

→ she is presented from the western perspective, seemingly depending heavily on  
 • Any Chun self describing her book as a reflection on her **romanticised** narrative  
 weakening her narrative

"She is charming,  
 warm, down to earth  
 and quick to laugh"

Tiger mom - **exoticised**  
**abusive**

she's been given, but the article takes her literally.

6) the article presents a different maternal figure to the  
 discussing Any Chun's successful career and her appearance with  
 to informal, humorous registers,  
 Any Tan's ~~subject~~ sooyuan,

"the book is  
 more in a  
 monitor free-zone"

Extract from JLC

40 lines

7) however,  
 the article both  
 appears to be both  
 claiming that the Any Chun's narrative  
 is fabricated for the audience, while simultaneously acting as if her "beat" parenting is shocking  
 for a Chinese mother

"critically acclaimed books on free-market  
 democracy and global instability... (they  
 put a ~~stake~~ at home (can)  
 she doesn't with my son said)  
 humours her into western cultural  
 paradigm."

?  
 "she lets me  
 go to rap  
 concerts with  
 my friends... not  
 my 'chinese'  
 activities?"

Extracts from Tiger Mom article

40 lines

8) the Any Chun herself describes however, links her  
 expression of the tiger mother as a veiling of the  
 also Chinese migrants story. → "they said oh you're  
 going to get in such trouble, you can't talk about this in the  
 west" → "I thought, why should we not be able to talk about this?"  
 she is sharing her personal, deep narrative

sooyuan, is the  
 husband's migrant  
 status and  
 unpopularity.

presenting undermining  
 the power of  
 narrative of  
 presentation of  
 of their  
 Chinese parenting  
 culture.

Bring it out into a commentary of rep

a) ultimately, the both texts discuss the representation of the Chinese diaspora, a  
 while Any Tan's words brings light to representing a community, we have to voice the  
 of Chinese mothers/parenting styles in West

question of  
 if she's  
 justifying  
 cultural, and  
 knowledge  
 in  
 western  
 culture

theorise the U.S.

And while 10) the Any Chun on the other hand, appears to be taking a pre-existing  
 narrative it is hard to tell whether she is creating her own voice by  
 humours and personalising tape memo, or if she is linking the story to fit the

IMPressive... western in tone and hegemony. IMProve... I Make Progress

it is  
 clear  
 that  
 the  
 mother  
 is the  
 victim  
 within

→ "said my mother  
 shrilly"

"she was frighteningly  
 strong, half pulling,  
 half carrying me toward the  
 piano as I  
 wished the piano was under  
 my feet"

she is reducing  
 her voice to back  
 within an acceptable  
 western hegemony.



How is Chinese identity constructed in English language texts.

diaspora.

How is the Chinese migrant experience represented

a cemy fan establishes her narrative

• why China takes a narrative and claims power over it, othering the western gaze

1) The Toy Luck Club was a novel written in 1989, it and tells the story of the four mother daughter immigrant families +

~~the~~ The second extract I have is from an ~~stage~~ interview of Amy  
Chua, who wrote Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother published in 2011  
~~the~~ the parenting memoirs

2) Both books discuss the representation of ~~more~~ Chinese mother-daughter relationships within the Chinese diaspora experience, particularly within western ~~concentration~~ the united states. <sup>in time period</sup> <sup>in culture</sup>

3) the joy luck club presents is presented as a storytelling of ~~the~~ a culture  
dissonance between first generation immigrant & mother and the second generation  
daughters, discussing cultural identity within the second generation "I wasn't her slave.  
(Q) This wasn't China". → her identity is separate to her mother.

4) Amy Tan renders the Chinese migrant mother as a product of an <sup>\*</sup>oppressive culture, vulnerable and backward → "from her mouth was open, smiling crossly as if were pleased I was crying" → "only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughters!"

3) the dream mother in Europe, do bring through her own daughters  
"as if she were blowing away like a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless."

"I failed her so many times each time asserting my own will, my right to full share of expectation."

\* The mother  
has a bad  
day singing the  
sacred with  
prayer.

twenty six malignant  
gates

\* 2000-2001  
ppt

is refuse  
to ~~have~~ giving  
away her habits

# Amy Chua: 'I'm going to take all your stuffed animals and burn them!'

Amy Chua brought up her daughters with an extreme regime that banned TV, drilled academic learning and demanded hours of music practice daily. Then one daughter declared war ...

*Heather Hodson*

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Amy Chua was in a restaurant, celebrating her birthday with her husband and daughters, Sophia, seven, and Lulu, four. "Lulu handed me her 'surprise', which turned out to be a card," writes Chua in her explosive new memoir, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. "More accurately, it was a piece of paper folded crookedly in half, with a big happy face on the front. Inside, 'Happy Birthday, Mummy! Love, Lulu' was scrawled in crayon above another happy face. I gave the card back to Lulu. 'I don't want this,' I said. 'I want a better one – one that you've put some thought and effort into. I have a special box, where I keep all my cards from you and Sophia, and this one can't go in there.' I grabbed the card again and flipped it over. I pulled out a pen and scrawled 'Happy Birthday Lulu Whoopee!' I added a big sour face. ... 'I reject this.'"

What kind of a mother throws her four-year-old daughter's homemade birthday cards back at them? A "Chinese" one, that's who, says Chua.

When Lulu turns in a poor practice session on the piano, Chua hauls her doll's house to the car and tells her she'll donate it to the Salvation Army piece by piece if she doesn't have *The Little White Donkey* mastered by the next day. When Sophia does the same, she screams: "If the next time's not *perfect*, I'm going to *take all your stuffed animals and burn them*."

In *Battle Hymn*, Chua rips open the curtain on what she calls the "Chinese" method of rearing children, and it makes for a jaw-dropping read. Asian households make up the demographic group most likely to produce stereotypically successful kids. How do they produce all those maths whizzes and musical prodigies? Can it really be by carrying on as Chua does?

The book bares all about how the parenting model worked for her older daughter Sophia, now 17 and heading off to an Ivy League college, but backfired dramatically for her younger girl, Louisa, or Lulu, who is now 14. Chua spares no detail in recounting her early methods: banning television and computer games, refusing sleepovers and playdates, drilling academic activities for hours, insisting on lengthy daily practice of the piano (Sophia) and violin (Louisa), including weekends, high days and holidays. Even travelling abroad, Chua would book a practice room near their hotel. With missionary zeal, Chua spurned the permissive style of "western parents" (she uses the term loosely), the tendency to underplay academic achievement (no rote learning!) and emphasise nurturing, play and self-esteem

(overfetishised!). The result is that at times *Battle Hymn* reads like an American-Asian version of Mommie Dearest.

Dominant throughout is the powerful figure of Chua herself, a larger-than-life matriarch: draconian, emotionally volatile, loving, often verbally cruel, hard-working, always devoted. Chua herself was raised on the Chinese parenting model, and her view is simple: "Childhood is a training period, a time to build character and invest in the future." As a result, both daughters are straight-A students, over-achieving and musically accomplished. By the time Sophia is 14 she has performed Prokofiev's *Juliet as a Young Girl* at the Carnegie Hall in New York while Lulu, aged 11, auditions for the pre-college programme at the world-famous Juilliard School.

But the cracks beneath the surface begin to show. Toothmarks are found on the piano (the culprit is Sophia, who gnaws on it during practice), and Lulu becomes rebellious, openly defying her teacher and her mother and bitterly complaining in public about her home life. By the age of 13, writes Chua, "[Lulu] wore a constant apathetic look on her face, and every other word out of her mouth was 'no' or 'I don't care'."

What brings the situation to an end is two horrifying incidents. First, Lulu hacks off her hair with a pair of scissors; then, on a family holiday to Moscow, she and Chua get into a public argument that culminates in Lulu smashing a glass in a cafe, screaming, "I'm not what you want – I'm not Chinese! I don't want to be Chinese. Why can't you get that through your head? I hate the violin. I *hate* my life. I *hate* you, and I *hate* this family!" Her relationship with Lulu in crisis, Chua, finally, thankfully, raises the white flag.

Now that *Battle Hymn* is about to be published (in the US and UK rights were sold at auction, and have now sold in 11 other countries), the public reaction seeping on to internet sites and into newspapers is one of shock and outrage. How could she be such a mother? In publicly owning up to her conduct, Chua has broken a taboo because in print, at least, this territory has so rarely been charted.

At its heart, *Battle Hymn* is an account of the psychological warfare between a "Chinese" mother and her "western" daughter and in telling it, Chua raises an interesting set of questions about bringing up children, cultural norms and the confessional mode: namely, why expose herself? Why choose to open her mouth at all? At what point does confessing in print that you called your child "garbage" to her face cease to be a comment on Chinese parenting and resume its traditional function as a sign that you are two cards short of a deck?

Chua, 46, is a professor of law at Yale Law School who writes critically acclaimed books on free-market democracy and global instability. Her husband, Jed Rubenfeld, 51, also a law professor at Yale (they met as students at Harvard Law School), is a well-known Jewish-American academic. On the morning I meet her, on a freezing day in New York, she has travelled into Manhattan by train from New Haven, Connecticut, where the family lives.

Sitting opposite me sipping water in Norwood, an arts club in Chelsea, in a black sweater and miniskirt with silver hoops in her ears, she is petite and pretty and much softer looking than in her book-jacket photograph ("She doesn't *look* very mean," my



son said.) If on the page she can come across as a little unhinged, in person she is charming, warm, down to earth, and quick to laugh. The truth is, we are definitely in a monster-free zone.

"I think I know what's to come," Chua says with a wry smile. "When I show this book to immigrants and immigrants' kids, they were like, exactly, this is how it is. It's funny, they relate, it's not controversial for them. Now among my western friends it provokes extremely intense reactions in all directions. Some, including my closest friends, are shocked and aghast." Did she anticipate this reaction? "I do now. My husband kept warning me and my sisters kept warning me. But I guess it's part of my personality. A little bit rash. For me, so much of my book is making fun of myself through the words of my children. And some people get that. Other people read it straight. My older daughter said, 'Mummy, you put only the most extreme stories in. People don't realise how much fun we had'."

What Chua didn't put in the memoir, she says with a hint of regret, is all the good times. "All the way through, Jed was bringing balance to the family, insisting that we were going to go on family bike rides and to Yankees games and apple-picking and water slides and bowling and mini-golfing, so we socialised a lot actually ..." ("My mum has a touch of the dramatic, and she's much nicer in real life," Sophia says to me later by email. "She lets me go to rap concerts with my friends and do archaeological digs in our backyard – not very 'Chinese' activities!")

She'd had no idea that she was going to write her testimonial to "Chinese" mothering and its dangers, but in the black, bleak summer of 2009 that followed her beloved sister Katrin's diagnosis of leukaemia, when her 13-year-old daughter Lulu was in full rebellion, she began to put pen to paper. "I wrote this in a moment of crisis. I tend to be over-confident but I really felt that the whole family was falling apart, I thought, have I done every single thing wrong? Have I wrecked everything? So after one terrible blow-up [with Lulu], I got on my computer and the words just poured out."

Over a period of two months she wrote, revised, edited, all the while consulting Jed, Sophia and Lulu, showing them "every single page", she says proudly. "It was like family therapy." When she had finished the remembering, she showed it to her parents and close friends, all of whom told her not to publish. "[They] said, 'Oh you're going to get in such trouble, you can't talk about this in the west.' And that kind of got my back up. I thought, why should we not be able to talk about this? It's not just me. Millions of people raise their kids this way and their kids come out pretty well."

Really? What about the child who will never be a straight-A student? "I get this question, what if they have dyslexia or autism?" she says. "The answer to that is, of course you have to know your child, of course you have to adjust. It would be a ridiculous parenting programme to say that no matter what, you have to get an A-plus. And my best example is that my younger sister has Down's syndrome and I know for a fact that my mother applied Chinese parenting with her. I know that when she was little my mother spent hours teaching her how to tie her own shoelaces and people said, look she can't do it, she doesn't have the muscle co-ordination."

"Nobody expected my sister to get a PhD or to get As, but I think it's a very nice story. Today my sister has a wonderful relationship with my mother."

For Chua, who grew up with her two sisters in the midwest, the daughter of first-generation immigrants from the Philippines, a straight-A student, graduating first in a class of 350, the Chinese method is the one towards which she instinctively gravitates. "For my senior prom, my father finally said I could go – as long as I was home by 9pm! That was around the time that most people were heading out," she recalls. "When I was little I was so mad at them all the time. Why can't I do this? Why are there so many rules? But looking back now, my parents gave me the foundation to have so many choices in life. After I left home I had a choice of who I could be, a choice of careers, a choice of schools, so I deeply believe in the model."

Nevertheless, fact, and her own telling of it, shows that the way she brought up her children nearly wrecked her relationship with Lulu, and in some ways Battle Hymn can be seen as her atonement for that. "I think I stopped just in time," she says. "Right now it seems OK, but I have many regrets ... I have a head full of regrets. I worry that by losing my temper so much and being so harsh and yelling so much that, by example, I will have taught my daughters to be that way, and I'm now constantly telling them not to do that."

Did she ever consider family therapy? "I was very Chinese in a way. I went for help to my family – so I went to my mother and to my sisters and just extended family on both sides." All gave the same advice: pull back. So Chua stopped making all the decisions for Lulu, allowing her to leave the orchestra and take up tennis instead, allowing her to practise the violin only when she felt like it. When I ask Lulu if she feels her mother understands her more since that period, she emails, "She has always understood me better than anyone, but she definitely listens more now. That doesn't necessarily mean she'll like what I'm saying."

Chua's memoir raises more questions than it answers, not least of which is, where was her husband – who was raised in a liberal, Jewish household – in all of this? Why didn't he intervene? "A couple of things. Jed always favoured strict parenting ... and in my household I did most of the parenting. It was my choice; it wasn't an argument at all. For him it was like, look, if she's willing to put in three hours with these instruments and I just get to go to the recital and you have the refreshments, why not?"

Also, she says, the early results were, in both their views, "hard to argue with". When I ask Sophia the same question, by email, her answer is revealing: "It would have been so easy for my dad to 'score points' with us by undermining my mum's draconian parenting – but he never did. In retrospect, I have immense respect for how he stood by her through everything."

Was her husband against her writing the book? Chua hesitates for the first time. "It wasn't so much that he objected but that he has such a strong voice himself – he's an author in his own right – that for me to put quotes of him speaking as a father always sounded wrong to him. He said, 'Look, this is your book. I supported you but you were the one that had a strong world-view about how to raise your kids. It's your world-view, it's your book.'"

Ironically, in writing her book, Chua has done the most western thing imaginable: she has exposed herself, warts and all, at risk of misunderstanding and vilification. "I