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### Lindo in The Joy Luck Club

In *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, there are a few stories that write about how the life of Lindo Jong exemplifies loss, which is one of the main elements of Bildungsroman. The reason why “The Red Candle”, “Double Face”, and “Four Directions” all exemplify loss in Lindo’s life is because in each of these stories, Lindo either loses her family, the part of her that makes it clear that she is Chinese, or more importantly, her relationship with her daughter, Waverly.

In “The Red Candle”, Lindo was betrothed to a man named Tyan-yu by her family when she was very, very young. As she grew up, her family began to separate from her and act like she was a part of her Tyan-yu’s family, because she was going to marry the Huangs’ son. It got so far that, as Lindo said, “my own family began treating me as if I belonged to someone else. My mother would say to me when the rice bowl went up to my face too many times, ‘Look how much Huang Taitai’s daughter can eat’” (51). From this quote, it is clear that her real family was separating from her as she was becoming a part of the Huang family. In addition to this, while Lindo was still living with her original family, they were forcing her to live up to some expectation to prevent them from being shamed. Almost in a threatening manner, Lindo’s mother would occasionally tell her that she has “such an ugly face. The Huangs won’t want you and our whole family will be disgraced” (52). Because of these expectations, Lindo was forced into

misery, and she was isolated from them. Towards the end of “The Red Candle”, Lindo tricked everyone into believing that she and Tyan-yu were not meant for each other to get herself out of the situation. Thus, she was disconnected from both the Huangs and her own family, so she moved to America to start a new life.

When Lindo moved to America, she left behind a few Chinese values in attempt to fit into the American culture. She even paid an American raised Chinese girl to teach her how to hide her true self. How to fit in. The girl told her that “the authorities [in the United States] will ask you if you have children now or if you are thinking of having some. You must say no. You should look sincere and say you are not married, you are religious, you know it is wrong to have a baby” (258). According to the story, while she was being taught this information, she looked confused: “I wondered why she said I should look sincere. How could I look any other way when telling the truth?” (259). This indicates that the details in the aforementioned quote was the truth, that she had no children, that she was not married, and that she was religious. Even though she believed that having babies was wrong, after her “teacher” told her she should have a baby, and that “once [a baby] has arrived, it is an American citizen, and it can do anything it wants. It can ask her mother to stay” (259), she decided to have one and go against her morals in order to stay in America. She went against her Chinese self to become a part of America. But as she said at the end of Double Face, “I think about my intentions. Which one is American? Which one is Chinese? Which one is better? If you show one, you must sacrifice another” (266). While she could never become truly American, she would never again be truly Chinese. Therefore, she had lost the part of her that makes her a Chinese.

Lindo's goal was to raise her daughter, Waverly, to have the good aspects of both the American and Chinese cultures-- the opportunities that Americans receive, and the obedience and lifestyle of the Chinese. Lindo believed she failed, because she "couldn't teach her about Chinese character. ... How to not show your own thoughts, to put your feelings behind your face so you can take advantage of hidden opportunities" (254). Waverly was tired of her mother being so old-fashioned, so she told Lindo, "I'm my own person" (254). This quote demonstrates how Waverly wants to separate from Lindo so she can experience individuality. However, the defect in Lindo and Waverly's relationship is not entirely Waverly's fault. The problem also rests in the fact that Lindo does not treat her daughter with the respect she deserves. For instance, when Waverly took her mother out to a restaurant in order to put her in a good mood, Lindo immediately said, "'Ai-ya! What's the matter with your hair?' ... I said, 'I had it cut.' ... 'Looks chopped off,' she said. 'You must ask for your money back.' ... I sighed. 'Let's just have a nice lunch together, okay?'" (166). This quote makes it quite clear that Lindo has a negative relationship with her daughter. The most likely reason why Lindo does is that she acts in such a disrespectful manner.

"The Red Candle", "Double Face", and "Four Directions" are all stories that exemplify elements of Bildungsroman. "Loss" is arguably the most prominent of these elements, as it is shown in multiple places throughout the stories, like when Lindo lost her country's ideals, her family, and her relationship with her daughter. But in the end of "Four Directions", Waverly and Lindo finally understand each other, and their problems are finally resolved.

### Works Cited

Kim, Susan, and Amy Tan. *The Joy Luck Club*. Dramatists Play Service, 2009.