

American Perspectives of Chinese Culture in Amy Tan's the Joy Luck Club

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Abstract

The novel *The Joy Luck Club* was written by Amy Tan, an American author of Chinese Heritage. The novel was published in 1989. The novel tells the stories of four Chinese immigrant women who met in San Francisco and formed a club known as *The Joy Luck Club* where they play a game called Mahjong and dine together. It is structured as four parts which is divided into four sections and each section consists of four stories in it, totally sixteen interlocking chapters. Each section starts with a parable which relates the theme of the four stories in that section. The novel mainly focuses on the story of four Chinese mothers and American born daughters. The protagonist of the novel is Jing-Mei woo daughter of late Suyuan-woo who is the founder of *The Joy Luck Club*. The first part explains the story of four mothers past lives, the second section tells the daughter's childhood, third section is about the daughter's adulthood and the fourth section narrates the story of the mother's adult lives. The protagonist Jing Mei narrates the whole story on behalf of others. Thus the novel explains the conflicts between American born daughter's and Chinese mothers. Amy Tan has written this novel in the American perspective daughters focus on the Chinese folklore.

Keywords: Storytelling and Narration, Cultural Identity, Chinese Culture, Interlocking Stories.

Introduction

The term "Asian American" was invented to stimulate governmental cohesion and traditional autonomy among Asian Americans in the United States. It allowed them to identify as a subgroup with shared concerns and articulate their individuality. In 2000, the U.S. Survey defined "Asian American" as anyone with origins in Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Chinese American literature is crucial in American literature, exposing and communicating the experiences of Chinese American people, defining the United States as a multicultural, multi-ethnic country, and dismantling Anglo-centred American literature stereotypes. Chinese American authors have contributed to the American literary landscape with their works. Chinese-American writers including Amy Tan, Frank Chin, Maxine Hong Kingston, Sui Sin Far, and Frank Chin created the genre of Chinese American literature in the 19th century. Assimilation, tradition and modernization, and the

generational gap in Chinese American households are among the topics it examines. The genre first appeared in the 20th century, and as Chinese Americans' works have developed, it has come to represent the difficulties they encounter in mainstream, white American society.

Amy Ruth Tan is an American author of Chinese heritage, best known for her work *The Joy Luck Club*. Born in Oakland, California, Tan was the second of three children to Chinese immigrants John and Daisy Tan. Her father, an electrical engineer and Baptist minister, migrated to the US to escape the Chinese civil war. Amy Tan worked as a freelance technical writer for ninety hours a week before publishing her first novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, in 1989. Her novels explore Chinese history and culture, often focusing on issues of sisterhood, but they don't become stale with repetition. Her details vary from novel to novel, allowing her to explore new approaches and explanations.

American Perspectives of Chinese Culture

After the Japanese invasion in China, thousands of people migrated to America. There they started a new life. This leads to the combine of Chinese American culture. Chinese people who lived in America struggles to adapt their language and culture but their children who born and grew up in America are totally Americanized and finds Chinese culture as superstitious and struggles to adapt with their Chinese parents and they got conflict with them. American people find Chinese vast tradition, culture and language very difficult to understand. Thus American culture is a day by day evolving in a great speed which Chinese can't compete with them but American children of Chinese heritage can easily go up with it. They are just Chinese hybridity but mentally and practically totally American. So they are basically called as Chinese Americans.

The Joy Luck Club is a novel by Amy Tan that explores traditional Chinese culture from an American perspective. The story follows American-born daughters who struggle to adapt to Chinese culture, focusing on the folklore and cultural identity of Chinese American writers. Amy Tan, born and raised in China, describes stories objectively and vividly, absorbing western values while capturing the essence of Chinese customs, history, and ceremonies. Her subjective understanding of Chinese customs is shaped by her mother's influence, and she examines the spirits of her mothers. Amy Tan, like other Chinese-American writers, explores the experiences and mindsets of first and second-generation Chinese Americans in American culture. Her work bridges the gap between Chinese culture and the evolving American landscape, capturing the complexities of identity and heritage, offering a glimpse into shared human experiences transcending borders and generations.

American Perspectives of Chinese Culture in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*

Amy Tan, an American writer, reflects on the cultural identity of Chinese American writers. Despite her focus on traditional Chinese culture, Amy Tan is also an American woman who grew up in China, allowing her to portray it through an American perspective. She describes her stories in first person to make them objective and vivid, while absorbing western values. Her subjective understanding of Chinese customs, history, and ceremonies comes from her mother, who teaches her about Chinese customs and ceremonies. She examines her mother's spirits as others and this American perspective is evident in *The Joy Luck Club*. She portrays an emotional tug-of-war between the daughters and their mothers, a conflict between East and West cultural values, affecting communication and autonomy. This American perspective is evident in her portrayal of the daughters' struggle for autonomy. The parables from each part explain about Chinese Mothers who struggles to teach their American born daughters Chinese tradition, language, customs and culture. Thus the novel contains four parts and each part contains four stories so totally sixteen stories. The theme American Perspective on Chinese culture revolves on the stories of Chinese American daughters.

However, American culture tends to value direct, direct communication. The women in the book follow traditional Chinese customs and traditions, such as filial piety, respect for elders, and emphasis on family and inheritance. However, in keeping with American tradition, their daughters questioned or challenged the principles of independence. Chinese culture has stronger gender roles and expectations than American culture. This book reveals the nature of these differences between mothers and daughters, particularly in regard to career aspirations, marriage, and family transitions. These girls are alienated from Chinese culture because they do not know their mothers who immigrated to China. Many girls want to be independent, which they feel does not conform to what Chinese culture expects, such as worshiping children and respecting elders. They may feel there is a conflict between their Chinese parents and their American parents, leading to conflict or confusion. Some daughters reject or reject their mother's attempts to suppress Chinese culture, considering it ancient or irrelevant to the modern world. This rejection led to conflicts and disputes between their relatives and their mothers.

American Daughters Struggle on Chinese Culture

In the novel, Suyuan Woo, a mother, initially expects her daughter June who is the protagonist of the novel, to become a prodigy without considering her individuality. However, after failing the tests, Suyuan searches for examples of remarkable children to test June. This approach, without deep communication, results in June failing the tests and disappointing her mother. Consequently, June develops antagonism and hates her mother's expectations and tests. Despite this, Suyuan Woo persists in her pursuit, even forcing June to play the piano. Despite her efforts, June believes that all this is not equal for her and has the right not to play the piano to please her mother. She refuses to be raised as a submissive Chinese daughter and launches a battle against Suyuan's domination by pretending to be bored with the tests, deliberately playing the wrong notes during piano lessons, and failing the "talent-show" concert. The author explains the conflict between Chinese mother American born daughters whose living, culture and mind set are totally opposite to their mother's.

American daughters struggle with their Chinese heritage in a number of ways. Throughout the novel, the daughters move between their identities as Americans and their identities as mothers. Chinese culture is often divided between the two. For some daughters, like Wu Jing Mei, their lack of understanding of Chinese culture makes it difficult for them to love their mothers Experience and value. The American daughters of *The Joy Luck Club* understand and embrace their Chinese roots in their own unique ways through interactions with their mothers and their own travels.

Lindo Jong, a possessive and dominating mother, is known for her prodigy daughter, Waverly. Waverly, a nine-year-old chess champion, enjoys all the privileges at home, including her brothers doing chores, having her own bedroom, and driving her brothers to sleep in the living room. However, she feels uneasy accompanying her mother to the market, where Lindo proudly boasts her daughter's achievements. Lindo talks about her strategies and takes credit for Waverly's victories, polishing her trophies daily to satisfy her pride in being the mother of a prodigy. Waverly, seeing herself as a unique girl. And she was annoyed by her mother's behaviours and tells her mother that she should not take pride on her daughter's success and also she wishes that she is not her daughter. The story highlights the tension between a traditional Chinese mother and a daughter who sees herself as a separate entity.

The conflict between mother and daughter, Suyuan and June, and Lindo and Waverly, is more intense than usual due to different ideals about being a parent or child. Chinese mothers expect their daughters to bring honor, while Lindo and Waverly represent these stereotypes. Both mothers use their daughters to advance their own interests, but their personalities are virtually identical. In the United States, people value self-reliance and self-sufficiency, making the mother's good

intentions often misunderstood by their daughters. The tensions between these two pairs highlight the complex dynamics between mother and daughter in the Chinese society.

Language Barriers and Miscommunication

American daughter's opinions about their Chinese mothers are complex and often controversial. Daughters growing up in the United States see their mothers' traditional Chinese beliefs and expectations as repressive or outdated, leading to conflict and misunderstanding between generations. Likewise, girls sometimes think their mothers are too strict or too critical, especially when it comes to education, marriage, and success. However, as the book progresses, the girls come to appreciate their mother's strength and wisdom. Through their mother's stories and events, the girls deepen their understanding of their heritage and begin to embrace their dual identities as Chinese and American.

Growing up in the United States, they were often caught between two cultures their mother's Chinese culture and the American culture they were exposed to. Generational differences: There is a significant generational difference between daughters and their immigrant mothers. Daughters feel alienated from their mothers. Traditional values and beliefs can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts over issues such as education, career choices and interpersonal relationships. This burden may be exacerbated by maternal stress. There are high hopes and expectations for them to achieve both goals.

Language barriers and communication barriers can exacerbate conflicts between daughters and mothers. Differences in language skills and cultural differences can lead to confusion and frustration, making it difficult for a girl to connect more deeply with her mother. Despite their frustration, girls often feel guilty and responsible for their mothers, who have sacrificed so much to provide them with good opportunities. than the United States. Mostly, the girls' struggles in stem from the difficulties of navigating between two cultures, reconciling identities, and building meaningful relationships with their immigrant mothers while struggling to be independent and successful in America.

American Modernism and Chinese Values

Many people, especially daughters of immigrant mothers, struggle with a bicultural identity. They are torn between their mother and the Chinese heritage that their mother represents. Cultures, values, and growing up in America expose you to different cultural norms and expectations. The clash between Chinese values and American modernism creates tension between an immigrant mother and her American-born daughter. Although mothers often try to pass on their heritage to their daughters, daughters resist or struggle to understand the importance of these traditions. These intergenerational conflicts reflect broader issues of cultural adjustment and adaptation in immigrant families. Some characters experience the loss or alienation of their wealth.

This is especially true for people who were born in the United States and have little exposure to their Chinese roots. The characters struggle with questions of identity and sovereignty as they try to reclaim or reconcile their American heritage and identity. The mothers of *The Joy Luck Club* try to pass on their traditions, stories and values to their daughters to inspire them with their Chinese identity. Through rituals, storytelling, and shared experiences, the characters connect with their heritage and find ways to keep it alive for future generations. Thus the identity and heritage are shown as closely intertwined aspects of fashion. We live our lives creating our own experiences, relationships and thoughts.

The problems American daughters face in Chinese culture stem from differences in culture, place of birth, and social identity. Daughters growing up in the United States often find it difficult to understand and connect with their mothers. Chinese culture can prevent misunderstandings and

misunderstandings in their relationship. Amy Tan shows how American daughters deal with a variety of challenges, including culture, communication barriers, and conflicts with their immigrant mothers. They grew up in the United States, often living apart from their Chinese traditions, and struggled to reconcile with their mother, their culture and American culture. The girls face questions of belonging and identity as they travel between two cultures and struggle to escape their Chinese culture. Through their struggles, *The Joy Luck Club* Daughters explores themes of culture, racial conflict, and self-discovery.

Overall, the American subsidiary's Joy Luck Club perspective on Chinese culture reflects the complex interplay between their own cultural identity and their mother's influence heritage. Amy Tan's experience growing up in a Chinese immigrant community highlights the arbitrary nature of motherhood and the portrayal of Chinese mothers as "other." Eye among American-born daughters. This expression reinforces the image of the "other." The author describes traditional Chinese educational methods from an American perspective. Amy Tan's portrayal of Chinese culture is influenced by her American background, as she did not grow up in China, so she writes from an American perspective.

Conclusion

Amy Tan, an American novelist, skilfully incorporates traditional Chinese culture elements into her stories, enhancing plot development and character features. Her immigrant culture is a significant aspect of the United States' tapestry. *The Joy Luck Club*, her popular best-seller, resonates with readers of all backgrounds. Her work has been extensively analysed, highlighting its literary value. Her Chinese-American identity is a significant concern in contemporary criticism, but her incorporation of Chinese elements in her works satisfies Western readers' novelty-hunting tastes and gives her works distinctive features. Her work is a testament to Amy Tan's unique perspective and cultural blend. This novel is effectively blend Chinese elements with American culture, blending past and present, young and old, legend and reality, Chinese tradition, and American culture.

However, Tan's understanding of China differs significantly from the real situation in China, as she reshapes Chinese superstitions, folklore, and historical events to fit American tastes. This may initially attract readers with exoticism, but readers will soon realize that the themes and feelings are typical of Americans, with the mystical China providing a misty background. The literary Critics and the academician should focus on the overall ideology and theme of the work rather than the writer's origin or materials. Tan, unlike many of the Chinese-American writers, has managed to use her ancestral origin while stepping out of the shadow of Chinese culture, making her an American writer.

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