【研究ノート】

An Analysis of *The Joy Luck Club* from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication[1]

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Outline

I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze Amy Tan's (1989) *The Joy Luck Club*, one of the recent best selling books in the U.S.A., from the perspective of intercultural communication. Considering the fact that Amy Tan herself is a second generation Chinese in the U.S.A. and the book illustrates the various experiences of four first generation Chinese immigrants and their daughters in the United States, a careful observation of the book helps us relate to the constructs and theories in intercultural communication.

Specifically, the first part of the paper explains the author's conceptual assumptions in analyzing *The Joy Luck Club*. The second part of the paper analyzes the content of the book in terms of cultural identity; how subjective cultural identifications change through generations and what kind of identity confusion occurs intrapersonally. The third part of the paper discusses how the suggested Chinese communication patterns in the literature are reflected in the story: (1) the values underlying Chinese people's communication; and (2) possible communication gap with the members of dominant society in the U.S.A. The last part of the paper suggests further directions in analyzing *The Joy Luck Club* and using it as material in intercultural communication education or training.

II. Assumptions for the Analysis

A. American Society as Being "Salad Bowl"

Various social scientists studied how immigrants blend into the "melting pot" of American society and viewed assimilation as the final goal of cross-cultural adaptation. That is, assimilation is considered to be always a uni-directional process from immigrants toward the dominant host culture and cultural heritage that the immigrants brought with them from their native culture are assumed

to diminish over the process (e.g., Gordon, 1964 ; Lieberson, 1980).
However, since the early 1970's, scholars started to advocate the
equal ethnicity for all (e.g., Novak, 1971) and introduce the cultural
relativism approach (e.g., Hall, 1976). Within the "new" frame-
work, American society is not considered as "melting pot" but "salad
bowl" where each ethnic group retains its cultural heritage and
remains as being unique yet coexists with other ethnic groups. The
assumption that the author bases her argument on is this "new"
framework ; American society as being "salad bowl".

In *The Joy Luck Club*, four mothers have socialized mainly with
other Chinese ; they participate in ethnic activities and speak Chinese
most of the time. They have kept their cultural heritage and had a
limited exposure to the "dominant"[2] society. On the other hand, most
of their daughters are married to Caucasians, speak little Chinese and
get easily irritated by their mothers' speaking Chinese. Yet, the
cultural heritage that the first generation Chinese brought with them
has been passed on to their daughters to some degree.

B. "Subjective" versus "Objective" Culture
In discussing culture, cultural identity and ethnicity, some
researchers focus on "objective" factors such as the individuals'
interpersonal relationships with members of the host society, lan-
guage skills evaluated by others and demographic factors. Others
focus on "subjective" culture that an individual identifies with (Kim,
1988). In *The Joy Luck Club*, how individuals identify with a culture
subjectively is described more than how they are viewed by the
society. Thus, in this paper, subjective culture is focused on. Yet,
as Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1990) suggest, the author is also
aware of a possible interaction between "objective" culture and
cultural identification and "subjective" culture and cultural identifi-
cation.

III. Intercultural Identity

A. Process of Acquiring Intercultural Identity

Cross-cultural adaptation is defined as "the process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialization process in one culture and then come into continuous, prolonged first-hand contact with a new and unfamiliar culture" (Kim, 1988, pp. 37-38). In this process, an individual experiences comfort and discomfort and changes in attitude, self-image and self-awareness. Cross-cultural adaptation includes one's encounter not only with others but also with oneself; the entire process is a process of personal growth (Adler, 1975 ; Zaharna, 1989).

According to Adler (1975), cross-cultural adaptation is seen as a process of personal growth consisting of five steps.[3]　They are : (1) a contact phase where an individual perceives the new environment ethnocentrically ; (2) a disintegration phase where an individual identifies cultural differences negatively and is confused and depressed ; (3) a reintegration phase where an individual rejects the second culture and yet tries to defend his or her own difficulties ; (4) an autonomy phase where an individual starts to understand the host culture with a feeling of competence ; and (5) a final independence stage where an individual acquires an intercultural identity.　With this intercultural identity, an individual acquires flexibility and considers oneself neither totally a part of nor totally apart from any particular culture.[4]　Although Adler's (1975) model is generally applicable to immigrants' experiences, it does not seem to sufficiently explain how second generation American-born Chinese daughters identify with a culture.　As the second generation immigrants are enculturated into two cultures, the dominant culture and their parents' culture, this process is seen to be extremely complex.

M. Benett (1986) and J. Benett and M. Benett (1992) present a more sophisticated model of the process of acquiring an intercultural

identity and suggest six stages consisting of three ethnocentric stages
and three ethnorelative stages.   As it focuses not on the process of
adaptation to a particular culture but rather on the process of
acquiring an intercultural identity, the J. Benett and M. Benett (1992)
model is better suited in analyzing the cultural identity of both the
first and second generation immigrants.   The three ethnocentric
stages are :   (1) a denial of difference stage where an individual
never recognizes cultural differences because he or she is isolated or
separated from the dominant culture ; (2) a defense against differ-
ence stage where an individual recognizes cultural differences and
evaluates most variations negatively ; and (3) a minimization of
difference stage where an individual recognizes and accepts superfi-
cial cultural differences and emphasizes universal cultural elements.
The three ethnorelative stages are :   (1) an acceptance of difference
stage where an individual recognizes and appreciates cultural differ-
ences in behavior and values ; (2) an adaptation to difference stage
where an individual develops communication skills using empathy
and shifting frame of reference ; and (3) an integration of difference
stage where an individual internalizes multicultural frames of refer-
ence and freely chooses a proper judgment standard appropriate for
the situation.   An individual in this state of mind is called a person
of "constructive marginality" (J. Benett & M. Benett, 1992, p. 7).
The following analysis is based on this process of acquiring an
intercultural identity.

B. The Joy Luck Mothers' Identity

1. Ethnocentrism[5]

All four mothers in the story escaped from Mainland China after
World War II and have lived in the U.S.A. for almost fifty years.
Yet, as far as the previous process of acquiring intercultural identity
goes, few of them have gone beyond the ethnocentric stages.

The strong sense of ethnocentrism is illustrated in the following

three examples.　First, when one of the daughters, Jing-mei Woo, asked her mother about the difference between Jewish and Chinese mah jong, her mother tried to convince her of how Chinese mah jong is far superior to Jewish mah jong :

> "Entirely different kind of playing," she said in her English explanation voice.　"Jewish mah jong, they watch only for their own tile, play only with their eyes." Then she switched to Chinese : "Chinese mah jong, you must play using your head, very tricky.　You must watch what everybody else throws away and keep that in your head as well.　And if nobody plays well, then the game becomes like Jewish mah jong.　Why play ? There's no strategy.　You're just watching people make mistakes." (Tan, 1989, pp. 22-23).

Second, although all of the mothers experienced hardship in China, they still cling to their "old Chinese value" and regret that their daughters cannot appreciate the "old Chinese value" :

> She learned these things, but I couldn't teach her about Chinese *character.　How to obey parents and listen to your mother's* mind.　How not to show your own thoughts, to put your feelings behind your face so you can take advantage of hidden opportunities.　Why easy things are not worth pursuing.　How to know your own worth and polish it, never flashing it around like a cheap ring. Why Chinese thinking is best (Tan, 1989, p. 289).

Third, the sense of ethnocentrism is viewed not only on the level of national culture as in the examples above ; it is also viewed on the level of regional culture as seen in the following interaction between one of the mothers, Lindo Jong, and her daughter :

"Half of everything inside you," she explained in Chinese, "is
from your father's side. This is natural. They are the Jong
clan, Cantonese people. Good, honest people. Although some-
times they are bad-tempered and stingy. You know this from
our father, how he can be unless I remind him." ... "And half of
everything inside you is from me, your mother's side, from the
Sun clan in Taiyuan." She wrote the characters out on the back
of an envelope, forgetting that I cannot read Chinese. "We are
a smart people, very strong, tricky, and famous for winning wars.
You know Sun Yat-sen, hah ?" (Tan, 1989, p. 202).

As shown in the above, Lindo is trying to assure her daughter that her
clan is superior to any other clan. All these three examples indicate
that the Joy Luck mothers stay in the second stage, a defense against
difference stage.

2. Demarkation of in-group versus out-group

Ethnocentrism causes an individual to clearly divide the world
into two parts : us and them (Pusch, 1979). The Joy Luck mothers
have a clear idea of who belongs to the in-group and who belongs to
the out-group. Sometimes the mothers perceive their own daughters
as members of the out-group ; that is, as an American. For exam-
ple, Ying-ying St. Clair was upset about her daughter's "American-
ized" idea and says :

Annh! Why do you Americans have only these morbid thoughts
in your mind? (Tan, 1989, p. 105).

Ying-ying, who is married to a Caucasian, has perceived even her
husband not as an individual but as an individual from the out-group
since her husband proposed to her. Ying-ying says :

Saint courted me for four years in his strange way.   Even though I was not the owner of the shop, he always greeted me, shaking hands, holding them too long.   From his palms water always poured, even after we married.   He was clean and pleasant. But he smelled like a foreigner, a lamb-smell stink that can never be washed away (Tan, 1989, p. 284).

Moreover, this mothers' idea of in-group versus out-group further brings a conflict with their daughters.   The following is the conversation between one mother named An-mei Hsu and her daughter, Rose Hsu Jordan.   The conversation took place after Rose's Caucasian male friend picked her up at home.   Rose describes him as follows :

"He is American," warned my mother, as if I had been too blind to notice.   "A **waigoren**."   "I'm American too",   I said (Tan, 1989, p. 124).

As the above example shows, a word "American" or "**waigoren**" is a reflection of the mother's concept of out-group.   Likewise, it may be also true that a word "American" or "**waigoren**" strengthens the mother's ethnocentric world view.

3．Identity confusion

As shown above, most of the Joy Luck mothers stay within the ethnocentric stages.   Lindo Jong realizes the dual identity in herself. Yet, not being able to identify with either of the two cultures clearly, American or Chinese, she cannot freely switch back and forth between the two cultures.   Lindo illustrates her own identity confusion as follows :

I smile.   I use my American face.   That's the face Americans

think is Chinese, the one they cannot understand. But inside I
am becoming ashamed. I am ashamed she is ashamed.
Because she is my daughter and I am proud of her, and I am her
mother but she is not proud of me. Mr. Rory pats my hair more.
He looks at me. He looks at my daughter. Then he says
something to my daughter that really displeased her: "It's
uncanny how much you two look alike!" I smile, this time with
my Chinese face. But my daughter's eyes and her smile become
very narrow, the way a cat pulls itself small just before it bites
(Tan, 1989, p. 291).

This scene indicates that Lindo has not become a person of construc-
tive marginality who can freely set his or her own cultural boundary.

C. The Joy Luck Daughters' Identity

1. Defense against difference

While the Joy Luck mothers stay within the ethnocentric stages,
the daughters' cultural identification process has progressed further.
The daughters have gone through the defense against difference
stage. For example, Jing-mei Woo, one of the four daughters, recall-
ing the days when she was fifteen, says:

"Cannot be helped," my mother said when I was fifteen and had
vigorously denied that I had any Chinese whatsoever below my
skin. I was a sophomore at Galileo High in San Francisco, and
all my Caucasian friends agreed: I was about as Chinese as
they were (Tan, 1989, p. 306).

As the description above shows, Jing-mei Woo was in the second
stage of the J. Benett and M. Benett (1992) cultural identification
model. She was confused to know or to be informed that "she is
different from other classmates" and tried to deny her being Chinese.

Likewise, another daughter, Waverly Jong, went through the same stage when she was a teenager though she is frustrated to find out she is different from Chinese. Recalling the past, her mother Lindo Jong says :

"Aii-ya," I said.　"Even if you put on their clothes, even if you take off your makeup and hide your fancy jewelry, they know. They know just watching the way you walk, the way you carry your face.　They know you do not belong."　My daughter did not look pleased when I told her this, that she didn't look Chinese. She had a sour American look on her face.　Oh, maybe ten years ago, she would have clapped her hands---hurray !---as if this were good news (Tan, 1989, pp. 288-289).

Rose Hsu Jordan, recalling the time when she first met her mother-in-law, also illustrates her psychological state in the same stage :

She assured me she had nothing whatsoever against minorities ; she and her husband, who owned a chain of office-supply stores, personally knew many fine people who were Oriental, Spanish, and even black.　But Ted was going to be in one of those professions where he would be judged by a different standard, by patients and other doctors who might not be as understanding as the Jordans were.　She said so unfortunate the way the rest of the world was, how unpopular the Vietnam War was.　"Mrs. Jordan, I am not Vietnamese," I said softly, even though I was on the verge of shouting (Tan, 1989, pp. 124-125).

Before Rose met Mrs. Jordan for the first time, her mother stopped her from dating Ted because he is American.　Then, Rose opposed her mother by claiming that she is also American. This shows that

she identified with American culture rather than with Chinese culture. Yet, when she was identified by Mrs. Jordan with another group of Asians, she was confused. She might be depressed to realize the fact that she was viewed as somebody different no matter how much she identified with the American dominant culture. Also, her cultural pride as being a Chinese-American might have been a little hurt when Mrs. Jordan did not seem to distinguish the Chinese from the Vietnamese.

Rose, after her marriage with Ted fell apart, attributes the failure to her Chinese background and says :

> At first I thought it was because I was raised with all this Chinese humility,...Or that maybe it was because when you're Chinese you're supposed to accept everything, flow with the Tao and not make waves. But my therapist said, Why do you blame your culture, your ethnicity? (Tan, 1989, p. 170)

This insecure feeling is also shared by another Joy Luck daughter, Lena St. Clair. Here she tries to convince herself that she is good enough for her Caucasian husband :

> So I think I deserve someone like Harold, and I mean in the good sense and not like bad karma. We're equals. I am also smart. I have common sense. And I'm intuitive, highly so. I was the one who told Harold he was good enough to start his own firm (Tan, 1989, p. 170).

These examples show the complexity of how second generation daughters acquire their cultural identity. There are two factors that make the second generation Chinese daughters' cultural identification process complex. First, as previously mentioned, they are enculturated into both Chinese and American cultures. Second,

"how one identifies with a culture" is influenced by "how one is viewed by others" and vice versa.

2. Constructive marginality

Although the daughters' cultural identification process is complicated, they have progressed further in cultural identification than their mothers.[6] For example, Jing-mei Woo, after meeting with her twin sisters in China, starts to move to the fifth or final stage of cultural identification. She says:

> And now I see her again, two of her, waving, and in one hand there is a photo, the Polaroid I sent them. As soon as I get beyond the gate, we run toward each other, all three of us embracing, all hesitations and expectations forgotten. "Mama, Mama," we all murmur, as if she is among us. My sisters look at me, proudly, "**Meimei jandale**," says one sister proudly to the other. "Little Sister has grown up." I look at their faces again and I see no trace of my mother in them. Yet they still look familiar. 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 (Tan, 1989, p. 331).

This comment indicates that Jing-mei Woo is in the stage where she starts to understand the Chinese culture inside her with a feeling of competence. In other words, Jing-mei Woo starts to enter the stage of constructive marginality where she enjoys being on the margin of the two cultures and negotiates the boundary between the two cultures.

Ⅳ. Chinese Communication Patterns

A. Communication Conflicts

1. With the members of the dominant culture

Because they retain their cultural heritage, the first generation Chinese mothers present communication conflicts with the members of the dominant culture. One of the important rules governing Chinese communication is the concept of humility and self-deprecation. Thus, in receiving a sincere compliment, Chinese people are likely to deny the compliment by saying "Oh, no" even when they think they deserve the compliment (Hu & Grove, 1991). If a member of another society fails to understand the self-deprecation ritual, he or she may be confused or engage in an "inappropriate" behavior. The following interaction between Lindo Jong and her daughter's fiancé, Rich, presents Lindo Jong's self-deprecation speech and Rich's "incompetent" behavior in the Chinese cultural framework :

But the worst was when Rich criticized my mother's cooking, and he didn't know what he had done. As is the Chinese cook's custom, my mother always made disparaging remarks about her own cooking. That night she chose to direct it toward her famous steamed pork and preserved vegetable dish, which she always served with special pride. "Ai! This dish not salty enough, no flavor," she complained, after tasting a small bite. "It is too bad to eat." This was our family's cue to eat some and proclaim it the best she had ever made. But before we could do so, Rich said, "You know, all it needs is a little soy sauce." And he proceeded to pour a riverful of the salty black stuff on the platter, right before my mother's horrified eyes (Tan, 1989, p. 197).

Another important rule governing Chinese communication concerns levels of formality. It is suggested that early in social relationships, the Chinese act in a relatively formal manner toward each other and that their formality is very slowly dissolved into informality (Hu & Grove, 1991). The following example shows Rich's failure in understanding this rule :

> I was still shuddering, remembering how Rich had firmly shaken both my parents' hands with that same easy familiarity he used with nervous new clients. "Linda, Tim," he said, "we'll see you again soon, I'm sure." My parents' names are Lindo and Tin Jong, and nobody, except a few older family friends, ever calls them by their first names (Tan, 1989, p. 198).

Rich's failure to use the customary formal style of address such as Mr. and Mrs. Jong may have surprised Tin and Lindo Jong. However, what is more surprising for them may be Rich's informality in speech.

2. With daughters[7]

As discussed in the second section, the four Chinese mothers have struggled to adapt to American society suffering from an identity crisis. The four second generation daughters have struggled to adapt to their Chinese culture inside themselves. The mothers always feel ambivalent because they are proud of their daughters and at the same time they are disappointed to know how little their daughters retain their Chinese values. The daughters sometimes grant their mothers' and their own "Chineseness" as being valuable, and sometimes they deny it. Both the mothers and the daughters have ambivalent feelings that may cause minor conflicts between them. The following is an interaction between Waverly Jong and her mother :

But there was one duty I couldn't avoid. I had to accompany my
mother on Saturday market days when I had no tournament to
play. My mother would proudly walk with me, visiting many
shops, buying very little. "This my daughter Wave-ly Jong," she
said to whoever looked her way. One day after we left a shop
I said under my breath, "I wish you wouldn't do that, telling
everybody I'm your daughter." My mother stopped walking.
Crowds of people with heavy bags pushed past us on the side-
walk, bumping into first one shoulder, then another. "Aiii-ya.
So shame be with mother ?" She grasped my hand even tighter
as she glared at me. I looked down. "It's not that, it's just so
obvious. It's just so embarrassing." "Embarrass you be my
daughter ?" Her voice was cracking with anger. "That's not
what I meant. That's not what I said." "What you say ?" I
knew it was a mistake to say anything more, but I heard my
voice speaking, "Why do you have to use me to show off ? If
you want to show off, then why don't you learn to play chess?"
(Tan, 1989, p. 101)

As the interaction above illustrates, Waverly was embarrassed
that her mother tried to show her off to others as being a chess
champion. She did not realize how **mianzi**[8] or face is important to
her mother and did not understand why her mother showed her off.
However, her mother was upset when Waverly said that she was so
embarrassed. Not being secure about herself, she negatively inter-
preted what her daughter said and attributed her daughter's embar-
rassment to her being Chinese. Thus, Waverly Jong and her mother
cannot fully understand each other, and neither can the others.
When Jing-mei Woo first takes her mother's place in the Joy Luck
Club after her mother's death, she thinks :

And then it occurs to me.　They are frightened.　In me, they see
their own daughters, just as ignorant, just as unmindful of all the
truths and hopes they have brought to America.　They see
daughters who grow impatient when their mothers talk in
Chinese, who think they are stupid when they explain things in
fractured English.　They see that joy and luck do not mean the
same to their daughters, that to these closed American-born
minds "joy luck" is not a word, it does not exist (Tan, 1989, p.
31).

As the passage above indicates, Jing-mei Woo realizes for the first
time how little she knew about her own mother.　Barnlund (1975)
suggests that even when two people mean to talk about the "same"
word, they often talk about different things.　In other words, each
individual views the world differently and creates his or her own
social reality that is not the same as anybody else's.

B. The Concept of Face as a Communication Rule

1. The concept of face

As pointed out previously, a self-deprecation ritual plays an
important role in Chinese people's communication.　Thus, they can
keep an intragroup harmony and avoid overt conflict in interpersonal
relations (Hu & Grove, 1991). Another important construct in
Chinese people's communication is "face".　"Face" is defined as the
public self-image that everyone wants to present (Brown & Levinson,
1978 ; Goffman, 1959).　Although face is a universal concept and is
related to the notion of integrity, Tracy (1990) claims that the
concept of face is Chinese in origin and further analyzes Chinese idea
of face and presents two concepts of face ; **lien** and **mianzi**.　**Lien**
represents the confidence of society in the integrity of the ego's moral
character while **mianzi** represents a reputation achieved through
success and ostentation.　According to Hu and Grove (1991), the

importance of face in the Chinese culture is based on Confucius,
which emphasizes that humans exist in interactive relationships with
others and that most relationships are unequal in nature. Conse-
quently, face-saving behaviors are necessary to maintain harmony
and each individual's place in the hierarchical order.

In the story, An-mei Hsu was told by her grandmother that her
mother did not ever exist. Her grandmother was so ashamed of
An-mei's mother because she became the fourth wife of a rich
merchant after her first husband passed away. An-mei's grand-
mother says :

> "When you lose your face, An-mei, it is like dropping your
> necklace down a well. The only way you can get it back is to
> fall in after it" (Tan, 1989, p. 36).

When An-mei's mother came to take An-mei with her, her grand-
mother told her mother :

> "Who is this ghost? Not an honored widow. Just a number-
> three concubine. If you take your daughter, she will become
> like you. No face. Never able to lift up her head" (Tan, 1989,
> p. 38).

The example above shows the importance of the **lien** part of face or
the confidence of society in the integrity of the ego's moral character
in Chinese society. Accordingly, it is implied that if an individual
has done something shameful, all family members and even ancestors
will lose their face in Chinese society. This is in line with Hu and
Grove's (1991) notion that in the Chinese culture, individual and
group integrity are both important while in other cultures like the
U.S. culture individual integrity is important.

Just as an individual's shame could be his or her family's shame,

an individual's good reputation upgrades his or her whole family. The **mianzi** part of face is best demonstrated in the previous interaction between Waverly Jong and her mother (see IV. A. 2).　Interestingly enough, this notion of **mianzi** has been passed on to the second generation American-born daughters.　Before participating in a chess tournament, Waverly Jong as a little girl is aware of a possible danger :　her losing in the game may make her family lose face.

If I lost, I would bring shame on my family (Tan, 1989, p. 97).

Comparing the Chinese and the Japanese in terms of the concept of face, Matsumoto (1987) suggests a difference.　In Japan if an individual brings his or her family or company shame, his or her parents or superiors will take responsibility for the shame.　On the other hand, in Chinese society, this is not likely to happen and the parents or superiors will cut the relationship with the individual that brought them shame.　This Chinese attitude toward those who brought shame is illustrated in the interaction between An-mei's grandmother and mother.　An-mei's grandmother tries to cut the relationship with An-mei's mother, her own daughter, by making An-mei believe her mother is a ghost ; An-mei's grandmother tries to convince herself that her daughter does not exist.

2 ． **Mianzi** games

Matsumoto (1987) suggests another difference in the concept of face between the Chinese and the Japanese.　While the Chinese concept of face centers around **mianzi** or reputation, the Japanese concept of face centers around shame.

Bond and Hwang (1986) suggest six categories of face behaviors :　(1) enhancing one's face ; (2) enhancing another's face ; (3) losing one's own face ; (4) making another lose face ; (5) saving one's own face ; and (6) saving another's face.　In *The Joy Luck Club*,

these face behaviors concerning one's **mianzi** are frequently demon-
strated. The following three examples illustrate these face or
mianzi games explicitly. In this scene, Suyuan Woo and Lindo Jong
try to enhance their face by talking about their daughters:

> And then one day I heard my mother and her friend Lindo Jong
> both talking in a loud bragging tone of voice so others could
> hear...Waverly Jong had gained a certain amount of fame as
> "Chinatown's Little Chinese Chess Champion". "She bring
> home too many trophy," lamented Auntie Lindo that Sunday.
> "All day she play chess. All day I have no time do nothing but
> dust off her winnings." She threw a scolding look at Waverly,
> who pretended not to see her. "You lucky you don't have this
> problem," said Auntie Lindo with a sigh to my mother. And my
> mother squared her shoulders and bragged: "Our problem
> worser than yours. If we ask Jing-mei wash dish, she hear
> nothing but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent"
> (Tan, 1989, pp. 148-149).

On the surface, each mother tried to convince the other that her
"problem" is worse than the other's. However, this interaction
illustrates both mothers' enhancing their face; both of them tried to
improve their reputation by showing off their daughters' most ap-
preciated qualities.

Another scene where **mianzi** games are played is when Jing-mei
Woo played the piano in a talent show. At first, Jing-mei's parents
invited all the couples from the Joy Luck Club to show off her talent.
However, when she looks back to the time when she played out of
tune and failed to prove her talent to all the Joy Luck members, she
thinks:

> And now I realized how many people were in the audience, the

whole world it seemed.　I was aware of eyes burning into my back.　I felt the shame of my mother and father as they sat stiffly throughout the rest of the show.　We could have escaped during intermission.　Pride and some strange sense of honor must have anchored my parents to their chairs (Tan, 1989, p. 151).

The description depicts an example of Bond and Hwang's (1986) third and fifth face behaviors.　That is, because of Jing-mei's poor performance at the talent show, she herself and her parents lose their face.　Her parents also try to save their face by taking a self-defensive reaction, i. e., sitting and doing nothing.　After the failure, a **mianzi** game continued as follows :

"Lots of talented kids," Auntie Lindo said vaguely, smiling broadly.　"That was somethin' else," said my father, and I wondered if he was referring to me in a humorous way, or whether he even remembered what I had done.　Waverly looked at me and shrugged her shoulders.　"You aren't a genius like me," she said matter-of-factly. And if I hadn't felt so bad, I would have pulled her braids and punched her stomach (Tan, 1989, p. 151).

As the above interaction shows, what Lindo and Waverly Jong demonstrated are Bond and Hwang's (1986) fourth behavior, trying to make someone else lose face.　What Lindo said implies that Jing-mei does not have as much talent as anybody else in the talent show.　Waverly obviously criticized and aggravated Jing-mei's feeling.

In the last example, the most obvious **mianzi** game is played between two daughters ; Jing-mei Woo and Waverly Jong as follows.

At that crab dinner, I was so mad about what she said about my
hair that I wanted to embarrass her, to reveal in front of every-
body how petty she was.   So I decided to confront her about the
free-lance work I'd done for her firm, eight pages of brochure
copy on its tax services.   The firm was now more than thirty
days late in paying my invoice.   "Maybe I could afford Mr.
Rory's prices if someone's firm paid me on time," I said with a
teasing grin.   And I was pleased to see Waverly's reaction.   She
was genuinely flustered, speechless (Tan, 1989, p. 230).

There are many other examples in this story that illustrate the
concept of face.   This definitely indicates how important it is to be
concerned about one's own and another's face, either positively or
negatively, in communicating with the Chinese.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, *The Joy Luck Club* has been discussed from the
perspective of intercultural communication.   As shown in the above,
the book is pertinent to various aspects of communication.   For the
future, research could develop in two directions: . (1) a further
analysis of the processes of cultural identification ; and (2) a further
investigation into the Chinese concept of face.

Moreover, being relevant to various aspects of communication,
The Joy Luck Club can be utilized as an effective teaching material
or a reference book for intercultural communication education or
training for the following four reasons.   First, by reading a narra-
tive, a student should be able to relate what they have read to the
theories or constructs of communication easily.   Second, reading a
literary work is considered as a cognitive [9] learning process.
Cognitive learning is most convenient and suitable in the regular
university classroom setting.   Third, as Mizuta (1990) suggests,

cognitive learning is considered as particularly effective and comfort-
able for Japanese students because cognitive learning involves low
risk or failures and low degrees of self-disclosure.　Last, although
the level of focus is cognitive, if a student is deeply involved in the
story with sympathy or empathy,[10] the level of training can be brought
up to the affective level.　However, it is possible for students or
trainees to hold a fixed image of the immigrants' experiences. Thus,
the students or trainees should be aware of the fact that what they
read in the narrative is a limited experience of several Chinese
immigrants.

　　The Joy Luck Club depicts the limited experiences of the four
first generation Chinese women and their four daughters and the
author has to admit that her way of analysis is preliminary in nature.
However, the author believes that an analysis of a narrative of this
kind should contribute to the field of communication mainly for the
following two reasons. First, qualitative analysis of this kind is
important in understanding underlying cultural values such as face,
and in tackling the richness of these cultural values which quantita-
tive study can never reach.　Second, by going beyond the boundary
of their own field and speaking to other disciplines, researchers in the
field of communication could enrich their own field and those of
others.

Notes

1.　This paper is written partially based on the presentation made on
　　Oct. 8, 1992 at the Hokusei Gakuen University Public Seminar
　　(**Hokusei Gakuen Daigaku Kohkai Kohza**).　The author would
　　like to express hearty thanks to Professor Honda for his encour-
　　agement and valuable advice and to Professor Calzada for sharing
　　some information about Amy Tan and helping the author editing
　　the paper.　Although the author has to admit the fact that her way

of analyzing a literary work is far from the "standard" way, her
belief that efforts should be made among researchers to connect
the field of communication and other disciplines led her to decide
to write a paper of this kind.

2. In this context, the "dominant" society means the mainstream of
the society; that is, the white culture. However, according to
Henry III (1990), the population of non-white members is expected
to exceed that of the white by 2056. This being the case, neither
"dominant" nor "minority" is easy to define.

3. The author does not think that the process of cultural adaptation
is necessarily linear; someone may skip a certain stage and some-
one may go back and forth between stages.

4. This stage is called having a "third culture perspective" (Gudy-
kunst, Hammer & Wiseman, 1977), or being a "multicultural man
or woman" (Adler, 1982) or being able to "double-swing" (Yoshik-
awa, 1988).

5. Ethnocentrism means our tendency to identify with our in-group
and to evaluate out-groups and their members based on one's own
standards. Due to ethnocentrism, one's own cultural values and
ways of doing things are considered as more real, right, natural or
better than those of the other groups (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984;
Pusch, 1979). Ethnocentrism is also suggested to be one of the
major factors that prevent one from achieving effective
intercultural communication and adapting to another culture
(Copeland & Griggs, 1985; Harris & Moran, 1987).

6. The author does not necessarily mean that, by objective measures,
the second generation Chinese daughters in the story progressed
further in cultural adaptation than their mothers.

7. Tan claims that the ethnicity does not play a major role in her
work and says, "It is not that I have unusual ideas, it's just that I
happen to be a baby boomer and my pulse beats with other women,
not just in America but the world" (Nakano, 1992, p. 16). As she

mentions, the relational development and disengagement between mothers and daughters is considered to be a universal theme. However, through various personal contacts that the author have had with the second or third generation Asian-Americans, she believes that their conflicts with their parents are likely to incur due to differences in value.

8. The importance of **mianzi** or face will be discussed further in the next section.

9. In designing the structure of an intercultural communication class and materials for the classroom, various factors should be taken into consideration. For example, the focus of levels of understanding to be examined, whether cognitive, affective or behavioral (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

10. According to Stewart and Benett (1991), sympathy refers to the imaginative placing of ourselves in another person's position, while empathy means the imaginative intellectual and emotional participation in another person's experience. While the referent for sympathy is our own experience, that for empathy is another person's experience.

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An Analysis of *The Joy Luck Club* from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze Amy Tan's (1989) *The Joy Luck Club* from the intercultural communication point of view. As the book illustrates the various experiences of four first generation Chinese immigrants and their daughters in the United States, a careful observation of the book helps us relate to the constructs and theories in intercultural communication.

In so doing, the first part of the paper explains the author's two conceptual assumptions: (1) American society is considered as "salad bowl" where each ethnic group retains its cultural heritage yet coexists with other ethnic groups ; and (2) the "subjective" culture that an individual identifies with is more important than how he or she is viewed by the society. The second part of the paper analyzes the content of the book in terms of cultural identity: (1) how subjective cultural identifications change through generations ; and (2) whether or not the first generation Chinese immigrants and their daughters integrate both cultures and enjoy being on the margin of the two cultures. The third part of the paper discusses how the suggested Chinese communication patterns in the literature are reflected in the story : (1) the values underlying Chinese people's communication including the concept of face ; (2) possible communication gap with the members of dominant society in the U.S.A. ; and (3) communication gap between the first generation Chinese and their daughters. The last part of the paper suggests further directions in analyzing *The Joy Luck Club* and using it as material in intercultural communication education or training.