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**Chinese-American Women between East and West in Amy
Tan's *The Joy Luck Club***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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Dedication

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to everyone who has helped me write this thesis. I would love to dedicate this work to my dear Dad (M'hemd) and my dear Mom (Djahida) for their love, struggle, enlightenment, and endless support to finish this work. I would also like to dedicate this work to my dearest brothers (Mohamed, Nacer Adin, and Mahdi) and special thanks to my beloved sister Manel and my sister by choice Noussaiba. From the bottom of my heart, I would love to thank my "Angel" Bissen for being in my life. On the occasion, I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to my dearest friend Chaima for her faithful love and help, and to my sweet friends; Sabra, Noura, Bassma, and, Hakima. My appreciation extends to all the members of Mokrani and Cheriatia families; uncles, aunts, and cousins. Finally, I would like to express deep love to my grandma "Mdala".

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Abstract

Like many Chinese American writers, Amy Tan, occupies a significant position. Her novel *The Joy Luck Club* marks a distinct growth of Asian American Literature. Based on Said's book of *Orientalism*, this work aims at analyzing the Chinese mothers' domestic and racial discrimination in two different societies. Besides, it explores the cultural conflict between different generations in the Chinese community in America. The Chinese mothers want their American daughters to be more obedient and respectful to the Chinese traditions. But, the daughters prefer to be American citizens rather than Chinese ones. Hence, they find themselves struggling between Western modern life and the mothers' opposing values. So, the mothers were seen as the inassimilable "other" in the eyes of their westernized daughters. Amy Tan's description of the Chinese mothers as "other" leads her work to participate in the dominant American discourse of Orientalizing Chinese culture. Her harsh description of the Chinese's peoples, customs and traditions helps, to some extent, to reinforce the Chinese mothers as the image of "Other" in the dominant culture.

Key words: Other, Orientalism, East, West, Chinese- American women's oppression.

Introduction

Amy Tan is one of the most prominent Chinese-American writers. Amy Tan was born on February 19, 1952, in Oakland, California. Tan's parents are Chinese immigrants. Her mother Daisy was born to a wealthy family and she leaves Shanghai before the communist takeover in 1949. Tan's father, John, also flees the civil war in China. When her father and brother die from brain tumors, the family travels to Switzerland where Amy finishes her high school. Amy Tan is a good student and earns her MA in linguistics in 1973. At California University, Tan enrolls as a doctoral student in linguistics but unfortunately she leaves her doctoral program before completing her degree. Before starting her writing career, Tan has worked with children as a language development consultant. (NEA, 4)

Despite her mother wish, Tan wants to pursue a career in writing. Her mother wants her to be a doctor but Tan chose to be a writer. Tan's first book *The Joy Luck Club* is nominated for the National Book Award and received the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. In 1991, Tan publishes her second book *The Kitchen God's Wife*. Then, she writes *The Hundred Secret Senses* in 1995, follows by *The Bonesetter's Daughter* in 2001. Two years later, Tan publishes her first non-fiction work *The Opposite of Fate*. As part of the Multicultural Curriculum of High School and Colleges Tan's books cause her much ambivalence and honor.(NEA, 8)

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said tackles the issue of non-western other. He shows that the imperial and colonial hegemony is highly involved in discursive and text production. He states that "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the differences between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the orient, East, "them")" (12). Thus, Orientalism is a term used to describe the representation of the Eastern culture and practices by the Western discourse. It is based on the

assumption that all the Eastern societies are the same. In fact, Orientalism refers to the attitudes of the west towards the east. It explores observes and describes the “Orient” on the basis of occidental views. Too, the “orient” is seen as passive and non-participatory objects of study which has unchanged history while the “occident” is a dynamic and an active history (36).

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2007) publish a book entitled *Post-Colonial Studies* where they introduce this second edition and define some key concepts related to pos-colonialism. They provide an essential key to comprehend some issues which characterize pos-colonialism and to clearly explain them. Such issues are; Diaspora, Double colonization, Exotic / exoticism, Feminism, Hegemony, Orientalism, Other...etc.

In a Journal for and about Social Movements, Motta, Fominaya, Eschle, and Cox (2011) separate an interrelated themes of feminism, women’s movement and women in movement in the context of global neoliberalism. They resist to defend women from neoliberalism and to state their role in maintaining patriarchy. According to them feminist theory is created to develop women’s activism, at the same time to reclaim their political social and universal rights. Besides, they question the new strategies and limitations in the current movement, and how the second movement brings a new version of rights to them. Their strategic debate results other key themes which are: plurality beyond liberal feminism, experience and voices, communication, women-only spaces and self-care...etc.

In the “European Journals of Business and Social Science” (2014), Xiaoyan Peng addresses the issue of patriarchy and racism as well as the Chinese mother’s image in *The Joy Luck Club* from the perspective of racism. Since the very past historians argue that women are naturally weaker than men and they give them stereotype idea that women’s place is at home. “Historically, women have been considered not only intellectually inferiority to men but also

a major source of temptation and evil in the west” (148). As a matter of fact, oppression has a long history in China where women has to face the racial prejudice. In China, the relation between men and women can be illustrated through the relation between Qian (heaven) and Kun (earth). This relation indicated that men who are represented by heaven are superior and have a significant role. Whereas, women who represented by earth belonged to an inferior place.

“The European Journal of English Language and literature Studies” demonstrates a general overview about the belief in superstitions among the Chinese immigrant. In his article’s “Between Two Cultures-Finding Meaning in Amy Tan’s The Use of Superstitions” (2015), Gehan Anwar Deeb clarify the idea of superstition which is remained as a central concept in the Chinese Culture. Superstitions are a set of fictional rituals that existed in every culture to explain events and daily life situations. In her works Amy Tan concentrates on the use of ghosts and irrational expression in the Chinese culture and how they determine their way of life. By using such elements Amy Tan aims to add meaning to the overall context and plot. *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan is a combination of both two cultures. The mothers who represent the East and the Chinese traditions are the major source of superstitions’ element. However, the daughters of the novel represent the Western modern life.

In an article entitled “Analysis the Gender conflict of *The Joy Luck Club*” in the journal of “literature and language” (2015) feminism is defined as liberation which means that the role of the movement is to help women to comprehend the importance of freedom and liberation in a patriarchal society. As to overcome the second wave feminism dilemma the third wave feminism appears. This wave is interested in analyzing the internal complex relationship between the individual and feminism. The article also tackles the issue of gender in *The Joy Luck Club*. Gender is divided into two parts nature and society. Both men and

women born with biological differences and later on the differences are deeply acquired through social experiences.

Ambesange Praveen's article "Post-colonialism: Edward Said & Gayatri Spivak" (2016) which is published in "Research Journal of Recent Sciences" note that "Post colonialism is a term largely used to refer to all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the time of Colonization to our own time". By all means, pos-colonialism is those imperial attitudes, beliefs and concepts that influence the colonized nations, and then are represented in their cultural heritage. Moreover, this article explores two major concepts of pos-colonialism which are "Orientalism" by Said and "Subaltern" by Spivak. Orientalism is a field of a research which expressed the Euro-centrism. It constructs binary opposition between the East and the West. "The 'Subaltern' is a military term which means of lower rank". In other words, the term come to refer to the Third World countries which are marginalized in literature and social life.

Jing Yang's article of "American Cinematic Discourse of Women's Oppression in Old China" from the Journal of Culture Studies (2017) describes the dichotomization between the "progressive" West and the "passive" China. The writer focuses on women's oppression in old China and how they are marginalized by the west. The western ideas are based on the assumption that China's inability to transform itself from within. Earlier, Chinese women abided by culturally defined roles, they carefully listened to their father's wishes until they were married. Then, they obey their husbands until their demise. Later, they spent the rest of their life caring about their sons' needs. They never care about their own benefits and interests just because their role is at home and they are weaker than men.

Feminism is a movement where women fight to have equal rights and opportunities as men. On the basis of the idea that every human being on the planet deserves equal rights and

equal chances, feminism is emerged to celebrate women's rights all over the world. Feminism can be recognized into three waves. The first wave (1830-1900) addresses women right to vote and gaining political power. It is more political and gives women more freedom to participate in social and political agenda. The second wave (1960-1980) focuses on the reproductive rights as well as workplace, sexuality, family...etc. The third wave (1990-present) is concerned with women's recent issues which face them in their workplace and society. It also aims at eradicating violence against women in the world.

The Joy Luck Club portrays the writer's feminist point of views through the stories of different women characters. Throughout the novel, Amy Tan discusses many problems that women have faced, including marginalized roles, social gender, family, domestic violence, sexuality and the lack of power. This thesis will interpret the novel from the perspective of feminism while focusing on two issues. First, women are powerless to obtain their self-actualization. Chinese Americans often felt invisible within the dominant white culture so they seek for more acceptances and share their fascinating stories to build new lives for themselves and their daughters who are born in the US. Both mothers and daughters of *The Joy Luck Club* have a common goals and interests which are to overcome their pain and marginalization for better future. Second, the domestic violence is a major source of women's painful life. This thesis aims at describing all women's suffering within their family. Hopefully, all the women of the novel experience segregation and violence. This study explains the domestic violence against women and it is highly presented by Lindo Jong who is abused by her husband and mother in-law.

As regards, Orientalism is the idea that stereotyped Oriental culture as exotic. In his book, Edward Said defines Orientalism as "a rhetorical strategy through which the western self gains a positional superiority over the oriental other" (7). In other words, the differences between self and other become more tangible in the way that the self can understand the other

only as an external object who belongs to a different space. Moreover, the orient is represented and depicted by the western world in the form of writing, figurative arts, and designs. The study also would go beyond the idea of western imperialism and portrays their image towards the orient and particularly the Asian American women who experience the western's misrepresentation of eastern culture.

Amy Tan's description of mother and daughter bond requires a deep understanding of both the Chinese culture and the Chinese American culture. By appreciating and valuing the role of Chinese mother, Tan's aim is to destroy the concept of "Orientalism". Throughout the novel, Amy Tan tries to show that the Chinese women can stand by themselves and embrace the Western culture without losing their own. As any other Eastern countries, China is portrayed as a land of oppression, antiquity, savagery, superstition, and ignorance. Thus, this study will testify the major elements that lead the Western to adopt such concept towards the Asian Americans and to discuss how the Chinese women are represented as "other".

This thesis consists of a general introduction, three chapters, and general conclusion. The introduction in fact is an overview of the research issue. Chapter one represents the theoretical framework which focuses on Asian American literature and what makes it different from other immigrant literature. Furthermore, it analysis Edward Said' concept of Orientalism and how it can be apply in the novel. Chapter two is an analysis of the mother of the novel from both perspectives of Feminism and Orientalism. Chapter three discusses the daughters' ways of life as Chinese American women.

Chapter I: Asian Diasporic Writers as Orientalists

1.1 Terms Defined

The term diaspora is derived from the Greek word “diaspeirian” which means scattered. The term diaspora has been defined variedly, and has come to refer to the dispersion of the Jews outside Israel. It is the movement of people from their original homeland. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defined diaspora as “the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country” (Hornby 347). Simply put, diaspora is the dislocation of group of people from their nation to another one. Those dislocated people regard their ancestral homeland as their true land, to which they will return. As mentioned before, diaspora is mostly associated with the dispersion of the Jewish people outside Palestine. Connotatively, the term also refers to physical, philosophical, and religious displacement.

Although Orientalism depicted the ways in which the western civilization distinguishes the other cultures as different. Today its features are presented in literature. Orientalism can be seen even in the world of diasporic writers. Those writers are influenced by the notion of the Orient and starts reading about Said’s book *Orientalism* as a way to understand the diverse cultures between the East and the West. According to some writers literature plays a significant role in presenting the stereotypical oriental. It helps the westerns to know about themselves and about others. Authors of Asian descent such as Lisa Lau pointed out in her article Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals that Orientalism survives in the form of “re-orientalism”. The term clarifies the situation in which diasporic authors depends on “techniques in claiming authenticity” so as to address their cultural stereotypically and South Asians “over simplistically, stereotypically and often sensationally” (Lau 581). In other words, those ethnic writers have to be faithful to their cultural backgrounds and positively portray the Eastern thoughts. Like Amy Tan, many

other writers from Asian descent find themselves in charge to speak about the Asians including their culture, literature, and philosophy.

Re-Orientalism can be found in the writings of diaspora and it is constructed through three problems. The most important things the diasporic writers want to achieve are that being noticed as south Asians (Lau 582). Another problem is that re-orientalism occurs when a writer aimed to recall for the representation of all members of an ethnic group (Lau 584). Lau discovers that the south Asian diasporic literature and she names generalizations typical of this strand of literature. The last problem is that mixing facts and fiction by diasporic authors leads to the emergence of south Asian diasporic literature (Lau 585). Not only the western people are capable of providing a full representation about the Asians, but also people of Asian descent give a full picture about Orientals.

Although Re-Orientalism is associated with Indian diasporic literature, but now includes all Asian as a whole. Furthermore, the western stereotypes about Chinese Americans create a kind of alienation among them. For example Amy Tan' novel *The Joy Luck Club* describes the experience faced by the Chinese diaspora in America and how they are transformed mentally and physically between two different worlds. The Chinese diaspora is one of the largest groups in America. It is also known as Chinese emigration which occurred from the 19th century to 1949. It is mainly occurred because of starvation, wars, and political corruption. They are Chinese illiterate hard worker who left their homeland to search for better life. Hence, both Indian and Chinese diasporic writers can apply orientalizing strategies in order to create a struggle between minorities and majority population (Lau, 583). They mean by orientalizing strategies, those exaggerated techniques through which the orient is described as "other". Some of them can be summarized in cultural heritage, norms, beliefs, and manners. As mentioned above, the orient is the orient and it is not the occident; Westerns portray the East as exotic, backward, and dangerous. Thus, the Asian authors use these

negative concepts as a tool to raise a kind of conflict between the minority and mainstream society. For example, Amy Tan uses some of these techniques as a way to negotiate the dilemma of misrepresentation. She depends on the mistreatment of Asian women in old China as well as using the Chinese old belief.

As Lisa Lau, many other scholars observe the orientalizing strategies in Asian diasporic literature. Anis Shivany clarifies some well known principles which appear in the recent Indian novels written for western audience. Yet, she names them as “exoticised orientalism” and claims that it is what connected Asians together and aide writers to use some ethnic practices as a symbol of Indianness. Culture exotic as Shivany has expressed is more than providing a cultural description of some practices, but also use some foreign expression to create a sense of a different culture. Such practices may be in the form of food, clothes, movies which are known to western readers.

The previous terms in current orientalism among diasporic writers demonstrate that there is no consensus concerning the term re-orientalism. As Lau and Shivany who use various terms to interpret current orientalism, others like Tobias Hubinette describe the term re-orientalism as the equivalent of fundamentalism or nationalism in Asia. He argues that fundamentalists or nationalists articulates to themselves certain qualities or traits which they are perceived as an integrate part of their nature. As a result, they try to differentiate themselves from the west and shift from the notion of being “religious minded, despotic and cruel” to a more positive image of being “diligent and hardworking” (6). In his Essay Hubinette said that

[Classical] Orientalism has also survived as a re-orientalism in the form of

[Islamic] fundamentalism and nationalism in the newly independent former

colonies of Asia. It is possible to view fundamentalism, especially its Islamic

vision, as a form of indigenized orientalism whereby the orientalized re-orientalize [s] himself in a manner which can be summed up as: “yes, we orientals are really religious minded, despotic, and cruel by nature.

According to Hubinette re-orientalism is a reflection of classical Orientalism which perpetuates the Muslims in a negative way. Moreover, Hubinette refers to Orientalism in arts, movies, and literature as popular Orientalism without addressing the diasporic or second generation writers (Hubinette 7). Orientalism has various definitions and interpretations, but not all of them denoting the strategies that are used by diasporic writers. Some scholars talk about re-orientalism, others adopt neo-orientalism, and the last category speaks of popular orientalism. So, this indicates that no specific term can be used for the same phenomenon and that is “exoticism”. Up to other scholars as Graham Huggan, for example, whether it is Orientalism or exoticism, it denotes the same principle and that is the tendency to show the criteria of other cultures in order to establish a sense of visible differences (19).

1.2 Orientalism and Occidentalism

Both Orientalism and Occidentalism are the most significant branches of post-colonialism. The post-colonial studies focuses on the relation between the colonizer and the colonized country. Since its emergence, post-colonialism examines the western’s thought towards the colonized culture. Post-colonialism is mainly concerned with the Third World countries that are suffered from imperialism such as Africa, Middle East, and South Asia. According to many postcolonial critics the postcolonial literature is appropriate and most authoritative, term to denote, describe and study the emerging literatures in English. Apart from this, post-colonial theory is a literary analysis which examines issues of post-colonialism such as identity, gender, ethnicity, and race. Stephen Legg defines it as “a complex mix of theorists, including Homi Bhabha, Jaques Drrida, Franz Fanon, and Gayatri Ghakravotry

Spivak” (265). To put it differently, post-colonial theory is a combination of related approaches which is produced by a number of theorists. Edward Said is one of those theorists who engage in western discourse toward the orient.

Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* is the founder stone of post-colonial study. He asserts that the western opinions and texts about the orient are merely a mistaken idea and do not represent the real orient. He proves that Orientalism is just an imaginary concept which is produced by westerners. In his well-known book *Literary theory: The Basics*, Hans Bertens (2007) clarifies that

West and East from a binary opposition in which the two poles define each other, the inferiority that orientalism attributes to the East simultaneously serves to construct the West’s superiority. The sensuality, irrationality, primitiveness and despotism of the East construct the West as rational, democratic, and progressive and so on. (205)

The focus of Orientalism is to show the binary opposition that is highly observed among the West and the East. This binary opposition marginalizes the Eastern literature based on various factors such as irrationality, primitiveness, and sensuality.

Edward Said describes Orientalism as the construction of “Occident” as having opposed values to the “Orient”. He argues that the relationship between them is not equal. Thus, Orientalism can be understood as “a western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the orient” (4). Here the Orient is always perceived as the strange “Other” who has an inferior position. Broadly defined, Orientalism is the representation of the

East from the eye of the west. This representation included the historical, cultural, and political views of the East that are held by the west. In *Orientalism* Said notes that

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the differences between the familiar (Europe, the west, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”). This vision is a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived. Orientals lived in their world; “we” lived in ours. The vision and material reality proposed each other up, kept each other going. A certain freedom of intercourse was always the western’s privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery, as Disraeli once called it. (44)

In fact, Orientalism refers to the attitudes of the west towards the east. It explores, observes, and describes the “Orient” on the basis of occidental views.

Before, Orientalism was the political, economical, academic, cultural, or geographical entities and facts about the orient called “Orientalism”. Yet, Orientalism is a western critical discourse that presents the East as an exotic and inferior other. They construct the East by a set of stereotypes or negative images which misrepresent the orient and their culture. Said claims that “as much as the west itself, the orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the west” (5). In other words, Orientalism confirms that the orient is a set of imaginary ideas, thoughts, and vocabularies that are held by the west.

In his book, Said discusses the idea of “representation” which plays a central role in the study of the orient. Generally speaking, many scholars including Edward Said advocate that representing the unknown and the foreign can be found in every culture. The aim behind this process is to make a clear distinction between the foreign and the native’s cultures. The western thoughts are chiefly based on myths about the East in which they are easily transformed into representations. The representation of the foreign in the US follows the same path. Thus, Edward Said tries to analyze this notion and interpret it through the analysis of the occident views. He confirms that representation can be characterized by exteriority and imaginativeness. He says “Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the orientalist, poets or scholars, make the orient speak, describe the orient renders its mysteries plain for and to the West” (21). According to him, the orient needs the western’s political and linguistic representations in order to present itself properly. The orient according to Said is perceived as “other” who is totally different from the “self”. The self is the center and the superior whereas the other is the margin, and hence the inferior.

Therefore, The West is an active and creative, possessing agency and capable of generating knowledge, while the Orient is passive and the object of Western study and, in fact, a concoction of the Western imagination. Said argues that “because of orientalism the orient will not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action... but that is the whole network of interest inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved in) any occasion when that peculiar entity “the orient” is in question” (3). In other words, the western ideas about the orient are just an imaginative knowledge that can not represent the real orient. Then, the orient and the occident are merely imagined concepts. Besides, the relationship between them is a relation of power, dominance, and hegemony. In Antonio Gramsci’s opinion, Orientalism as a western discourse gains hegemonic power. Gramsci’s concept of Hegemony explains the role of ideology by which the ruling class maintains its power and domination in a society. As

Said points out that hegemony is “an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial west” (7). Namely, this concept summarizes what Said has intended to advocate and explain the description of the orient via western culture texts.

Similar to Orientalism, Occidentalism is also built on Eurocentrism. Occidentalism is a field of research which is developed in the orient to study the west from a non-western world point of views. In Couz Venn’s book *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity*, describes Occidentalism as a period of modernity, it refers to it as “the becoming-modern of the world and the becoming-west of the Europe” (19). In other words, it denotes that Occidentalism is the oriental’s description of the western modern discourse and their unique culture. In their well known book *Occidentalism: the West in the Eye of its Enemies*, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit argue that Occidentalism is the dehumanizing picture of the West draw by its enemies (13). Thus, Occidentalism is all what has been taught, and written about the Occident by the Orient. Besides, it refers to whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, philologist, or a religious scholar is an Occidentalist.

According to Buruma and Margalit the origins of these “negative representations” of the Occident can be traced back to the Reformation, Renaissance and the appearance of natural science. This latter is mainly about a separation of Church and state in Western Europe. In his article *Origin of Occidentalism* Ian Buruma declares that

Clearly, the idea of the West as a malign force is not some Eastern or Middle Eastern idea, but has deep roots in European soil. Defining it in historical is not a simple matter. Occidentalism was part of the counter- Enlightenment. to be sure, but also of the reaction against industrialization”. (14)

That is, the idea of Occidentalism is not a full Oriental's views, but instead its origins are traced back to the Enlightenment era and the rise of science in Europe.

While Orientalism is the margins, Occidentalism becomes the center. The center is the dominant and the margin is not. The center creates and the margin consumes. The relation between the Occident and the Orient can be described as superiority-inferiority complex relationship. Hence, Occidentalism is considered as a contrary to Orientalism in which they share roles, for example, if the West studies the East from a negative way, the Orient as well studies the West in the same way. Edward Wang wrote in his article "Occidentalism", in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* that

While the discussion of Occidentalism is often in juxtaposing with that of Orientalism, it can also amount to a criticism of the later. Edward Said's critique of Orientalist writings and studies raised important questions about the Western hegemonic power in shaping the imagery of the "the Orient" (6)

According to him, the relationship between Occidentalism and Orientalism is like sharing roles. Also Occidentalism may occur as a criticism of Orientalism.

1.3 Asian Americans and their Place in the American Society

1.3.1 Asian Americans

The term "Asian Americans" is an umbrella term which includes all people from the East especially, East Asia. Before, Asian Americans are referred to as Orientals, but in 1960's they are called as Asian Americans. In his well-grounded book *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America*. Henry Yu evaluates the change as

“reaction to the exotic connotations of the term ‘Oriental,’ [that] valu [es] a past that had its roots in Asia, yet emphatically sounding a right to be treated as Americans” (8). The change from Oriental to the Asian Americans is a change of perception of the Asian Americans in the American society where they transform themselves from “Other” to almost “self”. Yu argues that the term remain in an Orientalist context as it is still representative of a group that was perceived through the eyes of the West (7).

Asian Americans are Americans of Asian descent. They are a diverse group in the United States. According to US Census Bureau, “Asian” refers to “people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent”. The Asian population include people who calls their races as “Asian Indian”, “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Japanese,” “Korean,” “Vietnamese” or “Other Asian,” or write in entries such as “Pakistani,” “Thai,” or “Cambodian”. Sau-Ling Wang defines Asian Americans in her introduction to *Reading Asian American literature - From Necessity to Extravagance* as

much more difficult than it seems. The term is inherently elastic [...]

not merely a denotative label with a fixed, extralinguistic referent, it

is a sign, a site of contestation for multitude of political and cultural forces.

it is a semiotic status of the term Asian American that shapes our

understanding of what kind of discourse Asian American Literature

is, and in turn, what kind of practice Asian American criticism is. (5)

Wang wants to show that the term Asian Americans has a political and cultural connotation which shapes their importance as well as their status in the American society.

In 1965 Hart-Celler Act was passed and altered the structure of immigration in the US. The law has come with many objectives which are; family reunification, followed by employment preferences. Visas allocation to refugees is also among the three most important preferences (Lobo and Salvo 742). The improving conditions for migrants contribute to the rise of the number of Asian newcomers. In 1964 the percentage of Asian immigrants were 7 % and rose to 33 % a decade later and they make up of almost half of all migrants two decades after the law had passed (Lobo and Salvo 737). The law has a powerful influence on immigration from Asia. Thus, the Asian American population grows faster than any other race group.

In 1960's migrants from India and China are affected by liberalization of immigration politics. Hence, Chinese immigration to Americas and Australia increase after the restrictions are weakened. But it is not only the number of migrants that change. Adam McKeown argues that the structure has been changed in that the percentage of Chinese professionals and students rise (72). The structures of Chinese people who live in America consequently change too. The Indian migrants are also influenced by the act. Vivek Bald see that although in the pre-1940s era there exists a population of Indian laborers without a legal status, after 1965 South Asian migrants are consisted of high-status professionals (5).

Besides, Chinese migrated to America because they seek for better life with their families or as refugees. The two main reasons for immigration are seeking to live in independent countries and having better political economy. The first reason is that Chinese people who are suffering from the Communist regime aims at gaining more freedom and development for their lives; especially those who are from the poor family. The second reason is that they can work and built more effective existence in a new society. So, they want to resolve poverty and escape persecution within their country. Furthermore, it enables them to get opportunity to start their lives on the new land.

According to some statistics, Chinese Americans do less than other immigrants since the closed society of Chinatown provide low paying jobs. The history of immigrations shows that the earlier Chinese immigrants come from working classes. They work in the United States on railroads, in mines, on farms and as domestic servants. Chinese immigrants work every thing of all trades. Chinese are satisfied with low wages and want to do any job in America. At last, the Chinese are forced to find out employment directing competition with the whites because of riots, expulsion and lynching (Kung 30). They gradually adapt their position from the menial jobs to the laundry and the restaurant business. Characteristics of the Chinese in the United States have changed. Because of the benefit of social, economic and political progress in World War II, the Chinese can make better living and give their children a good education. Their patience and hard work have helped them to be better accepted in American society.

1.3.2 Asian American Literature

Asian American literature becomes an integral part of American literature since 1960's. Asian American literary history begins during the twentieth century. In particular, when the Americans open the borders in 1940's for Asian immigrant women. Asian American literature is emerged as a reaction towards American literature that marginalized Asian Americans. It is literature by Americans of Asian descent which is concerned with topics relating to identity and ethnicity. Since Asian American literature shares its narrative techniques, genres, main motifs with mainstream white American literature, and exists in interdependence to it, Scholars argue that Asian American literature is part of American literature.

Reviewers and critics assess the Asian American literature from a single perspective of race. Simply put their literature is centered on the identity position of Americans of Asian descent in the US, and they fight against unjust policies and racial violence. The truth is that

their writings reflect the cross-generational concerns and styles. Chinese-language poems written by immigrant Chinese on the barracks walls of Angel Island (the site of immigrants' arrivals on the U.S. West Coast) between 1910 and 1940, and Issei (first-generation Japanese American) *tankas* (Japanese verse form) have been translated. Each has added a new achievement to the Asian American literature. Edith Eaton publishes a collection of stories and essays (*Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, 1910), which helps her to take the pen name of Sui Sin Far to indicate her adoption of the Chinese half of her ancestry. She focuses on problems facing Chinese and those of "mixed race," or as she calls them "Eurasians," in the United States of the early 20th century. *America Is in the Heart* (1946) by Carlos Bulosan is another work which follows a Filipino immigrant as he and other migrant workers struggle for social justice and acceptance. Each is part of the Asian-American heritage (Wang, 104).

Memoirs are the most favored genre with Asian immigrants, first-generation writers, and other ethnic group as well. Younghill Kang's *The Grass Roof* (1931), Pardee Lowe's *Father and Glorious Descendant* (1943), and Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1950) have a significant impact on the mainstream audience and positively change their views toward the strangers. Indeed, after the Japanese American World War II, topics like variants experiences are highly used for memoirs and autobiographical poetry. Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1956), Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973), and Mitsuye Yamada's poems in *Desert Run* (1988) are the strongest examples. However, the Asian American writers are not limited to one era or to one discipline of literature. They communicate, and continue to communicate, by using a range of genres -- including fiction, poetry, drama and oral history (wang, 108).

Recently, Asian American literary works have fascinated the western audience. Maxing Hong Kingston's novel *The Woman Warrior* (1976) is one of many other Asian American works which find welcome readers and audiences. Cathy Song's novel *Picture*

Bride (1987) and Garrett Hongo's collection of verse, *The River of Heaven* (1988), ameliorate the reputation of the Asian American writing community in the 1980s, as do *M. Butterfly*, David Henry Hwang's startling theatrical piece, and Philip K. Gotanda's drama, *The Wash*. Moreover, Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* is a semi-autobiography (Adams, Bella 31). Semi-autobiographies are much known among ethnic writers in US from the 1960's to the 1980's. Her novel increases the Asian American cultural and social awareness (Bella, 84).

Moreover, the relation between children and parents is the most used topic in Asian American Literature. Too, it has historical and social backgrounds. Years later, because of the language barriers that faces immigrant Asian Americans find that language barriers is an obstacle of miscommunication between them and their American-born sons and daughters. This can be prevailed in their literature. As early as 1943, Lowe's auto-biography, *Father and Glorious Descendant*, gave U.S. readers the character of a dominant father within a strong, cohesive ethnic community. The second-generations often reject their parents' social expectations. They want to assimilate in the American society and neglecting their ancestral culture. But, the immigrant parents are proud of their traditions and refuse to adopt the western culture. They are also individuals who have broken away from their original communities in moving to the United States. Therefore, the U.S.-born Asian American writers address complex parental characters who are themselves double figures, for instance, the relationship between mothers and daughters as depicted in Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club*.

Chapter II: Chinese American Mothers as Others

2.1 Chinese American Mothers' under Patriarchy and Racism

2.1.1 Women in Old China

Earlier, the relationship between the Occident and the Orient was out of balance. In his *Orientalism*, Edward Said points out that “The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (5). The spread of European expeditions over the world help to some extent in the discovery of the Eastern countries and mainly China. Then, China becomes a source of treasures and the westerners start their unlimited trips over there. From then on, The West impose the hegemony on the East by presenting the East as the West’s exotic, silent and inferior “Other”, hence strengthening its superiority over the subaltern. Being an “Other”, the Oriental lacks of a sense of belonging and become a silent and fixed stereotype; they fell displaced from the mainstream society. In Amy Tan’s novel the mothers face a double segregation and not only swallow their tears under patriarchal oppression but also they keep silent under racial discrimination (Xiaoyan, 148).

Actually, women’s oppression in old China is one of the worst in human history. In an article published in the Journal of Chinese Philosophy Xinyan Jiang (2009) states that “Foot-binding and polygamy are among the most sexist practices in China’s past”. It has been argued that Confucius (551-479 B.C.), whose philosophical system controlled Chinese culture for nearly twenty-five centuries, has not one preferable word for women. China is a patriarchal society and the way Confucianism works in China in regard to women’s status can, to a great degree, show the way Confucianism may function in this regard in patriarchal communities as a whole. The ideal woman in traditional Chinese society is one who focuses all her efforts on her home tasks (228). From the very past, women are taught not to

participate in outside affairs, especially public matters. Thus, women distance themselves from political, economic and social activities.

The Chinese family is characterized by multigenerational families with several married brothers living together (Ebrey 1). Chinese family is a large family named extended or joint family. The extended family composed of parents, their unmarried and married son or sons and the son's wives and children. They live together in a big house where the father is the head, or one of the brothers supervising unmarried and married brothers, with their wives and children. In Chinese family women are restricted to obey the order and command of the head of the family, and their husbands are their fathers' choice and had no right to refuse. They cannot hold any position of power in society. Chinese history has often described Chinese women as subservient in society (Baker 421). They are expected to be totally subservient to men and had no social or political position in their society. Furthermore, women are considered as morally pure and physically weaker than men, so they hold an inferior role in the family. Their personal choice depends entirely on their family decision.

2.1.2 Chinese American's Mothers and Patriarchy

Even today, sexual discrimination still exists in China. Although women's status has been greatly enhanced in contemporary China, women's inferior position is still widely assumed without question. Therefore, Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* focuses on how Chinese mothers as "Other" keep obedient and silent in patriarchal society. The mothers in *The Joy Luck Club* endured loss, tragedy, fear in order to establish new lives for themselves and their daughters who are raised in the United States. In the novel the four mothers have experienced sexism, and all of them fight to break down their silence and choose to travel to the dream land where they think their entire wish would fulfill.

“In China, everybody dreamt about Kweilin. And when I arrived, I realized how shabby my dreams were, how poor my thoughts. When I saw the hills, I laughed and shuddered at the same time” (Tan 5). In the story of “*The Joy Luck Club*”, Jing-mei Woo introduces the story of her mother Suyuan Woo who expresses her sadness and suffering with a weekly mahjong game night calls Joy Luck Club. Back to China, Suyuan is still young married woman with twin baby girls. At that time, China is at war and Suyuan’s husband is a soldier for the Kuomintang, the Chinese nationalist party fighting off Japanese aggression against China. This story reveals Suyuan’s personal sacrifices when she tries to save her twin babies by taking them to the city of Kweilin, but her expectations to protect them go in vain. She experiences hunger, disease, tragedy and fatigue, but she has never lost hope to save her twin baby girls. “You became like a starving person, crazy hungry for light outside I could hear the bombing. Boom! Boom! And then the sound of raining rocks” (Tan 5).

Lindo Jong as well has to accept absolute obedience to her family and the society around her. Throughout the plot Lindo Jong experiences an inability to make decision. Her parents are the one who decide instead of her. “I once sacrificed my life to keep my parents’ promise” her promise to obey her parents’ decisions shows how Lindo give up being dutiful to her family. Hence, Lindo starts losing her freedom to marry whom she chooses, and to propose her own decision. She narrates that “of course, now I know the tree-trunk lady was the old village matchmaker, and the other was Huang Taitai, the mother of the boy I would be forced to marry”. Lindo is no longer able to reject her family decision just because she is a girl and she has to say yes to what her mother-in-law Huang Taitai would say. Because the obligation hold between Lindo’s family and her future husband’s family, Lindo yet send to marry Tyan-yu and cannot break this obligation as the two families will no longer be friends, and then, they will lose the social values and norms which cover the Chinese belief for a long. Thus, Lindo sacrifices her life to preserve her culture.

And this is when Huang Taitai looked down at me with a cloudy face as though she could penetrate my thoughts and see my future intentions. I will never forget her look. Her eyes opened wide, she searched my face carefully and then she smiled. I could see a larger gold tooth staring at me like the blinding sun and the rest of her teeth opened wide as if she were going to swallow me down in one piece. (Tan 24)

Huang Taitai makes Lindo unhappy and unsatisfied about her own life.

Yet, Lindo's first marriage is the most miserable scene in the novel. To clarify, Lindo lives in Tyan-Yu's house where his abusive mother treats Lindo as a servant. Her forced marriage indicates the powerlessness of being a woman in the pre-dominant China. While Lindo behaves as a model wife, she is used as a machine to produce but never consume. Lindo is the slave that has no right to judge. She faces all kinds of domestic and sexual abuse from her husband's family. In the story of the "Red Candles" Lindo Jong remarks her new family will never accept and treat her as a member of the family and she says "My own family began treating me as if I belonged to somebody else. My mother would say to me when the rice bowl went up to my face too many times, 'Look how much Taitai's daughter can eat'" (Tan 24). In that patriarchal society, Lindo cannot change her fate and she has to accept what has been given to her without complain. She asks herself why she cannot manage her own fate: "I began to cry and thought bitterly about my parents' promise. I wondered why my destiny had been decided. Why I should have an unhappy life so someone else could have a happy one" (Tan 28).

Besides, Lindo is highly devalued from her mother-in-law and reluctantly tortured in a loveless marriage. Finally, she realizes that Taitai's wishes are to keep bloodline of her ancestry and no one cares about Lindo personal life. Even though, Lindo wants to sleep with Tyanyu in the same bed, but he would not. "I was sleeping with Tyanyu. He would never touch me and I had comfortable bed to sleep on" (Tan 30). This situation really represents how the beautiful Lindo is rejected by her husband. She tells that she tries more than twice to sleep with him but he refuses. Moreover Lindo is punished because she cannot give birth and no one speaks about her husband's desire to never touch her. "Bad wife" she cries. If you refuse to sleep with my son, I refuse to feed you or cloth you" Taitai said to Lindo with angry face.

An-Mei Hsu, like other women in China, shows that women is portrayed and treated in racist way. Throughout the novel Amy Tan proves that gender is the most prominent theme in the novel and it shapes Chinese cultures and lives. An- Mei's story represents a real tragedy for her and her undesired mother or Rose grandmother. In old China, the wife would never break the family role and would be undesired if she had a second marriage. The story of An-Mei mentioned through a flashback to her childhood where she lives with her uncle, auntie, and grandmother (Popo). When An-Mei is still young her father is dead and her mother is obliged to be the fourth concubines to a very wealthy man named Wu Tsing. In the story of "Magpies", An-Mei's mother is considered as dead since she brings shame and they view her as a traitor to An-Mei's father.

Besides, in a racist and patriarchal community, woman must be faithful to her dead husband otherwise she will be punished and refused among her family member. If a widow agrees a second marriage she will be abandoned and neglected, An-Mei's grandmother tell her to never say her mother's name as Popo says to her two grandchildren that their mother is a ghost. "Never say her name", [Popo] warns, "To say her name was to spit on your father's

grave” (Tan 34). Just like the story of “No Name Women” in Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior*, An-Mei’s mother name is prohibited to recall among the member of the family. Their relatives humiliates her because she is a woman, and she is a weaker than a man to whom she has to obey and to remain faithful even after his death. “A girl in China did not marry for love. She married for position, and my mother’s position, was the worst” (Tan 128). Simply put, An-Mei’s mother is discriminated and dehumanized for being a wife of a wealthy merchant. As well as, she is forced to marry him because he rapes her and manipulates her. “the only father I know was a big painting that hung in the main hall. He was a large, unsmiling man, unhappy to be so still on the wall. His restless eyes followed me around the house. Even from my room at the end of the hall, I could see my father’s watching eyes. Popo said he watched me for any sign of disrespect” (Tan 18). In fact, An-Mei and her mother cannot even pursuit their happiness. They have to follow and obey a male-dominating culture against their own personal and shares interest as women. To keep silence is the only source for them to save their status among the family’s discrimination and social destruction.

“For all these years I kept my mouth closed so selfish desire would not fall out” “A girl can never ask, only listen.” (Tan 34, 36). Meanwhile, the last case in Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club* demonstrates another type of social, cultural and prejudicial discrimination of Chinese women. From their childhood, Chinese women have learned to accept what the family asked them to do without proposing questions. Ying-Ying St Clair for example has the habit to obey what her family asks but not to ask questions “Too many questions... You do not need to understand. Just behave; follow your mother’s example” (Tan 35). Certainly, the concept of masculinity has been stressed in the minds of these Chinese mothers. They are gradually trained to adopt all what the male impose. Males are the one who has the power and females have to obey them. From then on, women understand that their cultural backgrounds oblige them to follow men’s decision. Ying-Ying St Clair explains that she cannot even ask

for her simple wish and she will ask it from the “Moon Lady” at festival where she can meet her. “The Moon Lady! The Moon Lady!” I said, jumping up and down with great delight. And then, after I ceased to be amazed with the pleasant sounds of my voice saying new words, I tugged Amah’s sleeve and asked: “Who is the Moon Lady?” (Tan 35) Ying Ying wonders who this person is and her Amah answers her that she is the only person who can fulfill her secret desire, the desire that she cannot ask for publically.

During her childhood, Ying-Ying noticed that no one give her an importance like they do with a boy. She mentions her story when she falls off the boat during the “Moon Lady” festival and a Fisherman and his wife rescue her while no one of the boat members looks for her. Eventually, Ying-Ying realizes that no one misses her or even notices that she is gone “I began to shiver again. I had seen nobody who cared that I was missing”. (Tan 41)

In order to find their way and to assert themselves some Chinese women, like the Joy Luck mothers, gradually design their way to the United States. But they are oppressed and silenced by racism. Also, they are stereotyped according to their cultural features which are appeared as inferior and exotic culture. Unfortunately, the Joy Luck mothers face a hostile treatment from the western people Edward Said notes that “Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the West” (30). In other words, it is the culture that is perceived as exotic and unseen then the West gradually represents the Asian people as “the mysterious Orient.” (34). “But when she arrived in the new country, the immigration official pulled her swan away from her, leaving the women fluttering her arms and with only swan feather for a memory. And then she had to fill out so many forms she forgot why she had come and what she had left behind” (Tan, 3).

Simply put the features of Orientalism and mistreatment resonates throughout the novel. From the very beginning the old woman mentions that she has a swan which she brings

from China to America, but the officers take it away from her. This swan is her last link with her homeland and now she cannot recall any thing in China. As if they try to eradicate her mother culture and pushes her to adopt their own. Generally Speaking, the story represents the difficulties caused by racism that the mothers encounter in a foreign country.

Another Joy Luck mother Ying-ying who get married with an American Caucasian who named her as Betty St. Clair .from then on, Ying-Ying changes her Chinese name and from GU Ying-ying to Ying-ying St Clair. She has a new birth date and identity when she lives in American. Even by doing so, she never accepts the Americans' style of life. When she arrives to the United States, Ying-ying is released for three weeks at Angel Island Immigration Station and since the American law “didn't have rules for dealing with the Chinese wife of a Caucasian citizen” (Tan 54) Ying-Ying's papers should be verified and classified as either: “war bride, displaced person, or wife of a Chinese-American citizen” (Tan 54). “In the end, they declare her as a Displaced Person, lost in a sea of immigration categories” (Tan 54). Therefore, Ying-Ying is classified as a displaced person who suffers from the situation of In-betweeness.

Lindo Jong hopes to live in America as well as to adopt the American way of life for her and daughter. By marrying an American citizen, Lindo can ensure her American nationality. She has intended to say that she admires America as a permanent solution in order to get the citizenship. On the way, she intends to neglect her origin including; her traditional clothes, facial expression, and even traditional values. As undesired immigrant Suyuan Woo now enters in America, she is forced as well to cover her Chinese origin so she can assimilate in the American society. For the sake of safety, Suyuan Woo has to live as an invisible in the United State.

To sum up, living in an isolated Chinatown society reflects the miserable situation that Asian American women could endure. Being excluded from the mainstream society is another kind of racial prejudice and then shows that the idea of “Other” or “Otherness” is quietly used in the novel. Therefore, Amy Tan’s novel confirms that Orientalism can be found in every Eastern culture.

2.2 Eastern Mothers’ Parenting Style

2.2.1 Parenting Style’s Types

Chang claims that “The type of parenting style used by parents may be determined by the parent’s own cultural heritage. According to researchers, the primary cultural difference between Caucasian Americans and Asian American culture is the concept of independence versus interdependence.” (5) Since the mothers of *The Joy Luck Club* are all Chinese, their way to raise children is based on their Chinese customs. Scientific research assumes that Chinese immigrant mothers are more restricted and firm than the Caucasian ones (Kelley and Tseng, 444). In Amy Tan’s novel, the mothers are the first teacher of their daughter. They keep parenting them based on what they perceived in old China. As a matter of fact, conflicts of parenting style and influence hold in mother–daughter relationships reflect different Chinese and American cultures. For example, Suyuan confirms her maternal force to her daughter physically as June is supposed to follow her mother order, and to listen to her advice to be a child prodigy. According to some studies published in McClelland Institute, Asian American parents have to show less warmth and to be more restricting in raising their children. Unfortunately, their children start to act just as the European counterparts. Mother’s parenting style may reflect differences in what warmth and control mean in their culture.

As Baumrind (1968) states that there are three main types of parenting styles. For the Americans, Authoritative parenting style is mainly related to psychological well-being of a child. In this case the parents “direct the child’s activities... in a rational, issue-oriented

manner... [and] encourages verbal give and take” (22). In this type two main behaviors are stressed; support by hugging and praising children when they do well and control in which the parents set clear expectations and moderate limits. Westerns tend to prove that such behaviors are more suitable in dealing with children. Therefore, the degree of child’s performance would increase and they can cope better with problems, do well in school, and have less anxiety and depression. “These parents monitor and impart clear standards for their children conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self regulated as well as cooperative” (89).

To clarify, authoritative parents are assertive but responsive to their children desire and willing to listen to their need. Conversely, the second types which is authoritarian parents as the Asians are so restricted and not willing to listen to their children question. They put strict rule for their children to follow and if their children disobey, punishment should be applied. Authoritarian parents “are obedience- and status- oriented, and expect their order to be obeyed without explanation” (Baumrind, 60). The third type is permissive parents, who permit their children to be more dependent and free. They encourage them to assert themselves by choosing their own decision in life.

“children are supposed to sacrifice their own desires for the benefit of the family” (Uba, 1994).

2.2.2 Chinese American Mothers’ Parenting Style

In *The Joy Luck Club*, the mothers’ parenting style is mainly based on what they have learned in old China. They learn to be obedient and never question the aim behind their parents order. Hence, the mothers want to raise their daughters the same way. For example, An-mei experiences a painful life because her mother has forced to her be a concubine rather

than remaining as a widow and to honor for refusing her husband's death. An-Mei's mother refuses to sacrifice herself for her husband. That's why; An-Mei's grandmother (Popo) excludes her daughter as a punishment for her selfish action. She warns An-Mei to never say her name in the family house and says that the Chinese children should follow their parents order and they have no authority to refuse. Similarly, Lindo is mostly enslaved to her future husband and mother-in-law just to be good daughter and faithful wife. She has to endure an undesirable marriage, in which she is forced to sleep with a childish husband until she can give birth. Ying ying as well spends all her life giving but never taking. She remembers her Amah's advices to never think of her own needs, and she should only listen to the needs of her family member. On the day of the Moon Festival, Ying-ying realizes that she lost herself when her family missed her as well as when she has to stifle her wishes. However, An-mei, Lindo, and Ying ying sympathizes with their mother cold action as being forced to obey the Chinese customs. Additionally, they consider their action as a sacrifice to protect their daughters' lives.

Meanwhile, in An-mei's story there is a kind of respect for the old ways and the ancestors. An-mei's mother tries to cure grandmother by a superstition of taking off her own flesh and making a soup with it as symbol of deep love and sacrifice. Yet, An-mei is deeply satisfied with the behavior and she sees the scar as her bond to her mother, which always reminds that her mother is in her soul. Even Ying-ying stays faithful to her ancestral traditions. She criticizes Lena because of adopting the American circumstances and for losing her mother and her ancestors' cultural belief. As regards, Ying-ying feels lost and painful because her mother left her alone, but she never intends to ignore her homeland' traditions.

So, in America Children are raised in different ways and circumstances. The United States is more individualistic society where democracy and free will control the society. Unlike China, the American society is less rigid and hierarchal; so the struggle between the

two cultural norms confused the mothers. Although the daughters of the novel take their mother's advices and will into consideration, but, adopting the American style requires establishing their individual goals. In America the parents are more authoritative as permitting their children to monitor their own life, as well as have to respect their decision. Yet, the American-born daughters conflict with their mothers who want to impose their will. As an example, despite Waverly learned the art of "visible strength" from her mother, but she and her mother straggle for control.

Chapter III: Chinese American Daughters Adopting to the West

“Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident”. (Said 11)

‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (Bhabha 2)

While *The Joy Luck Club* mothers choose to preserve their old China’s lifestyle, the daughters are fascinated with the individualistic and American one. As mothers make efforts to bring up daughters in American modern life with Chinese mentality, daughters quickly try to avoid the Chinese old belief and adapt to the American sophisticated life. In the United States, the daughters experience disappointments, frustrations in their daily lives. *The Joy Luck Club* daughters go through miserable situations that lead them to refuse what their mothers have believed in about old China. Consequently, tension, misunderstanding and confusion occurred.

3.1 Daughters between East and West

“They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”.

Karl Marx. *The Eighteenth
Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*
(1852)

As an academic discipline, Orientalism is a Western thought through which the West tries to dominate the East. This idea is a misrepresentation of the Eastern people. Moreover, the idea of representation is a full Occidental discourse, and it is used to reaffirm the Western claims that all Easterners are the same. Amy Tan as an Asian writer explores the Orientalizing style in her well-known novel *The Joy Luck Club*. She remains faithful to her

origins when she uses the Chinese traditional heritage such as, food, clothes, customs, and common values. To clarify, this chapter will examine the cultural clash and cultural in-betweenness that leads the daughters to search for a positive representation in a foreign society.

Despite their mothers' hope to survive the Chinese custom and to give better American conditionals for their daughters, the American-born daughters cannot fully adopt to the Chinese way of life. Jing-me is one of the four daughters who prefers the American individualistic lifestyle. In the prologue "Feather From a Thousand Li Away" Jing-me's mother declares that she will travel to America where she will raise a daughter just like her. However, Jing-me is raised in complete ignorance of all the hopes of her mother had for her. Jing mei clearly states that she likes her American name "June" instead of her Chinese one "Her names is June. They all go by their American names" (Tan 14). Jing Mei Woo's mother hopes that her daughter will become prodigy since she "believed that you could be anything you wanted to be in America" (Tan 130). However, Jing Mei gives no importance to what her mother utters. Besides, Jing- mei refuses her mother who is the representative of the Eastern culture. She cannot accept her mother's advice to assert herself and she said, "I didn't budge. And then I decided I didn't have to do what mother said anymore. I wasn't her slave this wasn't China. I had listened to her before, and look what happened. She was the stupid one!" (Tan 139).

In *The Joy Luck Club*, the daughters struggle between two different identities. They feel that they are under the pressure of Western ongoing thoughts and the Eastern traditional values. They disrespect and misunderstand their mothers' past in China and they neglect what their mothers had experience in before they arrive in America. From that way, Chinese identity and culture are the "other" for the daughters (Guillary 133). Simply put, *The Joy Luck Club* daughters consider the Chinese people and the Chinese lifestyle as "other" or the strange one. They believe that China belong to the other side of the world. For them this world is less

developed and uncivilized if compared to that of America. By ignoring her mother's words, Waverly Jong assumes that America and being an American is "superior". Waverly feels ashamed for being a Chinese immigrant, she avoids taking her mother to the hairdresser because she finds her mother's hair style and clothes so shameful.

Meanwhile, Rose's divorce ensures, to some extent, her real identity. Rose used to devalue her desires during her marriage with Ted and she had always overestimated Ted's desires. In this way, Ted is the symbol of American identity. Rose refers to the Chinese culture and identity which is inferior. While, Ted represents the American culture which is superior. Hence, the dominant culture always wins and then controls the weak one; as Ted just decides what should be done "fifteen years of living in Ted's shadow. I lay in bed, my eyes squeezed shut, unable to make the simplest decisions" (Tan 108). Although Rose shows a great importance and interest in the American Culture and tries to assimilate and integrate in the society, she is finally convinced that the realities and the truths display the opposite. After an epiphany and a realization, Rose now can value and listen to her mother's words and therefore she can rebel and confront her husband, and do not follow him anymore. Her ability to stand up for herself shapes her new Rose and she starts planting weeds and likes it overgrown abundance but Ted loves a tidy garden.

Likewise, Lena St Clair, the daughter of Ying -Ying St Clair, has realized that her and her husband's childhood lives are extremely based on her mother's psychotic episode. Ying Ying never speaks about her life to Lena.

My mother never talked about her life in China, but my father said he saved her from a terrible life there, some tragedy she could not speak about.

My father proudly named her in her immigration papers: Betty St. Clair, crossing out her given name of Gu Ying-ying. And then he put down the wrong birth

year, 1916 instead of 1914. So, with the sweep of a pen, my mother lost her name and became a Dragon instead of a Tiger (107).

She can see danger in everything and can predict what can happen later. She usually warns Lena about stupid things but Lena cannot predict the meaning behind “she sees only bad things that affect our family. And she knows what causes them. But now she laments that she never did anything to stop them” (151). In this way, Lena fears what her mother will think about her new house in Woodside and what would say about her future since Ying-Ying will visit the new house and check its corners. All this Chinese beliefs and norms lead Lena to confuse her identity which causes her problem of cultural understanding. Lena likes the American circumstances and never tells her friends about her Chinese origin. She is happy with her surname and physical shape similar to her father. Another negative representation of Eastern culture and people is Lena’s marriage to a Chinese American man, who is not purely American, Lena’s employer. The relation between Lena and her husband Harold astonishes Ying-Ying. Since Ying-Ying learned to be an obedient wife and daughter, she was shocked about her daughter’s dependent life from Harold. Lena claims that she likes to be equal with her husband.

3.2 *The Joy Luck Club* Daughters as Others

3.2.1 Other and Otherness

By art alone we are able to get outside ourselves, to
know what another sees of this universe which for him
is not ours, the landscapes of which would remain as
unknown to us as those of the moon.

– Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*

“The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (Said 1). In his “*Orientalism*” Edward Said tackles the notion of “Other” which is a Western fascination with the Orient. This misconception exists in the Occidental mind in order to orientalizing the Orient. Said states that the Orient is the irrational, backward and inferior other and it is totally different from the self. Otherwise, the self is rational, progressive and superior. Thus, the notion of the other becomes the legitimization of the fictional Occidental self and it has the privilege to define the East as passive, silent, and weak “Other”.

“Other” and “Otherness” are technical words used in the social sciences and humanities to describe the way people perceive others that are different from us. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, otherness is the quality or state of being different. Simply put, the other is in some degree not like us; he is dissimilar and separated from us. Indeed, the “Other” is unchanged and unable to develop and progresses as well as they are passive and receptive in the way that they cannot speak their experiences and ideas.

Canales (2010) argues that the notion of the other date back to the De Beauvoir’s introduction of the concept of the “Other”. In her work *The Second Sex* Simon de Beauvoir constructs the notion of other as the opposing to the notion of “Self”. Besides, the concepts of “the other”, “othering”, and “otherness” also dates back to areas of study and investigation classifying from nursing science (Canales 2010) to cultural geography (Crang 1998). Hence, Crang (1998) s’ cultural geography comes to refer to “Other” as “a process (...) through which identities are set up in an unequal relationship” (61). In other words, the other is the process by which people are considered as inferior and uncivilized also people are unequally treated. Actually, “othering” can be understood as a social operation whereby a sovereign group or person uses negative qualities to define a minor group.

In an article titled “Othering in the nursing context: A concept analysis” introduced in *Wiley Nursing Open* magazine, Mary Lee A. Roberts publishes a study which offers a conceptual framework about how othering emerges in the nursing context. To illustrate, this study is restricted to that experimental evidence of othering in nursing practice is neither studied nor negotiated. What is more, the writers comprehend that the taste of being attached to the phenomenon of othering is greatly dependent on context and has a grade of epistemological and ontological results for the individuals and groups involved. Hence, an accounting for this grade of results and the implications for the nursing profession are beyond the scope of this study. In that case, Nursing examiners have often used and adopted social theoretical structures to produce descriptions of othering, where social scientists have simplified and portrayed othering and related exclusionary relationships. Thus, othering is to treat the others as ‘not fully human’, and as a result, it dehumanizes natives. Othering arranges and situates the self as the true human and the other as other than human.

3.2.2 The Daughters of the Novel Treated as Others

Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club* revolves around the binary opposition of the Self and the “Other”, and essentially to make a clear distinction between the whites and non-whites. Hence, all the characters of the novel emplaced on two categories: the natives and non-natives, the whites and non-whites, the Chinese and Americans, the familiar or stranger, the civilized and uncivilized, the Westerns and Asian, the us and them, and the Self and the Other. Additionally, a number of stereotypes and clichés are specified to the natives that have participated to Orientalize them. China and Chinese people are stereotypically racialized and eroticized as “Other” wherever they are located. *The Joy Luck Club* daughters have perpetuated as exotic other and perceived as a stranger. Even though the daughters were born and raised in America, but they were treated harshly and often dehumanized.

The protagonist June is the first example to be examined in terms of “other” “self” relationships. Jing- mei who is an Asian American is considered as “an outsider”, “a marginal person” in such an alien world. Amy Tan wants to reflect the marginality of the “Other” in June personality to show the other side of being an Oriental woman. Despite the fact that, Jing- mei is raised and grow up in America where she adopts mindset different from that of her mother’s. However, she is still under the pressure of her mother’s control. Tan’s description of Jing- mei’s personality shows that the daughter is to some extent her mother’s doll. And this reflects how a second generation immigrant perceived in a mainstream society. June’s mother tries to make her a piano prodigy, but Jing- mei is lacking both talent and drive.

I know my mother resented listening to Auntie Lin talk about Waverly when she had nothing to come back with. At first my mother tried to cultivate some hidden genius in me. She did housework for an old retired piano teacher down the hall who gave me lesson and free use of a piano to practice on in exchange. When I failed to become a concert pianist, or even an accompanist for the church youth choir, she finally explained that I was late-blooming, like Einstein, who everyone thought was retarded until he discovered a bomb. (15)

That is to say, Jing-mei’s mother makes all her efforts to raise a gifted daughter and start making control on her daughter’s abilities. The alternative is that Amy Tan shows that a child of an accidental parents live a life that he or she chooses, but in the case of oriental parents none of the children disobey his or her parents’ decisions. Moreover, Amy Tan aims at portraying her protagonist as inferior “Other” who is controlled and directed by another one. Now a copywriter for a small advertising firm, Jing -mei is easily humiliated by those who retain greater self-confidence. In her childhood, Jing-mei was in charge to assert her right

to be herself and not her mother's doll. Yet, Jing-mei obtains the acts of both self-realization *and* self-sabotage

And after seeing my mother's disappointed face once again, something inside of me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and the failed expectations. Before going to bed that night, I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink and when I saw only my face staring back – and it would always be this ordinary face – I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror. (73)

Feeling ashamed obliges Jing-mei to find herself and to find her identity actually when she meets her twin half-sisters in China, after her mother's death.

In the Story of "Rules of the Game", Waverly Jong narrates that how her mother Lindo tries to teach her "the art of invisible strength" as a mechanism of defense: "I was six when my mother taught me the art of invisible strength" (45). This ability as her mother explains will help her to be recognized by peoples "It was a strategy for winning arguments, respect from others" (45). She thinks that acquiring the strategy of invisible strength ameliorates her status in the western society. Unlike Jing-me, Waverly admires her prodigy and tries her best to be talented in chess. As an Asian American child Waverly is unhappy about her parents' undesirable control of her abilities. Waverly conceives of her mother as an opponent: "I could see the yellow lights shining from our flat like two tiger's eyes in the night," (51) she declares. Waverly sees her mother as a tiger, waiting to roar. Waverly clearly imagines herself the victim in the struggle with her mother. "Waverly sees herself as the fish, stripped clean by her mother's power, unable to break free" (92). Tan's characters are depicted as the oriental, negative, submissive, and over controlled ones. This harsh depiction reflects the imaginative concepts of the oriental "Other".

As her name suggests Rose seems passive and delicate. Here, Tan shows another kind of stereotypes which is passivity and timidity. Since the notion of otherness means to feel very different from other, In *The Joy Luck Club* Rose Jordan is delineated as a different other who is unable to make decision and organize her life directions. Rose confesses during her first story “Without Wood” that “My mother once told me why I was so confused all the time,” (107). “She said that I was without wood. Born without wood so that I listened to too many people. She knew this because she had almost become this way” (107). To put it more, Rose refuses to take any responsibility or make any major decision because she worries about making a wrong one. She lacks wood in her personality and always confused. Rose considers: “It was true. Lately I had been feeling *hulihudu*. And everything around me seemed to be *heimongmong*. These were words I have never thought about in English terms. I suppose the closest in meaning would be ‘confused’ and ‘dark fog’” (106). Because her confusion and passivity, Rose’s husband get tired of her and asks for divorce. Rose’s mother attempts to convince her daughter to fight for her marriage, but Rose’s fears of making a right action disappointed her mother.

Like Rose, Lena St Clair also has a difficult marriage as an adult, with her husband Harold. Lena attempts to maintain an equal partnership between them, but her passivity and silence win the struggle.

All these years I kept my true nature hidden, running along like a small shadow so nobody could catch me. And because I moved so secretly now my daughter does not see me. She sees a list of things to buy, her checkbook out of balance, her ashtray sitting crooked on a straight table. And I want to tell her this: we are lost, she and I, unseen and not seeing, unheard and not hearing unknown by others. (34)

Ying-ying seems to regret hiding her nature from her daughter who is raised as a silenced and passive person. Lena goes through a divorce and she does nothing to prevent it. That is why her mother Yin-ying wants to tell her that they are unseen and unheard.

Lena, Rose, Waverly and Jing-mei are all Americanized daughters of Chinese parents. The description of these daughters as Oriental “Other” is not merely mentioned in the novel. They are not humiliated by the Whites as Westerners but they depicted as negative, passive, over controlled and silenced. The daughters are devalued in the novel because they are just like their Chinese mothers. At the end, the daughters learn how to take control of the circumstances of their lives. And this was by understanding their cultural and mothers’ intentions.

Conclusion

Amy Tan, influenced by both Chinese and American cultures, writes her novel *The Joy Luck Club* which is about four pairs of mothers and daughters. This thesis analyzed the work from two perspectives; Feminism and Orientalism. In male's history, females are marginalized and characterized as the inferior "Other". In patriarchal society, women have no remarkable right that's why Amy Tan satisfied the women's desire when she makes all the stories told by women. In old China, women are always restricted to home, housework and children, they have no personal time and space, they are always mistreated by social and family norms. Thus, Amy Tan wants to show the other side of being a woman.

Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* is an exploration of different identities that are experienced by immigrant families in the United States. It can be displayed through the mothers and daughters' life as main characters. Mothers want to preserve and protect their homeland culture despite the fact that they live in a different society. It can be noticed that the mothers do not fully adapt to the American modern values. However, the American-born daughters are massively affected by the American culture. So, according to them, their mothers' culture is ancient and out of date.

In fact, the daughters have experienced different identities at different stages of lives in this new nation. In their childhoods, the daughters tried to flee from their Chinese identities and stick to the American ones. Therefore, they considered themselves as Americans and their parents as Chinese. As they grow up, they are able to realize that their identity is constructed of two worlds; China and America. The daughters, who once forget who they ethnically are as individuals, begin to show cultural awareness; hence, they feel sorry to have distanced from their Chinese cultural identities. They decide to translate their mothers' tales as a way of realization and understanding of China's culture. At the end of the book, the daughters discover that they are much more Chinese than they are Americans. Thus, a new form of

identity has been established and the result of the emergence of such new identity construction is that of the Chinese-American identity.

Besides, the representation of the native women in *The Joy Luck Club* and designation of some stereotypes and clichés to the Orientals follow Said's model which is depicted in his *Orientalism*. Said's analysis of Orientalism displays the negative stereotypes or images of women. Said wants to show how the 'Orient' is systematically presented by the discourses of writers, colonial authorities and scholars. The distinction between 'East' and 'West' constructs the Orient and determine what can be said about this constructed entity. Said describes Orientalism as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient". (Said 3) Representations of the eastern woman describe her exotic image within the Western discourse.

Actually, presenting the "other" in the western society is just a usefulness way to destroy the Eastern ancient heritage. Even though Orientals participated in the international conferences, Olympic Games, technological process, but Westerns still underestimate their efforts and contribution. Hence, this misrepresentation or misconceptions make the gap between the West and the East too large and difficult for the Orientals to overcome. Amy Tan have dealt with the Americanized daughters as "an object" which is unable to study and analyze. She represents them as totally dependent and powerless to discuss their personal problem.

To conclude, the whole thesis consists of three chapters, general introduction, and conclusion. The first chapter was a simple research about the Asian and the Asian American literature, as well as I go through many perspectives one of them *Orientalism* which is a crucial book written by Palestinian writers named Edward Said. In this chapter we find that the western cultures have a stereotypical idea about the East and then all of them are

considered as “Other”, the one who is different from the “Self”. Also, it distinguishes between the Asians and the Asian Americans and their cultures’ aspects. The Asians are people born and raised in Asia including; China, Japan, Vietnam, India and so on. Whereas the Asian Americans are people born or raised in America but have Asian backgrounds.

The second chapter is an analytical study about Amy Tan’s novel’s *The Joy Luck Club*. In this chapter we have noticed that the mothers of the novel suffer to a great degree from sexism and racial prejudice. Thus they charge themselves to obtain a new life for them and their Americanized daughters. Moreover, we learn more about the Asians parenting style and how the Asians raise their children. The last chapter analyzed the daughters’ ways to adopt the American culture and the difficulties of being an Asian American. Furthermore, we discover that the only way that helps those daughters to assert themselves is their mothers’ narrative techniques. Amy Tan’s great intention is to explain how the American –born daughters influenced by the Oriental’s classical thinking. The daughters as Amy Tan depicts, are much more oriental “other” who to some extent someone’s doll. They are their parents doll, every step they go through they fell as if they are restricted to a directed path.

This work finally can to some extent be a reliable source for further studies about the Asians and Asian American literature. I intend to include many details but I find it too hard, so I will be grateful if my suggestions take into account. My first remark is that Orientalism can be discussed further in the field of Chinese literature because the Chinese writers are mainly the most who are influenced by Edward Said’s ideas. The second remark is that parenting styles differ from one culture to another and within the same culture there are many ways to raise children. So that, studying people’s cultures and ways of growing up acquire understanding all their cultural heritages. The last but not least, I remark that daughters’ life can be fully discussed through analyzing the concept of in-betweens.

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Résumé

Amy Tan est considérée comme l'une des romancées les plus populaires d'Amérique. Parmi ses œuvres les plus connues « Le Club de Chance et de Bonheur ». Elle a contribué à la progression de la littérature Asiatique. D'une façon remarquable, sur les lumières du livre «Orientalism » de l'écrivain Edward Said. Dans le but d'analyser la discrimination raciale chez les mères Asiatique dans deux différentes communautés. Comme il démontre les conflits culturels dans une communauté Asiatique en Amérique. Les mères Asiatique veulent que leurs filles soient fidèles aux traditions Asiatique et qu'elles les respectent. Mais ces filles préfèrent être des citoyens Américains plutôt que de se reformer à la nationalité Chinoise. De là, elles se trouvent la lutte entre la vie Occidentale civilisée et les valeurs imposées par leurs mères. Donc, pour eux les mères sont considérées l'autre comme non susceptible d'être homogénéisées définies Amy Tan aux mères Asiatique que son travail l'a mené à participation dans le débat Américain pour Orientaliser les Asiatiques, sa description solide des coutumes et les traditions de façon éloquente afin de consolider l'image des Asiatique comme les autres dans la culture Occidentale.

ملخص

تعتبر "امي تان" احد أشهر الروائيات الأمريكيات. فروايتها المشهورة "نادي الحض و السعادة" ساهمت في تطور الأدب الآسيوي بشكل ملحوظ. علي ضوء كتاب "الاستشراق" للكاتب ادوارد سعيد يهدف هذا العمل إلى تحليل التمييز العنصري للأمهات الصينيات في مجتمعين مختلفين. كما يكتشف هذا العمل الصراع الثقافي أجيالي في مجتمع صيني بأمريكا. فالأمهات الصينيات يردن من بناتهن أن يكونا طائعات و مخلصات للتقاليد الصينية وان يحترمنها. ولكن هؤلاء البنات يفضلن أن يكون مواطنات أمريكيات على أن يتقمصن الجنسية الصينية. من هنا يجدن أنفسهن يتصارعن بين الحياة الغربية المتحضرة والقيم المفروضة من قبل امهاتهن. إذن بالنسبة لهن الأمهات يعتبرن "الأخر" الغير قابل للتجانس. وصف "امي تان" للأمهات الصينيات كالأخر قاد عملها للمشاركة في الخطاب الأمريكي المتزعم لاستشراق الصينيين. وصفها القوي للصينيين وللعادات والتقاليد ساعد بشكل ملحوظ في ترسيخ صورة الأمهات الصينيات كالأخر في الثقافة الغربية.