The Woman Warrior: The Image Of The Warrior

A warrior is often viewed as someone that competes in physical battles, however, in the memoir, “The Woman Warrior”, that is not so. A character by the name of Kingston is portrayed as a warrior but the so-called warrior qualities of a physically competitive individual have no match against the mental capabilities a real warrior would withhold. In the book, all of the main characters had both internal battles and external battles. A warrior must have strength, courage, and wisdom, like any typical warrior, it is how it is used to a mental extent. Without the use of physical contact, they are proven warriors.

A warrior from the memoir “The Woman Warrior” is someone who demonstrates someone who does not give up through the use of patience and persistence. Warriors must face adversity with the mindset of no intention to benefit personally from the situation. In the memoir, her Aunt is portrayed with un warrior-like traits. “Don't tell anyone you had an aunt, your father doesn't want to hear her name.”(Kingston, 13). When she was faced with embarrassment, this made her make selfish decisions. Her actions portray her incompatible with a warrior. In this situation, a warrior would’ve used the selfless option, disregarding any shame they felt at the time. The Aunt thinking how the outcome of her suicide would affect her family. She could’ve proven herself a warrior had she stayed alive and overcome these obstacles and hardships she was facing. Much like Kingston in the memoir, her mother moved to the United States where her race and sex was frowned upon. Her mother had to face the fact that she wasn't as welcome to the United states as she was in China. She did this so she could support her family. These character traits demonstrate a warrior, without any violence involved.

In the re-telling of the Fa Mu Lan myth, Kingston demonstrates the abilities and strengths a warrior withholds, rather than weaknesses to a warrior her mother speaks poorly about, in the memoir, “No Name Woman.” “When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talk-story, we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves.” Fa Mu Lan supports her escape the ongoing loop of a typical Chinese woman that cooks and cleans or is a slave. She wants her to achieve something beyond a slave or a housewife. She gets her inspiration from the warrior in Fa Mu Lan. Kingston set the goal to herself to escape the loop much like her idol, Fa Mu Lan did. Kingston learns it’s more than alright to be different to be both a Chinese-American woman. She proves to herself that she can be any person of her desire, no matter her sex and societal influence.

In Kingston’s memoir, silence takes place when meeting new people. At school, Kingston tries to socialize with a girl. Kingston says, “If you don’t talk, you can’t have a personality. Do you think someone is going to take care of you all your stupid life? You’re not the type that gets dates, let alone get married (Kingston, 180).” Kingston is forcing herself to speak instead of the girl she’s trying to communicate with. When silence follows after trying to communicate with the girl, this boils her temper to the extent she cannot make out sentences. She doesn’t want to be an outcast among her friends and school and wants to be able to communicate with others, which the Chinese culture she grew up with, deprived her of this. When she speaks her mind, the reader was able to grasp and looker deeper into Kingston’s character. It is revealed that she is a very fragile human, her insecurities, and the hard time she at the time was being put through.

The memoir “The Woman Warrior”, by Maxine Hong Kingston, defines a warrior as someone that doesn't live up to the term “warrior” through violence and battle, but as their selfless actions. Kingston describes to the reader, a warrior doesn't always have to be a physically competitive individual, but as someone who can overcome hardships and adversity, racial, and cultural oppression. Everyone must go through hardships throughout their lifetime. It is what they do with them that defines who they are. No human has the strength to fight off one hundred men, it is the wisdom and mental strength they have, that can defeat an army.