

**Acculturative Gap in Novels of Chinese American Women: A  
Cultural Identity Quest.**



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**(2021-2023)**

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**Acculturative Gap in Novels of Chinese American Women: A Cultural  
Identity Quest.**



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**(2021-2023)**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of  
Philosophy in American Studies**

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**Islamabad**

**Approval of the Thesis**

This is to certify that we have read the dissertation submitted by Ms. Javeriya Javed Baloch under the title **Acculturative Gap in Novels of Chinese American Women: A Cultural Identity Quest**. In our opinion, it is up to the standard of acceptance by Quaid-I-Azam University Islamabad to grant the master's degree Master of Philosophy in American Studies

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Declaration**

In submitting this dissertation titled **Acculturative Gap in Novels of Chinese American Women: A Cultural Identity Quest**, I declare that I have read and understood the rules and regulations of Area Study Center and QAU regarding assessment procedures and formally declare that all work contained within this document is my individual research work carried out in consultation with research supervisor. I further confirm that this work has not been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it currently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

**Javeriya Javed Baloch**

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, whose unwavering love and support have been the driving force behind the successful completion of this dissertation. This work is dedicated to celebrating the intricate and profound bond between mothers and their daughters. My mother's consistent encouragement and empowerment in all aspects of life inspired my research in this area. I am also deeply grateful to my father for his belief in me and his encouragement to pursue my own path in life. With the utmost sincerity, I dedicate this dissertation to both. Their support has been invaluable throughout this journey. After my parents, I would like to express my profound gratitude towards my supervisor Dr. Umaima Kamran, without her time and guidance this research would not have been able to achieve the goal it intended.

## **Abstract**

This in-depth investigation explores the crucial and important subject of giving women's narratives priority, with a special emphasis on the acculturation gap that develops between succeeding generations of women. This research sets out to navigate the complex terrain of identity construction against a background of deep cultural variety, anchored in the ideals of authenticity, intersectionality, and varied representation. It reveals the complex tapestry of experiences that define women's lives via a painstaking examination of their stories. The deep importance of investigating the links between women's narratives and the wide-ranging effect of cultural shock is at the heart of this work. These stories within both novels serve as a lens through which to explore the complex consequences of cultural adaptation and the resulting alteration of identities. The research offers a acculturative perspective through which the intricate process of identity building develops within the complicated context of immigration by intimately interacting with these narratives.

## Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction .....	10
1.1 Research questions. ....	14
1.2 Objectives .....	15
1.3 Significance of the study .....	15
1.4 Delimitations .....	16
1.5 Organization of the thesis.....	16
Chapter 2. Literature review .....	21
2.1. Chinese American women writing;.....	21
2.2. Hyphenated Identity; .....	23
2.3. Culture .....	25
2.4. Language / Discursive analysis;.....	26
2.5. Individualism; a conflict in Chinese immigrants, .....	29
2.6. Mother daughter relation .....	30
2.7. Talk stories .....	32
2.8. Acculturation .....	35
Chapter 3. Methodology .....	40
3.1. Theoretical framework .....	40
3.2 Selection of Novels .....	41
3.3 Limitations .....	42
3.4. Secondary Sources .....	42
Chapter 4. Acculturation in “The Woman Warrior” .....	43
4.1. SEARCH FOR IDENTITY .....	44
4.2. STORY TELLING. ....	47
4.3. HYPHENATED / HYBRIDITY .....	51
4.4. INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA.....	53
4.5 Character analysis; .....	55
The narrator; .....	55
Brave orchid .....	56
Aunts;.....	57
Fa Mu Lan; .....	58
Ts'ai Yen .....	59



The ghosts;.....	59
The quit girl .....	59
4.6. Literary devices indicating Acculturation;.....	60
4.7. Style.....	61
Chapter 5. Acculturation and acculturative Gap in “The joy luck club” .....	64
5.1. Themes; .....	64
5.2. Tension between Chinese and American culture .....	65
5.3. Mother daughter relation;.....	68
5.4. Memory and storytelling;.....	74
5.5. Cultural identity/ assimilation/ the immigrant experience; .....	76
5.6. Style and tone; .....	78
5.7. Literary devices;.....	79
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	81
Future scope .....	85
References.....	87
Journal Articles: .....	87
Web Sources:.....	97
Books:.....	98
Book Chapters: .....	98
Theses/Dissertations:.....	99
Reports: .....	100

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Literature, over time, has become a tool in exploring the evolving gender roles and cultural dynamics. In this world of globalization where multiculturalism is a norm, multiculturalism along with the representation of women's perspective have gained recognition for their ability to unveil different human experiences. To understand this multifaceted society literature demands diverse narratives that portray various cultural backgrounds. In global migration and cultural exchanges, the interplay between elements like acculturation, identity crisis and literature has become very pertinent in the context of globalization. The literary investigation of these issues sheds light on the obstacles and successes that individuals confront when navigating unfamiliar cultural terrains. While literature has sought to convey the essence of diversity and the realities of women, several aspects remain unexplored. Existing research frequently skims over these issues, leaving potential for additional investigation and a more sophisticated understanding. The selected novels for this research conveys the diverse narratives and social experiences of the immigrant along with the unsettling relation of them with their daughters.

The *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* is a semi-autobiographical novel which is called memoir in modern literature. The book is written by Maxine Hong Kingston, considerably it is a blend of autobiography, a folklore and fiction to create a track to trace the experience of writer of being a Chinese American woman in California. To depict the different facets of the narrator the book is divided into five interconnected chapters. Kingston delves into Chinese folklore, family history and the struggles of Chinese immigrants by experiencing the reconciliation of her dual identity. The main themes on which the memoir dwells are the cultural expectations, power of *talk stories* and women empowerment. Kingston examines the complexities of her identity by depicting the mix of personal experiences, family stories and myths and how

these elements influence and shape her sense of self.

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan is a captivating novel which involves the stories of four Chinese women immigrants and American born daughters. The novel is set based on cultural clashes with the main themes of identity crisis, mother daughter relationships and the struggle to bridge the gap between two different cultures through a series of interconnected narratives, each one of them reflects of their pasts, regrets and shares their feelings through *talk stories*. The club is a symbolic space to converge experiences, hopes and fears. Tan depicts the rich flow of emotions and experiences that resonates across the generations, along with the complexities of assimilations and influence of heritage.

This research aims to explore the uncertain identity of the American generation within a Chinese American family by examining the elements that contribute to it. This research is based on the analysis of two women novels as primary sources. The novels serve as the foundation for examining the themes of cultural identity and intergenerational relationships in the context of acculturation. In the investigation of acculturation, it has been found effective to consider women's experiences written by women for several reasons. Firstly, female authors provide authenticity and empathy in conveying the acculturation process through their personal experiences. Their genuine and sympathetic narratives, as exemplified by Catherine Romagnolo and Ellyn Kaschak, offer a feminist and multicultural approach to understanding immigrant women's experiences. This approach considers various contextual factors such as race, class, sexual orientation, family dynamics, and cultural beliefs, providing a nuanced understanding of their struggles and victories. Secondly, analyzing female authors' accounts allows for an exploration of intersectionality, considering how gender interacts with other aspects of identity during acculturation. By focusing on women's perspectives, the complex interactions between gender, race, ethnicity, class, and

sexual orientation can be better understood, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the acculturation process. Also prioritizing the women scholarships help the research to navigate the intersection of cultural adaptation formation of identity and culture values which according to Berry and Sam (2013) has significant importance in studies of acculturation.

Thirdly, prioritizing women's perspectives in the research of acculturation promotes representation and empowerment. Historically, women's voices have been marginalized in academic discourse. By giving weight to women's views and experiences, researchers and writers contribute to a more inclusive and equitable understanding of acculturation. Moreover, women often face gender-specific difficulties in adapting to a new culture, such as navigating gender roles and societal expectations. By researching women's experiences expressed in writing by other women, a focused analysis of these gender-specific concerns becomes possible, shedding light on the interactions between acculturation and gender dynamics.

Furthermore, women authors contribute diverse narratives to the field of acculturation research, representing a range of cultural origins, migratory routes, and personal situations. By examining these varied narratives, a deeper understanding of the complex nature of acculturation and its impact on women from different backgrounds can be achieved. In the context of a Chinese American family, the relationship between the dominant American culture and the preservation of traditional Chinese values and rituals is critical. The generation gap and cultural differences between immigrant parents and their American-born children contribute to an uncertain identity. External societal forces, such as stereotypes and discrimination, further complicate the establishment of a distinct sense of self.

The research also recognizes the importance of storytelling in bridging the acculturative gap within families. Mothers play a crucial role in transmitting cultural traditions, values, and narratives,

fostering cultural preservation and intergenerational understanding. Additionally, cultural shock experienced by parents can impact their parenting practices. It may lead to changes in beliefs, communication barriers, identity confusion, and difficulties bridging the cultural gap with their children.

Understanding these contributing factors is essential for exploring the challenges faced by the American generation within a Chinese American family and shedding light on the complexities of identity formation in a multicultural society. The research considers storytelling, cultural shock, language barriers, role confusions, and cultural adaptation in the contextual analysis of the novels, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of immigrant women and their families. It's crucial to remember that while cultural shock can provide difficulties, it can also present chances for adaptability and personal development. A certain set of abilities and viewpoints can help parents raise their kids in a multicultural environment if they can successfully manage the cultural shock process and strike a balance between their heritage culture and the new culture. Each generation in a household may experience the effects of cultural shock in a different way. These are some typical manifestations of these effects across generations:

1. First Generation: Cultural shock may have the greatest effects on the first generation, which often consists of immigrant parents. They frequently struggle to preserve their cultural history while assimilating into a new culture. This generation may have an identity crisis, a sense of displacement, and feelings of loneliness as a result. They might find it difficult to adapt to the new cultural norms and expectations, which would make it challenging for them to effectively pass on their cultural values and traditions to their offspring.
2. Second Generation: Also known as immigrants' children, the second generation grows up blending the customs of both their parents' and the society in which they are reared. They could

feel the effects of an acculturative gap and a sense of cultural dualism. This generation may have difficulties such as juggling cultural expectations, struggling with identity development, and navigating assimilation pressures. Additionally, they could experience problems between the traditional values of their parents and those of the prevailing culture, which could result in internal conflicts and a quest for their own cultural identity.

3. Third Generation and Beyond: Due to the growing separation from their immigrant roots, later generations may have a weaker connection to their ancestral culture.

A decreased knowledge and understanding of one's cultural history may be one of the effects of cultural shock. Cultural assimilation becomes more common as the generations go on, which could lead to a loss of customs, cultural practices, and language ability. These subsequent generations may have disadvantages such as a sense of cultural disconnection and difficulty completely accepting or reclaiming their ancestry. It's crucial to remember that cultural shock can have different effects on different families and people. While assimilation into mainstream culture may be prioritized by some people, others may actively work to preserve and appreciate their own cultural history. Additionally, a few variables, including socioeconomic status, geography, and the degree of acceptance and support within the broader culture, might have an impact on the outcomes. The complex dynamics of cultural adaptation, identity formation, and the continual evolution of cultural legacy within immigrant households are better understood when these effects are considered across generations.

## **1.1 Research Questions**

Q 1. How do novels reflect the unclear identity formation in Chinese American families across generations?

Q 2. Why does *storytelling* mean a lot to immigrant mothers in novels?

Q 3. How does the parent's *cultural shock* influence their ability to raise children?

## 1.2 Objectives

- To investigate the prospect of ambiguity in Chinese American family
- To analyze the Importance of 'talk stories or storytelling on the lives of immigrant mothers.
- To investigate the impact of parent's cultural shock on child rearing.

## 1.3 Significance of the Research

This research delves into the gap arising from acculturation between different generations of immigrants. The significance of acculturation in the American context cannot be understated. Previous studies have highlighted the lack of comprehensive cultural and acculturative analyses in literature of American anthropology and sociology. This research examines autobiographical novels by Chinese American writers, capturing their firsthand encounters. These novels serve as platforms for narrating the complexities of their vulnerable identities. Additionally, this research pays notable attention to women, their literary creations, and their perspectives on these situations. The literature authored by Asian/Chinese American women is approached from various angles, encompassing identity quests and the challenges faced by women within patriarchal societies as they strive to retain their cultural heritage while interacting with contemporary American norms. Chinese immigrants' parents in the U.S. grapple with bridging the cultural disparities between their ancestral Chinese heritage and the mainstream American way of life. Through their *talk stories*, these Chinese mothers inadvertently contribute to the acculturation gap, posing difficulties for daughters in comprehending their own identities. This exploration unveils the intricate dynamics that stem from this intergenerational struggle and its profound implications for identity formation in a multicultural society.

## **1.4 Delimitations**

The theoretical framework employed in this dissertation has undergone extensive examination and has garnered significance in various multidisciplinary fields, such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Within this array of academic disciplines, it holds a notable position, particularly in the realm of multiculturalism. Much research has already been done on this perspective of acculturative and on acculturative gap distress has been taken majorly from quantitative research. This research has given it the perspective of novels. In modern American media and popular culture, the multicultural art is taking place as a popular subject, but the purpose to delimit this research to exclusively Chinese American women writing is to provide a different lens to these novels.

Whereas it could have been studied as comparative research with another multicultural diaspora, but the main focus was to create a base, because this theory and exclusively gap-distress by cultural shock (which this research would prove as a core of gap between generations) have rarely been studied in the field of genres of literature. The novels are always critically analyzed in the perspective of various feminist studies and more. But this thesis, by researching and developing on the single theme of women's writing has tried to build a rational theoretical framework and delimitate it into a single gender perspective.

## **1.5 Organization of the Thesis.**

To provide navigation through this research, this chapter is dedicated to the organization of the research. All chapters included in this dissertation play an important role and contributed to reaching the objectives of this research. This research includes following chapters



Chapters	Main ideas
Chapter 1. <u>Introduction</u>	Provides the pillar of the research by providing key characteristics and elements.
Chapter 2. <u>Literature review</u>	By casting light on the existing literature about this research, it gives the platform to conduct the research.
Chapter 3. <u>Methodology</u>	Includes the theoretical framework of Acculturation and acculturative gap and crux of qualitative methodology given by Mahajan Hardhan (2018). This chapter is a structure on which the research dwells.
Chapter 4. <u>Acculturative gap in <i>The Women Warrior</i></u>	This chapter has the critical analysis of the novel to reach the research objective as this research is conducted on two Chinese American novels
Chapter 5. <u>Acculturative gap in <i>The Joy Luck Club</i></u>	This chapter provides the acculturative insight to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> novel of the dissertation. To investigate the research questions this chapter, like chapter 4, provides evidence along with discursive analysis of <i>the joy luck club</i> .
Chapter 6. <u>Conclusion</u>	This chapter includes the findings of this research and presents the culminations of the analyzed data. Through these findings, this research aims to answer the question and aims of the research.

The introduction has been set in accordance with the sequence of the research objectives. As it introduces the research it provides the base for the reader to understand the research objectives and how it is being carried out throughout the dissertation. First it discusses the delimitation of the research, pointing out that this research concerns with the women's depiction of immigrant life and their *between two worlds* experience. Then it includes the *WHYS* and *WHATs* of this research, for instance what is the concept of cultural shock between the generation and why this research is carried out on these two specific novels of Chinese American context. Secondly it provides readers with the rationale of the research and theoretical framework. It also gives sight upon the research objectives and explains the differences of generation on which the research has been based.

Chapter 3, titled *Literature Review*, has been crafted following a structured approach. This section not only illuminates existing scholarship on various aspects of secondary sources but is intentionally sequenced to facilitate a comprehensive understanding. Beginning with an exploration of women's literature and progressing to Chinese American literature, it gradually narrows down to the research of Chinese American women's literature within the context of immigration. Following this, it outlines the research scope and the covered scholarly works. The chapter then delves into the primary themes of the novels, aligning with the research objectives and leading to the subsequent analysis. Lastly, it presents an overview of the theoretical framework's treatment in previous studies and underscores the distinctiveness and the Gap it provides of this current research from the existing scholarly landscape.

Chapter 4 and 5 are the critical analysis of the novel which investigates the main research purpose. Chapter 4 discusses the contributing elements and highlighted themes along with discursive analysis of the first novel *The Woman Warrior* by the Hong. Kingston. Chapter 5 discusses the 2<sup>nd</sup> novel

of this dissertation named *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Both novels are taken from the post-modern era and carries the context of immigrant literature having the elements of it being autobiographical. Each chapter contains seven subheadings with the same format and sequence to make it easy for the reader to understand the process through which this research reached its conclusion.

The conclusion includes all the researched aspects and findings. It covers the answers and objectives mentioned in the introduction. Offers a comprehensive amalgamation of our research voyage. In this section, we reexamine the research queries, underscore the consequences of our discoveries, and map potential avenues for future investigations.

## **1.6 Definitions of Terms.**

### **Acculturation**

Acculturation is a process by which a person or a group of individuals come in contact with another culture, it involves the merging of cultures. People involved in the acculturation process often adopt cultural practices and norms along with other aspects of culture. In simple words, it is a bidirectional process.

### **Cultural Shock**

Cultural shock is a sense of disorientation and anxiety of not belonging to a culture that is different from their own. It can be manifest in different ways affecting the person's mental and physical health.

### **Talk Stories**

Talk stories or stories telling is a part of Chinese culture because it connects them to their ancestors.

The ancestors, according to Chinese culture, never leaves them and are always around to protect them. In both novels, the story telling has been given importance, because it helps the mothers to keep their daughters connected to their home culture.

### **Hyphenated Identity**

It refers to the sense of belonging to more than one culture or ethnic group. Individual with hyphenated identity come from multicultural or multiethnic background I.e. Asian American or Mexican American. It represents the fusion of two or more cultures which motivates the person to navigation, which then involves balancing of language, values and practices.

### **Generational Trauma**

Generational trauma or intergenerational trauma refers to the transmission of trauma through generations. This term is often used in the context of historical events, cultural or societal events and family dynamics. This trauma, according to several studies, contributes to collective grief, loss and injustice within a community. This can also affect the way individuals may perceive themselves and their place in the world.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Chinese American Women Writing

Late 1800s and 1970s was the time when Chinese American literature started to make its mark in mainstream of American literature (Mao, 2014). The term “Chinese American literature” comprises the definition and has evolved to refer to Asian-American writers who live in, write about, were born in, or have visited America and the struggle of voicing that experience of immigrants is as daunting task for Chinese American as for the African American. In the early twentieth century, Stein (1937) was of the view that women earned their confidence in the twentieth century, evident in writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as he states in, *Everybody's Autobiography*. Women were no longer happy to keep silent about their displeasure with their place in the world. Chinese American women writing refers to the literary work of American born Chinese females. Where male writers of Chinese American literature create the extraordinary image of Chinese men, the perspectives of female writers are different regarding neo-immigrant life which is usually the combination of cultural history and western traditions (Guan & Wang, 2008. p. 53). The act of validation and empowerment can be achieved by the act of speaking and writing, as Amy Ling (1990, p.179) concludes that "Without their words, their experiences and emotions would have no existence".

In women's writing in general, female is a main body and absence of male is considered as evidence to the independence of female, as the modern feminist Elaine Showalter (1977) states that although there is an absence of innate imagination, female's artistic expression is different than men. Therefore, women's writing has its own unique attributes and traditions. These traditions are evident in novels like Amy Tan's *Joy luck club* where she has mastered in showing special feeling for two languages while transforming the daily life details to the core of language (Mao,2014).

The core of Chinese American women's writing is the representation of two cultures usually by penning down the mother and daughter relation, procedure from the nostalgia of first-generation immigrants to the rejection of second generation (Mao,2014).

In 1882 while America issued a "Chinese exclusion law", where men were facing the problem of racism the women had to face patriarchy within the community along with racism. At this time the Chinese women was portrayed either as a mistress/ a docile woman who knows nothing but to obey his man or a dishwasher (Dong, 2021). After WW II, in 1960s the congress of America lifted the Chinese immigrant quota law and the number of immigrants increased, among them women were greater in number at the same time a new wave started to promulgate human rights, these human right movements opened a door for liberation of multiculturalism and women writers of the decade began to explore their subjectivity through their writings (Dong, 2021).

Mary E. Young (*Mules and Dragons: Popular Culture Images in the Selected Writings of African-American and Chinese-American Women Writers*, p.146) her comparative research of African American literature and Chinese American literature criticizes that, Chinese women writer like Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston, does not realize the importance of penning down the difficulty of survival in a complex social structure that is characterized by colorism, sexism, racism, and classism like African American writers . Whereas contradicting to this point, Hui Wing Wong (1972.p,9) states, that Kingston and Tan's complex characters of the novels describes their understanding in the context of dynamics of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Where these complexities are intriguing in the social, cultural and psychological aspects of society and reflect the authors' keen observation. Adding to it Wong (1972) further points out that referring to China and Chinese culture, and reinterpreting Chinese narratives these authors tend to form an identity and voice for their characters existing in that complicating space. The authors are doing that by

creating a bridge between their past and present, so they can navigate their dual worlds. (Between Worlds, p.20).

## **2.2. Hyphenated Identity**

As Chinese American women often face a unique challenge when it comes to their identity. They must navigate between two cultures and find a balance between their Chinese roots and their American identity (Ling, 1990). This identity crisis is further compounded by the fact that their hyphenated identity is often viewed as foreign or exotic by mainstream American culture. On the one hand, Chinese American women may feel a strong connection to their Chinese heritage, language, and traditions, they may have grown up speaking Chinese at home and attending Chinese cultural events. Yet on the other hand, they also must adapt to American culture and language, which may feel like a betrayal of their roots (Skandera-Trombley.1995, pp 17-35). Growing up is a tough process for children everywhere, but for hyphenated Americans who are confused by cultural and societal complexities, it may be extremely unsettling to try to separate reality from fantasy, truth from myth (Wang, 1985).

Furthermore, Chinese American women may also experience discrimination and stereotypes from both cultures. They may face prejudices from Americans who view them as foreign and unassimilated, while experiencing pressure from Chinese communities to conform to traditional gender roles. The biological blend of cultures produces double consciousness and sometimes conveys to the cultural in-betweenness of the subject. To voice this question Bhabha (The location of the culture, 157) asks, how can the past be approached as a prior state that consistently brings forth a sense of distinctiveness or difference into the current moment? How can the present then be articulated as a type of contemporaneousness that is not punctual or simultaneous? Whereas Maxine, the protagonist and author who straddles two cultures, must decide whether to believe her

mother's legendary but authoritative *talk-stories*, which primarily inform her of her Chinese history, or not. Her American birth, education, and experience have perplexing realities. she must deal with her past and present simultaneously finding identity and voice for herself, one that is not imposed by society and surroundings but self-expressive, developed by sorrows out of the experience of estrangement and suffering, with woman-as-slave and woman-as-warrior (Wang, 1985)

To deal with this anxiety subjects are usually depicted as mixed race which in postmodern era are called hybrid or hyphenated, as has been said “being hyphenated is being American” (Barber.n.d, p. 167). Self-construction of national identity is related to hyphenated identity because the immigrants, when they are classified as a minority group in host countries, tend to re-identify themselves and “hyphenated” becomes their only choice (David and Bar-Tal 2009, p.359).

Construction of identity, for hyphenated Asian/Chinese American, is a crucial issue to address while negotiating cultures, languages and stabilizing all the aspects of their heritages (Huntly 2001, P-106). And Chinese American literature have been criticized in numerous ways mostly based on these standards, Nan-Hu (2010) tries to classify this criticism in to three categories by dividing them in to, one who were American critics of positive views. Second, the Chinese American critics who keeps the view that Chinese culture is distorted and third are neutral category people who thinks that it is deliberately depicted that way to show the effects of living “in-between worlds”. Along with criticisms of different sorts. there has been a debate to consider the literature of descendants (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) of immigrants can be included to diasporic literature (Nan-hu, 2010). But this cannot blur the fact that writers like Amy tan and Maxine Hong Kingston are considered as best of diasporic writers and representors of hyphenated identities, as Wang Ning (2006, pp.172) states about Kingston's work that, it represents the culture of American Chinese, and its mediation



is diasporic in broader light. Which highlights that descendent of immigrants' work is diasporic in context of cultural conflict and collision if not in terms of mental or physical like their ancestors. On the other hand Laura Skandera (1995) in her research of Chinese American women and their literature points out that most of the Chinese American stories depicts are second or third generation, and China was directly connected to their ancestors then how is it possible to create a picture of Chinese society even when they do not have any direct interaction with China as a regime, answering to this question she adds, The concept of motherland echoes throughout their work and acts as a frame against which Asian American women imagine themselves, their personal histories, and their history in the United States.

### **2.3. Culture**

Negotiating cultures properly is a key element in a diaspora, Dr. Linda and K.Hema Letha (2018) explain culture as a forming element of a person which includes intellectual and artistic cultural practices, it works as a factor which peruses and forms one's mind. When we see the cultures of America and China, the vast difference is evident which create misinterpretation between Chinese mothers and American daughters because they are unable to understand mother's alien Chinese language and beliefs (Primlyn, 2018) as we see when Jing mei says, "these kinds of explanations made me feel my mother and I speak two different languages, which we did" (Tan, 1989, p.23). Some Chinese American women writers depict China as a place of cultural richness and tradition that they strive to connect to, while others see it as a source of trauma and oppression. They often navigate the tension between their Chinese heritage and their American identities, and how those identities intersect with gender, race, and class for example, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* portrays China as a place of mythic and oppressive patriarchal power, while Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* explores the nostalgia and longing for the traditions of the Old World.

Overall, China functions as a powerful cultural and symbolic touchstone for Chinese American women writers, shaping their personal and artistic journeys. For American culture the Chinese American writers like Hong Kingston and Amy tan represents Chinese culture but for Chinese civilization they are still others, as Amy ling states they are living between two worlds (Ailiesei, 2012). In other words, even though the novels concern and engages with the bicultural issues but dislocation of two cultures is the gist of tan's and Kingston's work (Ling, 1990)

#### **2.4. Language / Discursive Analysis**

In cross culture borders, along with culture language plays a continuous role in identity building (Ailiesie, 2012). Discursive analysis of the Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan and The Woman Warrior by Hong Kingston reveals the intricate experiences of women of Asian descent living in America. Both books convey the legacy of cultural conflicts between the women and their mothers while negotiating their identities in a foreign land. Furthermore, the girls' discursively constructed identities, which are molded in a variety of ways by their mothers' tales, their education in American institutions, and their exposure to media portrayals of their cultural background, do not center on their mothers (Romagnolo, 2003).

Amy tan seems to be interested in “creating a women narrative which can give a chance to affirm their identity within a continuum of past and future” (Trinh,M, 1989). The Joy Luck Club consists of sixteen interrelated stories narrated by four Chinese American women and their Chinese immigrant mothers and explores the mother-daughter relationship that how cultural differences influence their communication with each other (Gillespie, 2001). The daughters are torn between their Americanized identities and their mother's Chinese customs, which at times seem confusing and oppressive. The mothers are still attached to their Chinese traditions because they feel that their daughters have lost touch with their roots (Godfrey, 1995). The novel's importance lies in its

portrayal of Chinese women and how they deal with their cultural difficulties. Some feminist academics, including Bonnie Brandlin and Gloria Shen, saw Tan's work as an analysis of mother-daughter interactions in general. Similar to this, *The Joy Luck Club* is frequently cited as an illustration of the "successful immigrant" story by American literary experts like Walter Shear. Furthermore, according to Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong scholar of Asian American literature, Tan's book serves as a narrative that promotes orientalist perceptions of the Chinese American community and immerses reader in the inconsistent relationship between freedom and confine through assimilation games that turn Chinese immigrant "victims" into Asian American "victors" by mimicking the structure of a game of mah-jong and using gaming symbols to dramatize the relationships between four Chinese immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters. Tan is therefore able to question the conventional conceptions of kinship and intragenerational affinity that are prevalent in most classic Asian American literature (Fickle, 2014).

Whereas *The Woman Warrior* is a memoir and a semi-autobiographical novel that captures the writer's childhood experiences with her mother and grandmother exploring Chinese culture, myth, and history. The story focuses on the daughter's identity formation while navigating her Chinese and American cultures. The protagonist's struggle is further complicated by her father's absence, which leaves her questioning her place in society (Minh, ha,1989). *The Woman Warrior* shows link between speech and silence that Foucault's ideas uphold, and that has lately been broadened by Glenn. Jill Parrott (2012) argues, Kingston's work may infer at least three rhetorical issues for silence: "suppression through force", "self-restraint", and "translation". She depicts the quiet individual being hushed physically (as in *At the Western Palace*) or symbolically (as in *No Name Woman*) through repression by force. Forcible suppression aims to deprive the person being hushed of authority, whereas self-control exploits the silent's volition to obtain power. Suppression

through reinterpretation entails the somewhat more complicated concept of silencing and being silent operating in tandem with the author's interpretation of language. The analysis of works that utilize silence shows a more complex rhetorical picture than just what is stated, while leaving the research of silencing to cultural corners alone. Even while silence has broad and significant cultural consequences, concentrating just on those features misses the diversity of its rhetorical meanings. Kingston emphasizes the flexibility of culture and identity, but she also recognizes the power of social norms to control and exclude variations. The narrator keeps the tongue that was cut loose as a reminder that language is a battlefield. The societal norms used to judge the narrator's language proficiency are consistently lower than her actual language proficiency. Her ethnic and cultural stereotypes have an impact on the social factors that determine how well she speaks a language. The sliced tongue first represents a physical control that satisfies societal demand for conformity, but it gradually takes on the role as a symbol of Kingston's resistance (Lim, 2006).

Gillespie (2001) suggests that both books share a common bond intersecting culture, identity, and immigration. The characters in both texts face cultural clashes and barriers that manifest themselves in different forms. To illustrate, the *Joy Luck Club* exemplifies communication barriers, while *The Woman Warrior* illustrates the struggle of belonging and acceptance. Kingston's narrative style is more conversational, often incorporating rhetorical questions into her writing. Additionally, she changes the form of the story within the book to include vignettes, memoirs or narratives, which adds complexity and layers to the story. On the other hand, Tan's narrative style is more traditional, consisting of a linear storyline. Both books utilize literary techniques such as symbolism, language, and imagery to convey their themes. As evident, in *The Joy Luck Club*, the characters use food as a symbol of family and heritage. Tan uses language and metaphor to convey the complexity of the communication barriers between the daughters and their

mothers. Similarly, in *The Woman Warrior*, Kingston explores the immigrant experience using intertextuality, as seen in her appropriation of famous Chinese myths such as Fa Mu Lan. The use of myths and legends portrays the fusion of Chinese and American culture that the protagonist is experiencing.

## **2.5. Individualism; A Conflict in Chinese Immigrants**

Dr. Francis L.K. Hsu (1953) has explained about individualism as a key aspect of American life, emphasizing self-reliance as its fundamental aspect. According to Hsu, individuals in America assert their control over their own destiny and reject the need for assistance from others. They are driven by personal desires and ambitions, valuing self-interest and independence. This individualism fuels competitiveness and creativity, propelling the nation forward. The emphasis on the individual also results in fractured family ties, superficial relationships, minimal community control, and diluted traditions, as sentimentalities, conventions, and traditions are seen as hindrances.

In contrast, Dr. Hsu (1953) argues that Chinese culture is situation centered. The Chinese approach encourages individuals to find harmonious adjustments with the external environment, recognizing interdependence. Like bricks in a wall, each individual supports others, forming a strong society. The Chinese prioritize the common good over personal wishes and ambitions, subordinating self-gratification to duty and obligation. Harmony is a crucial concept, governing relationships between gods and humans, as well as among individuals. Maintaining harmony is highly valued, and creativity and individualism must be kept within accepted norms.

Dr. Kenneth Abbott (*Harmony and Individualism*, 1970) also highlights the importance of harmony in Chinese culture and the subordination of personal desires to duty. Chinese teenagers often contribute their entire paychecks to their families, and young Chinese individuals may pursue

educational paths chosen by their parents rather than their own preferences. Chinese society places strong emphasis on responsibility toward distant relatives, and honor and glory are shared among those who contribute to people's success. This feeling of belonging and security within a greater whole restricts individual freedom of action.

Hsu and Abbott's (1953,1970) summarize the perspectives by outlining the contrasting values of individualism in American culture and situation-centeredness in Chinese culture. American individualism emphasizes self-reliance, personal ambitions, and independence, while Chinese culture values harmony, duty, and interdependence.

## **2.6. Mother Daughter Relation**

Mother's "Talk-stories" were the base of both novels and are seen as a means of communication and connection of the nostalgia with western life. Mother-daughter relationship is a very usual theme in Chinese American women's literature. Many Chinese American writers explore the complicated and often fraught relationships between mothers and daughters as they navigate their cultural differences, generational gaps, and personal struggles Fae Myenne Ng (Bone), and Lisa See (Snow Flower and the Secret Fan). Each of these authors portrays the complexity of mother-daughter relationships in Chinese American families and the challenges of navigating cultural and generational differences.

A well-known example of this theme is Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*. Tan explores the relationships between four Chinese women and their American-born daughters, depicting the tensions and misunderstandings that arise between them. The mothers struggle to pass on their heritage, cultural traditions and values to their daughters, who often reject them in favor of embracing their American identity. Through their struggles and conflicts, the characters come to a deeper understanding of each other and learn to bridge the gaps between their cultures and generations (Ailiese,2012). Tan discusses how she was motivated to develop a dialogue with her mother as she communicates her matrilineal purpose: "Mother

daughter interactions are at the center of what I was writing" (Taylor 1993, p. F1).

*When I was writing, it was so much for my mother and myself... I wanted her to know what I thought about China and what I thought about growing up in this country... almost like a little curtain that would fall away. (Lew 1989, p. 19).*

Mothers and daughters balance their alienation and the responsibilities of daughter, wife, mother, sister, or career woman in this environment of dual identities. As they must adjust to a new society while recognizing their ancestry, ancestral Chinese culture, these women's quest for and redefining of the self is an archetypal journey as rites of passage. To indulge in the process of self-exploration and engagement come to terms with their positions, voice is crucial for striking this equilibrium (Hirsch, 1989, p. 161).

Writers who explore this theme include Maxine Hong Kingston (The Woman Warrior). Kingston notes in conversations with Donna Perry (1991) and Eric J. Schroeder (1996) that, like herself, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison begin key volumes with references to silence (Skenazy & Martin 177, 215). Kingston asks her readers to see the narrator's mother as a representative figure as well as a protagonist's mother by tying the introduction of The Woman Warrior with "the feminist landform of imposed silence" (Cheung, articulate 74) which is also found in the Color Purple and The Bluest Eye. Dragonwings, written by Lawrence in 1975, opens with "a mother who is hesitant to broach the taboo issue," according to David Leiwei Li (46). The narrator of "No Name Woman" is a representative of oppressive patriarchal culture since she tells her daughter not to talk, which is a method of controlling her behavior. Kingston tells Perry, "You see, everybody has that same phrase." The effort to overcome taboos and discover our voice is the same as what [James] Joyce described as "exile, secret, and cunning" (Skenazy & Martin, p. 177).

Because the narrators of both novels attempt to visualize the sketchy accounts created by their mothers in forms of stories and Chinese maxims understanding the mothers, daughters have

difficulties articulating what they mean, "Sometimes I felt very proud that my mother committed such a powerful act upon me" but the feeling was always mixed with a antithesis that said, "At other times I was terrified-the first thing my mother did when she saw me was to cut my tongue" (Kingston, 1976,p.164). As Kingston in the end of her novel expresses her reluctance to retelling the stories of her mother, she writes it as the reason why her mother cut her tongue (Kingston, 1976, p.163 – Lim 2006). The inner conflict of the daughters is particularly acute since their mothers have great expectations for their achievements and capacity to have the best of both identities. "I wanted my children to have the ideal combination: American circumstances and Chinese spirit," Mother Lindo Jong expressed it clearly. "How could I know these two things do not mix?" (Tan, 1989, p. 254). None of these mothers wishes for her daughter to be Chinese and follow only Chinese customs, because each lady came to America in search of a better life in which her family might get familiar with the illusion of American success (Ailiesei, 2012).

Overall, the theme of mother-daughter relationships in Chinese American literature serves as a way for writers to explore the complex and nuanced experiences of Chinese American women as they negotiate their identities and relationships with their families and culture.

## 2.7. Talk Stories

Any reading of literature creates a distinction in fact and fiction but in the case of genres like autobiographies, more precisely memoirs readers cannot determine, what they are reading, is truth or imagination. Which creates ambiguity while interpreting and in *Woman Warrior* and *Joy Luck Club* re-voicing the "talk-stories" of mothers makes it daunting for readers to distinct between myth and reality. What these writers are trying to do is, to give ordered shaping to the Chinese American anchored in the outer world (Wong-250). In her "Autobiography as guided China town tour" Wong says that Kingston violates the popular perception of autobiography. Kingston herself in her



interview says that, in every one of her books, she had to create a new way of saying what she has to say. Furthermore

*And I feel that I break through pigeonholes of what's fiction and what's nonfiction, of what an autobiography is. (Fishkin 791).*

Kingston tries to offer an unparalleled insight through the elements of autobiography and re-voicing the “talk stories” of her mother give a visual to, not only the Chinese culture but portrays her confused personality. Even though Maxine's mother, Brave Orchid, only tells her the few details of No-Name Woman's tale, Maxine utilizes them as a jumping-off point to conjure up her aunt. Similarly, Maxine's reaction to Brave Orchid and Brave Orchid's *talk-story* verbally transmitted stories based on Chinese myth and fact demonstrates Maxine's perceptiveness (Job, 2010). Kingston entitles this baggage of talk-stories" as “Chinese impossible stories” which her mother packs for her, she tries to get over these stories, but they still haunt her in night (lightfoot-59).

*To make my waking life American-normal, I turn on the lights before anything untoward makes an appearance. I push the deformed into my dreams, which are in Chinese, the language of impossible stories. (Kingston, 1976, p.87)*

The author continuously re-experiences her heritage and makes the reader notice that myth is history and history is myth. She keeps the reader with her while re-experiencing the mythic Chinese history and simultaneously in her contemporary Americanness.

*Before we can leave our parents, they stuff our heads like suitcases which they jam-pack with homemade underwear. (Kingston, 1976, p.87)*

She is linking the myth and reality, “telling” her version of “stories” (Cox, 1992). When she assumes the role of storyteller, Kingston's narrator tells her mother, “There is just the eternal now, and biology”. “We belong to the plant now, Mama. Does it make sense to you that if we're no longer attached to one piece of land, we belong to the planet? Wherever we happen to be standing, why, that spot belongs to us as much as any other spot” (Kingston, 1976). In our modern “global

village”, where we also “belong to the earth”, telling the “full narrative” from a metonymic perspective is crucial. This approach widens our definitions of self, family, community, and society, Kingston recalls.

Chinese immigrant mothers adopted talk stories for instructing their children, the mother’s intention talking these stories is to convey unsaid message or lesson as Linda Ching sledge says that it retains the structure of Chinese old wisdom. Tan adopts this old Chinese wisdom/ talk stories in mothers warn stories to their daughters. Talk- stories is one of the Chinese sides that Tan shares with Hong Kingston by multiplying it by four Tan enacts with same pattern of tale telling (Tale structure, mahjong rules and history 2012). The Joy Luck women fight to keep critical communication open and to put together their life' fractured memories through talk-story. The mothers' gifts to their daughters in the form of their life tales are the initial intent of the Joy Luck Club's creation. Suyuan Woo established the Kweilin club years ago to transform the difficult past of women like herself into a group expression of resistance and optimism, reenacting the past as stories of "joy" and "luck" (Ailiesie, 2012). The social conditions and experiences of the Joy Luck moms, which were ingrained in Chinese Confucian patriarchal norms contributed to their critical consciousness. Tan depicts these Chinese women and their daughters as not just alienated and solitary, but also competitive as they compete for status in a male-dominated system (Latha & Primlyn ,1995). This perspective may be used to explain a lot of the literature written by women in patriarchal cultures. *Worlds Within Women*, for example, has traced the oral tradition of pre-patriarchal Goddess cultures as the "cultural otherness" upon which these women writers have drawn, rejecting the dominant discourse's definitions of reality and turning to form defined by that discourse as fantasy to explore the “whole story” (Shinn, 1994).

## 2.8. Acculturation

Immigrants experience a great deal of uncertainty because they are cut off from their own culture and because many aspects of life are foreign to them. Fortunately, most immigrants figure out how to make sense of the unfamiliar *world* they are living in. This process of adjustment is known as *acculturation*, which is defined as "the change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture" (Marden & Meyer, 1968, p. 36). Keesing (1953) and Spiro (1955) explains the mentioning of acculturation in literature, they refer, the term acculturation is not used often in literature rather it is used in terms like *assimilation*, *cultural integration*, *self-identification* and *observation* which do not necessarily convey the meaning but is used equivalently to highlight the concept of acculturation. Where acculturation depends upon communication, which is an incidental part, as some sociologists refer to it (Nagata, 1969). Another definition given to acculturation is that it's more "linear, progressive process of psychological development versus U- curve adjustment" (Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima (1998). As this research of "acculturation" came into light from the sociologist and anthropologist, the psychological approach was given by Berry (2006. p,131) to this concept of cultural change that there has been an increase in interest in the psychological aspects of acculturation because "in recent years psychologists have engaged themselves with a range of psychological variables which are thought to precede and stem from changes in a cultural system". Acculturation researchers recognize the individual's critical, basic involvement in the process.

This change of cultures continued to be studied by various fields and gave the concept of a gap occurring in the process of these changes and different levels of assimilation which ultimately affects the family dynamics. This process is lengthy as Sodhi (2008- p190) refers to it while making a case research of Indo-Canadian second generation, "bicultural identity formation can be seen to continuously shift and modify after one's adolescence is actualized, tested by significant

events in one's life (e.g., academic/professional achievement, marriage, the birth of a child) .

In the subject of “American Dream” developing two cultural identity is unable to be ignored, researchers, Acar, Yigit, and Aslan (2016), in their studies toward the challenges of the Multi-cultured students in school, reached to the conclusion that students develop their double identity even before they are adolescents. In this prolonged process of cultural change, acculturation is the main step for American immigrants, and the family relation dynamics is the main context in the development of double identity from childhood to adolescence. Wiesner, Arbona, Capaldi, Kim, and Kaplan (2015) while conducting their quantitative research to determine if health-risking behaviors and emotional disorders caused by acculturative stress had been influencing the mother-child connection and this scholarship of the above researchers shows that the youth adapting to cultural differences have unique problems. The acculturation process is conceptualized using two models: unidimensional and bidimensional. Unidimensional acculturation occurs when a youngster completely assimilates himself or herself in the host culture. Because the value of each culture differs, this paradigm frequently widens the gaps between parent-child interactions. Where the bidimensional model is "a process of acculturation to the culture of the United States, there is an enculturation process that functions to retain the heritage culture." Given the perspective from the side of second generation of American immigrants Wiesner (2015, p- 5) studied that this gap is the major cause of depression among youth. Jannati and Allen (2018) on the other hand gave the lenses to the parent-child perspective that the difference in acculturation of parent and child can create familial conflicts. In parallel to this, Pasch (2006) investigated the impact of intergenerational conflict on the acculturation process of Mexican American households and adolescent adjustment.

The issue most frequently mentioned was the language barrier by immigrant Chinese in

researchers' fieldwork, which is of great importance because language is the primary mean through which we engage with others, as well as a fundamental tool for thinking, learning, and self-expression. However, it is not apparent that our speaking, acting, and thinking are influenced by a range of factors, including our upbringing, education, culture, and life experiences. Adolescents adapt faster than their parents as researchers examined the substantial data supporting linkages between acculturation, family dynamics, and adolescent adjustments, the researchers gave an hypothesis, as in many prior studies, that families with a greater acculturation gap, defined as "adolescents are relatively high in acculturation and their parents are relatively low" (p. 77), would suffer higher level of conflicts in families. This level of conflict is then associated with increased risks of negative emotions, behaviors, and academic performances.

Acculturation and acculturation Gap is prominent research in American research laboratories of social sciences, psychology, and human development. The novels of immigrants and first immigrant Americans are depictions of their experiences and difficulties those first American generation faced in the process of "acculturation" in host country. This thesis tries to read the Gap created between the mothers and daughters of the novels resulting from the different levels of acculturation which is usually explained in the words like *assimilation* as mentioned above which does not give the exact concept and meaning. According to the acculturation gap theory, differences in acculturation between parents and children lead to family strife and conflict. these novels being autobiographical, and memoir creates a mind picture of experiences like search of identity, intergenerational conflicts and language barrier and children (daughters) who experience such familial strife have a harder time adjusting mentally, academically, and in other areas of their lives on basis of their difference of acculturation which then is explained in to four phases by Berry (2006). This creates a gap in terms of ethnicity and acculturation as Telzer suggests, this distress

or difference can create psychological stress and emotional difficulties. This acculturation gap of individual with family or community creates a sense of isolation and guilt of not fulfilling the expectation of their surroundings which may include either family or host society.

Telzer's (2010) research focuses on the acculturation gap distress experienced by immigrant families, which occurs when parents and children differ in their adherence to their culture of origin and adoption of the host culture. Telzer's review of existing research on this topic highlights the nuances of the concept, and notes that the direction of the acculturation gap may vary depending on the specific aspect of acculturation being considered, such as language, cultural values, or identity. As immigrant families straddle two distinct cultural worlds, there can be significant differences in the way parents and children assimilate to their new society. The speed at which individuals adapt to a new culture can vary depending on their exposure to it and their age at the time of arrival (Telzer, 2010). While most parents have matured in their native culture, their children may have been socialized in both their original culture and the new host culture or exclusively in the latter (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). Consequently, researchers suggest that the cultural orientations and acculturation processes of parents and children often diverge (Szapocznik et al., 1984). For example, parents may struggle more with acquiring a new language, be less receptive to the values of the new culture and hold on to their traditional values and way of life. In contrast, their children tend to have more contact with the host culture as they attend schools with peers from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Birman, 2006). As a result, children may be more inclined to embrace the values and lifestyles of the new culture than their parents. Additionally, without the benefit of formal schooling and cultural socialization that they may have had in their native country, the traditional values and practices of immigrant children may never reach the level of importance that their parents would prefer (Birman, 2006). Consequently, it is common for

immigrant parents and their children to live in separate cultural worlds, a phenomenon referred to as the acculturation gap.

Understanding these contributing variables is critical for investigating the difficulties faced by the American generation within a Chinese American family and giving light on the intricacies of identity creation in a multicultural society. This research, keeping the variables given by Tezler highlights the elements like storytelling, cultural shock, language barrier, role confusions and adaptation of culture in the contextual analysis of the novels. Asian or Chinese American women's literature is examined through diverse perspectives. This includes exploring themes of identity exploration and how women from patriarchal backgrounds navigate preserving their home culture while interacting with their modern American offspring. The primary focus of this research is to analyze the generational gap, stemming from acculturation, that emerges between mothers and daughters due to the dual identity of the second generation. This situation poses challenges in identity formation for women within the hyphenated cultural context. After a comprehensive review of the existing literature, it becomes evident that there is a notable gap in the current understanding of the Acculturative gap and dissonance as a main element contributing to alienation. While numerous studies have explored hyphenation, language analysis, acculturation, there remains a paucity of research addressing Acculturative gap in literary works and then in women writing. This in the literature underscores the need for further investigation to clarify the literature being the imitation of life highlights the social experiences and problems. And expand our understanding of specific aspects. Consequently, the present research seeks to address this research gap by investigating the ambiguity in Chinese American families, exploring the elements that contributes to the unclear identity through analyzing the women written experiences.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

To explore the theme of these chosen American novel a qualitative research methodology is adopted as the material or data has been extracted through the open-ended scholarships. Qualitative research is a type of social endeavor that emphasizes how individuals interpret and give meaning to their experiences to grasp the social context of their lives (Haradhan. 2018). Qualitative researchers focus on understanding people's beliefs, experiences, and the meanings they attach to them, all from the participants' own perspectives. This approach doesn't involve statistical analysis or empirical calculations, as stated by Brink (1993). The origins of qualitative research can be traced back to disciplines such as social and cultural anthropology, sociology and psychology more like “keeping focus on something particular” (Domholdt, 1993). In my research, I aim to align with the qualitative tradition's objective of gaining a profound comprehension of specific phenomena.

### **3.1. Theoretical Framework**

These works of selected Chinese American women, to examine the importance of women ethnographers Amy tan and Hong Kingston in the quest of identity, where the vast majority of immigration studies are still conducted as though gender relations are irrelevant to the way the world is organized (hondongnue-satelo,1999) and gender has faced opposition in the field of immigration (hondogbeu,1999). Where this research discusses the problems and issues of immigrants, the focus of this research would be on the reasons that cause the characters to feel rootless and living between two worlds because of hyphenated identity. Redfield (1936 p,150), acculturation involves the processes which occur when groups of individuals from different cultures come into direct interaction with each other, with modifications in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. This research, while conceptualizing the work of well-known



scholars John W. Berry and Jean Phinney, that acculturation is as a change in cultural, attitude and behavior that results from contact between two distinctive cultures with an ethnic identity being an important aspect of acculturation. When significant effects were found, the author inferred the link exists because one family member's acculturation level (such as the child's) can imply a smaller or wider "acculturation gap" with the other family members (Birman.D- 2006).

According to the acculturation gap-distress concept, immigrant children adapt to their new culture faster than their parents do, causing strife in families and poor adjustment in young people. As Eva.H Telzer (2010) describes it, the term *acculturation gap distress* defines the issues and tensions that can arise when children and parents in immigrant households have different levels of (a) adherence to their original culture (ethnic culture), and (b) adoption of their new (host) culture. The gap's orientation (whether parents or children score better on each metric) and the area in which it manifests itself (e.g., language, values, practices).

### **3.2 Selection of Novels**

The selection of novels has been meticulous, aligning with the outlined research objectives. These chosen literary works not only encompass the essence of multiculturalism but also provide insights from women's perspectives. These postmodern novels are situated within the aftermath of both pre- and post-war China, offering a unique narrative that navigates between two distinct cultures and underscores the repercussions of significant historical events that compelled migration. The forthcoming interviews with the authors, a part of this thesis, validate the presence of parental cultural disorientation and the ensuing identity predicaments faced by the second generation. The meticulous contextual and discursive analyses of these novels contribute to achieving the research objectives outlined in the theoretical framework. While the theme of acculturation permeates the novels, the primary focus of this research is on Tezler's concept of acculturation gap, which will

be explored through an in-depth examination of the works by authors such as Hong Kingston and Amy Tan.

### **3.3 Limitations**

The motivation behind this research was to investigate the cultural conflict and elements that play a role in the unsettling relations of mothers and daughters in novels. It is to be considered that the literary interpretation of the novels and already existing literature can potentially lead to bias. The research while in sighting, may apply to specific criterion novels and may not be universally applicable.

### **3.4. Secondary Sources**

These sources have held a response in the foundation of the research. It provides the base and richness of scholarships in review of literature and theoretical framework. These include research articles, well written dissertations, reports, written interviews, and books which are used to shape the research according to the need of research and research objectives.

The selection of the sources is guided by the relevance of the main idea and their direct alignment to the research questions. Through the referencing method of APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition style, the secondary sources have been cited and referenced throughout the thesis. to verify the authenticity of the sources cross referencing has been performed across multiple secondary sources.

## Chapter 4. Acculturation in *The Woman Warrior*

The *Woman Warrior* is a memoir and yet a blend of genres which includes (semi) autobiography, fiction, non-fiction. The book comprises of five chapters, and each explores different aspects of Kingston's life and experiences. This novel provides a platform for the narrator to voice the voicelessness of a feudal male society dominated by Confucianism and at the same time it gives vocals to the difficulties and confusion for being the first Chinese (American) generation. The *Woman Warrior* is an introspective and personal work that blends history, myth, and autobiography to explore the complexities of Chinese American identity and the experiences of women in Chinese culture.

The entirety of *The Woman Warrior* takes place in the United States, particularly in Stockton's Chinatown in California, where Maxine Hong Kingston was reared. The book also features recollections and experiences from Maxine's family's ancestral homeland of China.

This book, swings between many dates and places, covers Maxine's childhood in California in the 1940s and 1950s, her mother's experiences in China during the Communist Revolution, and the myths and stories that have been handed down through generations of Chinese women. The book is concentrating on the experiences of Chinese American women and for reflecting in its setting the difficulties and complexity of managing cultural identity and ancestry in the context of immigration and assimilation in the United States. The environment also draws attention to the conflicts and rifts that exist within the Chinese American community and the way traditional Chinese cultural values may be both retained and changed in an American setting.

Although acculturation refers to the process of cultural change over time, there have been very few studies that investigate how this process differs across different stages of development. It is

important to understand these differences because the impact of acculturation gaps on a young person's adjustment is likely to vary depending on their developmental stage. Acculturation encompasses many areas, such as cultural values, customs, media, search for identity, language use, preferences, ethnic identity, and family responsibilities. Through her storytelling or more comprehensively re-voicing the told stories, Kingston highlights the experience of second generation of immigrants adjusting in their two different cultures and how Chinese culture can be both beautiful and oppressive along with the struggle of Chinese American women to find their voices and identities in a society that often marginalizes them.

#### **4.1. Search For Identity**

One of the key themes of the book is the search for identity and as per Gergen's (1991) saying that identity exists but in case of acculturation and identity it is in flux and cannot be constructed in isolation and on permanent terms. Kingston grapples with what it means to be Chinese American, Kingston understood her duty to highlight the cultures while not compromising what she had to highlight in her dual identity. Maxine, in examining her early experiences, acknowledges the challenge of determining what aspects of her identity are Chinese versus those that stem from other factors such as childhood, poverty, or personal relationships. The Woman Warrior's narrator finds it difficult to comprehend her identity in two distinct cultural worlds due to the intensified complexity of her cultural environment. She expresses her puzzlement as:

*I could not understand "I." The Chinese "I" has seven strokes, 6 intricacies. How could the American "I," assuredly wearing a hat like the Chinese, have only three strokes, the middle so straight? Was it out of politeness that this writer left off strokes the way a Chinese has to write her own name small and crooked? (Kingston, 1976, P.166-67)*

The narrator's struggle to reconcile her two selves leads to confusion as she cannot determine which "I" she truly is. At times, she asserts her American identity and even speaks out against her Chinese heritage "she can't entrust her voice to the Chinese" (169). Other times, she uses "we" to refer to Chinese people: "We make guttural peasant noise" (Kingston, 1976, p.171-72) considering

herself one of them. The narrator is of Chinese descent but does not associate herself with the Chinese cultural identity. She “had to whisper to make [herself] American-feminine” and she “whispered even more softly than the Americans” (172). On the other hand, despite being American, the narrator still faces discriminatory treatment due to her Chinese heritage “nigger yellow” (48) fills her with resentment toward Americans. Tezler suggests that these disapprovals can create a mental conflict and confusion for the child, often leaving them torn between the values taught at home and the societal norms accepted in American culture.

Nevertheless, for Chinese American women, it is essential to explore and uncover all levels of their consciousness in order to achieve self-realization and take on a meaningful role in society. This process involves confronting and understanding even the most concealed aspects of their identity. The most difficult task for narrator of the story was to articulate what it is to be a Chinese daughter and American generation. this struggle is penned in the first chapter, "No Name Woman," in which Kingston starts with Chinese believes and concerns for a woman and imagines the life of an aunt who was shunned by her family and community for becoming pregnant outside of marriage. By exploring her aunt's story, Kingston can confront the cultural values and expectations that have been imposed on her “Don’t humiliate us. You wouldn’t like to be forgotten as if you had never been born.” (Kingston, 1976, p-10) these impositions are the expectations Chinese parent, research indicates that disagreements violets Chinese cultural norms, obedience and family harmony the situation may intensify because of language barriers which causes gaps in communications and differences in acculturation can suggest that parents and children have varying expectations, including the amount of supervision that parents should provide. The story raises questions about the narrator's own identity and her place in her family and community. She feels a sense of shame, burden of expectation and confusion as she tries to understand her aunt's

experience and how it relates to her own identity (Kingston, 1976, p,20).

Furthermore, the intricate interaction of personal experiences, cultural influences, and individual decisions within the family dynamic might add to the confusion of the identity of the American generation. Intergenerational interactions, educational opportunities, and exposure to other ideas all impact their understanding of themselves and contribute to the formation of an ambiguous identity (Balidemaj, 2016). Studies have shown that ethnic identity includes both a person's self-reported affiliation with a specific ethnic group and how this association affects their cognitive processes, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors where acculturation ethnic identity and psychological wellbeing is interrelated to each other. It is the struggle to assimilate while being affiliated to the ethnic culture, in the book depicts this struggle to "fit in" being a Chinese American woman who is often marginalized not only in their own culture but on basis of their race in modern (American) society "We made up our own English, which I wrote down and now looks like eeeeeeeee. (Kingston, 1976, p. 97). Kingston uses a range of narrative techniques to convey this theme, including intertextuality, fragmentation, and hybridity. For example, from *No Name Woman*, Kingston weaves together her aunt's story to Chinese cultural folk-tale myths and legends, creating a layered narrative that highlights the complex and contradictory nature of Chinese culture. Drawing on these stories to assert the importance of female agency and empowerment she incorporates elements of magical realism and folk tale to explore the rich cultural heritage of her Chinese ancestry, and on the other hand using a fragmented narrative structure to convey the sense of dislocation and alienation that she feels as an immigrant. "We American Chinese girls had to whisper to make ourselves American-feminine". This quote shows how the protagonist's mother instills certain cultural beliefs in her daughter but also warns her to keep them hidden from Americans. (Kingston, 1976. p. 167)

Through her quest of *identity*, *talk-stories*, and *power* Kingston offers a nuanced and personal perspectival representation on the experiences of Chinese American women. In *Shaman*, the narrator witnesses her mother's struggle with mental illness and learns about her grandmother's experiences as a shaman. These stories deepen the narrator's understanding of her family history and cultural heritage and help her to see herself as part of a larger tradition. In *At the Western Palace*, and *A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe*, she struggles to reconcile her Chinese and American identities and reflects on her experiences growing up as a Chinese American woman and the challenges she faced. She realizes that she must embrace both cultures to fully understand herself and find her place in the world.

#### **4.2. Story Telling**

In his book *The Politics of Storytelling*, theorist Michael Jackson (2002, p,14-15) puts forth two compelling theses about the transformative power of storytelling. The first thesis posits that storytelling is a means of turning private experiences into public meanings (). This means that personal stories can be shared and interpreted by the public, creating a sense of connection and understanding. The second thesis highlights the importance of storytelling as a strategy for maintaining a sense of agency in difficult circumstances. By reconstituting events through storytelling, individuals can actively rework their experiences, both through dialogue with others and within their own imaginations. These theses suggest that a storyteller transcends the boundaries between personal and public, narrative and reality, and self and other. Through the act of storytelling, individuals reinvent themselves and rework reality, using language to manipulate and transform their experiences. As Jackson (pp,18) notes, this process of making words stand for the world and manipulating them becomes a coping strategy, enabling individuals to change their experience of the world around them.

In the culture of China *storytelling* has an important space, culturally it is known as *Pinghsua* or *Pinghua*, basically refers to the tradition of Han Chinese of telling stories with nothing but a fan in teller's hand. According to Sledge, communal folk art helps redefine the culture of embattle immigrants by granting them ceremonial access to ancient lore. The stories of "Woman Warrior", as Miller refers to it, is in form of beads and those beads are stories connected by the protagonist with the literary devices and (re) voicing.

*.. summer afternoons, either my mother or my father would say that it was time to tell another ghost story so that we could get some good chills up our backs. (Kingston, 1976, p.87)*

In her memoir, Kingston (1976) challenges traditional biography by inventing new literary structures to capture multi-versions and the true lives of non-fictional storytellers. She undermines the notion of a linear timeline by blending childhood memories with historical legends, creating confusion between reality and fantasy. The literary character Fa Mu Lan is transformed into the narrator, who undergoes training to become a warrior. Kingston's narrative reflects the narrator's determination to become a warrior like Fa Mu Lan through her pursuit of a college education in her American life, demonstrating her commitment to overcoming obstacles and succeeding. (Kingston. p, 185-186, 19), as the narrator says.

*I can do ghost things even better than ghosts can. Not everybody thinks I'm nothing. I am not going to be a slave or a wife. [...] I'm going to get scholarships, and I'm going away. [...] I'm going to college. (WW 201-02)*

Most of the book is taken up by the story telling as the above quote indicates. Kingston is influenced by the oral tradition of storytelling that she grew up with, and she uses this tradition to give voice to the women in her family and community who have been silenced or marginalized. Even though the stories were meant to connect the Chinese American generation to their home culture, but it traumatized the protagonist, for instance *No-Name Woman* story of aunt *haunts* her,



“My aunt haunts me”

*Just as I would climb up to the shelf to take one look after another at the hand, I would hear my mother's monkey story. I'd take my fingers out of my ears and let her monkey words enter my brain. I did not always listen voluntarily, though. She would begin telling the story, perhaps repeating it to a homesick villager, and I'd overhear before I had a chance to protect myself. Then the monkey words would unsettle me. a certain flapped loose inside my brain. I have wanted to say, "Stop it, Stop it", but not once did I say, "Stop it". (91)*

Whatever the reason might be of these stories telling was, but as Kingston penned it down, they had a strong effect on brain and personality of narrator. The story of Kingston's aunt, who was ostracized and ultimately driven to suicide for having an extramarital affair and giving birth to a child out of wedlock. This story highlights how Chinese culture is deeply patriarchal and oppressive to women, particularly in sexuality and serves as a cautionary tale for Kingston, who learns from her mother's telling of the story the dangers of breaking cultural norms. "Whenever she had to warn us about life, my mother told stories that ran like this one, a story to grow up on" (No Name Woman,1975).

On the other hand, to picturize the women agency in *White Tigers*, Kingston tells the story of Fa Mu Lan, a mythical female warrior who becomes a symbol of strength and courage for Kingston and the other women in her life. Refuses to be constrained by societal expectations of women's roles. *At the Western Palace*, tells the story of Kingston's mother's life in China before immigrating to the United States and explores the intergenerational trauma that is passed down from mother to daughter and how memories of the past can shape the present. The final chapter, *A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe*, is a retelling of a Chinese folk tale about a young woman who defies gender norms to become a musician and celebrates the power of creativity and imagination to challenge oppressive cultural norms. These chapters in this sequence illustrate how talk stories or oral traditions passed down through generations play a crucial role in shaping the narrator's sense of self and identity. The stories told by her mother and other women in her family provide a

framework for understanding the world and her place within it. Kingston has backed this story telling culture and women agency's right on it, in her another novel *The China Man*, "Talk stories, my mother said, were only suited for women. She vetoed any attempts by my father to teach me masculine ones." (from *White Tigers*). They also highlight the importance of language and communication in shaping cultural identity "As soon as I learned to speak Chinese, I discovered that I had spoken improperly all along. I should have been using the same vocabulary as my mother, the same sounds she used." (from *At the Western Palace*). By listening to and internalizing these stories, the narrator can navigate the complex cultural landscape she tries to inhabit and find a sense of belonging and purpose. These stories of protagonist's mothers were the legacy which the Chinese American generation had to keep with themselves. Kingston thanks her mother and father before leaving after the craved their names and address on her and bid them bye say she would come back (Kinston, 1976, p.40)

Additionally, storytelling, in these novels, allows for emotional connection and bonding within the family. Mothers can express their love, wishes, desires, and aspirations for their children through storytelling. Stories frequently contain moral teachings, values, and wisdom that can help children manage the intricacies of their dual selves. Mothers can transmit not only cultural knowledge but also feelings and ties to their families through storytelling because the act of doing so fosters intimacy and communication. Finally, storytelling empowers mothers as guardians of their family's history and narrative. Mothers demonstrate their status as the family's storyteller and keeper of cultural history through recounting stories. Within the setting of the acculturative gap, this act of storytelling might strengthen the mother's feeling of identity, agency, and purpose. It enables them to exert their cultural authority and provide a strong feeling of self and cultural grounding for their children. Mothers in (acculturative gap) immigrant women's books place great

value on storytelling as a means of maintaining culture, bridging generational divides, promoting emotional connection, and empowering mothers in their function as cultural transmitters.

### **4.3. Hyphenated / Hybridity**

When there are cultural conflicts, it can create various challenges and psychological issues that may not be immediately evident but could still affect the growth and development of immigrant children. These problems could arise due to a clash of values or expectations between the child's home culture and the new culture they are exposed to because from the moment of birth, a child starts to internalize and assimilate the culture of their primary group. These customs and behaviors become ingrained that they become almost instinctive. However, for immigrant children, it can be a painful experience when their accumulated life experiences and ways of being are suddenly deemed irrelevant, and they are required to adopt a whole new set of language patterns and social norms in a new country. Betty Lee Sng (1985) points out that the process of adapting to a new culture can be challenging, for children who may not have fully developed the necessary coping skills. While the impact of these conflicts may not be immediately apparent, they could still have lasting consequences for the child's mental and emotional well-being. It is therefore important to be aware of these potential conflicts and take steps to address them, to ensure that immigrant children have the best possible chance to thrive and succeed. Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* explores the theme of this conflict through hyphenated identity, particularly the challenges faced by Chinese Americans as they navigate the complex cultural landscape of the United States. Kingston recounts her experiences growing up as a second-generation immigrant in the United States, where she is often made to feel like an outsider. Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* is said to be a literary masterpiece that defines easy categorization. It is a work of creative nonfiction that blends personal memoir, cultural critique, and mythic storytelling to explore the experiences of Chinese American women growing

up in the United States (Miller 1983). Where it is a blend of genres which Cheng discovers as genre hybridization, according to Bhatia (p.58), hybrid genres are the result of the invasion of one genre's integrity by another genre or convention. This invasion of one genre by other leads to a genre that can be interpreted in multiple ways. While, on one side, it permits the utilization of another tradition's history to challenge, compare, and differentiate from the prevailing discourse of the present, the current hybridity also acknowledges the notion of transgression or resistance across a broad spectrum where diverse ideologies converge. Therefore, postmodern genre hybridization defines a multiplicity of ideas and thoughts, which encourages diversity and pluralism.

And this hybrid genera or just presence of hybridity in book tends to explore the theme of hyphenated identity, particularly the challenges faced by Chinese Americans, "They would not tell us children because we had been born among ghosts, were taught by ghosts, and were ourselves ghost-like. They called us a kind of ghost. Ghosts are noisy and full of air. They talk during meals. They talk about anything" (Kingston, 1976, p. 178).

Cultural shock can cause a parent's belief, values and parenting techniques to change or be challenges. Parents may come across various societal conventions, expectations and parenting philosophies as they make their way through a new cultural setting. This might cause them to reconsider their own upbringing and their parenting techniques. Confusion and adjustment might result from parents having to balance the values of their old culture with those of the new culture (Berry, Phenny, J.S.Sam and Vedder. 2006)."It was a terrible thing to insult Chinese parents, to call them 'foreigners' and 'Chinks,' to point out the differences in the shapes of their eyes, to laugh at their accents." (from *The China men*) adding to that, she highlights that "My American life has been spent among foreigners. I have been a Chinese in America and an American in China". Seems

like Kingston in both her novels focus on the hyphenated identity being an immigrant's second generation and demonstrates how the protagonist and her family goes through a process to navigate both cultures. They show the tension and conflict between the two cultures and the challenges faced by those who must straddle the divide between them. The protagonist's character shows the difficulties of carrying a hyphenated identity and the struggle to find a sense of belonging in a society that often considers them as an outsider. This Un-belongingness and confusion of living between two worlds can be spotted in different chapters

*“When you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies”. (10)*

#### **4.4. Intergenerational Trauma**

Szapocznik and his colleagues (Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Arnalde, 1978, Szapocznik et al., 1984) studied intergenerational and acculturation differences in Cuban families seeking help for their adolescents' behavioral problems. Their research found that immigrant youths tend to acculturate faster than their parents, leading to conflicts over values, interests, and language skills within families. These conflicts can cause behavioral and psychological problems in children, such as rejecting parental lifestyles, conduct disorders, and drug use. The authors highlighted that these traumas are different from typical parent-child disagreements because they arise from differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes directly linked to the acculturation process, rather than normative developmental processes of individuation and autonomy. Hyphenated identities often create a gap between generations which can be results of different stages of assimilation which creates intergenerational trauma. It is a key theme in the book and is the impact of the past on the present. Kingston explores the intergenerational trauma that is passed down from one generation to the next, particularly in the chapter *At the Western Palace*, which tells the story of Kingston's mother's

life in China before immigrating to the United States. Through this narrative, Kingston highlights how memories can shape the present and the importance of understanding and confronting the legacies of trauma and oppression. Metaphorically, the protagonist travels to China with her mother through her *talk-stories* and struggles to connect with her Chinese heritage. Her mother is critical of her daughter's American ways and insists on conforming to Chinese customs and traditions. The stories which supposedly were meant to be cautionary created a trauma, Whenever the parents said *home*, they suspended America. They suspended enjoyment, “but I did not want to go to China. In China my parents would sell my sisters and me. My father would marry two or three more wives, who would spatter cooking oil on our bare toes and lie that we were crying for naughtiness. They would give food to their own children and rocks to us. I did not want to go where the ghosts took shapes nothing like our own”. (Kingston 1976, p. 98)

The story telling played a role of trauma for the narrator and the reason that she felt suffocated to extent that when she saw a girl (her new classmate) who reminded narrator of herself she started to torcher her. On another incident she spoke up for herself and shouted at her mother, because all these stories and concepts of ghosts made it difficult for her to gauge a normal life. As she writes at one place that.

*“I don’t want to hear Wino Ghosts and Hobo Ghosts. I’ve found some places in this country that are ghost-free. And I think I belong there, where I don’t catch colds or use my hospitalization insurance. Here I’m sick so often, I can barely work. I can’t help it, Mama.”*  
(p107)

When it comes to the relationship between American culture and the preservation of traditional Chinese values and rituals is critical. Children (daughters) of Chinese immigrants are frequently caught between those two cultural domains, causing confusion and ambiguity about their identity.

The generational and cultural difference between immigrant parents and their American born children is another element that contribute to an uncertain identity. The parents' attachment to their native customs and language, as well as their expectation of cultural continuity, may clash with their children's desire to integrate into the American society. Collision can cause internal struggle and ambiguity about one's true place in the world. Uncertain identities are shaped in part by external societal forces as well. Both the dominant American society and their own ethnic community may subject Chinese American to stereotypes, discrimination, or prejudice. As individuals battle with societal expectation and the desire to reconcile their dual cultural inheritance this external pressure can further complicate the establishment of a distinct sense of self and identity (Berry- Phenny, 2006)

To understand all the element of intergeneration trauma this research tends to research each character to calculate the acculturation within the characters by analyzing them

#### **4.5 Character Analysis**

The Woman Warrior characters are varied and multifaceted, having a variety of strengths and weaknesses, they negotiate the difficulties of having various cultural identities, and the expectations imposed on them by society and their family. Women experience emotions of loneliness and bewilderment, but they also find strength and resilience in their identities as women.

##### **The Narrator**

The protagonist and narrator of the novel being a first-generation Chinese American woman Maxine struggles to maintain a balance between her two identities. She has proven to be observant, attentive, yet she also feels embarrassed, alone, and confused. Even though she lives in an American context that traditionally values individualism above collectivism, her experiences are regularly influenced by the expectations of her Chinese mother and the cultural traditions that she

strives to uphold. The expectations of her Chinese heritage influence her experiences, even though she lives in an American culture that occasionally disregards ethnic standards. The narrator has trouble understanding her identity and she depicts the quest for her identity through re-telling her mother's stories, these stories are supposed to tell her how she must behave and live life. Whenever the parents had to warn daughters about life, the mothers told stories that ran like a story to grow up on. the narrator tries to tie all these scattered beads of stories with a string throughout the novel, from the *No Name woman* , the folk-tale of Fa mu Lan to the story of Ts'ai Yen, when she get her own voice “Here is a story my mother told me, not when I was young, but recently, when I told her I also talk story” (Kingston, 1976, p,199). The narrator faces a gap during her process of acculturation which caused a range of challenges for her, one of these challenges was language barriers as she found it difficult to adjust in both languages. In this acculturation gap she is often left caught up with difficulties of reconciling the Chinese language (culture) and expectation of American society. Socially she is a confused person does not have many friends because of lack of Americanness,

Facing all the challenges such as of identity language social, the protagonist adopted some of the behavior from the acculturation gap she had been experiencing. She started negotiating and assert her choice of independence along with commitment with her family and she learned to switch American in to Chinese and vice versa according to the surroundings, along with development of her own storytelling style. All these behavioral adaptations are a result of challenging acculturational gaps she faced in her experiences

### **Brave Orchid**

Brave Orchid, Maxine's mother, plays a significant role in the story. She is a Chinese immigrant to America who is tough, smart, and independent. She also expects her daughter to uphold



traditional Chinese values and beliefs since she is very proud of her Chinese ancestry. Although she loves her daughter, she is frequently critical and emotionally aloof, which makes it hard for Maxine to really connect with her. Brave Orchid represents the oral traditions of Chinese culture as a healer and storyteller, transmitting knowledge and wisdom to future generations. Her expectations for her daughter to follow in her footsteps are a source of conflict in their relationship because she is also restricted by these traditions.

*“She tested our strength to establish realities. Those in the emigrant generations who could not reassert brute survival died young and far from home. Those of us in the first American generation have had to figure out how the invisible world the emigrants built around our childhood fits in the solid America”. (Kingston, 1976, p,10)*

As Brave's orchids social network was always with Chinese immigrant community where she played a leading role by guiding and helping the new Chinese immigrants to settle and earn money, she had difficulty to speak In English and relied on daughter to translate, language barrier proven to be a challenge to Brave for being an immigrant .Yet through acculturation process she starts to adopt some of American culture for example when she and Moon orchid discusses about Moon's husband, she uses the references of American culture about how to ask for her rights (individualism).but still it took her a large period of time to realize that she cannot move back to China because for her when she referred to *home* she had China in her mind and America was always a *ghost* country. Her experiences of oppression and marginalization have shaped her viewpoint.

### **Aunts**

All the confusion Narrator had in her mind was because she was going through acculturation as a psychological process and Berry refers to it. And Tezlers broadens this concept by discussing the gap that one experiences and how they create conflicts with own self and family, she names it as acculturation gap distress. According to this research the narrator by portraying the stories of aunts

try to create a min picture to write her confusing and two totally different worlds and how it is effecting her mental health, for example in the last chapter narrator tries to differentiate how it was for her when she used to live within her parents' house and she is better living on her own and she does not get sick anymore. Through the characters of her maternal and paternal narrator tries to depict women of Chinese culture, miserable in patriarchal society adjusting to the society norms without complaining, ends up dying miserably.

Moon Orchid is sister of Brave Orchid and travels to the United States in search of love. In contrast to her strong and independent sister, Moon Orchid is represented as being reliant and weak. In the end, she is unable to confront her husband about his adultery since she finds it difficult to act like a citizen in America even when Brave orchid gives her brief to the American ways.

“*No Name Woman*”, aunt of Maxine who killed herself after having an illegitimate child, her experience serves as a cautionary tale to alert Maxine to the risks associated with defying societal expectations and standards but in turn this cautionary tale about aunt haunts her, “My aunt haunts me—her ghost drawn to me because now, after fifty years of neglect, I alone devote pages of paper to her, though not origami-ed into houses and clothes”(Kingston 1976, p.31)

### **Fa Mu Lan**

A legendary woman warrior who, in myth and history, stands for feminine bravery and strength. Her experience acts as a metaphor for the difficulties the book's female protagonists face, particularly when it comes to patriarchal societal norms. She is admired for being a strong and inspirational person, yet her life also included sacrifice and heartache. Fa Mulan and Ts'ai Yen are two of the girls that exhibit empowerment in the search for individuality. Both characters are mythological and real figures from Chinese culture, and the stories of both are included into the overall storyline of the novel. The poem Ballad of Mulan, which tells the story of a young woman

who assumes a male identity to replace her dying father, centers on Fa Mu Lan. Kingston retells the tale of Fa Mulan in *The Woman Warrior*, examining issues of gender identity, societal norms, and the influence of myth and folklore.

### **Ts'ai Yen**

Known for her prowess as a musician and poet, Ts'ai Yen is a historical character from ancient China. She was executed by the northern barbarians and took her to live among them, where she eventually gained their respect. Kingston uses the story in *The Woman Warrior* by Ts'ai Yen to explore the complex connections between identity, culture, and power. A Chinese princess who is captured by the enemy and forced to marry a barbarian. She eventually assimilates to their culture and becomes a respected musician and poet. Her story is used to explore the idea of cultural assimilation and the ways in which individuals can adapt and thrive in new environments.

### **The Ghosts**

Throughout the book, Maxine and her family are followed by the ghosts of their ancestors and their own cultural past. but on the other hand, ghosts are used as a metaphor for how cultural heritage affects people today and how the past may still have an impact. The ghosts in the book explore the relationship between personal and community memory and serve as a metaphor for inherited cultural norms, expectations, and restrictions. These are the ghosts of the women who lived in the past, whose stories and interactions still have an impact on the lives of women today. These ghosts are a source of both power and terror since they represent the complexity and depth of cultural heritage. Kingston's use of ghosts highlights the power of narrative and the significance of cultural memory in forming human identity by obfuscating the boundaries between truth and fantasy.

### **The Quiet Girl**

Although the Quiet Girl's brief appearance in the novel, it serves to emphasize the disparities in

culture and rifts among the Chinese American community. The Silent Girl is an illustration of the "model minority" stereotype, which maintains that Chinese Americans kid' difficulties, challenges and bully they must face, and academically strives to fill up the barrier of language. Yet, this preconception can also be constricting and contribute to marginalization and cultural misunderstandings.

The quiet girl represents the challenges faced by immigrants and individuals who do not fit into the dominant culture. She struggles to find her place in a new society and is marginalized because of her (not able to speak) language and cultural barriers. However, Maxine's rude behavior to the quiet girl highlights emptiness and frustration because the girl was like a mirror image of herself, quite like her.

#### **4.6. Literary Devices Indicating Acculturation**

The overall themes are intertwined with diverse literary strategies, bringing light on the intricacies of cultural assimilation and generational difference. These tactics are effective means of exploring and deepening our comprehension of the novel's key topics. Kingston, to convey her voice being a Chinese American, has loaded the women warrior with literary devices of different sort, to express its topics and deliver its stories. The following are some of the book's most prominent literary devices:

The book makes use of **Metaphors** to explain difficult concepts and situations. For instance, the metaphor of the "talk-story" represents how myths and legends are passed down through generations of Chinese women, while the metaphor of the "white ghosts" represents the cultural constraints and expectations that Chinese American women must contend with.

**Symbolism** is also used throughout the novel to convey abstract concepts and images. The "*swordswoman*" picture, for instance, stands for female empowerment and a rejection of

established gender norms, but the aunts of "*no-name woman*" and "at the western palace" symbolizes the erasure of women's experiences in Chinese culture.

Vibrant **Imagery** is used throughout the book to evoke a feeling of location and atmosphere. While the portrayal of the "*ghosts*" in the book employs vivid and even grotesque imagery to express the psychological stresses encountered by Asian American women, the description of the "*town of stone*" in China conjures a haunting and eerie mood.

**Allusion:** The novel also makes use of allusion to allude to other literary and cultural works. Using the name "white tigers" relates to a Chinese martial arts emblem, while the narrative of Fa Mu Lan makes references to classic Chinese folktales and mythologies. The book's core topic, "The Woman Warrior: Memories of a Girlhood Among Ghosts" which examines the experiences of Chinese American women and the cultural norms and expectations that influence their lives, is alluded to in the title.

**Fragmentation:** The book also employs nonlinear narrative and fragmentation to illustrate the nuanced and varied perspectives of Chinese American women. The stories frequently overlap as the book shifts between several locales and eras, reflecting the fluidity and intricacy of memory and identity.

#### **4.7. Style**

Maxine Hong Kingston's writing in *The Woman Warrior* has a tone and a style that combines poetic prose with non-fiction, unadorned honesty. Her novels come to life via the use of strong imagery and detailed descriptions in her writing, which turns it quite emotive.

Kingston analyses her own experiences as well as those of the women who came before her in the book, which has a quiet and introspective tone. Along with feelings of rage and despair over the

injustices and restrictions suffered by Chinese American women, there is a sense of desire for a bygone era and nostalgia for a society that no longer exists. Even the way she has titled the novel is very emotive because Kingston employs sarcasm and wit to criticize the cultural expectations and preconceptions that have been imposed upon people, and at times the tone is also sarcastic and amusing. She blends components of various genres to produce a distinctive and potent tale that examines the meeting point between cultural legacy and human experience. Kingston's use of metaphor and symbolism is among the most distinguishing aspects of her literary style. The disjointed, nonlinear style of Kingston's work is another distinguishing feature that shows to the reader her, being a first Chinese American generation. The novel clearly reveals the levels of acculturation levels of immigrants and first American generation and how these different levels create and distressing "gap". She combines biography with traditional Chinese folktales and legends, weaving together tales from many eras and locations with a purpose of passing on the stories of China and stories of America and difference between them. As a result, the lines between reality and fiction, memory and imagination, and other categories become hazy and ambiguous.

Kingston's use of vivid imagery and sensory description is another aspect of her writing style. She transports the reader to the world of her youth as well as the settings of China and America by using sensory language to evoke a feeling of location and ambiance. The work of Kingston is distinguished by its unvarnished and unflinching depiction of the hardships of Asian American women. She approaches delicate and complex themes with an openness and sincerity that is both energizing and humbling, such as sexual abuse, racism, and cultural strife. Her writing explores the intricate interplay between a person's identity and the social and cultural forces that define it in a way that is both intimate and political. Her full intention to showcase the women's side of the immigrant stories and their difficulties, eliminating the men's point of view from her whole novel

is obvious even in her title.

The title of the novel, *The Woman Warrior*, reflects its focus on strong, independent female heroes who defy cultural expectations and gender standards. As these women confront difficulties in navigating the complexities of their cultural identity and genealogy, the image of the warrior is used as a metaphor for the strength, fortitude, and perseverance she gained after the behavioral adaptation. The second part of the title of book that examines the complex interactions between personal and collective memory as well as the impact of cultural heritage on individual identity is *Memoire of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. The cultural expectations and customs that continue to haunt Chinese American women's lives and shape their experiences, as well as how they see themselves and their position in the world, are represented in the book by the ghosts. Where the *Memoire of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* also indicates that it is real-life experience of immigrants among the foreign language speaker of America (*White Ghost*).

## Chapter 5. Acculturation and Acculturative Gap in *The Joy Luck Club*

The literature under research portrays the acculturative gap between the generation or precisely between the immigrant and first Chinese American generation and from the women's perspective. To substantiate this as a main theme the research employs various aspects including linguistics aspects, navigation through the cultures of the characters is highlighted by their dialogues and inner monologues along with the talk-stories. This linguistic exploration of the novel uncovers the hybrid language usage to indicate the emotional reflection of the larger acculturative gap frequent in the society depicted in the novel.

Along with the language analysis the following research tries to answer the research question through researching its symbolism, style, tone and literary devices. The visual depictions act as palpable examples of the collision and integration of the two worlds. For instance, the clothing, traditions, or even the setting that the characters inhabit might be used as symbols of their cultural fusion or detachment. The author masterfully uses these visual components to create a visual language that says volumes about the acculturative gap, helping readers better comprehend the experiences of the characters and the larger cultural adaptation implications of the story.

### 5.1. Themes

Amy Tan's novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, spans between two decades the 1940s and 1950s set in San Francisco, California, it is about four women immigrated from China to the United States, and the 1980s, when their American-born children have grown into adults. Numerous challenges were faced by these mothers as they were get used to the life in American, including discrimination, language barriers, and a sense of loss for their homeland.

Primarily the narrative takes place in the 1980s and revolves around the journeys of the American-



born daughters: Jing-Mei Woo, Rose Hsu Jordan, Waverly Jong, and Lena St. Clair. These young women navigate their own cultural identities along with their relationships with their mothers. They strive to forge their own Chinese American identities while also seeking to understand their mothers' experiences and the cultural expectations instilled in them. San Francisco serves as a significant backdrop throughout the novel, representing a vibrant and diverse city, yet one marked by racial tensions and cultural divisions. The protagonists must confront these obstacles as they seek a sense of community and connection among themselves.

The Joy Luck Club explores questions of identity, cultural conflict, and the transmission of trauma through generations. To picture a confused and multilayered experience through the lives of four Chinese American women, their individual mothers, and their foremothers. Tan, like Maxine Hong Kingston, examines the complexities of the immigrant experience and the challenges of juggling the past and the present.

## **5.2. Tension Between Chinese and American Culture**

The daughters in *The Joy Luck Club* struggle with their ethnic identity as they are American by birth and cannot fully understand the experiential sense of their Chinese mothers' cultural heritage, acculturation refers to it as a process of adapting a new culture but reconciling the home culture at the same time which creates clash between beliefs, understandings and values of both cultures (Telzer,2010). The mothers' need to emphasize their ethnic experience is more perplexing to the daughters, who cannot relate to it as intimately as their mothers. While the daughters feel a sense of estrangement from their mothers' past, they cannot revert to a state of Chinese innocence that they have never experienced. They identify neither as fully Chinese nor American, and their Chineseness is more in their relationship with White Americans than their Chinese cultural heritage. The novel presents a possibility for the daughters to reconcile with their ethnic identity,

but this requires overcoming the divide between their existential self and their ethnic self. This divide is alluded to in the narrative's conflict between the "tale of the past" and the "tale of present." The conflict between Chinese and American culture and the difficulties immigrants and their first American generation encounter in bridging these two worlds is one of the novel's major topics for example in the chapter "Double Face" of the novel Lindo feels she does not exist in the conversation of Waverly and hair stylist but she realizes to herself that her daughter speaks like a real American and her face is only Chinese ( Tan,1989 ,p-255). Through the lives of the four central characters, who try to strike a balance between their Chinese origins and their American identities, Tan tackles this issue. For instance, Jing-Mei Woo, the Joy Luck Club's youngest member, initially resists her mother's attempts to teach her about her Chinese history but later learns the value of having such origins. "My mother and I never really understood each other. We translated each other's meanings and I seemed to hear less than what was said, while my mother heard more." - (Jing-Mei Woo) (Tan,1989, p-32). This emphasizes difficulties that arise in communication between immigrant parents and their American-born children. Furthermore, even as she exposes her characters' problems and vulnerabilities, Tan's work is distinguished by a strong feeling of empathy for her characters as she says in one of her interviews that this novel is a key to show her mother how she felt and how much she wanted "those words to fall off the page so that she could just see the story that the language would be simple enough, almost like a small curtain that would fall away"(New York Times-July, 1989) . She illustrates the complex dynamics of interpersonal interactions and the way our prior experiences create who we are via her nuanced representations of the many Joy Luck Club ladies. "I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character. How could I know these two things do not mix?"- Lindo Jong, (Tan, 1989, p. 222) these sentences clearly explain the intention of Tan

to write about both the past and the present and the gap it creates.

This confusion and identity struggles that can arise when returning to one's country of origin after being raised in a different culture is a prominent element to be found in the novel. The contrast between Eastern and Western perspectives on individuality is based on the division between competitive and cooperative approaches to play. Similarly, in *The Joy Luck Club*, the disparity between being Chinese and American, as described by the aunties (to June), is centered around the contrast between interdependent and independent methods of play. When June takes her deceased mother's place at the mahjongg table and reveals that she learned how to play from "some Jewish friends" in college, Lindo scolds her for confusing the two types of play. This scolding exposes Lindo's ethnic bias, which is evident throughout the novel, such as when she responds to a young Waverly's question about the definition of *Chinese torture* by asserting that Chinese people are superior to Americans because they are not lazy and can do the "best torture." However, to the aunties, racial and national distinctions are often only discernible through differences in games. Thus, Lindo's anecdote, delivered with no self-deprecation, defines *Chinese* and *Jewish* mahjongg.

*"Entirely different kind of playing," [Lindo] said in her English explanation voice. "Jewish mah jong, they watch only for their own tile, play only with th eyes." she then switching 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." (Tan 1989, P.33)*

Lindo's preference for Chinese mahjongg over its Jewish counterpart, and her use of Chinese language to describe the former while relying on her imperfect command of English (American) to describe the latter, reveals her belief that cultural and ludic strategies are inextricably linked. She suggests that identity of Chinese is not a static or genetic characteristic, but rather a specific and strategic way of playing a game that involves rational choice and self-reflexive observation. In this way, she draws a connection between *game character* and *Chinese character* not only that,

but Amy tan has also created the root of the tension of different cultures that, how the immigrant people differentiate each element and compare it in front of their children to make them understand which then causes collisions and gap of communications.

### **5.3. Mother Daughter Relation**

Tan's female characters in *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), from the waterlogged child to the mother and daughter with an abundance of wood, as well as the chess queens, all discover their ability to shape their own identities, progressing from passivity to assertiveness and ultimately expressing themselves. The mothers, in their efforts to win their daughters' support, depend on them to carry on their stories and maintain their cultural traditions. They longed for a daughter who possessed a Chinese characteristic like theirs but in new surroundings (Ho 1999, p. 156). The mothers in the novel reconnect with their Chinese heritage in order to comprehend the current challenges faced by their daughters, while the daughters attribute their struggles to their upbringing in America. Neither starting point is given greater prominence in the narrative structure, nor is one deemed more valid than the other. The novel leaves readers uncertain about the root causes and origins of the daughters' identities, deliberately disrupting a linear progression and presenting identity as multifaceted and complex this simultaneity is studied by Ketu H. Katrak (2002) as Simultaneously existing in both here and there, it challenges the sequential nature of time and the distinctness of space by juxtaposing the current moment and location with historical contexts and previous geographical settings.

As the novel is based on the relationship of mothers and daughters, it exemplifies the cultural and lingual gaps prominent between them. Throughout the novel, the daughters struggle to understand their mothers and their Chinese heritage, while the mothers try to pass on their traditions and wisdom. For example, in the story *Scar*, An-Mei's daughter Rose struggles to assert herself in her

marriage, while An-Mei tries to teach her the importance of standing up for herself. Similarly, in *Two Kinds*, Jing-Mei's mother tries to mold her into a genius, leading to conflict and resentment between them, "I didn't see why I had to learn Chinese. She never learned to speak English well. She didn't need to." - Jing-Mei Woo (Tan,1989, p.116), the frustration and resistance that is observed in American-born children when they are forced to learn their parents' native language or culture shows their hard time to acculturate psychologically as Berry refers to it. Jing-Mei resents the pressure to learn Chinese and fails to understand its importance to her mother.

These mothers had a kind of influence on their daughters that they always tried to put up with the expectations of mothers, because these mothers set a certain expectation criterion in their brains for their daughters, these daughters come from different (American) cultural backgrounds than their parents, they experience a sense of disappointing their parents when they are unable to meet their expectations. Moreover, these daughters may feel a lack of understanding from their parents who are less acculturated into the dominant culture (Phinney 2002) and whenever these daughters did anything out of the Chinese culture, they wore a shield of self-defense Infront of their mothers.

For example, in *American Translation*, chapter of Waverly Jong *Four Directions* she says

*“That night, after the dinner, I lay in bed, tense. I was despairing over this latest failure, made worse by the fact that Rich seemed blind to it all. He looked so pathetic, So pathetic, those words! My mother was doing it again, making me see black where I once saw white. In her hands, I always became the pawn. I could only run away. And she was the queen, able to move in all directions, relentless in her pursuit, always able to find my weakest spots.” (158)*

For individuals who have a dual cultural identity and face distress when criticized by more traditional members of their culture, an important element is recognizing the personal significance of and the individual's emotions and responses (Schwartz 2009) towards the expectations imposed by their parents for example when June was forced to learn piano or have good lessons she always responded in rebelliously to the assault of expectation by her mother templating her self-respect

the assault of her mother's expectations:

*"The girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts, or rather thoughts filled with lots of won'ts. I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not" (p. 134)*

**An-Mei**, the mother of Rose, is one of the four moms in the book. Even in the face of cultural expectations, she empowers her daughter to speak up for herself and state her demands since she has a strong sense of self. **Rose Hsu Jordan**, the daughter of An-Mei, fights in her marriage to take control of the situation. She frequently feels overwhelmed and helpless, but in the end, she finds her voice and defends herself. The acculturation gap between the mother and daughter can be seen through Patricia Yaeger's *multilinguiddness* as language is the ground level of understanding this difference between the two. As Gloria Anzaldua refers, mothers' language *borderlands* explaining ethnic identity as a twin of lingual identity and suggests that this type of language is located at the juncture of two cultures. In *Joy Luck Club* this junction placed language is an instrument of communication. In novel the daughter speaks English fluently, but the mothers speak a mixture of Chinese and English which confuses daughters to understand their mothers. June at one place in novel says, "The joy luck aunties begin to make small talks, not really listening to each other, they speak their own language, half in broken English, half in their own Chinese dialect" (Tan, 1989, p-34). Where An-mei is having problem in adjusting in the American life with mixed language and recreating the stories to mend the mother and daughter relation which she had experienced in her past. The daughter's situation is confused too, she tries to understand this *gap* "Chinese people had Chinese opinions. American people had American opinions. And in almost every case, the American version was much better. It was only later that I discovered there was a serious flaw with the America version". The difference in their communication patterns An-Mei is of the background whereas meaning between the line's matters, but Rose on the other hand is a

straightforward and speaks of her mind which causes language barrier because An-Mei never speaks explicitly but tries to advise her deep meaning words.

**Suyuan Woo:** is the mother of Jing-Mei and the creator of the Joy Luck Club. She was compelled to leave China during World War II, and as a result, she carries pain and a sense of loss. Suyuan struggles to connect with her daughter but is adamant about passing on her Chinese heritage to her. **Jing-Mei Woo:** Jing-mei is the novel's main character and Suyuan Woo's daughter. She has remorse and a sense of inadequacy for not living up to her mother's expectations and finds it difficult to reconcile her Chinese history with her American identity.

Mah-Jong game is a symbolic representation of connection between past and present particularly for the club's aunties and June's taking place of her mother indicates the linking of two gapped cultures and generations. As the starting and the end narratives of the novel are from the perspective of Jing-Mei she is playing the role of a closure to this journey of the identity quest of all the daughters of the novel as she is symbolically and metaphorically playing a role of a split for the daughters. Jing-Mei experiences the ethnization yet merely ethnized encounter does not inherently lead to formation of an ethnic identity a gap is always existing Ben xu suggests. The absence of mother created a matured self of June and shaped the influence of ethnic affiliation simultaneously this affiliation is accompanied with the unease and constraints. This intriguing combination of compliance and resistance explains why the return to the motherland in The Joy Luck Club is a fleeting and disheartening experience, nothing more than a temporary "visit." Such a visit serves as both a proclamation of "going home" and a poignant realization of "going home as a stranger."(Tan, 1989, p.237-239)

**Lindo Jong:** Lindo is the mother of Waverly and one of the novel's four mothers. She is incredibly intelligent and independent, but she also carries shame and remorse from her past. **Waverly Jong**

is a talented chess player and is Lindo's daughter. She tries to balance her American and Chinese heritages, and she and her mother frequently disagree on matters of cultural norms. In the second chapter titled *double face*, the daughter's perspective has been given the center as the title suggests it is like mirror reflection of mother and daughter. The scene of Lindo, Waverly and Mr. Rory, Lindo sitting in front of mirror to get a haircut and listens to the conversation of hair stylist and Waverly. Lindo calls Waverly's conversation a perfect typical American style conversation where they do not look at each other's face, she translates it to Lindo and her voice is louder in translating, as if she does not have good listening skills nonetheless, she tries to interpose herself by altering her facial expression between *the Chinese face* and *the American face*

The opening of every chapter represents the symbolic origins to uncover the multiple possibilities and ambiguous message about the mythology and truth of cultures. The beginning narrative of second chapter for example exposes the book of *the twenty-six malignant gates* a simple fairy tale which Lindo intended to talk about to keep her daughter obedient. By interpreting this opening as a critique of how mythology is employed in nationalist endeavors, Tan's revised myth can be viewed as an example of how the invocation of an *authentic* mythology or historical narrative can be manipulated to foster loyalty among individuals toward their nation, often referred to as the *mother country*.

*"Do not ride your bicycle around the corner," the mother had told the daughter when she was seven. "Why not!" protested the girl. "Because then I cannot see you and you will fall down and cry and I will not hear you." "How do you know I'll fall?" whined the girl. "It is in a book, The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates, all the bad things that can happen to you outside the protection of this house." "I don't believe you. Let me see the book." "It is written in Chinese. You cannot understand it. That is why you must listen to me." "What are they, then?" the girl demanded. "Tell me the twenty-six bad things." But the mother sat knitting in silence. "What twenty-six!" shouted the girl. The mother still did not answer her. "You can't tell me because you don't know! You don't know anything!". (Tan 1989 ,p-76)*

Just as the difference of language and the assimilation of ethnic and national identity the mothers use of mother-tongue validit-ize the authenticity of the myth and simultaneously suggests that the



daughter's ethnic identity is uncertain. This establishes the daughter's inferiority and mothers' authenticity. Although the daughter appears to challenge the originality of the story, the conclusion of the opening seems to strengthen the power of the myth. Even though the daughter uncovers the constructed nature of *The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates*, the prophecy her mother claims to extract from the myth comes true: "And the girl ran outside, jumped on her bicycle, and in her hurry to get away, she fell before she even reached the corner" (Tan, 1989, p,87). Clearly, we are not meant to believe that the myth predicted the child's injury. Instead, the ending illustrates the myth's ability to enter the child's imagination and lead her to attribute her fall to the story's prophetic power. Thus, the narrative argues that the potency of nationalist mythology lies in the subject's imagination rather than in any inherent truth.

**Ying-Ying St. Clair:** Ying-Ying is the mother of Lena and one of the four mothers in the book. She finds it difficult to relate to her daughter since she is plagued with guilt and sorrow from her past. **Lena St. Clair** is Harold's wife and Ying's daughter. She struggles to establish herself in their marriage and frequently feels like she is walking on eggshells around her spouse. Communication gap and the urge of not explaining the real meaning of what mother meant to say and what daughter had to face is the biggest sign of gap and difference between this pair of mother and daughter in the chapter of *the voice from the wall* when the mother stops her to look at a person across the street following some Chinese believes she had in her mind, but the confusions in heads of daughter compels them to know everything but hardly got to understand the answer and majority times did not even got any answers: ““*Aii-ya!* Such questions! Because it is too terrible to consider. A man can grab you off the streets, sell you to someone else, make you have a baby. Then you'll kill the baby. And when they find this baby in a garbage can, then what can be done? You'll go to jail, die there.” but these ambiguous answers were not just from the mother's side as the lingual

gap was coexisting element: “I knew this was not a true answer. But I also made up lies to prevent bad things from happening in the future”. To overcome the embarrassments, Amy has depicted the immature way of coping with situation like these, by mistranslating the situations as done by Lena when she confesses that:

*“I often lied when I had to translate for her, the endless forms, instructions, notices from school, telephone calls. “Shemma yisz?”—What meaning?—she asked me when a man at a grocery store yelled at her for opening jars to smell the insides. I was so embarrassed I told her that Chinese people were not allowed to shop there. When the school sent a notice home about a polio vaccination, I told her the time and place, and added that all students were now required to use metal lunch boxes, since they had discovered old paper bags can carry polio germs”.*  
(Tan, 1989, p.93)

#### **5.4. Memory and Storytelling.**

The highlighted power of storytelling and memory, in the novel, plays a vital role in preserving cultural traditions and passing down wisdom from one generation to the next. Caring the American dream these four women comes crossing seas caring scars of past along with Chinese with them to give a better life to their daughters “The old woman remembered a swan she had bought many years ago in Shanghai for a foolish sum” (Feathers from a Thousand Li Away) where the *swan* is a symbol of memory which she (old women) brought from China. The characters use these stories and memories to connect with one another and to make sense of their experiences. Amy tries to reflect on the nature of memory and the ways in which it can be distorted over time in her novel while representing the complexities of being an immigrant. This theme of memory and storytelling reflects the characters' struggles to reconcile their personal memories with their cultural and familial histories. But the confusion that these stories created makes it obvious for readers to understand the confusion existing the characters of novel when they kept on repeating those stories, of different endings

*“I had been talking too many people, my friends, everybody it seems, except Ted. To each person I told a different story, yet each version was true, I was certain of it, at least at the moment that*

*I told it" (Tan, 1989, p.106).*

Each mother in *The Joy Luck Club* has her own story of triumph over adversity and feels the pain of the cultural gap between herself and her daughter. They all hope their daughters will embrace the strengths of both cultures rather than just one, the American (Mistri 1998, p. 251). For instance, An-Mei Hsu encourages her daughter Rose to adopt the American way and speak up about her unhappy marriage to save it. She contrasts the Chinese way, which involves not expressing desires, speaking up, or making choices, with the American way, which involves expressing choices and speaking up for oneself. An-Mei raised her daughter the American way to give her a better life than she had in China. Similarly, Lindo Jong blames herself for her daughter Waverly's upbringing. She admits that she wanted her daughter to have the best of both worlds, but she couldn't anticipate that her daughter's American reality would not necessarily mesh with her Chinese heritage. She regrets not being able to teach her daughter about Chinese character and thinking (Tan, 1989, p 307-320).

These stories often and more than usual created confusion and fear that further widened the gap between mothers and daughters because usually these stories told the side of the memories to convey a lesson for American generation, "in truth, this was a bad thing that Yan Chang had done telling me my mother's story... After Yan Chang told me this story, I saw everything, I heard things I had never understood before" (Tan, 1989, p.134) because they effected their way of perceiving the world. One of the impacts of storytelling on the daughters is the way it shapes their identities and their relationships with their mothers. Yet, on the other hand, by hearing their mothers' stories, the daughters can gain a deeper understanding of their own cultural heritage and the challenges that their mothers faced as immigrants to the United States. This understanding helps them to develop a sense of empathy and respect for their mothers, even when they disagree or struggle to

communicate with them. Because all they brought from China was their memories and stories to keep their Chinese culture alive in this foreign land as Amy says in the start of her novel in *Feathers from a Thousand Li Away*.

*“But when she arrived in the new country, the immigration officials pulled her swan away from her, leaving the woman fluttering her arms and with only one swan feather for a memory... For a long time now, the woman had wanted to give her daughter the single swan feather and tell her, “This feather may look worthless, but it comes from afar and carries with it all my good intentions.” And she waited, year after year, for the day she could tell her daughter this in perfect American English”.* (19)

### **5.5. Cultural Identity/ Assimilation/ The Immigrant Experience.**

Catherine Romagnolo appreciates the work of Amy tan research that how this novel write-s about the narrative beginnings of (women) destabilization in the history which majorly ignores the presence of women who are non-Europeans. Readings of scholarships like these pushes readers to know about the relevance of Asian American cultures female subjectivity and authenticity of cultures which is apparent in the novel from the beginning in terms of *Chinese American* and *American Chinese*. The novel begins with the transition of Chinese culture to American and ends with the real image of contradiction between more assimilated generation and less acculturative generation and the fragmentation of identity which is story of every immigrant. “But when she arrived in the new country, the immigration officials pulled her swan away from her leaving the woman fluttering her arms and with only one 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, 1989). Catherine in her research of feminine narrative also studies that, Amy tries to negotiate the contradiction of idealized thought of melting pot cultural concept of America and rather she is highlighting how American stripes out the homeland culture and yet make them (immigrants) feel the *other* : “ the woman is still waiting for the day she could tell daughter this in perfect American English” (Tan, 1989, P.3).

This story plays a significant role because it is describing the power dynamics and domination of Chinese culture which accompanied the immigrants. Moreover, it combines the symbols more apparently stereotypical and cliched that are associated with the Chinese and American culture for instance Tan employs symbols determined by cultures like *swan* typically associated with Chinese women as graceful, silent, and submissive and connect it with *old woman* who ‘bought it years ago in shanghai’. And then to emblem the American culture there is *Coca cola*: “now the woman was old. And she had a daughter who grew up speaking only American English and swallowing more coca cola than sorrow” (Tan, 1989, p.3). This usage of symbols and repetition of mythical stories, as Catherine suggests, reads out the authenticity of the authentic differences of cultures because it grasps both the historical violences of immigration and the illusory nature of nativist and assimilationist myths.

The research has shown that the expectations of Chinese immigrant parents are influenced by both their cultural heritage and the challenges they face in adapting to a new culture. This means that these high expectations are not fixed but are constantly evolving based on the demands of the Canadian socio-cultural context. In summary, cultural expectations are not static and are shaped by a dynamic interplay of cultural heritage and acculturation challenges. The story looks at the struggles of integration and cultural identification faced by Chinese immigrants and their American-born children. The protagonists, who frequently feel like they are stuck between two cultures, seek to reconcile their American identity with their Chinese origin. To start over in a new nation after leaving behind their family and homes, immigrants must overcome several difficulties, which are explored in the book. The protagonists must deal with problems including prejudice, language challenges, and losing their native country.

### 5.6. Style and Tone.

The process of cultural change and adaptation, as suggested by Berry, is the process of *Acculturation*. This is typically experienced by individuals on individual and society levels when they interact with and adopt the element of another culture. This research tends to apply acculturative measures to match the tone of novel which might be determined by highlighting the pacing and using of language and crafting the style of the novel by the author, as suggested by Arijit Singh that a critical reading of any text is to analyzing if the author has applies the theories and providing the alternative possibilities rather than simply accepting what it presents.

The main element that could indicate Tezler's acculturative gap between the characters of the novel, is the dealing of themes of the acculturation which then must deal with the style of novel reflecting the fusion and clash in single frame. For instance, language which can be evoking and addressing the character's navigation process of detachment/ disconnection or the process reconciliation.

Tan uses rich language to vividly describe the places and characters, which is one of her literary strengths. She calls the San Francisco Bay, for instance, "a beautiful crescent of dark silver, the water hardly rippling, as if it had all been smoothed out by the hands of some holy potter" in the first chapter (Tan, 1989. p. 3). The reader is drawn into the tale by the vivid, evocative language that serves to establish the setting and tone. Tan's utilization of several perspectives and narrative voices in her work is an additional feature. The work is organized as a collection of interrelated short stories, each recounted from the perspective of a different character.

Tan's use of language is a key component of her approach. She creates a distinctive linguistic style that represents the experience of growing up between two cultures by fusing English and Chinese terminology and syntax. The characters' experiences with cultural identification and the difficulties

of intergenerational and intercultural communication and understanding are highlighted by the hybrid language. Tan's style in *The Joy Luck Club* is richly descriptive, deeply symbolic, and linguistically innovative, reflecting the novel's themes of cultural identity, heritage, and the complexities of mother-daughter relationships.

*The Joy Luck Club* has a thoughtful and nostalgic tone. The characters in the book think back on their pasts and how those events have impacted on their personalities and interactions with one another. In contrast to their current lifestyles in America, the protagonists' ancestral home and cultural background evoke feelings of nostalgia and desire. The tone is one of resolve and resiliency at the same time. The protagonists are resolved to persist and build a brighter future for themselves and their family despite the obstacles and tribulations they encounter. The novel is characterized by a spirit of fortitude and resiliency in the face of difficulty.

### 5.7. Literary devices.

The acculturation and acculturative gap do not necessarily research the devastation and negative impacts of its process rather it has positive and negative impacts at same scale of measurement. In a novel the level of negative or positive tones and thematic importance is measured through the literary devices used by the author to make his/her intention obvious to the readers.

One of the primary literary devices used in the novel is the **structure of the narrative**. The novel is divided into four sections, with each section containing four interconnected stories told by different narrators. This structure allows the novel to explore the experiences and perspectives of different characters, while also highlighting the similarities and differences between them. To improve the plot and give the characters and ideas depth throughout *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan employs several literary techniques.

**Flashbacks:** To show how the characters' prior experiences in China have influenced their current

interactions with one another, the story regularly employs flashbacks.

**Symbolism:** Tan used symbols to express bigger concepts or themes throughout the book. For instance, the jade pendant that Jing-mei gets from her mother represents the value of cultural legacy and the link between mother and daughter.

With **foreshadowing**, Tan might allude to forthcoming events or highlight hidden conflicts between the characters. For instance, Jing's discovery about her sisters later in the novel is hinted at in Suyuan's hunt for her long-lost daughters.

**Irony:** Tan uses irony to contrast the expectations of the characters with the reality of their circumstances. For instance, even though Lindo herself was compelled into an unhappy marriage when she was a young woman, Lindo's daughter Waverly goes on to become a great chess player.

The story is rich in **imagery**, with descriptions of characters, settings, and events that are both vivid and sensuous. Tan, for instance, emphasizes the value of tradition and cultural history by using visuals to depict the fine details of the cuisine served at the Joy Luck Club meetings.

**Allusion:** Tan makes several allusions to Chinese mythology and folklore throughout the book, giving the characters' histories and cultural identities more nuance and richness.



## Chapter 6. Conclusion.

The research undertaken in this dissertation signifies a deliberate and crucial departure from conventional studies, as it places a deliberate emphasis on the narratives of women and addresses the acculturation gap prevalent among generations of immigrant women. The decision to prioritize women's voices and analyze their literary works stems from a recognition of the historical oversight that women's perspectives have endured in scholarly discourse. This dissertation strives to rectify this oversight by delving into the intricacies of cultural adaptation and gender-specific challenges, offering a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of immigrant women in the context of identity formation. The literary works of Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan offer narratives that unfold the tales of two and four families, respectively. Through a meticulous examination of these familial units, this research endeavors to contribute by ascribing a name to the palpable uneasiness experienced within the families depicted in the novels. With a deliberate concentration on the intricate dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship, the study elucidates a nuanced gap that exists between two distinct cultures coexisting within a single household. In essence, this research seeks to delve into the complexities of intergenerational and cross-cultural dynamics, offering an in-depth exploration of the intricacies that shape the cultural unease within the familial settings depicted in the novels of Kingston and Tan.

As per UNESCO, the current number of Chinese individuals residing overseas exceeds 10.7 million, a figure that escalates to approximately 60 million when accounting for their descendants. This demographic places China among the nations with the highest immigrant populations globally, according to the International Organization for Migration. Given this significant representation, the Chinese American experience, marked by hyphenation, assimilation, and acculturation, stands as a profoundly rich subject of exploration. Examining the historical

backdrop reveals three distinct migration phases, spanning from 1849 to the present day, encompassing pivotal events such as the California Gold Rush, the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and the civil rights movements in the 1960s. This research, rooted in the literary works of Chinese American women writers, endeavors to construct a nuanced portrayal of the Chinese American community in the United States. Emphasizing acculturation within the context of two and three generations, the study delves into multiple levels of exploration. It commences by scrutinizing identity and storytelling, drawing inspiration from Tezler's delineation of the acculturation gap. Proceeding to language as the initial manifestation of this gap, the research navigates through the levels of identity conveyed through storytelling. It then advances to the realm of family dynamics and mother-daughter relationships, aligning with Tezler's values. Finally, the study reaches the thematic level, examining representations that mirror Tezler's observations of the practical application of values within the acculturation process.

The novels studied in this research has the element and ingredients in it that depicts the confusion in the minds of characters. In this research, it has highlighted those elements and indicated them in the frame of acculturation. This acculturation in the reason in the work of both writers either it is in the character sketch of the immigrant or tone of novel and that has proven to be the core reason that the American generation of immigrants are unable to settle in to the environment of hybridity, they had been seen to calculate or to bridge up the difference between two worlds .this bridging, in the novels, had been a daunting task because even after putting efforts the results always came opposite to the expectations of the characters and is prominent in case of American generation. As it has been proven above through the critical discourse analysis of both novels, that these novels reflect the unclear identity of Chinese Americans. As far as the question of 'how' is concerned, then the writers have made it clear for the readers to pin point the uneasiness of identity

crisis by shuffles between the past and present, secondly by using allusion, comparison of cultures, and talk stories to keep the home culture alive and lastly by sketching the legacy of 3 generation in single frame.

The guiding principles of this research authenticity, intersectionality, representation, empowerment, and diverse narratives serve as beacons illuminating the complexities, triumphs, and challenges faced by the American generation of immigrant women. Through an in-depth exploration of these key factors, the research seeks to unravel the layers of identity formation in a multicultural society, shedding light on the multifaceted journey of these women as they navigate the intersections of gender and cultural adaptation. Within the context of the relationship between the dominant host country culture and the preservation of traditional hereditary values and rituals, the daughters of immigrants find themselves caught between conflicting domains, engendering confusion and ambiguity regarding their identity. The clash between the native customs and traditions upheld by immigrant mothers and the aspirations of their children to integrate into the societal expectations of the host culture contributes significantly to an uncertain identity. This collision gives rise to internal struggles, as individuals grapple with defining their true place in the world, compounded by external societal pressures such as stereotypes, discrimination, and bias.

Storytelling or talk stories are terms used a number of times in both novels. It is important for the mothers of novels because they find it easy to talk about their culture through stories. Teaching something with the help of stories or connecting the youth to their ancestors through the mean of telling stories has been a part of Chinese culture, as the beginning of both novels is on basis of stories. The story of *No Name Woman* was the story to teach the narrator the way of life conduct according to Chinese culture. And in the case of *The Joy Luck Club* the story of swan from miles away, shows the importance to storytelling as a mean of communication between two generations

and two different cultures. The role of storytelling emerges as a crucial aspect in bridging the acculturation gap, acting as a dynamic tool for transmitting cultural traditions from mothers to their daughters. Through storytelling, mothers ensure the preservation of ancestral knowledge and cultural identity, fostering a sense of belonging amidst the challenges of acculturation. Narratives become a powerful means through which crucial values, emotions, love, and moral teachings are imparted, creating a rich tapestry of cultural continuity that serves as a foundation for identity formation.

In the exploration of the relationship between the dominant host country culture and the preservation of traditional hereditary values and rituals, the daughters of immigrants find themselves frequently caught between two domains, causing confusion and ambiguity about their identity. Generational and cultural differences between immigrant parents and their children further contribute to an uncertain identity. Mothers' attachment to native customs and traditions clashes with their children's desire to integrate into host societal expectations, leading to internal struggles about one's true place in the world. External societal pressures, stereotypes, discrimination, or bias, further complicate the establishment of a distinct sense of self and identity. Yet, the acculturation gap is further accentuated by the cultural shock experienced by immigrant parents, representing a profound sense of confusion and unease when exposed to a new culture. This cultural shock not only complicates the parenting process but also leads to miscommunication, language barriers, and disagreements that impair the parents' ability to navigate the challenges of raising children in a multicultural society. The decrease in cultural knowledge over generations intensifies this shock, resulting in increased assimilation and subsequent difficulties in fully embracing and reclaiming ancestral heritage.

The consequences of this acculturation gap reverberate across generations, as individuals grapple

with assimilation into mainstream culture while actively working to preserve their unique histories. The intricate dynamics of cultural adaptation, identity formation, and the ongoing evaluation of legacy within immigrant households become more apparent when considering socioeconomic status, geography, and the degree of acceptance. This research offers a comprehensive examination of the experiences of immigrant women, providing a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between cultural adaptation, identity development, and the enduring legacy of various immigrant experiences.

In conclusion, the dissertation's exploration of gender-specific issues and diverse narratives deepens our understanding of the multifaceted nature of acculturation. By unraveling the effects of the progressive loss of cultural knowledge across generations, the research delves into the ensuing issues and ramifications while highlighting proactive measures employed by families to preserve their cultural legacy. Through an insightful examination of various preservation initiatives, the study underscores the critical role of storytelling in maintaining a sense of legacy for future generations. This research captures the richness, challenges, and developmental trajectories of immigrant women's lives, offering a comprehensive and vivid portrayal of their complex journey that encompasses the acculturation gap, the intricate negotiation of identity, and the enduring legacy of diverse immigrant experiences.

### **Future Scope**

This research has made the foundation of research of acculturation and acculturative gaps in the context of literature through the qualitative methods of data collection. The coming studies can work with quantitative approach to the theoretical framework by providing the comparative analysis of the modern immigrants and immigrants after the world wars. Additionally, one can research on the changing patterns of acculturation and how it is playing role in the psychological

patterns of the American generations. This research had the limitation to only research the women's depiction of immigrant experiences whereas the future studies can explore in other context and diverse cultures.

Furthermore, the comparative studies of any subjects give the in depth understanding of any aspects, so considering the same context the in future some can compare the Chinese American novels with the novels of other multicultural literature. In the modern world where being multicultural is a norm, studies like orientalism, Occidentalism, alienation, and acculturation have contemporary relevance, being a postmodern concept, it still has much potential to conduct more research. Other possibility to conduct this research is to carry longitudinal research of the Chinese American individual or a family for a period to obtain a more statistical quantitative finding. On the other hand, in the time of expanding social media and globalization, research the influence of acculturation on them can be considered as a major contribution to the field of research.

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