

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING IDENTITIES OF CHINESE WOMEN
AS REFLECTED IN CONTEMPORARY WORKS
OF DIASPORAL CHINESE FEMINIST WRITERS

A DISSERTATION
BY
INTIRA CHARUCHINDA

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English
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AN ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the changing identities of Chinese women as reflected in contemporary works of diasporal Chinese feminist writers. An approach to understanding the changing identities of Chinese women demands an analysis of different periods of times and place to be examined in their full complexity. The selected works include texts written between the last decade of the twentieth century and the very beginning years of the first millennium of different diasporal feminist Chinese writers. These are Jung Chang's Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China (1991), Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children (1993), Adeline Yeh Mah's Falling Leaves (1997) and Amy Tan's The Bonesetter's Daughter (2001). Chapter 1 provides an overview of landscape and the stereotype of Chinese women from the earliest time of the Confucian up to recent years as depicted by western and Chinese writers. Chapter 2 discusses Confucianism and Communism as the precarious predicaments for women as reflected in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China. Chapter 3 examines The Concubine's Children in which the protagonists changed their identities because of their relinquishment of Chinese illusion in the western reality. Chapter 4 looks at a reflection of patriarchal practices in the old days and the modern times as revealed in Falling Leaves. The analysis discovers the dilemma of a Chinese woman whose textual ground was built on patriarchal practices and western colonialism. Chapter 5 examines the changing identities of three women of different

generations which arise from true alliances between mothers and daughters, as envisioned in The Bonesetter's Daughter. Chapter 6 makes a conclusion, and compares the presentation of Chinese women in these selected literary works. This study concludes these works illustrate that the changing identities of Chinese women emanate from their power to define themselves and to reject the patriarchal discourse.

การวิเคราะห์การเปลี่ยนแปลงอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีน
ที่ปรากฏในงานเขียนร่วมสมัยของนักเขียนสตรีเชื้อสายจีนโพ้นทะเล

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

อินทิรา จารุจินดา

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่ง
ของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรดุษฎีบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ
กันยายน 2549

อินทิรา จารุจินดา. (2549) *การวิเคราะห์การเปลี่ยนแปลงอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีนที่ปรากฏในงานเขียนร่วมสมัยของนักเขียนสตรีเชื้อสายจีนโพ้นทะเล*. ปรินซ์นิพนธ์ ศศ.ด. (ภาษาอังกฤษ) กรุงเทพฯ: บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. คณะกรรมการควบคุม : ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. อัมพร ศรีเสริมโภค, อาจารย์ ดร. สุภาภรณ์ ยัมวิสัย, ศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ริชาร์ด ซี บัคสเตด
คำสำคัญ: อัตลักษณ์ สตรีจีน สตรีนิยม งานเขียนร่วมสมัย วรรณคดี

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีนที่ปรากฏในงานเขียนร่วมสมัยของสตรีเชื้อสายจีนโพ้นทะเล เพื่อที่จะเข้าใจการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์นั้นเราจำเป็นต้องวิเคราะห์ทั้งในเชิงมิติเวลา และสถานที่ เพื่อที่จะทราบถึงภาพรวม ดังนั้นผู้วิจัยได้เลือกวรรณกรรม 4 เรื่องที่เขียนในช่วงระหว่างทศวรรษสุดท้ายของศตวรรษที่ 20 ถึงปีแรกของการก้าวเข้าสู่สหัสวรรษใหม่ ได้แก่ เรื่อง Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China (1991) เขียนโดย จุง ฉาง เรื่อง The Concubine's Children (1993) ของ เดนิส ชอง เรื่อง Falling Leaves (1997) ของ อดีไลน์ เยน มา และเรื่อง The Bonesetter's Daughter (2001) เขียนโดย เฮมีตัน บทที่ 1 นำเสนอภูมิหลังและแบบฉบับ (stereotype) ของสตรีจีนที่เป็นมาตั้งแต่ยุคก่อนตามคำสอนในลัทธิขงจื้อไล่เรียงถึงปีที่เพิ่งผ่านมา ในวรรณกรรมของนักเขียนชาวตะวันตก และของนักเขียนจีน บทที่ 2 อภิปรายลัทธิขงจื้อและลัทธิคอมมิวนิสต์ล้วนเป็นสภาพการณ์ นำความทุกข์มาสู่สตรีจีน ดังที่ปรากฏในเรื่อง Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China บทที่ 3 กล่าวถึงเรื่อง The Concubine's Children ที่นำเสนอการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์ที่เกิดจากการเสื่อมสลายของภาพลวงตามแนวคิดจีน ท่ามกลางความเป็นจริงในโลกตะวันตก บทที่ 4 อภิปรายภาพสะท้อนระบบปิตาธิปไตยในอดีตและในปัจจุบันที่ปรากฏในงานเรื่อง Falling Leaves วรรณกรรมเรื่องนี้เสนอทางออกของสภาพการณ์ที่สตรีจีนเผชิญกับระบบปิตาธิปไตยและลัทธิแสวงหาอาณานิคม (colonialism) บทที่ 5 กล่าวถึงการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีน 3 คนในชั่วอายุที่ต่างกัน การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีกลุ่มนี้เกิดจากสัมพันธภาพอันแท้จริงระหว่างแม่และลูกสาว ดังที่ปรากฏในนวนิยายเรื่อง The Bonesetter's Daughter บทที่ 6 เป็นการสรุปการนำเสนอการเปลี่ยนแปลงอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีนในงานเขียนทั้ง 4 เรื่องนี้ พร้อมทั้งเปรียบเทียบระหว่างงานเขียนเหล่านี้กับในวรรณกรรมอื่น ผู้วิจัยสรุปว่า ในงานเขียน 4 เรื่องนี้แสดงให้เห็นการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางอัตลักษณ์ของสตรีจีนเกิดจากพลังของตนเอง ที่ให้คำนิยามตนเอง และปฏิเสธวาทกรรมปิตาธิปไตย

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as Reflected in Contemporary Works of Diasporal Chinese Feminist Writers”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Feminist writing existed as early as the 17th century, and developed as a genre in the 19th century. Representative feminists voice their concerns about the limitation of women's place, roles, and identities in various aspects. Especially, 20th century feminist writers such as Simon de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Lawrence, Agnes Smedley, and Toni Morrison, to name just a few, have been worldly acclaimed. They are considered pioneers in their psychological and visionary presentations of realities of limitations and other kinds of prejudice in patriarchal ideology. These feminist pioneers around the world have been very influential to contemporary feminist writers, including Chinese writers, such as Amy Tan, Jung Chang, Denise Chong, and Adeline Yen Mah, who have also reflected their concerns about the limitations of women in different aspects. Their works embody cultural concerns in their own contexts, the Eastern World. They reveal the experiences of Chinese women who are often marginalized by the male dominant discourse. Since the Chinese culture has been pervasive in other countries in the Eastern world, and become archetypal for a long time in those countries, the experience of Chinese women can as well represent the common ground of women in the Eastern culture.

The pace of change in the political realm is opposed to that of Chinese women's status. In other words, Chinese women's gender roles changed slowly and tortuously in contrast with rapid social changes. There was a huge public reaction against feudalism, social and political upheavals, complaints about losses, hooligan robbery, and almost

incessant war or violence. These cataclysmic events stand in contrast to the snail-like pace of changes in women's roles which Judd notes change quietly, due to the lack of priority given to gender equality (239). Consequently, it took more than one generation to change women's identities from adherence to the strict Confucian doctrine.

Furthermore, Xinran in The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices (2003) notes Chinese women were confused about whatever new role they were expected to assume; they did not know what women's responsibilities and rights were and did not know how to find a niche for themselves in a world of their own (49).

The slow pace of changing identity of Chinese women could be a result of long history which not just one rationale underlines women's mistreatment in China. The most outstanding teaching was preached by a man known today as Confucius. He lived in 551-479 B.C. He prescribed the equality of men, but not of women. And he classified women as slaves and small humans (*haiso ren*). Furthermore, he wrote that the aim of female education is perfect submission, not cultivation and development in mind. As a result, Confucian women were born inferior beings and would remain inferior until their death. Apparently, such a belief remained true for two thousand years and still has its effect on society and women of today. With this reason, Confucius, was deemed as 'eater of women' (Amy Ling 3).

Determined by Confucianism, Chinese women's gender roles are derived from its principles of three obediences. According to this ideology as mentioned by Amy Ling, "women obeyed the Three Submissions: submission to your father, then your husband and, then after his death, your son (3). Charlotte Bonny Cohen says that because of this principle, the Chinese woman had no independent status, no property rights (387). She could not inherit land and other holdings because these properties were divided among sons only. She was raised to only to become an obedient wife in someone else's family.

Still young, she would be sold as bride to a man whom she had never seen. She acquired status in her new family only by bearing male children. She prepared meals for men, and then ate separately after they finished. Furthermore, she belonged to that family, whether her husband left her or died. Remarriage of widows was forbidden, and divorce was extremely rare.

With the concept wifely submission, a Chinese woman was tormented by the practice of foot binding. It fostered the separation of men and women. Elisabeth Croll says that in general, girls up to seven or eight years of age had their feet wrapped tighter by the day for over a year until the arch was broken and toes bent permanently under so that they could no longer run, even walk freely and frequently could only hobble, or be carried (20). Consequently, they finally became crippled. This marked the end of girl's liveliness, and freedom of movement. Jonathan D. Spence writes that the optimal length for a woman's foot was three inches. Apparently, even as late as the 1920s, foot binding was considered essential for a woman for her eligible marriage (20).

Along with the rule of three obediences instructed by Confucianism, Chinese woman's values were measured by the rule four virtues. According to Amy Ling, this teaching was promulgated by Ban Tso (A.D 42-115), who was a daughter of a prominent scholar general (3-5). In Amy Ling's primary source, Kuo conjectured that Ban Tso might heap with honors from the highest male authority and identify with the patriarchy. Another possibility is that the emperor was the actual author of the code, but to sugarcoat the pill, he put a woman's name on it. The rule of four virtues is detailed as follows. The first virtue directed a woman should be chaste or be clean of person. Second, she should be reticent in words. Her conversation should be courteous, and she should not be gossipy. Third, her deportment should be graceful but not extravagant. She was instilled with a habit of adorning herself to pleasing the opposite sex. The last virtue demanded a

woman spend her leisure on needlework and tapestry for beautifying the home. It decrees that she should not shrink of her duties. In short, these four virtues put a Chinese woman into a perfect submission.

Additionally, Chinese women were defined by the philosophy of the Chinese cosmology –Taoism – which views everything in the cosmos as related to and affected by everything else. According to this ideology, everything stable in the cosmos is characterized by harmony between *yin* and *yang*. The Taoist terms of Yin and Yang have cultivated a negative view onto women and a positive view onto men. Yin was associated with dark, cold, demons, earth, negative, death, and women were assigned to this category. In contrast, yang was associated with men, light, heaven, and warmth, positive. Furthermore, in the symbol of yin and yang, the white area is associated with yang, the male, sun and the active principle, whereas the black part –yin– with the female, moon, and tranquility. Grace Galliano says that according to this ideology, a man was assigned to take the roles of either a ruler or a father. On the other hand, a woman was assigned to be a follower or a wife (61).

Accordingly, this concept of yin and yang was applied to human conduct. As reflected in a myth about The Moon Lady, a part of The Joy Luck Club, the moon lady cries sadly that “For woman is yin, the darkness within, where untempered passions lie. And man is yang, bright truth lightening our minds” (Tan 82). This means a Chinese woman must suppress her passions and follow a man who brightens her mind. Her realization of her dark side prevents her from reaching the bright truth. From the feminist perspective, Chinese women were oppressed just for the sake of harmony. They were taught that their territory was black and they must not violate the rule of harmony, or misfortune would dominate their lives. Therefore, they became muted groups, having no important roles in society. In other words, in their black territory, women lacked power

and were restricted to the home and prevented from achieving success in the public realm. As followers, women did not have access to the dominant symbolic order or authoritative language, and they were denied and unacknowledged.

From the mid twentieth century onward, many changes in China have liberalized Chinese women and legally ended traditional gender roles. The long traditional of male oppression was shaken by the emergence of Mao Tse Tung and the communist party. For example, the marriage law of 1950 prohibited concubinage and introduced marriage. It gave a woman the right to marry any man of her own choice as well as the rights to divorce and to receive maintenance. In addition, the land law allowed women to hold property in their own names and a right to share in family inheritances. Moreover, under Mao Tse Tung, there was an expansion of female education. Also, the chaos of the Cultural Revolution allowed many women to leave their homes and travel all over China as Red Guards (Rai 183). These were exciting and liberating experiences for Chinese women which would not have been possible in Confucian China as reflected in a traditional common saying: “a man can go anywhere while a woman is confined to the kitchen” (Croll 27).

However, in some way, the change in the political realm did not exactly affect the changing identities of Chinese women. Apparently, their first entry into the male dominant sphere is difficult. The first women encountered hardship as a result of not only the attempt to change themselves but to become accepted in society also. Betty Friedan remarks in her work-- The Feminine Mystique-- that the first women whose feet were unbound must have felt such pain that some were afraid to stand, let alone to walk; the more they walked, the less their feet hurt (94). This old value of glorified femininity trapped them for a lifetime and prevented them from becoming independent. Some people at this turning-point of women's identity foretold that women with unbound feet

were possibly doomed. For example Amy Tan recounts the social attitudes toward an unbound feet woman in her work--The Kitchen God's Wife: "When Pearl's mother was eight years old, her feet were already unbound; that is why she ran wild" (100).

Despite the emancipation under Mao, there is often a difficulty when women's subordinate roles evolve to become equal to those of men. This is because the embodiment of male supremacy is enshrined above laws. Consequently, Chinese women at present *seem* to have the same legal rights as men. In fact, they still feel alienated by the shift between the government's official policy of gender equality and reality (Croll 1). In other words, the rights, and privileges of women are not truly equal to those of men. Although women now work alongside men, they retain a lower status. Some modern Chinese women still *seem* to wear an ancient veil of Confucianism, avoiding confrontations, suppressing their emotions, and yielding to male authority. At the same time, they struggle to see the world of gender equality behind that veil. For instance, In Ha Jin's Waiting (1999), Manna Wu, a nurse who works with Dr. Lin Kong in a hospital, waits for him to divorce his wife. Manna Wu is an example of a modern woman of the social revolution in that she chooses her own man. Yet, she wastes her time for eighteen years waiting for the man who is influenced by both Confucianism and communism. Despite Manna Wu's desperate longing for status as Lin Kong's wife, she endures living in a society that rejects divorce but accepts concubinage. She simply waits for the occasion when she can marry her lover.

Likewise, the Chinese feminist movement from precursors to contemporary writers reflects the transition of Chinese women's identities and the effects of oppressive traditional culture imposed on them. Despite gender inequality directly endured by Chinese women, women's stories were first told in works of Western observers who had spent part of their lives in China. Pearl Buck was the first writer to portray the lives of

Chinese women (Collin Mackerras, 67-68). Buck depicted Chinese women's suffering as well as their endurance and tolerance. Her work, The Good Earth (1931), narrates the experience of a poor Chinese slave girl, Olan, who is never treated as a human being. Pearl Buck attacks the marriage arrangement by which Wang Lung's wife has come as a slave girl to marry him, and absolutely sexist society in which both rich and poor men get everything while women are downtrodden. Olan never complains about routinely serving men in the household. She tolerates Wang Lung's rigidity, philandering and extravagance. She hardly requests anything for herself because her subjection to Confucianism blurs her ability and ties her to domesticity. Apparently, this story has become influential in the creation of images of Chinese women, who are often stereotyped as second-class citizens living in silence and tolerance of unfair practices.

Later, there were similar works written by Agnes Smedley, who narrates stories of the painful experiences of women who struggle against unfair practices. Her autobiographical novel, Daughter of Earth (1973), and her collection of short stories Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution (1976), have become vital voices to a new generation and an inspiration for their own struggle to liberation. Unlike Pearl Buck's The Good Earth, Smedley's works talk about self-realization for women not as individualistic beings but as collective and crucial challenges to patriarchy. Smedley offers new role models and new patterns of living for Chinese women.

In the late twentieth century, Chinese women who lived in Western countries began to write their own stories. Maxine Hong Kingston is the first Chinese feminist writer who reveals the oppressive Chinese culture. Her work, The Woman Warrior, was published in 1975 and was renowned as the winner of The International Book Critics Circle Award for the best work of nonfiction in 1976. According to Sidonie Smith, Kingston uses autobiography to create identity (1117-1118). Kingston breaks out of the

silence that has bound her culturally to discover a resonant voice of her own.

Recognizing the extricable relationship between an individual's sense of *self* and the community's stories of selfhood, Kingston self-consciously reads herself into existence through the stories her culture tells about women. The Woman Warrior offers the occasion to consider the complexities of cultural fictions that surround the autobiographer who is engaging two sets of stories: those of the dominant culture and those of an ethnic-subculture with its own traditions, its own unique stories. As a Chinese American woman, Kingston features the complicated perspectives on the relationship of woman to language and to narrative. For Kingston, story telling becomes the means through which her mother--Brave Orchid -- passes on to her all the complexities of and the ambivalences about both mother's and daughter's identity as woman in the patriarchal culture. Also story telling becomes the means through which Kingston confronts those complexities and ambivalences. In her response to her mother's narrative, she struggles to constitute the voice of her own subjectivity, to emerge from a past dominated by stories told to her, ones that inscribe the fictional possibilities of female selfhood, into a present articulated by her own storytelling.

Later, Chinese feminist writers explored a broad range of subjects and themes, but their unifying emphases were on qualities of Chinese women and their path to gain feminist consciousness. One of the outstanding Chinese feminist writers is Amy Tan. Her work, The Joy Luck Club (1989), depicts the reaction and negotiation of women of different generations to cultural conflicts. The mothers still follow the old Chinese ways of life, whereas the daughters adopt the American ways of life. Although women of a different generation have different lifestyles, they all are strengthened through their individual experiences. The older generation becomes stronger due to the experience of the hardship and the war, whereas the younger ones encounter complex difficulties,

namely marital problems, stress in the workplace, and dissidence with their mothers. However, such troublesome experiences shape these women to become stronger and to discard their weak personalities.

Apart from The Joy Luck Club, there is another story in M. Elaine Mar's Paper Daughter (2000) which recounts the experiences of a Chinese immigrant family in America and her personal journey to triumphs of independence. Her mother is attached to the traditional Chinese ideology and attempts unsuccessfully to transmit it to her daughter, Man Yee, who grows up and is educated in America. Consequently, the daughter acquires some traits that are considered inappropriate for a traditional Chinese girl. For example, she usually neglects her femininity, and believes in gender equality. The writer conveys the frustration of being the first generation Chinese-American due to conflicts with her parents whose horizons of the realities in American society seem unbearably limited. In these two disparate worlds, Man Yee actively seeks to be assimilated into American culture rather than cling to traditional Chinese ways. Her identity is Americanized in that she becomes independent and finds her standing point.

This Western image of Chinese women does not reflect the reality of their identities which change over a period of time. Despite the fact that these stories suggest that all identities are fractured, their traditional gender roles become their images as recounted in Amy Tan's The Kitchen God's Wife (1991). Amy Tan writes about Chinese girls: "Americans always imagine the kind, who walk around with tiny bound feet, choosing their words as delicately as they choose their steps (100). Jim McGuigan notes that there are no essential identities of class, ethnicity, gender or sexuality; everything is potentially fluid and transformable (83). In fact, it is difficult to change their images which have been stereotyped by westerners.

Finding of Previous Research

Apart from related literature discussed above, there are also many studies pertaining to identities of Chinese women. For example, Li-chun Lin's dissertation (1998), The Discursive Formation of the "New" Chinese Women, 1860-1930, examines the discourse concerning the transformation of the traditional Chinese woman into a modernized, educated new woman by investigating the promotional tactics that re-enforced gender stereotypes. Li-chun Lin finds that in the first decade of the twentieth century, the notion of "proper womanhood" became a salient concern among Chinese women as evidenced by magazines which were intended for female readership. However, society was not comfortable with the newly subverted gender relations, and a latent anxiety manifested itself as a result of conflicting demands for Chinese women in these magazines. This anxiety became more radical in literary works in the 1920s-1930s by some male authors such as Mao Dun, Lu Xun, Zhang Tianyi and Yu Dafu, who simply claimed that males, not females themselves, were a center of creation of a new woman, and of women's roles in the proletarian movement. Additionally, many women writers explored their new identities and their contemplated futures. They discussed gender issues such as a liberated woman's options in a society unprepared for changes, the impact of romantic love, middle-class women's awkward position between traditional versus modern womanhood, and social inequalities affecting working-class girls. Such a complex situation forced women into an odd predicament. That is, they did not know whether they could fulfill their wish for emancipation without hindering the survival of the nation and the completion of social reforms.

As for the mother-daughter relationship, Yanmei Wei (1999) studies twentieth-century Chinese literature, including works of many Chinese writers, namely Bing Xin,

Zhang Jie, Chen Ran, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Gish Jen. She concludes that motherhood is not a unified and stable concept in modern China; the modernization efforts of the twentieth century have exerted a large influence on Chinese feminism. Moreover, these Chinese writers have proven that women's emancipation needs to realize the deeply embedded structural and ideological sources of gender inequality before women can achieve the goal of emancipation.

Apart from Yanmei Wei's study of the mother-daughter relationship, Ellen Marlin Jo (1995) analyzes mothers' roles which are represented in autobiographies. Her dissertation, The Voice of the Mother: Embedded Maternal Narratives in Twentieth Century Women Autobiographies, suggests that every woman autobiographer is a daughter who writes and establishes her identity through her autobiographical narrative. Many twentieth century autobiographical texts by women contain an intertext, an embedded narrative, which is a biography of the writer / daughter's mother. Ellen Marlin Jo proposes a theory of a hybrid autobiographical narrative containing an embedded narrative of the mother. The textual relationship between the two narratives is unique among texts in the autobiographical canon. This alternative narrative technique is both autobiographical and biographical. All texts contain a feminist writing practice which resists the use of a monologic, authoritative narrative voice. Ellen Marlin Jo examines dialogues and finds that in all texts the daughter / writer as a subject attempts to speak to her mother as a subject rather than about her as an object. And this model allows for a discussion of texts that are related by the subject of the conversation between mother and daughter.

Female autobiographies reflect the difficulties of immigrant women. For example, in The Female Identity in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Immigrant Women's Autobiographies, Emine Lale Demirturk's dissertation (1986) encompasses four

American immigrant women's autobiographies, namely, Antin, Yeziarska, Wong, and Kingston. She finds that these authors illustrate the life-long process of erasing patriarchal impositions on their personal growth, as well as develop their sense of themselves, as women. Their writings illustrate that conflicts between different value-systems of different cultures have become the common pattern of their lives. They, however, have become a whole person with a bicultural identity. That is, their identity is reformulated and mixes native and their American cultures.

Furthermore, female autobiography reveals how a woman searches for identities. In Linzhen Wang's dissertation (1998), Modern and Contemporary Chinese Women's Autobiographical Writing, the researcher focuses on Chinese women's autobiographical writing in the twentieth century through examining the complex negotiations of self-identity among diverse historical forces, such as dominant discourses, literary tradition, social conventions, individual experiences, inter-subjective relationships and psychological and physical formations. Linzhen Wang reasons that female Chinese autobiographers portray their specific political and historical realms and their reaction to dominant ideologies and social conventions. In their writings, they become subjects who are constantly resignified by other historical forces. Linzhen Wang concludes that the agency or subjectivity of Chinese women writers is produced neither by a pre-discursive and determined identity, nor by non-historically mediated dominant discourses, but rather by complex negotiations and interactions among diverse historical forces.

In addition, the narrative art sophisticatedly functions as a tool to represent a character's identity. Shelley E Reid's dissertation (1994), The Compound I: Narrative and Identity in the Novels of Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, Amy Tan, examines how the use of multiple narrators affect self-representation. She reads their texts as identity narratives –like many novels by minority American authors. She finds that their

narratives reflect the bi or multi-cultural American heritage of the characters and communities. More specifically, the Chinese American writer, Amy Tan, uses multiple narratives -- the compound I-- in her works The Joy Luck Club and The Kitchen God's Wife. This strategy helps her to incorporate all relevant perspectives into a stable, multifaceted Chinese American identity. Her works focus on the balance between isolation and assimilation.

The maintaining of national identity of diasporal Asian women is demonstrated in the study of Patricia Ann Sakurai's dissertation (1995), Speaking of Identity: Naming, Experience, and Sexual Politics in Asian American Literature of the 1970s. She finds that the terms of identity are much more complex and unstable than the neat categorical naming of the paradigm of the interactions of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nationality. Similarly, Asian American texts subvert the paradigm's assumption of the possibility of stable and singular identity. In these texts, characters attempt to reformulate their identities through these complex and unstable selves in terms of race, class, and national belonging, gender, and sexuality. Significantly, their discourse divulges the uses of heterosexual inter-, and intra- racial relationships to name identity. As a result, Asian American women reject Western womanhood in favor of intra-racial relationships. Moreover, with Asian American's frustration about the paradigm's assumption of the possibility of a stable, singular identity based on the mainstream discourse of Western women, their racial pride has arisen.

Also the changing identity of Chinese women in the diaspora is expanded to anthropological studies. For example, in Re-negotiation and Re-rooting Chinese Identities in the Diaspora, Andrea Louie (1996) explores the diversity of meaning of 'Chineseness' and the possibilities of various levels of identification as Chinese. She finds that in one sense, conceptions of Chinese identity are constrained within their

historical roots. Thus, their worldview is limited to the culturalistic conceptions of Chineseness which shaped Chinese modernization. But in another sense, diaspora identities are not only in relation to their mother country, but are also responsive to transnational forces as they are manifested in the diaspora.

As discussed above, there is no research examining the changing identities of Chinese women in contemporary works of diasporal Chinese feminist writers whose works were published at the edge of the new millennium (1991-2001). This can be interpreted to mean that the door is still open to conduct research on such a topic. In a different light from anthropology, my primary information source is literary works of diasporal writers rather than documentation in general because this source, as an art form, transcends women's experiences. The important aspect of this dissertation is neither transmigration nor transnational processes of the Chinese; rather it explains the diversity of Chinese women's identities in different dimensions. In terms of milieu, this study is varied in that it concerns Chinese living in virtual isolation from Westerners and Chinese expatriates living at the centre of modern Western life in California. In terms of time, it will range over more than one lifetime. That is, it will include the lives of women in ascendant generations. My analysis differs from other research in that mine will discuss solely works of feminist Chinese diasporal writers in terms of searching for their identities.

Research Objective

This research aims to explore how identities are formed by patriarchal forces and changed. This dissertation is intended to answer the following questions:

- (i) What kind of suffering does patriarchy impose on the women in the stories?

- (ii) What crucial events change gender identities? And how have these events come to shape their gender identities?
- (iii) What former identities do Chinese women want to discard? What new identities do they want to embrace?
- (iv) What conflicts do they experience in gaining new identities and weakening the former ones? How are the identities of Chinese women negotiated and reproduced by the main characters in the stories?

Scope of the Study

As for the scope of this dissertation, literary works are selected from feminist writings which embrace women's subordination and subsequent emancipation. This kind of narrative not only speaks about real problems and tensions in women's lives but also resolves them. The authors of these books write to establish their identities and to display the negotiation of the tensions of two different discourses: on one hand the hegemonic Confucian discourse, and on the other the global feminist movement. Their stories provide a perspective of Chinese women who chose to defend themselves against weak, passive, and homebound stereotypes of women. Among many stories published in English about Chinese women, four outstanding works by different writers are selected as the main focus of this dissertation. They were published chronologically as follows:

- (i) Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China by Jung Chang (1991)
- (ii) The Concubine's Children by Denise Chong (1994)
- (iii) Falling Leaves by Adeline Yen Mah (1997)
- (iv) The Bonesetter's Daughter by Amy Tan (2001)

Additionally, these works are chosen according to four criteria. Firstly, female ethnic Chinese authors in the diaspora wrote them. *Diaspora / Diasporal / Diasporic*

mean ‘scattered’ or ‘dispersed.’ The term *diaspora* is applied to communities with large numbers living outside their traditional homeland (Linda McDowell 25). In this research, diasporal Chinese writers mean a writer who lives in other countries outside China. However, it also applies to writers who emigrate to other countries either by themselves or by their parent’s relocation. Their experiences, as diasporal writers, help shape the history, politics, and literature of Chinese women. Because these writers have entered the new world of gender equality, they offer perspectives on how patriarchal gender roles framed the ultimate source of the experiences of Chinese women. The ideas of these writers were influenced by exposure to Western culture, where the movement toward female liberation originated. That they experienced the contrast between Eastern and Western cultures makes them aware of their gender identities.

The experiences of these diasporal writers relate to their narrative, as briefly reviewed as follows. The first author is Jung Chang was born and grew up in China, as a product of communism. At present, she lives in England, where it was possible for her to write to subvert the Chinese patriarchal discourse, and redefine the meaning of Chinese women. Her work, Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China reveals the experiences of three Chinese women of different generations in China. Second, Denise Chong lives in Canada. Her Chinese-Canadian mother was born, and grew up in Chinatown, Canada. Therefore, her story, The Concubine’s Children revolves around the experiences of a Chinese family in Canada. The third author is Adeline Yen Mah who has moved to work as an expatriate doctor in America. Her parents were originally from Shanghai. Then, they fled to Hong Kong due to the Communist occupation in China. She received her medical education in England. Thus, the autobiography, Falling Leaves narrates a myriad of experiences in mainland China, Hong Kong under Commonwealth England, and America. As for the last author-- Amy Tan—was born in California as Chinese American

daughter. Her parents left behind three young daughters. Apparently, her mother suffers from losing the connection with her daughters in China. Not only did this painful feeling haunt her mother, but it also affected Amy Tan's emotional development in her childhood (Amy Ling 137). Perhaps by this reason, her novel, The Bonesetter's Daughter, shows the attempt to make a connection between the East and the West. In particular, her story embodies Chinese patriarchal context, Chinese superstitions and American modern life. In short, these four writers live between two worlds, or two cultures.

Secondly, these works have achieved international recognition. Hence, they have played an important role in informing the world at large about the condition of Chinese women. Moreover, they have been received and accepted as exemplary literature among literary circles. For example, Jung Chang, the author of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, is the winner of the 1992 NCR Book Award. Denise Chong, the author of The Concubine's Children, received the City of Vancouver Book Award in 1994. Falling Leaves is lauded as an international bestseller. The Bonesetter's Daughter is also highly regarded, as it is written by Amy Tan, a renowned contemporary author.

Thirdly, the selected works were published at the edge of the new millennium (1991-2001) when gender issues became important concerns. These works were contemporaneous in about the same decade, and the works were published three or four years apart. These stories portray not only the experiences of women in a former generation recounted to the later generation but also personal experiences, resulting in a suggestion that contemporary Chinese women see themselves in a different light.

Lastly, some protagonists portrayed in these works have endured the period of wars and the political upheavals in the second half of the nineteenth century. This period delineates the beginning of new identities for Chinese women. The participation of women in these political crises resulted in women's voices being heard in society. This,

therefore, can be considered the transitional period from the ancient ideology to the modern movement toward gender equality. During this period, there was a social change in women's place in society. For example, according to Charlotte Furth, Chinese women changed from being unpaid agricultural laborers to paid employees in a productive realm (75).

Underlying Theories

This area of study of the changing identities of Chinese women might concern two theories: namely, a theory of identity formation, and feminist writing theory. First, the theory of identity formation involves choice and an endless process of change as typified by Judith Butler in her work Gender Trouble (1990). In it, she remarks that 'women are something we do, rather than something we are' (Sara Salih 46-48). For Butler, gender identity is constructed and constituted by language and discourse over time and from culture to culture. This means that there is no gender identity that precedes language. In other words, language and discourse do gender. However, Butler rejects such essentialism. In her view, it is also possible for identities to be reconstructed in ways that challenge and subvert existing power structures because gender identity is a sequence of acts rather than givens. In other words, gender is *unnatural*, so that there is no relationship between one's body and one's gender. According to her claim, gender is a choice, which does not mean that one is a completely free agent standing outside the discourse and simply selecting an identity. On the contrary, she means that one chooses gender roles from received gender norms. Although women's choices are always limited, Butler insists on the possibilities for subversion from within those constraints. In her view, gender identity can be constructed in unexpected and subversive ways. Additionally, she asserts that gender identity is a process having neither origin nor end. It

is not something inherent, fixed, stable, or innate, but it can be developed. Therefore, Judith Butler's assertion opens a chance to analyze the process of changing identities, as reflected in contemporary diasporal Chinese feminist writers.

The second underlying theory is feminist writing. Many feminist critics seek to redefine women's identity. For example, Virginia Woolf in A Room of One's Own (1929) argued that women's writing should explore female experience in its own right and not form a comparative assessment of women's experience in relation to men's. In so doing, women's writing differs from men's. However, it is not because they were different psychologically from men, but because their social positioning was different. Furthermore, Woolf aimed at discovering linguistic ways of describing the confined life of women. She believed that when women finally achieved social and economical equality with men, there would be nothing to prevent them from developing their artistic talents. Prior to women's writing achievement, women need to overcome their constraints. Woolf mentioned two limitations for women's writing from her own experiences. First, she was imprisoned and constrained by the dominant ideology of womanhood. Second, the taboo about expressing female passion prevented her from 'telling the truth about her own experiences as a body.' This means women's writing which is closer to the body, the direct sensations, and free from social mediation, is rejected in male-dominant rhetoric.

The Structure of the Study

The structure of this dissertation centers on the theme of the changing identities of Chinese women as reflected in works of contemporary diasporal Chinese feminist writers. Each selected literary text represents a range of cultural experiences. Therefore, in order to understand the development of their changing identities, I have arranged them

according to the extent of direct exposure of these Chinese protagonists to Western culture. At one extreme are those who live in virtual isolation from Westerners. At the other end of the spectrum are Chinese expatriates living at the center of modern Western life in San Francisco.

Chapter 2 in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, largely takes place in China in the twentieth century. It depicts how Chinese women's identities changed amidst the political upheavals. In it, I will examine how the three women of different generations, who lived through different social contexts, changed their identities. For example, Yu-fang, the grandmother, endured the traditional ideology. I will examine what suffering the old tradition imposes on Yu-fang and what made her ignore the traditional practices. In the next generation, her daughter-- De-hong-- joined the communist movement, which provided her a chance to move from the domestic household to work cooperatively with men. In this context, I will investigate how De-hong found her place in the public realm and attained her own needs. As Jung Chang represents a contemporary woman who lives in the Western world and successfully decides her own fate, I will discuss Jung Chang's enlightenment about women's precarious predicament at the turning point from Confucianism to Communism, and her self-discovery.

Chapter 3 discusses The Concubine's Children whose main characters, May-ying, and Hing were restricted to the milieu of Chinatown. My focus shifts to Confucian practices in the Western world. Despite the existence of a larger Chinese enclave in Canada, these family members and other expatriates in these overseas Chinese communities maintained firm ties with their native country, and most of them still adhered to Confucian principles. I will investigate how these two Chinese women --May-ying and Hing— changed their identities amidst the Chinese illusion and western reality.

Despite living in this Western world, May-ying was required to conform to the Chinese ideology. Therefore, I will examine Chinese traditional imposition, her awakening, and her subversion. As for May-ying's daughter, Hing, she lived her early life as an obedient daughter in order to please her parents. Along with her attempt to fit into the Chinese tradition, Hing needed to survive in this Western reality. Apparently, Hing discovered the source of her mother's suffering. Therefore, this chapter will include discussion on Hing's childhood frustration, her establishment, and, then, discovery and enlightenment.

Chapter 4, which discusses Falling Leaves, a true story, will focus on Western colonialism. It presents an influx of Western culture to China, which resulted in both devaluation of Chinese culture and mimicry of Western culture. During this time, the 1930s, everything Western was considered superior to anything Chinese. Despite living in the Chinese territory, people who cling to Chinese culture are insulted by this attitude. Simultaneously, Chinese traditional gender roles still imposed upon Chinese women. Hence, this chapter will examine how Adeline Yen Mah, as the autobiographer and protagonist, changed her identity in this complex oppression. This chapter divides Adeline's discussions into three parts, beginning with the traditional Chinese patriarchy, then colonial power of the matriarch, and finally her restoration of identities.

In Chapter 5, I will analyze The Bonesetter's Daughter. This work reveals the experiences of three women which are varied from an explicitly rigid patriarchy in China to deceptive emancipation in modern America. This story exemplifies a large gap between Chinese mothers and their American born daughters. However, the commonality in their experiences is that they suffer injustices due to the male domination. In this chapter, I will examine how three women detach and release themselves from the bondage of male-domination. The analysis is divided into three sections, according to the generational order. The first section discusses the Chinese oppressive culture imposed on

Precious Auntie, and her resistance. The second section will examine how LuLing, who was exposed to both the Chinese patriarchal ideology and western feminist one, comes up with the new identity. The last section will explore how Ruth, who lives in deceptive emancipation in modern society, can establish her authentic voice.

Chapter 6 will conclude that the changing identities of Chinese women as reflected in these selected works emanated from their power to define themselves, and to reject the patriarchal discourse. As the previous chapters concentrated on various contexts, this chapter aims to put their multiple ways of the changing of identities in perspective by answering research questions. I will compare the changing of identities of the Chinese women in the Chinese milieu with ones in the West. Moreover, I will compare the stories of Chinese women in these works with one presented from a western perception. It concludes with suggestions for further study.

Significance of the Study

As for the significance of this dissertation, with my endeavor to answer the research questions, I hope for three contributions. Firstly, I hope to promote a better understanding of the Chinese women who grow up in ethnic Chinese families. If the Chinese people have their own way of looking at the world, this study would help us to understand Chinese women whose perspectives fall upon the binary of Western feminism and their ancestral roots, or this contemporary world and their history of a great nation. Secondly, this dissertation can enhance a new perception of women's values initiated from the recognition of sexist practices both recounted in the selected works in this dissertation, and perceived in terms of an external reality. This would lead to readers changing their inner values, perspectives, and worldview. Likewise, internal change would be expressed through their exterior personas which can be noticed in terms of the

way of utilizing potential and of rejecting sexist practices. I hope to encourage readers to reduce or to eliminate social prejudices against women. This will build a harmonious environment in which men and women appreciate each other's differences, similarities, and contributions to the society. Finally, instead of viewing them as chattels, men should treat women as equal life partners.

CHAPTER 2

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China

Confucianism and Communism: Precarious Predicaments for Women

Jung Chang, the author of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China reveals, from the deep heart of China, a true story of three strong women of different generations in this period of transition in Chinese history. Falling under the spell of male dominated rhetoric, the early lives of these three women demonstrate that each, in turn, yearned to be an obedient daughter of Confucianism, then, a nationalist devotee of communism, and, finally, a good girl of Mao's cult. This revelation of the changing identities of Chinese women took place in the period, as Amy Ling calls, "the winds of change." According to Ling, during this period which lasted from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, China underwent a series of monumental revolutions that shook her foundations with incredible speed, and overturned the age-old feudal culture (6). Simultaneously with the winds of change, Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China took place from the end of feudalism to the end of tyrant Mao. Changes in the political realm not directly mean the end of women's oppression. Thus, these realities led the three women of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China to demand the changes that would bring them a new humanity and liberation.

This chapter will argue that with their strength, rather than the winds of change, the three women of different generations living through different social contexts have subverted the dominant ideology of their times and have established identities. Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China is a story of three women of different generations, living under the male dominated discourse in China which, according to Sherry B. Ortner, is the archetypal

patriarchal society (22). Gradually, the grandmother, the mother, and the daughter--Jung Chang-- changed their identities to subvert this ideology. Their identities were transformed through their personal qualities that were revealed during the tribulations of their lives, rather than the rhetorical mainstream of their times that hypocritically “enhanced” women’s status. The grandmother faced the traditional sexist prejudice; and the mother the dilemma of escaping from the age-old traditional practices, and encountering a vicious women’s repression for the sake of nationalism. By contrast, the daughter, Jung Chang, despite being the product of communism, endured the conflict of reality and the rhetorical mainstream. Metaphorically, these three women could be viewed as wild swans who were born and had grown up in a sexist society. With their inner strength, they negotiated a path through this precarious predicament. Eventually, these three wild swans, elegantly advanced from a small backwater of traditional constraints to a large lake of gender equality. These three wild swans dared to be different from stereotypical females.

Before considering exactly how these three central characters utilized their innate strength, I shall, first, analyze their sufferings imposed by patriarchal rhetoric as related to the key debates of changing their identities. The discussions will move in a chronological order, starting with the grandmother, then the mother, and the daughter, respectively.

The Grandmother

Due to the belief of three obediences, in the grandmother’s childhood, she was tormented by the practice of foot binding. According to the rule of three obediences, the Confucian, as Amy Ling writes, taught three obediences to women: before marriage, a woman was to obey her father, after marriage she was to obey her husband; finally, after the death of her husband, she was to obey her son (3). In this story, the grandmother’s parents

hoped that her bound feet would have made her an obedient daughter, who would not play like boys. They also wanted to prepare the grandmother to be an obedient wife who would do chores only within her husband's household.

Apart from making an obedient daughter, binding feet would bring a prosperous marriage to a woman. For this point, Elisabeth Croll points out that bound feet were an essential female attribute enhancing a girl's marriage prospects and the family status (22). In this story, Jung Chang narrates that a woman whose feet were allowed to grow naturally would meekly become ashamed if the hem of the bride's long skirt was lifted and it was found that her feet were more than about four inches long. The marriage would be turned down, and the bride would be an object of the critical gaze of the wedding guests (31). In this way, the grandmother and other women in her times were like Cinderella's sisters. With their small feet, they could have a chance to marry wealth. Her bound feet achieved their purpose when General Xue became interested in her. Eventually, her bound feet led her to marry him, though as a concubine.

Her father considered the grandmother as an object of investment in a hope of getting a son-in-law of social domination. When women are objectified, they are nothing but objects to be used in the service of men's fantasies, desires and control (Grace Galliano 165). In this story, the grandmother was prepared to contribute to male gratification. More specifically, in her childhood, she was treated as an object in which her father could invest money for the purpose of attracting a well-to-do son-in-law. Born a beauty, the grandmother was counted as her father's only valuable property. She possessed ideal Chinese beauty, which, at that time, was an oval face, rosy cheeks, lustrous skin, long black hair down to her waist, sloping shoulders, and especially the most important trait of feminine beauty, her

bound feet. In her teenage years, she was considered ‘the belle of the town.’ Moreover, her father invested money in sending her to a girls’ school to receive training in women’s skills, such as playing chess, mah-jong, drawing, embroidery, and playing musical instruments. These abilities were just used to entertain her man. Her ambitious father, who was just a low-ranking official in a small town, saw his daughter as his only treasure which would bring him a benefit, perhaps promotion in his work and wealth. In this sense, a woman’s beauty benefited the men who possessed her.

After the grandmother had been sent out of the threshold of her parent’s home, she became a reflection of her husband’s greatness. In this traditional practice, men needed women just to exhibit high status. As Louise Williams points out, the power and wealth of Chinese men were measured by the number of their wives (80). To enhance his standing and dignity in the community, General Xue was a warlord who, no doubt, had both military and economic power to take the grandmother as a concubine to his harem. This traditional rhetoric never mentioned what we now regarded as the women’s true value which comes from their innate ability, or their personal desires. As chattel of General Xue, the grandmother functioned as a mirror to reflect his social status.

In her married life, the grandmother's duty was to give pleasure to her husband, General Xue, in order to make harmonious relationship. In a theory of doctrine of two spheres, according to Leeder, it is a belief that a married woman stays home, creating a home and haven for her husbands and children whereas her husband works outside (76). The idea of the two-sphere doctrine provided a harmonious relationship as a couple, despite a large gap between him and the grandmother. For example, besides their age gap, they seemed to live in two different worlds. The grandmother lived in the household and was restrained

from traveling freely because of her bound feet. She spent most of her time on embroidery, cooking, and playing musical instruments. In contrast, the General spent most of his life in the military, within no boundaries, giving commands to his kinsmen. What brought them together was General Xue's sexual desire and the grandmother's responsibility to fulfill such a need. In particular, the grandmother was made to render herself to General Xue whenever he chose to relax himself with her. Thus, the gaps of their age, and their experience were narrowed by the grandmother's subservience to General Xue.

Apart from marrying off as a concubine for her father's career progress, the grandmother was doomed to a negative image in this patriarchy society. According to Annie Wang, in the ancient time, rather than by her own will, a woman was defined by Confucianism which contended that women should not think for themselves; selflessness and self-sacrifice were said to be graceful and noble, individualism and self-concern immoral (192). In Annie Wang's claim, the grandmother should have been praised for her self-sacrifice for her father. But apparently, she ended up with the reputation of being a worthlessly wicked woman. The fact that the grandmother was a concubine opposed the ancient adage that "No good woman would have become a concubine in the first place" (Jung Chang 65). Her father's decision proves that he did not care about his daughter's social status. The concubine's image from ancient China was so fossilized that it was characterized in the mass media as wicked. Jung Chang narrates "The women in books and films who made themselves up now were invariably wicked characters, like concubines" (351).

The grandmother is awakened to change her identity by a crucial event which forces her into frustration beyond her tolerance. Once, General Xue left her in the house for six

years. She agonized over the loneliness but she had to submit to the fact that she was just one of his concubines, or his chattel. Jung Chang reveals that “She came to realize that for him she was a mere plaything to be picked up again only when it was convenient for him” (45). In this way, her recognition of the oppression leads her to change her life; as Patricia Hill Collins claims a changed consciousness encourages people to change the conditions of their lives (117).

The grandmother’s subversion of the concubinage practice was her refusal to follow General Xue into the afterlife. More specifically, the grandmother ignored the practice of committing suicide, whereas another concubine opted to follow General Xue by killing herself. Amy Ling notes that the act of suicide was taught to women; after their husbands died, they had no right to live. And the society regarded such action as ‘heroism’ (4). In other words, this patriarchal society gave a woman almost no position after the death of her husband. Her proper place was supposed to be in a coffin lying next to General Xue’s. Nonetheless, the grandmother rejected the social expectation. She declined to turn herself into a chaste widow who would have committed suicide to follow her dead husband. Despite this value, the grandmother refused even to attend his funeral. This is because she no longer identified herself with General Xue, but with her daughter. Instead of committing suicide, she dedicated herself to rearing her daughter despite knowing that difficulties awaited.

The death of General Xue marks the beginning of her self-definition. One of her strategies to gain power of self-definition is her beauty. Una Stannard points out that the ideal beauties teach women that their looks are a commodity to be bartered in exchange for a man, not only for food, clothing, and shelter, but also for love (195). In this story, the grandmother knew that her beauty could be used as social ladder to achieve opulence as her

experience in her marriage with General Xue had demonstrated. Her beauty released her and her family from poverty. The grandmother learned that General Xue was impressed by her beauty and her femininity, and he later lavished her with magnificent gifts. Similarly, Dr Xia was puzzled by the grandmother's beauty. Jung Chang narrated: "When he first walked into her room, he was struck by her beauty that in his confusion he backed straight out again and mumbled to the servant that he felt unwell (60). Again the grandmother profited from her beauty but this time, she moved up to be a proper wife of Dr Xia in her second marriage. This indicated that the grandmother's beauty brought her considerable property which the General gave her during his life time, as well as proper martial status, which Dr Xia lovingly provided to her. In this sense, her beauty was power which could be used as a means to change her identity.

Apart from her beauty, the changing identity of the grandmother lies on her consciousness of women's oppression. Kate Millett points out that to become aware of the effects of male domination, women must have a consciousness of female oppression. It is a way of learning to see and to feel the previously invisible effect of patriarchy (Hester Eisenstein 35). In this story, the grandmother became conscious of female oppression. In the crisis of the loss of her husband, who was her luxurious accommodation and regular income, she took it as a chance to return to her parent's home and to struggle for herself and her mother. She became a different person, from the girl who was married off just for the sake of her father's well-being. In this return to her parents' home, she told herself that "the days of subservience to her father were over, and that she was going to fight for herself and for her mother" (Jung Chang 59). Her father could no longer treat her as an object which can be used for another exchange. In this light, the grandmother broke the rule of three obediences,

and became a woman who wanted to determine her own fate.

In addition, the new identity of the grandmother is derived from her motherhood experience. Adrienne Rich remarks that the loss of the daughter to the mother, the mother to the daughter, is the essential female tragedy (237). Furthermore, she argues that the experience of motherhood is not entirely formed or controlled by the patriarchy. However, this experience enables women in developing their capacities and resistance to the patriarchy (279-280). Corresponding to Rich's claim, the grandmother's motherhood experiences empowered her to resist against the patriarchy. A short time after General Xue's second departure, the grandmother realized that she was pregnant. Jung Chang revealed that the grandmother found a new meaning in her life: "[The] grandmother was ecstatic at having a child. Now she felt, her life had a purpose, and she poured all her love and energy into [her daughter]" (47). With this new meaning in her life, the grandmother did not surrender to the concubinage practice which customarily allowed the primary wife to adopt the concubine's children. The primary wife on the sake of General Xue's family hinted that she wanted to restrain the grandmother's daughter within her household. In this traumatic situation, she mustered up her strength to protect her daughter. She could not bear living without her daughter, who was the only precious person in her life. For the grandmother, it would be her tragedy if she had to lose her daughter. Therefore, she managed to save her daughter from Xue's household and wished not to return to this concubine's world. This means her motherhood serves as a site where the grandmother learned and expressed the power of self-definition.

Aside from protecting her daughter, she also gave a consideration to her daughter's family with her caring hands in order to survive menaces in the public realm. Drawing on

the distinction between men and women, Sherry Ortner says women have the ability to give birth and to create life as opposed to men whose activities involve the destruction of life such as hunting and warfare (30). Corresponding to this claim, the grandmother provided refuge for her daughter's family out of her caring hands. More specifically, when her daughter and her husband were absent due to their career responsibilities, the grandmother took care of their children. Moreover, when the daughter and her husband were beaten because of political reasons, they came to the grandmother's caring hands. This is to say that the grandmother was the source of life for her daughter's family, all of whose members sought refuge, although torrents of politic upheaval would occasionally take them away from home. The grandmother managed to help her daughter and her family get through all difficulties and maintained the bonds of this family. Her caring hands could be viewed as her power to resist the supreme patriarch of the country, Mao, who enjoyed zealous fighting. In this way, the grandmother did not define herself as powerless woman in the household, as her previously designated roles in General Xue's household. In fact, she became a capable woman who supported all members in her daughter's family.

However, the grandmother's violation of the patriarchal practice brought her a sense of guilt. This could be the result of her behavior such as remarriage, which was not acceptable in her rigid society. Her lack of consciousness of guilt may be explained by applying Hegel's theory which claims: "Once the unconscious has been acknowledged, it is impossible to think in terms of a self-identical coherent individual, since the subject is constituted by desires it cannot know and cannot even speak, but nonetheless determine its identity" (Sara Salih 38). To paraphrase Hegel, when a woman's desire is contradictory to the social discourse, she would have a moral conflict. In this story, the grandmother knew

that her decision to remarry was opposed by this society, but her desire forced her to do what she did. She could not speak about bitterly enduring her low status in concubinage and about her father's exploitation just for his own career advancement because obedience had been demanded of Chinese women. The conflict made her paranoid sporadically. Therefore, to compensate for her loneliness in her marriage to General Xue, and her feeling of objectification by her father, the grandmother sought true love in Dr Xia who can be compared to a father figure, and her love. However, her remarriage was radically against the concept of the good Chinese woman. As reflected in allegorical statues, a widowed woman was being sawed in half by two husbands because she was the chattel of both (Jung Chang 82). Owing to the patriarchal belief, for a woman to have two husbands was a carnal sin. Therefore, with the feeling of guilt, she avoided introducing her daughter to the moral lesson about a woman having two husbands whenever they walked past the statues.

Another event in her old-age, showing her unconsciousness of guilt, took place in a scene on the way home on foot from the hospital. Suddenly there was a rainstorm. With her sickness and her hopelessness in such bad weather, she said "Oh heaven, let me die! Let me die" (Jung Chang 527). Her words prove that she felt she was attached to Providence, which possibly sentenced her by making slight of bad things. In her view, the rainstorm showering on her during her sickness was a heavenly punishment for her breaking the moral code in her twenties. Therefore, the power of patriarchal discourse had shaped the grandmother's perceptions and often played a role in her interpretations about her fate.

However, within these patriarchal constraints, the grandmother paved the way for her daughter to go further than herself. The grandmother in this story is similar to Black mothers, who Joseph claims, provide their daughters with basic necessities and protect them

in dangerous environments—to helping their daughters go further than the mothers themselves were allowed to go (Patricia Hill Collins 184). In this story, the grandmother was vital to the changing identity of her daughter, as we can see in how she brought up her daughter. The grandmother in many ways renounced traditional practices. For example, she provided a better chance for her daughter. For instance, she did not bind her daughter's feet. She supported her study in school, and let her daughter make a decision about whom she wanted to marry.

The grandmother's experiences under patriarchy stimulated her daughter to subvert traditional patriarchal ideology. Although the grandmother did not explicitly tell her daughter about her oppressive experiences, her daughter figured out that the grandmother's remarriage contradicted both religious belief and social norms. As for the religious belief, her daughter found out that a statue of a woman who was sawed in half by her two husbands illustrated the punishment for women's remarriage. As for the social norm, her daughter also learned that the grandmother was mistreated by Dr Xia's family. His children gave the cold shoulder to both herself and the grandmother. Also the grandmother's perspective towards the patriarchy passed on to her daughter. As a result, her daughter did not hesitate to jump outside the patriarchal system when there was an emergence of communism claiming to end the patriarchal practice.

In sum, the age-old Chinese practices imposed certain gender roles upon a woman. In order to be a good woman, she must be silent, submissive, patient, and chaste. The only respectful status for a woman was to be an obedient wife. Any deviations were considered 'bad.' The grandmother did not match the concept of a good woman of old China in the sense that she did not submit to the oppressive culture. The grandmother established her

identity at the cost of disobedience. Her strength, which was formulated under the unbearably oppressive culture, led to violation. Metaphorically, her inner strength enabled her to stand on her own two feet gracefully despite standing and walking awkwardly with her bound feet.

The Mother

Like the grandmother who was a strong woman in a traditional feminine robe, the grandmother's daughter was a strong woman in communist garb who grew up during the breakthrough of communism. The grandmother's daughter will, henceforth, be called 'the mother.' She was considered a pioneer woman whose thoughts and acts concerning women's rights could be performed legally. For example, she was allowed to marry the man of her choice, to choose her occupation, and to enter new public spheres or domains, which, for a long time, had been solely occupied by men. The communist ideology was theoretically compared to a utopian world for gender equality, as reflected in the Maoist utterance: "Women can hold up half of the sky" (Jung Chang 503). The mother was not reluctant to actively join the new realm. Inheriting the grandmother's strength, she was a projection of her mother whose ability had no outlet in the Old China.

Many factors in the mother's life made her grow up to be strong, and also prepared her to the new light of better status for women. For example, the grandmother was theoretically her role model in making a decision about marriage. The mother acquired this trait of strong character from the grandmother in addition to the blood from her father, warlord General Xue, a man of the public sphere. The grandmother amazingly said that "You have your father's blood in your veins" (Jung Chang 103). Furthermore, the mother grew up as the stepdaughter of a doctor who was highly respected in the community.

Moreover, invasion and occupation by Japan in the 1930s, poverty, starvation, and the insecurity of life emboldened her because she proved that not only, she could survive, but she also adjusted herself to these difficulties. Her adaptation is reminiscent of Charles Darwin's remark: "In the struggle for survival, the fittest win [...] because they succeed in adapting themselves best to keep their environment." These factors contributed to the mother's self-confidence and made her ready to walk out of her cocoon, when she was called for, by the political regimes, to participate in the national development. These factors were always there lurking in the background, enhancing her status to be a comrade of men.

In this new realm, the mother was overwhelmed by this political movement and did not wish to acquire traditional women's traits. In her high school, she chose not to study household tasks, which mostly were for the purpose of male pleasure. The mother erased the image of the traditional woman from her consciousness and identified herself as a liberated woman under a communist light. Her outside personality was described in Jung Chang's narrative: "Her hair had just been cut short in keeping with the new revolutionary fashion" (154). Thus, both her attitude and appearance were identified with the new woman of communism.

Not only did she deny acquiring traditional skills, but she also resisted traditional practices which rendered women's subordination. More specifically, with her awareness of gender equality, the mother wanted to get to know men before committing herself, as Jung Chang writes: "Mother was longing to have some fun and freedom and to be able to make friends with men without committing herself to marriage" (109). This means she wanted to extend her acquaintances and connections which would have been impossible in the Old China when the only men in a respectable woman's world were her father, husband, son(s)

and other male relatives. Moreover, the mother wanted to marry for love; she said she would rather die than marry someone who could not give her happiness and love. In addition, the mother's awareness of gender equality concerned traditional polygamy. Jung Chang writes: [The] mother decided she could not be happy with a husband who regarded flirtations and extramarital sex as essential aspects of 'being a man' (111). Women, in the mother's view, were not men's playthings.

Aside from her gender awareness, the mother, in her role of female activist, mobilized other women in the corroborative group to struggle against male abuse, and even to occupy a male working position. Robin Morgan points out that women who had been struggling on a one-to-one basis with men, began to see that some sort of solidarity was necessary for struggling against the gender prejudice (Patrocinio P. Schweickart 618). In this story, the mother knew that an individual woman could not defend herself against male abuse, but in solidarity, they could even get rid of a man who beat them. Jung Chang writes about the women's federation, for which the mother was responsible.

At the time one of my mother's jobs was teaching and reading and writing to the women in the textile factory [...] and informing them about women's equality with men. The factory was still privately owned, and one of the foremen was still beating women employees whenever he felt like it. My mother was instrumental in getting him sacked, and helped the women workers elect their own forewoman. (178)

Clearly, with the help of the mother, other women started to know that they, as a group, could overthrow patriarchal power, and women could attain male occupational positions.

However, the public or productive realm was not a terrain for the improvement of women's status as Maoism advocated. Women's inferiority under communism still existed, for example in her public life. More specifically, at Women's Federation, the mother and

other women took the responsibility of making cotton shoes for the army. According to the Chinese culture, shoes were considered clothing for the body's lowest part, which connotatively means inferior, or low-grade. Doing such a traditional job would not help provoke a sense of gender equality. On the contrary, this underpinned their status quo. It fortified the fact that women were obliged to be tolerant of a subordinated status both at home and at work. In addition, the new women's role was still committed to child rearing, food, clothes, and making connections between the authority and grass roots. As the maternal role in a house is to nurture children, women's roles in the public realm concerned dealing with young people. The mother's job as a medium of the state included explaining to the young workers about communism, and encouraging them to join the Youth League and the Party. Likewise, they did housework; their role in the public realm was to be supporters rather than commanders. In other words, the women's revolutionary service did not incorporate equality with men, but merely to be men's assistants in the public domain. Because of this unequal male-female power relationship, women were not a part of decision-making, but were men's subordinates who made the male constructed national policy successful.

Apart from the public realm, communist practices also oppressed the mother in her private life. Ridiculously, her personal matters became the business of the Communist party. For example, without the communist party's approval, she could not marry her love. Moreover, the discourse saying men and women are equal can be an excuse to ignore women's physical condition. For example, the mother, during the long march to Nanjing, was treated as though she were a man. Her husband-- Jung Chang's father-- did not even console or support her during the hardship which made her miscarry her first child and

almost killed her. His idea of anti-nepotism forced him to overlook the fact that the mother was a pregnant woman. Moreover, her private life was under the surveillance of the Communist party which thwarted her from expressing her suffering, even to her husband. Significantly, it was her husband who objected to her making a complaint. Her agony had to be suppressed by all means. To be called a communist heroine, a woman was to devote her energy, soul, and privacy. The point is that her mother's sense of patriotism was a menace to her emancipation.

However, the mother's emancipation arose from her inner soul, rather than Communism. According to Emma Goldman, "true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor courts, but her inner regeneration (224). In parallel to this idea, the mother realized that communism, despite being the alternative of feudalism, was not a path to emancipation. The mother came up with a new solution for the dilemma. That is, she reserved her psychological room to reveal her real self. For example, listening to her voice of nature, the mother was brave enough to express her love to her dear man on their wedding night. The father recounted his wedding to his daughter, Jung Chang: "your mother was so graceful. Then, jokingly, 'How times have changed! You're (Jung Chang) not like your mother! You wouldn't do something like that-kneel down to take off a man's shoes" (174). This is not to suggest that the mother followed Confucian practices and abandoned her patriotism. In addition, it does not mean she contradicted communism, which advocated the equal status of men and women. In fact, it is an expression of her nature to her dear man in their private realm. She was regarded neither as an obedient wife according to Confucianism, nor as a stupid wife, to communism. On the contrary, this reveals that the power of the Communist

Party could not entirely dominate her. She preserved herself from assimilation and divulged her nature in her privacy. Despite having little privacy, she still had her own sphere for personal feelings. Instead of acting like cold communist bride in the wedding night, the mother shifted into her true selfhood in private. Ignoring the communist convention, she showed her love to her groom. That is to say, the mother separated personal matters in private realm from patriotism in the public realm.

In her path of identity changing, the mother showed self-respect and her appreciation of women's maternal roles by kowtowing¹ to her mother-in-law. Paradoxically, June Jordan suggests that while self-respect is essential, respect for others is the key (Patricia Hill Collins 116). To paraphrase June Jordan, one needs to give respect to respectable persons first, and then one will learn to respect oneself. In China, no one was obliged to respect women because of their inferiority. In addition, women themselves were required to respect or obey men, namely fathers, husbands, and sons. As a result, Chinese women presented themselves to men distinctively from the way they treat other women. In addition, the mother disagreed with Maoism, which wanted to overthrow feudalism by aborting kowtowing. According to these communist ideological values, kowtowing was considered an insult to human dignity. Apparently, the mother expressed her dignity out of her self-valuation by kowtowing three times at first meeting her mother-in-law. Her graceful deference was not an expression of subservience or powerlessness. However, the mother acted traditionally to her mother-in-law, rather than arrogantly in the manner of communism. On one hand, it is because she realized that to pay respect to her mother-in-law did not mean to decrease her self-respect,

¹ Kowtow, a Chinese term, is the act of deep respect shown by kneeling and bowing so low as to touch the head to the ground.

especially if that respectable one was the mother of her dear husband. On the other, the mother knew that her mother-in-law, as a human subject, wanted respect from others. Significantly, this was the woman who gave birth to and brought up her husband. Hence, her maternal roles deserved a proper respect in the mother's view.

Apart from paying respect to her mother-in-law, the mother also contradicted the communist party by motherhood fulfillment. Chodorow and Dinnerstein argue that women could usually learn to increase their sense of autonomy without losing their nurturing skills (Hester Eisenstein 95). In this story, the mother disobeyed the communist regime which intended to turn women into professional automatons. It is illustrated in the expression of her maternal love. Under communism, women were urged to take responsibilities in the national revolution, and let their children be nurtured by nursemaids, or nursery, as an excuse for enhancing women status. The mother, instead of overwhelming herself with the revolution, sought chances to express her maternal love to her young children:

Eventually, she became drilled into the habit of working nonstop. By the time, she came home. [...] She would sit by our (her children's) bedsides watching our faces as we (her children) slept and listening to our peaceful breathing. It was the happiness moment of her day. (Jung Chang 278)

It is to say that in the public sphere, she devoted herself to the country. But in her own privacy, she concerned herself with her children. One may argue that she got back to the traditional feminine duty. To reason carefully, her motherhood experience drew the mother from mandatory work world under communism, and provided her with the feeling of human connection. Her experience of motherhood could contain within itself the potential for her happiness and joy. In order to assume equal status with men, she did not completely turn herself into an automaton according to the communist rationale to achieve its mission of

national revolution by rejecting women's nurturing roles. On the contrary, she turned motherhood as a source of her fulfillment.

In this fake discourse of gender equality, the mother achieved her emancipation by removing herself from communism. The mother realized that communism is not the path to women's liberation; therefore, she created her own frame. Mary Field Belenky and her colleagues point out "to learn to speak in a unique and authentic voice, women must jump outside the frames and systems authorities provide and create their own frame" (134). The mother in this story is a case in point. She removed herself from the authority of the communist party. Eventually, she learned that communism was another form of patriarchy and another way to exploit women. Therefore, she moved herself outside the given. She learned that her experience under communism was just a fake emancipation. She was forced to undergo unbearable conditions when prevented her from being her own person. Particularly, she was ordered to leave her children in order to have nationalistic feelings. The author recounts: "She had been an absentee mother when we were growing up, having submitted herself at the cost of her family. Now she reflected with remorse on the pointlessness of her devotion" (577). It is clear that the mother jumped outside the communist authorities. In her new way of viewing herself, she was concerned about her children, and refused to following communism.

Having learnt from destructive communism, the mother identified herself with being mother figure of the community. Her disillusionment about communism did not put her into a withdrawal. Apparently, she, as a female activist, helped others to whom she was not related by did it for free. This can be seen as rejecting the basic values of communism. With her maternal quality, she contributed moral support to other people in the camps where both

political detainees and camp commanders were defeated by Mao. This forged her ahead into her new identity as a mother figure of the community, compared to the Chinese goddess

Kuanyin:

As the days, then months went by, the harsh work and lack of relaxation became unbearable. Everyone missed their family and children, the Rebels included. Their resentment was perhaps more intense because they now felt that all their past zealotry had turned out to be for nothing, [...], depression replaced denunciations, and the Rebels sometimes had to be cheered by my mother. She was given the nickname 'Kuanyin'-the goddess of kindness. (Jung Chang 576- 577)

The mother, with the wisdom of hindsight, realized that she missed her children.

Nonetheless, the mother, instead of becoming hopeless, encouraged, out of her sincerity and strength, both her people and her adversary. In despair, a despondent sufferer could ironically become a moral supporter, and friends could be spiritually made out of foes.

Unlike destructive communism, her motherhood offered hope in hopeless situations. With her motherhood, women in this camp survived and recognized the oppressive ordeal under communism. In this way, her motherhood provided a base for self-actualization.

Compared to the goddess figure, Kuanyin, the mother assumed equal status to men by her maternal role. Sherry Ortner claims that the matriarch is the original ruling form of China as reflected in the worship given to Kuan Yin. This Chinese Buddhist deity is the most worshipped and most depicted in China (22). Blofeld adds that this goddess was depicted as a male deity, and was offered compassion in a womanly form; her power extends far and wide as the beloved personification of compassion (41). As for the mother in this story, it cannot be an exaggeration to claim that the mother resumed the position of matriarch of China, as opposed to the tyrant patriarch Mao. By analogy with Kuan Yin, a divinity of the male deity, the mother's psychological strength could be equated to men's, whereas her

expression corresponded to women's motherhood. This praise verifies that the mother had been transformed from a communist to a humanitarian who comprehends mankind's sufferings.

The Daughter

In the daughter's generation, women were brought up as a product of communism. Three years after the birth of the People's Republic, Jung Chang, the author of this book, was born --1952. Her parents, in the early phase of their occupational lives, worked as communist officials. They had faith in communism and worked devotedly in a provincial area of China for the communist party. Although Jung Chang experienced torturing heartaches' loss, and pain during her childhood in communist China, she eventually came to a realization that a woman as a human being can be created by neither patriarchal prescription nor the nationalist movement; but by their encouragement to subvert existing power which, in this context, meant the tyrant Mao. Furthermore, in this public domain, women needed to have self, gender, and political awareness; otherwise, they would simply fall prey to becoming a political apparatus. Jung Chang represented a strong woman whose identity changed from a believer of Mao to be a woman with a sense of authority.

Jung Chang in her childhood was expected to behave like a boy under the communist ideology which failed to recognize the difference between men and women. According to Judith Fetterley (1978) who writes The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction, women's suffering can arise from 'immasculation' by men. As she explains, it is the process that women are taught to think as men, to identify with male point of view, and to

accept a male system as normal, and legitimate. The process of immasculation does not give masculine power to women. Rather, it doubles their oppression because a woman is doomed to powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience legitimized (xx). The social mainstream in Jung Chang's time is a case in point. More specifically, Jung Chang experienced difficulties in entering the public sphere where female specificity was not recognized. The male remained the norm against which women were measured. As a result, Jung Chang became uncomfortable in what the society perceived as gender equality. For example, she was instilled with new forms of behavior and was forced to bear experiences of gender equality in the military domain as a prerequisite to attain gender equality, as Jung Chang describes:

Mao called for girls to be militant; femininity was condemned in the years when my generation was growing up. Many girls tried to talk, walk, and act like aggressive, crude men, and ridiculed those who did not. There was not much possibility of expressing femininity anyway. To start with, we were not allowed to wear anything but the shapeless blue, grey or green trousers and jackets. (422)

It also implied that if this boy-imitated manner were a ticket to enter the men's world, this would mean that the community welcomed members who had the same qualification as them, maleness. A girl's value depended on the extent to which she acted as a boy. It proved to worsen women's subordination, despite this idea aiming at erasing the traditional woman's stereotype which was soft and meek manners. Under communism, women were required to disguise their true identity in order to be part of this community. That is to say, women were still delineated as outcast.

Imposed upon with the male rule model, Jung Chang blindly and obediently followed Maoist instruction. According to Belenky and her colleagues, for silent women,

their obedience to authorities is of the utmost importance for keeping out of trouble and insuring their own survival, because to know “why” is not thought to be possible or important (28). In this sense, Jung Chang in her childhood was a silent woman who just followed a male role model. Mao created as heroic character for both boys and girls to follow. He made up an orphaned boy named ‘Lei Feng,’ who devoted his life to the military world. He had no connection to family, and worshiped Mao as if he were his god. Blindly imitating this role model, Jung Chang did not doubt this fake character. For example, after Jung Chang and her friends had voluntarily helped a man in public, this man cynically said: “What a pity, that you are not real Lei Feng, and there are no photographs on hand to take your pictures for the newspaper. (Jung Chang 341). This is to mean that Jung Chang, at this point, depended on authorities for direction. She was like a puppet moving with the jiggle of a string under the control of Mao without any questions.

Like other girls in this nationalistic period, Jung Chang was persuaded to re-identify herself with the communist discourse by changing her name. According to old values, a girl usually was given a name whose meaning was associated with flowers, loveliness, or gentility, for example, to indicate the woman’s femininity. In this story, Jung Chang was like other girls who found that their names opposed the communist ideology. Therefore, she had her names changed. She was unhappy with her name “Er-hong” given at her birth by her grandfather, Dr Xia, who exclaimed ‘Ah, another wild swan is born’ (Jung Chang 235). It was because it was homophonous with the word meaning “faded red.” Becoming faded red implied that one’s belief in communism had become languid and would possibly lead to ideological revision. Not wanting to be mocked by her classmates, she began to dislike her

name. Jung Chang writes, “My classmates giggled, and I could see them stealing glances at me. I felt I must get ride of my name immediately” (356). At this point, she wrongly understood that changing her name would mean changing her identity. In fact, feminist theorists such as Kate Millette, Patricia Collins, as well as Belenky and her colleagues, to name just a few, argue that the change of self-definition must begin in their consciousness of gender equality, rather than changing their names.

Jung Chang gradually constructed her knowledge out of the contradiction between reality and her reasoning. Drawing upon Belenky and her colleagues’ women’s constructing knowledge, during the transition into a new way of knowing, there is an impetus to allow the self back into the process of knowing, to confront the pieces of the self that may be experienced as fragmented and contradictory (136). The identity development of Jung Chang fell in this line. She often had conflicts in her mind. On one hand, she conformed to Mao’s idea of new women’s roles such as imitating male characters, and rejecting sexist practice such as concubinage. She misunderstood that the woman’s feminine nature and the status quo of concubinage were disdained. But it was found that her grandmother embraced these qualifications. Her grandmother had a feminine nature, and was a concubine of a warlord. For Jung Chang, the grandmother was not wicked like Maoist propaganda. In contrast, she was a good woman whom Jung Chang loved and respected. Jung Chang recounts: “I was learning to live with contradictory thoughts and reality, and getting used to compartmentalizing them.” This is to say that during this transition, instead of overwhelming herself with women’s new roles under communism, Jung Chang constructed her way of thinking on the truth that might eventually guide her own intellectual

development.

Jung Chang became upset of misogynist practices in rural areas, while working as a peasant. Although Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, which urged people to end old ways of life, some prejudices persisted in her commune. For example, unreasonable, obsolete thoughts which considered women as subservient or even contemptuous persisted. More specifically, the lower parts of female bodies were considered 'unauspicious' when touching men's working equipment. Once, Jung Chang, unintentionally, stepped over a shoulder pole which was lying on the ground. Its owner was furious because he believed that he would develop shoulder sores if a woman stepped over his pole. Jung Chang was made to cross back over it to undo the poison. It might be viewed that men in this community were afraid of the low part of the female body because it carries power of giving life. Drawing upon the feminist object relations theory, Chodorow describes men's feeling towards women in terms of contempt, disparagement, and devaluation on one hand, and resentment, fear, and dread on the other (Denise Thompson 83). In this way, men's fear of women's power can become a reason for misogynist practices.

Deplored by treatment of women as objects, Jung Chang eventually recognized the taken-for-granted patriarchy by resisting the life under Maoist control. According to Denise Thompson, resistance requires a greater degree of self-reflection and deliberate choice, questioning the 'world-taken-for-granted' and espousing some values and rejecting others. In addition, it involves recognizing freedom and constraint (50). In this story, whereas the society strictly followed Maoist ideology without questioning, Jung Chang began to cast doubt upon it. She knew that hard-work as a peasant could not be a path for women's

liberation, nor for uplifting women's status. Rather, it was just an excuse to exploit women. In fact, her critical thinking was a channel to release women from this taken-for-granted world which assumed women to be lower than human beings. Refusing to settle for a life as a peasant, Jung Chang talked to herself: "I rejected the life Mao had assigned to me" (515). In addition, she recognized that female peasants were oppressed because their lifestyle was limited in the wall of silence, and their time was consumed by physical work from dawn until dark. Jung Chang was skeptical about the Maoist campaign of 'Thought Reform through Labor' which sent adolescents to the countryside. She narrates: Mao advocated 'thought reform through labor' for everyone, but never explained the relationship between the two. Coincidentally, the peasant village where this realization came was Ningnan. This place was near the edge of the Himalayas, the mountain with the highest peak of the world, Everest. This could mean that her understanding of the world came full circle when she had acquired the ultimate experiences of the patriarchal system at this place. Consequently, she began to resist Maoist instructions, and turned to rely on her intellectual self.

Disassociating from a daughter of the Maoist cult in the public realm, Jung Chang defined herself as the Changs' daughter who made the home atmosphere her own. Jung Chang returned to her family after she had been sick and tired of following Maoist instructions. Whereas Maoism concerned none of their daughters' roles in the family, she tried all possible means to connect all members of her home. She made use of a medical excuse to return home, visiting the grandmother, mother and father. Apparently, her home--which means familial togetherness--had been dissolved for political reasons. However, Jung Chang rebuilt the sense of familial togetherness across geographical distance. Although her

father and mother were detained in different distant places, Jung Chang made them feel that they were not alone. Moreover, in returning to her parents, Jung Chang felt that she belonged to family, rather than the Maoist public realm.

Aside from challenging Maoist patriarchal authority by associating herself with her family, Jung Chang also challenged the traditional patriarchal ideology which imposed occupational segregation on men and women. Under the Maoist campaign of thought reform through labor, she selected careers of barefoot-doctor, and electrician which, as we know, are stereotypically associated with men. This campaign forced women to work as hard as men for the sake of gender equality. However, on one hand, women were physically exploited because their work showed no concern about their bodily difference. On the other, it opened opportunities for women to work in traditionally male-dominated occupations. Instead of enduring physical exploitation, Jung Chang turned these opportunities into a forum of which she availed herself to expose the male experiences. Having no option, she, at first, worked as a peasant, an occupation which both genders had in common. Then, on her own account, she entered the medical profession in Deyang, working as a 'barefoot doctor.' And about a year later, she decided to work as an electrician due to her glamour as the only woman in the factory doing the job. Although she did both cutting edge jobs haphazardly, she crossed the gender boundary.

Resisting the social mainstream, Jung Chang rested her future on education as a path to changing her identity. Betty Friedan, the author of The Feminine Mystique, emphasizes education as a key to release women from sexist tradition. She writes: "education, only education has saved, and can continue to save American women from greater dangers of the

feminine mystique” (344). Like Betty’s Freidan’s opinion, Jung Chang was concerned that education was the only chance to redefine women’s status and to save her from being victimized by political domination. Despite the fact that women’s ignorance and conformity were ridiculously turned to good account according to both Confucianism and Communism, Jung Chang valued education as a key to success in the public realm. Jung Chang recounts: “As for girls, the peasants considered it a complete waste of time for them to go to school. They got married and belonged to other people. It’s like pouring water on the ground (558). Whereas a large number of women adhered to this social norm, Jung Chang was determined to bring about the change in her life by education. In her view, education was a social ladder which not only led women to be on the same level with men but enabled them to know men’s astuteness also. Because of her self-education, she knew the calamity in China was not righteous, or legitimate. To make it clear, Jung Chang narrates, “My father’s collection of Marxist classics was also useful to me. [I wonder] what on earth those nineteenth-century German controversies had to do with Mao’s China. [...] Reading Marx helped me to think rationally and analytically” (563).

Apart from reading Marxism for her rational thinking, Jung Chang employed reading of literature as a means to learn about woman as subjects. Drawing on Jonathan Culler’s idea of literature and identity, literature has not only made identity a theme, it has played a crucial role in the constructing of the identity of readers. In addition, the value of literature has long been linked to the vicarious experiences it gives readers. Thus, we usually become who we are by identifying with the characters we read about (112-113). Jung Chang was no exception. In this story, Jung Chang gained vicarious experience of womanhood through her

reading of The Winds of War by Herman Wouk. It helped illuminate her true self as a woman. She came to realize that she had missed her true self, which she could not find in the mainstream rhetoric. By this point, she understood that the communist ideology caused the loss of woman's meanings. As mentioned earlier, woman's characteristics were denied in the communist public, as opposed to Western women in The Winds of War who could, without restraint, choose their clothing from a wide range of colors and styles according to their favors. Jung Chang responded to it, "At twenty, I had only a few clothes, in the same style as everybody else, almost every piece blue gray or white, I closed my eyes, and caressed in my imagination all the beautiful dresses I had never seen or worn" (604). Her response reflected that she is a woman, rather than a masculine being. Recognizing that she did not belong to this patriarchal rhetoric, she became aware that what she lacked throughout her life under Mao's policy was a chance to express herself as a woman. At this point, Jung Chang changed from a Maoist daughter to a mature woman who wanted to be her own person. She knowingly wanted neither to imitate men's behavior, nor to wear men's outfits.

With her consciousness of gender equality, Jung Chang wanted to have more liberal life. An event serving as catalyst in her struggle for liberation can be seen in her training program in a Zhanjiang port. She was criticized for her self-expression in public by her classmates for the way she smiled, used eye contact, and made hand gestures. She recounts:

Because my eyes looked 'too interested,' I 'smiled too often,' when I did so I opened my mouth 'too wide.' I was also criticized for using hand gestures: we women students were supposed to keep our hands under the table and sit motionless. Much of Chinese society still expected its women to hold themselves in a sedate manner, lower their eyelids in response to men's stares, and restrict their smile to faint curve of the lips which did not expose their teeth. They were not meant to use hand gestures at all. (648-649)

On this account, Jung Chang realized that she was different from others. Under communism, women still adhered to the old belief of proper characteristics of women. Coincidentally, this event took place in a port in the south called Zhanjiang, only a mile from the sea. It might signify that her psychological journey had come close to liberation. Symbolically, the sea is a place where people can liberate themselves, in contrast to the inland which is full of constraints. This place inspired her to make a difference in the world, and to study and live overseas where she could be herself.

Unbearably assuming a subordinating position in this patriarchal society, Jung Chang yearned for an alternative. Denise Thompson points out that although women's difference from men is usually justification for women's subordination, it can be a source of women-only power and identification (82). Similarly to Thompson's idea, no matter if she imitated men's role, or resumed her woman's role, she was still subordinated. Nevertheless, from this imposition, Jung Chang gained a motivating force for the struggle to identify herself. She realized that in this patriarchal society, she, as a woman, had no niche equal to that of men. Thus, Jung Chang's aspiration to live as a woman could not have become true in this society. Like her father, an idealistic communist who had no place in this country, Jung Chang's self-definition could not be established here either.

The fact that Jung Chang seriously competed to win a scholarship to study in England suggests her articulation to self-definition. However, her departure from China was not viewed as her surrender to the patriarchy. The significance of leaving the country, in fact, could be threefold. First, she rejected women's lower status as defined by patriarchal rhetoric. Second, she proved that, with her intellect, she could surpass men academically. In

almost three decade's time, she was the first person from her university, and from all of Sichuan --among its population of ninety million, to be allowed to study in the West since 1949 (Jung Chang 670). In addition, she was the first person from China who received a doctorate from a British university. Last, she employed England as a site to fight against Chinese patriarchy through her autobiographical writing. In it, she proved that Chinese women were not soft, meek, dependent, and incapable as the stereotype suggested.

Moving to live in the diaspora is tantamount to challenging the conventional assumption that woman associates with stasis and men with the dynamic. Massey claims that if travel tends to be associated with an idea of progress, change, and masculinity, then place and location have been associated with stasis and femininity (Linda McDowell 14). In this story, Jung Chang apparently refused to enroot in a place or location where women's identities were invisible. Countering this claim of women as stasis, Jung Chang traveled to live in England. This also reflects her psychological transformation by which she eventually changed from a woman living behind the wall of silence in China to a woman with greater autonomy in England.

As opposed to the image of a maggot, Jung Chang can be compared to a wild swan according to what Dr Xia, her grandfather, foresaw in her at birth. She countered the traditional image of Chinese women which woman equated to a maggot. As reflected in Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior, the author writes: "Girls are maggots in the rice. It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters" (43). In Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, the author denied associating herself with image of the maggot, which is tiny, soft, meek, dependent, and useless. On the contrary, she was metaphorically compared

to a wild swan regarding her former name 'Er-hong' which means 'wild swan.' She was strong and independent. Not acting like a destructively useless maggot, she contributed support to her family in hard times. Furthermore, she used her self-consciousness to transform herself from a girl who was dominated by patriarchal rhetoric to a woman who had her own authority. Not behaving as a maggot living invisibly inside a fruit of male domination, she made her identity visible by writing autobiography.

As a diasporal Chinese feminist autobiographer, Jung Chang writes to subvert the patriarchal discourse and to redefine her identity. Georges Gusdorf asserts that it is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not exist (Inderpal Grewal 238). In a similar point, Tani Barlow adds that term 'woman' is not part of a Chinese terminology prior to Western influences. Chinese women came into existence and power partly because this term 'woman' was utilized as a category by the state to discipline female persons (Inderpal Grewal 243). This means Chinese women were not recognized in Chinese history. Although the national movement advocated that they participate in the political realm, they remained under patriarchal disciplines. In other words, this new realm was considered a threat to their self-definition. Thus, Jung Chang's autobiography made the term 'woman' become part of Chinese terminology. As mentioned earlier, Jung Chang employed England as a site to write Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China to make a difference for herself, her mother, and grandmother. In it, Jung Chang represents her protagonists as unique women who dared to make a difference. With their power of self-definition, they contributed to the meaning of 'women' outside the rules of Confucianism or communism.

Compared to water, these three women had the power to find the way out from their

suffering in this archetypal patriarchal society. Not unlike water in a closed basin, the grandmother had very little contact with the outside world in her younger years. But with her inner strength, she managed to escape from rigid tradition. For example, when her daughter was supposed to be constrained within General Xue's compound and to be brought up there, her mother's protective spirit prompted her to manage to free her daughter despite a lot of difficulties. Eventually, the grandmother released herself from concubinage and remarried Dr Xia. In addition, with her self-adaptability, she was ready to support her daughter, who, in turn, encountered turbulent politics. Moreover, she, as a grandmother, spiritually reared her grandchildren during the long period of their parents' absence. This means that she was always a source of life not only for her daughter, but also all members in her daughter's family.

In the time of her daughter, De-hong, she was like fountain water which gushed at the beginning and eventually returned to its origin, pervasively through barren land. Having heard that communism aimed to put an end to injustices against women, she was bravely eager to join the cause. But reality was opposed to her idealistic expectations. She mused over the discrepancies between what she heard and said and what she saw or sensed. Hence, she reduced her devotion. She, in her enlightenment, stepped outside patriarchal discourse and returned to the ancient matriarchal origins of China. Eventually, she identified herself with Kuanyin, the goddess of mercy and kindness, becoming a giver according to matriarchal ideology, instead of remaining a revolutionist who always sought the communist utopia.

As for Jung Chang, the author, she was like water at the sandbar, trying to seep through to the large sea where she would have more freedom. The sandbar of deceptive political rhetoric, disinformation, and hypocrisy virtually prevented her from seeing through

the façade, and form an intelligent judgment. During her childhood, she lived with these contradicting thoughts and realities, and meekly compartmentalized them. Nonetheless, she realized that the oppression of women in China was unbearably incorrect. Like water, Jung Chang managed to circumvent the sandbar and live in England, where feminism was alive and well.

Political change could not induce the liberation of Chinese women. It is because the change must originate from their inner strength. Even without the formal movement to gender-equality, women with inner strength like the grandmother could release herself from sexist practices. Her bound feet could not bind her to the sexist world. Her liberation had no relation to the winds of change. As for the mother, the winds of change did not blow her away from oppressive conditions. But she made herself a matriarch who contributed moral support to suffering women in her camp, in contrast to the fighting atmosphere blown out by Mao. As for Jung Chang, she got lost in male-role imitation, and had to endure physical difficulties in peasant communes. Recognizing the reality of a male dominated society, Jung Chang redefined her identities by rejecting the society that rejected women's values. In short, the changing identities of these three women came from their inner strength, rather than externally.

CHAPTER 3

The Concubine's Children

Gold Mountain: Chinese Illusion and Western Reality

As other outstanding ethnic diasporal Chinese writers, Denise Chong, the author of The Concubine's Children, has apparently embodied strong elements of Chinese cultures, especially Confucian practices, in her work. Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children tells us about the lapse of Confucian practices in western reality. More specifically, the reality in Canada, where Denise Chong's ancestral family sought 'Gold Mountain' is considered a difficult dilemma for women. Whereas women in Jung Chang's Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, were exploited for their mission of helping men make China the great nation, women in The Concubine's Children were burdened with helping men seek the Gold Mountain, or their fortune in the western reality, in order to make a warm hearth fire in China. However, what is common between these two missions is that Chinese women in both stories were confronted with dilemmas which were contradictory to their expectations. However, they could change their identities by finding a source of their strength in their situations.

This chapter will argue that The Concubine's Children reflects that the changing identities of Chinese women in two different generations were derived from their relinquishment of Chinese illusion in the western reality. We, the readers, are presented with

the experiences of Denise Chong's maternal grandparents, Leong May-ying and Chan Sam. In 1924, seventeen-year-old May-ying was sold as a concubine to Chan Sam, a peasant twenty years her senior, who had left his At-Home Wife behind in Chang Gar Bin, a village in China, to seek wealth in Vancouver's Chinatown. May-ying spent most of her life working as a waitress in Chinatown's teahouses, and her wages were regularly sent by Chan Sam to his At-Home Wife. To survive her loneliness and the hard life in the slum-like places, she gambled and drank. She had three daughters with Chan Sam, two of whom were taken back to China to be raised by the At-Home Wife; the third child, Hing -- Denise Chong's mother—was brought up by May-ying in Vancouver. May-ying often abandoned Hing to follow a lover on his business trips across Canada. Therefore, in her childhood, Hing lived her life in misery. However, Hing eventually learned to be independent and to survive. Hing married and had a family of her own. Hing and her daughter, the author of this book, managed to travel to Chang Gar Bin to meet Hing's siblings in China. This journey made Hing understand her parents and eventually, she forgave her parents for her childhood misery.

The setting of this true story is significant. This story would not have happened if the setting of this family had not taken place between two worlds. For example, if May-ying and Chan Sam-- her husband-- had lived together, she would probably have kept her behavior on the Confucian path, and she would not have had to be the primary breadwinner of the family. It seems that the western reality contradicted the Confucian gender roles. Out of necessity, May-ying assumed her responsibility as an important breadwinner of the family. In addition, this story occurred in the early twentieth century when communication and

transportation across two continents were inconvenient. Therefore, in this setting, the Confucian belief that all members an expanded family should live together, was challenged by the reality.

The discussion of the changing identities of women will move along the chronological order, starting with the mother, May-ying and, then, the daughter, Hing, in order to see development, and understand the legacy of the former generation which influenced the later one.

May-ying

In the early phrase of Chinese immigration, the oppressive culture of women in the far-away land was not less severe than in its country of origin. Amy Ling states that the Chinese people who have immigrated to other countries, whether motivated by homesickness, alienation, or persecution, often hold tightly to what they have brought from the old country; thus, customs and attitudes that may have altered or disappeared in the mother country may still be continued almost unchanged in isolated enclaves abroad (9). As Amy Ling suggests, the Chinese community in Canada where May-ying relocated to, almost without exception maintained the traditional culture so well that they did not want to acquire the new culture. Therefore, May-ying's work in teahouses brought her a negative image. Instead of judging the morality of May-ying's actions, I shall examine Chinese traditional imposition, her awakening, and her subversion.

Chinese Traditional Imposition

May-ying started her life as an ordinary poor girl in the Chinese oppressive tradition.

Born as a daughter of a poor family, May-ying could not designate her own fate. She was sold at four to be a servant of a woman whom she called 'Auntie.' As a servant, May-ying did domestic work for Auntie. Furthermore, her fate was under her Auntie's designation. May-ying could be resold to another purchaser at Auntie's will. May-ying knew that she had no rights to expect romantic love between a man and a woman. Despite no expectation about her marriage, May-ying was depressed when her boss told her that she had sold her to be a concubine of a Chinese sojourner living in Canada. This is a result of her resistance against the oppressive practice when her mother tried to apply the first bandages to her feet. Not having bound feet, May-ying had to endure another oppressive ordeal in her marriage. In spite of not wanting to become a concubine in a far-away land, May-ying submitted to the fact that she could not be sold as an expensive bride because of her naturally grown feet.

In Chinese patriarchal ideology, whereas women were taught to accept their inferiority, men were permitted to relate their ego needs to their superiority. While May-ying suffered from being sold to a sojourner in Canada, Chan Sam the man who bought her, ordered and bought a woman to be his concubine as if she were a commodity. Chan Sam was not concerned about compatibility between him and his concubine to-be. Having a fancy for a concubine, he just asked a friend who knew someone returning home, Chan Sam said: "Can you find me a *chip see* (a concubine)?" (Denise Chong 22). We can see that a Chinese woman had no authority of her own, and a man could buy a woman as though she was a plaything to comfort his loneliness.

May-ying was treated as an object by her husband from the first moment of the meeting. The first meeting of this couple was like doing a reference check of the commodity

to see whether or not its appearance accorded to the order. He looked for a face that matched the photograph of May-ying. May-ying, as a mail-order bride, came to the point of no return because in this foreign country, she had nothing including connection and accommodation as well as survival tools such as language and occupation. Thus, she had to follow Chan Sam. Although this was an arranged meeting of two total strangers, it was not like a blind date in the modern world in the sense that a man and a woman can decide whether to start, to continue, or to terminate their relationship. As an object, May-ying was to submit to Chan Sam, a man who had bought her from China.

Apart from being treated as an object at the first meeting, May-ying endured disappointment at the public realm. Chan Sam, wearing a suit as a decent man, invited May-ying, his date, to a meal in a tea house out of his showiness. Here, May-ying expected to hear a hint of accepted status of her husband due to his smart suit. The situation turned contradictory to her expectation. The ridiculous scene was when he was going to pay the bill. After the meal in the teahouse where she was supposed to be treated as an ordinary honored customer, calling for service, she was informed that she had to give services here as a waitress, instead. Ridiculously, the man who Chan Sam was going to pay the bill to was introduced to May-ying as her boss, who would give him her wage. Reporting to this man, her duty here was to attend to customers, mostly men, not to call for attention. Opposing May-ying's wish, Chan Sam was not an opulent guy. In fact, he was just a blood sucker who invested nothing and who just made use of her as an earning tool. He told May-ying that she was under contract to this tea house until she had worked off the cost of bringing her to Canada. She talked to herself out of her disappointment: "Whatever have I done in my

previous lives to deserve this?” (Denise Chong 26).

This disappointment was a result of her concept of woman as chattel. Drawing on a theory of a true or authentic woman, Hester Eisenstein writes that a true or authentic woman was a woman who committed herself to a man for the sake of receiving, not only his name but also the legitimacy conferred in the relation of his power, his status, and his accomplishment, by virtue of becoming an extension of him. She was authentic, legitimate, real, to the extent that she was the property of some man (51). May-ying, in this story, conformed to the concept of true or authentic woman by equating herself with Chan Sam's property. Thus, when she was claimed by Chan Sam, a man who did not possess wealth, power, or social recognition, she simply became disappointed. She, herself, henceforth, had to become an extension of him. Of course, by the social expectations of acting like an 'authentic woman,' she had to be dictated by this low-profile man, she, thus, became more deeply downtrodden than women in general. She knew that it was difficult to gain a status and identity from her poor husband. This is because women's values were to be defined by men. Hence, if a man, who was the only source of identity, was in low status, then she, herself, would accordingly have no chance to gain social acceptance.

Along with designation as male property, the harshness in May-ying's life also derived from women's marginalized position. In the patriarchy, males were treated as the center of the universe, and females marginally. Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's analysis of women's subordination, in male perception, women function different than men do. Beauvoir writes: “[A woman] is defined and differentiated with reference to men, and not he with reference with her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He

is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other” (xviii). Narrowing down to the Chinese tradition, Amy Ling similarly notes that for the belief of the gender role of Confucianism, Confucius classified woman as slaves and small humans (3). It is clear that in both Chinese tradition and Beauvoir’s theory, woman always undertakes her subordinate position. In this story, Chan Sam was the only one in the family who prescribed the destiny of all people in the family without keeping in mind of the needs of other members. Living at the side of Chan Sam’s aura, May-ying, herself, was such a small human that her yearning was unheard, but was dictated by her dominating male. Chan Sam simply told May-ying about his fancy to which he seriously committed. He wanted to have an extended family in which he and his wife, and concubine and all of his children lived in the same household. Attempting to set up a harem-like home, Chan Sam assumed that they all would have lived in harmony and he would have been able to live as if he were a man of stature. He did not ask May-ying if she wanted to live in his sphere as his concubine. Likewise, he did not ask his At-home Wife about taking a concubine into the household. He, as the center of the universe, established this social unit which he, himself, would be set as the master because he adhered to the Chinese saying: “many generations under one roof and feeding from the same hearth” (Denise Chong 73).

Although their relation was not established as a matter of love, Chan Sam, living as May-ying’s sleeping partner, always got benefits from her. May-ying worked hard to make his dream of uniting all of the household family under the same roof come true. She did not protest when Chan Sam siphoned money out of her toil for his family in China. Therefore, Chan Sam was not only her ‘sleeping partner’ in the sense of husband and wife relationship.

But also he used her as a ‘sleeping partner’ in the sense that he took advantage of her. As time went by, Chan Sam, her husband realized that this earning apparatus, May-ying, gave him good benefit: “[He] began to realize that his decision to take a concubine has also been a good investment” (Denise Chong 31).

Apart from being submitted to Chan Sam, her sleeping partner, May-ying was also taken advantage by the At-Home Wife. Along with giving up her money to the household in China, May-ying surrendered her two daughters to the At-Home Wife in China as an excuse for comforting her loneliness. Ebrey notes that in Chinese society, the primary wife assumed that the care of the concubine’s children was presented as an indication of the maternal love and kindness of the wife (53). With this practice, May-ying was obliged to yield to Chan Sam’s and the At-Home Wife’s authority, offering up both her daughters, Ping and Nan. The act of giving up her daughters is tantamount to complete surrender to the authority of the At-Home Wife. Her two daughters would be compared to hostages whom the At-Home Wife could hold as ransom and as remittance from their birth mother’s hard-earned money. Although May-ying was unwilling to leave her daughters in China, she had no authority to speak of her maternal wish. Whereas the concubine earned anguish, At-Home Wife earned the credit.

Aside from having no authority in the household, the western reality necessitated May-ying to become an object of lust in her workplace in spite of contravening the teaching about good women. Elaine Showalter points out women were taught that they should be ignorant of the evils of the world, in order to preserve their purity of spirit. In other words, women ought to present themselves in every way a contrast to and an escape from the harsh

intrusive realities of vanity, greed, and sensuality (460). Similar to Showalter's idea, May-ying attempted to restrain herself from being submerged into prostitution, though her husband threw her into it. Paradoxically, she feigned to ignore the customers' flirtatious advances at the end of her shift, though she needed to attract her customers in order to urge them to spend money on her. Furthermore, she had to restrain herself against the invitation to drink with her customers, whereas she had to tempt her customers to buy drinks. Because of her husband, she became an object of lust for her male customers at a tea house, as opposed to her good will.

Despite May-ying good attention to working hard to earn money to support Chan Sam's family in China, she received a bad result which was the alienation by this family. For Chan Sam, his At-Home Wife came before his concubine. He told himself that "I am not the kind of man who thinks only of making money and does not miss my wife at home" (Denise Chong 39). Gaining no room in his heart, May-ying was just a woman who comforted his temporary loneliness in Canada. He was so concerned about his family in China that he overlooked May-ying who also devoted her soul, and energy for all familial members' well being. At-Home Wife dislikes May-ying because May-ying could not make her husband happy. The author writes: "She was sorry that he (Chan Sam) had not been awarded a concubine more worthy for him" (76). Her two daughters in China turned against May-ying when they overheard Chan Sam and the At-home Wife's condemnation on their concubine mother. Their good impression of her mother was replaced by their negative attitudes as the author writes: "[Their] talk began to drown out what few memories Ping and Nan had for her [concubine mother] (76). In other words, May-ying was regarded as a black sheep in this

family. This is because her work in teahouses did not conform to the feminine ideal which combined elements of the angel and the slave. It disassociated her from the concept of good women, and resulted in her alienation. Kate Hughes explains that based on the social norm, the more you waver from the norm as an individual, the more you are seen as deviant by society (54).

Awakening

In the deep pain of her suffering, May-ying gained power to subvert the patriarchy. Whereas Chan Sam wanted to gain control, May-ying wanted to be her own person. This is like a tug of war in which both parties want to have their own yearning. If one gained, the other lost. Her silenced despondency was like an active volcano waiting for the time of a little more accumulated depression, and then, explosion. There are two crucial events which induced her to subversion against the Chinese patriarchy. One is her disappointment of the third delivery of daughters and the other is the death of her second daughter who lived in the household in China. Both events dissolved her hope to attain her identity in Chan Sam's household. As a result, she was released from the Chinese illusion of reuniting two families.

At the delivery of her third daughter, May-ying came to the full circle of understanding of the Chinese oppressive tradition. In order to avoid being recursively underpinned by its practice, she rejected bringing up her third daughter in the Chinese oppressive culture. Although she was disappointed by the fact of having only girls in her first two deliveries, she had a glimpse of hope when a soothsayer predicted during her pregnancy that she was carrying a son. Thus, she became disappointed when the midwife announced it was a girl on the third delivery. On the day of the customary Full Month

celebration of the girl, May-ying was so overwhelmed with disappointment that she dropped her baby down the stairs. This depicted that May-ying came to the grievance that she could no longer bear. She was no more tolerant of women's destination. This situation also means that she rejected the plight in this patriarchal culture which would doom her daughter. At the first interpretation, one would understand that May-ying was a bad mother who was cruel enough to kill her baby daughter. In fact, May-ying realized that being a girl or a woman in Chinese society was not different from being a slave. Expectedly, the baby's future was blighted because of her status as a concubine's daughter. Her daughter would be taken away from her to China and then she would be sold or married off at the will of the At-Home Wife. In parallel to Toni Morrison's Beloved, Margaret Garner killed her baby daughter to save her from being returned to her master's plantation (Lois Tyson 290), May-ying's intention to kill her daughter could be viewed as a protection to her daughter from being a man's slave on one side; and a rebellion to the At-Home Wife's power on the other.

Underpinned by the loss of her second daughter, May-ying cut the connection with concubinage. The other crucial event can be seen in her acknowledgment of the second daughter's death. According to Adrienne Rich, the loss of a daughter to a mother is the essential female tragedy (237). In this story, the loss of her second daughter was so unbearable that her spirit of reconciliation completely vanished. Her acknowledgement led to the loss of her faith in joining the household in China. More specifically, when she knew that Nan, her daughter, died, she became grief-stricken. She wrote to Ping, her first daughter that "Do not write to me anymore. I am too heartbroken" (Denise Chong 131). The death of her second daughter reminded her that she could not reunite with her daughters in this

household because sooner or later, her first daughter had to marry off, and belong to another household. This means she would have no loved ones waiting for her return to the At-Home Wife's household in China. She would have no blood connection left in this household. For May-ying, at this time, China became a place where there was nothing worthy of her nostalgia and no glimpse of hope for a happy future in this household to hope for. This tragedy drove May-ying to change her identity in accordance with the western reality which demanded that she adapt herself to harsh conditions.

These mandatory oppressions of women and the crucial disappointing events made May-ying realize that she could not conform to the Chinese tradition. As identity changing does not occur in a vacuum but in a crisis, May-ying's identity changed from an innocent 'good' Chinese girl to a woman of her own will in her crisis of maladjustment. This changing identity was a result of being treated as an object, being exploited by her husband, enduring low status in the concubinage system, hard working in tea houses, being alienated by the family, having a negative image as a concubine and as a waitress, and being disappointed with having only daughters. Therefore, May-ying had to react against these oppressions. As May-ying endured radical oppressions, her subversion was accordingly radical.

May-ying's Subversion

May-ying's subversion started from changing from a passive agent to an active one. A profound example of her role as an active woman lies in her transforming her third daughter to be a boy by having her wear male outfits. Drawing on Judith Butler's theory of cultural gender-role creation, that gender is unnatural, so that there is no necessary

relationship between one's body and one's gender (Sara Salih 46). Similarly to this theory, Simone de Beauvoir also writes: One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman (267-268). Beauvoir means that gender is derived from cultural programming as feminine and masculine, which are created by society, rather than nature. Additionally she notes that it is not because the femininity itself instinctually dooms her to passivity, coquetry, and maternity. Rather, it is because external influence indoctrinates the child to be a woman. May-ying wanted to have a boy in order to fulfill her need by her cultural programming. More specifically, May-ying constructed Hing-- her third daughter-- to be a girl in a boy's outfit. May-ying chose a gender which was opposite to the gender designated by nature for her daughter without depending on a bliss endowed by sacredness. In the past, she had faith in the sacred gods and she just waited for her fate or her gods to bring what she wished. Indulging herself in the idea of having a son, May-ying, as an active agent, made her dream of having a son come true. To culturally program her daughter to be masculine, she took Hing, in a boy's dress and a boy's haircut. May-ying and her daughter posed together at Yucho Chow's photo studio. She might hope that Hing, in her maturation, would stick to the masculine image in the photo. And this would envision her place, and character in the real world.

Another example showing that May-ying, as an active agent, kept pursuing her hope of having a real son is seen in her adopting a baby boy. Elisabeth Croll writes that indeed without sons, there was still no certain family future; a family with daughters is a dead end family (95). In this story, in her need, May-ying adopted a baby boy whom she named Gok-leng or Leonard Chan, though at a high price. Her self-will of having a son was a reaction to

the patriarchy. The way she managed to have a son of her own is interpreted as that a son is a commodity. This demonstrates that, in some way, a woman could be so powerful and self-determined that she could possess a son without having to depend on a man to father it. More specifically, she had no need to rely on her husband in order to bear a son. Significantly, May-ying was twice sold as object. The first one is when her parents sold her to Auntie at the age of four. The second one, she was sold to Chan Sam by her auntie at her marrying age. But at this moment, May-ying changed herself from an object of a possession to a possessor.

Along with her active roles, May-ying provoked society by violating the rule of Four Virtues, which can be compared to the cult of true womanhood of the Victorian period in western countries. Both the rule of 'Four Virtues' and the cult of womanhood forced women into inferior status because these practices were attributed with patriarchal femininity and domesticity. The cult of true womanhood demands woman to have piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (Barbara Welter 313). In a similar way, 'The Four Virtues' comprised, general virtue, reticence, self adornment in order to please the opposite sex; and concern of household duties (Elisabeth Croll 13-14). Both 'good Chinese woman' of four virtues and 'true woman' of the cult of womanhood were defined as fragile, submissive, and sexually pure. Their proper sphere was the home. They should not venture beyond that sphere because to do so is considered unwomanly. Instilled by these concepts, these women indulged personal beauty, cooking, and taking care of men. In these similar patriarchal rules, woman who had these characteristics of 'true woman' and 'good Chinese woman' were deemed worthy of masculine protection. These female characteristics made men feel, in

contrast, capable, powerful, and in control. Therefore, these feminine ideals formulated the image of 'helpless female.'

In this story, after May-ying had crossed the threshold into the productive realm, she circumvented the Four Virtues. This is because this teaching of Four Virtues, which, as Amy Ling notes, was originated by a female historian to serve the emperor in the court (5), was not suitable for a poverty-stricken woman of public sphere like May-ying. Out of her necessity, she cast off her submissive female attire and, in turn, donned a cloak of powerful, assertive woman. Her violation of the rule of Four Virtues is discussed as follows.

She assaulted the 'general virtue,'--the first virtue. This precept decrees that a woman should know her place in the universe and behave in total compliance with the ethical codes (Elizabeth Croll 13). In this story, May-ying's was designated by two rules -- one is the rule of three obediences equating her place in this universe a subordinate to Chan Sam, and the other is the concubinage system which stamped her as an inferior woman to Huangbo--the At-Home Wife. Apparently, May-ying rejected this precept by disrespecting both her husband and his At-Home Wife. As for her disrespecting her husband, after she had acquired the habit of living independently, she simply announced her refusal to live with Chan Sam. Packing up her belongings, she and her daughter left to live in another town. This shows that she had no concern about keeping herself hidden beneath Chan Sam. Apart from her nonchalance toward her husband, May-ying had occasional arguments with the At-Home Wife as a means of rejecting her subordination to concubinage. The author says that for Huangbo, neither her position as *Dai-po* (primary wife) nor the eight years she had on May-ying were any guarantee of authority. Her gentleness was ripe for being exploited.

Moreover, she was no match for May-ying who found her easier to outwit than obey (45).

Thus, it is clear that May-ying rejected her subordinate position to the At-Home Wife.

In addition, May-ying violated the second virtue. This rule commands women to be reticent in words. It forbade women to chatter too much (Elizabeth Croll 13). In this story, May-ying ignored this teaching which practically muffled women into silence. Instead, she spoke her pain and suffering. She told her female friends about Chan Sam's dictatorship:

“The trouble with Chan Sam, [...] is that he always has to be Number One” What peeved her most was how difficult it was to make him see anything her way. “Talking to Chan Sam was which way, coming or going, is useless. He doesn't hear what I'm saying. Every time he opens or closes his mouth to me, it's ‘*Gum Gee!*’ or ‘*Bull-lo-shit!*’”(Denise Chong 81)

This conversation might be called in Patricia Spacks's term *gossip*. Spacks points out that ‘gossip’ is different from *discourse*. People discourse ‘to’ one another; they gossip ‘with.’ According to Michel Foucault ‘discourse’ is used as a powerful tool to restrict alternative ways of thinking or speaking (Anthony Giddens 676). In addition, he says that power does not always come from the authority. He remarks that power ‘circulates’ in all directions, to and from social levels, at all times (Lois Tyson 281). As opposed to ‘discourse’ by the top of the social structure, ‘gossip’ signifies the power which was exerted from bottom of the structure by marginalized people to show their disagreement with the discourse. Belenky and her colleagues say the significance of gossiping is that gossipers tell each other about themselves by expressing their interpretation of the information they share (116). In this story, May-ying's gossip with her female friends can be interpreted as resisting Chan Sam, who was granted by the Chinese patriarchal discourse to oppress women. Simultaneously, it means May-ying contradicted the patriarchal discourse. Therefore, May-ying's gossip

suggests that she, by this point, identified herself with neither Chan Sam, nor the patriarchal discourse. Rather, her gossip about her oppressive experience with her female friends fostered her to self-definition which was outside the patriarchal control.

May-ying broke the third virtue. According to this rule, a woman was taught to be a clean person. Apparently, May-ying was unsatisfied with her married life. Therefore, running away could be her motive to rid herself of such unhappiness. May-ying had affairs with many men, though this behavior is considered contrary to the teaching of the cleanliness of person. The fact that Chan Sam treated her as chattel drove her to contravene this teaching. This fed May-ying's appetite for retaliation, and tempted her to give him something he could really worry about. She erased her previous identity of a woman who was selected at random by a man. Repositioning herself as a selector, May-ying liberally chose whether to escort men, or to terminate the relationship. Except Chan Sam, many men came to and went away from her life at her inclination. One of the men with whom May-ying had a relationship with was Chow Guen. Her relationship with Chow Guen was an affair of the heart, which embodied understanding and compatibility, rather than giving or taking advantage. What matters is that such an extra-marital relationship annoyed Chan Sam, who considered it a loss of face. He asked Chow Guen to pay him for her. May-ying replied "You are such a greedy man. How could you? He'll never pay you, and I will do exactly what I want" (Denise Chong 125). It can be interpreted that at this point, May-ying changed from being an object for sale, to a liberal subject.

The third virtue not only demands a woman to restrict herself to her husband, but it also suggests that she adorn herself to please the opposite sex. In this story, May-ying

adorned herself because she felt she was worthy of it, rather than wanting to please Chan Sam. One of the thoughtful examples is a scene when Chan Sam and May-ying went to Chan Gar Bin, a village where the other side of the family lived. It seems that May-ying and the At-Home Wife were from different worlds. The At-Home Wife looked plain as a result of lacking the sense of self-concern whereas May-ying was proudly dressed up as if she had been the mistress in this household. Denise Chong describes these two women:

One (At-Home Wife) was dull in the cotton tunic and pants—once black but faded from the sun and years of washing to same color as the gray adobe bricks of the house behind her—and plain-looking her hair combed back and pinned behind her ears. The other (May-ying), in her flared dress, nipped in at waist, her hair bedecked with a satin ribbon, was splash of color and style. (42-43)

Dressing in fine attire, May-ying was a woman of her own nature. One may argue that her appearance was a result of socialization in the teahouse. But in my view, May-ying crossed the boundaries of a women's virtue. Because this situation was not her workplace, she did not have to dress up like this. In this context, May-ying was supposed to follow the saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." That is, she should have worn plain clothes. But she chose her dress out of her female nature, and she did not care about being gossiped about by the villagers. With the sense of self worth, May-ying wore elaborate clothing as an adornment while the At-Home Wife wore her a worn-out garment as protection. In this situation, if she wanted to please Chan Sam, she should have worn ordinary dress in order to show respect to his At-Home Wife.

Like the situation in her visiting the family in China, May-ying had no concern about the third virtue when she wore a masculine outfit. In this way, May-ying declared her assumption of the male position. The masculine-like clothes that May-ying wore in her

workplace could meaningfully suggest her changing of identity. In other words, she had consciousness that she could do whatever about masculinity, even wearing their clothing style. In particular, she had a tailor design a three-piece suit. Although such an outfit was considered 'masculine', she reasoned:

She was taking her rightful place in a man's world; that a woman who made her own living, who didn't depend on a man for support, should be respected. Perhaps more than anything, her masculine dress was a statement that a woman could do as she pleased with her life. As if to prove some solidarity, she convinced two other women friends to do the same, to wear men's suits and matching caps. They called themselves "The Three Sisters." (Denise Chong 124)

May-ying deliberately called for social attention to regard her as a career being who was not a subordinate to males. At this point, she, on her account, began to assert her identity as a capable woman who had entered to the men's world. Significantly, that she and other two female friends wore men's outfits announced a new fashion breakthrough. By group solidarity, May-ying came to realize her sense of self. This suggests collective women's identities whose gender roles were recognized as women in the men's sphere. In this related point, Sheila Rowbotham (1973) in Women's Consciousness, Man's World asserts that women's sense of self emerges from a collective identity as women rather than male individualized sense of self. This collective, gendered identity can also be used to created group solidarity (Susan Stanford Friedman 34).

As for the last virtue which instilled women not to shirk her household duties, May-ying also broke it. This rule is more radical if a woman is in the position of concubine which is inferior to that of a wife. According to Ebrey, concubines fell more to the side of maids (39). Not surprisingly, May-ying was expected to undertake domestic duty after her work in

the public realm. Denise Chong writes: “she (Huangbo) still expected May-ying to help with most of the household chores—most concubines were expected to do all the work of the household. May-ying did what she thought was her share, less than one-half” (45). However, as the primary breadwinner of this family, May-ying rejected the domestic burden. In addition, this behavior is against the doctrine of two spheres which requires married women to stay home, creating a home and haven for their husbands and children, whereas married men were expected to earn the money and to support the family (Leeder 76). In this story, May-ying turned a blind eye to the chore. This means that May-ying did not accept her status which was considered not largely different from that of a maid. Possibly, she would think she did not belong to this domestic household. She established her niche as the same place of males in this universe, rather than positioning herself with inferior status in domesticity.

May-ying’s subversion of gender roles without regarding to limitations accorded to Judith Butler’s metaphor of ‘out of the closet.’ By analogy with Judith Butler’s metaphor ‘out of the closet,’ if you decided to ignore the expectations and the constraints which had been set up by the authorities, you could not simply ‘reinvent’ your metaphorical gender wardrobe or acquire an entirely new one; rather you would have to alter the clothes you already have in order to signal that you are not wearing them in a ‘conventional’ way, for example by ripping them or sewing sequins on them or wearing them back to front or upside down (Salih 50). To paraphrase Judith Butler, whereas limitations are prescribed to women for the sake of men, a woman might use them for her own purpose, or in her way in order to show her resistance. In this story, the fact that May-ying herself also assumed male activities

such as drinking, gambling, and committing adultery, was considered inappropriate for women. However, there were no role models for women who assumed male roles offered in this society. In the light of this analogy, May-ying's behavior of luring men in her workplace can be interpreted as surrendering to Chan Sam's power because this labor was part of her job which earned her money to submit to him. But when she altered the purpose, she was viewed as a woman of her own will. Altering such activities in order to earn money for Chan Sam, May-ying did so for her own pleasure. Her new purpose could be viewed as a path to undermine Chan Sam's authority. This is like wearing her ordinary clothes but in an 'unconventional' way. Thus, her enjoyment of giving pleasure to male customers in teahouses suggests her changing identity.

The result of subversion of the patriarchal discourse was to give May-ying a negative image. Amy Ling notes that Asian women, when the powerful, are seen as dangerous and treacherous; and when the powerless, as sexual objects and submissive servants, are not to be taken seriously (12). In this story, May-ying changed her identity to be such a powerful woman that she rejected the Chinese teaching of women's decorous manners. For her, the proper women's roles did not fit the reality where a woman was forced to assume the position of breadwinner by working in teahouses. Unfairly, May-ying received a negative image despite her good self-sacrifice for her family. She was unavoidably ostracized by her family members and society at large, who were trapped inside a male truth.

May-ying's adherence to Confucianism decreased throughout her journey to her triumph of independence. The way May-ying attempted to conform to the patriarchy resembled Chan Sam's collecting sand to build a house in China. This means they both

committed to endeavor that did not grow out of their own innateness. They merely shared the mission of making an ideal patriarchal familial unit. Whereas Chan Sam was a loser who was incapable of earning money to concretize his dream, May-ying gained power in public life by assuming his role. Paradoxically, the more attempts May-ying made to conform to this ideology, the more she discovered herself to be a strong woman. The forum where May-ying employed her strength in order to earn money for Chan Sam goaded her into a realization of herself as an independent being. She also ascertained that her strong personality empowered her to reposition herself in a productive sphere where her wage was equated with her labor. Simultaneously, she rejected a woman's role as reproductive agent whose labor was considered valuable only after she delivered a son; otherwise it was worthless. Throughout the course of her life, she identified herself as a woman of the public realm. She transformed herself from an obedient daughter/ maid, and a submissive concubine of Confucianism to a liberal woman who was tough and assertive to live her own life.

If we read the text, The Concubine's Children which runs against the grain, we would not regard May-ying as an ordinary drunkard, smoker, gambler, male pursuer, or a quick tempered woman. If we change our perspective from the privileged center of the patriarchy to the silenced marginality where women, the less privileged ones, found themselves, we would understand the source of women's oppression, and would behold May-ying as a strong woman whose dream was dominated by patriarchal ideology. In her humble dream, she just wanted to be part of the household, deliver sons, and be secure in her old age. In other words, she wanted to be an 'object' in Chan Sam's domain, or an object of his At-

Home Wife's pity. In order to make her humble dream come true, she, inadvertently, became her own person, or subject. May-ying, as subject, had an object of desire, which was money for house building which was supposedly to be Chan Sam's duty. Although her plight in Chinatown was not different from that of a debauchee, the imposing house in China proved to be her success which will be discussed in her daughter's generation.

Hing

Hing's hindsight about her past in her relationship with her mother fully depicted May-ying. Hing accompanied by the author, Denise Chong, took a journey to visit her siblings in China. The witness Hing bore in China not only led to a redefinition of her mother's identity but helped her to recover from her psychological problems. Apparently, May-ying denied proper care to Hing. Consequently, a miserable childhood had weighed on Hing but not until after she discovered that her mother was a heroine of the Chans. With her understanding of the Chinese traditions which affected her parents' way of thinking, she was released from her miserable memories. In this generation, we will see that Hing, as a child growing up in Canada, established the western reality in the midst of conflicting alternatives. Like her mother, the changing of Hing's identity is derived from her enlightenment of the Chinese illusion amidst the western reality. Divided into three parts, this part will discuss Hing's childhood frustration in order to understand her background in relation to a debate of the changing of her identity. Then I will discuss establishment, and, then, discovery and enlightenment, respectively.

Childhood Frustration

The conflict between Hing and her mother was a result of miscommunication. According to Dana Heller's study on Freud, since the mother cannot access the symbolic order and phallic language, the mother was simply constructed as a voiceless and potentially deceptive enclosed space where their miseries are encoded in a language no one can read (Kristi Siegel 2). In this story, Hing felt embarrassed about her mother's behavior. This could be a result of either that her mother's voice was unheard or that her mother did not possess such phallic language. Thus, this miscommunication developed into Hing's frustration with her mother. Instead of speaking to her daughter, and to the society at large about her oppressive female experience, May-ying willfully acted against the patriarchy. But Hing interpreted her mother's behavior which contradicted the patriarchal discourse in her community as shameful because her mother never talked about her suffering with Hing.

While in her parents' generation, their general difficulties included poverty and toil, in her daughter's generation, Hing tolerated emotional problems. In reviewing Maxine Hong Kingston The Woman Warrior, Veronica Wang says that growing up is a painful process for any youngsters anywhere, but especially for hyphenated Americans who are confounded by cultural and social complications, the task of separating reality from illusion, truth from myth (213). In this story, Hing's mental difficulties resembled hyphenated American children. Hing, as a hyphenated Canadian girl, had difficulties in knowing the difference between reality and illusion. Apparently, she hid her real emotion in the world of reality but expressed it in a psychological world. For example, at a Chinese opera performance, Denise Chong writes "In the dark, Hing's tears of laughter or sorrow ran freely" (121). This

demonstrates how Hing psychologically escaped the reality and compensated for it through her response to the performance.

While growing up, Hing was torn between the reality of her knowledge about Canada and the Confucian ideal of their parents about the family reunion. Her father taught her to pay respect to Huangbo as her real mother and expected her to write letters to her invisible family in China saying: “Honorable mother, I kneel before you with my head bowed and my hands clasped. How are you? I am a good girl” (Denise Chong 99). Following her father’s suggestion, Hing could not help romanticizing her primary mother, whom she had never met. As opposed to Hing’s father who kept telling her about returning to China, May-ying longed for the reunion of her three daughters here in Canada. She said: “When I win big (in gambling), I’m going to bring my two daughters over from China” (Denise Chong 110). Confusedly, Hing did not know where, China or Canada, she was supposed to belong. She did not know how her parents’ dreams could become reality. Therefore, her mental task was to separate reality from illusion.

As Chinese girls growing up in the West, both Hing and Kingston has to test their strength to establish realities in the midst of conflicting narratives. Kingston, in reviewing her early life, admits confusion. She writes in The Woman Warrior, “Chinese Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese” (6-7). In her search for her identity, Kingston had to understand that what is considered truth in Chinese is, but fiction to her (Veronica Wang 213). Like Kingston, Hing had to figure out what Chinese illusion is, and what the

reality in the West is incompatible to the Chinese illusion. Thus, both Hing and Kingston had to reject external forces, in order to allow their own voice a chance for expression.

Apart from Hing's muddling of reality, she also had emotional difficulties which were a result of the conflict between her mother's teaching and her mother's personality. May-ying taught Hing to be an obedient, academically promising, disciplined girl, whereas she did the opposite. For example, May-ying was rebellious. She was not concerned about enrolling Hing in a school. Likewise, she expected her daughter to be mindful but she herself was mindless. For example, May-ying wanted Hing to be mindful about not playing with her playmates too long, and taught Hing to assume certain responsibilities. But May-ying was mindless about her maternal roles. This developed emotional problems in Hing. In particular, her confusion was a result of the dissidence between what her mother instilled into her and her mother's behavior. Thus, Hing unavoidably had emotional problems.

Moreover, the fact that May-ying showed a primary concern for her business instead of her daughter caused psychological problems in Hing. Nancy Chodorow, a feminist sociologist, called the phenomenon of the mother who does not properly care for her children 'too little mothering,' which Dinnerstein says that makes children psychotic (Rosemarie Tong 155). In this story, May-ying was often inattentive toward her daughter. A thoughtful example is that May-ying abandoned Hing to follow Chow Guen. Hing's godmother snorted: "Humph! May-ying doesn't even have a tear of goodbye for her own daughter" (Denise Chong 128). Inevitably, Hing endured complicated psychological problems. Consequently, Hing lived her childhood in loneliness and insecurity and often felt that she had no one.

The fact that Hing had a conflict and strain with her mother turned her against her mother's lifestyle. According to Thurer's theory about a classic lose-lose situation in the mother's sphere, mothers who did not stay home were viewed as unnatural and caused psychotic harm; while mothers who did remain at home were also blamed for every neurotic / psychotic impulse (Kristi Siegel 5). In this story, Hing's feelings about her mother fell on the side of too little staying at home. In keeping with Thurer's thesis, Hing thought her mother was unnatural or abnormal, and she had negative attitudes toward her mother's lifestyle. And this became her inferiority complex. The author writes "She (Hing) told herself calmly, "This can't go on with *Mama* like this, she's gambling; she's sick half of the time; she drinks. If this keeps up, we won't even have food on the table" (163). Hing did not consider her mother's lifestyle in the public realm, such as gambling, drinking, and having relationships with men, acceptable. As a result, her mother was always disadvantaged, despite the fact that she earned money to support her family. Hing, in her late teens, dreamed of normal married and family life, whereas her mother failed to procure them.

Establishment

Denise Chong narrates Hing's establishment of her new identity in the Bildungsroman² fashion. As early as kindergarten, she found her voice. That is, she named herself 'Winnie' when the teacher asked her an English name. This foreshadows that she was determined to 'win' her niche in this Western world. In order to settle down here, Hing had to overcome childhood frustration. Chodorow believes that in order to moderate the

² The bildungsroman is a study of the maturation of a youthful character, typically brought about through a series of social encounters that lead to self-awareness.

experience of regression to maternal fulfillment, women have three options: lesbianism, a relationship with men, or to seek fulfillment by other means (John Storey 122). In this respect, Hing employed the last two options to dissolve her lack of maternal fulfillment, but in a reverse chronological order.

At first, Hing compensated for the lack of a mother-daughter intimate relationship by seeking fulfillment in academics, and her career. Hing enjoyed her academic life, as the author writes: [Hing] told herself she loved school more than ever, that she couldn't remember loving, anything or any body, as much as school (161). However, her academic excellence proved to be not as important as equipping herself to enter the work world. Therefore, she altered her academic goal to professional practice. She was the only Chinese woman who passed the entrance exam to a nursing school. Nevertheless, she found another dilemma in her professional world. More specifically, she experienced racial discrimination in her workplace—the hospital. Her colleagues refused to be paired with her because she was Chinese. In the meantime, she came to the vantage point, knowing that a career could not bring her happiness. In other words, Hing understood the reality in this western world, and she knew that she would not have achieved career success. Therefore, she had to reconsider her path for the next step in her life.

Later, Hing employed the second option identified by Nancy Chodorow, namely to overcome her inferiority complex of regression to maternal fulfillment. Hing pondered settling on a relationship with a man or married life, as an alternative. She had to choose whether to continue her career, or to give it up and start her married life. Despite choosing the latter, Hing did not hope to be rescued by John Chong, her love. She just thought about

rebellion against her mother. Hing wanted to settle down with the man of her choice, not her mother's. Unyielding to her mother's intention to arrange marriage, Hing was explicit about her choice. She learned from her parents that a man and a woman without a romantic relationship could not have a happy married life.

However, the bond between Hing and her mother was problematic. Although Hing felt that her mother did not play the angel's role in the house, she could not completely turn back to her mother. Nancy Chodorow states that in most societies women are primary caretakers of children; girls, therefore, may remain closely attached to and identified with their mothers all through life (Grace Galliano 53). In this story, the fact that May-ying—in large measure—paid attention to her career or her public life resulted in insufficient care for Hing. However, she was still Hing's primary caretaker, whose influence effected Hing's way of life. For example, after her mother's death, Hing said about her mother's pawned jewelry items: "They're so symbolic of my life growing up with my mom" (Denise Chong 232). This means Hing maintained the relationship with May-ying despite her dislike of her mother's lifestyle.

Whereas Hing, in her childhood, identified with her mother at the cost of her obedience, in her maturity, Hing identified with her mother by her emotional attachment. Besides, her mother's dead body, Hing thought to herself: "My mother was a very beautiful woman. I've never seen her so ugly in my whole life" (Denise Chong 232). It can be interpreted as Hing's love and attachment for her mother. Hing forgave her mother for all mistreatments in her childhood. May-ying's jewelry, given by her mother when she sold her, was a symbol of the inheritance of women's suffering. What May-ying inherited from her

mother and took to Canada indicates that May-ying was destined for the Chinese traditional patriarchy, as if these jewelry items carried the power of patriarchal ideology. And Hing knew that this ideology tormented her mother. When her husband asked if she wanted to keep these items, she said: “I’m not going to be cursed with it; [...] it’s not a happy thing to have” (Denise Chong 233). This means Hing refused to live her life like her mother although she was still attached to her mother.

Feeling at home in Canada, Hing successfully established herself in this western world out of her negotiation between western and Chinese cultures. Because she identified herself as a Chinese Canadian citizen, Hing assimilated the western culture and retained some of the Chinese tradition. For example, she was a mother of five Canadian children as well as retaining her identity as the Chans’ daughter. Moreover, Hing cooked both Chinese and western foods, as well as spoke two languages. Although her family members spoke English at home, her children used Chinese sibling terms to call each other during their growing up period. Finally, while Hing made her home a nuclear family according to the western fashion, she still occasionally supported her parents. Inviting them to her home, Hing harbored her parents when they had problems. Instead of wishing for the gold mountain and expanded family in China like her parents, Hing established her niche out of the negotiation between her personal needs and her morality and the western reality. In this respect, Hing was considered as a pioneer woman, on whom the spell of Chinese values lost their effect, and who remained with a moral sense.

Discovery and Enlightenment

Hing’s psychological problem was overcome when she discovered the source of her

mother's suffering, and she witnessed her mother's success. Hirsch asserts that daughters' feeling of ambivalence towards their mother is derived from their own daughterly perspective, colluded with patriarchy in placing mothers into the position of object (Kristi Siegel 9). In Hirsch's theory, Hing placed her mother into the position of object of the Chinese patriarchal discourse. Thus, she felt ambivalence towards her mother. In particular, she did not know about her mother's success. Before Hing's journey to China, her mother was an object of criticism due to her negative image in both the public and domestic spheres, as well as in both the Chinese family and the Canadian one. Therefore, a trip to China to investigate the cause of May-ying's suffering was necessary. Hing's experience in China clarified her ambivalent feeling towards her mother. In May-ying's mission seeking the Gold Mountain in Canada, Hing just felt her mother was a low-profile woman. Her mother kept walking in and out of pawnshops, pleasing men, working long hours, and being thrifty. Ridiculously, her father, who was the blood sucker toward her mother, spent money like water in China. On the trip to this country, Hing saw her mother's success. Hing's perspective toward her mother dramatically changed when the last piece of the jigsaw seemed to clarify her mother's identity: her trip to China where her ambivalent feeling about her mother was expunged, and where she discovered the new meaning of her mother as a successful woman.

Hing became secure when her shame about her mother was dissolved. Denise Chong writes: "What she saw and heard in China illuminated her own past. Instead of making her bitter, it lifted the burden of her shame" (259). This corresponds to what Amporn Srisermbhok finds out in her criticism on Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye and Margaret

Laurence's The Diviners. She points out that any search for freedom and integrity must come from the 'Self' in connection with one's history, culture, and ancestral roots (58). In this story, instead of totally assimilating the Western culture and leaving May-ying's negative image on her mind, Hing challenged the social accusation of May-ying by redefining her mother as a heroine or a great woman. In so doing, Hing reached her self-fulfillment in the connection with her mother.

The enlightenment of Hing's mother, as a result of her being worshipped as a heroic woman, cured her emotional problems. Paula J. Caplan in Don't Blame Mother: Mending the Mother-Daughter Relationship (1990) concludes that if mothers and daughters stopped feeling so panicky about their relationship, they might form a real alliance. In this story, Hing's enlightenment about the influence of Chinese traditional ideology on her mother dispelled her feeling of loneliness. Denise Chong writes: "For mother (Hing) [...] had lived her childhood in a shadow of sacrifice for the Chinese side of the family" (259). By this point, the shadow of sacrifice which brought unhappiness and loneliness in Hing's childhood was replaced by the light of her knowledge about her mother. This light reflected May-ying's experiences beyond the control of patriarchy, and created Hing's high spirit of herself as the concubine's daughter.

In this analysis of the changing identities of two Chinese women of different generations, we will see that these two women--May-ying and Hing--were resigned to equip themselves to live in Canada by shaking off their Chinese illusions and recognizing the Western reality. May-ying, the woman of the first generation, was bought to be a concubine of a sojourner. She was imbued with Chinese illusion about uniting two families—the

Canadian and Chinese sides. The harsh Western reality incited May-ying to employ her strength to subvert the patriarchy. In her daughter's generation, Hing also changed her identity in a different direction from her parents. Hing sought security and establishment in Canada. Ultimately, she integrated the Western reality, and her Chinese roots, into a coherent whole. On one hand, she kept the bond with her familial roots. On the other, she freed herself from the familial obligation. In short, the story of this mother-daughter pair leaves us with new images of Chinese women who had changed their identities by removing their Chinese illusion at the western reality.

Despite revolving around the Gold Mountain theme, The Concubine's Children features two strong Chinese women, as opposed to Kingston's Moon Orchid. In this Kingston's work, we witness Moon Orchid in At the Western Palace coming to America with the intention of pursuing with her husband who sought the Gold Mountain, his fortune, in American. Apparently, Moon Orchid strictly adhered to the Confucian ideal, which demanded that she keep warm the hearth fire. As a result, the reality in America turned her down. Finding that her husband had married a young, Westernized woman, Moon Orchid suffered nightmares of faint-hearted pursuits. In contrast to Moon Orchid, May-ying in The Concubine's Children was awakened by the Western reality. May-ying's controversy around the patriarchal discourse encouraged her to go beyond the boundaries of Chinese gender roles. At last, she was regarded as a successful woman whose labor allowed the other side of her husband's family to keep the hearth fire aglow. In her daughter's generation, Hing was also different from Moon Orchid in terms of the changing of their psychological conditions. Hing psychologically changed from frustration to security, whereas Moon Orchid changed from a glimpse of hope to

mental imbalance. Moon Orchid was attached to the Chinese tradition so deeply that she could not comprehend when Western reality contradicted her expectation. Unlike Moon Orchid, Hing was enlightened about Chinese illusions. Hing successfully discerned reality from the Chinese illusion. Her enlightenment helped her to discover her frustration, and eventually to settle down in the Western reality. Thus, The Concubine's Children ultimately presents a different aspect of Chinese women whose experiences were organized around the Gold Mountain theme.

CHAPTER 4

Falling Leaves

A Reflection of Patriarchal Practices in the Old Days and the Modern Times

Adeline Yen Mah, the author of this book, reveals her true story about growing up in the society where Confucianism in complicity with colonialism oppressed Chinese women. The author tells us about her personal world which is based on the practice of patriarchy and colonialism. In particular, it reveals the effect of Confucian hierarchical society in which males were considered superior to females. Additionally, younger people were taught to respect their elders, according to the code of seniority. Simultaneously, the author presents us people's reaction when pride in their own nation is lost due to the influx of Western hegemony, and how they have regained it. Many people, who lost their pride, might simply regain their self-esteem by identifying themselves with materialism and using it as a tool delineating the social class.

As written in a Bildungsroman tradition, this autobiography depicts the experiences of an unwanted Chinese daughter during her journey to independence and her negotiation between her roots and the mainstream of westernization. Adeline's oppression was consistent with Spivak's claim that women in a colonized country almost by definition lack a voice within their own patriarchal culture, and they were doubly unheard under the colonialism's regime (Hans Bertens 211). Adeline Yen Mah, the autobiographer and the protagonist, endured the complex abuse which placed women on this fusion of cultural forms. On the traditional Chinese side, women were expected to be selfless, submissive to the male authority. On the current colonial side, women were

instilled with the idea that anything Western overvalued anything Chinese. To defend their privilege, women who possessed the Western qualities, and who imitated the Western life style, might be deemed narcissistic, and on insult to other Chinese women despite living in the native Chinese domain. Therefore, Chinese women could be on the verge of submitting themselves to new oppressive masters. The important message in this work is that in order to soundly proclaim their identities, Chinese women should adjust and prepare themselves to accord with any uncertainty, while retaining their ancestral roots. Furthermore, without pride in their own roots, Chinese women cannot create their own niche because they still endure their subservient positions.

Significantly or perhaps coincidentally, this work was published in 1997, the same year Hong Kong returned to China's rule. In this year, Chinese people in Hong Kong underwent a change which can be considered a historical milestone. In my view, this book emerged at the right time because it reminds us that, regardless of political regimes, Chinese patriarchy or Western supremacy, women must realize their potential, if their identities are to be changed. One reason is that apart from national policy, there were still politics of role and relationship, as well as politics of personality. These are more subtle than explicit national political regimes. In other words, Chinese patriarchy was not magically erased by Western colonialism. On the contrary, in complicity with such an idea, Chinese patriarchy can make China an even more sexist society because nowhere in all these new Western colonial and old Chinese patriarchal regimes, are Chinese women assumed to be full human beings. Therefore, women, instead of seeking an egalitarian society, should realize their potential and, in turn, learn to be independent, and live their lives with the awareness of gender equality.

Through the English language, Falling Leaves reflects new identities of a Chinese woman who adjusted herself to the fast changing world with her sense of

ancestral identity. Falling Leaves is written in English, like the large majority of literary works by writers from the former British colonies. Adeline Yen Mah makes use of English as an international language to voice the changing of Chinese women's identities. Furthermore, the author imbues her book with the Chinese philosophy in terms of its calligraphy and transliteration. The result from such a practice draws our attention to the cultural context of the narrative, and defends author's identity within colonialism. More importantly, philosophy conveys us the idea that the Chinese people have their own way of looking at the world. This work, hence, is an epitome of the current mainstream of literature in English. Speaking to social reality larger than the life of a single individual, Adeline Yen Mah is a representative of Chinese women in this transitional period. On one hand, they had the feeling of alienation. On the other hand, they displayed their own strength and adaptability as guardians of their cultural heritage, and moved with the changing world.

The journey to maturity of Adeline Yen Mah is narrated as follows. Adeline was born in a rich family as the youngest daughter. Unfortunately, her mother died a few days after delivery. Her parents had five children including her. Not long after her mother's death, her father remarried a Eurasian woman who became her stepmother. The children called her 'Niang.' Compared to Niang's own two children, these five children were treated as second-class citizens. The lack of love and security in Adeline's childhood made her lonely. Adeline was often disconnected from her familial roots. In particular, Adeline, in her childhood, was left in convent boarding schools. With an unshakable feeling that she was the unwanted daughter in her own family, she determined to unravel the enigma of this complex inferiority. Her route to changing identities arose from her attempt to win her father's and Niang's love. Whereas her father represented the Chinese patriarch of the family, Niang represented the new authority of this Chinese

society. Eventually, what Adeline gained was not acceptance from her family, but the enlightenment of the dark side of human nature which, in the light of patriarchy and colonialism, took for granted that a Chinese daughter, as a low status social member, was a person who could be uncared for, and over whom they could take advantage. In this chaotic and hostile environment, Adeline Yen Mah, with her moral strength, successfully constructed her niche, maintaining both her ancestral roots and gaining the modern mind of selfhood.

Adeline Yen Mah's narrative answers the dilemma of a Chinese woman whose textual ground was imposed on by patriarchal practice and colonialism in this period. These discussions are mainly based on the premise that Hong Kong in the second half of the twentieth century confronted the age of transition. The thesis statement of this chapter is that the route of changing identities of Adeline arose from self adjustment according to the dictates of today without an abandonment of her own ancestral roots, and her morality. In order to examine social illusions, Adeline's depression, her discovery, and her action to restore herself, the researcher will divide her discussion into three parts, beginning with traditional Chinese patriarchy, then, colonial power of the matriarch, and finally the restoration of identities.

Traditional Chinese Patriarchy

With the Confucian ideology, Adeline was ranked in the lowest status of the household. The Chinese society is an absolutely authoritarian grouping of the young with the old, and females by males (Charlotte Bonny Cohen 386). Since Adeline was the youngest daughter of the deceased mother, she was subordinate to her three brothers, Gregory, Edgar, and James. Also as the rule of Chinese seniority, she was subordinate to her elder sister, Lydia. Needless to say, these five children of the deceased mother were

marginalized when their father, Joseph, remarried a Eurasian woman, and had their own children. Moreover, as Adeline's mother died a few days after delivery, her family believed that she was a curse. Thus, to be born in a rich family did not bring her good luck.

There is, in fact, an event to prove a dramatically large gap of social status between Adeline, as the lowest status, and her father as the aloof authority in this household. Out of seven ducklings given by her father's acquaintance, Adeline was given the last one which, certainly, was the weakest, and the scrawniest. She identified herself with this poor duckling. However, it was chosen to be the object of a test when her father wanted to ascertain how his dog obeyed his order. Apparently, the father's dog bit Adeline's duckling and it died on the following day. This event is not superficially about the duckling and the dog, but it is an issue of the relationship between father and daughter. The dog represented the father's power, and Adeline's poor duckling represented her powerlessness. Like her duckling, Adeline needed love and care. Whereas the father wanted to show off his state of being master over that dog, Adeline unwillingly resigned herself to him by letting her duckling be the one in jeopardy. Because she was to dutifully obey her father according to the rules of three obediences, she could not resist her father by showing her anger to his dog. This episode shows that her status was not only the lowest among her siblings, but it was also even lower than the father's dog because the dog was cared for and loved by her father, unlike her.

Adeline Yen Mah --as the one with the lowest status--needed love from people who had authority in the household, rather than from former power, or other subservience. Drawing on the notion of love, Emma Goldman claims that love is the strongest and deepest element in human life and love powerfully designates human destiny (323). In this story, not surprisingly, Adeline longed for her father's love and in order to win his

love, she, by all possible means, devoted herself for it. Although her grandfather, whom she called Ye Ye, loved her, he represented a declined authority. He belonged to the traditional Chinese world which, in this period, was threatened by materialism and Western authority. Being loved by a man with inferior status, Adeline could not fulfill her need of love because she still felt classified as unwanted. Therefore, acceptance from her father was necessary for her.

In this patriarchal family, Adeline was the object of jealousy. As a Chinese daughter, she was supposed to lack ability. Nonetheless, she thought education was the only path to independence. When her academic performance was superior to that of her brothers', she was threatened by them. Conspiring against Adeline, they mixed their urine with orange concentrate and duped her into drinking it. This is the reaction of the three brothers who felt uncomfortable with their sister's achievement. Una Stannard explains that men feel threatened unless they are with a woman who is less intelligent than they are (197). This situation in this story depicted the exclusion of a woman in the culture of male supremacy. Her three brothers' act of bedevilment might stem from their overwhelming fear or envy of her academic excellence. In the light of social expectations about women, what surprised us is that Adeline did not get the message that she was supposed to be stupid in the academic world. On the contrary, the conspiracy of her brothers underpinned the conscious pain of alienation. She narrates: "As I burst into tears, what troubled me was not Edgar's malice or Gregory's treachery but James' betrayal" (257). This shows that although a woman had opportunities to receive an education, her success was not as appreciated as men's.

Apart from being mistreated by her brothers, Adeline's academic accomplishment did not bring her acceptance from her father. Instead, it got her into trouble. The fruit of her success turned to ashes when her father, instead of giving her a

compliment, made a comment: “Her successful performance at school has given her a high opinion of herself. [...] She must be taught to be obedient and modest. She should know her place and realize that her opinions and desires count for nothing.” (Adeline Yen Mah 85-86). Because she was unloved and unwanted, she, apparently, became powerless. We can analyze love in terms of power. Adeline loved and respected her father but her father did not care about her. This inequality in love became destructive. This simply led to the conclusion based on patriarchal ideology that Adeline’s character, hard-working and self-determined, was not preferred in this family. However, it seems that Adeline, out of her naiveté, did not cease her attempt to win her father’s love. At this phase of her childhood, she bound herself by the patriarch’s authority rather than by truth.

Aside from being alienated in her family, Adeline also confronted sexist practices in a rigidly structured medical hierarchy. Miriam Gilbert notes that medicine is a microcosm of the society at large (64). A similar scenario happened in a Hong Kong hospital where Adeline worked. In parallel to the household unit and Chinese society at large, the patriarchal system took place in Adeline’s occupational sphere as a doctor, which profession formerly belonged to men solely. Adeline, herself, was one of a few female doctors whose role and place were equivalent to those of male doctors. Not surprisingly, like her smaller unit within the household, and the larger one of Chinese society, this community was correspondingly sexist. Adeline explicitly recounts: “Sexual discrimination was rampant and blatant. Male doctors earned 25 per cent more than female doctors of the same rank, although we did identical work and took equal numbers of night calls” (148).

Adeline’s endurance of sexist practices was not limited only to her home country but she also confronted them in her first married life in America. Due to her maladjustment to the medical community, and failure to gain her father’s love in Hong

Kong, Adeline sought the passionate love in a surrogate father. That is a man of her romantic love. In her relocation to America, Adeline married Byron, a Chinese man, just six weeks after their first meeting. Although Adeline had expanded her life into the occupational sphere, her responsibilities in her work world bore no relation to her domestic work. In order to have a happy married life, she was expected to play a role which was opposed to her nature. Winnifred Johnson and Lewis Terman, psychiatrist clinicians, claim that happily married women were, among other things, submissive rather than aggressive, indecisive, cautious rather than daring, and not very self-sufficient (Jessie Bernard 157). Although Adeline had assumed the male role, she was expected to succumb to male domination at home. As opposed to Byron's occupation as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant who was not keen to be decisive, but attentive, Adeline's career as a doctor revolved the around matters of human life which always needed smart decisions. Nonetheless, her gender role at home was drastically different from that in her occupational sphere. In her domestic sphere, she played the attentive role of a waitress, whilst her waiter husband became her master who made decisions about important matters. In her domestic, attentive role, Adeline devoted her life to serving her husband and child in order to live up to the prescribed norm. Although Adeline was determined to be happy in this marriage by conforming to this doctrine, she herself became sick. The point is that the gender roles of women in the domestic household are difficult to change, no matter a woman proves to be capable of working alongside men. Men and women were often thrown back into out-dated Chinese gender role playing.

Added to all this, we can see that Adeline, living in Chinese societies in Hong Kong and aboard; whether in domestic or occupational realms, in her childhood or adulthood, found the patriarchal culture to be consistently pervasive. She felt herself being marginalized, as if the doors of these patriarchal societies had slammed shut in her

face. However, Adeline made her ground on her own, rather than depending on Western colonial power to release Chinese women because it did not intend to eradicate these sexist practices in Chinese society. On the contrary Western colonialism, leaguings together with Chinese traditional patriarchy, underpinned the low status of Chinese women. Likewise, on Adeline's route to liberate herself from patriarchal identity, she was imposed upon by the colonial power, the new authority. And this made her route to independence thornier as discussed below.

Colonial Power of the Matriarch

The parental bond between the father and the children in this household was broken by the mother's departure. This story is reminiscent of the saying: "When God takes someone's mother, he also takes his father." Since the birth mother of children in this family died, their father was not concerned about their welfare. The father fancied business rather than family matters. Furthermore, according to the doctrine of two spheres, he, who belonged to the public sphere, left these family members in the controlling hands of the stepmother. His brutal neglect opened a chance for the colonialism of the stepmother. Parallel to the situation in the society at large where national leaders indulged in their own benefits and left the country at risk of being occupied by Western powers, the Yen family welcomed a woman who intervened with this parental bond. The gap between the father and the children widened due to the fact that this unmotherly woman later proved to be narcissistic, and enjoyed exacerbating the family conflicts. Adeline stepmother's mistreatment exemplifies how women exploit and oppress other women.

The father's new wife --Jeanne Prospersi--was epitomized a woman of western culture who took it for granted as a privilege to disparage the Chinese family members.

She had a taste for everything western. For example, as the author narrates: “She could not read nor write Chinese and was proud of this because it proclaimed, yet again, her western heritage” (29). Moreover, she invariably wore Western clothes and wore them well in her daily life. She lived among Western luxurious items such as an imitation Louise XVI coffee table, Burgundy-red velvet couches in her living room, and red-velvet curtains, to mention just a few. Furthermore, she had a connection with Westerners; as a result, when she lavished parties, the less-privileged members of the household were indirectly propelled to somewhere else, even though this was their home. Adeline narrates:

Spectacular dinners were held at home. Invitations were treasured because of the quality of food and Niang’s cosmopolitan guest list. During these parties, Ye Ye and we the stepchildren [...] were never mentioned or introduced. It was understood that we should keep ourselves hidden in our rooms, and not embarrass anyone by our presence, especially when there were westerners. (97-98)

The point is the household was permeated by western tastes or values. This milieu suggests this western-like woman was so powerful that Ye Ye, representing traditional Chinese ideology, was to shun this social mainstream.

All members in the Yen family were under the manipulative power of the Western-like stepmother. Similar to her motherland under control of Westerners, the position of mother in this family was bestowed to this foreign woman who controlled all family members on behalf of the father. Part of China was already occupied by western countries in the twentieth century. In this new oppressive paradigm, Chinese women inevitably confronted a difficult predicament. However, the hegemony in the family did not occur as overtly as ordinary warfare intruders. Niang, on her behalf as surrogate mother, insidiously intruded into the bond among all family members, as the author writes: “Niang’s new strategy was to divide and rule” (57).

Niang exploited her colonial power in the guise of a matriarch. Whereas the father was the patriarch who made all major decisions, especially in his business, Niang's role was to inspect the house, supervise all of the children, and administer the household budget. It seemed doubtful how this western-like woman instilled Chinese culture in these family offspring, though she herself had a taste for western culture. According to Partha Chatterjee, women, as keepers of tradition, are responsible for protecting and nurturing the spiritual quality of national culture (Schech and Haggis 127). This means, these children who grew up in the context of mixed Chinese and Western cultures, were put in jeopardy of losing their national identity. It is because the Chinese and Western cultures were not in equivalent status; the Western one was deemed superior, the Chinese inferior. Consequently, this new authority figure established herself as the civilizing influence of the family. As a result, the Chinese culture in this family risked being displaced by the Western one.

Niang, regarded as elite in this society, was welcome to this family as a privileged member. In parallel to the loss of motherland to Western countries, the loss of the mother in this household was the tacit intrusion of the new power. The fact that this stepmother was called 'Niang,' a synonymous Chinese term for *mother*, suggested that she was not a replacement of their deceased mother, as the children's dead mother was called 'Mama.' But she assumed the surrogate position equivalent to that of their mother. In this context, Niang automatically was well received into this household with prestige. Besides the father, she became the supreme ruler of the house by consent. To exercise her colonial power, she created a new emotional atmosphere in the household.

Her first act of colonialism was to rename these five children. Because the act of renaming is common when there is a change of power, Jun-pei, Adeline's elder sister became Lydia. Her three elder brothers, Zi-jie, Zi-lin and Zi-jun were named Gregory,

Edgar, and James, respectively. And Adeline, whose Chinese name was Jun-ling, was also renamed on this occasion. It was assumed that these children were owned by the new power. Niang's act of renaming the children shows her power to erase the children's identities which had been molded by their natural mother. More significantly, the children's names in their mother tongue which were associated with the mother were replaced by the new language of the dominant culture. This suggests that the children had a tendency to be incorporated into the new culture because language is not only the means of communication but it also embodies culture, race, and the world perception.

Furthermore, Niang's pervasive power sought to remove the children's memory of their birth mother. Niang got rid of photographs of Adeline's mother, although Adeline does not explicitly narrate. She merely writes: "I (Adeline) had no idea what she (the mother) looked like. I have never seen her photograph" (24). However, there would have been no other suspects who had the motive to do so. This means Niang wanted to wipe out all memories of the family members about their deceased mother. Therefore, the children's loss of mother means not only the loss of their primary caretaker, but also the loss of their origin.

These situations correspond to Helene Deutsch's claim about the niche creation of the stepmother in the household. Helene Deutsch, a psychologist, notes that in some cases, a woman can develop into a rejecting, wicked stepmother because she was willing to assume the mother's role in the home of her husband only if the former wife is completely excluded from its emotional atmosphere (462). In this story, the coming of the stepmother led to the fading of the emotional attachment between these children and their natural mother. This also reminds us of the notion of hegemony, a term coined by Gramsci. Hegemony emphasizes how people's everyday lives and identities are defined in and through dominant social structures (Stephen Morton 65). From this perspective,

the children in this story were dominated by the stepmother and had a tendency to live their lives by identifying themselves with the stepmother.

Like the relationship between stepmother and stepdaughter of many fairy tales, the relationship between Adeline and Niang was melancholic because Niang lacked maternal love. Helene Deutsch asserts that the motive for the stepmother mistreating the stepdaughter is very frequently the stepmother's jealousy of the love between her husband and his daughter. Therefore, the stepmother strives to make her rival harmless either by degrading her through dirty, menial work or by doing away with her through witchcraft (454). Niang, the stepmother in the real world, although she did not have magical witchcraft, had the power to manipulate Adeline in the same way as the stepmother in fairy tales. Her witchcraft could put Adeline into a boarding school to endure mental difficulties. Thus, out of Adeline's naïve feelings toward her stepmother, she suffered from such terribly mistreatment. In this way, the wicked stepmother developed into an even wicked witch, and Adeline became an archetypal Cinderella.

Besides occupying the territory of the former wife of her husband, Niang wanted to subdue any resistance by alienating it. Niang, as the matriarch, was responsible for money matters for all of the family members including Ye Ye (the grandfather), and Aunt Baba, and the stepchildren. In this way, she used her responsibilities as a power to control them. Her act was consistent with Helene Deutsch who claims that the one type of stepmother is the efficient, aggressive woman introduces marvelous order and discipline in the household, and makes herself absolutely necessary for the man and forces the children into a masochistic dependence upon their 'fair' stepmother (458). Niang, in this story, belonged to this type. She wanted to control all family members. According to the issue of tram money, the fact that the stepchildren begged tram fare from their grandfather and Aunt Baba annoyed Niang because she could not control them.

Niang indirectly blamed the grand father and Aunt Baba for spoiling them. Whereas all others of her siblings asked for tram fare from Niang, Adeline, who stood on Ye Ye and Aunt Baba's side, never begged for Niang's money. This event foreshadowed Adeline's quality of independence. Consequently, Niang kept alienating Adeline because she was not a masochistic dependent stepdaughter under her control, as the grandfather commented: "But every day her (Adeline's) presence is like a thorn in their (the father's and Niang's) side: she annoys them by simply being around. They're sending her away because they want to be rid of her" (Adeline Yen Mah 86).

However, Adeline did not totally accept what Niang imbued in her during her childhood. Though Adeline's rejection was considered 'passive resistance,' as exemplified in the situation at the dining table where all family members, including Niang, were present. Needless to say, Niang customarily was the arbiter of all domestic matters, including food. For example, Adeline had an aversion to fatty meat. She and other children were forced to eat it because the father disliked children's leaving food on their plates. Refusing to swallow it, Adeline hoarded chunks of it somewhere around, or made a dash for the bathroom with her cheeks bulging with fatty meat which would be flashed down the toilet. When all else failed, she swallowed it whole (Adeline Yen Mah 56). It is interpreted as her limitation of endurance which made her reject Niang's power. Drawing on Sau-ling Cynthia Wong's concern of food in Asian American literature, the motif of eating symbolizes a survival-driven act of assimilation. Assimilation to the dominant society means allowing the circumstances to be controlled by those in power to overwhelm them. However, there is such a thing as having to swallow too much until one can no longer hold in the pain and humiliation. And a large number of images of overstuffing, gagging, bursting, and vomiting are compared to the limits of endurance (77). In this story, Adeline's declining to swallow fatty meat is a case in point. This

means Adeline did not totally assimilate Niang's hegemony. Compared to fatty meat, Niang's acculturation of the children infers her lesson of immorality. Furthermore, fatty meat in her dish suggests malicious food which signifies harm for one's health in the long run.

Even more crucially, Adeline's table manners imply her negotiation of the tensions between her personal dislikes and the dominant culture. Although table manners are considered the embodiment of western cultural practice, and although bringing food back from one's mouth is acceptable in the Chinese practice, Adeline chose to negotiate this bicultural conflict. In other words, she was expected to adapt to the social mainstream but she did not desert her selfhood. This situation also exemplifies Adeline's selectivity regarding both the Chinese and the western cultures. Throughout her life, Adeline had to choose what practices to adopt and what practices to neglect.

Whereas inferior status as a woman paved its way for Adeline, she refused to walk through it. Nancy Chodorow explains that the difference between girls' and boys' attainment of gender identity is that girls and women *are* whereas boys and men *do*. In other words, whereas feminine identity is *ascribed*, masculine identity is *achieved*. In particular, women's roles are certain, and predictable. Thus, in this story, Adeline's appearance, instead of her academic achievement, was an issue to talk about. For example, after Niang had stared at Adeline's shabby school uniform, straight, unpermed hair and stubby, bitten fingernails, she criticized: "[...] you really should need some time grooming yourself. Make yourself presentable. No man wants an ugly bride" (114-115). This means the identity of femininity was ascribed to her. In this situation, Niang downplayed Adeline Yen Mah's academic achievement, and magnified her unpleasant appearance. Without a decent concern, Niang just wanted to change the quality of the bluestocking in Adeline into a saleable object. No matter how successfully Adeline

achieved at school, she was expected to be what the patriarchal society assumed or prescribed for her gender role.

Niang did not encourage Adeline's ambitions, rather than showing her the pointlessness of a woman's life. Apart from criticizing Adeline's outlook, Niang prescribed for her to learn the menial office jobs of secretary. As for secretarial work, Margaret Adams deems it as one of the helping professions; and the position of these professions occupies the hierarchy of social values, the small degree of direct executive power, compared with that endowed by other more prestigious professions (559). In addition, as we know, this clerical occupation is in common with that of a housewife. Both are routine and invisible to outsiders. In this story, while society expected Adeline to live her life as a smaller, weaker, lesser being than men, she knew that she was not less capable than they, and she wanted to have a forum where she could express her talents. Whereas Adeline's three brothers were supported by the father to study in universities in England, Adeline was unfairly proposed to study clerical work. Niang said "Your father does not have an endless supply of money. We have decided that you should learn shorthand and typing and find yourself a job" (Adeline Yen Mah 115). Niang intended to put Adeline into the most familiar of the female careers which corresponds to social expectations about women. With self-esteem, Adeline, however, did not have the same self-perception as the social expectations about her. Significantly, the more she was thwarted from her academic ambition, the more she wanted to prove herself as a successful educated woman.

Apart from Niang's intention to push Adeline into unprivileged work, she claimed economic necessity was a channel to oppress Adeline but Niang herself applied the code of extravagance to her own advantage. According to Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, the theme of Necessity and Extravagance are abstractions represented in relationship

between two different characters (13). The code of Necessity emphasizes survival, austerity, and utilitarian ends. Extravagance involves the pursuit of impulse, or desire. The two contrasting codes are applied to both Adeline and Niang but in different ways. In one circumstance, if Niang applied the code of Necessity, Adeline would apply the other, and vice versa. For instance, Adeline's fate was ruled by Niang's code of Necessity. More specifically, Niang paid Adeline no tram fare to school during her primary school, abandoned her in boarding schools, paid no visits, and thwarted her from extending social life among her schoolmates, and let Adeline wear worn-out school uniforms. As opposed to code application to Adeline, Niang opted the code of Extravagance for herself. Once, the grandfather commented on Niang's irrational desire for a costly Russian sable coat and called it 'senseless extravagance' (Adeline Yen Mah 27). Furthermore, in Niang's daily life, she commuted by an expensive chauffeur-driven car, lived in a relatively large mansion, regularly attended social meetings, lavished parties, and wore immaculate clothing.

On the other hand, where Adeline applied the code of Extravagance, Niang saw it as superfluous and useless. In particular, Adeline wanted to upkeep relationships with her siblings by all possible means. Disowning Lydia, Adeline's elder sister, Niang commanded Adeline and her other siblings to disconnect her, otherwise they would be disinherited as well. Even so, Adeline granted her help to Lydia and her family. This resulted in Adeline's disinheritance by Niang. Furthermore, Adeline was willing to support Edgar-- her brother-- to work with her in California although they had had no contact for many years. Drawing on the application of Extravagance code, Adeline had an impulse to reconciliation with her siblings despite the rivalry in their childhood. Niang agreed with the father on his suggestion that Adeline should have employed the scheme of 'Necessity' for Edgar. The father said "He (Edgar) has the rest of America in which to

create a niche for himself” (Adeline Yen Mah 184). That is to say, Adeline wanted to express her pleasure at being accepted by her siblings, whereas Niang misled Adeline and Edgar into distrusting each other. Applying code of Necessity, Niang let the stepchildren struggle for survival on their own, even though Niang could offer help. Another event in which Adeline applied a code of Extravagance is seen in how she supported her parents. She offered cocoons in terms of money and housing for the father and Niang in their old age despite the fact they were multimillionaires. The point is Adeline was defined as Extravagance in a Chinese way as illustrated in the way she expressed her hospitality to her siblings and parents. As opposed to Adeline, Niang-- as a westernizer-- associated herself with the code of Necessity, and considered Extravagance of expressive hospitality among relatives as a path to undermine her power in this household.

The dichotomy of Necessity and Extravagance reflected the opposite personalities in Niang and Adeline. Applying the code of Necessity, Niang played the game with the concept of austerity in family relationships. More specifically, her concerns organized around bereavement, superficial relationship in the society at large, and money matters. Her impulse corresponded to the idea of individualism which, according to Claire Chow, is a prominent western philosophy. It emphasizes on individual choice over loyalty to family (49). In Niang’s act of hegemony, Adeline’s siblings unknowingly adopt the concept of individualism. Niang suggested they consider each other as competitors. For example, Niang insinuated that Gregory was James’s rival due to the fact they both worked for the father’s business and that Edgar was Adeline’s envious brother. Lydia, in order to reconcile with Niang, became treacherous to Adeline who once gave a good life to her son. In other words, Niang successfully instilled the code of Necessity in terms of sibling relationships.

As opposed to Niang, Adeline identified herself with the Chinese concept of harmony and relativism. Francis L.K. Hsu asserts that the Chinese individual sees the world in relativistic terms. He is dependent upon others and others are dependent upon him. Moreover, harmony is the key concept in all relationships between humankind (Betty Lee Sung 260). In this story, Adeline, representing Chinese civilization, put a great effort into keeping the family tie. Although she lived in America, she still felt her sense of responsibility toward distant relatives in Hong Kong. Due to the Chinese culture, the sense of being part of something that is greater than oneself gives the Chinese the feeling of belonging and security and that they do not stand alone. Adeline, throughout her journey to maturity, searched for the family tie which had been superceded by the western hegemony.

Apart from her Necessity code in family relationships, Niang also represents materialism. She used her beauty as a commodity. During her courtship period, her beauty attracted the father so much that, even her farts were fragrant, to father (Adeline Yen Mah 28). Through her beauty, she received flowers, chocolates, then pearl, jade, diamond earrings, a diamond bracelet, and necklace, as well as a Russian sable coat. This suggests that in this materialistic society, womanly beauty is an article of conspicuous consumption, showing men's economic status. Furthermore, the most beautiful woman, like all other valuable property, can go to the highest bidder.

Not only did Niang, herself, marry for money, but she also evaluated her daughter's expression of love by the amount of money. According to Marshall Sahlins, one who ignores the cultural code of concrete properties governing 'utility' remains unable to account for what is in fact produced. This leads to self-deception of the society where the logical system of objects, and social relations are manifested only through market decisions based on price. Thus, this leaves the false impression that the

commodity is just the precipitate of rationality (279). In this story, Niang, who was materialistic, failed to appreciate the objective of her daughter's presents. Adeline writes: "She (Niang) was very critical of Susan [...]. On the mother's day, Susan bought her a box of chocolates. The box was too small and the chocolates too cheap (186). Niang interpreted the symbolic quality to the object in its commodity-form. She simply equated the market price of presents with the objectives of the givers.

Not only did Niang indulge herself with materialism, she also changed children in this family to become materialistic. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's notion about hegemony, oppressed groups accept the condition of the world of elites as common sense; then their understanding of how the world works leads them to collaborate in their own oppression (Raymond Williams 413). In this story, all of her siblings, accepted Niang's hegemony into common sense and they corroboratively confirmed the values of materialism. Hence, the materialistic idea that Niang instilled in them led to their viewing the world in a materialistic way. Adeline's siblings, who hovered around Niang, identified themselves with this ideology and competed to curry Niang's favor. Any one who kept good graces with Niang, who was considered 'the elite' of the house, not only became a first-class citizen but was also financially supported. But ones who failed to do so were excluded from this household property. In addition, the fact that Susan, her daughter, did not allow Niang to interfere in her romantic relationship made Niang angry. As a result, Niang did not give anything for her as dowry on her wedding, whereas Lydia, who followed her instructions of marriage choice, received an enormous sum.

Assuming the control over the children by the money condition, Niang took over this household by intimidating them on the money account. Drawing on politic relationship, Vivian Gornick claims that a power struggle is based on the grounds that all political cruelties stem from overwhelming fear (144). Opting to intimidate the children,

Niang understood that they could succumb to the lure of economic advantage, without any reasons other than fear. As illustrated in the letter, Niang, out of her anger with Susan, her own daughter, wrote to her stepchildren: “We (the father and Niang) wish to inform all four of you that Susan is no longer part of the Yen family. You should not to speak, write or associate with her ever again. Should you disobey our instructions, you too will be disinherited” (Adeline Yen Mah 189). Although this letter was written in the name of father and Niang, it was not the father’s intention because he was not the reason for this dissent with Susan, but Niang. Therefore, Adeline was placed in a perilous situation. Having only two options, she had to choose between alliance with Niang for monetary benefit and assistance to her sibling on the moral basis of a harmonious relationship.

On this crucial point of Adeline’s journey to maturity, the disinheritance, although it is tantamount to a crisis of identity loss, galvanized Adeline into restoring her identities on ground of truth, instead of authority. Ignoring Niang’s prescription, Adeline was disinherited. She granted her help to Lydia, her disinherited elder sister, due to her morality. In this respect, Adeline, as a stepdaughter who lacked love, proved herself to be rich in love. Undoubtedly, inheriting even a small remnant of a multimillionaire’s property might mean a large fortune for an ordinary person. Although Adeline was disinherited, not only could she survive, but she also became stronger. Her discovery of Niang’s disinheriting her merely dissolved her utopian concept of a Confucian family which was proved to be illusive in this materialistic world. Therefore, her hypothesis about filial piety to the stepmother demanded a change accordingly. However, although Adeline’s utopia disappeared, she regained her strength through her true ancestral roots. Although she was disinherited by Niang, it did not mean she failed to seek for maternal love. It only means her hypothesis of Niang as a mother’s replacement had to be rejected.

This situation proved that the maternal love, that she longed for, was found in her Aunt Baba.

Restoration of Identities

The disinheritance is compared to a chance that allowed the latent sides of human nature to reveal and express themselves. This situation revealed the true nature of her siblings who had been corrupted by materialism. With the money coming to them, they betrayed their youngest sister and submitted to Niang's egotism and gave in to their affinity as brothers and sisters to an outside authority. This scenario proved that in some case, materialism enslaved human beings. Whereas Adeline says: "It's about family and fair play and our common journey in search of a mother" (258), James says: "you (Adeline) wanted to believe that we all shared your dream of a united family. In fact, no one cared except for you" (Adeline Yen Mah 269). James accused Adeline, saying that: "It's money you're after, isn't it? Money I can help you with. Tell me how much do you want" (Adeline Yen Mah 258). His utterances released Adeline from her despondency on others for her own identity. James and other siblings were too overwhelmed with the idea of capitalism to be blind to the stepmother's witchcraft. What happened in this microcosm corresponds to the world at large. Drawing of the concept on hegemony, John Storey states that capitalism is now, more or less, international hegemony (104). The world changed so fast that the concept of hegemonic capitalism was regulated even among this brother-sister affiliation.

Unlike her siblings, Adeline searched for a concrete representation to ascertain her sense of belonging in this family. According to the issue of commodity, Karl Marx argues that capitalism is not concerned about the particular quality of usefulness of an object, but only in the exchange of objects for profit. Furthermore, to capitalists, the

value of a commodity is not defined according to an 'inherent property' of the object, but rather by profit (Stephen Morton 102). In this light, James and other siblings interpreted the property in Niang's will as a commodity in the capitalistic sense. That is, for them, the property in the will was merely an object from which they would gain or make profits. They were not concerned about its 'inherent property' which, in this context, is the father's procurement for the family. Thus, all his children deserved it. As for Niang, to inherit property would mean the rapprochement between her and the children. In this situation, affinity between siblings was changed into an entrepreneur relationship due to their materialistic ideas. Hence, while Adeline's goal was to reclaim her sense of 'belonging' to the family, her siblings' were to request 'belongings' from their deceased parents.

At this moment of truth, Adeline, instead of submitting to the lure of Niang's influence, restored her identities. She saw herself as different from her parents and siblings. In this respect, her identity came into view. According to Jonathan Culler, the process of identity-formation emphasizes an internal difference and projects it as difference between individuals or groups (117). In this view, this situation cannot be interpreted as her loss of identity. In fact, it means her identity came onstage in marked contrast to her siblings, and this is part of the process of identity-formation. During her growing-up, Adeline's naiveté made her perceive social reality, which was defined by the authority, as truth. But in this crisis, her naiveté was eroded by her acknowledgement of the fact that her siblings did not have a spirit of family reconciliation. In such a crucial point of Adeline's journey, her different internal quality was projected. Additionally, this situation merely led to a loss of her illusion of accrediting the stepmother as a reference person, and to her understanding of the two-faced tie with her siblings who had been enslaved by Niang's witchcraft of capitalistic materialism.

In the revelation of the will, Adeline, with moral strength, did not react as Niang expected. Her decision to ignore the large fortune can be interpreted that she recognized it as a game of hegemony. According to the concept of the complexity of hegemony, Raymond Williams asserts that if what we learn there were merely an imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolated meanings and practice of the ruling class, which get imposed on others, occupying merely the top of our minds, it would be a very much easier thing to overthrow (414). In this story, Adeline told James-- her brother-- who was given rights to manage the will: "It was a great misfortune for us to have Niang for a stepmother. Don't worry. I won't contest her will. I will never allow her to triumph over me" (270). This means the materialism was not Adeline's ingrained nature. Therefore she, without difficulty, recognized capitalism's hegemony, and was able to overthrow such a materialistic idea. Although there was a high possibility for her to win if she contested the will, she could not bring herself to shatter the connection with her close brother. Moreover, although she did not receive any property, her morality made her stand firm without depending on any pecuniary ground. She can support her life with dignity which was formed with her well-stored mind, rather than a pile of money.

In the crisis of being an otherness in the colonial culture, Adeline opted to employ passive conscious resistance which is accorded to the eastern philosophy. The western colonization as described in Joseph's Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness which the colonizers, particularly Kurtz, employed violent exercises to subdue the natives. In a similar way, Niang aggressively abused and eventually controlled these children. In Adeline's childhood, Niang abused her power over her physically and mentally. In this light, Niang was compared to Kurtz who is corrupted by his sense of superiority and self indulgence. As opposed to western colonization, Adeline adopted a policy of passive resistance. In Indian history, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Indian leader used this

policy to fight back against the British (Stephen Morton 6). In Adeline's passive resistance, she apparently did not contest the will for two reasons. On one hand, the act of contesting Niang's will would prove to be an aversion to her siblings, instead of Niang. On the other, Adeline resisted everything about Niang, especially her personality. That is to say, she did not want to behave as aggressively as Niang. And for Adeline, the aggressor was not necessary a victor. Furthermore, Adeline resisted Niang's hegemony out of her consciousness. Drawing on the relation of the colonized and colonizer, Hans Bertens reasons that the colonial power's lack of complete control is possibly a result of acts of conscious resistance on the part of the colonized (209). In this story, Adeline proved that her conscious resistance disempowered Niang's trickery to trap Adeline into a materialistic pitfall.

Apart from Adeline's conscious resistance against Niang, this crisis is considered a chance for Adeline to ponder her experience during her journey to maturity. In the event the revelation of Niang's will, everything countered Adeline's expectations. Therefore, Adeline needed to reassess her place, in order to accommodate herself into the society. It seems that this moment of truth, embracing her hindsight, enabled her to understand the world of reality, but not as a social norm. For instance, she was exposed to four types of cultural environment, namely the traditional Chinese world, the western world, the Chinese patriarchal culture in western countries, and the western hegemony in their native country. She found there is no such thing as an ordinary assumption in each type of cultural environment.

Adeline witnessed gender equality in the traditional Chinese world. As expected, this environment was supposed to be very sexist. In fact, Adeline experienced Ye Ye, her grandfather who treated women fairly. He called himself 'a one-woman man' although the society, in his epoch, admired men with many wives (Adeline Yen Mah 14). Furthermore,

her grand aunt-- whom Adeline called 'Gong Gong,' a masculine kinship term which means 'grand uncle'-- assumed a male role as a founder of her own bank, the Shanghai Women's Bank, despite the fact that women were supposed to be incapable in her time.

Adeline found hospitality from westerners and nonchalance from her parents. In the western world where Adeline was considered a stranger, people there could be more supportive to her than her parents. Although materialism is a philosophical tradition in western civilization, some westerners were not attached to material reality as strictly as her parents, as revealed in her preparation to relocate to work in America. Her parents ignored Adeline's need of money to buy a plane ticket, whereas her request to borrow money against her future earning was accepted although she was just a stranger.

As for the Chinese patriarchal culture in western countries, Adeline endured the patriarchal practice in her first marriage with Byron. Treated unfairly by her self-concerned husband, Adeline led an unhappy married life. Although a woman has a wider choice of lifestyles in America, she was required to assume traditional Chinese female roles. At home, she was responsible for menial work, as if she were Byron's servant. This stands in contrast to the reality in which Adeline worked as a doctor, but Byron, a waiter. This means America is not necessarily a land of equal opportunities for everyone. Such Chinese patriarchal practices still persist even in this liberal western country.

As for the western hegemony in her mother country, Adeline was indoctrinated with a feeling of inferiority within her own race. This contrasts to the ordinary assumption that natives should live in their own country with ethnic pride. Apparently, Chinese people felt inferior in their home country. People of western blood, or who mimicked the western culture, could easily take advantage of colonial opportunities to mistreat Chinese citizens. For example, whereas Niang threw luxurious parties for her

cosmopolitan guests, her grandfather and the children--Chinese residents in this household-- were expected to stay hidden in their rooms.

Due to this upside-down reality, Adeline's journey to maturity accordingly deviated from the false assumption of fixed absolute reality to a new identity which rested on a pluralistic sense of self. According to the notion of the plural self, Beahrs suggests that a pluralistic sense of self or multiple identities could be part of normal individual's adjustment to society. Gergen, additionally, suggests that an individual who saturates herself in social diversity can hardly be expected to develop a sense of self or identity that is not diversified, and in many respects, variable or inconsistent (Leon Rappoport, et al. 97-98). In this related point, Amy Ling suggests the most three fundamental means of identification, namely, in terms of nationality, gender, and individuality (104). In this story, Adeline, who had been exposed to uncertainties, correspondingly formulated her selfhood on the ground of various categories. Her new identity can be called 'plural self.' In the light of several categorized identities, Adeline identified herself with Chinese to demonstrate her national identity, and ethnic pride. In addition, as for gender identity, she acquired a western feminist sense, and gained self-will to become an independent woman.

However, Adeline's new identity can be viewed paradoxically in terms of her nationality and gender. Out of selectivity, Adeline identified her race as Chinese, but she rejected sexist practices in the Chinese tradition. As for the gender stereotype, she opted to be a woman who realized her potential and who had the self-will to be successful. Although she clarifies herself as a Chinese woman, Adeline incorporated herself to this western originated concept. As documented by Alison M. Jagger, the first feminist voices were heard in England in the seventeenth century (Amporn Srisermbhok 13). Moreover, Adeline chose education as a stepping-stone towards independence and success. However, it was western civilization according to Anna Garlin Spencer, and it seemed to

have been reached in the Anglo Saxon civilization as early as the eighteenth century (274). In short, the changing of Adeline's identities derived from her strategic acts of selective accommodation. She did not assume any one of them to be the whole truth.

Along with these two categories of nationality and gender, Adeline also gained her own sense of identity as an individual which derived from her true ancestral origin. Adeline says: "Life had come full circle. *Luo ye gui gen*. (Falling leaves return to their roots), I felt a wave of repose, a peaceful serenity" (274). This episode took place at the sickbed of her Aunt Baba to whose care Adeline's birth mother had entrusted her. At this point, she found love, and became fulfilled. Adeline's pain of losing her identity as a Chinese stepdaughter of the elite Eurasian stepmother was cured by her feeling of security toward her personal coherence with her Aunt Baba whose life demonstrated a resistance against western colonialism and Niang's power. Sitting beside her sickbed, and watching her departure from this earthly world, Adeline discovered her true ancestral bond in her Aunt Baba. If Aunt Baba represented a link to her ancestral roots, Adeline's homecoming to Aunt Baba accordingly meant to include her ancestral roots into terrain of her plural self.

Apart from her nationality, gender, and ancestral roots, Adeline's plural self can serve as a cross roads of situated knowledge. As Adeline writes the plural forms for *leaves*, and *roots* (Falling leaves return to their roots) in the very last lines of this work probably to signify Adeline's plural self. This suggests that she realizes the fragmentation of monolithic identity, and accepts her own plural self. The fact that Adeline was exposed to social diversity necessitated self-repositioning in different categories for different reasons. Properly adjusting herself in relation to various social environments, Adeline gained multiple of knowledge, including her mother tongue, a second language, an occupation, and her integrity among other categories. To be specific,

Adeline counted Chinese as her mother tongue. As she was obliged to adjust herself to the vastness of western knowledge, she acquired English as her second language. As for occupation, she was a woman in the traditional male occupation of doctor. Even more crucially, these pluralistic senses were construed on the foundation of her integrity which enabled her to restore her 'identities,' and which yielded the fruit of self-fulfillment.

Another piece of evidence suggesting her plural self can be examined in her autobiographical writing. According to Leigh Gilmore, autobiography wraps up the fragmentary discourses of identities and presents themselves as persons (17). To illustrate this point, Adeline's act of writing autobiography is tantamount to clarifying herself as a whole coherence amidst fragmentary discourses such as Chinese patriarchy, western colonialism, and hegemonic materialism. Not only did Adeline identify herself as a person amidst these fragmentary discourses, she also struggled against their limitations. Apparently, Chinese women are subordinate to men, according to the rule of three obediences in Chinese patriarchy. As for the western colonialism, Chinese women were instilled with the idea that anything Western would be more valued than Chinese. To exert their practices, materialism was conditionally used to lure Chinese women to submit themselves to Chinese patriarchy and western colonialism. Amidst social limitations, Adeline deviated from a paved way for a Chinese woman to assume her inferior status, and seek her way to express herself out of her integrity. Her self-representational text strives to produce truth, though contradictory to the social values of male supremacy, elite westerners, and material indulgence. Adeline chose to identify herself as a woman who successfully established her niche in the male sphere, who proudly belonged to her ethnic race, and who was not dominated by materialism but used money as a physical token to achieve her moral gratification.

On the whole, seemingly, this author has empowered women who are assumed to have a lower-status. She implies that materialism and mimicry of western cultures are not paths to Chinese women's emancipation. In fact, women can change their identities by their personal willfulness, consciousness of gender equality and alliance among themselves. Of course, obstacles are evitable because this matter concerns power politics. In particular, power can be problematic because it is often exercised to prevent powerless people, especially women, from achieving their human dignity and respect. Therefore, first of all, women need to have personal will to achieve success, like Adeline Yen Mah, who is determined to be occupationally successful, in order to financially support herself and live her life with dignity. Then, we are required to be conscious of gender equality in order to eliminate blind obedience to authorities. That is because the authorities and society at large usually take for granted the tendency to marginalize women. With her consciousness of gender equality, Adeline has opted to avoid these disadvantageous situations by creating her own niche, removing herself psychologically, and even geographically, from its imposition. This idea is consistent with Jung Chang's in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China who stepped aside from the cult of Mao, another form of patriarchy. Moreover, alliance among women is also important. This relationship provides women with the sense of security, which is most helpful in eventually enabling them to launch themselves into the world at large. In this story, Adeline had Aunt Baba, who loved her, as her ally. Moreover, Aunt Baba is also Adeline's model in the sense that she is a woman of her own authority. Adeline's circumstance is akin to Jung Chang's who had her mother and her grandmother as women behind her emancipation. In short, the changing identities of women must start from their inner impulse, not from mainstream values.

CHAPTER 5

The Bonesetter's Daughter

True Alliances of Mothers and Daughters

In the early years of diasporal Chinese feminist writing, most writers reveal the experience of Chinese immigrants who felt somewhat out of place. Women in the first generation and their daughters often have problems in relation to their experiences in two different worlds. Unfortunately, it is difficult for children to hold this delicate balance between East and West. Similarly, mothers also have difficulties in accepting their children's western lifestyles. Therefore, this disparity of experiences becomes a source of conflict. For example, in Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior (1975), we hear the voice of an American daughter criticizing the Chinese oppressive culture. In it, Kingston consistently talks from the daughter's perspective toward her mother. Later in 1989, Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club, presents the generational tensions between traditional Chinese mothers and their American born daughters. It, as Amy Ling suggests, depicts the mother-daughter relationship disintegrated into a battle for power / autonomy (138). Whereas the daughters become Americanized, their mothers retain the Chinese culture. Therefore, the mother-daughter bond is vulnerable to external forces. To relieve the generational tension, Amy Tan in The Bonesetter's Daughter (2001) presents to us the conflict which can be dissolved by better mutual understanding between mother and daughter. Furthermore, a daughter who learns from both her mother's oppressive experiences and resistance can properly reposition herself both in relation to the mother, and to society at large.

The author of The Bonesetter's Daughter depicts the changing identities of women in different generations. We will see how women in each generation reject their patriarchal definitions and define themselves as women of their own authorities in relation to their motherhood and daughterhood. According to Mary Wollstonecraft's claim about women's definition in the patriarchal society, the women's value is measured by their connections with men. She writes: "Connected with man as daughters, wives, and mothers, their moral character may be estimated by their manners of fulfilling those simple duties (8)." In order to subvert the patriarchal power, Adrienne Rich tells us that motherhood can release the creation of male-domination, and lead women into the same realm of decision, struggle, and surprise, imagination and conscious intelligence. Motherhood itself would become a transformed and a transforming experience for women (280). In this sense, Rich's ideas could be the answer to the changing identities of women which have been defined by the patriarchal discourse as claimed by Mary Wollstonecraft. This idea becomes tangible in The Bonesetter's Daughter, which exemplifies women of different generations detaching themselves from the bondage of male-domination by re-defining themselves in their bond.

More importantly, this work was made with a crucial difference from other literary works. Adrienne Rich points out that there are very few literary documents in which a woman has portrayed 'mother' as a central figure (227). In particular, this work depicts motherhood and daughterhood as a true alliance which is a source of power to subvert the patriarchy. Within the bond, women can define themselves out of the patriarchal framework. This chapter will argue that The Bonesetter's Daughter reflects the changing identities of three women—Precious Auntie, LuLing, and Ruth—which arise from the true alliances of motherhood and daughterhood.

Amy Tan, the author of this book, decidedly centers this story on the bonesetter's daughter, as the title indicates. The bonesetter's daughter who appears almost throughout the book is recognized as Precious Auntie. The novel is divided into three parts. The first part concerns Ruth, who is the granddaughter of Precious Auntie. Ruth lives in America with her mother, LuLing, who is the daughter of Precious Auntie. Ruth lacks an authentic voice both in her private and occupational realms. As for her private realm, she has been raised with many Chinese traditional expectations. She is unable to meet her mother's satisfaction because she does not have a clear sense of her Chinese heritage. As for her occupational realm, working as a ghostwriter, she does not have a voice. Whereas Ruth confronts these difficulties on her own, her Chinese mother struggles over dementia which gradually makes her lose her reasoning ability, and her memory. Before her sickness destroys her memory, she writes about her past in China.

The middle part recounts LuLing's experiences in China. Her story is embedded with a narrative of Precious Auntie-- an unconventional woman-- who is brought up by her father, a bonesetter. Precious Auntie is taught by her father to know the mysteries of the human body. Moreover, she knows where the valuable dragon bones are hidden. In her marriageable age, she has two marriage proposals: one from a man with whom she falls in love, and the other from a coffin-maker who wants her to be his concubine. She refuses the proposal of the latter man and accepts marriage with the former one. As a result, the coffin maker is so angry that he destroys the wedding. He kills Precious Auntie's groom and father. Since then, her identity has been rejected by the society. The story would have a simple end if Precious Auntie did not have a daughter out of wedlock. Her daughter is a reason for her to go on living. After this event, Precious Auntie lives her life as a nursemaid of her own daughter, Liu Luling, until her marriageable age. She also passes on the secret about the hidden place of dragon

bones to LuLing. The coffin-maker, with his greed, wants Liu Luling to tell him the hidden place of the priceless bones. So, he wants LuLing to be his daughter-in-law. When her wedding news is brought to Precious Auntie, she protects her daughter from a disastrous marriage with her life by revealing the truth about LuLing's birth. As a result, LuLing is thrown away into an orphanage which later becomes a gateway for her to be exposed to the western feminist ideology. Here, she is taught by missionaries about gender equality. Also, this place inspires her to start her new life in America.

In the last part, the narrative switches exclusively to Ruth's life in America. It organizes around how Ruth attains her own voice. The fact that she discovers the long-lost identity of her grandmother compensates the loss of her private and occupational identities. This enables her to remove the state of being silenced, and to embrace herself by a connection with her mother and grandmother. And the truth about her maternal ancestral roots urges her to speak for them in her occupational realm.

The analysis of the changing identities of these three women will be divided into three sections, corresponding to the generational order. The first section discusses the Chinese oppressive culture imposed on Precious Auntie, and her resistance against it. In the second section, the researcher will point out that the emergence of LuLing's identity is based on the intertwining aspects of the feminist ideology and her ancestral story. As for the last section, the researcher will contend that Ruth's discovery of her authentic voice emanates from the connection with her maternal roots in China.

Precious Auntie

Precious Auntie is brought up to be a woman who assumes equal status to men. She grows up in a family that is characterized by gender equality. As a result, she defined herself as strong and capable woman throughout her life. Her bonesetter father teaches

her to be capable of what is traditionally associated with males, such as reading and writing, playing riddles, walking alone, as well as curing bone injury. He does not prepare his daughter to be a property in a man's realm, nor to submit to the demand of male authorities. Rather, he teaches her to be decisive, like men. For example, Precious Auntie decides to marry her beloved without feeling scared of a man of social domination. She is given two marriage proposals, one from her lover and the other from the coffin-maker. She chooses to marry her love, Baby Uncle of the ink-maker's family. She talks back to the coffin-maker: "You asked me to be your concubine, a servant of your wife. I'm not interested in being a slave in a feudal marriage" (Amy Tan 164). Thus, she regards herself as equal to men and has her own rights to marry a man of her choice, rather than valuing herself as property in the coffin-maker's domain.

In the oppressive culture, Precious Auntie is criticized for expressing her natural intellect. In fact, she is expected to pretend to be incapable according to a traditional Chinese proverb: "A woman without talent is a woman of virtue" (Amy Ling 1). Seen in this light, Precious Auntie's abilities to do men's work are against the gender norm. Therefore, Precious Auntie is criticized by the society when she argues, and questions out of her intelligence in public, as the narrator recounts:

She (a fortune teller) saw her (Precious Auntie) on market day, walking by herself. That strange girl did fast calculations in her head and argued with merchants. She was arrogant and headstrong. She was also educated, taught by her father to know the mysteries of the body. That girl was too curious, too questioning, too determined to follow her mind. Maybe she is possessed. (Amy Tan 163)

Paradoxically, she is expected to be a super human being who is capable of healing human life, or injuries while helping her father. She is also expected to be a subhuman being, as wife, who obeys her husband. Thus, she unavoidably becomes an object of criticism.

Alongside social criticism on her, the identity of bonesetter's daughter is negated. Precious Auntie is doomed to tragedy because she refuses to conform to the gender stereotype. In particular, her wedding is ruined by the coffin-maker. Thus, she is not considered as wife of Baby Uncle of the ink-maker's family. Accordingly, she is not legitimately attributed as the mother of her own daughter. She is meekly recognized as her daughter's nursemaid. More importantly, her loss of social identities as wife and mother is tantamount to losing her profoundly social accreditation; as Pauline Bart says the most important roles for women in our society are the roles of wife and mother (172).

Corresponding to the loss of social identities as wife and mother, the bonesetter's voice is unheard in society. Her voices are also unheard in both literal and figurative senses. As for the literary meaning, Precious Auntie loses her voices because her articulating organs have been burned by her act of committing suicide. She just gasps and wheezes. Therefore, her language is unheard. As for the figurative sense, the voice of her opinions is unheard because no one wants to listen to her. For example, nobody listens to her rebellion against the coffin-maker. Thus, her existence is not different from a piece of furniture in the household due to the lack of a means to communicate, and social concerns about her.

Apart from lacking voice, the distortion of her face also results in the loss of her identity. Needless to say, Precious Auntie's burned face causes other people to give her no recognition. According to David Yau-fai Ho, a sociologist, losing face is a serious matter which will affect one's ability to function effectively in society. Similar to Ho's idea of losing face, Precious Auntie no longer functions effectively as a woman who is able to claim her status as the bonesetter's daughter, Baby Uncle's wife, and her daughter's mother. Her facial distortion in the attempt to kill herself is akin to losing face in this sociological aspect because the concept of face entails one's personality, status, dignity,

honor and prestige in society. The author narrates: “Precious Auntie’s wound changed from pus to scar, [...]. She had once been a fine-looking girl. Now all except blind beggars shuddered at the sight of her” (168).

Moreover, the erasure of her name from people’s minds is also inductive to the loss of Precious Auntie’s true identity. Anthony Giddens, a sociologist, says an individual’s name is an important marker of an individual’s identity (691). In this sociological light, the loss of Precious Auntie’s identity is repeatedly confirmed by the loss of her name. Like Maxine Hong Kingston’s No Name Woman, Precious Auntie has her child out of wedlock. This violates the gender norm which demands a woman to be an object of chastity for a man. With this misconduct, nobody wants to call Precious Auntie by her name because she is considered as outcast in this society. She becomes alienated by the ink-maker’s family. No one wants to socialize with her, and even to call her by her name. As a result, she becomes a no name woman. People just call her ‘nursemaid.’ Only her daughter calls her ‘Precious Auntie.’ Luling narrates: “I did not ever question the truth. I did not wonder why Precious Auntie had no name” (169).

However, the absence of Precious Auntie’s social identity is not to be interpreted as submission in her self-defined consciousness. Adrienne Rich in Of Woman Born tells us that, to destroy the ‘institution’ of motherhood according to male-dominant discourse does not mean to reject motherhood. Adrienne Rich makes an analysis of motherhood by dividing the concept of motherhood into ‘experience’ and ‘institution.’ This distinction enables her to discuss what is done to a woman, as mother, under the patriarchy, as a different matter from what might be the experience of woman in motherhood when it is detached from, and freed of, the bondage by male-domination (13). According to Rich’s idea, social identity bears no relationship with Precious Auntie’s self-defined consciousness which is formed out of her connection with her daughter. In the midst of

social negation of her true identity, her sense of self has been formulated out of her motherhood which is not perceived by the world at large, but by herself and her daughter. Precious Auntie talks with her gesture to LuLing: “My family name, the name of all the bonesetters. [...] Never forget this name” (Amy Tan 5). This is to suggest that her consciousness of her self-definition transcends to her daughter beyond the patriarchal constraints.

Whereas Precious Auntie has been a strong woman of her nature as a unique individual before her pregnancy, her new consciousness of motherhood empowers her to go on living, and fighting prejudice as a team. When Precious Auntie is demoralized by her father’s and her groom’s death, her life is enriched by her child. Precious Auntie finds a new meaning of life in her motherhood, as reflected in LuLing’s narrative: “[Pregnancy] happened. Precious Auntie stayed. I (her daughter) was the reason she stayed, her only reason to live” (Amy Tan 168). At this point, Precious Auntie has changed from liberal, carefree, individual woman to one who commits herself to her daughter. Not only does Precious Auntie regain her strength, her child is a proof of the reality of her own existence. Regardless having no name, facial distortion, and damaged vocal organ, her motherhood experience helps her regain her balance. Cutting off herself from all hostility by male-domination, she creates the comforting world where only their mother-daughter bond matters. This phenomenon is akin to Nalini Natarajan’s findings in her study of Mother India. She proposes that motherhood could be a privileged site for women and also a potential challenge to patriarchy (83). Similarly, as Adrienne Rich asserts, motherhood can be converted into a purpose, an act of self-assertion because a woman is forced to assert herself primarily through her biology (160).

To affirm that Precious Auntie has formulated her sense of self out of her motherhood, we can examine the communication between her and her daughter. Her

soundless language reflects that she is an exceptionally strong woman of her times.

Despite not having social identities as wife and mother, Precious Auntie does not have the feeling of worthlessness, or despair. She reveals her strength to her daughter by soundless language, namely hand talk, face talk, and chalk talk. Her daughter --LuLing—says: “I grew up with soundless and strong [language]” (Amy Tan 2).

There is a crucial event to prove the real alliance of motherhood and daughterhood. When her daughter is going to marry a son of the coffin-maker who has killed Precious Auntie’s father and her groom, Precious Auntie reveals her true identity, as bloodmother, to protect her daughter. In addition, she sacrifices everything, even her life, not only to stop this marriage but also to awaken her daughter from blind submission. This means her true identity is used as a last resort to prevent her daughter from a disastrous married life. Based on the Chinese belief of life after death, vindictive ghosts can be supernaturally so powerful that they can return to take their revenge in the earthly world. This customary belief of coming back as a ghost is the only path to take revenge and protect her daughter. Precious Auntie’s letter written before her death says if LuLing joined the Chang household, she would come to stay as a live-in ghost, haunting them forever (Amy Tan 204). Therefore, Precious Auntie’s suicide is viewed as her dying for her daughter, not dying in despair of her daughter. This is to say that the patriarchal authority cannot overpower the true alliance of mother and daughter.

Apart from her intention to shield her daughter from a disastrous marriage, the revelation of Precious Auntie’s true identity is the establishment of her own family history. According to Fuss’s suggestion, women who find themselves in dominated and marginalized positions in society, in order to struggle against oppression, can adopt *fixed* or *essentialized* identities to serve as important strategic tools (Freedman 87). In this light, Precious Auntie’s writing about her family history and herself can be viewed as her

resistance to patriarchal ideology which intends to erode her identity. Apparently, Precious Auntie proclaims her fixed identity by using her writing as an instrument to resist society. Through it, she rejects the patriarchal identification of her as nursemaid of the daughter. This adoption of her fixed identity signifies that she erases her identity as a marginalized woman, and becomes a woman who is freed of male domination.

Aside from her writing about her story, her committing suicide can be viewed as further resistance. According to the myth of violence, Vivain Gornnick claims that coming up against potential violent death is coming up against life. To Gornnick, it is a measure of life, a reflection of self-value in the world one comes gaspingly up against. When one discovers that a sense of herself is unavailable anyway, she does not want to live through it (133-134). Following Gornnick's idea, Precious Auntie is against her life which the closeness of the mother-daughter relationship is destroyed by the patriarchy. Her disapproval of marrying off LuLing into the coffin-maker's family means her attitude against this society. Paradoxically, for Precious Auntie, to go living in this world, her sense of selfhood is no longer available. But to kill herself, she can proclaim her everlasting sense of self because it will awaken her daughter from her blind submission. When her teen daughter comes to unconsciously conform to patriarchal values, this offers her not only sadness, and remorse, but also anger that leads to action. Lending herself to her daughter, Precious Auntie's perception will be reborn in her daughter. Equating her life with the well-being of her daughter, she commits suicide violently to awaken her daughter. The narrator implies that Precious Auntie slit her throat, as recounted: "I (LuLing) walked toward her. [...], and then I saw her neck was clotted with flies. She kept her eyes on me, but her hands were still. One [hand] held a knife used to carve the inkstones" (203). If her daughter is compared to Precious Auntie's breath which makes

Precious Auntie go on living in the patriarchal society, to slit her own throat, can mean to sever her daughter from the imposition of male domination.

However, there is no violation of patriarchal ideology without a negative result. Precious Auntie's vehement resistance results in the complete loss of her identity.

Adrienne Rich asserts: "Where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence" (James Herrick 257). To paraphrase Adrienne Rich, whereas language and naming are powers which the patriarchal society employ to oppress women, women's silence on the outside does not mean admission of defeat. On the other side of silence lies women's roar. Inside their mind, they struggle vehemently against the patriarchal power. The existence of Precious Auntie in this story is a case in point. In the earlier time, this patriarchal society does not recognize her because of having no voice, face, and name. Seemingly, she is silenced by the patriarchy. However, her identity is acknowledged at her revelation as the mother of LuLing, and reason for her committing suicide. These are compared to violent outbursts. As a result, the patriarchal society once again penalizes her by the power of language and naming. Apparently, her identity totally disappears. Her name no longer exists in anyone's memory, even her daughter's. Her voice is no longer heard, even her grasp, wheezing, and banging sounds. Her dead body is thrown away at the End of the world. Even her spirit is confined in a smelly vinegar jar, according to the belief of the ink-maker's family. No one can remember her name.

Whereas the death of Precious Auntie leads to total disappearance from this sexist society, it contributes to the emergence of her daughter's identity in a milieu that concerns the issue of gender equality. Drawing on Jean Baker Miller's view about the source of women's strength, the crucial ingredients in the creation of new women come from the traditional strengths of women which have been developed during the long period of their subordination (Hester Eisenstein 66). In Miller's idea, the strength of LuLing

comes from her realization about Precious Auntie's subordination in society throughout LuLing's maturation. And when this subordination is beyond the LuLing's tolerance, LuLing needs to cast herself as a new woman by using her strong character, inherited from Precious Auntie. What LuLing learns from the oppressive experiences of Precious Auntie is used as an important ingredient. Like a relay race, this ending of Precious Auntie's journey in this very narrow band of an acceptable behavior is also a starting point of her daughter to travel in a broader array of two cultures which will be discussed below.

LuLing

Leaguings with Precious Auntie, LuLing challenges the patriarchal vision in which women are analogously viewed as beings functioning to give birth. Drawing on Luce Irigaray's reflection of women's status, the woman exists only as an occasion for mediation, transaction, transition, transference between man and his offspring (Kristi Siegel 8). In this story, LuLing does not equate Precious Auntie in the same way as the society. Instead, Precious Auntie, in LuLing's view, becomes a figure of power rather than an object between herself and the authority because her maternal roles of nurturing are affectionate in her memory. In the eye of LuLing's mind, she does not see Precious Auntie as an ugly-faced woman. With her motherhood, Precious Auntie is adorable for LuLing. This proves that Precious Auntie was not regarded merely as something functioning to give a life to a human being. LuLing acknowledges her mother's power.

Embedded in this mother-daughter relationship is LuLing's attempt to retrieve Precious Auntie's identity. Apparently, Precious Auntie's impaired identity due to social humiliation is partially repaired by her daughter. Since Precious Auntie's identity has been erased by the society, LuLing perpetually tries to recall her name. Feeling warm and loved, LuLing refines her nursemaid as Precious Auntie, rather than simply the low

position as nursemaid. LuLing narrates “To others she was Nursemaid. To me, she was Precious Auntie. (Amy Tan 169). Furthermore, LuLing attempts to bring Precious Auntie into a public sphere and make her existence significant. For example, when the dragon bones, Precious Auntie’s family treasure, become rare and beyond price, LuLing wants her to sell them. LuLing narrates: “I was not just thinking selfishly. If Precious Auntie made us rich, my family might respect her more” (Amy Tan 172).

Besides the retrieval of Precious Auntie’s identity, LuLing speaks for the mute Precious Auntie out of her natural inclination. Drawing on the relationship between motherhood and daughterhood, Adrienne Rich points out that mothers and daughters exchange with each other beyond the verbal transmission a knowledge that flows between two alike bodies, even though this knowledge is subliminal, subversive and preverbal (220). This story corresponds to Rich’s suggestion. LuLing, as mouthpiece, is Precious Auntie’s communicative channel. In particular, LuLing is the voice of soundless Precious Auntie. LuLing recounts: “No one else understood Precious Auntie’s kind of talk, so I have to say aloud what she meant” (Amy Tan 3). In this respect, Precious Auntie’s language is mutually intelligible because it is transcended beyond her daughter’s consciousness. This also suggests that LuLing, as Precious Auntie’s daughter, could ultimately acquire her authentic voice to speak for Precious Auntie from her inside.

In this mother-daughter relationship, LuLing is molded into a whole and self-actualized person, in contrast to the gender stereotype. While external authorities demand that LuLing behave herself submissively, Precious Auntie teaches her to be a full person. In Chinese tradition, women are expected to conform to the condition of male supremacy, and their interest can be trivialized and denied. For instance, Old Widow Lau, a matchmaker, instructs LuLing to behave during the meeting with her prospective in-laws: “eat little of each dish to show you are not picky but don’t be greedy. Let others be

served first and act like you are the least important” (Amy Tan 187). As opposed to this instruction, Precious Auntie molds LuLing to be a self-actualized woman, like Precious Auntie, as LuLing recounts: “Precious Auntie taught me to be naughty, just like her. She taught me to be curious, just like her. She taught me to be spoiled. And because I was all these things, she could not teach me to be a better daughter” (Amy Tan 160). That is to say, Precious Auntie introduces an idea of the full human being to LuLing. Instead of socializing LuLing to be passive, she teaches LuLing to concern about her need, instead of feigning to trivialize it.

Apart from giving her attitude of a woman as whole person, Precious Auntie also teaches her daughter to enter a culture realm through calligraphic skills. Drawing on the culture construction of gender, Sherry Ortner in her essay Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? suggests that women are identified, or symbolically associated with nature, while men are associated with culture (21). Regarding calligraphy, Adeline Yen Mah complementarily points out that calligraphy embodies an intimate connection between Chinese words and paintings, and that literature and art are inextricably linked (107). In combining Sherry Ortner’s idea with that of Adeline Yen Mah, it can be said that calligraphy represents Chinese culture. In this story, this pair, mother and daughter, challenges the polarity of women as nature and men as culture by their calligraphy. They both identify themselves with culture which is prevailingly accounted as closer to men. Their calligraphies are better than most men. LuLing narrates: “Her (Precious Auntie’s) calligraphy was even better than Father’s” (Amy Tan 151). Furthermore, LuLing is also praised for her calligraphy: “LuLing, if you had been born a boy back then, you could have been a scholar.” And LuLing narrates that: “I was a better calligrapher than his (Teacher Pan’s) own son” (Amy Tan 223). This is proof that both mother’s and

daughter's abilities counter the idea of woman as nature and man as culture. In other words, they cross the gender boundaries into the formerly male dominant realm.

Apart from their similarity in their self-actualization and calligraphic skills, the fact that Precious Auntie labors, nurtures, and teaches LuLing to be like her, leads to the interpretation that Precious Auntie, herself, is the bonesetter in the figurative sense. Because this word --bonesetter—is ambiguous, it carries two or more possible meanings. Within several layers of meaning, it is found that Precious Auntie is deemed 'the bonesetter' as corresponding to two figurative meanings. Needless to say, its literal meaning is a doctor who sets broken bones. As for the figurative meanings, it concerns the notions of nature and nurture in motherhood and daughterhood. Regarding nature, LuLing is born of Precious Auntie. Hence, Precious Auntie's genes have been biologically transmitted to her daughter. Simultaneously LuLing receives bones, blood, flesh and everything else about her body from Precious Auntie. Therefore, Precious Auntie is compared to *the bonesetter* or a person who sets bone in a human body through the biological formation. According, LuLing is *the bonesetter's daughter*.

As regards the nurturing process, this mother-daughter bond involves the Carl Jung's concept of collective unconsciousness. Jung wrote in his essay, Psychology and Literature (1972) that a certain psychic disposition is shaped by forces of heredity; from it consciousness has developed. Moreover, the image of oneself or one's primitive character can be derived from ancient or esoteric teaching (Amporn Srisermbhok 58). Jung believed a collective unconsciousness contains the universal memories and history of mankind (Robert J. Sternberg 543). That is to say one's personality is formulated by heredity, memory, or the interpretation of experiences. To Jung, the manifestations of the collective unconsciousness are compensatory to the conscious attitude. In this story, LuLing's mental set is connected to her mother through the mother-daughter bond. Not

only does LuLing receive Precious Auntie's perspective, but also her resistance in Chinese patriarchy remains in her memory. Precious Auntie's strength and subjectivity have been passed on LuLing who interprets Precious Auntie's fate in the Chinese patriarchy as unfairness. This foreshadows that LuLing, in her conscious attitude, will be the next woman who challenges patriarchy.

Moreover, the ambiguity is derived from Amy Tan's previous work—The Joy Luck Club. In it, the author depicts the relationship between mother and daughter grounded on both meanings. For example, in The Joy Luck Club, when Jing-Mei, an American born daughter, is going to see her two Chinese sisters in China, she is nervous because she does not know what to tell them about her mother. Auntie An-mei cries with disbelief: "How can you say? Your mother is in your bones." Then, Auntie Ying adds: "Tell them stories she told you, lessons she taught, what you know about her mind that has become your mind (31)." Thus, *bonesetter* means a person who gives not only body through her labor but also one who instills her attitudes to her child. Like Jing-Mei, LuLing receives not only everything about her body, but also attitudes from her biological mother.

LuLing changes from a daughter whose psyche resembles Precious Auntie's to a silent woman. To illustrate the point, when LuLing grows up to her early adolescence, she adjusts herself to authorities without questioning her own happiness. While in her childhood, Precious Auntie is the figure of power in her private sphere, LuLing soon learns that the patriarchal power is more dominant in a larger realm. Therefore, to enter this realm, she conforms to the patriarchy. LuLing narrates: "I began to increase my respect for Mother (who is not her biological mother). I sought her favor. I believed favor was the same as love. Favor made me feel more important, more content" (Amy Tan 174). Not questioning about her prospective husband, and in-laws' morality, LuLing

is considered silent, selfless and voiceless. This is because LuLing's sense of self consists entirely of her usefulness to external authorities. Her importance and her content depend on external forces. Hence, in her detachment from Precious Auntie at her adolescence means her transition into silence.

To remove the state of silence, the first hurdle for LuLing is to cut short her childlike behavior, and resume adult roles. As Carol Gilligan claims, childlike in the vulnerability of their dependence and subsequent fear for abandonment, they claim to wish only to please, but in return for their goodness they expect to be loved and cared for (67). In following Gilligan's idea, LuLing has proved to leave her childlikeness, and assume the position of a mature woman at the revelation of her mother's true identity. Not long after this revelation, LuLing shows no fear of abandonment and being unloved and uncared for. At the same time, her childlike innocence is cast aside. She is disconnected from the couple whom she calls Mother and Father. When Mother tells her about sending her to the orphanage, LuLing nonchalantly accepts her decision. This means that the change at this phase of her life is a crucial transition into adulthood. Losing her sense of vulnerability, LuLing gradually takes a stand in this orphanage, where she conceptualizes herself as an adult. She becomes responsible, not only for herself but also for young orphans. In particular, she works as a big sister, a tutor, and a teacher of young children. She does not bemoan this abandonment. In other words, at this stage of her life, LuLing's representation of subjectivity changes from childhood to adulthood.

After having changed to an adult, the next step for LuLing is to construct her authentic voice. LuLing's relinquishment of her childhood does not mean attaining voice yet. LuLing, as a grown woman, still has some psychological difficulties in acquiring her voice. Drawing on the metaphor of woman's finding a voice, bell hooks suggests that it

is compared to self-transformation, and speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject (12). In other words, only subject can speak whereas object is deaf and dumb. In bell hook's idea, LuLing, at her loss of Precious Auntie, is required to overcome her psychological problem because she feels voiceless after Precious Auntie's death. While Precious Auntie is buried haphazardly in the End of the World—a disposal place, LuLing also feels rejected by the society. At this burial site, LuLing admits that Precious Auntie is part of herself, as she narrates: "I was a girl who had lost part of herself in the End of the World" (Amy Tan 205). This means LuLing is confronted with a similar situation which leads to identity loss. In other words, she is no longer identified as a daughter of her Mother and Father, as she recounts: "[At the orphanage] when they (American missionaries) asked my name, I was still unable to talk, so I used my finger to paint the characters in the air" (Amy Tan 219). Like a mute person, LuLing is so psychologically voiceless that she cannot orally identify herself. The lack of voice to speak about her identity could be indicated that LuLing is just treated as a disposable object. Henceforth, she has to find her voice to speak as subject in the active self-transformation process.

In her self-transformation, LuLing projects her inner psyche which has been nurtured by Precious Auntie. Drawing on the similarity of mother and daughter, Shulamith Firestone suggests that mothering is not only biological but also, it is a set of attitudes, skills, and values that accompany it (Jane Freedman 21). Regarding Firestone's idea, it would not be an overstatement to claim that LuLing is a reincarnation of Precious Auntie. In fact, there is an event in which LuLing projects herself in the same way as her Precious Auntie. It is reflected in her privacy with her love--Kai Jing-- where her natural desire flows. Even though they have not gone through the wedding ceremony yet, she actualizes that she wants to follow her desire. Rather than adhering strictly to the

tradition, LuLing is guided by her passion, as she says “And if this was bad fate, let it be. I was the daughter of Precious Auntie who could not control her desires, who then gave birth to me” (Amy Tan 235). It is clear that LuLing’s physical and psychological responses to her love are similar to Precious Auntie’s. Like Precious Auntie, LuLing is not concerned about the rule of the Chinese four virtues which demands women to be chaste. Instead of acting like a puritanical keeper of her virginity, she simply liberates herself. This remind the reader of the night when Uncle Baby comes into Precious Auntie’s room. In this way, LuLing changes her identity by Precious Auntie who is considered ‘the bonesetter.’ LuLing projects herself similarly to Precious Auntie.

Apart from projecting herself in the same way with Precious Auntie, LuLing assimilates herself to the Western feminist ideology which, in fact, is just a repercussion of Precious Auntie’s unheard attitudes. This phenomenon corresponds to the Freudian configuration which claims that the mother cannot access the symbolic order and phallic power. This is because this site of power and language belongs to men alone. As a consequence, men are considered as privileged and as sources of social meaning (Kristi Siegel 2). Following Freudian analysis, Precious Auntie’s voice has been previously unheard in the Chinese patriarchy because her language, in both literal and figurative senses, has been unimportant due to the male dominant discourse. But in the feminist surroundings in the orphanage, Precious Auntie’s voice becomes amplified, despite the fact that throughout Precious Auntie’s life, she is an epitome of the concept of woman’s emancipation. Like Precious Auntie, American missionaries teach orphans to realize their potentiality:

We can study, we can learn,
 We can marry, whom we choose.
 We can work, we can earn,
 And bad fate is all we lose.
 (Amy Tan 222)

This concept is not a breakthrough discourse for LuLing. In fact, it has been introduced by Precious Auntie. For LuLing, this Western feminist ideology just serves as a catalyst to her voice.

Despite her exposure to Western ideology, LuLing does not adopt it as an absolute site to construct knowledge. Instead, she negotiates between the Western ideology and her Chinese ethnicity. Unlike westerners, Chinese people teach their descendants to maintain their ancestral roots, as reflected in a Chinese saying: “No ancestors, no identity” (Ien Ang 21). In the orphanage, people are overwhelmed by Western ideology and urged to adopt the Western culture, and abandon the Chinese one. Even statues of Chinese gods are converted into Christians. However, LuLing reasons: “Chinese people were polite and also practical about life. [...] Chinese people, unlike foreigners, did not try to push their ideas on others. Let the foreigners follow their own ways, no matter how strange they were, that was their thinking (Amy Tan 231).” This means LuLing consciously retains Chinese identity but she practically constructs knowledge out of the contradiction. We can examine how she struggles to retain the bond with Precious Auntie, and how she finds her standing point in the Western ideology. Her solution to this contradiction is to change herself, as she recounts: “I promised myself I would change and become a better daughter” (Amy Tan 249). Thus she does not desert her ancestors in the light of Chinese tradition. At the same time, she defines herself as a human subject in the feminist light. She can establish her voice in this gender-equality environment, but she always realizes that she is Chinese, and belongs to her Chinese ancestral roots. Her manner can be changed, but not her Chinese ethnicity.

Nonetheless, LuLing, whose intention is to be a better daughter of Precious Auntie in the fashion of feminism, challenges the definition of ‘good woman’ in the

traditional Chinese definition. According to Denise Thompson in her essay Defining Feminism, in order to create a human status for women, women are required to seek recognition from each other in ways which are outside male control and definition (13). As opposed to this feminist thought, Xinran in The Good Women of China tells us about a definition of good women in Chinese concept. She says good Chinese women are ones who are conditioned to behave in a soft and meek manner, and who submit to oppression (40-41). Therefore, we can see that feminist women differ from those of the traditional Chinese. The former group is encouraged to acquire their standpoint with dignity as human beings, while the latter one is degraded into inferior positions. Thus, in this respect, LuLing is not a good woman of China because she acts as a strong, capable, independent woman. At the same time, she does not submit to the oppressive tradition which rejects Precious Auntie's identity. In particular, LuLing struggles to recover it. Her attempt to remember Precious Auntie's name shows that LuLing defines not only Precious Auntie, but her self as well on feminist grounds. Consequently, LuLing excludes herself and Precious Auntie from male domination.

Apart from defining herself and Precious Auntie, LuLing also defines female ancestors on the ground of feminist ideology. Drawing on Denise Thompson's idea of women objectification as the Other, in a male-dominant ideology, women have no rights to recognize, validate, and maintain human status, whereas women, in a feminist idea, see themselves as not the 'other' to human status, but women as subsets of human status, like men (46). In this story, at Ruth mention's about Peking Man, LuLing perks up: "Not just man, woman too" (Amy Tan 333). LuLing's words reflect her feminist idea which aims to create a human status for women. LuLing embraces female ancestors into this ancient humankind as opposed to patriarchal ideology which excludes women from human status. Needless to say, Peking Man is the origin of today's mankind. Thus, to LuLing's idea,

Peking Women, no less important than men, should be considered as ancestors of humankind. Her idea is opposed to the patriarchal ideology that she has been taught in her childhood. As we see in the ritual paying homage to ancestors, female ancestors' spirit tablets are excluded from the altar. This is to mean that LuLing's attitude is changed from women as non-human beings, to women as full human beings. They deserve respect, and recognition, equally to men.

Although LuLing successfully establishes her voice though in the modern Western feminist ideology, her psyche clings strongly to her past in China, revolving around Precious Auntie. As aforementioned, she embraces Precious Auntie as part of her identity. Even in America, she lives her life behind the shadow of Precious Auntie. To LuLing, both good and bad things in her life come from Precious Auntie's magic. As for good things, she believes it is Precious Auntie who made Ruth--LuLing's daughter-- able to talk again after her injury at the playground. Additionally, she believes that Precious Auntie's spirit guides her about which stocks to buy through her daughter's writing. As for a bad thing, she is convinced that the death of Edwin-- her American husband-- is the curse of the Precious Auntie's family. In this way, LuLing is superstitious. With her spiritual connection to Precious Auntie, not only does LuLing feel sorry for her guilt of disobeying Precious Auntie's object of marrying into the coffin-maker's family, but she also wants to express her gratefulness to Precious Auntie for her nurturing. This becomes LuLing's drive in her great attempt to remember Precious Auntie's name, regardless of the distance between China and America, the time Precious Auntie passed from the earthly world. Her existence never dies from LuLing's memory.

LuLing's psyche tying to the past in China results in inefficient communicative skills in America. This becomes her barrier to speaking out loud. Needless to say, language is a communicative tool. Not effectively communicating the English language

means lacking a channel to reveal one's own subjectivity. Although LuLing has achieved her sense of self as equal to men, she finds another dilemma which is not having a language to articulate her own feelings. She depends on Ruth as her mouthpiece to contact the society at large. This is like history repeating itself. Compared to Precious Auntie who has no sound to talk, LuLing has no language to communicate. Her communication with her daughter merely concerns general necessities in America such as food, housing, health, and neighborhood. LuLing has no language to express her sufferings, and her self-definition. As a result, she does not tell Ruth that she, herself, is an illegitimate child. She never tells her American daughter about the story of Precious Auntie in English. Because of this language barrier, LuLing's knowledge cannot be transmitted to her daughter.

To overcome this language barrier is, for LuLing, to express her self-knowledge, LuLing's feminist writing about her past in Chinese can be a means to gain power of self-definition, despite her brain illness. Her writing is autobiographical. Clark Blaise says "autobiography is the dialogue of the individual that makes him/her unique, with the vastness of time and space, all that makes him/her indistinguishable from anyone. Autobiographers realize that the true enemy of autobiographic writing is the enemy of life itself: time (205). LuLing's writing her autobiography is a case in point. In order to construe her self-knowledge, LuLing has to struggle against the flow of time which gradually obliterates her memory, especially in her senility. Her dementia--a brain disease-- makes her forget things. LuLing establishes her identity by writing in Chinese, beginning with "These are the things that I should not forget." Significantly, her writing reveals the power of self-definition. In it, LuLing speaks about her feminist ideas and maternal ancestral roots. More specifically, she writes about her story imbedded with Precious Auntie's story. LuLing reveals the Chinese oppressive culture imposed upon Precious Auntie, as well as Precious Auntie's resistance. The point is that writing of

herself and Precious Auntie is tantamount to establishing their identities which have been lost in the male dominant discourse. However, LuLing's self-definition, which is written in Chinese, can fully come to view only with the true alliance between LuLing and Ruth—her daughter.

Ruth

In this generation, Ruth is born as an American daughter who is exposed to Western culture which, as Claire S. Chow claims, emphasizes individualism and choice and personal responsibility over loyalty to family (49). For this reason, Ruth is more concerned about her responsibility in her professional sphere, than her family. However, Ruth does not have her sense of selfhood because in her job as a ghostwriter, she knows only how to translate what others want to say. As a consequence, she loses her ability to speak for herself. In other words, Ruth confronts the crisis of identity loss. The true alliance between her and her Chinese mother is the site for Ruth's self-transformation. This section will argue that Ruth's discovery of her authentic voice is derived from her sense of connection with her maternal ancestral roots in China.

Her crisis of identity loss emanates from lacking the sense of voice, the dislike of her own face, and the ignorance about the meaning of her name. Ruth has no authentic authority in her occupational life, or in her private life. In her occupational domain, she, as a ghostwriter, has no stories of her own to tell. Additionally, Ruth's work is in a setting of a male career. Thus, her womanly voice is unheard, as her client, tells her: "If you have to write this book with me, you have to believe in its principles. [...] And if you can't do that, maybe we should consider whether you're right for this project" (Amy Tan 36). This means that Ruth has no authority to voice her own ideas.

Apart from not having a voice in the occupational realm, Ruth also has no voice in her private life. Ruth suffers from not having the authority to talk for and about herself both in her childhood, and adulthood. As a child, she learns to please her mother by writing messages with a chopstick on a sand tray, and the messages are credited to Precious Auntie's ghost. Moreover, her mother—LuLing—relies on Ruth to be her mouthpiece because of her shortcoming in the English language. In her adulthood, even at the age of forty-six, she cannot talk about her true feelings to her love, Art. For example, while she is pondering about a household matter and Art wants to express his amity to her at bedtime, she feels she lacks the shared emotion with Art. She cannot explain the reason, as narrated: "She wants to explain what was wrong--but she realized she did not know. There was nothing specific beyond her bad mood" (Amy Tan 11). In today's world in America where the ideology of liberty and equality for woman is promoted, a woman, like Ruth, might not achieve her voice.

Similar to Precious Auntie's, Ruth's identity problem also embodies the notion of face. Ruth dislikes her face because it is a reflection of her mother. Drawing upon the daughterly perspective of her mother, Laurie Corbin asserts that a mother might function as a 'mirror' for her daughter, but to her daughter, it is often an unwelcome reflection (Kristi Siegel 10). In this story, Ruth dreads time in her age of forty-six because her face begins to look like her mother's, as the author narrates: "To think she used to resent having the face and skin of a perpetual teenager. Now she had down the corners of her mouth. They made her look displeased, like her mother's. Ruth brightened her mouth with lipstick" (15). Looking at herself in a mirror is tantamount to looking at her mother. This similarity is bitter to a daughter, like Ruth who does not want to look like her mother. It can be explained that Ruth considers her mother as if she were an object in patriarchal domination. For Ruth, to look like her mother can be compared to being powerlessness

like her mother. Hence, Ruth's ignorance of her mother's experience in China contributes to her identity loss, as reflected in the way that Ruth disguises her face with makeup.

Apart from her dissatisfaction with her own face, Ruth's dislike of her name results in her loss of identity. Ruth does not like her mother to call her in a Chinese way *Luyi* because it sounds like the name of a boy, a boxer or a bully. A list How to Name Baby compiled by Robin Morgan implies that a woman's name is supposed to associate with sweet, bright, helpful, good girl, in order to reflect her subordinate position (526). In other words, a woman is expected to be named in a feminine way in order to meet the social construction of gender. In this story, to Ruth's understanding, her name is opposed to this naming practice because it sounds masculine. This means that Ruth has conformed to the patriarchal construction of gender. Thus, within this ideology, the loss of Ruth's identity is derived from her ignorance of her Chinese name's meaning.

There is an event confirming Ruth's identity loss in which she unconsciously talk to nature. The author narrates: "[At the beach] Ruth now stooped and picked up a broken shell. She scratched in the sand: Help. And she watched as the waves carried her plea to another world" (127). This reveals that Ruth needs someone to help her with the unexplainable problem. When her voice is unheard in this earthly world, she unconsciously turns to nature. This story revolves around superstition, or the connection between existing descendants and their ancestors' spirits, Ruth's ancestors would answer her plea and help her to come up with her new sense of self-definition.

Ruth's absence of a sense of self could be a result of not achieving true emancipation. Emma Goldman in her essay The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation points out: "Now women are confronted with the necessity of emancipating themselves from emancipation, if they really desire to be free" (215). In other words, among the mainstream of woman's emancipation in America, women can be trapped in illusory

emancipation because true emancipation has to begin in their inner desires, not from social givens. Following Goldman's assertion, Ruth's emancipation is considered deceptive because she does not have the vital right to choose her own destiny. Her everyday life and social relations are constructed through inequality. More specifically, she is so concerned about others that she diminishes her own need. Her success in this realm is not appropriately accredited, as evidenced in the small-type of her name on her work. Ruth claims that she does not need to be acknowledged to feel satisfied but this is not exactly true. As for her cohabitation with Art, it is Art who does not want to marry her. As a consequence, Ruth had no sense of pride and belonging. Moreover, she cannot speak about her anxiety that she and Art fail to be a family because she is convinced that it is more her fault than his (Amy Tan 95). This means her talents of using words in today's world does not bring her a true sense of emancipation. It can be explained that the social givens of emancipation are synonymous with ridiculous notion of being both sweetheart for Art, and responsible ghostwriter. These conditions give her no chance to move outside the social givens.

Because of no selfhood, Ruth is a silent woman. Belenky and her colleagues in their study of silent women's behavior find that silent women are submissive to the immediate commands of authorities, not to the directives of their own inner voices. In this story, Ruth is a silent woman in Belenky's definition. She just lets the outside in, having eyes and ears to pay attention to other people's obsessions. Ruth tells Art:

Sometimes I feel like I'm a pair of eyes and ears, and just trying to stay safe and make sense of what's happening. I know what to avoid, what to worry about. [...] I haven't had anything inside me to figure out where I fit in or what I want. If I want anything, it's to know what's possible to want.' (Amy Tan 326-327)

This attitude reflects an extreme denial of self and dependence on external authorities for direction. Merely listening to external directions, Ruth cannot project her inner voice

because she perceives it as unworthy of attention. Her life is consumed by immediate commands of authority such as her clients, and her family for routine survival, and for impending difficulties in order to make everything in her life perfect according to the concept of good employee, good woman for Art's family.

Ruth's restless distress can be similar to that of her mother. Ruth possesses some characteristics which have been inherited from her mother. In particular, she is superstitious, like her mother. For example, she usually counts things to do each day. When she cannot remember what Nine is, she talks to herself: "What was Nine? Nine was usually something important, a significant number, what her mother termed the number of fullness, a number that also stood for Do not forget, or risk losing all" (Amy Tan 18). This means that Ruth has been instilled with Chinese superstition by her mother. The point is that Ruth's mind works in the same as with her mother's. And this characteristic traps Ruth into anxiety, like her mother.

Apart from Ruth's superstition, she is similar to her mother in terms of strength to survive when she is unheard, or uncared for. In other words, Ruth and her mother are metaphorically compared to orchids. The author narrates Ruth's reaction when she sees flowers for sale in a supermarket: "Ruth decided to splurge and buy a small orchid plant with ivory blooms. Orchids looked delicate but thrived on neglect. [...] They never died—you could count on them to reincarnate themselves forever" (Amy Tan 35). Orchids have some characteristics that resemble the daily situation of Ruth and her mother. In particular, Ruth's life is consumed by deadlines of her work. Consequently, she becomes inattentive about her mother's illness. However, her mother tries to thrive on. As for Ruth, her surrounding people such as Art and his children are unconcerned about Ruth's good intention to make all household matters perfect. They say in unison: "Why do you (Ruth) have to make everything so difficult?" (Amy Tan 19). This means her voice is

unheard in this family. Despite needing attention, this pair of mother and daughter can thrive on the neglect of people around them for their daily ordinariness.

Besides their similar personalities and having a similar problem of lacking proper attention, Ruth and LuLing have a similar difficulty which bears on the notion of language and power. Foucault tells us that power is located in language. This is to mean that language can manipulate one's way of thinking because the language organizes the way we see the world (Hans Bertens 157). In this story, both Ruth's and LuLing's languages are not sites to gain power because their languages do not achieve the purpose of communicating their thoughts. LuLing cannot communicate to her audience who, in this context, is Ruth. LuLing wants to tell Ruth about her family history, but her incompetence in English prevents her from recounting it. Thus, LuLing's subjectivity cannot be perceived. In contrast to LuLing, Ruth has a communicative tool but her shortcoming of subjectivity makes her talent fruitless. This means they both possess different essential communicative components. As a result, Ruth's writing talent and LuLing's subjectivity do not bring them a sense of power in Foucault's theory as long as this pair of mother and daughter cannot form a true alliance.

In the crisis of identity loss, the incorporation of Ruth and LuLing leads to the way of gaining their sense of self through real talk. Drawing on Belenky and her colleagues, *real talk* requires careful listening. Also listening to others no longer diminishes women's capacity to hear their own voice. The capacity for speaking with and listening to others while simultaneously speaking with and listening to the self is an achievement (144-145). In Belenky and her colleagues' idea, Ruth's changing her identity into subjectivism is a case in point. Through real talk with her mother, Ruth discovers that her mother's and grandmother's experiences are closer to hers. Listening to their voices is like listening to her inside. Apparently, her grandmother lives in the oppressive culture

where her identity is not recognized. Like Precious Auntie, Ruth's professional success is not recognized. As for her mother, Ruth's self perception is not different from her mother's. More specifically, they both tend to give their first priority to other people over themselves. For example, her mother gives up her chance to come to America to her sister, GaoLing. Consequently, her mother gets stranded in Hong Kong. Like her mother, Ruth often trivializes her own interest, as Art says to Ruth: "[you] tend to think about you second" (Amy Tan 310). Hence, this discovery of her mother's and grandmother's stories provides Ruth with a shared recognition. It helps her understand not only her family history, but also herself. In this sense, Ruth achieves her selfhood through real talk.

Listening to LuLing's revelation of the connectedness with Precious Auntie, Ruth feels that her self-transformation correspondingly rests on the connection with her mother and Precious Auntie. According to Mary Field Belenky and her colleagues' findings on maternal authority and the transition to subjectivism, women are no longer willing to rely on higher status and powerful authority in the public domain for knowledge and truth. Instead, they consider turning to mothers and grandmothers, who have a similar experience to their own (60). In the same fashion, Ruth's discovery of her maternal ancestral origins in China makes Ruth understand her identity, and gives her a sense that she is part of a story larger than her own. This makes her achieve a sense of belonging. The author narrates the scene in which Precious Auntie's name is recovered: "Gu Liu Xin. She had existed. She still existed. Precious Auntie belonged to a family. LuLing belonged to that same family, and Ruth belonged to them both" (Amy Tan 336). At this point, her self-identification with her ancestral roots makes her come to fulfillment.

Along with self-definition on the ground of her ancestral roots, Ruth also constructs her selfhood on her knowledge about her name. Similar to the loss of Precious Auntie's name, Ruth's ignorance of the meaning of her name concerns her identity

problem. As previously mentioned, Ruth does not like to be called ‘Luyi.’ When she knows the origin of her name she is amazed and gratified that her mother has put so much heart into her. Her Chinese name *Luyi* means “all that you wish” in Chinese. This can be interpreted that Ruth is all that her mother wishes. In other words, she is everything for her mother. Aside from this literary meaning, this name also has a hidden meaning, concerning true alliance. To illustrate this point, this name is derived from Sister Yu, Yu Luyi, a strong Chinese woman who lets LuLing have a chance to come to America. Whereas Sister Yu gives LuLing a chance to journey across the geographical boundary to America, land of freedom, in their view, LuLing gives her daughter—Luyi— support to take a journey across the psychological barrier in her self-transformation into language and action. This also suggests that LuLing has wished Ruth to become a person with whom LuLing can establish a true alliance.

Apart from the discovery of her name’s meaning, Ruth no longer cares about her face which is rather similar to her mother’s. At this point, she admits the similarity among her, her mother, and her grandmother, as we can see in Ruth’s pondering the picture of her grandmother. The author narrates: “The picture of the grandmother is in front of her. Ruth looks at it daily. Through it, she can see from the past clear into the future” (337). It is clear that Ruth’s acceptance of her maternal ancestral roots. Ruth accepts that everything about her existence, including her face, is biologically derived from her grandmother, and her mother. Looking into the photo of Precious Auntie, she can see part of herself in it. Born of LuLing who is born of Precious Auntie, Ruth considers herself as Precious Auntie’s existence in today’s world. Therefore, whatever she looks like, it suggests the blood connection between her and her maternal ancestors.

Simultaneously with changing her attitudes about her name and face, Ruth’s shift into subjectivism also significantly concerns her discovery of her voice. Drawing

upon Belenky and her colleagues' idea, for subjectivists, the self is nascent and amorphous; the inner voice is a new experience. Subjectivist women must ignore other voices so that they can nurture the seed of the self (136). Ruth's shift into subjectivism is a case in point. In the past, Ruth cannot hear her inner voice because her attention is on external forces. But not until after she has discovered her family history, can Ruth sense that her inner voice comes from her maternal ancestors. While starting to write, Ruth can hear Precious Auntie's voice saying: "Think about your intentions. [...] What is in your heart, what you want to put into others" (338). At this moment, Ruth just turns away from external authorities to listen to her inner voice which is a resource for her self development. In other words, Ruth's discovery of her family history can be compared to a seed for her sense of self. And Ruth has to nurture the seed in order to grow up and to stand tall as its potentiality.

While listening to her inner voice, Ruth nurtures it as the seed of selfhood and develops it into full emancipation. Emma Goldman tells us that in order to achieve full emancipation, women are imperatively to learn lessons of oppressive experience and the struggle against it through their effort (224). In this story, Ruth learns from explicit oppressive experiences and radical struggles of her mother and Precious Auntie. These lessons are emancipatory because they encompass Precious Auntie's and LuLing's thoughts, feelings, and actions. In addition, they are so penetrating that Ruth is released from her illusive emancipation. Instead of being confined to the superstition and attempting to thrive on neglect, Ruth learns that her full emancipation rests on nothing but the true alliance with her maternal ancestors, as the author narrates: "[Ruth knows] where happiness lies, not in a cave or in a country, but in love and the freedom to give and take what has been there all along. (338-339). This can be interpreted that Ruth, with a free mind, has changed from a woman who is confined behind the wall of silence to one who

repositions herself as a subject. Her full emancipation is not the autonomy gained by separating herself from others. Rather, Ruth's emancipation is defined through relationships with her mother and Precious Auntie whose love has been given to their daughters for a long time.

Ruth's new perspective of her maternal ancestors fosters action. Using stories of her mother and Precious Auntie as important ingredients, and her writing talent as a means, Ruth can establish her niche, in dissociation from conventional attitudes but association with her maternal ancestral roots. Drawing upon Vivian Gornick in her essay Woman as Outsider, the literary concept of the outsider speaks about the idea of a human being who, for mysterious reasons in mysterious ways, is outside the circle of ordinary human experience. Instead of embracing oneself into such a circle, the writer stands beyond it (126). In following Gornick's claim, Ruth—as writer— speaks from her position beyond the circle of common experience. As a result, her writing provides an alternative which challenges a conventional patriarchal assumption that women are created for the benefit of men. On this grounded position, Ruth thinks of herself, her mother, and grandmother as subjects. Thinking over what has happened to them, and how these stories have been distorted, Ruth ultimately dissolves a mystery of her family. For Ruth, this mystery becomes my-story, at this point, as revealed in her cooperation with Precious Auntie's voice. Ruth writes: "[What] happened, why it happened, and how they can make other things happen. They (Ruth and Precious Auntie) write stories of things that are but should not have been. They write about what could have been, what still might be. They write of a past that can be changed" (Amy Tan 338). More importantly, their writing corrects misunderstanding about them. Precious Auntie, LuLing and Ruth have been deplorably viewed as outsiders. As mentioned, Precious Auntie is not counted as a member of the ink-maker's family. LuLing is disowned and thrown away into an orphanage. Ruth is not

accredited for her success. Thus, in speaking about their outsider's experiences, Ruth eventually establishes her niche in her writing career.

Apart from making her niche in a career, Ruth's writing also proves that Precious Auntie, LuLing and herself have changed their identities on the ground of motherhood-daughterhood bond. Their identities come to view because these women define each other. And it is Ruth who, in this relay race, brings them into the public realm. Their definitions are beyond the frameworks and external authorities, but within their true alliance. Even though the institution of motherhood is repeatedly destroyed, motherhood remains. But Ruth's discovery of her maternal ancestral story fosters her empowerment. At this point, Ruth recognizes her mother and grandmother as strong women who achieve the truest sense of emancipation. At the same time, Ruth releases herself from illusive emancipation, and eventually repositions herself in a sense of connection and relatedness to LuLing and Precious Auntie. In this light, it would not be an overestimation to conclude that the changing of identities of these three women arises from the true alliance between motherhood and daughterhood.

Virginia Woolf asserts that it is necessary for a woman to have a room of her own. In Woolf's essay of A Room of One's Own, she implies that a woman needs private space to be herself. And to lock the door of her room means to have the power to think for herself (354). Ruth's discovery of her grandmother's and mother's stories can be compared to a psychological room where Ruth is allowed to have the power to think about herself. Her room is free from the pervasiveness of external authorities. At this point, her cubbyhole is no longer an arena for her to work as ghostwriter to compete with the deadline. Rather, it has changed into a place where her writing constructed out of her psychological room can be expressed. Within this space, Ruth can write as a woman to represent her voice as distinct from others but in unison with Precious Auntie and LuLing.

Precious Auntie writes to establish her fixed identity, as a bonesetter's daughter and LuLing's mother. LuLing writes to recover Precious Auntie's identity, and identify herself as Precious Auntie's daughter. Both Precious Auntie's and LuLing's writings pave the way for Ruth to psychologically attain her own room where Ruth can think and learn about herself through the alliance with her mother and her grandmother.

Centering on Precious Auntie, The Bonesetter's Daughter can be considered to represent an allegorical aspect of the Bible. As written in the Old Testament, women had been created for man: "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man (Genesis 2:22-23). As an allegorical revision, this story proposes that women, in fact, are bodily and mentally created by their mothers. In other words, this story is not superficially about Precious Auntie who represents the limitations of women in her times. Instead, she is considered as 'an allegorical figure' who is powerful because she is recognized as the beginning of new women, as opposed to Eve. Precious Auntie's subjectivity is a model which female descendents should follow. Furthermore, Precious Auntie's death can be interpreted serving to protect women from oppression in the patriarchal ideology, in parallel to Jesus who dies to redeem the sins of mankind. Consequently, women are no longer defined by companionship with men. Rather, they define themselves through mother-daughter relationships. In reading it allegorically, this story offers hope to a woman who is confined to male-dominated ideology that she too will experience emancipation, if she can establish a true alliance in the mother-daughter relationships.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

An approach to understanding the changing identities of Chinese women demands an analysis in terms of time and place to examine in its full complexity. Therefore, the selected literary works herein vary contextually from the virtual isolation from Westerners to the Chinese expatriates living at the center of modern Western life in San Francisco. In particular, in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, the experience of Chinese women in China remains isolated from Westerners. On the other hand, The Concubine's Children concerns the Chinese sojourner society in Canada. Additionally, Falling Leaves mainly unfolds in the Commonwealth community in Hong Kong while The Bonesetter's Daughter covers the Chinese expatriates living in San Francisco with other American citizens. All these texts cover experiences beginning with their departure from their ancestral motherland, China until their return to her, and detail their new perspectives. This chapter aims to put their multiple ways of the changing of identities, situated in various contexts, in perspective by answering research questions, proposed in chapter 1. Subsequent to the analysis of these four literary works, further study is suggested.

As question (i) asks what suffering patriarchy imposes on the women in these stories, it is found that all protagonists in these selected works had difficulties in lacking discourse that allowed them to develop their sense of voice, or self. Although each lived in a different cultural milieu from that of the others, the commonality of their experience is that they were expected to devote themselves to men. Furthermore, the patriarchal effects were so palpable that most women were hardly aware of them. They become invisible to most women. Apparently, its invisibility made the patriarchal ideology more

oppressive for women. Moreover, it caused the failure of women to live up to their full human potential as reflected in each literary work. For example, the three women in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China were taught to relinquish their own desires. The grandmother was instructed to obey father and then, her husband, General Xue. The mother was persuaded to follow Chairman Mao. Similarly, in the daughter's generation, Jung Chang was reared amidst the mainstream of the cult of Mao, who was the absolute authority. In the second autobiography, The Concubine's Children, we have seen that May-ying and Hing tied to the Chinese illusion of a male dominant ideology. The mission of seeking the gold mountain in the Western reality was their dilemma. Regarding Falling Leaves, Adeline is indoctrinated to be an obedient daughter as well as the amenable youngest sister of the family according to her place in the Confucian hierarchy. Her parents and siblings took it for granted to exploit Adeline. As for the last work, The Bonesetter's Daughter, LuLing, assimilated to the patriarchy during her adolescence in her entrance to a larger realm. Viewed as an object of possession of the ink maker's family, she could be thrown into a disastrous married life. Ruth-- LuLing's American daughter-- conforms to male domination. She spends her moral capacities for promoting happiness for her man's family, as well as employing her talent as a ghost-writer career. Allowed to be nothing else essentially, female protagonists were regarded as remote and subservient due to the limited confinement of the patriarchal ideology.

To answer question (ii), what crucial events change gender identities, we might consider that these protagonists confronted two types of events, namely bad fate and the discovery of their family stories or their own perception. First, their bad fates challenge and goad them to employ their inner strengths. The protagonists came to a realization that women's oppressive culture caused their misery. Their lives were molded around the social limitations. But not until after their ordinary wishes such as normal married life,

and living with their daughters, were not granted for any reasons, they changed from women in the patriarchal discourse to ones who challenged it. Because their experiences were not conducive to the patriarchal discourse, they needed to construct their knowledge and re-identify themselves that they were also human beings. For example, in Wild Swans Three Daughters of China, when the grandmother might lose her daughter to General Xue's primary wife after his death, she managed to protect her daughter, and refused the concubinage practice. In The Concubine's Children, May-ying was disappointed with her third delivery of girl, and sad with the death of her second daughter. These two events made her realize women's oppression in the practice of concubinage. Consequently, the hopelessness of living in her husband's household, and her assumption of the male bread-winner role, provoked her to subvert patriarchal constraints. As for Falling Leaves, after Adeline's disinheritance, she realized that there was no standpoint for a Chinese daughter in the terrain of Chinese patriarchy and Western colonialism. Out of her integrity, she rejected both oppressive discourses. In The Bonesetter's Daughter, when LuLing loses her birth mother-- Precious Auntie--and is thrown out into an orphanage, she grows to be a capable woman like her mother, and identifies herself to her mother. In this way, not only did their bad fates awaken them up to their subservience, but such destinies were chances to employ their strength also.

The second type of crucial event is discovery of their family story, or their own perception. Their understanding of the reality eventuates in a new conception of themselves. In their early phase of lives, they blindly submitted to the teaching of male-domination. Exposing to injustices and harm done to women, the protagonists such as Jung Chang, Hing, and Ruth gradually learned that this was a reason of women's oppression. And their discovery of their mother's or grandmother's stories sharpened their perceptions of women's oppression. For example, Jung Chang in Wild Swans:

Three Daughters of China viewed women around her as subordinate to men. Household tasks were solely women's responsibility despite the concept of gender equality in Maoism. Additionally, Jung Chang learned that to imitate the male, namely to talk like men, wear a man's outfit, do hard physical jobs were not right channels to women's liberation. As a result, she could disassociate herself from Maoism, and reformulated her own psychological room where she thought for herself, her mother, and her grandmother. Hing in The Concubine's Children came to an understanding of her mother's suffering in the gold mountain mission. This drove her to break with Chinese traditional values of the extended family. Ruth in The Bonesetter's Daughter understands the effect of male-domination in her discovery of her ancestral stories in China. Not only does she establish a bond with her maternal ancestors, this recovery helps develop her authentic voice. In this way, the changing identities of women in their descendants derive from their discovery of the truth out of their intellectual ability.

As for question (iii), which asks what former identities Chinese women want to discard, one may conclude that they want to discard their female identities within the patriarchal ideology. None of them want to acknowledge themselves as slaves or small women--Hsiao ren-- according to the Confucian classification. After the crucial events, they no longer wanted to be associated with inferiority. In other words, they wanted to discard their patriarchal identities. For instance, in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, the grandmother, the mother, and Jung Chang did not conform to the dominant ideologies of their times. Apparently, Confucianism, Communism, and even Maoism were ideologies that silenced them. Despite the rigid social conventions, they could reformulate their sense of self. In The Concubine's Children, May-ying and Hing discarded a sense of wistfulness in favor of the realm where Chan Sam and his primary wife were supreme. Adeline in Falling Leaves rejected her inferiority according to

Chinese patriarchy and Western colonialism. In The Bonesetter's Daughter, Precious Auntie, LuLing, and Ruth untied themselves from the male domination. In these different ways of discarding patriarchal identities, all female protagonists decidedly were no longer immune to feelings of subordination.

Apart from discarding their identities within patriarchal ideology, these protagonists embraced feminist consciousness. As soon as their patriarchal identities died, it was time for the birth of feminist consciousness. More specifically, after they were aware of effects of the patriarchy, they fought for the world in which women might attain full human status. These women asserted themselves in various ways as human beings who deserved recognition and respect. For example, the grandmother in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China rejected being a chattel that her father could barter to men on her return from General Xue's household. Instead, she decided to remarry her love, regardless of objections. The mother denied traditional Chinese gender roles by working alongside men in the public realm, and by supporting other women to fight against male abuse. Jung Chang exposed herself to male dominated occupations as bare-foot doctor, and electrician. In The Concubine's Children, May-ying gained social recognition by wearing a male-style outfit. As a liberated woman, she drank, gambled, and had affairs with many men at her will. As for Hing, after she realized the Chinese illusion, she achieved her niche in the Western reality where she could be happy in her married life. As for Adeline in Falling Leaves, she embraced a male-dominated occupation to attain financial independence. In The Bonesetter's Daughter, Precious Auntie, LuLing, and Ruth shift to women of authority who speak for themselves and who define themselves in terms of their mother-daughter bond. These protagonists' experiences demonstrate how their new identities gravitate from a feminist standpoint.

The last question asks what conflicts they experience in gaining new identities and weakening the former ones. It might be considered that the protagonists had emotional difficulties. In the course of breaking away from the patriarchal discourse, the protagonists became tolerant of differences. They recognized that their desires were contradictory to the dominant discourse. For example, in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China the grandmother was preoccupied with a feeling of sinfulness for having two men in her lifetime. The mother felt guilty when she gave priority to her own need above those of her country. Moreover, Jung Chang experienced a reality which conflicted with Maoist teaching. In the second work, The Concubine's Children, May-ying and Hing suffered when the Western reality hindered their gold mountain mission. In Falling Leaves, Adeline confronted the incongruity between the Chinese and the Western ideologies. She embraced Western feminist ideology, but resisted Western hegemony. Furthermore, she rejected Chinese patriarchal ideology but she valued her Chinese ancestral roots. As for The Bonesetter's Daughter, although LuLing gains Western feminist consciousness, her psyche still adheres to her maternal roots in China. As for Ruth, her emancipation is offered as a complimentary gift for the reason of being born as an American citizen. This gift might become an invisible barrier to achieve the truest sense of independence. Also her conflict arises in the milieu where emphasis on individualism does not afford her a chance to talk on her own behalf. Thus, it was a major transition for her to identify with her maternal ancestral roots and become subjectivist. In this way, the changing of identities for all protagonists did not come easily.

When facing with emotional conflicts in their changing identities, they need to solve them; otherwise they may risk returning to the patriarchal ideology. It is found that these protagonists employed two strategies to overcome the conflicts. The first one was

employed among women in daughter's generation. That is, they established their relationship with their mothers, grandmothers, or mother figures who also recognized the existence of, were affected by the patriarchal discourse, or were opposed to the male-domination. This dissolves their serious moral dilemma in breaking the patriarchal discourse. As seen in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, Jung Chang returned to her grandmother, and mother, when she rejected being a child of the Maoist cult. Hing, in The Concubine's Children, retained her ties with her mother. Realizing the power of Chinese traditional gender roles, Hing changed her perspective towards her mother by valuing her as a family heroine. Adeline, the autobiographer of Falling Leaves, re-established the connection with Aunt Baba to claim her sense of belonging, or to identify with her true origins. In The Bonesetter's Daughter, LuLing and Ruth set true alliances with Precious Auntie in challenging external authority. Noticeably, women to whom these protagonists returned for their self-definition also embraced feminist ways of thinking. Therefore, their new identities arise from the power of a group whose members agree upon women's rights and dignity.

The second strategy, which was employed by women in mother's generation, is the motherhood experience. The maternal instincts could work for them in curing and obliterating their emotional problems. Their motherhood experience reduced the conflicts between self-actualization and the patriarchal discourse because it provided women with the experience of human connection through their spirituality and body. This cut them off from influences of the male domination. We can see in the experience of the grandmother in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, and Precious Auntie in The Bonesetter's Daughter. These two protagonists were mentally freed from the patriarchal discourse. Starting to think for their daughters, they retained and developed the capacity of resistance to male power. In particular, the grandmother and Precious Auntie

acknowledged a new meaning in their lives, when knowing their pregnancies. Devoting themselves to their daughters, they were not concerned about male power. In hard times, their daughters became the fountains of their lives. To illustrate, in her married life with Dr Xia, the grandmother could have a good time out of her feeling of real family which included her daughter. This dissolved her feeling of guilt of having two men in her lifetime. Also Precious Auntie could ignore any affront of the ink-maker's family for the sake of her daughter. In this respect, motherhood can reduce the conflicts between self-actualization and the patriarchal discourse.

In answering these four research questions, it is appropriate to conclude that these selected works illustrate that the changing identities of Chinese women emanated from their power to define themselves, and to reject the patriarchal discourse. Proposing a new image of Chinese women, their representation clearly suggests a new plot for changing women's identities in this contemporary world, as opposed to that of the Cinderella tale. Their new plots are organized around the theme of power of self-definition, quite the opposite to that of Cinderella which is stipulated by magic or external power. Her identity is easily changed from a poor girl to a beautiful princess overnight by the angel's wizard. In contrast to Cinderella, the identities of all protagonists were not passively changed by the givens or external power of their surroundings. Rather, the changing of their identities originated from their own abilities. Even though the society recursively asserted the patriarchal power to control them, these women denied it and chose to be women in their own rights.

In terms of the comparative study among protagonists in these four selected works, it is found a difference in the way the changing identities of women in China and ones in the West. The protagonists in China yearned to break the wall of the Chinese rigid patriarchy. To make it clear, in Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, the

grandmother, and the mother resisted Confucianism, and Communism, respectively. In The Concubine's Children, the main context which May-ying subverted the patriarchal values was considered Chinese domain. These family members and other expatriates in this overseas Chinese community still adhered to Chinese patriarchal principles. In her subversion, May-ying broke the Chinese rule of four virtues. As for Precious Auntie in The Bonesetter's Daughter, by her motherhood experience, she never submits to the power of male-domination.

As for the changing identities of Chinese female protagonists in the West, their path moves further towards de-Westernization as demonstrated in their connections with their familial roots. As mentioned in Claire S. Chow's book-- Leaving Deep Water (1999)-- the Western value emphasizes individual choice over loyal to family (49). In this Western mainstream, Adrienne Rich suggests that de-Westernization could begin at home (Caren Kaplan 141). To paraphrase Rich, among the dominant culture in the West, the solution for Chinese women-- who are classified as a group of ethnic-subculture-- is to establish their identities in the country of their origin, or to acknowledge their own roots. Regardless how Chinese women personally feel or think about their emancipation, or gender equality in the West, others will continue to see them as marginalized in the Western countries. Therefore, to return home would mean to gain self-esteem.

To de-Westernize themselves, their identities of these diasporal Chinese women in the West embrace their familial roots. Susan Friedman points out that despite clear geographical connections, the concept of identity can be seen as historical embedded site, a positionality, a location, a standpoint, a terrain, an intersection, a crossroads of multiply situated knowledge (19). In this respect, the diasporal Chinese protagonists in the West have embraced their historical site or ethnicity and their present location in diasporal countries in their terrain of identities. However, they do not attach themselves to China

as a country possessing their loyalty, but as their quest to the integration of ethnicity and identity. To them, after China has been left behind either by themselves or by their parents, a home returning to China give them a new meaning of *home*. Their home in China is associated with memories and their identities. Thus, *to return home* means to claim their ancestral identities, rather than to commit themselves to origin of the patriarchal discourse. For example, Jung Chang—the author of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China -- returned home to China after she had avoided thinking about her homeland for ten years. In return, painful memories of life in China were compensated by love among her family. In Denise Chong's The Concubine's Children, the power of the Confucian discourse, which was sensed in China, enabled Hing to understand the source of her parents' suffering. Similarly, Adeline Yen Mah, the autobiographer of Falling Leaves returned home to affirm her sense of belonging. As for The Bonesetter's Daughter, there is no geographical return to home in China. But LuLing and Ruth psychologically return to their maternal ancestral origins in China, which, in this context, is Precious Auntie. Upon their return, LuLing and Ruth find a strong bond with Precious Auntie that empowers them to subjectivity. Therefore, for these protagonists in the West, *home*, which refers to China, is a place to escape from, or to leave but also return to with the new meaning.

In parallel to returning home by the protagonists in the West, the diasporal Chinese feminist writers de-Westernize their works by integrating Chinese motif into their works. Their motif rests on Chinese history or tradition. Ultimately, the integration of the Chinese motif leads us to reject the concept of universal oppression which is claimed by Western feminism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1986) in her essay Imperialism and Sexual Difference contends that Western feminism has itself fallen prey to its own work by claiming to speak for all women, when it often excludes the

experience of other parts of the world (Stephen Morton 40). Similar to Spivak, Adrienne Rich's theory of 'politics of location,' in her collection Blood, Bread and Poetry (1986) asserts that whereas Western women appear to be real movers and shakers in this world of white men, there are others made marginal by white Western women themselves. Also Rich encourages non-Western women to take responsibility for these marginalizations, and to acknowledge their part in this process in order to change these unequal dynamics. Rich suggests that in order to de-Westernize itself, non-Western women have to name the ground we are coming from, the conditions we have taken for granted (Caren Kaplan 140). Illustrating the plight of Chinese women, the diasporal Chinese feminist writers in this research speak for Chinese women. Jung Chang, the author of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, revealed the difficult situations for Chinese women in feudalism, Communism, and Maoism. In The Concubine's Children, Denise Chong writes about the Chinese family in Canada whose members were attached to Confucianism amidst the harsh Western reality. Adeline Yeh Mah in her autobiography-- Falling Leaves-- recounted her life, as an unwanted daughter on the ground of the Chinese patriarchal discourse and Western colonialism. In The Bonesetter's Daughter, Amy Tan depicts the experience of women who live between the Chinese and Western cultures. Even its setting is in America, the protagonists namely LuLing and Ruth were attached to Chinese superstitions. As a result, we can see that Chinese women endure complex situations. However, it is found that these Chinese women had their own ways to break away from the fetter of patriarchal discourse.

Apart from integrating the Chinese motif in their works, these four diasporal Chinese feminist authors write both in Chinese and English to authenticate the voice of Chinese women. This bilingual writing might be viewed as their de-Westernization. For example, Jung Chang, the author of Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, writes

Chinese proverbs in English and illustrates the application of Chinese philosophy in situations. Furthermore, in The Concubine's Children, Denise Chong concurrently uses Chinese transliteration and English translation. Moreover, in Adeline Yen Mah's autobiography--Falling Leaves-- consistently presents Chinese proverbs through both calligraphy and transliteration. Finally, Amy Tan, the author of The Bonesetter's Daughter, writes a few Chinese calligraphies and characterizes LuLing by using non-standard English or fossilized language to demonstrate her subjectivities which is forged by both Western feminism and Chinese ancestral roots. Therefore, the bilingual writing can become political. Not only did these authors break out of the silence, but their language also defends their ethnicity. This reassures that marginalized women can speak about their experiences in their own way.

To some extent, their works have expunged the image of Chinese women which has been created by Western outsiders such as Pearl S. Buck. As Aihwa Ong points out, Western feminists often come to the conclusion that Third World women are passive, nonresistant, living in destructive, uniformly and similarly repressive, patriarchal families (Inderpal Grewal 238). As reflected in Pearl S. Buck's The Good Earth, Chinese women are seen as subservient. Buck reveals the experience of Olan, a slave woman whose life is equated to a chattel of her masters. Apparently, this work has been so well-received by a large number of the world audiences that it has become an effective legacy. Therefore, Chinese women are seen as submissive, subservient, powerless, and silent. In contrast to these salient characteristics of Olan, the protagonists presented by Chinese women in the contemporary world trust themselves and their ability to learn from their own experiences amidst the change around them. Unlike Olan, who conforms to the patriarchal gender roles, the patriarchy is not the source of their self presentation for the female protagonists in these contemporary works. When they learn that the external authority lead them into

subordination, they deny it and fight for a world in which they can have a fully human status. Their writings can be viewed as representations of truth about themselves which come from their positions as insiders.

This analysis has reassured the fact that in the process of equipping themselves to external change, Chinese women have developed their identities. In particular, it is found that the female protagonists had their ability to move along the change and eventually establish themselves on whatever ground. Moreover, their experiences goaded them to use their inner strength to achieve emancipation. Although the new identities are not initially the goal of their assertion, their ability to move along changes and their understanding of oppressive experiences formulates the power of self-definition. Reading their stories, we realize that the world of change, on one hand can be a threat for women. Changes borne by external power do not always purposefully advance women's status. In their stories, women's subordination is underpinned by the external change. On the other, the world of change has provided the possibilities for women to achieve legitimate power of self-definition. It necessitates employing their ability to establish themselves. And eventually, women would realize their potential and would gradually create a sense of subjectivity. Thus, women should not be afraid of change. After overcoming difficulties, and accommodating herself to change, a woman would find a new sense of self.

In relation to the psychological impact, these four selected works offer an insight into the changing identities of Asian women in the world of Western hegemony. To achieve sense of wholeness, Asian women should integrate ethnicity with identity. In my view, ethnicity does not simply mean the pride of one's own culture. But we should understand our ethnicity as its way to formulate our identity. Instead of denying the important part of ourselves, we should define it as ancestral acknowledgement. It is because one who liberally westernizes themselves is still unheard and overlooked in

Western hegemony. Paradoxically, in order to be recognized by the world at large, we might need to recognize our ethnicity. Apparently, the Chinese women in the West who move towards de-Westernization provide a new perspective of how to integrate ethnicity and identity, simultaneously with acquiring feminist consciousness. Like them, women in the influx of Western hegemony in today's world might learn to think for themselves, and fulfill their potential as human beings without an abandonment of their ethnic part.

Throughout the course of writing this dissertation, the researcher has come across some peripheral issues which are well worth a future study, such as in Wilds Swans: Three Daughters of China. For example, women one might examine how a women establishes herself in this traditionally male-dominated domain. In this story, we can see that women were not without certain forms of power, e.g. Gang of Four's influence in national leaders' decision-making.

Secondly, sisterhood in Amy Tan's The Hundred Secret Sense should be examined in terms of a contrast of experiences between two girls who live in the same household. However, due to their sisterhood bond, these two women could overcome their problems.

Lastly, the connection between the earthy and afterlife worlds should be studied. In contrast to Amy Ling's book Between Worlds which explores women's bicultural and multicultural experiences, it might be possible to study the connection between the earthy and afterlife worlds. Memories of Chinese women might be used as a resource. Talking to ghosts is embedded in the texts of Chinese diasporal writers such as Kingston's The Woman Warrior, Amy Tan's One Hundred Secret Senses and The Bonesetter's Daughter.

Reading about Chinese women's awakening allows us to accomplish two objectives. Firstly, as female readers, it might provoke a sense of feminist consciousness in our own contexts. In other words, the fact that these writings reflect social limitations

and the protagonists' subversion against male control enables us to understand our social limitations. Secondly, this awakening of feminist consciousness can inspire us to improve our own status by taking control of our lives. For example, a woman can gain the power of self-definition by strengthening her relationship with others, especially women in former generations or by reconsidering experiences which have been passed on to her. In terms of their relationships with males, women's self-definition would empower them to break the old fetters of male dominate ideology, and to create their own frame which is cut loose from the influence of any prejudices.

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