

INTERPRETATION OF LOVE AND CONFLICT BETWEEN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER BASED ON THE NOVEL «THE JOY LUCK CLUB» (喜福会)



<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7335817>

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**Annotation:** *«The Joy Luck Club» is a representative work by Amy Tan , a well-known American writer of Chinese origin. In the novel, she presents readers with a story of conflict and understanding between four Chinese immigrant mothers and their daughters who grew up in the United States. In addition to the love between the four pairs of mother and daughter, the whole novel is full of many conflicts and contradictions: contradictions and conflicts between mother and daughter. In this article, the sad and happy stories of the four mothers and daughters in «The Joy Luck Club» will be taken as a starting point for interpreting the love and conflict that exists in the novel.*

**Keywords:** *«The Joy Luck Club», mother and daughter, love and conflict, interpretation.*

The four mothers of the «The Joy Luck Club» have their own worldview, and their worldview is based on their life experiences in China. These women immigrated to the United States for decades, but still remember the traditional education they received from childhood and adhere to the feudal-patriarchal ideology that has been absorbed into the blood of Chinese women for thousands of years and has become almost natural. Their general principle is to strictly educate and control their daughters so that they can avoid the fate of the women of their generation and become happy women in their eyes. However, the daughters grew up in the United States, hoping to share the joys and sorrows with their mothers like other children, and to share with each other their hearts, which Chinese mothers often ignore. This kind of contradiction has led to a lack of communication between the two generations of mother and daughter, although they deeply love each other.

**1. The story of four mothers and daughters in the «The Joy Luck Club»**

All the mothers in the «The Joy Luck Club» have lived through the poverty, war, disasters and suffering caused by feudalism in old China. Wu Jingmei's mother, Wu Suyuan, not only lost her husband in the war, but also had to reluctantly give up raising her twin daughters. Cyu Anmei moved from Ningbo to Tianjin with her mother, who was forced to remarry and become a concubine. The Gong Linda family is located in northern China. Years of disaster forced her to marry a worthless rich child from a young age. She was called a young mistress, but in fact she was a child bride. During the entire period of marriage, she endured all sorts of insults. In the end, she managed to muster up the courage and leave the marriage, which was created at the request of her parents. Gu Yingying, the daughter of a wealthy family, suffered greatly physically and mentally due to her husband's frequent visits to prostitutes and his depraved lifestyle. She killed the fetus in her womb because of her own hatred of her husband. Since then, she lives in despair and anger. Only when her husband died did she emerge from her desperate situation and marry an American soldier and come to America to start a new life.

Although the daughters of the «The Joy Luck Club» are also black-haired and yellow-skinned, they were born in the United States and raised in the United States. They were raised on “coke and spaghetti”. [LiJinging 2011: 2]As the mothers said, “Except for the Chinese-style hair and skin, all

their interiors are made in the United States.” The daughters speak American English, eat American food, and wear American clothes. They do not understand or can only speak or read Chinese, and they do not understand China. They misinterpret "Taiyuan" as "Taiwan". They are real Americans.

### **2. Mother's love for her daughter in the «The Joy Luck Club»**

All the mothers in the «The Joy Luck Club» love their daughters in the Chinese way. On the one hand, they are very strict with their daughters, on the other hand, they deeply love their daughters, and their bones are still imbued with thousands of years of traditional upbringing and feudal-patriarchal practices.

They, who are also victims, have a common ideal of strict upbringing and reining in their daughters so that they can avoid the fate of the women of their generation and become happy women in their eyes. The maternal love shown by the four mothers to their daughters is typical of the Chinese style, and the way Chinese mothers express maternal love is not as straightforward as American mothers. Chinese mothers won't kiss and hug their daughters like American mothers, and won't say "I love you" every step of the way.

First, the mothers of the «The Joy Luck Club» have high hopes for their daughters. They want their daughter to stand out and they plan for their daughter's future because in their eyes her daughter is still a child. They don't care if their daughter likes the plan, because in traditional Chinese culture, children must obey their parents' orders, and children cannot disobey their parents or they will be rebellious and judged by their families, neighbors, and society. Although the mothers of the «The Joy Luck Club» immigrated to a completely new country such as the United States, their thoughts about traditional Chinese culture are deeply rooted in their minds.

Second, «The Joy Luck Club» mothers are more critical of their daughters than they are of praise, which is different from American mothers. In their opinion, if they want their children to have the abilities and skills to survive in a competitive society, they must be strict with their offspring.

Third, the mothers of the «The Joy Luck Club» take care of their daughters' lives, Chinese parents want their children to have a happy life, even if they are married, mothers will still pay attention to their married life.

### **3. Four conflicts between mother and daughter in «The Joy Luck Club».**

However, the daughters resisted their mother's control in different ways.

Among mother and daughter Wu Suyun and Wu Jingjing, Wu Suyun came to the United States and believed that there were more opportunities for development in the United States, and she placed everything on her daughter. But Wu Jingjing aspired to a free Western lifestyle and was an ordinary person. Wu Suyun imposes traditional ideas on Mei, but her daughter believes that although she is her mother's daughter and not her slave, this is not China, she deserves democracy and equality, like other white children.

Gong Linda and her daughter Waverly, mother and daughter, are well aware that they both rely on each other and torture each other. The mother came to the United States with the humiliation of old China in order to have a better material life and give her children more opportunities for development. Gong Linda is proud of her daughter's accomplishments and brags to outsiders everywhere, which makes her daughter Waverly particularly disgusted. After a quarrel between mother and daughter, the relationship became strained. Although Gong Linda has not intervened directly in her daughter's life since the "chess incident" for a long time, she is still not idle when it comes to her daughter's marriage. In Chinese tradition, the marriage of children is crucial, and parents try to intervene, often with good intentions. However, the daughter did not understand her mother, believed that the failure of the first marriage could be the result of maternal witchcraft, and was afraid of another "witchcraft" from her mother. mothers. [Zhelokhovtsev 2001:28]

Contradictions and conflicts between Xu Anmei and her daughter Ruth are mainly reflected in Ruth's marriage. When a daughter faces a marriage crisis, she would rather find a psychiatrist than her mother to tell her. [Huangyuan 2013:21] The mother thinks that the psychiatrist will only confuse people more. These kinds of things should be told to the mother... For example, all kinds of seemingly trivial things in life, it has caused certain obstacles between mother and daughter. The submissive nature of Ruth was inherited from her mother. The character of this typical Chinese girl once almost made her the biggest sacrifice in her marriage, but fortunately, what she received from her mother was not only kindness and obedience, but also strength and perseverance. Ruth is married to an American. She always has an inferiority complex in front of her husband. She doesn't make decisions about anything, but she lets her husband make decisions. This is because she believes that her husband's decision will always be the best. Gradually, she began to lose her charm in front of her husband, who thought that she was avoiding responsibility, and he even filed for divorce. Xu Anmei encouraged Ruth, "Why don't you speak for yourself? Why can't you talk to your husband?" [Jin Yanfei 2011:88] Ruth took her mother's advice and spoke for herself, which surprised her husband and ultimately saved her marriage.

**Conclusion.** «The Joy Luck Club» is full of differences in the concepts and methods of family education between China and the United States. In China, people pay attention to the fact that "the orders of parents cannot be violated", that is, parents are responsible and obliged to arrange all aspects of their children's lives, from daily life to marriage. And all that children are capable of is absolute obedience to their parents. Americans treat children as equal members of the family, fully respect the individual rights of children and give children enough free space to develop. Two completely different concepts and methods of family education have their own advantages and disadvantages. The mothers and daughters of the «The Joy Luck Club», first- and second-generation immigrants, can only take advantage and avoid disadvantages through constant conflict, and finally achieve reconciliation between mother and daughter and the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures.

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