



DISOBEDIENCE OF CONFUCIAN RULES IN MAXINE HONG KINGSTON'S THE WOMAN WARRIOR

Happy Simamora

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas

Email : happysimamora781@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to find and analyze the disobedience to Confucian rules that found in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. This research uses qualitative methods with data collection done through comprehensive reading, marking relevant data, reading the concepts and theories applied and removing irrelevant data and writing the most relevant to be analyze. The data analyze with feminist theories. The results found are that there are Confucian rules that do not support gender equality or demean women. Therefore, through her work Kingston expresses disobedience to these rules. The rules that found are: Match making, the difference between boys and girls, humility, husband's and wife's duties, wholehearted devotion, and silencing women. Through this research, women must dare to get out of their comfort zone, to be independent, speak up, and not be afraid of restrictive rules, and have a freedom to do domestic and public roles.

Keywords: *Confucian rules, disobedience, feminism, gender equality.*

I. Introduction

In modern times, most women are free to make their own choices. It can be seen from the intellectual aspect that the number of educated women is increasing. The data shows that 88% of females had primary education, compared to 91% of males. But in tertiary education, 41% of females achieved tertiary education while only 31 % of males did (weforum.org: 2019). It shows that most women or females are free to pursue their dreams without educational boundaries. Besides, most women are independent, they also have brilliant careers that can compete with men even internationally. They can be leaders in many fields that give them economic opportunities or financial freedom. The stereotypes of women, such as that they are weak, incapable, have now been reversed, because in reality, they are tough, hardworking, and independent.

Nowadays, apart from the greatness of women, there are still women who are not fully able to find themselves. There are still women who do not dare to get out of their comfort zone, dare to have a dream, and consider themselves unworthy. Women are still bound by cultural standards that inhibit women's freedom. There are strong relationships between gender roles and the cultural context of a particular community. The views and beliefs about proper gender are

attributed to the overall cultural environment (Hruvikova, n.d.:4). Mentioned in *Indonesia Gender Equality Program*, Indonesia's female labor force participation rate is still relatively low, at around 53% in 2021, and has remained unchanged for more than two decades despite structural changes in the economy, improvements, and lower fertility rates. In addition, the gap between men and women in Indonesia's labor force participation rate remains one of the largest in the region at 30% (Worldbankgroup.org, n.d.). It shows that the disparity between women and men is still very evident. Marriage and childbirth reduce women's supply-side participation. It is estimated that more than 46% of women do not work a year after the birth of their first child (mediaindonesia.com, 2024). A culture that puts household chores and children in the hands of women, while men work outside. This makes companies worried that women will not be able to focus on their work after marriage or after giving birth. Women's rights are still not yet well-recognized, and gender equality is still an important issue.

Several cultural influences are strong in determining the position of men and women. For instance, in Toba Batak's culture, men or boys are honored more than women or girls. In birth tradition, boys are more desired



by their families than girls. When there is no boy birth in a family, the mother or wife is the target for blame. Meanwhile, based on science, what determines the sex of the child is the genes carried by male sperm. The Y chromosome, which is only possessed by males, contains the SRY (Sex-determine Region Y) gene that plays a role in testicular formation and hormone production for the development of male characteristics. Without the Y chromosome, individuals would develop as females biologically (Udjung, 2025). Moreover, the husband will be asked to marry again to get male offspring who will continue the family name. Panggabean in *Perubahan Perlakuan Terhadap Anak Perempuan Pada Masyarakat Batak Toba* says that boys are called “*Tampuk ni pasu-pasu ihot ni ate-ate, tum-tum siubeon*,” which means boys are everything and very valuable (Gaol, 2008:49). Sons will continue the family name or *marga*; therefore, a family that does not have a son will try by all means to get a son. Culture can change, but a patriarchal culture is very difficult to change and still influences the lives of today.

Chinese culture is strongly influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism is the way of life propagated by Confucius in the 6th-5th BC (Before Christ) and followed by the Chinese people for more than two millennia. Although transformed over time, it is still the substance of learning, the source of values, and the social code of the Chinese (Weiming, 2025). Therefore, the way Chinese people behave, think, and live is formed by Confucian thoughts. Confucianism is the philosophy that teaches a set of moral principles founded on ethics, humanity, and love. However, everything has positive and negative sides, such as Confucianism.

One of the negative aspects of Confucianism is inhibition gender equality. This doctrine or several rules of Confucian places women in lower positions than men. According to Fang, the concepts of filial piety and natural order are central to Confucianism; however, they ultimately contribute to systemic gender inequality (Fang, 2021). In Chinese society, the impact of Confucianism perpetuates gender biases and stereotypes

within the educational system and employment sectors. Confucianism serves as a precursor to gender inequality, particularly in China. The dominance of men is evident, as the Analects is utilized in classical Confucian texts. The word “He” is used much more frequently than “she,” highlighting the gender-based disparity in language. This mindset is passed down through generations, solidifying a culture known as patriarchy.

Therefore, it's necessary to disobey any thought or culture that inhibits gender equality. Gender equality can be found all over the world, but new ideas and the development of human thinking, especially among women, were used to proclaim women's freedom. Such as in Indonesia, before the Kartini era, women could not get formal education. But with the rejection of that state, women in Indonesia now enjoy the same rights in education and other fields. Women's courage is needed to free them from the cultural stranglehold on women's freedom. Many ways can be used to reject this culture, such as demonstrations and even through literary works.

II. Concepts and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Confucianism

Confucianism is an old Chinese philosophy taught by Confucius. It is a system of thought based on the teachings of Confucius, who lived from 551 to 479 B.C.E. Confucius is the most revered person in Chinese history and is accorded such titles as Sage of All Time and First Teacher. Though he is called Confucius throughout most of the world, that name is the Latinized form of his Chinese name, Kong Fuzi or Master Kung (Dorothy and Hoobler, n.d.:10). He is the founder of the Confucian school and reformer of the *ju* tradition; his name is known in Chinese as K'ung Fu-tzu or K'ung-tzu, meaning Master K'ung. His family name is K'ung, his name is Ch'iu, and his courtesy name is Chung-ni (Tylor and Choy, 1994:150). This thought had influenced China's people in every aspect of their lives. Confucius is one of the most influential people who shaped China's mind. Besides, there are several famous philosophers of



Confucianism. After Confucius, the most important Confucian philosopher was Mencius (around 371-289 B.C.E.), the Latin form of the name Mengzi, or master Meng. Another Confucian thinker who lived after Mencius was Xunzi (around 289-238 B.C.E.) (Dorothy and Hoobler, 2009). They taught Confucianism and produced new scholars of this teaching.

In addition, after classical Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism was initiated by Zhu Xi and Wan Yang-Ming. From Neo-Confucianism born *The Four Books*. It consists of *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, and the *Book of Mencius*. The Four Books are used as the basis of Confucian education from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. Zhu Xi set the Four Books in specific order: *Great Learning*, *Analects*, *Book of Mencius*, and the last is *Doctrine of the Mean*. This order, according to Wan Yang-Ming, suggested a sequential process of learning and the interconnection that exists between the works (Tylor and Choy, 1994:186). Besides the Four Books, Zhu Xi also wrote *The Book of Family Rituals*, which contained forms of liturgy for the home, and *The Book Advises Parents*. In his work, Zhu Xi drew on traditional sources but modified them for simplicity's sake (Dorothy and Hoobler, n.d.:100)

Confucianism teaches a good way to live, which focuses on morality in society. Confucius and his followers always practiced eight majesty attitudes, that is, benevolence (Ren), righteousness (Yi), decency (Li), wisdom (Zhi), trustworthy (Xin), faithful (Zhong), destiny (Tian Ming), and man of virtue (Junzi). The main thoughts are benevolence (Ren) and decency (Li) (Zilaing and Wen, n.d.). Based on the thought above, it can be concluded that Confucius teaches a good way, a manner of life, and kindness. However, Confucianism also has bad sides, especially against gender equality. It seems to reflect the male-dominated Chinese society. All emperor's scholar officials were male, and only they were allowed to take the examinations that led to government service (Dorothy and Hoobler, n.d.: 100). Here are Zhu Xi and Ban Zhao's books about

Confucianism that consider inhibiting gender equality.

2.2 Theory and Method

This study employs feminist literary criticism to explicate the problems above. Criticism, or more specifically literary criticism, is the overall term for studies concerned with defining, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating works of literature (Abrams and Harpham, n.d.). Literary criticism allows readers to engage critically with literature, uncovering its themes, values, ideologies, and moral messages. This research will analyze and criticize a novel about feminism.

Feminist theory is used to look at and to analyze works of literature that depict the phenomenon of women being degraded as a result of how the Chinese society lives based on Confucianism. This theoretical framework enables a deeper understanding of how female characters disobey of Confucianism's rules that inhibits gender inequality, cultural expectations, and gender roles. By examining both the intrinsic elements of the novel, such as character development, narrative structure, setting, and themes, and the extrinsic elements, including the social and cultural contexts surrounding the text. This approach reveals how Kingston constructs the disobedience of Confucianism rules. De Beauvoir's concepts, especially the idea of woman as "the Other," provide a critical lens through which to explore the struggles and resistance of the female characters within patriarchal structures.

This is a qualitative research method. Assumptions and the use of interpretive and theoretical frameworks serve as the foundation for qualitative research, which examines the meaning that people or groups assign to social or human issues. To investigate this issue, qualitative researchers employ a newly developed qualitative method of inquiry, gather data in an environment that is sensitive to the subjects and locations being studied, and analyze the data both inductively and deductively to identify trends or themes. Participant voices, the researcher's reflexivity, a thorough explanation and analysis of the



issue, and a demand for change or addition to the literature are all included in the final written report or presentation (Creswell, 2013). This method helps to understand what people experience, thoughts, and emotions which are contained in the data that will be analyzed in this research.

III. Analysis

The Woman Warrior is a story about the experiences of growing up as a Chinese-American woman. A mother, Brave Orchid, talks about family stories, myths, and cultural conflict, especially against women. It started with a tragic aunt, who was rejected by her family because she had an illegitimate child, but she took all responsibility for it. The mother tells about *Fa Mu Lan*, who inspired and obsessed her daughter, I narrator, to be a warrior. The story continued with the mother's struggles and courage to be a doctor in a midwifery school in town, considering she was a mother and a wife. When her husband in America as an immigrant. The story ends with her daughter of I narrator, who made choices in her life such as rejecting the arranged match-making offered by her parents and preferring to continue her education and strive for a scholarship.

Confucianism has several rules regarding how women must behave towards their parents, husbands, and the environment, which lead to ostracizing women or inhibiting gender equality. Rules that are identified from the novel that degrade women's rights and inhibit gender equality, resulting in women's disobedience. The rules are: matchmaking, the difference between boys and girls, humility, husband and wife's duties, wholehearted devotion, and silencing women.

A. Match Making

The author presents women who disobey the rules of Confucianism by creating a character daughter or I narrator. Matchmaking is one of the rules that does not give women the freedom to choose their life partner, and through a marriage that they do not want, women will spend the rest of their lives as domestic doers, with all the other rules that hamper women's rights as

human beings. That is what the author wants to convey by creating stories and characters that can convey women's disobedience.

The match making tradition is showed through the actions of I narrator's parents who arranged the match making for her is a proof that match making is still practices even when they no longer live in China.

I learned that young men were placing ads in the *Gold Mountains News* to find wives when my mother and father started answering them. ... I saw him looking over our photographs. "This one," he said, picking up my sister's picture. "No. No," said my mother. "This one," my picture. "The oldest first," she said (193-194).

The author shows the disobedience of match-making by creating the I narrator who strongly rejects the match making that was arranged by her parents, not only for herself but also for her other sister. She overheard her mother's conversation with one of the FOB men: "This one," he said, picking up my sister's picture. "No. No," said my mother. "This one," my picture. "The oldest first," she said (194). When she already knew that it was an arrange marriage, she shows her displeasure of it through her monolog: It was an obstacle. I would protect my sister and myself at the same time (194). The author uses I narrator to convey directly to the reader women's disobedience of match making. By using the first-person narrator as a point of view, the reader can easily access her thoughts and agree with her. Kingston shows that disobedience is not just by thought but also through the actions of I narrator.

Knowing that I narrator, is matched with a man, she starts to protest by her unusual acts in doing housework. she shows the acts: "As my parents and the FOB sat talking at the kitchen table, I dropped two dishes. I found my walking stick and limped across the floor. I twisted my mouth and caught my hand in the knots of my hair. I spilled soup on the FOB when I handed his bowl (194)". She tries to make her future partner dislike him her by creating 'ill-



feeling' towards her. It seems that as if she was incapable of mastering basic housework that stereotyped for women or slave. She hopes that the FOB men (the man to whom she is mated) dislikes her and cancels the match making. Since the purpose of marriage in Confucian rules harms women by making them slave in the family, the author thoughts opposition and shows women's disobedience through I narrator.

In addition to actions, the author also shows the disobedience verbally through I narrator's protest directly to her mother:

I want you to tell that hulk, that gorilla-ape, to go away and never bother us again. I know what you're up to. You're thinking he's rich, and we're poor. You think we're odd and not pretty and we're not bright. You think you can give us away to freaks. You better not do that, Mother. I don't want to see him or his dirty boxes here tomorrow. If I see him here one more time, I'm going away. I'm going away anyway. I am. Do you hear me? I may be ugly and clumsy, but one thing I'm not, I'm not retarded. There's nothing wrong with my brain (201).

In her protest, I narrator says that she does not to see his "dirty boxes" which containing: The two cartoons were stuffed with pornography-naked magazines, nudie postcards and photographs (197). This shows that men view women as objects of sexuality. This also similar to Beauvoir's critics of the opinion that says women are only 'object' not subject (Beauvoir, 1953:15). The words spoken by I to her mother become a tool to depict and to emphasize women disobedience. The words "I am" emphasize her real identity as a woman and human being not as a concept or object.

Her refusal to submit to the rules of matchmaking is also a way of rejecting the idea of being a slave to a man, or to her future husband. I narrator even chooses not to marry at all. She wants to continue her education, wants to become an independent woman and

does not want to depend on other man. The Confucian rule about marriage and women makes them only do domestic role and this is the same as Beauvoir's opinion. She strongly believes that marriage...trapped and stunted women's intellectual growth and freedom (Beauvoir, 1953). I narrator realizes that when she gets married, she will become a slave of 'wives or slaves (19).' Therefore, she does not want to get married and she said inherently "I am not going to be a slave or a wife. I won't let you turn me into a slave or wife (201). Therefore, she said, "I'm never getting married, never! (102)." Her disobedience not only shows that she does not like the man she is matched with, but also wants to show that she is capable of being independent and educated woman.

B. The Difference Between Boys and Girls

Confucianism teaches to differentiate the treatment of boys and girls. The difference is emphasized, such as the education given, and the way the two are treated differently. Differences between boys and girls are taught from the moment they are born. Girls and boys have different values, and this is manifested in the celebration of the birth of boys and girls. A baby boy is well cared for, placed in a comfortable place, given attention, celebrated, and eagerly awaited by his parents and family. In contrast to a baby girl who is placed on the ground, parents will also cover up the birth of their daughters. It is considered that she will only bring trouble to her parents. This is certainly demeaning to girls or women, putting them in an undesirable position. If a boy is born, the parents congratulate each other, but if a girl is born, they kill her. Both boys and girls come from the same parents, yet boys are celebrated, girls are killed; this is because their parents consider the benefits of having boys in the long run (Rosenlee, 2006).

The difference between boys and girls is also depicted through I narrator question to her mother, Brave Orchid: "Did you have a full-month party for me? Did you turn on all the lights? Did you send my picture to my Grandmother? Why not? Because I'm a girl? Is that why not?" "Why didn't you teach me



English?” “You like having me beaten up at school, don’t you?” (46). I narrator asks her mother, Brave Orchid about how her parents celebrated her birth. The author uses the narrator's rebellious questioning as a disobedience to the different celebrations of boys and girls. I narrator’s questions urge her mother to treat both boys and girls equally. Kingston positions the reader as I narrator so that the reader can feel the emotions of I narrator who is not celebrated for her birth. This injustice is conveyed by the author reader, and the desire of women to disobey or reject these rules.

Besides that, I narrator feeling and witnessing the unfair treatment of her and her sister.

“Come, children. Hurry. Hurry. Who wants to go out with Great-Uncle?” On Saturday mornings my great-uncle, the ex-river pirate, did the shopping. “Get your coats, whoever's coming.” “I'm coming. I'm coming. Wait for me.” When he heard girls' voices, he turned on us and roared, “No girls!” and left my sisters and me hanging our coats back up, not looking at one another (47).

Third Grand-Uncle finally did get a boy, though, his only great-grandson. The boy's parents and the old man bought him toys, bought him everything-new diapers, new plastic pants-not homemade diapers, not bread bags. They gave Him a full-month party, inviting all the emigrant villagers; they deliberately hadn't given the girls parties, so that no one would notice another girl. Their brother got toy trucks that were big enough to climb inside. When he grew older, he got a bicycle and let the girls play with his old tricycle and wagon (191).

This unfair treatment of women can also be felt by the reader through I narrator's feeling when their great uncle treats them as girls. The author deliberately creates a character the third great uncle, to represent how girls are treated unfairly. As shown in

data three, the third great uncle takes the boys shopping and delights them with candy and new toys, meanwhile I narrator witnesses the disappointment of her sisters who are not allowed to go with their third great uncle for shopping just because they are girls. I narrator's anger towards that treatment is seen when she and her sister are happy when the third great uncle died: “At my great uncle’s funeral I secretly tested out feeling glad that he was dead (47).”

The author also eliminates the differences between boys and girls, especially in the field of education, through Brave Orchid's actions towards her children. She gave her children, both boy and girl freedom to get education such as it said: All her children made up their minds to major in science or mathematics (160). This statement means that there are no gender barriers to education or limits on majors. Through Brave Orchid’s action, readers can accept that education can change perspective, open minds, and make great changes to success in career. When both boys and girls are given the same educational opportunities, the declaration of independence by American feminists that “all men and women are created equal (Djajaneegara, 2000:6)” can be realized, especially in the education field.

The author reveals that women must have persistence in achieving their dreams and goals through I narrator, a strong character who shows her identity as a good woman. She is able to find her true self and is willing to work towards realizing her dreams as a mathematician, she says: “They tell me I’m smart, and I can win scholarship. I get into collages. I’ve already applied. I’m smart. I can do all kinds of things. I know how to get A’s, and they say I could be scientist or a mathematician if I want. I can make a living and take care of myself (201).” This quotation, shows that women can recognize themselves have capability as men, take care of themselves and being able to support themselves. Scientists and mathematicians symbolize human power in using logic and knowledge. It is also used to contrast with the programming mind created by patriarchy. It is said that the example of patriarchal



programming, little girls have been told early in their educational careers that they can't do math (Tyson, 2006:87). This symbol is used by the author to reinforce that women are capable of logic and rational thinking.

C. Humility

Another rule identified in the novel is humility. In Confucianism, women are taught to embody humility. However, this humility can make women appear less like slaves. A woman must be good at housework, but they do not need to tell everybody what they have done. Women are expected to always show respect to others, consistently concede, and prioritize others over themselves. This woman's humility includes doing every household chore perfectly, and not saying what she has done.

Confucian rules about humility have similarities with Victorian values. The values promoted by Queen Victoria required women to maintain their piety and purity, be passive and submissive, diligently take care of the family and household or maintain domesticity. The Confucian rule also required maintaining an attitude of putting other's interest first, not to be def and to do all housework perfectly. As a domestic doer, woman becomes a slave such says in the novel: There is a Chinese word for the female I-which is 'slave' (42).

The author shows how the I-narrator disobeys traditional expectations of female humility through her rebellious actions during housework. Her defiance is expressed through acts such as breaking dishes, yelling, burning the food, and refusing to feed others. These behaviors are not merely acts of mischief, but deliberate forms of resistance. The reader easily agrees with her actions and her disappointment with the gender stereotypes that are demanding and show gender inequality. She does them after hearing demeaning stereotypes about women from the villagers, such as the belief that "there is an outward tendency in females," which implies that a girl's efforts and achievements, like getting straight A's is ultimately for the benefit of her future husband's family, not her own.

In response to this, the narrator consciously rejects these gendered expectations. She states, "I did not plan ever to have a husband. I would show my mother and father and the nosy emigrant villagers that girls have no outward tendency." As a result, she stops getting straight A's and begins to reject the image of the obedient, self-sacrificing daughter. Her refusal to cook, letting dishes rot, and burning food are symbolic acts of protest against a culture that equates being female with being a slave, as suggested by the line, "There is a Chinese word for the female I, which is slave." Through these actions, the I-narrator reclaims her agency and challenges the deeply rooted cultural norms that seek to define and confine women. I narrator disobedient through her actions:

I refused to cook. When I had to wash dishes, I would crack one or two. "Bad girl," my mother yelled, and sometimes that made me gloat rather than cry. Isn't a bad girl almost a boy? What do you want to be when you grow up, little girl?" "A lumberjack in Oregon." Even now, unless I'm happy, I burn the food when I cook. I do not feed people. I the dirty dishes rot. I eat at other people's tables but won't invite them to mine, when the dishes are rotting (47).

The use of term "Bad girl" against the I narrator show how traditional roles works. When a girl accepts and obeys the traditional roles, she is a "good girl"; if she does not, she is a "bad girl." (Tyson, 2006:89). I narrator's answer "isn't a bad girl almost a boy?" shows that the person who must obey are girls, and boys are free to disobey just like the I narrator's actions. Through this, the author wants to show the disobedience can lead to freedom and equality with boys or men. The author counters 'bad girl' through I narrator's words: "I am not a bad girl," I would scream. "I'm not a bad girl. I am not a bad girl." I might as well as slave said, "I'm not a girl," (46). I narrator, that she does not want to be called a bad girl, and she does not even want to be called a girl.



D. Husband's and Wife's Duties

Confucianism explains the duties of a husband and a wife. In Ban Zao's book *The Lesson for Women*, it says that in a family the position of a man or husband is the same as God. The relationship between husband and wife is the same as the government and the governed (Ziliang, n.d.). Kingston directly mentions Confucian rule in the novel: My father said, "A husband may kill a wife who disobeys him. Confucius said that." Confucius, the rational man (193). This statement shows how a husband controls and has authority over his wife. It means that women are prohibited to help her husband in leading family or to take men's duties or to become decision makers. This rule is one of the important settings to know how the duties of a husband and wife in that story.

The author creates character Fa Mu Lan that contrasts with Confucianism's rules about the duties of husbands and wives. Besides, I narrator obsesses over *Fa Mu Lan* character to make all readers agree with the obsession to be like Fa Mu Lan as model role for women. Women can be warriors and replace their husbands, fathers, to take and do men's duties. Kingston also creates Fa Mu Lan's husband who disobeys the rule to control his wife. Even when they have a child, her husband who takes care for the baby while Fa Mu Lan leads the tropes in the war. It can be seen in Fa Mu Lan's expression towards her husband: Then I gave the husband my baby and told him to take it to his family, and I gave him all the money we had taken on raids to take to my family. "Go now," I said (41). The author even wants shows contrast between men's and women's duties through Fa Mu Lan's husband by his loyalty to his wife, his assumption of her duties in caring for their child. Fa Mu Lan and her husband represent a family's duties that contradicts with Confucian rule.

On the other hand, Fa Mu Lan also pointed out the basic duties and responsibilities of a wife. The author wants to show that women are not given the opportunity to do both domestic and public roles. When Fa Mu Lan finish with her last battle, she back home and says: "Now my

public duties are finished," I said. "I will stay with you, doing farmwork and housework, and giving you more sons" (45). It shows that a wife must submit not only to her husband but also to her parent in-laws. This is also proved by the author's quote from Confucianism that show in the novel, saying: Chinese smeared bad daughters-in-law with honey and tied them naked on top of ant nest (193). This quote pints how parent-in-laws can punish their daughter-in-law with terrible punishment if she does not "respect" them.

E. Wholehearted Devotion

Another Confucian rule that is identified from the novel is wholehearted devotion. Confucianism teaches to maintain an intact and harmonious family. It allows a man to marry more than twice, but a woman must be faithful to her husband no matter what. Such as depict in Brave Orchid's story about Chinese emperors: A long time ago... the emperors had four wives, one at each point of compass, and they lived in four palaces (143) and in page (99) I narrator directly said that "In China... my father would marry two or three more wives." While in contrast, Confucianism teach that a wife must not leave her husband for whatever reasons. When a husband does wrong, the wife must always forgive and tolerate his actions. In contrast, when a wife does not obey her husband, she will get the worst things such says in the novel: A husband may kill a wife who disobey him (193).

The author displays disobedience to the rule of wholehearted devotion in No Name Woman (the aunt). The day after No Name Woman got married, her husband went on a migration to America and then there was no news from him. She had even forgotten what her husband looked like. Instead of faithfully waiting for her husband, no name woman fell in love with another man. It is narrated:

But perhaps my aunt, any forerunner caught in a slow life, let dreams grow went toward what and fade and after some months or years the enormities of the forbidden kept her persisted. Fear at the enormities of the desires



delicate, wire and bone. She looked at a man because she liked the way the hair was tucked behind his ears, or she liked the question-mark line of a long torso curving at the shoulder and straight at the hip (8).

Through I narrator, the author shows that the aunt has right to be happy again and her the aunt is a forerunner. The use of I narrator as a point of view deliberately makes the reader agree with her thoughts. It shows that not only man, but woman can reach her happiness because everyone has a freedom for it.

F. Silencing Woman

The last rule that is identified from the novel, which results in women's disobedience, is silencing women. In Confucianism, women are taught to be gentle. Keeping away from conflict is one of the signs of a beautiful woman. In *The Woman Warrior*, shows how a Chinese girl or woman has to be silent.

The author uses the metaphor of 'cut tongue' to show the silencing of women. The 'cut tongue' culture in China symbolizes the silencing of women by the patriarchal social structure, where their voices, opinions and presence in public spaces are often considered unimportant or even shameful. The author shows disobedience to this rule through I narrator by making the 'cut tongue' way to make women silent unsuccessful. The author vividly makes I narrator say: "You can stop me from talking. You tried to cut off my tongue, but it didn't work" (202). The reader agrees with I narrator's rebellion to be able to speak. The author also shows that silencing must be rejected and women must be able to speak to express who they are, what they want, and need.

In addition, the author also plays on the meaning of 'cut tongue' not to silence I narrator but to make her fluent in various languages through *Brave Orchid*.

"I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You'll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one

another. You'll be able to pronounce anything. Your frenum looked too tight to do those things, so I cut it." "But isn't 'a ready tongue an evil'?" "Things are different in this ghost country." "Did it hurt me? Did I cry and bleed?" "I don't remember. Probably (164)."

Kingston reverses the meaning of 'cut tongue' as a way to refuse the silencing of women. I narrator becomes proud of her parents who have made her speak up by 'cutting out her tongue'. The mind's access to I narrator shows that she accepts and wants to be a woman who can speak. "Sometimes I felt very proud that my mother committed such a powerful act upon me. ... The first thing my mother did when she saw me was to cut my tongue (164)."

The author also tells how the narrator struggles to speak up. At first, the narrator does not dare to speak up as she says:

... When I went to kindergarten and had to speak English for the first time, I became silent. A dumbness-a shame-still cracks my voice in two, even when I want to say "hello" casually, or ask an easy question in front of the check-out counter, or ask directions of a bus driver (165).

It means that I narrator is able to find her identity and is able to speak up. Through her monologue, it shows that she feels bad when she is unable to speak: It was when I found out that to talk that school became a misery, that the silence became a misery. I did not speak and felt bad each time that I did not speak ... I knew the silence had to do with being a Chinese girl (166).

IV. Conclusion

After analyzing the novel Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, the following conclusion can be drawn. Confucian rules that are found inhibit gender equality and degrade women's rights, so that women disobey them. These rules include matchmaking, the differences between boys and girls, humility, husband and wife's duty, wholehearted devotion, and silencing women. Through these rules, women have no freedom



and live in dependence on men. Women are considered to have no value, and even the presence of a woman in a family or society is considered detrimental and a curse. Women are conditioned to be weak and unimportant creatures. Besides, women are internalized to do just as a domestic role.

In the face of these Confucian rules that inhibit gender equality and degrade women's rights, the author creates characters, setting, and point of view to represent women's disobedience of them. This disobedience comes as a realization of the importance of a woman's freedom, especially in the field of education. The disobedience liberates women from any rules that inhibit gender equality or degrade women's rights, and empowers women to be aware of themselves, who are capable of being domestic and public doers.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M.H., Harpham, G.G., 1998. *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 10th ed. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, USA.
- Beauvoir, S. De, 1953. *The Second Sex*. Jonathan Cape, London.
- Djajaneegara, S., 2000. *Kritik Sastra Feminis*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta.
- Dorothy, Hoobler, T., 2009. *Confucianism World Religions*, Third Edition. ed. Chesea House Publishers, China.
- Fang, X., 2021. *Influence of Confucianism on Gender Inequality in Chinese Education and Employment*. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 561, 212–215.
- Gaol, B.H.L., 2008. *Perubahan Perlakuan Terhadap Anak Perempuan Pada Masyarakat Batak Toba*. Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan.
- Hruvikova, T., n.d. *View of A comparative analysis of the representation of gender equality Awareness in Lucy, The Woman Warrior and The God of Small Things novels* [WWW Document]. URL <https://royalliteglobal.com/advanced-humanities/article/view/1905/874> (accessed 3.28.25).
- Kingston, M.H., 1976. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. Alfred A. Knopf (Knopf).
- mediaindonesia.com, 2024. *Masih Rendah Partisipasi Angkatan Kerja Perempuan di Indonesia* [WWW Document]. URL https://mediaindonesia.com/ekonomi/679595/masih-rendah-partisipasi-angkatan-kerja-perempuan-di-indonesia#goog_rewarded (accessed 4.2.25).
- Rosenlee, L.-H.L., 2006. *Confucianism and Women*. State University of New York Press.
- Tylor, R.L., Choy, H.Y.F., 1994. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*. The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc, New York.
- Tyson, L., 2006. *Critical Theory Today*, 2nd ed. Routledge, New York.
- Udjung, G., 2025. *Jenis Kromosom yang Menentukan Jenis Kelamin?* [WWW Document]. <https://www.morulaivf.co.id/id/blog/kromosom-yang-menentukan-jenis-kelamin/#:~:text=Secara%20sederhana%2C%20kromosom%20X%20dan%20Y%20yang%20menentukan,yang%20membawa%20kromosom%20X%20akan%20menghasilkan%20anak%20perempuan>. URL <https://www.morulaivf.co.id/id/blog/kromosom-yang-menentukan-jenis-kelamin/> (accessed 3.25.25).
- Weiming, T., 2025. *Confucianism | Meaning, History, Beliefs, & Facts* | Britannica [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Confucianism> (accessed 2.13.25).
- World Economic Forum, 2019. *Insight Report Global Gender Gap Report 2020*.
- Worldbankgroup.org, n.d. *Gender Equality for Growth Research and Analytical Program in Indonesia* [WWW Document]. URL <https://www.worldbank.org/in/country/indonesia/brief/gender-equality-for->



growth-research-and-analytical-program-in-indonesia (accessed 3.25.25).

Zilaing, I.M., Wen, E.H.H., n.d. Apakah ajaran utama dalam konfusianisme? 孔子的思想核心是？.

Ziliang, I.M., n.d. Konsep “Tiga Kepatuhan dan Empat Sifat Murni (三从四德)” dalam ajaran Konfusianisme.