

CONFUCIANIST'S PERCEPTION OF WOMEN: ITS INFLUENCE ON MAXINE  
HONG KINGSTON'S THE WOMAN WARRIOR: MEMOIRS OF A GIRLHOOD  
AMONG GHOSTS AND AMY TAN'S THE JOYLUCK CLUB

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## NOTES

I am using the 1998 MLA style of Citation and Documentation in my thesis. For the romanization and translation of the Chinese terms and words used in my thesis, I have used the Pinyin system whenever I have referred to these terms. In the case of quotations which contain translations of Chinese terms and words I have retained the original translated terms as used by the authors.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes to examine critically how the fundamental ideals contained within the philosophy of Confucius have evolved into social rites and rituals contained within the Five Classics and Four Classics for women. This is important for it is the social conventions that form the essential patriarchal structure in addition to the moral as well as behavioural norms of Chinese society. The study and analysis of Confucius' principal doctrines will help us understand the roles and responsibilities held by Chinese women within the structural hierarchy of Chinese family and society in general.

The above will provide for a unique comparison of the contradictory values that beset the protagonists of Kingston's The Woman Warrior and Tan's The Joyluck Club as they search for a harmonious interweaving of the values of Chinese and American societies. Thus, this thesis attempts to analyze how the characters in both novels are able to negotiate the dilemma of Chinese women that is caused by inherent Confucianistic values of Chinese society and the equally contradictory demands of a Western, secular society. What is important to note is that the ideals of Chinese society encourage complementary and specific behavioural traits of its women in relation to men. In contrast, the models of a modern as well as Western society require the individual to adhere to the ideals of individuality and equality that is to be practiced by both men and women alike. Consequently, the characters from both books embark on a search for symbiotic identities through their narratives that will try

to reconcile the contradictory demands from both the Chinese as well as Western cultures.

Chapter one outlines briefly the objectives methodology and the limitations of this thesis. Chapter two traces the development of Confucius' philosophical principles as contained in his collected sayings in the Lunyu to see how they have evolved into ritualistic behavioural norms for both men as well as women. Chapter three, however, studies the main protagonist in Kingston's novel, The Woman Warrior to critically assess how the main character mediate the demands of Chinese as well as American culture to arrive at symbiotic personality that acknowledges the combinations of values from both cultures. Chapter four looks at Tan's usage of the mother-daughter dyad to depict the telling of the life histories of all the pairs of mothers and daughters. The telling becomes a powerful tool of empowerment for both generations to reconcile differences between the demands of both American and Chinese cultures. Chapter 5 concludes with a summation of how all the protagonists from both novels have to negotiate within the boundaries of both cultures in order to achieve as well as obtain symbiotic identities.

## ABSTRAK

Thesis ini meneliti secara kritikal bagaimana ideal-ideal asas yang terkandung dalam falsafah Konfusius telah berkembang menjadi upacara sosial dan ritual seperti mana yang tertera dalam Five Classics dan Four Classics untuk wanita. Ini adalah penting kerana konvensyen-konvensyen sosial yang membentuk struktur patriakal yang merupakan asas norma-norma dan tingkahlaku masyarakat Cina. Penyelidikan dan analisis prinsip-prinsip asas doktrin Konfusius akan membantu kita memahami peranan-peranan serta tanggungjawab-tanggungjawab yang ditangguh oleh wanita Cina dalam struktur hierarki keluarga dan masyarakat Cina secara umum.

Apa yang tersebut di atas akan memberi suatu perbandingan unik mengenai nilai-nilai yang bertentangan yang dialami protagonis Kingston dalam The Woman Warrior and hasil tulisan Tan The Joyluck Club apabila mereka cuba mengaitkan nilai-nilai sosial masyarakat-masyarakat Cina dan Amerika. Maka, thesis ini cuba menganalisa bagaimana watak-watak dalam kedua-dua novel merundingkan dilema wanita Cina yang disebabkan oleh nilai-nilai Konfusian dalam masyarakat Cina serta nilai-nilai bercanggah masyarakat sekular Barat. Adalah penting untuk diketengahkan bahawa ideal-ideal masyarakat Cina menggalakkan ciri-ciri tingkahlaku spesifik yang komplementari dalam hubungan wanita lelaki. Sebaliknya, contoh nilai masyarakat Barat yang moden mengkehendaki individu-individu untuk mematuhi ideal-ideal keindividuan dan

kesamaantaraan yang perlu dipraktikkan oleh kedua-dua lelaki dan wanita. Demikian, watak-watak kedua-dua novel memulakan suatu penerokaan untuk identiti-identiti simbiotik melalui naratif-naratif yang cuba menyatukan tuntutan-tuntutan bercanggah dari kedua-dua budaya Cina dan Barat.

Bab Satu menggariskan secara ringkas objektif-objektif, kaedah dan had-had thesis ini. Bab Kedua menguris perkembangan prinsip-prinsip falsafah Konfusianisma sebagaimana terkandung dalam koleksi pemikiran Konfusius dalam Lunyu untuk meninjau bagaimana mereka telah berkembang untuk menjadi norma-norma ritualistik tingkahlaku kedua-dua lelaki dan wanita. Bab Ketiga meninjau dan menilai secara kritikal watak utama novel Kingston The Woman Warrior untuk memahami bagaimana watak utama menyalurkan tuntutan-tuntutan kedua-dua budaya Cina dan Amerika untuk mencapai personaliti simbiotik yang mengiktirafkan kombinasi nilai-nilai kedua-dua budaya ini. Bab Keempat melihat bagaimana Tan menggunakan diad ibu-anak perempuan untuk mempersembahkan sejarah kehidupan semua pasangan ibu dan anak perempuan. Penceritaan ini menjadi suatu alat yang berkuasa untuk perbolehan kedua-dua generasi wanita bagi mengatasi perbezaan di antara tuntutan kedua-dua budaya Amerika dan Cina. Bab Kelima menyimpul dengan ringkasan bagaimana semua watak-watak dalam kedua-dua novel telah merundingkan sempadan kedua-dua budaya untuk mencapai dan menerima identiti-identiti simbiotik.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Notes	iii
Abstract	iv
Abstrak	vi
Table of Contents	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Confucianist Thought and Women	16
Chapter 3: <u>The Woman Warrior</u>	74
Chapter 4: <u>The Joyluck Club</u>	104
Chapter 5: Conclusion	137
Glossary	144
Selected Bibliography	146