



## CHAPTER 2

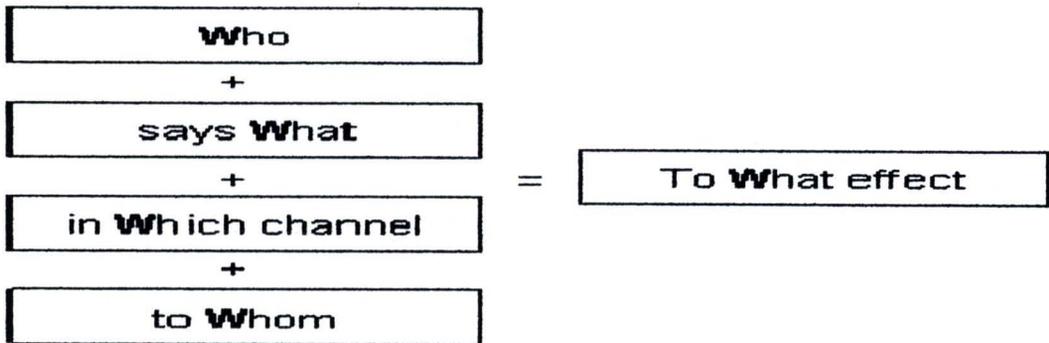
### LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 reviews the theory of the 5Ws Communication Model proposed by Harold Dwight Lasswell and previous studies related to the 5Ws Communication Model and *The Woman Warrior*.

#### 2.1 Harold Lasswell's 5Ws Communication Model

Harold Dwight Lasswell was regarded as one of America's leading political scientists and communication theorists. According to Gabriel A. Almond who wrote Lasswell's biographical memorial in the 1987 National Academy of Sciences, he was "ranked among the half dozen creative innovators in the social sciences of the twentieth century," and "few would question that he was the most original and productive political scientist of his time"(Almond 249). Lasswell's researches have resulted in several mass communication theories such as the Limited Effects Theory, Play Theory of Mass Communication, Cultivation Theory, and the Dependence Theory. Among them, the most famous theory is the model he proposed to describe and analyze mass communication processes in *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*. It is known as Lasswell's 5Ws Communication Model or as Transmission Models of Communication. According to this Model, an act of

communication can be divided into five components. These are “Who”, “says What”, “in Which channel”, “to Whom”, and “to What effect” which are illustrated in the chart below. Lasswell was the first person to write media studies literature for building up a comprehensive framework from these five elements. The five components are autonomous of each other as one may affect each individually. Therefore, in analyzing writing, multiple elements must be taken into consideration at the same time.



**Figure 2: Harold Dwight Lasswell's 5Ws Communication Model**

From the model, the first four important components on the message sender's part play a significant role in either an effective or failed communication on the message receiver's part. Lasswell asserted that the 5W model can be used to scientifically analyze communication messages in modern society. The model is especially practical when analyzing media such as radio, press, films, magazines and advertisements. Since the primary influence in the formula is the person “Who” communicates and controls the message, they have come to be closely associated with *control analysis*.

The questions to be posed for analysis could be various, among them are,

Who writes the book?

What are the objectives of writing the book?

Does the author possess first-hand experience?

Is the author subjected to any constraints?

It is obvious that “Who” influences “says What”, the content itself, and consequently, “says What” affects the reader’s responses and feedback. Moreover, “in Which channel”, the publisher, and “to Whom”, the readers also contribute to the affectivity of the communication result. Detailed descriptions and examples of the previously mentioned five aspects will be explored in Chapter Three, Research Methodology.

## 2.2 Previous Studies

### 2.2.1 Previous Studies of Lasswell’s 5Ws Communication Model

Many researches within mass communication have employed the 5Ws Communication Model. The media studied includes advertisements, TV programs, movies and others. The first case study was by 成 (Cheng) titled《蜗居》的“5W 理论”分析(*An Analysis on ‘Wo Ju’ Using 5Ws Communication Theory*). Applying Harold Lasswell’s 5Ws Communication Model the researcher analyzed the most popular Chinese television drama in 2009, “Wo Ju”. “Wo Ju” in Chinese language means “Living like a snail” or “Dwelling Narrowness” and was adapted from a novel of the

same title by Liu Liu which was published in 2006. The synopsis is about a Chinese family living in Shanghai, struggling to make ends meet during an economic hardship, where house prices have risen above the affordability level for most families. The author's description about a crazy and miserable life of Chinese people under the pressure of high prices is the most realistic blueprint of "Wo Ju". The first W, "Who", is both the author and director. The director states, "We cannot ignore the moral and the law just because we want to live in a big house and drive an expensive car." He wants the audience to reflect on the values of life instead of focusing on materialism. Incidentally, the shows content, the second W, What, becomes important. Through the story of ordinary people, the television drama easily resonates with audiences (the third W, "to Whom") who share similar lives. The fourth W, "in Which Channel", also plays a key role. The novel was published in 2006, but it did not become popular until it was adapted into a television drama in 2009. The media channel, television, enables audiences to identify with the actors and the content as if they were in the show reacting to the real life situations. The last W, "to what effect", is related to phenomenon, the drama is recognized and accepted by the vast audience and the show becomes tremendously popular. In conclusion, Laswell's 5 W Model of Communication is effectively used to demonstrate why the drama is so popular (58, 67).

卜(Bu) and 叶(Ye) conducted a study on *从哈罗德·拉斯韦尔的5W模式看当代中国对外传播中的问题与对策(Problems and Solutions of China's Contemporary External Dissemination from the Perspective of Harold Lasswell's 5Ws Model)*. In this study, the researchers identified the main disseminator, the first W, "Who", as the

government and other official media. The second W, “says What”, is the content of dissemination focusing on the social system and politically sensitive issues. The third W, “to Whom”, is not clearly targeted. The disseminator may have assumed that the message receivers could be anybody. The fourth W, “in Which Channel”, is equally important. Traditional media like radio, newspaper or television are mainly employed but new media such as the internet is ignored. Governmental channels are formal and the information presented is primarily propaganda and the promotion of China. This may result in a negative feeling towards China by foreigners who are more likely to accept non-governmental channels as trustable and neutral. The last W”, “to What effects”, clearly shows the inefficiency of the previous four Ws. Chinese media lost its voice in international and domestic news reports. Possible solutions to the problems are as follows. First, the disseminators should include universities, research institutions, enterprises, non-governmental organizations, all citizens and other media. With multiple media channels, the message can reach a wider audience of different backgrounds and social standings. Then, the message to be disseminated should include the image of China as a peace-loving nation, the achievements of Chinese economic reform and authentic Chinese culture. The information to be presented should also include material that can be understood and accepted by foreign audiences. As for the audiences, “to Whom”, the disseminators should be aware of their diversity. Foreign audiences can differ significantly from domestic audiences due to different environments, customs, languages, as well as differences in education and social systems. Therefore, the audiences or message receivers should be more clearly identified. To prevent China from being misread by Westerners, there is a need to change the obsolete dissemination policy and adopt the people’s voice. The improved

schema will result in greater effects of dissemination and thus establish an attractive and diplomatic image of contemporary China (25-26).

In addition, 侯 (Hou) conducted a study on *用5W模式剖析《演艺圈周刊》杂志* (*Analysis of 'The Entertainment Weekly Magazine' Using The 5Ws Model*) which was published in *安徽文学* (*Anhui Literature*). In this article, the 5Ws model was applied to analyze the orientation of *The Entertainment Weekly Magazine* and find the reasons why this low-grade magazine receives significantly high sales and popularity figures. The findings illustrated proper strategies used by the message sender. The editor in chief, the “Who”, understands their role and what they are doing. They have chosen the most interesting events, the “says What”, and renders these events for the audience. The celebrities’ private lives, colorful pages and the low price altogether stimulate enthusiasm with audiences. Then comes the third W, “to Whom”. Fervent news consumers include both women and men. Women are more enthusiastic about fashion, health and cosmetics, anything to make them look more attractive. Meanwhile men are more concerned about current affairs, social, military and sports news. Women, therefore, are more likely to be loyal buyers of entertainment magazines. Another group is youths. They are fanatical, tending to regard stars as idols and have economically affluent parents contributing to their spending power. With the specified two groups of consumers, the message sender is aware of what to present for sale, eye-catching and luring advertisements with exciting content. The editor selects the advertisements according to the magazine position. Advertising of medical and cosmetology account for 80% of the magazines advertising and the target market consists primarily of women. This is followed by drinks and mobile phone

ring tones, which account for 15% of the magazine ads and the target market consists of opulent youths. A small portion, 5%, is left for other types of advertising including the recommendation of new products, wedding photography, e-coupons, and so on. In this manner of operation, the magazines receive substantial revenue to support them in continuing to operate and enjoy their popularity (353).

### **2.2.2 Previous Studies of *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts***

Featuring the distinctive perspectives of diaspora writing, Chinese American literature has received international and domestic recognition in academic circles and among readers over the last forty years. As a representative of Chinese American literature, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, by Maxine Hong Kingston received significant amounts of criticism and praise from the American literary society. Previous studies have focused on literary style, Feminism, and Orientalism. The primary discussions have centered on its theme and literary style to analyze whether it is fiction or non-fiction. Most critics stress that it is a fictional autobiography and that it misrepresents China, whilst Kingston considers herself to be misread. The resultant notoriety led to a debate of culture and misrepresentation between the authors Maxine Hong Kingston and Frank Chin. Chin believed that Kingston misrepresented the Chinese and their culture by portraying stereotypes which catered to the interests of Westerners. Chin specifically wrote a satirical novel about Kingston in addition to an article claiming “This is Not an Autobiography” (Chin 1985 109-30). In this research five studies concerning various aspects of *The Woman Warrior* will be presented.

The first study explored the historical context of Chinese misrepresentation in Western society. Separatist tactics and negative portrayals against the Chinese emerged from a long founded prejudicial history in Western literature since the 19th century. Dave Williams' *Misreading the Chinese Character: Images of the Chinese in Euro-American Drama to 1925* and, *The Chinese Other: 1850-1925* focused on how Chinese culture was misrepresented in Euro-American dramas during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century (Conceison 382-87). Williams' assessment of Chinese stereotypes which were proliferated in the dramas was based on thorough research and chronological analysis of the society and dramas. The real life backdrop of Chinese migrating to America where they unlawfully built communities and took low-paying labor jobs created a culturally hostile atmosphere. *The Orphan of China* was the first Euro-American drama to portray China negatively and it was a commercial success. Chinese images did not appear again in dramas until after the First Opium War. After the war, a range of "X in China" plays appeared. The majority misrepresented Chinese through various negative stereotypes, employing tactics such as humor and demonization. Real life events influenced an ambition to distance Euro-American and Chinese cultures. Euro-American audiences became accustomed to and comfortable with the portrayal of Chinese as foolish foreigners, taking pleasure in ridiculing the minority. Most dramas displayed a clear prejudice against them in an attempt to gain success in American society. Titles of dramas such as *The Chinese Must Go* reinforced the anti-Chinese bias. This was a powerful way of turning the mass of uneducated Americans (in terms of Chinese culture) against the dubious Chinese. However, some drama writers who had positive experiences with the Chinese attempted to stage dramas portraying a more positive and accurate



representation. Unfortunately, these often fell on deaf ears and received little attention.

A more detailed misrepresentation of China in literary works written by Chinese Americans will help people to understand how misreading occurs. Sheng-mei Ma asserts that Orientalism is the reason why both Western readers and English reading Chinese audiences misinterpret China and Chinese culture. Her article *Orientalism in Chinese American Discourse: Body and Pidgin* analyzes the Orientalizing tendencies in Chinese American discourse by extending the theory of Orientalism in the Near East described by Edward Said to the Far East (104-17). Said defines Orientalism as “a means for the West to grasp and domesticate the other (East)” and “one culture’s attempt to control the other by fashioning it, a malleable object, according to one’s own imaginings” (Said as quoted in Ma 104). Through creating an imagined perception, Western audiences assume a sense of authority to fashion things however they desire to see them. This article aims to explore the cultural misrepresentation of the orient in American society, especially among Chinese Americans. Western interpretations of the orient are often based on learned experiences influenced by anti-Chinese propaganda resulting in racist stereotyping. Chinese American authors disassociated themselves from Chinese culture and instead identified with American society where they could be recognized and accepted. In doing so they defined the West as a superior force and China as regressive. In some of their works, the authors generalized and stereotyped the way Chinese talked as ‘alien’ and categorized them with elephants, dwarves and midgets. Chinese immigrants are described as semi-humans, monsters. Villains are typecast as sinister and brute hordes whilst

heroes are portrayed as helpless heathens, sidekicks and inferior allies (107). Questioning Chinese humanity and emphasizing the negative traits of their mannerisms and appearance is an act of isolation. Chinese American writers, intentionally or not, exhibited alleged power through Orientalization. However, in their denial of origin and association with America a paradox is exposed in that the image and power of Orientalism is actually perpetuated against them since their heritage is Chinese (107).

Thirdly, an infamous cultural debate between the Chinese American authors Maxine Hong Kingston and Frank Chin will be exemplified. The focus will be on how they accused each other of misrepresentation and stereotyping China and its culture. In the study *Chinese American Writers of the Real and the Fake: Authenticity and the Twin Traditions of Life Writing*, Madsen attempts to argue against Frank Chin's attack on Kingston in her *The Woman Warrior* for being "fake" and "un-Chinese" (Chin as quoted in Madsen 267). To Chin, Kingston's representation of Orientalism is a false inheritance of a "high" tradition found in Chinese American autobiography writing. His accusation derives from regarding the low or working class as an authentic tradition of Chinese American writing, which Kingston fails to identify with. Like many other Chinese American autobiographers, Kingston attempted to reveal an authentic China and apologize for the overwhelming burden of low class Chinese immigrants on America. Madsen adopts the concept of competence from a structuralism perspective in order to analyze the discourses of Orientalism and Occidentalism within the context of Chinese American autobiography writing, the memoir of Kingston is a case of this. Kingston strives to authenticate her Chinese

ethnicity whilst attaining American nationality. Like her contemporaries- Chiang Yee, Jade Snow Wong and Yuan Wing, she adopts various aspects of foundational American contexts. For example, Kingston clarifies the myth of Chinese culture, beliefs, conducts and rituals by pointing out the rationale behind them in order to ascertain that Chinese and Americans are similar despite their cultural differences. This results in a questionable authenticity and cultural discourses throughout her writings. To achieve authenticity, Chin challenges her to write within the working class tradition of struggle against economic deprivation, violence and discrimination. However, Chin himself confesses that the genuine Chinese American tradition is fundamentally a transmission comprising the narratives of old folks, the immigrant's descriptions of their harsh life and the figurines of animals, babies and fighters displayed on the shelves of Chinatown. To Madsen, Chin's accusation is pointless as the images Kingston uses in *The Woman Warrior* are similar to what Chin projected in his works, the back scratching sticks, chopsticks and lotion with a Buddha head lid. In this regard, Kingston weaves her background and imagination into her writing and should be viewed as such (Madsen 268).

The misreading of Chinese culture in Western audiences may stem from the fact they already hold a fixed idea of what Chinese culture is. Jonathan Culler states that the readers of literary texts are assumed to be equipped with the required interpretative competence to regard the texts as being literary — a poem, a short story, for example, and not a fact (as quoted in Madsen 262). Reading the Orientalist texts through their stereotyped and prejudiced vision cannot erase their fixed ideas and enables the real perceptions as intended by the writers. To conclude, Madsen

proclaims Kingston's authenticity arguing against an accusation heaped on her as being a fake Chinese American, and as a distorted view reflected in a stereotyping mirror of the viewers' incompetent understanding and interpretation.

The study titled *Empowerment Through Mythological Imaginings in The Woman Warrior* explores how Kingston utilizes her writing to become empowered in America and China where she must have felt unfairly treated by America and China (Johnston 136-46). It presents the argument that the Chinese woman (Kingston) is empowered through mythology in *The Woman Warrior*. It analyses the three worlds described in her memoir. These are the real world of China, the myth world of China and Chinese culture, and the world of reality in American society. In the real world of China, women are second class citizens, treated in this patriarchal society as inferior to men. In American society, Chinese women are equal to men. However, in the mythical world presented in *The Woman Warrior*, only the female Chinese, protagonist is more powerful than men. She has a louder voice, commits heroic acts and is regarded as superior. Nonetheless, far more female characters are seen as oppressed, weak and irrational. Influenced by Orientalism and stereotyping, Western readers will regard the low status of Chinese woman presented in the non-fiction book as being true. English speaking Chinese readers will also feel empowered in response to the mythical presentation of female characters in the non-fiction biography as real. Both result in the misreading of the real Chinese.

Kingston attains empowerment through writing her biography in a mythological context where she identifies with the superior protagonist. Elements of biography are mixed with myth, fiction with non-fiction. When she writes her biography via

mythical stories, the book becomes unreasonable and paradoxical. For example, her mother's name is Brave Orchid. Brave connotes masculinity and power, whilst Orchid suggests inferior feministic qualities. Assuming masculine power, her mother tries to silence her by cutting her tongue. Taking the role of a caring mother, the feminine quality, she explains the reason for cutting her tongue is to free and enable her to speak any language. Kingston becomes empowered through this myth and feels at liberty to express herself and her origins. Johnson analyzes that the memoir is Kingston's revenge. She expresses her anger toward both China and America. On the one hand, she feels second class in China whilst in America she feels meaningless. In America life is based on scientific facts but she dwells amid this notion with great irritation. The society wants her to become a scientist and mathematician while she wants to be a writer putting her imagination to work. Johnston sympathizes with her for having to exist amongst this dilemma. He concludes by stating that Kingston creates a fantasy world to empower herself through writing her biography in an imaginary mythological context.

*The Woman Warrior* has been accused of and questioned for fabricating an alternative reality. However, it has also received critical acclaim. Lim in *The Woman Warrior: Her Planetary Asian American Imagination* believes that Maxine Hong Kingston brings to light women's issues and highlights their unfair treatment in China and America (4-5). With their high regard to the book, Chin along with Amy Ling proposed to the MLA (Modern Language Association) to include Asian American literary studies in their division which has resulted in the recognition of this particular canon of literature not only in America, but also worldwide. To Lim, *The Woman*

*Warrior* was found “astonishingly multi-layered, richly stylized, provocatively historicized, mythologized, feminist, and aesthetic” (4). The book displays Kingston’s narrative techniques and imaginative pyrotechnic at her best. Lim praised Kingston as a bold feminist in line with Athena, the Greek Goddess warrior, who sprang forth from Zeus’ forehead, the absolute patriarch, her Godfather. While others criticize Kingston as having fabricated Chinese culture from her mother’s “talk stories,” Lim sees her work as experimental boldness, writing in the English language with a constant second home language in her ear and her Mother as a cultural trove. Kingston’s story is mythological; she re-imagines the stories told by her mother a Cantonese immigrant, into her own, defying Chinese customs and traditions along the way. She strikes against racism, boldly countering her boss’s remark on the “nigger yellow” paints by saying to him outright “I don’t like that word” (Kingston 46). Her voice is universal, pivoting out of girlhood among ghosts, to a Chinese immigrant and then a woman in America. Kingston boldly declares her identity as a world citizen telling her mother, “We belong to the planet now, mama. Does it make sense to you that we are no longer attached to one piece of land, we belong to the planet? Wherever we happen to be standing, why, that spot belongs to us as much as any other spot.” (Kingston 107).

To this day previous studies have concentrated on dissecting whether *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* is a non-fiction autobiography or a fictional work. Arguments have centered on the book’s reality and mythological aspects, but have shallowly delved into cultural misreading through the analysis of the authentic China as represented in *The Woman Warrior*. With reference to Orientalism

as described earlier, this research intends to shed new light on cultural misrepresentation and the misreading of Chinese culture in *The Woman Warrior*. The 5Ws Communication Model will be implemented to analyze Chinese American literature controversies in *The Woman Warrior* to find out how China is misread, and to what extent.