



The Joy Luck Club (Critical Insights)

Robert C. Evans

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This title includes in-depth critical discussions of Amy Tan's novel. Edited and introduced by Robert C. Evans, Distinguished Teaching Professor and Distinguished Research Professor at Auburn University at Montgomery, this volume presents an array of scholarship on a novel that is quickly becoming a modern classic, Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club". The volume opens Evans' introduction in which he emphasizes the artistic excellence of Tan's text. Joanne McCarthy offers an overview of Tan's life in her brief biography after which Karl Taro Greenfeld, writing for "The Paris Review", recalls his responses to the book when it was first published and then many years later. The Critical Contexts section of this volume presents four original survey essays that provide the reader with a useful framework for studying Tan's novel. Camille-Yvette Welsch begins by surveying the critical reception of Tan's works, particularly Joy Luck. Evans returns to place the book in an appropriate cultural and historical context-looking specifically at the four decades following World War II. Doris L. Eder considers some of the mechanics of Tan's novel, including structure, narration, style, and themes; after which Neil Heims compares and contrasts Tan's book with Michael Cunningham's "The Hours". Presenting a number of previously published essays, the Critical Views section of this book begins with Barbara Somogyi and David Stanton's classic interview with Tan. Next, Ben Xu examines the notion of the ethnic self as it is presented in The Joy Luck Club while Stephen Souris suggests that Tan's book 'invites analysis from critical perspectives that theorize and valorize fragmented, discontinuous texts and the possibilities of connections across segments'. Esther Mikyung Ghymn finds fault with many of the characters for being stereotypical, and insufficiently individualized. Following Ghymn's essay, M. Marie Booth Foster compares "The Joy Luck Club" to Tan's "The Kitchen God's Wife". Patricia L. Hamilton explains many of the traditional Chinese beliefs mentioned in "Joy Luck", while Patricia P. Chu argues that a 'utopian view of American immigration is the foundation of Tan's text'. Catherine Romagnolo provides a feminist perspective in her examination of the narrative beginnings in "The Joy Luck Club". Closing the volume, Robert C. Evans returns with a new, unpublished interview with Amy Tan conducted on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the publication of "The Joy Luck Club". Each essay is 5,000 words in length, and all essays conclude with a list of 'Works Cited', along with endnotes.

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