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Wong, Lindsay. (2019). The Woo Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

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Lindsay Wong's book, "The Woo Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family," is a firsthand recollection of some of the uncertainties, horrors, or traumatic events that immigrant families may be subject to when trying to assimilate into a new culture. Wong sheds light on the issues faced with Canadian immigration Policies by filling chapters detailed with the experiences she faced living with her immigrant family in Vancouver, or as in Wong's words, "Hongcouver." Evidencing how a lack of social ties can lead to parents being overwhelmed by everyday stresses and the consequences involved, Wong grew up normalizing verbal and physical abuse because her family suffered from mental health issues that were never formally diagnosed or treated. Wong's book depicts how a poor relationship with one's family makes it increasingly difficult for a child to form relationships of their own with their peers and lessens the likelihood that a child will have contact with those abusive family members later in life. Wong also hints at how children grow up; they learn the most from their parents' behaviours and mannerisms or other significant adult figures in their life. Throughout the book, Wong continuously draws attention to the impoverished neighbourhood referred to as "the Poteau," where she grew up with many other Chinese families that took part in the drug business. Suggesting an underlying issue that immigrants to Canada may not have as many opportunities readily available to them, they seek alternate forms of income to feel accepted in Canadian society.

As a parent, there is the idea that one needs to be as attentive, if not more, to their children's feelings and emotions as opposed to their own. Doing so allows children to learn appropriate ways to cope with the burdens and stresses that occur naturally throughout their lives. When we look at the situation, Lindsay Wong finds herself in, growing up in a household where the belief was "that mental illness or any psychological disturbance, was caused by demonic possession" (p. 14). Wong's parents refused to acknowledge their children's feelings/emotions (i.e. sadness, jealousy, anger, or vulnerability in general) due to the belief if they indulged these feelings/emotions, they are inviting 'demonic spirits' to come into the family. These 'demonic spirits' capable of possession are what Wong refers to as "The Woo Woo" throughout her book. By learning to ignore her family members' feelings and emotions, Wong had issues showing empathy for other people and was always ready for a fight when confronted with an issue. By not expressing how she feels growing up, Wong takes a spur of the moment trip to Honolulu right after she graduates high school and meets Fun-Fun, one of a few girls she will have a fast and brief connection with throughout the book. While in Honolulu, Wong stays in Fun-Fun's charming apartment until Wong has her first mental breakdown. Due to being surrounded by such lavish and expensive items, Wong trashes the apartment for Fun-Fun to return home and see. Instead of apologizing for her actions, "the word sorry was not in [her] Wong vocabulary... [due to] an automatic, self-protective reaction [and she] was ready for a hair-jerking, eye-gashing fight" (p. 180), which gets Wong kicked out onto the streets of Honolulu alone. Wong reacts the way that she does because she grew up witnessing her parents insult or physically attack each other due to their stresses instead of seeking others' help.

Growing up, the quickest way for a child to learn how to behave, speak, or treat people stems from watching their parents. How do their parents act towards each other? How do their parents talk to or about other adults? So, for Wong growing up in a house where belittling someone or physically harming them, both emotional and physical abuse were part of her everyday life. As a child, Wong heard things like, "SO YOUNG YOU SHOULD NOT BE SO FAT," or, "YOU HAVE MAJOR PROBLEM LINDSAY!" (p. 95), or the most extreme example, "[w]hy doesn't Retarded Lindsay just hurry up and kill herself?" (p. 200). Along with her father's tendency to belittle his children, Wong's mother tended to get violent; at the age of six, Lindsay witnessed her mother throw a plate of food at her father's head, and it smashed the cabinet behind him (p.21). By having constant exposure to abuse in childhood, Wong was unaware of her actions towards others as malicious because she lacked the knowledge to show compassion or empathy for others.

By lacking the essential skills required to make meaningful relationships work, showing compassion or empathy for other people, Wong is at a disadvantage growing up because she has a challenging time connecting to her peers and has no friends. Wong was seen as an outsider in school because she prioritized material goods in life over interpersonal relations. "I decided that if the other kids did not like me, not even realizing that my behaviour was hostile, I would concentrate on hoarding piano trophies and winning glossy gold medals rather than wooing their elusive friendships" (p. 128). Wong's father putting enormous emphasis on receiving trophies or achieving the highest mark at all costs enforced the idea that the only way people accept who they are is through success and showing it.

Growing up in a neighbourhood where it was common for the houses beside one's own to

be either marijuana grow ops or meth labs reinforced the idea they had to appear in a particular light for society to accept them. If one's family was like Wongs and did not take part in the "'gardening' business" (p. 46), then you were paid for your silence because "[A]fter all its only fair we [got] paid to tolerate their moist toxic smells" (p. 42), so Wong became accustomed to receiving money or other, "presents" (p. 44), whenever she felt inconvenienced. Not only did she get money for staying quiet for living in the middle of a drug ring, but Wong also received money from her parents in exchange for her to obey everything they have to say. For instance, when Wong's mother was contemplating suicide and Lindsay would not let her, 'eventually her mother attempted to get her out of the car by offering her a twenty-dollar bill' (p. 148). Leading Wong to have a distorted self-image such that "she evaluated herself in terms of dollars and cents" (p. 148).

Even though Wong had to endure such a traumatizing childhood, she portrays the stresses immigrants face when starting a new life in a strange new place. Throughout the book, the constant theme was the mistreatment from parents to child, suggesting that the Chinese family structure is very different from the Canadian family structure. By sticking to their traditional Chinese cultural norms, Wong's parents refuse Western medicine practices because of how their different cultures view mental illness. "[T]hese kind of doctors [do not] believe in ghosts … They [cannot] see them. They think [grandma] is [f-ing] crazy, they [cannot] see that [she is] possessed! The medication hides the demons" (p. 109). By holding to these beliefs shrinks the amount of help that is available to Wong and her family. With this in mind, the idea that is perpetuated follows, "The Woo Woo" may be an inhibiting factor on middle-aged Chinese women having an adequate social support network they can turn to for support in their new home country. Having to leave their family,

friends, and old life entirely immigration poses unique challenges to the parties involved. Not having a healthy way to release stress can cause family issues.

Wong gives evidence on how having immigrant parents or family members who have a mental illness and hold different cultural beliefs than the one in the dominant society may play a role in the way children are socialized and which behaviours are deemed acceptable. By not learning to show empathy and having assigned every emotion a monetary value, Wong clarifies that the care given by parents who have a mental illness may lead to more aversive effects for children in the long run rather than care given from parents without a mental illness. Lindsay Wong's book, "The Woo Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family," is an excellent firsthand recollection of how different cultures deal with mental illnesses and how an acculturation gap may make parent-child relations harder. The academic audience that would be interested in this book would include psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and those involved with child development.