Choosing Motherhood: The Empowering Transformation from Ambivalence to Certainty in Rebecca Walker's Baby Love: Choosing Motherhood after a Lifetime of Ambivalence

陳瑞卿
Foreign Languages and Literatures
Humanities and Social Sciences
rosa@chu.edu.tw

Abstract

In her second memoir, Baby Love: Choosing Motherhood after a Lifetime of Ambivalence (2007), Rebecca Walker, one of the founding leaders of third-wave feminism, tells readers her fulfilling experience of becoming an empowered woman by choosing motherhood after her many years of ambivalent quest. She relates: "I am a mother and a partner now. After all those years of wanting, denying and being afraid, I stopped searching and embraced what was right in front me" (206). Having painfully experienced decades of self-denial caused by the aftermath of the chosen abortion at the age of fourteen, of disconnected loneliness after her parental divorce, and of her ambivalent familial relationships with her white Jewish stepmother, her adopted son by her ex-girlfriend, and above all her feminist cultural icon mother, Alice Walker, the writer feels certain to build an intimate partnership with Glen to create an emotionally, psychologically, and physically secure family for her unborn child, Tenzie. The decision to take the long pregnancy journey enables Walker to learn how to love her child and even herself "unconditionally" (113). "Baby love" thus becomes an empowering source, driving away the writer's inner haunted self, the "neglected child" (169). This love eventually leads the reborn writer into her departure from daughterhood so as to claim her right to her own story with Tenzie, which Alice refuses to acknowledge. By undergoing varied phases of ambivalent quest for finding an intimate partner, creating a healthy family, choosing motherhood, and taking the pregnancy journey, Rebecca Walker completes her transformation of turning into an empowered woman full of maternal love in the end.