

RECONCILIATION OF CULTURES IN AMY TAN'S NOVELS – A POINT OF VIEW

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Abstract:

Reconciliation between significant female characters in Amy Tan's best-known books is examined in this study, which is often seen as her desire to improve her mother-daughter connection as well as her quest to find her cultural roots. There are several hurdles to overcome before this apparently perfect conclusion contained in cultural reconciliation can be achieved, including Tan's mixed origin, the specificity of Chinese American culture in Tan's works, discontinuities in cultural linkage, and a focus on China's identity.

Keywords: Cultural Reconciliation, Chinese identity, Mother Childhood.

Introduction:

Among the many cultural issues Amy Tan has to deal with as a Chinese-American author are tough relationships between Chinese moms and American-born daughters, strained sibling relationships, and foreign marriages that are supposed to be equal but aren't. It doesn't matter what the female characters do, they all get together and return to China. Amy Tan sees this reunion as the answer to resolving cultural issues. However, it seems that this magnificent aspiration will never come to fruition. The purpose of this study is to examine the difficulties of cultural acculturation as envisioned by Amy Tan in her books.

Cultural Reconciliation in Amy Tan's Novels:

The Chinese-American younger generation, descended from European immigration, had distinct oriental features, making it difficult for them to blend in with the rest of America. In the limits of Chinatowns, with parents who spoke horrible English and insisted on living according to the ancient Chinese way of life, they struggled to adjust to middle-class American society and felt an indelible sense of otherness. So, many Chinese American

authors express their desire to return to China in search of a sense of cultural roots and self-identity. The same goes with Amy Tan.' She often uses a variety of Chinas as the backdrop for her stories: a country torn apart by the T'ai Ping Rebellion in the nineteenth century; a nation devastated by the Japanese army; a feudal society divided by class; an idyllic existence hidden behind walls; or a culture that embraces European goods while trying to maintain the Chinese way of life. The Kitchen and the Joy Luck Club It is fitting that the last scenes of God's Wife depict the rapprochement of Chinese moms and their American daughters. At long last, the war is finished, and what was once despised as an unwelcome bondage is now seen as an honourable alliance. Finally, Winnie reveals all of Pearl's mother's agony, shame, and prior secrets to her at the end of The Kitchen God's Wife. For a long time, all of these unpleasant memories exert a spiritual burden on the person who is carrying them. Winnie has had a hard time letting go of things, much less confiding in Pearl and causing her pain. She discloses the truth in the hope that her daughter would be able to forgive her and reconcile with her. She succeeds in her endeavours. As a result, Winnie made a trip to a Chinatown boutique that specialised in the deities' statuses. Winnie joyously handed a new Goddess to Pearl in the last moment between mother and daughter.

Amy Tan refers to the last chapter of The Joy Luck Club as "Queen Mother of the Western Skies," referring to the chapter in which mother and daughter reunite. To some degree, this implies that American daughters see Chinese moms as "horrible fossils" instead than "holy queens."Intheplot,Jing-meidoestakehermother's place at the mah-jong table, "I am sitting at my mother's place at the mah-jongtable, ontheEast, wherethingsbegin"(22);She, too, embarks on a journey to China in search of her long-separated twins. However, despite their differences, mother and daughter might still come to an understanding and move toward reconciliation at some point. It's a result of the joint work of the two parties. First, moms try to get their daughters to inherit the Cheesiness, but they ultimately adjust their techniques and shift the blame onto themselves, while the daughters realize that the threat from their mothers is nonexistent and that mothers always put their own needs first. It's a sad situation when a daughter doesn't comprehend her own mother. Mothers are accepted and daughters come home as a result of this change in attitudes.

In many respects, Jing-final mei's story about returning to China serves as a paradigm for the tales of the other narrators, who similarly need to find a means to resolve cultural conflicts. WIn China, Jing-mei finally finds her twin half-sister, Suyuan, whom she had been searching for for more than forty years. After realising the significance of her mother's life, Jing-mei is now able to tell Suyuan's narrative and the tale they both share as mother and daughter. Jing-pilgrimage mei's to China has been made possible by the kind donation of the Joy Luck aunties, who are aware of the importance of the voyage for Jing-mei and for themselves. In order to learn more about Suyuan, her half-sisters implore her to tell them her story of raising a family and finding success on her own terms. As Jing-aunts mei's point out, storytelling is a powerful tool for bringing Suyuan to life for her other daughters, and they urge her to use it. It's clear from their statements that they hope that one day their own girls will recall and retell the memories their moms have shared with them. Jig-mei begs her father to tell her the remainder of Suyuan's tale about her twin newborn daughters as they are

staying in a Guangzhou hotel on their first visit to China. She also learns during that late-night talk about Jing-original mei's mother's choice of Chinese name, a name she had previously rejected in favour of a more American one. For June, all that her mother has been and has yet to be is embodied in her. Jing-mei means "Younger sister who [is] supposed to be the essence of others" (218). In the absence of the twins, Suyuan's American daughter would serve as a substitute child to ease Suyuan's grief. They believe that the aunts would be able to reconcile with their daughters by travelling to China, a country with different traditions and a different way of life. In point of fact, after returning from Jing-mei feels she is at last inclined to be Chinese, "The minute our train leaves the Hong Kong border and enters Shenzhen, China, I feel different. I can feel the skin on my forehead tingling, my blood rushing through a new course, my bones aching with a familiar old pain. And I think, my mother is right, I am becoming Chinese" (306).

In fact, as a Chinese American writer, Tan aspires to cultural acculturation much more than he does to maintain his Chinese identity. The conclusion of the Jing-experience mei's in China appears to suggest a rich composite identity rather than an identity of conflicting opposites. China, she discovers, is a country with American characteristics and components. She'll be eating hamburgers and apple pie for her first supper in China since her "Chinese" family asked her to do so. A pure condition of being Chinese or American may not exist; instead, each person is a combination of their own particular likes, habits, aspirations and memories. Immigrants and their families may feel both the agony and the richness of the contradictions in this combination. Girls in *The Joy Luck Club* have a difficult time finding a husband in the film. When her high school sweetheart turned out to be untrustworthy, penny-pinching, and prone to infidelity, Waverly Jong ended their relationship. Rose's husband has filed for divorce, and Lena's is completely unaware of the fact that their marriage is broken to the point of being unsalvageable. The multicultural union collapsed in the end. Throughout *The Kitchen God's Wife*, Jing weili instructs her to focus only on Wen Fu's wants and desires, regardless of the consequences for her bodily and spiritual health. When her spouse is violent, she has to put up with his harsh treatment, as well as a torrent of insults and accusations. He treats her with respect and care when she settles in the United States later in life. This couple has a great relationship, they get along well, and their lives are going swimmingly for them. It's been a great success for this cross-cultural marriage. Tan's books leave us with a clear understanding: clinging only to the New American way of life while rejecting the Old Chinese way is a path only a kid may take in order to be fully grown. One must find a middle ground between the two and come to terms with the past. The old and the new, if Lindo Jong is accurate, can only exist in one's images, recollections, and stories, yet they must nonetheless be preserved.

The Possibility of the Cultural Reconciliation:

The characters in Amy Tan's novels ultimately come to terms with each other towards the conclusion of her books. Like Jing-mei Woo in *The Joy Luck Club*, who takes her mother's place at the mahjong table and goes to her own country in search of family and fulfilment, Winnie in *The Kitchen God's Wife* tells Pearl all she knows about her history in order to gain her trust and understanding. They'll be there for one another in the future; in an

old Chinese town in *The Hundred Secret Senses*, Olivia has a firm grasp on the meaning of life and how to cherish it.

"The Orient is practically a European fabrication," stated Edward W. Said. The West invents 'Otherness' as an other in order to solidify its own identity... The Orient is more than just a neighbour to Europe; it is a source of Europe's culture and languages, a cultural rival, and one of Europe's most repeated conceptions of the rest of the world. "The West's contrasted image, notion, attitude, and experience have all been shaped in part by the Orient" (297). Using Said's thesis, we can plainly see how the East and the West are related. Between them, there is no noticeable variation in quality. For Chinese American authors, the topic of cultural completeness is inescapable in light of globalisation. Despite the cultural divides that exist between the two countries, it is not only a Chinese people's goal, but also a universal one. To be sure, when we read Tan's books, we can't help but marvel at her ability to weave a compelling story full of memorable characters and a unique narrative voice around the theme of Chinese-American cultural healing after decades of oppression and exile.

The Difficulty of Cultural Reconciliation:

If culture is to be really globalised, it would demand a shared yet hyper-differentiated value, taste, and style field available to any person without limitation for both self-expression and consumption. As it turns out, this type of reconciliation is difficult or unattainable. The journey back to China has just begun. In order to achieve cultural completeness, we must overcome the actual boundaries of geography, political systems, and cultural differences. In Tan's works, the reconciliation isn't full or even close to being so in Tan. Contrary to popular belief, it is really a cross between the two. The seemingly disparate cultures of China and the United States have far more in common than meets the eye since we are all fundamentally the same. While both moms and daughters battle with identity problems, it is in the major conflict of the novel that both try to find a middle ground between preserving one's lineage and maintaining one's individuality.

The Chinese civilization described in Amy Tan's books is not the genuine Chinese culture. As a matter of fact, this is not the present state of Chinese culture as we know it. Compared to contemporary American culture, it's either too stereotypical or out of date. It's difficult, if not impossible, to bridge the gap between two civilizations that operate on entirely distinct timelines, locations, and spatial scales. Second, the Chinese American experience is reflected in Tan's art. "Banana folks" include Amy Tan and other Chinese-American authors. These people have Chinese yellow complexion, yet their minds and lifestyles have been influenced by the West. They have lost their cultural ties to China. They are really expressing themselves by fusing their newfound knowledge of American culture with their distorted memories of Chinese classical literature. As a result, what they write isn't based on historical customs and civilizations, but rather on the prevailing literature of the community in which they are immersed. It's possible that what Americans perceive of Chinese culture is confusing, overlapping, or misinterpreted. Until she returned to her native Hong Kong, Amy Tan said that she only learned about Chinese literature and culture from listening to her mother's tales in Cantonese and reading translations of classic works of Western literature into Chinese. A

second-generation Chinese immigrant, Tan lacks a thorough understanding of Chinese culture due to his lack of exposure to the mainland's customs. In the late 20th century, immigrant literature is usually considered post-colonial literature. Cultural immigrants, according to Emerson, are at the heart of this literary movement.

The Overemphasis on Chinese Identity:

There are three main ways in which Amy Tan addresses cultural differences and problems between the mother-daughter bond and the husband-wife relationship. If cultural reconciliation is to be successful, it must be able to cope with challenges like cultural differences, compromise between mother and daughter, and accommodation between husband and wife. Tan's responsibility as a cross-cultural writer is to ensure peaceful coexistence between the two cultures. Even though she was raised in an almost entirely integrated Asian American community, Amy Tan is well aware of the price minorities pay for their partial acceptance into the mainstream culture: guilt and self-hatred. Americans have this idea of being a melting pot, yet assimilation results in a preference for American foods like hot dogs and apple pie while neglecting Chinese fare. Nevertheless, she places an undue emphasis on her Chinese ethnicity as a means of cultural reconciliation. A person cannot be wholly Chinese or American at the same time. Even while the daughters in Amy Tan's books gradually have a better understanding of their moms and of Chinese culture, they still struggle to reach a place where the two cultures can coexist harmoniously. Even if a single person or a small group of individuals achieves a state of equilibrium, the culture as a whole does not.

Conclusion:

It's becoming more popular to read about cultural issues including cultural conflict and reconciliation in Chinese American literature. Duality in life experience and familial origin impacts the doubleness of Chinese American authors' works. Chinese Americans are often depicted as victims of cultural assimilation and assimilation in popular fiction. Out of pure survival instinct, they do whatever they can to blend in with the new surroundings, including learning a new language and adopting Western customs and beliefs. However, deep down, they remain steadfastly rooted in their Chinese heritage. Many of Tan's female protagonists are immigrants to the United States, having emigrated from their native China. They lose their mental tranquility and spend their days tense and terrified. While the first generation of Chinese immigrants preferred Chinese culture, the second generation has embraced the American way of life while simultaneously rejecting it. This is plain to see. We must first understand and then embrace Western culture if we want to pass it on to the next generation. Their struggle for cultural identification affects all aspects of their lives as professors. In Chinese American literature, the clash between Chinese and American cultures has begun to heal.

When Amy Tan employs the mother-daughter tie, the husband-wife dyad, and the sisterhood as vehicles for presenting cultural issues, she shows us how possible it is to reconcile the two cultures. Amy Tan follows the historical pattern and shortens this time in her greatest works in this cultural milieu. While individual relationships are relatively

straightforward, cultural reconciliation is complex. It is a wonderful desire shared by the author and the reader. We may also claim that there is still a long way to go before we reach our objective.

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