

## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This research paper is a study of the Chinese-American writer, Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. It examines upon the theme of exploring ethnic self and other issues such as identity crisis and cultural problems. Its focus is on the analysis of the experiences, anxieties and trauma of Chinese immigrants, living in the USA.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan depicts the predicament of Chinese immigrants who always lack something despite the number of opportunities available for them in the US. Tan has successfully interwoven the story with the hardships of the characters in everyday life which creates a feeling of sympathy in every reader as Michiko Kakutani comments:

Tan is able to create enormously sympathetic people who inhabit some middle ground between real life and the more primary colored world of fable. In doing so, she draws the reader into these characters' lives and into the minutiae of their daily concerns. (qtd. in Gale 3)

The immigrants always struggle to fulfill the lack in their exiled life and want to compensate the feeling of loss although it is full of confusion and misunderstanding. The characters in the novel, especially the second generation immigrants, try their best to adjust in the new cultural environment of the new world but eventually their struggle is fraught with confusion and they feel obliged to seek their cultural root.

The novel explores how a mother plays a vital role in shaping one's identity. The dedication page of the novel says – "To my mother and the memory of her mother". In fact, the mother is not only a biological mother who merely feeds and brings up a child but above all a root from where she nurtures all the difficulties, anxieties and struggles of her off-springs. She is the only source of "Joy" and "Luck" to her children.

The story of the novel revolves around the Chinese immigrant mothers and their American born daughters whose relationships are diseased with the cultural and generational miscommunication while trying to reestablish their lost selves in the foreign land. The characters in the new world struggle with the feelings of odds. Their selves are torn between the two worlds; one, the endless possibilities for maintaining a sound career with the advanced technology, second, the world of their origin in which they can feel the sense of being united with their larger cultural heritage. These characters try to sustain anyhow in the new world but the feeling of loss makes them seek their homelands.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan presents the lives of Chinese in exile. Being herself a diaspora, she has the rightful claim to represent the pain and anxieties such people undergo. The writer is full of the sense of loss of the past, which every immigrant feels. In *Literary Cavalcade*, a journal under the title "Why I Write", she remarks: "I write to discover the past for myself. I don't write to change the future for others" (Tan12). It explores that each immigrant has the same feeling of loss of harmony of past and only writing becomes the means to explore their pasts, not of China, not of Europe and America but the peoples' anxieties and pain faced by such people in the space of in-betweenness.

The novel contains sixteen stories. It has different narrators but all the stories revolve around the common theme of mother-daughter relationship. Some critics comment it only as a collection of less interesting stories. But it is a novel having thought provoking strong stories which tell about same happenings as they are felt by the general people. Denise Chong praises the novel and comments: "These moving and powerful stories share the irony, pain and sorrow of the imperfect ways in which mothers and daughters love each other. Tan's vision is courageous and

insightful”(qtd. in Gale 2). The mothers and the daughters always find each other as enemies, the enmity being caused by the different cultural practices they follow.

All the characters go through the same problem of misunderstanding due to communication gap. The daughters think their mothers’ ways of doing things only as outmoded ones. On the other hand, the mothers have a strong power of storytelling from which they want to revive their pasts. Regarding this, Pin-Chia Feng comments: “The major theme of *The Joy Luck Club* is the difference and lack of understanding between the mothers and daughters caused not only by generational gap but also by immigrant experiences” (Riggs 824). So, the mothers always want to create home in exile by the memory of the past but the daughters want to create their own identities in the new circumstance of America. Eventually the daughters are grateful for their original culture, as Feng further opines: “To bridge the gap, the American-born daughters open their minds to their maternal cultural heritage” (824).

The present study focuses on the role of culture in shaping the ethnic identity in the new world in which a mother is the only one root from which every thing begins to exist. The study will throw light on the experiences felt by the immigrants especially of second generation and their efforts to get cultural unity with their original cultural heritage recollecting the past narratives of their mother. These second generation immigrants suffer more than their previous generation in the process of undergoing this tedious task.

Since the author herself is a second generation immigrant, the research will draw some related ideas from the author’s life, which will be fruitful to draw special attention to the characters that often become the spokespersons of the trauma of cultural bifurcation. The lives of many characters that are developed in the novel

resemble Tan's personal life also. So, it is appropriate to present something from the life of the author.

### **Amy Tan as a Writer**

Also known as Amy Ruth Tan, Amy Tan was born in 1952, February 19 in Oakland, California as the middle child and only daughter of Chinese immigrants, John Yueanhan, a Baptist minister and electrical engineer and Daisy Tan, a vocational nurse, who had fled from her previous husband in China with whom she had disastrous relationship and children there.

She got Bachelor's Degree in Arts from San Jose State University in 1973 and Master's Degree in linguistics and literature in 1974 and completed her Postgraduate study at University of California, Berkeley in 1974-76. She was married to Lou M. DeMattei, a tax attorney, in 1974, April 6.

Amy Tan has received several awards such as Commonwealth Club gold award for fiction, Bay Area Book Reviewers award for best fiction, American Library Association's best book for young adults award, nomination for National Book Critics Circle award for best novel, and nomination for Los Angeles Times book award, all 1989, all for *The Joy Luck Club*; *The Kitchen God's Wife* was a 1991 Booklist editor's choice; Best American Essays award, 1991; honorary L.H.D., Dominican College, 1991; and Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award, sponsored by *Poets & Writers* magazine, 2003.

From her childhood, Tan went through a tumultuous life, including, during her fifteenth year, the deaths of her father and elder brother Peter of brain tumor within six months. She had to entertain always the decisions made by her irritate mother. Hence Tan had a very tenuous relationship with her mother. After the death of her

father and brother, Tan's mother moved the family to Montreaux, Switzerland, hoping to change the family luck.

Tan's literary career was not planned. Her mother wanted her to be a neurosurgeon and when she first got to college, she studied medicine but later she dropped out and traded for the study of linguistics and literature. She separated from her mother and slowly got inclined to writing and began her career working as a consultant to educational programmes for disabled children in California from 1976-81. Then she worked until 1983 as a reporter, managing editor and associate publisher. From 1983-87, she became a freelance technical writer.

To cure her compulsive working habit and professional ennui, she started writing fiction. After her failed attempt at psychological counseling, she joined a writers' group and began writing short stories which eventually developed into *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) and launched her into a brilliant literary career. From 2006 onwards, she is involved in the *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles, California, as a literary editor of the west.

Though Tan had an embattled relationship with her mother, time itself drew them closer and bridged the gaps inherent in their lives. Her effort to accomplish all the wishes is clear to every reader while she remembers the vow she made to herself at the time of waiting to meet her sick mother at hospital:

. . . I made a vow to God and whoever was listening "If my mother lives, I will get to know her. I will ask her about the past, and this time, I'll actually listen to what she has to say. I'll even take her to China and, yes, I will write stories about her . . . . (Tan, "My" 126)

Tan accomplished all the vows she made. She took her mother to China. There she got a good chance to get closer to her mother. Her ways of complain at all the things

she did was a good inspiration in Tan's life. We know how the mother for Tan is the determiner of all the things – the past and the present, as she writes:

And when I returned home, I began to write stories about her life. I began to see how much my mother's past shaped me: her sense of danger, her regrets, all of the mistakes she vowed never to repeat. What I know about myself is what I know about her, including her secrets, or in some case, fragments of them. I found the pieces both by deliberate effort and by accident and with each discovery I had to reconfigure the growing whole.

(127)

It clarifies further that the novel is written for the fulfillment of all the respect towards her mother. Past relationship with mother aggrieves Tan in the present. She confesses that her cultural wholeness is lying with her mother. Needless to say, Tan gives an autobiographical touch to the novel by showing most of her characters undergo the same suffering which Tan had undergone before.

To talk about her personal life, Tan battled for years against depression, anxiety, pain and bizarre hallucinations. The trouble which was caused by Lyme disease began in 1999. Only after 'pretty advanced symptoms', she was diagnosed with the disease by Dr Raphael Striker, a San Francisco hematologist, experienced in treating tick-borne diseases. These days Tan takes an antibiotic to treat her symptoms, though she continues to suffer headaches, stiffness and numbness in her feet and must walk with a cane. "She still has episodes where she gets very very sick", says Striker noting that she will need at least three months of intravenous antibiotic treatment to fully recover. Now, Tan is concentrating on her book tour as well as raising awareness of the disease through LymeAid4Kids, her new charity. Tan says in this respect, "setting up this organization is one good thing that has come

out my having Lyme disease". Taking antibiotics made her skin sensitive to the sun. She further says, "It gave me a tan." Though she feels terrible other people comment that she "looks great!" (Taubar).

*The Joy Luck Club* includes sixteen stories, divided into four sections, each followed by a short parable. Section one and four are told by the mothers who relatedly recall their relationships with their own mothers and their struggle to offer the solutions and support to their daughters. In the second and third section, the daughters tell their stories of childhood relationships with their mothers and their adult dilemmas and troubles in their careers.

Throughout the stories, four daughters and three mothers talk and each narrates two stories but Jing Mei (June) Woo is the only character who has to narrate four stories, taking her mother's turn too, who has just died. The novel hinges around Jing Mei's trip to China to meet her two half sisters.

Most of the characters are drawn to the reality of life which the author and even her mother and grandmother go through.

Tan has reflected the same situation in the novel in which most of the characters are closer to the real life. Jing Mei Woo's role in "The Joy Luck Club" and the other stories "The Red Candle" and "A Pair of Tickets" are based on her mother who fled from her abusive husband and children in China who was a member of the Joy Luck Club. The stories are of the suffering of the mother's past and her failed attempt to wishing all the best of her daughter. "Two Kinds" and "A Pair of Tickets" are relatedly the description of worsened relationship with the mother, which is based on the writer's life. In the early period, Tan disagrees to her mother and later comes to know her mother as a great support for her life and career. "The Scar" is based on the story of her mother how her grandmother took care of her when she was injured by

spilling a pot of soup across her neck at the age of four. In short, the writer is guided and impressed very much by her mother.

Thus, the writer has skillfully interwoven the stories of the Chinese immigrant mothers and their Americanized daughters who do not see any possibilities of progress in their mothers' Chinese way of doing things which they think to be outdated one. The daughters want to create their own way of going forward for which they constantly clash with the mothers who want to control the activities of those daughters. Eventually, the daughters realize abundant love and care in the way their mothers complain. They come to know that all the "Joy" and "Luck" they can find is anchored to their mothers.

To understand how the mother or root culture shapes one's identity, it is deemed best to make a comprehensive study of *The Joy Luck Club*. While doing this, the research paper is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter gives a short introductory outline of the study and also introduces the biography of the author, Amy Tan and gives a brief introduction to the stories of the collection. This chapter gives a short glimpse on the entire work of the author.

The second chapter is meant to provide a short introduction to Cultural Studies, a theoretical modality, which helps to understand how the immigrants of first and second generation relocate their ethnic identity in diaspora, and it also develops some comprehensive tools by drawing ideas from this Studies. This part of the work defines different terms that will be dealt in the course of this research. Terms like diaspora, identity, hybridity, dislocation and reaffirmation of identity in diaspora are also be defined in the light of the subject of the study in this chapter.



On the basis of second chapter, the third chapter of this research analyzes the text. It consists of some of the extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the study. This chapter forms the core of this entire work.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of the entire study. On the basis of the analysis of the text done in chapter three, it concludes the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters and thus the research work presents a convincing argument on the basis of the study of the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*.

## 2. CULTURAL STUDIES: A THEORETICAL MODALITY

### **Cultural Studies**

As a major critical discourse in the humanities, the term, Cultural Studies, is manifested amidst the turmoil of the late 1950s and the early 1960s. It is composed of the elements of Marxism, new historicism, anthropology, studies of race and ethnicity, post colonial studies and other numerous fields: fields that focus on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division. Regarding its diversities, Kenneth Womack writes:

Cultural Studies manifests itself in a wide array of interpretative dimensions, including such intersecting fields of inquiry as gender studies, postcolonial, race and ethnic studies. . . the politics of nationalism, popular culture, postmodernism and historical criticism among a variety of other topics. (243)

So, the term blurs the boundaries between itself and other subjects. Concerned with the exploration of a given culture's artistic achievements, institutional structures, beliefs and systems and linguistic practices, Cultural Studies highlights the interrelationships and tensions that exist between cultures and their effects upon both the literary works and the authentic texts of our lives.

Cultural Studies not only explores the cultural codes of a given work but also investigates the institutional, linguistic, historical and sociological forces that inform the work's publication and critical reception. It is a discursive formation, which is a cluster of ideas, images and practices which provide way of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or

institutional site in society. Language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meaning and knowledge. In this sense, Cultural Studies takes linguistic turn since language gives meaning to material objects and social practices which are brought into view by language and made intelligible to us in term of which language delimits.

The most crucial here is Barker's view on Cultural Studies. He believes it is always connected to 'power' and politics. He says, "Cultural Studies is a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political practice"(Barker 5). Barker's view suggests that knowledge is never an objective phenomenon. It is a matter of positionality. "Power", as Barker opines, "is not simply the glue that holds the social together or the coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another, though it certainly is this but the process that generates and enables any form of social action, relationship or order"(10). In this sense, power, while certainly constraining is also enabling. Such notion of power is similar to Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony", which is related to Cultural Studies, that implies a situation where a "historical block" of powerful groups exercise social authority and leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent.

A good deal of Cultural Studies is centered on the question of "representation", that is on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us the central strand of Cultural Studies can be understood as the study of culture as signifying practices of representation which requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning.

From these observation we draw the proposition that Cultural Studies refers to a multi-stranded intellectual movement that places cultural analysis in the context of social formations, seeing society and culture as the product of historical processes

unlike frozen artifacts, emphasizing the inextricable relations between culture and power and calling attention to social inequalities, thus, always making a committed call for democratization.

## 2.1 Culture

The word 'culture' in English is derived from the Latin word 'cultura' as a noun of process connected to growing crops that is 'cultivation'. Later the term is applied to any custom, art, social institutions, literature music etc. that is cultivated in the society by human mind. Culture, thus, is a broader human consciousness, developed and shaped by society, religion and other related factors. Since every human society has its own shape, culture of every society also varies because there is not a single history, religion or geography. Relatedly, the literature as the reflection of culture also varies. So, when some one who is brought up in one culture is placed in another culture, s/he may feel alienated, hence the term is related with identity. These people do not find any belongingness in the strange land. Huntington comments it as: "People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs and institution. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations. . ." (*Clash* 21). He believes that the culture belongs to human consciousness that is developed and shaped by society. Culture is a mutable term, so a single definition cannot be sufficient. The term is viewed differently by different thinkers. According to the cultural critic, Chris Barker:

Culture is not 'out there' waiting to be correctly described by theorists who keep getting it wrong. Rather the concept of culture is a tool which is of more or less usefulness to us as a life form. Consequently, its usage and meaning continue to change as thinkers have hoped to 'do' different things with it. (35)

He believes culture is not something that is out there. It is a tool, and a set of practices constituted by the language game. It supplies the spirit of life to the society.

The emergence and dissemination of postcolonial criticism and the post colonial theory of discourse made culture a most contested space. So, many terminologies of other fields of criticism are borrowed by culture, such as Foucauldian notion of 'Power' and 'Discourse' and Gramsci's concept of 'Hegemony'. Postcolonial perspectives emerged from the colonial testimony of third world countries and the discourses of minorities within the geopolitical division of east and west, north and south. They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the 'rationalization' of modernity. Postcolonial criticism "forces us to engage with culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival. Culture reaches out to create a symbolic textuality to give the alienating everyday an aura of selfhood, a promise of pleasure (Bhabha 438). For him, nobody can delimit culture in one center. He further writes culture as a strategy of survival in both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement . . . culture is translational because such special histories of displacement . . . make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue (438). The transnational dimension of cultural transformation: migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. All these views share the assumptions that culture can have an influence upon ideas, attitudes and experience.

Thus, culture is a concept that consists of refining and elevating element. Culture is the source of identity and a combative entity. It can be a battleground for identity and survival. In the same way, the characters in *The Joy Luck Club*, specially the Chinese immigrant mothers feel America as a strange land because they do not find any similarities in their original Chinese culture and American culture. As a result, their anxiety grows more when their American born daughters show any inclination to their maternal culture. The mothers always feel uprooted in the new land where they migrate from China. Specially, the people move in the new land because of inconvenience they face in their original land and because of possibilities of numerous opportunities in the new land. In the context of the characters in *The Joy Luck Club*, the first generation characters face many difficulties in China and move to US, where they hope to make their livelihood better. These people are called diaspora. For our convenience, it is relevant to draw some ideas about the term 'diaspora'. We can illustrate it as following.

## **2.2 Diaspora**

The term 'diaspora' is related to the dispersion of people throughout the world which was used for the first time to refer to the Jews who scattered after Babylonian captivity and in the modern period to Jews living outside of Palestine and latterly Israel. Now, it is used in the studies of race and ethnicity or to describe a range of spread migrant group or individual. Diaspora refers to territorial dislocation, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Regarding this, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

Diasporas, the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homeland into new regions, is central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the

temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions. . .

(Ashcroft, "Key" 69)

Thus, diaspora is the movement of people familiar to unfamiliar, that is, from their homelands to the new location. This movement creates a sense of dislocation and alienation because those migrants can not fit into the new environment and culture of the targeted society. The diaspora is meant to state the condition of homelessness.

People in the diaspora have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths. Their identities are at once plural and partial.

According to Radhakrishnan, "The diaspora has created rich possibilities of understanding different histories. And these histories have taught us that identities, selves, traditions and natures do change with travels"(210). In other word, identities, perspectives and definition change when people move from their main land to the strange land.

Regarding the Chinese diaspora, Amy Tan, one of the Chinese-American writers grants her major focus on the stories of the Chinese-American people. The four Chinese women, Suyuan Woo, An Mei Hsu, Ying Ying St. Clair and Lindo Jong, who have different experiences of war, famine, deception and bad marriage. They come to America in the hope of making their lives better. They escape from different catastrophe they encounter in china either mental or physical.

When the Japanese invaders entered China, thousands of people were forced to leave their homes, their families and their belongings. Suyuan escapes leaving all the things in China, more than these things, she abandons her twin baby girl on the roadside. Lindo Jong also has the bitter experience where her parents left her after the flood destructed their house in the house of her would-be husband from where she has to flee, abused of not having any child. Ying-Ying is also the victim of deception

when her husband leaves her pregnant for another woman. An Mei Hsu is tortured by her stepmother there.

Globalization and the evolution of postcolonial world styles are further complicating the issue of diaspora by forcing individuals and communities to redefine their relationship to the nation, to the ethnicity and to language. Thus, diaspora also evokes the specific trauma of human displacement and is concerned with the idea of cultural dislocation. It reviews the colonial encounter for its disruption of native/domestic space. In short, the condition of being homeless because of colonial invasion is the characteristic feature of the writers like Amy Tan, the situation that can be found in her novel *The Joy Luck Club*. These characters that come to America are alienated from their mainland. They feel nobody knows them and cares for them there.

In short, the concept diaspora about which argued briefly is used to describe the dispersed intellectuals, expatriates or exiles in postcoloniality. Identity is very much debated of those who live in diaspora. The home country and adopted country become 'ghostly' location where people belong to no one country, neither to the original nor the adopted country and these people become the victim of dislocation, fluctuating between the two countries.

### **2.3 Dislocation**

Dislocation was developed historically in the institution of slavery and the system of indentured labor. It refers to the lack of fitting when one moves from known to unknown locality.

In addition to the involvement of slavery and indentured labor in it, it can also be extended to include the psychological and personal dislocation that result from the



cultural denigration. Stuart Hall quotes Ernesto Laclau arguing that dislocation is a structure that is characterized by never-ending processes:

A dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and replaced by another but by a plurality of power centers, and the societies have no center, no single articulating or organizing principle. It is constantly being decentered or dislocated by force outside itself. (278)

Really, dislocation is caused by the decline of old identities. It forces to create new identities which create identity crisis.

Place and displacement is crucial feature of post colonial discourse. Place is not only geographical landscape but at the same time it happens within the country also. The indigenous or original cultures of the invaded colonies are dislocated. These are kept in hierarchy and this hierarchy ignores its institution and values the practices of the colonizing culture. At the time of talking about the cultures of colonizer and colonized, no one culture can be a distinct culture. Both the cultures mix together which creates the hybrid culture which is discussed in the following title.

## **2.4 Hybridity**

Generally, the term hybridity refers to the creation of something new. It is used in horticulture to refer to the third species produced by mixing or grafting plants of different species. But in the present time, within the domain of postcolonial discourse, hybridity is the aftermath of the bringing together of people and their cultures from different parts of the world. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial etc. for example linguistic hybridity includes pidgin and Creole languages.

Hybridity has been used in postcolonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural exchanges. Any hybridization is understood as the process by which

colonized do copy the language and culture of colonizer. They borrow the western ideas, norms, practices and reject/forget their own original way of doing things.

Regarding the term hybridity in *The Joy Luck Club*, specially, the second generation immigrants are suffered from the cultural and linguistic hybridity. These characters are out of contact from original Chinese language and cultural practices of their mothers. As a result, there is linguistic and cultural gap between their mothers who try to practice their own Chinese culture and language. Regarding hybridity, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

Hybridity occurs in postcolonial societies both as a result of conscious moment of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler–invader dispossesses indigenous peoples and force them to 'assimilate' to new social pattern. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies. . . . (Ashcroft, "Reader" 183)

So, people are dislocated from the known world to the new locality where they have to adopt forcibly the social pattern of that locality. Immigration causes hybridity and hybridity causes the crisis of identity. People, who are the victims of hybridity, live in the state of in-betweenness.

Hybrid culture exists in colonial society. Although the people who suffer from hybridity borrow both cultures, yet they do not belong clearly to these two worlds, either of colonizer or the colonized. They are the victims of 'otherness' of both the cultures. So, hybridity becomes a cultural mix and creates a new form of identity. In colonial society, people occupy in-between space by mimicry. The characters in *The Joy Luck Club* also try to imitate western language and culture in

incomplete ways and the daughters also try to follow entirely the same but at the time they are also in contact of their eastern cultural practices and language. In this state, neither Chinese nor the English language and culture remains pure. Hence, they are given the name as 'other', 'minority group' etc. in American culture where they have to fight to establish their distinct self as ethnic American people. They try to create their Asian-American identity which they really are. In this regard, they reserve their ethnic identity as Chinese-American people.

## **2.5 Ethnicity**

The term 'ethnic' as adjectival form is derived from the Greek word 'ethnikos', which refers to a range of situations in which a collectivity of humans lived and acted together. We perceive the meaning of ethnic as "HEATHEN", "of or relating to a large group of peoples classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic or cultural origin or background (Merriam- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary '04). So, the ethnic group has distinct sets of values, belief and norms which differentiate from the other groups known as 'non ethnic'. The word 'heathen' means strange which shows that the term ethnicity is attached to the people from foreign land or caste or culture. So, the term conveys its meaning as something that is other than majority.

Ethnicity owes its base on cultural similarities among the members of same ethnic group and difference between the group and the others. To say there is ethnic diversity, there are different cultures within it. Regarding the ethnicity, Steve Fenton remarks:

Ethnic group refers to descent and culture communities with three specific editions.

1) that the group is a kind of sub-set within a nation state,

- 2) that the point of reference of difference is typically culture rather than physical appearance, and
- 3) often that the group referred to its 'other' (foreign, exotic minority) to some majority, who are presumed not to be ethnic. (23)

Here, Fenton manifests the role of culture while shaping ethnicity. There is diversity between superset and subset of a nation where the subset is always periled by the threat of 'otherization'. It further creates the question of identity. The minority are always in danger of losing distinct cultural quality, magnetized by the majority group.

As a postmodern term, ethnicity came into vogue in 1970s which replaced terminologically 'people' or 'nation'. Now, the linked concept of ethnicity and ethnic group has been taken in many directions, academically and otherwise. Vijayashree comments: "Ethnicity becomes an important concern as one shift one's location and becomes a member of a minority community in an alien environment. Shift in location and change in locational status make one conscious of their ethnic identity"(133). The spatial concept affects ethnicity when the ethnic group changes the location; certainly they become minority in the target locality. They see no way out except their cultural survival.

Likewise, Amy Tan portrays the characters in *The Joy Luck Club* who are displaced by the Japanese colonization in 1949 and are forced to move in America from China. These mother characters struggle differently to survive there. The four women establish a club, to which they give name Joy Luck, where they practice their Chinese culture at weekly gathering, playing mahjong, feasting Chinese dishes and gossiping. These kinds of activities in the club makes these characters relieved from the pain, caused by the alienation from their mainland. Doubtlessly, it is their aim to

survive in foreign land. The concept of ethnicity is mainly concerned with the land. There is straight connection to the ethnic group and geographical space because every community becomes inhabitant to a certain land.

Regarding the spatial concept of ethnicity, R. Radhakrishnan writes:

The constituency of 'the ethnic' occupies quite literally a 'pre-post'-erous space where it has to actualize, enfranchise and empower its own 'identity' and coextensively engage in the deconstruction of the very logic of identity and its binary and exclusionary politics. (63)

It is because immigrant suppresses ethnicity on the name of 'pragmatism and opportunism'. To be successful in the new world, they must actively 'assimilate and hide their distinct ethnicity' (205). The mainstream ideology suppresses the voice of the immigrant. Specially, the term refers to those characters or character groups who are settled in a different locality which differentiates 'majority and minority', 'us and them'. Ethnicity is mostly related with the issue of identity.

## **2.6 Identity**

In present time, identity has become the central area of concern. It is the process of how one identifies oneself to other with description of male/female, black/white, Asian/European etc. In other words, it is the totality of values attached to individuals and community in terms of their class, caste, group or culture and institution of any kind. Thus, with the change of values or the intellectual development in human history, man's concept of self also changes. So, identity is the discursive construction. In other words, identities are constituted or made rather than found. In most of the cases, it is given to the particular group or individual by the opposite group.

Identity, a discourse of tradition, is not transparent or unproblematic. For critics like Stuart Hall, identity is a 'production', which is never complete. He assumes identity as a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. Really, identity can be acquired after producing. Nobody provides it until it is claimed. But while claiming it, another identity can be threatened. So, the issue of identity is always in threat among other identities as Radhakrisnan remarks:

. . . ethnic reality realizes that it has a "name" but the name is forced on it by the oppressor and the discourse that is, it is the victim of representation: it achieves a revolution against both the oppressor and the discourse of the oppressor and proceeds to unnamed itself through a process of inverse displacement; it gives itself a name that it represents itself from within its own point of view; and it ponders how best to legitimate and empower this new name. (69)

We can properly understand the traumatic character of the 'colonial experience' out of which are constituted the identities such as Asianness, Chineseness, Indianness, Africanness etc. The ways in which such identities were positioned by and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization. The dominant or superior culture has the power to influence or dominate the other. Identity with many ramifications for the study of ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexuality and subcultures has become the central area of concern in Cultural Studies during the 1990s and the post 90s scenario. Because of globalization, identity has become a hybrid one, the state of not belonging to anyone or in other word, interfusing of identities. Identity, as Cornel West perceives is the 'matter of life and death'. It is about 'desire and death'(15). It depends upon how we construct our identity is predicted on how we conceive of death. It is said to be

difficult to sustain something rather than to acquire. Similarly, it is a tedious job to maintain the identity. To this term we study under the following title.

## **2.7 Reaffirming Identity in Diaspora**

Reaffirmation of identity in diaspora has become one of the common aspects in postmodern novels. In most of the diasporic novels, fragmentation of identity can be seen when one moves to a new land, all the things are new to him/her. In this new land, they feel alien and cut off from their main land and they try to manage this trauma by involving themselves in the past memories of their original land and culture. The adopted culture in the migrated land forces them to recollect their past stories of their lives. In this process of recollection, their stories of lost homeland and the suffering they bear works as a means of regaining their lost identities to which K. Satchidanandan puts forward:

. . . it also defines one's Self and reassures one about one's own distinct identity. The narrative production of home assumes many strategies according to one's relation to the place one belongs to. The idea of home is also related to time that transformed it into history or myth.

(19)

Amy Tan, one of the Chinese American writers, speaks through her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, about the Chinese American people who are suffering from the loss of past and bitterness of the present reality as the first generation mothers migrate to America from China. She highlights the issue of their ethnicity and minority in American mainstream culture. Mainly these characters suffer in the new land from the feeling of exile, cultural alienation and inter-generational clash between mother and daughters. As the time goes on, these mothers feel that they have lost their identities while move from the original land. Regarding the problems faced by the

diasporic people, Jasbir Jain puts: "the people who were dislocated were termed 'refugees' and territorial dislocated was full of memories and associations, break up of families and relationships, homesickness, shared cultural myths, legends and histories and these gave rise to question of identity"(85). It is because their daughters do not pay attention to their original culture and the first generation mothers feel more loss of values of their culture. Simply it is their ego that they do not bend easily to the opinion of the daughters' who are impressed by mainstream American culture. In the same way the youngsters can not understand the elders' feelings. As a result, there is created more gaps between them. The first generation immigrants face hardships in balancing their duality in culture and tradition. The same situation is inherent in the first generation Chinese immigrant mothers and their second generation American born daughters. As the time passes, the second generation evidences the lack of root in their present American livings. They start to remind their mothers' painful Chinese experiences as feedback for ethnic heritage. Finally, they locate their identity in the "in-between-worlds" of Chineseness and Americanness, that is to say, they are American people following distinct Chinese culture.

## **2.8 Cultural Repositioning**

To take a position is a difficult task. Continuing the position is rather difficult job. The term 'position' is related with identity. In the post modern age, like other terms, position has not any fixed entity. When position of anything changes, its identity also changes. Similarly, the issue of culture has become crucial and everything is described under the realm of culture. Culture has become the judgment of a person's origin or root, belongingness, lifestyle and other things. The people in the migrated country feel lacking of all those things. They cannot assimilate to the new culture. At the time, they feel they are far from their original culture and land and



grieve for losing it. Because, in the new land, they are like the men from another planet and treated as strangers. So, they try to establish their own culture in this new land which provides the feeling of belongingness within them. They feel pride that they have something which is distinctly their own. So, they try to revive their own cultural practices, gathering at a particular place, forming clubs, where they talk each other, play games, prepare dishes, collect fund and conduct other things collectively. These acts are outcome of the memory of their land of origin. In fact, they want to recreate or reposition their identity there.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, the mothers come to America from China. They face many problems to establish them in America as Chinese people. They form a club where they meet, talk, eat, play and conduct other things collectively. Amidst the numbers of hurdles, they finally reestablish their identity in America as Chinese people.

### 3. *THE JOY LUCK CLUB: A STUDY ON THE DISCOVERY OF ETHNIC IDENTITY*

#### 3.1 Stories in brief

The opening parable of *The Joy Luck Club*, "Feather from a Thousand Li Away" portrays linguistic and cultural veil that exists between the Chinese immigrant mother and her American born daughter while the mother decides to immigrate to US. An old woman remembers she had bought a beautiful and expensive swan thinking it to give her daughter but the immigrant officials took away the swan leaving only a feather on her hand. She wants to give this feather to her daughter which is the symbol of wishing all the best but she can never tell all these to her daughter in perfect American English.

In the first story, "The Joy Luck Club", Jing Mei (June) Woo opens her narrative that recounts how her father, Canning, after her mother Suyuan's death, asked her to take her mother's place at the Joy Luck Club. The club is the revival of the club, Suyuan founded in China before leaving for America. June tells her mother's beginning of the club. After China was threatened by Japanese invader, Suyuan came to Kwelin as a refugee with numerous people with her twin daughters and previous husband, an army official at Chungking. There, Suyuan created the club with three women to escape the fears and uncertainty. They cooked feasts, played mahjong, and told stories "And at each meeting we could hope to be lucky", Suyuan told Jing Mei. "That hope was our only joy. And that's how we call our little party Joy Luck' (*Joy* 11-12). Jing Mei narrates that Suyuan always ended her story at the same point about which Jing Mei thinks as a 'Chinese fairy tale'. But one evening, her mother told the real story how she left the club, husband and children. Recalling the story of her mother, Jing Mei hesitates to take the mother's position. The club

members force Jing Mei to go to China for meeting her sisters to whom Suyuan was searching. But Jing Mei fears she would not tell about her mother to them.

"Scar" is the second story in which An Mei, a four years girl and her little brother live with their grandmother, Popo, after their mother became concubine of a man, Wu Tsing. When Popo was seriously ill, An Mei's mother came there after five years. She cared for Popo and caressed An Mei. She remembers the scar made by spilling a pot of boiling soup when she was four years at the time she wanted to go with her mother. She sees her mother cutting flesh of arm and put it in the soup to feed Popo for curing. After the incident, An Mei starts loving her mother.

"The Red Candle", the third story brings forward a miserable picture of Lindo Jong who narrates the story the way she was promised to marry while she was two years old and married when she was sixteen. After a failed marriage, she escapes trick fully without hurting her parents. But she has also promised "not to forget" herself.

The fourth story, "The Moon Lady" told by Ying-Ying St. Clair has the setting of a Moon Festival. Finely dressed by her nursemaid (amah), she attends the festival with her family to fulfill her 'secret wishes' as told by amah. There she is cautioned "A girl can never ask only listen"(68). The festival is held in a boat where the chef was cutting fish for cooking. She is left alone there half naked after she was found her dress blood smeared. She, after screaming, falls in the water and is later taken out by a fisherman. She cannot find out her family and she is left ashore hoping to find her family. Standing alone there, she believes she has lost her self. There she watches a play about Moon Lady and 'wished to be found'(83).

The second parable, "Twenty Six Malignant Gates", presents the clash between children and parents. A mother forbids her seven years old child to ride

bicycle. She explains that the danger that occurs is detailed in the book "Twenty Six Malignant Gates". But the daughter cannot read the book because it is written in Chinese language and she rides the bicycle, and falls before she reaches the corner.

The continued clash between a six years old daughter and her mother is interwoven in the fifth story, "The Rule of the Game". When Waverly was six, her mother taught her the 'art of invisible strength' which helped her to be a child chess champion. She narrates the story of how she became champion after her brother got second hand chess as a Christmas gift. After learning with several persons and booklets, she becomes an expert at chess within her community. But her mother Lindo likes to take pride of her daughter and wants to introduce to every person while going outside. Exasperated, Waverly runs leaving her mother in the shop. When she returns home nobody concerns her. Lying on the bed Waverly envisions her mother as an opponent from whom she is defeated.

In the next story, "The Voice from the Wall", Lena St. Clair says that her mother Ying-Ying never spoke of her life in China. Lena's father, Clifford, a man of English- Irish descent says he saved Ying- Ying from a terrible tragedy in China which she could not tell to anyone. Lena is forced to act as a translator to her parents because neither Clifford knows Chinese, nor can Ying-Ying speak and understand English very well. After Clifford's promotion, the St. Clairs moved from Oakland to Sanfrancisco, there Ying-Ying used to rearrange furniture continually, claiming that things were not "balanced". Through the walls in her bedroom, Lena often heard fighting between a girl, Teresa and her mother. She imagined she might be killed, but whenever she saw her on the staircase of the building, she could never see a trace of blood and bruising on her. After moving to the new apartment, Lena came to know about unwanted pregnancy of Ying-Ying. The baby died after birth. Ying-Ying

blamed herself speaking about another son; she had killed in the past. But to her father, Lena translated her mother's words as expression of hope and consolation. Ying-Ying began to fall apart psychologically. Lena comforted herself by thinking that the girl to the next door was more miserable than her. She heard constant clash but finally she realized it as the expression of love to each other.

Like these two stories, the next story, "Half and Half", presents the struggle between Chinese mother and American born daughter. Rose Hsu Jordan describes the Bible under a leg of kitchen table, which was once a matter of pride to An Mei. Lena tells An Mei about the divorce with Ted while Rose knows she will reject. Lena and Ted were married though Ted's mother rejected her. Since Ted would make all decisions, after marriage, he forces Lena to decide herself and asks for divorce. Then Rose narrates an event of her childhood that scares her and engenders An Mei's loss of religious faith. They lost Bing, brother of Rose in a family trip to the beach. So, An Mei drives with Rose to the beach early in the morning, taking Bible in her hand, An Mei offers her prayer to God. But her attempt to get back Bing goes in vein. She concludes returning to the Bible under the kitchen table that she flips it and sees her little brother Bing's name written in 'Death' section with erasable pencil. Referring to Bing's name written by erasable pencil, Rose ends her story in optimistic mode.

In the next story, "Two Kinds", Jing Mei describes her childhood which was full of pain that she never becomes "prodigy", her mother desires her to be. Her mother Suyuan forces to find inner talent but Jing Mei promises in front of mirror not to allow her mother to twist her into what she is not. Suyuan admits Jing Mei to the piano lesson from Mr. Chong, a retired neighboring teacher. When Jing Mei notices Mr. Chong is deaf, she plays wrong notes, never correcting it later. Jing Mei plays piano in a talent contest where all the members of Joy Luck, her mother Suyuan and

Mr. Chong attend. Jing Mei plays piano without preparing and finally the performance goes flopped. Suyuan forces her to practice regularly but Jing Mei declares: "I wish I'd never been born; I wish I were dead like them"(153) referring the two children of Suyuan who were abandoned in China. Since then Jing Mei never plays again. Years after, she gets a piano as her birthday gift from her mother. She plays well the previous tune she used to play in piano lesson and realizes the two different pieces as the two halves of the same song.

The parable of third section, "American Translation", highlights the irrational nature of superstitious belief of the mothers and also emphasizes the deep wisdom that lies inside them. The mother, in the story, goes to the daughter's apartment. She comments the placing of the mirror. For better arrangement, she places another mirror at the head of the bed which reflects and multiplies the "peach blossom luck" of her daughter who asks to explain this luck and the mother points to the mirror and says that she can see her future grandchild there. The daughter looks and sees her own reflection in it.

The proceeding story, told by Lena, goes further that her mother always predicts the evil that will affect the family. Lena also tells that Ying-Ying always regrets never having done anything to prevent them. She remembers the predicting of her mother that her husband would have one pockmark for every grain of rice that is left at dinner. She also remembers that she used to leave large portion of grains to develop more marks on his face so that she can avoid marriage with the neighboring boy Arnold who has pitted face. She wishes his death and wants to marry smooth faced person. Five years later, though she forgets Arnold, she owes the habit of not eating. Arnold dies of illness; she eats half gallon of ice-cream and spends night throwing it up. She now questions herself whether her evil intention towards her

destined husband causes the present situation with her present husband. Lena and her husband Harold keep separate account and pay each expense separately. Ying-Ying also notices this and says Lena not to pay the bill of ice-cream because Lena hates it since she ate half gallons of it and vomited. Though Harold pays it, Lena gets angry. At the same time, Ying-Ying breaks a vase on a table in the guest room.

In the next story, "The Four Direction", Waverly Jong takes Lindo to lunch which Lindo criticizes. Waverly is humiliated that she never would get time to tell about her boyfriend and marriage. Every time, Waverly mentions Rich's name and shows gifts, given by Rich though she ignores. Waverly recalls the story of her childhood's chess talent and her disagreement towards Lindo's bragging, when she completely stops playing chess to hurt Lindo. Lindo does not comment her while playing chess nor does she polish her trophies. Waverly thinks Lindo poisoned her first marriage and will damage present marriage also. This false assumption damages at last because Lindo does not hate Rich.

"Without Wood", like other stories, targets to represent loving nature of the mother rather than critical. Rose Hsu Jordan describes finding divorce papers and a check in her mailbox from her husband, Ted. Suffered by the pain and shock, she stays in bed for three days until An Mei's call makes her wake up. Ted calls a few minute later asking for signed divorce paper. He tells he wants to marry another girl. Rose says him to come to take it. When he arrives, she gives it unsigned and says not to leave her.

Cultural tension emerges in the next story, "Best Quality", Jing Mei narrates that before a few months of death, Suyuan cooks crab dinner for ten people in Chinese New Year. While on shopping Jing Mei breaks leg of a crab, so they buy the damaged crab also. There comes extra guest also. They all take the best and Jing Mei

takes the broken crab. Suyuan takes the last one and goes to kitchen and comes back without crab and brings seasoning. There Waverly insults Jing Mei about haircut. They debate about give and take of their companies. June goes to kitchen to clean plates and thinks her own defects in regarding to Waverly. At night, Suyuan teases her for taking broken crab. Suyuan remembers June's distinct way of thinking, and gives a necklace to June which is "life's important". She advises not to hear Waverly, whose words always go sideways.

The opening parable of the fourth section, "Queen Mother of the Western Skies", depicts the woman of the first three parables as she plays with baby granddaughter. She tells that she used to laugh freely like the granddaughter. Then she learned to protect herself. She taught this to her daughter also and confused whether or not to teach this to granddaughter. While playing she sees the baby as the Queen Mother of the Western Skies, who has lived many times and knows right way to live. The grandmother listens the baby and says that she must teach her daughter the same lesson "how to lose innocence but not hope"(239) of how to live forever.

In the final section of the novel, the mothers tell their stories. In the story, "Magpies", An Mei Hsu expresses lament on the breaking of marriage of Rose. An Mei recalls her story of past when she was living in her uncle's house. Her mother came to take care of Popo as in the story "Scar". After Popo's death, she went to Wu-Tsing's house with An Mei where they stay happily until he returns with another wife. This time his third and second wife return with two years old son and the second one gives necklace to An Mei which her mother crushes, warning not to take anything from her. In fact, her mother was the original wife to Wu. Only to snatch property and get control over him, the second wife made her marry to Wu-Tsing without any choice and also snatched the son from An Mei as her own. An Mei commits suicide to



make her children strong. Chinese folks believe that the soul returns on the third day after death and punishes the ill doer. Fearing this, Wu-Tsing promises to honour her children.

Ying-Ying St. Clair knows everything before it happens in the story, "Waiting between the Trees". Although Lena does not know, Ying-Ying knows the cause of Lena's broken marriage. Ying-Ying does not tell her past story of marrying an old man to whom she loved unwillingly. He leaves her pregnant and marries another woman. Ying-Ying tells that she was born in "Tiger" year. After the husband leaves her, she starts to live with relatives doing a job at a shop where her present husband, Clifford meets and marries her after four years. Clifford believes her as a poor village girl, though she is not, because she does not tell him her story. She believes the first marriage drained her spirit and left her only the struggle to live. She became a mere ghost of the tiger once she was. She wants to change the spirit of Lena who is born under the same sign. Ying-Ying resolves to share her painful secret past with Lena to cut her tiger spirit loose.

In the next story, "Double Face", Lindo says that Waverly wants to go to China for honeymoon but she is afraid that the people would not let her to return. Waverly gets angry when Lindo says that they would know her as a foreigner. Lindo thinks that she wanted her children having both American and Chinese qualities. Lindo says that the American people have way of solving problem. She also knows that Waverly is ashamed of her Chinese appearance. While going to hair dresser Waverly is upset when the hair dresser says their faces match. Lindo says that she and her mother are also similar. Lindo narrates that when she comes to America, nobody pays attention to her. After getting job in cookies factory, she meets An Mei through whom she gets married with Tin Jong. They conceive three children to

whom Lindo wants the best for her daughter. Remembering this she watches Waverly and suggests her to correct the flawed nose but Waverly says it is same as that of her mother. When she goes to China, everyone takes her as a foreigner but does not say why she was a foreigner.

The last story of the last section "A Pair of Tickets" is the shaping story of the novel. On a train to China, Jing Mei feels her mother right that she is 'becoming Chinese' though she never thinks there is anything Chinese about her. She is going with her father to meet her twin sisters. In the crowded street of China, June feels herself a foreigner. Canning narrates the past story of Suyuan how she was ready to sell her valuable things to get the carriage while escaping but is unable. As a result, she leaves the place with a wheelbarrow, keeping all the things and her twin daughters in it but after the wheelbarrow breaks, she is forced to leave her daughters with a note to deliver these children in the written address who meet them. When Jing Mei's father meets her, she is sick. Later they visit China to search those daughters but are unable to find. A friend of Suyuan knows the twin girls but the mother is already dead. When Jing Mei (June) arrives at the airport, she sees the double image of her mother on the face of these two sisters. After all, she meets her own family, own nation which she belongs to. To say more, she is united with her real blood.

### 3.2 Interpretation of the stories

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan portrays different characters living in different cultures and environment and suffering from multicultural mentality which creates linguistic and cultural barrier that exists between the Chinese immigrant mothers and their American born daughters. The older generation is originally Chinese and comes for opportunities in the new land, America. These mothers come in America where they always suffer from their pasts. The daughters want to identify themselves as Americans and neglect their mother's Chinese heritage but as they grow up, they feel American culture as something strange and begin to regret for being in the in-between situation. Neither can they fit to the American culture, nor to their root culture. Because, firstly, they are treated as 'strange' in American culture and second there is a very long distance between them and their original culture where they cannot go back.

With the sufferings incurred by living amidst the cultural and linguistic gaps, the daughters believe their mothers' constant criticism is caused by the lack of affection. But in fact, the mothers' severity and high expectations are expression of love and faith in their daughters. All the mothers and daughters undergo the same misunderstanding which is created because of cultural differences. The traditional Chinese values of criticism-based expression of love and concealment of excessive emotion clash with the daughters' "American" ideas about autonomous and free and open speech. On the other hand, their mothers guide them even in the time of failure. As the daughters want to be self empowered, they start to feel something is lacking inside them. Most of them spend their childhood trying to escape their Chinese culture and identities in the name of being European.

On the one hand, the daughters find Chinese custom puzzling; on the other, with broken English and limited knowledge about American custom, the mothers are upset with the fact that their daughters do not understand them. But the generational and intercultural gap between mothers and daughters is unfolded with the confusion and frustration regarding their present situation of unsuccessful family life. While portraying the devastated situation of the mothers' and the daughters' hyphenated Chinese-American life, Tan gives equal emphasis to both sides. At first the Chinese mothers want their daughters successful in every walk of life. So, they do not hesitate to give their daughters American opportunities and self sufficiency. But later they wonder why they have alienated the children from their Chinese cultural heritage.

### **3.3 Bicultural Victimization in *The Joy Luck Club***

Every human society has its own shape. Hence, the shape of culture also varies because there is not a single phenomenon behind that. In every society, histories of narratives differ. The present novel also focuses on the culturally victimized Chinese immigrant mothers and their American born daughters. The writer herself belongs to the same situation, born in California and raised in San Francisco to her Chinese immigrant parents. She expresses her anxiety from her mouthpiece, Jing-Mei/June Woo: "My mother and I never really understood one another. We translated each other's meanings and I seemed to hear less than what was said while my mother heard more" (*Joy* 27). Throughout the novel, the daughters perceive meanings of their maternal language by translation. They are annoyed and feel odd at their mothers' way of speaking and doing things. So, they want to be self empowered which causes the misunderstanding between them which in fact is because of break between Chinese and American Cultures. Though they want to be autonomous, there is something inside them which is deep rooted from their mothers

to whom they feel having more capacity of hearing than themselves. The daughter in the first parable, "Feathers from a Thousand Li Away", never knows the sorrows of her mother in China. Though the mother wants all the best of her daughter, the lack of communication between them prevents her desire of wishing good luck to the daughter. Even if the mothers would learn "perfect American English"(4), she would always fail to translate fully the nuances of Chinese culture into American culture. Although a few words can be translated, the Chinese and American culture never be equated.

In the first story "The Joy Luck Club", Jing Mei Woo assumes her mother's past stories "a Chinese fairy tale. The ending always changed"(12). In one way, the mothers' story telling regarding their pasts is the only way to heal the experiences of loss and separation from the mainland but the daughters express disgust. Each mother suffers in China, either from famine and war, or degenerated marriage or loss of the previous husband or child. They all narrate their stories of pre-1949 in China, from which they want to revive their pasts, thinking their daughters would not have to undergo such miseries. Contrary to this, the daughters think their mothers' stories out of reality. When June takes over her recently deceased mother's place at the Joy Luck Club, she feels her incapability to do so. Their Joy Luck aunts give her \$1200 to travel to China for meeting her long lost twin half sisters. She hesitates: "what I will say? What can I tell them about my mother? I don't know anything. She was my mother"(31). Actually, the anxiety is not only because of lack of understanding her mother but it is caused due to the lack of linguistic and cultural competency inherent within her.

Another mother figure in *The Joy Luck Club*, Ying-Ying, is also undergoing the same problem of linguistic and cultural translation in "The Voice from the Wall".

Lena narrates Ying Ying's story of immigrating to America. Lena's father, an English Irish man, had married her and altered her identity by changing her name and even her birthday. Ying-Ying cannot translate her birth date into Chinese and feels as a displaced person in the new land. She cannot express her fear even to her husband at the time she feels her apartment out of balance. It is because neither her husband can speak Mandarin nor Ying-Ying speaks English well. While moving to America from China, she aborts a baby boy after her previous husband abandons her. She takes shelter in her maternal home for ten years before she moves to America with her present husband. While coming to America, her husband changes her each datum, including her birth date. Now, she is torn apart and fails to strike a balance between the two sides of her identity. She feels that the new apartment does not suit to her pregnancy, yet she cannot express her dissatisfaction. Like the mother in the parable, she waits to express her feelings but cannot express even the evil that harms her and her children; Ying-Ying remains helpless forever.

In another parable, "Twenty Six Malignant Gates", the mother suggests her daughter: "Do not ride your bicycle around the corner." The mother wants to protect her child from the disaster that befalls but her daughter asks for justification. Without discussing, she further says, "It is written in a book, The Twenty Six Malignant Gates, all the bad things that can happen to you outside the protection of this house." The girl forces to tell what are the twenty six bad things. But the mother says "it is written in Chinese" (87). Obviously, it is the difficulties caused by the incapability of translation. Exactly the mother cannot talk English and the daughters cannot understand Chinese language of their mother except a few words.

This bilingual trait of the characters is obviously portrayed in *The Joy Luck Club* to which Yuan Yuan comments: "As a product of different cultures and

histories, mothers and daughters abide by different cultural values and possess a different language whenever they talk about China"(29). Thus multi-cultural (bicultural) environments force each of them to balance a duality and negotiate the distance inherent in these mothers and daughters. On the other hand, being in this stage of in-between-ness creates a stage of suspension. It is like between the two banks of a river neither belonging to 'this' nor 'that' side.

In most of the post modern novels, identity crisis has become a common aspect where one's self is always in danger. The characters bear the feeling of nostalgia, loss and possessions of past memories for their lost homeland. It is because the characters tend to survive their selves by surviving their activities they would do in their original land.

Indeed, the club is a special tool that shows how the mentality of the mothers and daughters differ. Actually, all the mothers have two kinds of extreme calamities: one, in China which is already mentioned and other, cultural alienation, disintegration of old family structure and clash between mother and daughter in America. June narrates Suyuan's suffering while escaping from China leaving her previous husband, a Kuomintang army officer and twin baby girls on the roadside after her wheel barrow breaks. She comes to Chungking from Kwelin and forms a club with three women there. June quotes her mother's story as:

We ate sparingly, not as if we didn't have enough, but to protest how we could not eat another bite . . . People thought we were wrong to serve banquets every week . . . It's not that we had no heart or eyes for pain. We were all afraid. We all had our miseries but to despair was to wish back for something already lost . . . And each week we hoped

to be lucky. That hope was our only joy. And that's how we came to call our little parties Joy Luck. (*Joy* 11-12)

The feeling of loss caused by the war is deep rooted within her mind specially the loss of those daughters whom she left on roadside with a note to bring them up. It is totally unbearable while another character Lindo Jong in "The Red Candle" is devastated by a bad combination of marriage. Like a refugee, she has to adopt her husband. But she expresses confidence as, "I made a promise to myself. I would always remember my parents' wishes, but I would never forget myself"(53). There, Lindo is blamed for her inability to bear any child. Finally she plots and escapes from the house without blaming anyone.

There is no difference in the way of pain and suffering after Ying-Ying is abandoned alone from her family during the Moon Festival. She fears "she is lost forever" that her parents will never get the same girl as before. Throughout her life, she wishes "to be found"(83). We can clearly see the survival mentality in these mothers who in their own way seek throughout their lives. Amidst such unbearable sufferings they face, they always see hope in their lives. So, they never want their American born daughters to encounter such bad luck. But the daughters think their mothers having antiquated ideas following them and their Club as "a shameful Chinese custom. Like the secret gatherings of Ku Klux Klan or the tom-tom dances of TV Indians preparing for war"(16). The daughters do not find any possibilities of upliftment in their career, so they never express any respect for them. Valerie Miner puts it as: "For the first-generation daughters everything is supposed to be possible in the land of education and affluence and self expression"(566). The daughters know that their mothers want them to be successful. But in one way, the mothers express



their pain of past to get control over them, and to attain understanding from their daughters.

As the daughters grow, they start to feel a kind of void in their act of following American culture which they never confess to their mothers. Their purpose of self empowerment fails little by little as they grow matured and get married. Now they start to get evidence of the presence of a great portion of their mothers and their original culture within them. Once their belief about their mothers' antiquated ideas do not pertain to their own American lifestyles, their search for solutions inevitably brings them back to their relationships with the older generation and culture.

The trend of the mothers' story telling expresses their quest for communication which generates understanding and also serves to preserve the memory of the community. It is also the need to make their daughters aware of the histories of their lives. In short, story-telling has much to do with the growing understanding between the mothers and the daughters. One of the major causes of the conflict between them is that the daughters live much more complicated lives because of so many choices among the huge American opportunities. They do not suffer in the way their mothers suffered. These mothers have a controllable suffering and their sufferings take place on inner level. It is also a fact that they have no time to think about questions like "is this the world that we are living in?" or "is there another world beyond it?" It is a pattern of trans-generational, transcontinental trauma which is impossible to break. A Chinese born mother is separated from her own mother in childhood. Later circumstance is also the same for her children are left in China. She leaves China for America where she starts a new family life with her new children and more precisely it is a matter of tension that these new daughters are also far from them mentally. But

as the story of the novel proceeds, Tan constructs a bridge between these two generations where they both meet together.

Concerning the theme of bonds between Chinese immigrant mothers and their American born daughters, Tan draws our attention on these characters that firstly suffer from the cultural multiplicity, generation gap, diasporic experience of loss and exile etc. Like her characters in the novel, Tan also faces the same problem regarding the relation with her mother and the issue of locationality. Born and raised in two different towns of America --California and San Francisco-- to her Chinese immigrant parents, Tan regrets that she did not show any respect for her mother and her Chinese cultural legacy. So, Tan writes this novel which really salutes her mother and her original culture which we see from her dedication "To my mother and in the memory of her mother". It shows her attempt to fulfill the breaches inherent in their lives. Tan expresses great pride as Paul Grey and Andrea Sachs quotes: "I am my mother's daughter"(56). Since, Tan herself undergoes the same miseries, so her characters are facing the same problem in the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. The American lifestyles of Chinese immigrant mothers' daughters do not sustain them to hold enough in American culture. Rather it differentiates them from the mainstream American culture. At that time these daughter characters grieve that they ignored their original cultural heritage. As a result, they start to seek their origin for which they collect the memories of their Chinese culture, their mothers used to narrate them. Now, these daughters are more grieved and they are in a great dilemma of either following American lifestyle, or going with the original Chinese way. They face conflict between the two cultures. Regarding the dilemma of either "Chineseness" or "Americanness", Ghymn observes:

The polarity between traditional Chinese and American values is felt with particular keenness by American born Chinese women. Unlike their mothers, such women face conflicting demands for two opposing cultures while American daughters are familiar with the cultural nuances of Chinese life, their dilemmas frequently stem from having to vacillate between "Chineseness" and "Americanness". Their Chinese born mothers, in contrast are less plagued by the complexities of being Chinese, American, and woman. (qtd. in Zeng 3)

Particularly, these daughters have more opportunities in America as well as more challenges. They have to confront numerous hurdles related to the culture and the competition for maintaining their career in the huge cultural melting pot. These daughters constantly fight to establish autonomous life, but their realization leads them towards the value of becoming Chinese. Now, these daughters suffer more because they belong to no one particular nation.

But Tan equips the mothers and the daughters with equal value which helps to establish Chinese-American identity. Structurally, there is equal space for each mother and daughter except June Woo, one of the daughters, who is given extra space of her recently deceased mother. In both the narratives of mothers' Chinese cultural ideologies and the daughters' American ideologies are strongly depicted. It makes both mothers and daughters equally responsible for repositioning their selves in the new land. June Woo returns to China. She meets her twin sisters at the airport. Her face resembles that of her twin sisters and her mother and instead, they also see June identical to the mother. June Woo's ethnic dilemma is now resolved: "And now I also see what part of me is Chinese. It is so obvious. It is my family. It is in our blood. After all these years, it can finally be let go" (*Joy* 331). Eventually, it is June's

ethnic awakening where the isolated self is transformed into cultural whole.

Diasporic family is now connected with the larger family of China. Identity is now relocated as "Chinese-American" in the multicultural cauldron of America.

### **3.4 Generational Differences and Chinese Diaspora in *The Joy Luck Club***

The issue of generational difference plays an important role to infix the condition of diaspora which portrays the Chinese immigrants' present situation; as they are facing in the novel. Here, Tan depicts the complicated relationship between immigrant mothers and their American born daughters. Specifically, this bitter relationship of mother-daughter is the outcome of immigrant American life emerged out of Chinese diaspora. Basically, the first generation characters are migrated to US in pre1950s, unable to bear political, social and natural disasters embracing them. They feel exiled in the new environment of US, in memories of their lost homeland. So, they try to survive their Chinese selves by recalling their past narratives. The context of cultural analysis in the novel is very significant for decoding the generational differences and Chinese diaspora. Depicting the difficulties of mother-daughter bonding is a crucial problem for the culture as a whole; Tan has used both the perspectives of mother and daughter in a brilliant way which we trace through the structure of the novel also. Regarding the result of diaspora, Walter Shear comments as: "Where as the major problem for the older generation had been the struggle against fate, the younger generations perceive their essential difficulties to involve the making of choices"(197). The older generation suffers from the anxiety of how to survive in the catastrophe and even in hardships. In the same way, the four women as migrants are obviously displaced in Diaspora. They are struggling also with their American born daughters' mentality. Both are in the way of coping each other in the cultural difficulties in the in-between-ness of "Chineseness" and "Americanness".

These first generation Chinese immigrant mothers and their American born daughters are struggling to establish mother-daughter bond throughout the novel which signifies the difficulties of Chinese-Americans, between those of the first generation immigrants and their American born and raised children. Regarding the gap between mother and daughter, Zenobia Mistri comments: "None of these American born daughters listens, understands or respects the power, strength and wisdom of her Chinese mother. Each of them sees her mother's behavior as if from another continent and is ashamed of her "strange" ways"(252).

During the days of hardships, people want to survive anyhow. In the same way, *The Joy Luck Club* is the expression of survival mentality even in the state of sheer devastation. In fact, to survive in the unexpected upheaval in the lives, these women choose this way to maintain a 'psychological continuity', a coherent picture of 'life-world in the continuity of self' (Xu 6). Commenting the survival mentality of Chinese women in diaspora, Ben Xu further comments: "Indeed *The Joy Luck Club* itself, with a magnificent Mahjong, table at its centre, is an expression and embodiment of that survival mentality and its strategy of psychic defense"(6). Unquestionably, the act of gathering in the club, playing mahjong, feasting Chinese dishes and gossiping is to pacify their bruise of cultural alienation and disaster that followed their past lives. We are more convinced as one of the characters, Suyuan Woo, explains, "It is not that we had no heart or eyes for pain. We were all afraid. We all had our miseries. But to despair was to wish back for something already lost. Or, to prolong what was already unbearable"(11-12). These kinds of survival endeavor of these diasporas is not just a common sense survival but an optimistic expression that even in the dark times, they survived and emerged in a new world, full of better opportunities. What we find in the trait of the characters is in Nietzsche's

term "memory of the will"(qtd in Xu 7), the memory that is generated from the will to survive in diaspora. Suyuan tells her past stories in different ways to which Jing Mei cannot relate each other and thinks the story only as Chinese fairy tale. These stories are the records of her traumatized soul trying to throw the tragic memory of losing husband and baby girls in the war. Actually, her stories differ because of the suppression of real story which she cannot narrate to her second husband and daughter in America. It is not happening only with Suyuan but it is common to all these members of the club Joy Luck. Another member of the club, Ying-Ying, cannot say the real story to her husband and daughter and expressed psychologically by arranging "things not being balanced" (112).

On the one hand, these diasporas have experience of such extreme situations that have befallen upon them. On the other, they are anxious about their American born and raised daughters whether they would lose connection with them. The mothers, all the while see a vast gap between them and their daughters. Tending to bridge the gap, the mothers want to get control over them and equip their daughters with their original Chinese cultural heritage. But these daughters throw satire on the way their mothers exercise. One of the mothers, Ying Ying claims, "I have always known a thing before it happens". Her daughter Lena comments upon this skill of her mother. She expresses "She sees only bad things that affect our family" (161). The assumption of the daughters about their mothers is always negative. They see their mothers' activities towards them as lacking affection. But the main cause, responsible for creating generational differences is different environment in which this different generation grew in. In this respect, Walter Shear comments, "Whereas the major problem for the older generation had been the struggle against fate, the younger generation perceives their essential difficulty to involve the making of choices" (197).

Rose Hsu also describes America having offers of too many choices. She says, "So much to think about, so much to decide. Each decision meant a turn in another direction" (214). It is not strange to trace the clash between them because the daughters are among the heaps of opportunities and choices. They have to struggle to establish in this vast circumstance where as the mothers are only anxious about their traditional norms and regulations. They, in Sheer's version, "Insist on a basic cultural formulation", which further justifies the expression of Lindo Jong in "Double Face", "I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character" (289). It is Lindo's attempt to make stronger to her daughter but the daughter criticizes, "I'm my own person". Lindo thinks, "How can she be her own person? When did I give her up?" (290). Like Lindo and Waverly Jong, it is obvious in the mother daughter pair of Suyuan and Jing Mei Woo in "Two kinds". Suyuan assures Jing Mei: "you could be anything you want to be in America . . . Of course you can be a prodigy, too . . . You can be best anything" (141). But Jing Mei refuses it and promises herself "I won't be what I am not"(144). Her logic less expression, "I will never be the kind of daughter you want me to be someone that I am not!"(153), expresses that these American born daughters do not pay any attention to their mothers who own a great deal of insight in the way how to live the life.

### **3.5 Cultural Repositioning in the in-between-World in *The Joy Luck Club***

Position is something related to one's self. Really, it has become a difficult issue in the post modern age. The issue becomes even more difficult to those who are culturally displaced person who inhabits in another country. It is because the notion of identity is related to the expression of culture. The people in the new country try to manage with the new culture but the feeling of loss exists in them. The cultural duality results crisis in identity. This situation comes when people find difficulty in

belongingness. They seek for the root culture and try to establish their identity in alien land.

Being a second generation immigrant, Tan has been also undergoing the same trauma of loss. Although born and brought up in America, Tan expresses her anxiety of being an outsider. Tan assumes that all the immigrants struggle in the new land to establish their original culture. She herself states: "I am driven to capture the immigrant experience, to demystify Chinese culture, to point out the differences between Chinese and American culture, even to pave the way for other Asian American writers" (Literary11). Tan further says: "I think there is more of a history of suffering, of pain, of hardships among ethnic women writers. Writers of different ethnic backgrounds of writers who have very different voices . . . Southern writers even in the United States . . . have had very painful, tragic experiences in their lives" (Belles 20). Tan has a deep feeling of pain of those writers who are fallen far behind. The same kind of anxiety is obviously portrayed in *The Joy Luck Club*, Where the characters more or less give light to the personal life of Tan. Basically, the vagueness caused by the loss of ethnic identity is clearly portrayed in the relationship between the Chinese mothers and American daughters. The characters are facing the problem caused by in-between-worlds in which the Americanized generation is more victimized by cultural difference rather than the first generation immigrant. Though, these daughters constantly fight to establish autonomous life. They realize eventually the value of becoming Chinese. Now, those daughters are more suffered because they belong to no one nation.

The issue of second generations' bi-cultural identity may also lie at the heart of the decision to privilege China over America. Neither these generations nor Tan can claim legitimately to China in the novel, having never visited and lived there. They



have only the collected memory of first generation's Chinese stories, beliefs and customs. Jing-Mei's journey to China is doubtlessly the way she claims her name. She is only the daughter with both Chinese and American name. To sum up, the daughters' keen desire to be only American and the mothers' strong way to follow only Chinese culture and tradition merges at last with which they establish them as Chinese-American people.

To establish the dual identity, Tan gives equal emphasis to both first and second generation. To progress in their lives, they have to negotiate in central point leaving their stern point of progressive American generation and the traditional Chinese generation. Same kind of acceptance is apparent in the story "Magpies", narrated by An-Mei Hsu:

If she doesn't speak she is making a choice. . .I know this because I was raised the Chinese way: I was taught to desire nothing. . . and even though I taught my daughter the opposite, she still came out the same way. Maybe it is because she was born to me and she was born to be a girl. All of us are like stairs, one step after another going up and down but all going the same way. (*Joy* 241)

Here, we find a strong sense of negotiation. Though the mother wants her daughter to be strong unlike herself, but the daughter owes the same nature of her mother. The daughter is clearly guided by the instinct of her mother. There is no difference between them because they emerge from the same root.

Instinct passes from her mother and still she passes unwillingly the same instinct to her daughter Rose. Though the circumstances of these mothers and daughters differ, there is no difference the way they get sufferings in the present. In this respect, we notice that the present is shaped genealogically by the past.

Particularly, the second generation assimilates it. Once it was without any value to Jing Mei, when her mother gave her a 'jade pendant' which was 'life's importance'(221) to her mother. With the feeling of disagreement, she expresses: "I stuffed the necklace in my lacquer box and forget about it. And later she expresses: "But these days in think about my life's importance. I wonder what it means. I, now, wear that pendant everyday. I think the carvings mean something, because shapes and details, which I never seem to notice until after they're pointed out to me, always means something to Chinese people" (221). The gift was given only a few months before her thirty-sixth birthday, so it bears a special meaning for her because by accepting this pendant she hopes to know the meaning of her mother. She now feels how much her mother's activities, wishing and spirit has guided her. She feels she is really Chinese people and practices her mother's Chinese way. She reveres more to her mother and father. After the death of her mother, she tries to fulfill the gap of her mother in the family. She narrates:

"My father hasn't eaten well since my mother died. So, I am here in the kitchen, to cook him dinner. I'm slicing tofu. I've decided to make him a spicy bean-curd dish. My mother used to tell me how hot things restore the spirit and health. But I am making this mostly because I know my father loves this dish and I know how to cook it. (235-36)

This really shows her respect to Chinese culture. She respects her father as a Chinese traditional woman does. She practices Chinese dishes. The inspiration of Chinese culture is further inspired by the memory of her and her mother's courageous past.

At last she goes to China with her father to meet her two half sisters. "The minute, our train leaves the Hong Kong boarder and enters Shenzhen, China, I feel different. I can feel the skin on my forehead tingling, my blood rushing through a

new course. My bones aching with a familiar old pain. And I think, my mother was right I am becoming Chinese"(306). Since it is her first visit, she feels China familiar to her. When she meets her sisters in airport, she sees in them her mother's essence. At this time, she feels the worth of becoming Chinese, becoming one with family, and overall, becoming one with own blood. She sees her own mother in them. Though she finds those faces identical to the mother, yet they are not her real mother. What we can say is that she neither finds real mother nor her perfect identity in China. Something about her has been left in America where she was born and raised. These kinds of incomplete identity lead her to recreate new identity that is Chinese-American.

## Conclusion

*The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan's novel is an exploration of how people suffer to create ethnic minority identity in alien land. All the characters are living in the present world with the feeling of loss and they feel no way except the memory of the old world. They live in a very busy world where nobody pays attention to them. Here neither they can establish their identity nor can they return to the original world.

In Derrida's term, there is not any fixed entity, in this post-modern world. The things always get changed. Likewise, a human being has no fixed identity as thought or established by their ancestors. They have to struggle so much. These post modern people have to struggle mainly with the problems of belonging. The problem of identity has cropped up because people move from place to place for career opportunities. Since, the issues of exile and diaspora and displacement are real social and political problem today, they are given paramount importance in the fictional works, too. The Third World writers such as Amy Tan, has to struggle in creating identity as a Chinese-American writer.

People have the tendency to define themselves with cultural line in this age. They often ask themselves-where do we belong? And who are we? Which arouse the feeling of nostalgia for the past values. Like the proverb, "old is gold", the old cultural value is more precious to them from which they are separated. Similarly, Amy Tan draws out the characters whose mentality move back and forth, China and America. Basically, they are broken because they left their original cultural heritage and they cannot create actual space in the adopted country also.

*The Joy Luck club*, by Amy Tan shows the immigrant Chinese in the new land. Specially, Tan highlights the suffering, tension, dilemma, difficulties and even the inability of the two generations to understand each other. In fact, the first generation

wants to fulfill their succeeding generation with all the facilities in America but inversely they fail to get control over them, for the second generation immigrants want to be autonomous.

There is no meaning of life without culture. It gives us the sense of living. Culture is not only the written codes but is something that is followed and passed to the later generation practically, too. To talk about *The Joy Luck Club*, the mothers practice the same kind of behavior for preserving their cultural legacy and to hand over their daughters but the voice goes to the deaf ear. None of these daughters listen to her mother's voice. But from their point of view, it is not their fault that they were born in a different culture, environment, and circumstance from their mothers. They cannot see any trace of traditional Chinese culture in their surroundings which their mothers always force upon them. But as they grow with same kind of tussle with their mothers, they find numbers of difficulties while treading in the American society. Now, they lack the sense of belongingness. Actually, these daughters suffer from the feeling that they belong nowhere. Once they assumed American culture to be their own culture, now they cannot accept it fully for they feel that it has too many flaws. In America, they are treated as the 'other'. They feel at this time the value of original culture and the land where they dare not to be familiar. They are grieved to dishonor their mother. They realize that the mothers' attitude of criticism towards them was not the result of hate but the outcome of the desire to transmit the cultural legacy to them. Little by little, the daughters emerge to respect the Chinese culture. They start to collect memories of the China narratives their mothers used to narrate them. Even with the incomplete collection of these memories they are able to reach China to locate their cultural identity.

Tan, being an Asian-American writer, is able to locate the problem the immigrants are undergoing. She has perfectly interwoven the stories of people who are living between two worlds and belong to nowhere. They establish dual identity which is 'hyphenated'. In fact, *The Joy Luck Club* is a superb novel which placed Tan among the high ranking of Asian-American writers. In the same way, the club, Joy Luck, the reformed version of Chinese Joy Luck Club, also refers that the characters are able to reestablish their identity as Chinese-American people. The Club, once without meaning now works as a medium from where the characters find ways to establish their ethnic identity in America.

### Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Hellen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage, 2000.
- Bhabha, Homi K.. "Post Colonial Criticism". *Post Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995. 437-65.
- Fenton, Steve. *Ethnicity*. USA: Polity Press, 2003.
- Gale, Thompson. *Contemporary Authors Online*. 3August 2006.  
<<http://galenet.galegroup.com>>
- Grey, Paul, Sachs, Andrea. "The Joys and Sorrows of Amy Tan". *Time Europe* 157.10(2001):54-56. <<http://search.epnet.com>>
- Guerin, Wilfen L. et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: OUP, 1999.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Question of Cultural Identity." *Modernity and its Futures*. London: Polity Press, 1999. 273-326.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Viking, 1995.
- Miner, Valerie. "The Daughters' Journies". *The Nation* (April 24, 1989): 566-69.
- Mistri, Zenobia. "Discovering the Ethnic Name and the Genealogical Tie in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*." *Studies in Short Fiction* 35.3(Summer 1998): 251-57.
- Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations between Home and Locations*. Minneapolis: 1997.

- Riggs, Thomas. *Reference Guide to American literature*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. USA: St. James Press, 2000.
- Shear, Walter. "Generational Differences and the Diaspora in *The Joy Luck Club*." *Critique* 34.3 (Spring 1993): 193-99.
- Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. USA: Ivy Books, 1999.
- - -. "My Mother's Secrets". *Good Housekeeping* 238.4 (April 2004): 126-32.  
<<http://proquest.umi.com>>
- - -. "Amy Tan: Why I write". *Literary Cavalcade* 51.6 (March 1999): 10-13.  
<<http://proquest.umi.com>>
- - -. Interview with Angels Carabi. *Belles Letters*: 7.1 (Fall 1991): 16-20.  
<<http://proquest.umi.com>>
- Tauber, Michelle, Gee, Alison Singh. "A New Ending". *People* 60.18(2003).  
<<http://search.epnet.com>>
- Vijayashree, C. "Survival as an Ethnic: South Asian Immigrant Women's Writing." *Indiaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Indialog, 2001: 130-40.
- West, Cornel. "A Matter of Life and Death". *The Identity in Question*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.
- Womack, Kenneth. "Theorizing Culture, Reading, Ourselves: Cultural Studies". *Introducing Literary Theories: A Guide and Glossary*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh P, 2001. 243-54.
- Yuan, Yuan. "The Semiotics of China Narratives in the Con/texts of Kingston and Tan". *Critique* 40.3. (Spring 1999): 292-303.
- Zeng, Li. "Diasporic Self, Cultural Other: Negotiating Ethnicity through Transformation in the Fiction of Tan and Kingston". *Language and Literature* XXVIII (2003): 1-15.