

# Reading reflection on american born chinese by gene luen yang



American Born Chinese, written by Gene Luen Yang, is a fictional graphic novel. It is a mix of realistic fiction and fantasy, where some parts of the story are more realistic and others more imaginative and fictional. I first read the book for my Language and Literature class at my previous school last year, and afterward went back to the book because of its creative storytelling and interesting drawings. I chose to write a book review of American Born Chinese because of the fascinating story structure where different stories combine into one in order to tell a story of self-acceptance. Also, as a student of the IB curriculum, I am constantly exposed to different people and cultures. I have never lived in Japan, my country of origin for a considerable amount of time, so like the main character, Jin Wang, it is hard for me to identify as a person from my country of origin as I have never experienced life as a Japanese person living in Japan. As I can relate to the main character, I found that writing a book review for this graphic novel would be something that I would enjoy doing.

American Born Chinese is made up of three stories that come together as one. The first story is based on a folk tale called the 'The Monkey King', which is about a Monkey Deity who is refused entry to a party because he is a monkey. The second story is about a second-generation immigrant Jin Wang who struggles with fitting into his new school, who becomes friends with a Taiwanese boy, and later starts dating an American girl, but unfortunately is prevented from pursuing her because of his classmate's concerns. The third story is about a boy named Danny, a white American, whose cousin Chin-kee comes to visit every year, embarrassing him by displaying stereotypes of the Chinese concerning his accent, physical

appearance, what he eats, how he performs in school, and other significant stereotypes. Towards the end of the book, it is unveiled that Danny is in fact Jin Wang, who had 'transformed' into a white American after he was prevented from pursuing his crush Amelia because he was Chinese. After Danny fights Chin-Kee, Chin-Kee transforms into the Monkey King, who reminds Danny of his identity, which allows Jin Wang to embrace his identity as a Chinese person.

The story made me question how I embraced my identity as a Japanese person. I have never experienced living as an all-Japanese person, and much of my identity is shaped around my experiences from living in different places. The characters of the story were interesting to follow, and the storytelling techniques made the novel entertaining. For example, in the third story of Danny and Chin-Kee, the story is told like an old tv-show with laughing and clapping soundtracks. To conclude this review of American Born Chinese, I believe that this book follows a story that many people may see these days; due to the increase of globalization, we are making the world more diverse than ever. Therefore, I believe that reading this book would be an important part of becoming a more globally-aware citizen. In our current unit on World Religions in I&S, we explored stereotypes and the danger that comes with them, and reading this book would be an excellent way of developing my knowledge of stereotypes and their impact on people. I would recommend this book to those between the ages of 13 and 18, where people are exploring themselves and those around them. Perhaps this book would open up a new perspective for those who struggle with identifying themselves in this constantly changing world.