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Like Kingston's novel, Ho's *Paper Sons and Daughters* is strongly autobiographical; the protagonist is Ho's actual father, and hers is a daughter's narrative of her family's traumatic history during apartheid South Africa. Like *The Woman Warrior*, Ho's book also chooses a memoir form to narrate a second generation Chinese South African girl's life in South Africa. Ho describes her memoir as follows:

My book was an opportunity to tell the story of one family from a community (the Chinese South African minority) that still in many ways exists on the periphery of society. By this, I mean that we still live lives that are very insular and isolated and even hidden from community outsiders. (2001:1)

Following Kingston's footsteps, both books explore the difficulties and the feelings of alienation which the first immigrant generations met when they arrived in South Africa. Besides the similarity with Kingston, these two books also explore the strong cultural conflicts in the diaspora. The narrator in *The Woman Warrior* once complained that her mother ate anything she could reach (for example snakes, frogs, pig's entrails), but that she would rather "live on plastics" (Kingston, 1976:88). That description indicated her rejection of her traditional Chinese identity and demonstrates her acceptance of American fast-food culture.

Ho's book has a similar episodes in which cultural identity becomes manifest in food practices: "food and eating in the Ho household was a hybrid of chopsticks and woks alongside braai tongs and toasters" (Ho, 2011:20). In blending traditional Chinese

food with the typical South African barbecue meal, a hybrid cultural identity is achieved.

There is another important point that should not be overlooked, which is that “home” in the diaspora did not really exist anymore. It is only in their imaginations. Jeffery Yen in his review of *All Under Heaven* indicates that:

Accone’s book may be seen as a claim to belong to the ‘Chinese nation’. It is also an expression of nostalgic yearning for a return ‘home’, in which the hope of belonging, of an end of alienation (that is inevitably always disappointed) is seen to lie. (2005:108)

In *Paper Sons and Daughters*, the narrator indicates that the real China is inaccessible:

I have been taken to Hong Kong and China, I have never been so deep into the interior that I have been able to get to what remains of these villages. Some relatives, though, have journeyed to the old country and returned with a bit of these rural outposts caught in megapixels of today’s digital photographic genius. (Ho, 2011:21)

Even when physically going back to China, the idea of an authentic home is out of reach and fragmented “bit[s]” of the past can barely be “caught in megapixels”. In the context of a rapidly urbanising and modernising China, the idea of a real, authentic China is irretrievably lost. As a result, the ancestral country is no longer available to the diaspora and “home” is simply in their imaginations and memories. The idea of “home” and therefore identity is therefore always destabilised. As Accone puts it:

Struggling with questions of identity and belonging, neither Eastern nor Western, not Asian, not African, the family lives in limbo. Where is home – at the trio of Africa or across the sea, as it was for their ancestors? (Accone, 2004: 218)

As a Chinese student “sojourning” in South Africa since 2007, I have gained much insight from the diasporic texts that I have studied. South Africa is a special country,



but still marked by its apartheid past where Chinese people were considered somewhat higher than black people, but lower than white people. After 1994, there is now an equality of rights, together with affirmative action for historically disadvantaged black people. However, Chinese people, until very recently, were not regarded as historically disadvantaged and continue to struggle with a legacy of discrimination. The Chinese diaspora still has difficulties in living in a racially divided society between white and black.

With the rapid development of the China's economy, and its increasingly powerful financial and political global status, the social position of the Chinese diaspora has however developed and improved. China and Chinese people are no longer only an object of disparagement and discrimination, but also are admired for their progress and modernisation. Though the cultural conflicts still exists, it is less about being looked down upon by the other developed countries. As a result, I am very proud of my Chinese identity, but as a student learning and working abroad in South Africa, I am also wanting to embrace and know new places, cultures and experiences, and develop an identity that makes me both Chinese but also part of a global world.

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