

# Joy luck club essay sample

[Countries](#), [China](#)



“ Parents often talk about the younger generation as if they didn’t have anything to do with it.” Said by Haim Ginott, an expert and child therapist who had a great impact on the relationship between adults and children. (<http://www.betweenparentandchild.com/index.php?s=content&p=Haim>). According to the quote of Haim Ginott, the parents often feel unable to control their younger generation, and that is caused by a generation gap, which is normally refer to a time and space distance. But Amy Tan, a Chinese American author illustrates the generation gap in a different way. In her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan described the generation gap between four-immigrant American Chinese mother and their American born daughter, which is cause by the bi-culture difference, lack of communication and the different view of America, in order to illustrate the culture differences and hardship in a immigrant family in America. In the novel, Tan illustrates the generation gap between the four Chinese immigrant mothers and their Americanized daughters is caused by the bump of two culture, the eastern traditional culture and the western culture.

Stephen Soitos talks about the ethnicity problem between the mothers and daughters in her essay collection named “ Amy Tan”. Soitos thinks: “ The mothers are firmly rooted in their Chinese cultural heritage and are comfortable with being Chinese. The daughters are awkward with their own Chinese features, the Chinese language and their repressed Chinese spirituality. The mother identify with their ethnicity, but the daughters are ambivalent about who they are” (Soitos, 294). The mothers are used to their Chinese way of living style, and keep the Chinese culture even though they have moved to America but their American born daughters do not totally

understand what those Chinese heritages are. And this culture differences was apparent throughout the novel. After reading *The Joy Luck Club*, I find that the culture differences apparent are the one of the most important reason of the formation of the generation gap in the four immigrant families.

When the three aunties in the *Joy Luck Club* ask Jing-mei to go to China to meet her two sisters whom her mother Suyuan gave up in China, Jing-mei says to the three aunties: “ ‘ See my sisters, tell them about my mother,’ I say, nodding, ‘ What will I say? What can I tell them about my mother? I don’t know anything. She was my mother’ ” (Tan, 40). The words of Jing-mei shows that she never really understand her mother, so as while as she is asked to tell her mother’s story to her two sisters, she refused to do so for the reason that she dose not know anything about her mother. But in my opinion, she has try to communicate or to understand her mother, but what conduces that is the differences and misunderstanding of the two kinds of culture and experiences. Throughout the story, Tan shows that the lack of communication is also a main reason for the distance between the four immigrant families. Soitos also pointed out that the language problem also contributed to the gap between the older and younger generation: “ Tan felt uneasy to balancing American lifestyles with more traditional chinese customs.

Her limited Chinese language skills and her parents’ weak English added to the problem” ( Soitos, 289). Amy Tan wrote *The Joy Luck Club* almost all based on her life experiences, as she is describing the feelings of the daughters, actually she describes herself, that is, it is so hard to living in a bi-

culture family, not only because of the different cultures and life styles but also the different languages. In my opinion, the interpretation of Soitos is reasonable. Since two people speak two languages and cannot find a way to communicate then it is hard to understand the real meaning of each other. Despite of the culture differences and age gap, if the minimum language skill could not achieve then there is no any real communication. At the time the mother warns her daughter do not riding the bicycle out of her sight, otherwise it would be dangerous, and this is said in Twenty-Six Malignant Gates. The mother explain to her daughter why she can not ride the bicycle: “ It is written in Chinese. You cannot understand it. That is why you must listen to me.’ ”

‘ What are they then?’ the girl demanded. ‘ Tell me the twenty-six bad things.’ But the mother sat knitting in silence.

‘ What twenty-six!’ shouted the girl.

The mother still did not answer her ” (Tan, 87).

The mother try to teach her daughter in the Chinese way, but the daughter is educated and grow up in a white American society, the daughter is used to American thinking style and she is confused about her Chinese heritage.

As what Tan described in her book, even if the daughter want to learn a little bit of Chinese culture such as the twenty-seven bad things, she still cannot achieve it. The reason is what the mother says; the daughter dose not understands Chinese but that is told in Chinese. So the language is a barrier between the mothers and daughters in the novel. Also, another cause is that the mothers came to the dream land- America with their entire best wish on their daughters, but the things are actually not easy for the daughters.

Soitos writes about how the different views of America lead the daughters and mothers go apart. Soitos states: " in the joy luck club the daughters are weighted down with guilt. They feel they disappointed their mothers by failing to live up to unreal expectations of fame and success. The mother are seen as distance figures who make impossible demands"(Soitos, 294) In the book, all daughters carry a wish from their own mother, but unfortunately they are failed to achieve it.

This makes them full of guilt, also they are disgruntled about their mother's " impossible demands. At the beginning of the novel Tan writes a story about a woman and her swan, which signify the mothers and daughters in the book. In the story the old woman carry the swan to America from thousands of li away with all her best wishes. She cooed to the swan: " In America I will have a daughter just like me. But over there nobody will say her worth is measured by the loudness of her husband's belch. Over there nobody will look down on her, because I will make her speak only perfect English. And over there she will always be too full to swallow any sorrow! She will know my meaning, because I will give her his swan- A creature that became more than what was hoped for" (Tan, 17). The older generation came to the dreamland because of the war or painful life in China.

So while they are live in the United States they hope that their daughters will not go through the pain, which they had in the past. Due to their rooted Chinese tradition, they could not accepted by the main stream of the white society so they simply transfer all they wishes and hope on the shoulder of their daughters. The mothers want the daughters success and they do

believe their younger generation will, because the daughters are in America, a place that everything will come true and achieve easily. Absolutely, that are only their view of America, as for the daughters, this kind of heavily wishes make them out of breath. The daughters do not think they have any advantages than others in the society while their mothers think they have all the good conditions. Instead, they are ashamed about their eastern features and their distinct Chinese heritage. After failed to achieve their mothers' expectations, they “ weighted down with guilt” and due to the language problem they cannot convince the mothers that they had try so hard. Then the conflict comes out because of the different views of America.

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