On parempi kasvattaa hanhia kuin tyttöjä."

'Minä kyllä läimäyttäisin jos hän olisi minun. Mutta kurinpito menee työssä hukkaan. "Kun kasvatat tyttöjä, kasvatat vieraille lapsia."'

'Älä itke!', äidilläni oli tapana huutaa. 'Lyön sinua jos et lopeta. Tuhma tyttö! Lopeta! Minä päätin, etten koskaan löisi tai moittisi omia lapsiani itkemisen takia, sillä se saisi heidät itkemään vain lisää.

'Minä en ole tuhma', huusin. 'Minä en ole tuhma tyttö. Minä en ole tuhma tyttö. Aivan yhtä hyvin olisin voinut huutaa: 'Minä en ole tyttö.'

'Pienenä sinun ei tarvinnut sanoa muuta kuin "minä en ole tuhma tyttö", ja aloit heti itkeä', äitini sanoo tarinoidessaan lapsuudestani.

Minua loukkasi, kun kyläläiset puistivat päätään sisareni ja minut nähdessään. 'Yksi tytär – ja vielä toinenkin', he sanoivat, ja vanhempiani hävetti viedä meitä yhdessä ihmisten ilmoille. Veljeni syntymässä oli se hyvä puoli, että ihmiset lakkasivat sanomasta 'Voi voi, pelkkiä tyttöjä', mutta sen sijaan löysin uusia katkeruuden aiheita. 'Kieritiikö kananmunaa *minun* kasvoillani kun *minä* olin syntynyt?' 'Pidettiinkö *minulle* kuukauden mittaiset juhlat?' 'Laitettiinkö silloin kaikki valot päälle?' 'Lähetittekö *minun* kuvani isoäidille?' 'Miksi ei? Siksikö, kun olen tyttö?' 'Miksette opettaneet meille englantia?' 'Halusitteko, että meitä kiusataan koulussa?'

'Onpa pahansisuinen', kyläläiset sanoivat.

'Tulkaa lapset, pian, pian. Kuka haluaa ruokaostoksille isosedän kanssa?' Lauantai-aamuisin isosetäni, entinen jokirosvo, hoiti ruokaostokset. 'Ottakaahan takkinne, jos tulette mukaan.'

'Minä haluan mukaan. Minä haluan mukaan. Odottakaa minua.'

Mutta kuullessaan tyttöjen ääniä, hän kääntyi meihin päin ja ärjäisi, 'Ei tyttöjä!' ja me jäimme siskojeni kanssa ripustelemaan takkejamme takaisin naulakkoon, toistemme katseita vältellen. Pojat tulivat kotiin karkkien ja uusien lelujen kera. Kun he kulkivat Chinatownin

that he was dead – the six-foot bearish masculinity of him.

I went away to college – Berkeley in the sixties – and I studied, and I marched to change the world, but I did not turn into a boy. I would have liked to bring myself back as a boy for my parents to welcome with chickens and pigs. That was for my brother, who returned alive from Vietnam.

If I went to Vietnam, I would not come back; females desert families. It was said, ‘There is an outward tendency in females,’ which meant that I was getting straight As for the good of my future husband’s family, not my own. I did not plan ever to have a husband. I would show my mother and father and the nosey emigrant villagers that girls have no outward tendency. I stopped getting straight As.

And all the time I was having to turn myself American-feminine, or no dates. There is a Chinese word for the female *I* – which is ‘slave’. Break the women with their own tongues!

I refused to cook. When I had to wash dishes, I would crack one or two. ‘Bad girl,’ my mother yelled, and sometimes that made me gloat rather than cry. Isn’t a bad girl almost a boy?

‘What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl?’

‘A lumberjack in Oregon.’

Even now, unless I’m happy, I burn the food when I cook. I do not feed people. I let the dirty dishes rot. I eat at other people’s tables but won’t invite them to mine, where the dishes are rotting.

If I could not-eat, perhaps I could make myself a warrior like the swordswoman who drives me. I will – I must – rise and plough the fields as soon as the baby comes out.

Once I get outside the house, what bird might call me; on what horse could I ride away? Marriage and childbirth strengthen the swordswoman, who is not a maid like Joan of Arc. Do the women’s work; then do more work, which will become ours too. No husband of mine will say, ‘I could have been a drummer, but I had to think about the wife and kids. You know how it is.’ Nobody supports me at the expense of his own adventure. Then I get

halki, ihmiset varmasti sanoivat: ‘Poika – ja toinen – ja vielä kolmas!’ Isoetäni hautajaisissa mietin salaa, miltä minusta tuntui nyt kun hän oli kuollut – hänen kaksimetritinen, karhumainen olemuksensa. Lähdin kotoa opiskelemaan collegeen Berkeleyhyn, Kaliforniaan, opiskelin ja muutin maailmaa marssimalla mielenosoituksissa, mutta en muuttunut pojaksi. Olisin halunnut palata kotiin poikana, jonka vanhempani olisivat toivottaneet tervetulleeksi paistettujen kananpoikien ja porsaiden kera. Ne olivat veljelleni, joka palasi hengissä Vietnamista.

Jos minä lähtisin Vietnamiin, en tulisi takaisin, sillä naiset jättävät oman perheensä. Sanonta kuului: ‘naisissa on poispäin suuntautuva taipumus’, mikä tarkoitti, että hankin pelkkiä kiitettäviä tulevan aviomieheni perheen hyväksi, en omani. Minä en suunnitellut koskaan meneväni naimisiin. Minä näyttäisin isälle ja äidille ja tunkeileville kyläläisille, että tytöt eivät suuntaudu poispäin. Lakkasin saamasta pelkkiä kiitettäviä.

Ja koko ajan minun oli muunnettava itseäni amerikkalais-naiselliseksi, tai muuten ei ollut toivoakaan treffeistä.

Kiinan kielessä eräs synonyymi naispuoliselle ‘minälle’ on – ‘orja’. Lannistakaa naiset heidän omalla kielellään!

Kieltäydyin laittamasta ruokaa. Kun jouduin tiskaamaan, rikoin aina jotakin. ‘Tuhma tyttö!’ äitini huusi, ja joskus tulin siitä miltei ylpeäksi. Eikö tuhma tyttö ollut melkein poika?

‘Mikäs sinusta tulee isona, tyttö pieni?’

‘Metsuri.’

Vieläkin, ellen satu olemaan oikein hyvällä tuulella, poltan aina ruoat pohjaan. Minä en ruoki ihmisiä. Jätän likaiset astiat tiskialtaaseen. Syön vieraiden pöydissä, mutta en kutsu heitä omaan keittiöni, jossa likaiset astiat homehtuvat.

Jos osaisinkin paastota, voisin ehkä ryhtyä soturiksi, miekkanaiseksi, joka minuakin ajaa eteenpäin. Minä nousen – on pakko – kyntämään peltoja heti, kun lapseni on syntynyt.

Kunhan pääsen ulos neljän seinän sisältä, mikä lintu mahtaisikaan kutsua minua, millä hevosella voisin karauttaa tieheni? Avioliitto ja synnyttäminen vahvistavat miekkanaista, joka ei ole mikään neitsyt kuten Jeanne d’Arc. Tee ensin naisten työt, ja tee sitten lisää työtä, josta tulee myös naisten työtä. Minun mieheni ei koskaan joudu sanomaan: ‘Minusta olisi voinut tulla rumpali,

bitter: no one supports me; I am not loved enough to be supported. That I am not a burden has to compensate for the sad envy when I look at women loved enough to be supported. That I am not a burden has to compensate for the sad envy when I look at women loved enough to be supported. Even now China wraps double binds around my feet.

When urban renewal tore down my parents' laundry and paved over our slum for a parking lot, I only made up gun and knife fantasies and did nothing useful.

From the fairy tales, I've learned exactly who the enemy are. I easily recognize them – business-suited in their modern American guise, each boss two feet taller than I am and impossible to meet eye to eye.

I once worked at an art supply house that sold paints to artists. 'Order more of that nigger yellow, willya?' the boss told me. 'Bright, isn't it? Nigger yellow.'

'I don't like that word,' I had to say in my bad, small-person's voice that makes no impact. The boss never deigned to answer.

I also worked at a land developers' association. The building industry was planning a banquet for contractors, real estate dealers, and real estate editors. 'Did you know the restaurant you chose for the banquet is being picketed by CORE and the NAACP?' I squeaked.

'Of course I know.' The boss laughed. 'That's why I chose it.'

'I refuse to type these invitations,' I whispered, voice unreliable.

He leaned back in his leather chair, his bossy stomach opulent. He picked up his calendar and slowly circled a date. 'You will be paid up to here,' he said. 'We'll mail you the cheque.'

If I took the sword, which my hate must surely have forged out of the air, and gutted him, I would put colour and wrinkles into his shirt.

It's not just the stupid racists that I have to do something about, but the tyrants who for whatever reason can deny my family food and work. My job is my own only land.

To avenge my family, I'd have to storm across China to take back our farm from the Communists; I'd have to rage across the United

mutta piti ajatella vaimoa ja lapsia. Sellaista elämä on.' Minua ei kukaan elätä omien seikkailujensa kustannuksella. Sitten iskee katkeruus: kukaan ei elätä minua, kukaan ei rakasta minua niin paljon, että elättäisi minua. En ole kenenkään taakka, ja se saa korvata surkean kateuden, jota tunnen kun näen naisia joita rakastetaan niin paljon, että heitä elätetään. Kiina sitoo vieläkin jalkani kaksinkertaisin sitein.

Kun kaupunkiuudistus hävitti vanhempieni pesulan ja muutti slummimme parkkipaikaksi, minä vain elättelin pyssy- ja puukkofantasioita enkä ryhtynyt mihinkään. Satujen perusteella tiedän tarkkaan, keitä viholliset ovat. Heidät tunnistaa helposti – liikemiehen puvuissa, nykyaikaisen amerikkalaisen toimihenkilön ilmiäsuissa, kaikki pomot minua puoli metriä pitempiä ja mahdoton kohdata silmästä silmään.

Olin kerran töissä taidetarvikeliikkeessä. 'Tilaapas lisää tuota neekerinmustaa', pomo sanoi minulle. 'Aika mustaa tuo neekerinmusta, vai mitä?'

'En pidä tuosta sanasta', minun oli pakko sanoa heikolla pikkuihmisen äänelläni, jolla ei ole minkäänlaista vaikutusta. Pomo ei viitsinyt edes vastata.

Olin töissä myös rakennuttajalla. Rakennusalalla suunniteltiin suuria illalliskutsuja urakoitsijoille ja kiinteistönvälittäjille. 'Tiesittekö, että rotujärjestöt boikotoivat ravintolaa, jonka valitsitte juhliä varten?' minä vinkaisin.

'Tietysti tiedän.' Pomo nauroi. 'Siksi juuri valitsinkin sen.'

'En suostu kirjoittamaan näitä kutsuja', kuiskasin epävarmalla äänelläni. Pomo nojasi taaksepäin nahkatuolissaan, paksu maha pullottaen. Hän tarttui kalenteriin ja ympyröi harkituin liikkein yhden päivämäärän. 'Saat palkan tänne asti', hän sanoi. 'Sekki tulee postissa.'

Jos tarttuaisin miekkaan, jonka vihani varmasti synnytti, ja iskisin sillä häneltä suolet pihalle, tulisi hänenkin paitaansa vähän väriä ja ryppyjä.

Typerät rasistit eivät ole ainoita, jotka minun pitäisi hoidella. On myös tyranneja, joilla jostakin syystä on valta riistää perheeltäni elanto. Työ on ainut maa, jonka omistan.

Kostaakseni perheeni puolesta, minun pitäisi kiittää ensin Kiinan halki ja vallata maatilamme takaisin kommunisteilta, ja sen jälkeen Amerikan halki ja

States to take back the laundry in New York and the one in California. Nobody in history has conquered and united both North America and Asia. A descendant of eighty pole fighters, I ought to be able to set out confidently, march straight down out street, get going right now. There's work to do, ground to cover. Surely, the eighty pole fighters, though unseen, would follow me and lead me and protect me, as is the wont of ancestors.

Or it may well be that they're resting happily in China, their spirits dispersed among the real Chinese, and not nudging me at all with their poles. I mustn't feel bad that I haven't done as well as the swordswoman did; after all, no bird called me, no wise old people tutored me. I have no magic beads, no water gourd sight, no rabbit that will jump in the fire when I'm hungry. I dislike armies.

I've looked for the bird. I've seen clouds make pointed angel wings that stream past the sunset, but they shred into clouds. Once at a beach I saw a seagull, tiny as an insect. But when I jumped up to tell what miracle I saw, before I could get the words out I understood that the bird was insect-size because it was far away. My brain had momentarily lost its depth perception. I was that eager to find an unusual bird.

The news from China have been confusing. It also had something to do with birds. I was nine years old when the letters made my parents, who are rocks, cry. My father screamed in his sleep. My mother wept and crumpled up the letters. She set fire to them page by page in the ashtray, but new letters came almost every day. The only letters they opened without fear were the ones with red borders, the holiday letters that mustn't carry bad news. The other letters said that my uncles were made to kneel on broken glass during their trials and had confessed to being landowners. They were all executed, and the aunt whose thumbs were twisted off drowned herself. Other aunts, mothers-in-law, and cousins disappeared; some suddenly began writing to us again from communes in Hong Kong. They kept asking for money. The ones in communes got four ounces of fat and one cup of oil a week, they said, and had to work from four a.m. to nine p.m. They had to learn to do

ja ottaa haltuun menetetyt pesulat sekä New Yorkissa että Kaliforniassa. Kukaan ei ole vielä koskaan valloittanut ja yhdistänyt sekä Pohjois-Amerikkaa että Aasiaa. Minun pitäisi lähteä reippaasti liikkeelle, marssia oitis kotikatuamme alas, olenhan kahdeksan kymmenen sauvamiekkailijan jälkeläinen. Työtä ja valloitettavaa riittää. Kahdeksankymmenen sauvamiekkailijan joukko seuraisi ja suojelisi minua varmasti, vaikkakin näkymättömästi, niin kuin esi-isillä on tapana.

Tai sitten esi-isäni lepäävät onnellisesti Kiinassa, oikeiden kiinalaisten keskuudessa, eivätkä lainkaan tyrki minua sauvoillaan. Ei minun pitäisi hävetä vaikka en olekaan pärjännyt yhtä hyvin kuin soturinainen: minua ei kutsunut mikään lintu; ketkään viisaat vanhukset eivät opettaneet minua. Minulla ei ole taikahelmiä, ei vesileiliä, eikä nuotioon hyppäävää jänistä. Inhoan armeijoita.

Olen etsinyt lintua. Olen nähnyt suippoja enkelinsiiven muotoisia pilviä leijumassa laskevan auringon edessä, mutta ne hajoavat pelkiksi pilviksi jälleen. Kerran pitkän kävelylenkin jälkeen näin rannalla merilokin, joka oli pikkuruinen kuin hyönteinen. Mutta kun pomppasin ylös kertoakseni ihmeestä muille, en ehtinyt saada sanaakaan suustani kun jo tajusin, että lintu oli kaukana ja siksi hyönteisen kokoinen. Aivoni olivat hetkellisesti kadottaneet syvyyden tajunsa, niin innokas olin löytämään erikoisen linnun.

Uutiset Kiinasta ovat olleet hämmentäviä. Niilläkin on ollut tekemistä lintujen kanssa. Olin yhdeksän, kun Kiinasta lähetetyt kirjeet saivat kivikovat vanhempanikin itkemään. Isäni huusi ääneen unissaan. Äitini itki ja rypisti kirjeet. Hän sytytti ne sivu sivulta tuleen tuhkakupissa, mutta uusia kirjeitä tuli melkein päivittäin. Vain punareunaiset kirjeet saattoi avata huolelta, sillä ne olivat lomakirjeitä, joissa ei saanut olla huonoja uutisia. Muissa kirjeissä kerrottiin, että sedät pakotettiin polvistumaan lasinsirujen päälle oikeudenkäynneissä, ja että he olivat tunnustaneet olevansa maanomistajia. Heidät kaikki teloitettiin, ja täti, jonka peukalot väännettiin irti, hukutti itsensä. Jotkut tädit, anopit ja serkut katosivat; joiltakin taas alkoi tulla yhtäkkiä uutta postia kommuuneista tai Hong Kongista. Kirjeissä pyydettiin aina rahaa. Kommuuneissa asuvat sukulaiset kertoivat saavansa neljä unssia rasvaa ja kupillisen öljyä

dances waving red kerchiefs; they had to sing nonsense syllables. The Communists gave axes to the old ladies and said, 'Go kill yourself. You're useless.' If we overseas Chinese would just send money to the Communist bank, our relatives said, they might get a percentage of it for themselves. The aunts in Hong Kong said to send money quickly; their children were begging on the sidewalks, and mean people put dirt in their bowls.

When I dream that I am wire without flesh, there is a letter on blue airmail paper that floats above the night ocean between here and China. It must arrive safely or else my grandmother and I will lose each other. My parents felt bad whether or not they sent money. Sometimes they got angry at their brothers and sisters for asking. And they would not simply ask but have to talk-story too. The revolutionaries had taken Fourth Aunt and Uncle's store, house, and lands. They attacked the house and killed the grandfather and oldest daughter. The grandmother escaped with the loose cash and did not return to help. Fourth Aunt picked up her sons, one under each arm, and hid in the pig house, where they slept that night in cotton clothes. The next day she found her husband, who had also miraculously escaped. The two of them collected twigs and yams to sell while their children begged. Each morning they tied the faggots on each other's back. Nobody bought from them. They ate the yams and some of the children's rice. Finally Fourth Aunt saw what was wrong. 'We have to shout "Fuel for sale" and "Yams for sale",' she said. 'We can't just walk unobtrusively up and down the street.' 'You're right,' said my uncle, but he was shy and walked in back of her. 'Shout,' my aunt ordered, but he could not. 'They think we're carrying these sticks home for our own fire,' she said. 'Shout.' They walked about miserably, silently, until sundown, neither of them able to advertise themselves. Fourth Aunt, an orphan since the age of ten, mean as my mother, threw her bundle down at his feet and scolded Fourt Uncle, 'Starving to death, his wife and children starving to death, and he's too damned shy to raise his voice.' She left him standing by himself and afraid to return empty-handed to her. He sat under a tree to think, when he spotted a pair of nesting doves.

viikossa, ja että he joutuivat tekemään töitä aamuneljästä iltayhdeksään. Heidän piti opetella tansseja, joissa heiluteltiin punaisia liinoja, ja lauluja, joissa oli järjettömät sanat. Vanhoille naisille ojennettiin kirves ja sanottiin: 'Tapa itsesi. Sinusta ei ole mitään hyötyä.' Sukulaiset sanoivat, että hekin ehkä saisivat jotakin, jos me siirtolaiset lähettäisimme rahaa kommunistipankkeihin. Hong Kongissa asuvat tädit pyysivät lähettämään rahaa pian: heidän lapsensa kerjäsivät kadulla ja ilkeät ihmiset heittivät kuraa kerjuukuppeihin.

Kun uneksin olevani pelkkää teräslankaa ilman lihaa, näen siniselle lentopostipaperille kirjoitetun kirjeen leijumassa öisen meren yllä, minun ja Kiinan välissä. Kirjeen täytyy päästä turvallisesti perille tai muuten isoäitini ja minä menetämme toisemme.

Vanhemmistani tuntui kurjalta, lähettivät he sitten rahaa tai eivät. Joskus he suutuivat veljilleen ja sisarilleen, kun nämä pyysivät. Ja he eivät vain pyytäneet, vaan kertoivat vielä tarinoitakin. Vallankumoukselliset olivat vieneet Neljännen tädin ja sedän kaupan, talon ja maat. He hyökkäsivät näiden kotiin ja tappoivat isoisän ja talon vanhimman tyttären. Isoäiti pakeni käteisen rahan kera eikä palannut auttamaan. Neljäs täti nosti poikansa syliin, yhden kummallekin käsivarrelle, piiloutui sikalaan, ja he nukkuivat siellä yön puuvillavaatteissaan. Seuraavana päivänä hän löysi miehensä, joka oli myös päässyt pakoon kuin ihmeen kaupalla. Yhdessä he keräsivät risuja ja jamsseja myytäväksi, ja heidän lapsensa kerjäsivät. Joka aamu he sitoivat risukimput toistensa selkään. Kukaan ei ostanut heiltä. He söivät jamssinsa ja osan lasten riisistä. Lopulta Neljäs täti tajusi, mikä oli vialla. "Meidän täytyy huutaa: 'Ostakaa risuja!' ja 'Ostakaa jamsseja!' Emme voi vain kävellä katua edestakaisin niin, ettei kukaan huomaa. 'Olet oikeassa', setäni sanoi, mutta hän oli ujo ja käveli vaimonsa takana. 'Huuda!', täti määräsi, mutta setä ei pystynyt. He kuljeskelivat epätoivoisina ja hiljaa auringonlaskuun saakka; kumpikaan ei kyennyt mainostamaan. Neljäs täti, joka jäi orvoksi kymmenvuotiaana ja on yhtä paha suustaan kuin äitini, heitti lopulta risukimppunsa miehensä jalkojen juureen ja rähisi tälle: 'Nälkään kuolemaisillaan, vaimo ja lapset nälkään kuolemaisillaan, eikä vieläkään uskalla korottaa ääntään!' Hän jätti miehensä seisomaan yksin,

Dumping his bag of yams, he climbed up and caught the birds. That was where the Communists trapped him, in the tree. They criticized him for selfishly taking food for his own family and killed him, leaving his body in the tree as an example. They took the birds to a commune kitchen to be shared.

It is confusing that my family was not the poor to be championed. They were executed like the barons in the stories, when they were not barons. It is confusing that the birds tricked us.

What fighting and killing I have seen have not been glorious but slum grubby. I fought the most during junior high school and always cried. Fights are confusing as to who has won. The corpses I've seen have been rolled and dumped, sad little dirty bodies covered with a police khaki blanket. My mother locked her children in the house so we couldn't look at dead slum people. But at news of a body, I would find a way to get out; I had to learn about dying if I wanted to become a swordswoman. Once there was an Asian man stabbed next door, words on cloth pinned to his corpse. When the police came around asking questions, my father said, 'No read Japanese. Japanese words. Me Chinese.'

I've also looked for old people who could be my gurus. A medium with red hair told me that a girl who died in a far country follows me wherever I go. This spirit can help me if I acknowledge her, she said. Between the head line and heart line in my right palm, she said, I have the mystic cross. I could become a medium myself. I don't want to be a medium. I don't want to be a crank taking 'offerings' in a wicker plate from the frightened audience, who, one after another, asked the spirits how to raise rent money, how to cure their coughs and skin diseases, how to find a job. And martial arts are for unsure little boys kicking away under fluorescent lights.

I live now where there are Chinese and Japanese, but no emigrants from my own village looking at me as if I had failed them. Living among one's own emigrant villagers can give a good Chinese far away from China glory and a place. 'That old busboy is really a swordsman,' we whisper when he goes by, 'He's a swordsman who has killed fifty. He has

pelkäämään paluuta vaimon luo tyhjin käsin. Setä istahti puun alle miettimään, ja silloin hän huomasi puussa pesivän kyyhkysparin. Hän heitti jamssisäkin kädestään, kiipesi puuhun ja pyydysti linnut. Puuhun hän myös jäi, kommunistien satimeen. Kommunistit syyttivät häntä itsekkyydestä, kun hän oli mennyt ottamaan ruokaa perheelleen, tappoivat hänet ja jättivät ruumiin roikkumaan puuhun varoittavaksi esimerkiksi muille.

On hämmentävää, että perheeni ei kuulunut ylistettyihin köyhiin. Heidät teloitettiin aivan kuten paronit, vaikka he eivät olleet paroneita. On hämmentävää, että linnut huijasivat meitä.

Ne tappelut ja ruumiit, mitä minä olen nähnyt, eivät ole olleet hohdokkaita, vaan ankeita kuin slummit. Tappeluista on vaikea sanoa kuka voitti. Olen nähnyt ryöstettyjä, tienposkeen kipattuja ruumiita, poliisin huopaan käärittyjä surullisia, likaisia myttyjä. Äitini lukitsi meidät lapset sisälle taloon, jotta emme näkisi kuolleita slummin asukkeja. Mutta aina, kun kuulin jostakin ruumiista, keplottelin itseni ulos talosta; jos ajoin ryhtyä soturiksi, minun oli opittava tuntemaan kuolema. Kerran naapurissa oli puukotettu joku aasialainen mies ja hänen ruumiiseensa oli kiinnitetty kankaanpala, jossa luki jotakin. Kun poliisi tuli meille kysymyksineen, isäni sanoi: 'Ei osaa japani. Japani-sanat. Minä kiinalainen.'

Olen myös etsiskellyt vanhuksia, jotka voisivat toimia guruinani. Kerran eräs punatukkainen meedio kertoi minulle, että jossakin kaukaisessa maassa kuollut tyttö seuraa mukana, minne tahansa menenkin. Tämä henki voisi auttaa minua, jos tunnustaisin sen läsnäolon, hän sanoi. Minulla on kuulemma oikeassa kämmenessä, sydämen ja pään viivan välissä, meedion risti. Voisin itsekin ryhtyä meedioksi. En halua olla meedio. En halua olla huijari, joka keräilee 'lahjoituksia' rottinkiseen koriin pelokkaalta yleisöltä, jonka jäsenet yksi toisensa perään tiedustelevat henkimaailman olennoilta kuinka hankkia seuraavat vuokrat rahat, parantaa yskät ja ihotaudit, kuinka löytää töitä. Ja kamppailulajit ovat loisteputkien alla potkiskelevia epävarmoja pikkupoikia varten.

Asun nyt paikassa, jossa on sekä kiinalaisia että japanilaisia, mutta ei oman kylämme asukkaita, jotka pitävät minua luopiona. Kunnon kiinalainen voi saada arvostusta ja ansaita



a tong axe in his closet.' But I am useless, one more girl who couldn't be sold. When I visit the family now, I wrap my American successes around me like a private shawl; I *am* worthy of eating the food. From afar I can believe my family loves me fundamentally. They only say, 'When fishing for treasures in the flood, be careful not to pull in girls,' because that is what one says about daughters. But I watched such words come out of my own mother's and father's mouths; I looked at their ink drawing of poor people snagging their neighbours' flotage with long flood hooks and pushing the girl babies on down the river. And I had to get out of hating range. I read in an anthropology book that Chinese say, 'Girls are necessary too'; I have never heard the Chinese I know make this concession. Perhaps it was a saying in another village. I refuse to shy my way any more through our Chinatown, which tasks me with the old sayings and the stories.

The swordswoman and I are not so dissimilar. May my people understand the resemblance soon so that I can return to them. What we have in common are the words at our backs. The idioms for *revenge* are 'report a crime' and 'report to five families'. The reporting is the vengeance – not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words. And I have so many words – 'chink' words and 'gook' words too – that they do not fit on my skin.

paikkansa yhteisössä, jossa asuu oman kylän siirtolaisia. 'Tuo vanha tarjoilija on muuten miekkamies', eräästä miehestä kuiskitaan, 'miekkamies, jolla on viisikymmentä henkeä tilillään. Hänellä on taistelukirves komerossa.' Minä sen sijaan olen hyödytön, myytäväksi kelpaamaton tyttö. Nykyään kun käyn perheeni luona, kiedon amerikkalaisen menestykseni ympärilläni kuin yksityisen hartiahuivin: minullakin *on* oikeus syödä heidän kanssaan samassa pöydässä. Etäältä käsin voin uskoa, että perheeni loppujen lopuksi rakastaa minua. He sanovat, 'kun kalastat aarteita tulvavedestä, varo ettet nosta ylös tyttöjä', siksi, että sillä tavalla tytöistä puhutaan. Mutta minä jouduin kuuntelemaan tuollaisia sanoja omien vanhempieni suusta, ja katselemaan piirrosta, jossa köyhät ihmiset pelastivat itselleen naapurien tavaroita tulvan keskeltä pitkillä naarauskuukuilla, mutta työnsivät tyttövauvat takaisin virtaan. Ja minun oli päästävä pois vihavyöhykkeeltä. Jostakin antropologian kirjasta olen lukenut kiinalaisen sanonnan: 'tytötkin ovat tarpeellisia'. Kukaan kiinalainen, jonka minä tuntisin, ei ole tehnyt moista myönnytystä. Ehkäpä sanonta olikin peräisin jostain toisesta kylästä. Minä kieltäydyn enää kyyristelemästä omassa Chinatownissamme, joka kiusaa minua vanhoilla sananlaskuillaan ja tarinoillaan.

Miekkalainen ja minä emme ole kovin erilaisia. Huomatkoon kansani yhtäläisyytemme pian, jotta voisin palata heidän keskuuteensa. Minulle ja naissoitille ovat yhteistä selkään kirjoitetut sanat. Kiinan kielessä 'kosto on rikoksen ilmoittamista' sekä 'viidelle perheelle kertomista.' Julkituominen itsessään on jo kosto: ei kaulan katkaiseminen, ei vatsan puhkaiseminen, vaan sanat. Ja minulla on niin paljon sanoja – vinosilmäsanoja ja keltanaamasanoja – etteivät ne kaikki mahdu iholleni.