

"when the school sent a notice home about polio vaccination. I told her time and place, and added that all were now required to use metal lunch boxes. Since they discovered that old paper bags carry polio germs"

Another ironical instance is that Clifford St. Clair insisted that Betty learn English but he himself did nothing in order to help her adapt into a new atmosphere. He did not teach her English nor did he himself learn Chinese nor did he communicate with his wife in any other way it is only after their relationship deteriorates entirely that Clifford makes some effort. As Lena states:

" he tried to make things better. But it was as if he were running to catch things before they fell, only he would fall before he could catch anything"

There is again irony in the fact that parents are supposed to shelter their children from the harsh realities of the world but here ironically it is the daughter, Lena who tries to save her father from misery by hiding the true mental state of Betty:

" I could not tell my father what she had said. He was so sad already with an empty crib in his mind. How could I tell him she was crazy?"

It is also pathetically ironical that Lena can only dream to pull her mother through the wall of madness. There was no help left at all for Betty she had completely lost her mind. She did love her child but she should not have neglected her living daughter. Hence we see Lena pining for her mother:

" I was a girl complaining that the pain of not being seen was unbearable... then the girl pulled out a sharp sword and told her mother, "then you must die the death of a thousand cuts. It's the only way to save you"

Another stylistic technique which Tan employs is the use of native references in her narrative. She very aptly uses this technique to introduce the local Chinese custom to the world audience and also this technique adds realism to Tan's narrative. In the short story Tan has used the native reference of feng-shui when Betty voices her dissatisfaction with the new San Francisco apartment. Betty says:

" this house was built too steep, and a bad wind from the top blows all your strength back down the hill. So you can never get ahead. You are always rolling backward. See how narrow this doorway is, like a neck that has been strangled. And the kitchen faces the toilet room, so all your worth is flushed away.."