

ABSTRACT

This study examines the gender roles and patriarchy experienced by the female protagonist, Wu Zetian, in Xiran Jay Zhao's *Iron Widow*. The objectives of this study are to analyze the struggles of unfair treatment that Wu Zetian receives because of the traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms in society. This study employs a feminist approach and utilizes library research as the method of data collection, using the novel *Iron Widow* by Xiran Jay Zhao as the primary source, with secondary sources including various journal articles, books, and research papers. The analysis shows that Wu Zetian is enforced to traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms since childhood. This cause her to be more hostile around others and constantly asserting dominance to be recognized. The conclusion of this study is that traditional gender roles and patriarchal society cause harm to women due to the inequality of opportunities that women had to fight twice as hard to be recognized as equal to men.

Keywords: *Iron Widow*, gender roles, patriarchy

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