

## Cultural Ties in Amy Tan's Works

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### Abstract

Amy Tan has skilfully interwoven Chinese mythology with the beautiful language. The charm of oriental culture was reasonably romantic and adequate, displayed by its virtue of emotion and the relationship between ordinary people and the advance exploration of the mainstream culture. Amy stands on the surface of Chinese and Western cultures cross, interprets and enlarges the course of history and cultural development, not only to see the contradiction and confrontation of two cultures, but also cultural exchanges and integrations, conflicts and struggles of the collision and fusion, through a misunderstanding between the characters, conflict, communication and understanding to the description of art. Amy Tan's style is unique, elegant and full of humour. The twists and turns of its characters constitutes a melodious sound of the Western symphony reverberation, time and again shaking and stirring the readers as building a bridge between Eastern and Western cultural ties.

**Key words:** Amy Tan, western culture, Chinese culture, cultural ties

### Oriental charm

When I first contacted with Amy Tan it was her debut, *The Joy Luck Club* being published several years ago. It is a 1989 best seller about a Chinese-America four mothers who experienced the bitterness of humiliation and witnessed the growth of the new generation. After reading the novel I was deeply moved by the twists and turns of the characters. The image of mother-daughter relationship reflects the deep cultural connotation which attracts me.

In Amy Tan's works she uses a large number of Chinese cultural resources: history, myths, legends, religions, beliefs, customs, and absorbs the essence of Oriental culture. She creatively adapts oriental culture and digests the confrontation between east and west; she vividly displays the process of mutual culture, impact, understanding, and approval. Her

novels are often built with a strong oriental culture colours .It is this scenario that readers can quickly access to writers and cultural context set by the blend of cultural context, and embodies the entire novel with a strong oriental colour.

There are all kinds of Eastern mystical imagery in her works which is not a novelty to cater to Western readers to conduct psychological and aesthetic interest the fiction, or to become a footnote to the theory of Orientalism. On the contrary, it is specific to Chinese historical figures during the specific environment and life in the United States. There is no violation of life, the authenticity of history, the Chinese people's lives and hearts for a true portrayal of the world. This is the basic properties of oriental charm. Through her special eyes of oriental perspectives, Tan does not to focus on broad social life on the whole portrayal of the East, or a completely oriental legendary life, a mysterious image of the Orient only as a kind of folk culture. She uses Eastern mysticism along with the story of “Yin” and “Yang” that was hidden in the melody, teasing the reader, suspending and mystery and urging the reader to unlock mystery and find out each secret. This oriental mysticism of the Chinese culture gathers words to expand, as is being implemented through the magic of the wizard, shuttling and dancing between characters and story.

### **Fate, family and emotion**

The theme of Tan's novels is about emotion, family, and fate. The characters are mostly reflecting of the meaning of life. *The Joy Luck Club* is a story about the confrontation between mother and daughter in misunderstanding, reconciliation and integration, and the process of seeking self-identity. In fact, a valuable novel often depends on the problems inherent in them. Her novels just raise many questions, such as: What is love? What is hope? What is missing? Tan said: "My story is an answer, your story is another answer." These questions, doubts, and wonderings encourage tenacity to explore a balanced life, and the true meaning of life. Her writing contains the deep understanding of life and the tough life force of her character formed a unique style of elegant humour, wisdom, and is of a mysterious atmosphere and style. She's always been in the search of fate and the fate of many options outside. It is Amy Tan's major content and the core structure how to find and balance the

drifting fate, while looking for balance everywhere in our lives, figuring out what upsets us and how to restore the balance.

Amy Tan describes the unique perspective, writing style, rich culture and unique imagination to create a female literary legend, a new school which is committed to depict two generations existing in the United States among immigrant assimilation and alienation. Her poignant, moving novel, her writing style, delicate promises provide readers with a comfortable reading experience. She does not talk about much more than evaluate what the big theme of history and culture, but the good blending of psychology and the details of the words crisp, beautiful but not rare in English, which is a feminine classic.

She is a genuine novelist, she lives in another world. Her imagination, her talent, is a part of her life. Her life is to write fiction, she is master of creating atmosphere, anything they want brew dim indemnity weather field. Helplessly intoxicated her story, she obsessively tells her story.

In Tan's five novels, we can find contemporary Americans to explore the relationship between emotions. Although the stories are based on Chinese background. She has always been concerned about the emotional and contemporary relations between American. She depicts the living conditions of contemporary ordinary people and to glance inner disputes to the readers. The first four novels, she highlighted the relationship between mother and daughter relationship and sisters exploration of the contemporary maternal capture, conformed to the feminist movement, highlighting contemporary American literature in the tough image of Chinese-American women. She's famous for *The Joy Luck Club*, The reason why the growth of four pairs of Chinese American mothers and daughters in the United States give up constant affection between the stories. The love-hate relationships between her mother and daughter characters are staggered with emotions, joys and sorrows. Novels go into deep, sincere feelings, go into the depth of thinking and exploration of life and the meaning of life. In the *Bonesetter's Daughter* and *Saving the Fish from Drowning* the mother's image appeal to the reader again and again to move also reflects the oriental charm of Chinese culture connotation.

### **Maternal Chinese styles**

In Tan's novels, the comparison of Chinese and Western culture is the background: the trivial life of a roundtable lunch, dressing up, family traditions and other details of the scattered moments in life. Chinese maternal love is great - stirring, selfless (which is the world's rare form of self-expression). This type of maternal love is from one generation to another generation. Tan succeeds in shaping the image of Chinese mothers who have been accepted by American readers. The mother character is a carrier of Chinese culture, a tie of past and present, a bridge of the traditional Chinese culture. Tan applies art to the history and forms a diachronic and synchronic.

*The Joy Luck Club* reveals the colour of celebration of Chinese culture. In Western eyes the title is mysterious and unpredictable. In Chinese culture, the mother in the family is the authority and cohesiveness, the inertia of traditional Chinese culture and family expectations, but also bears a dual mission. How to educate their children and carry forward the glory of the family, is difficult to understand in terms of the Westerners. In *The Joy Luck Club*, the mother-daughter relationship is struggling between freedom and authority, on behalf of the authority of mothers to try the traditional Chinese culture with their own ideas to create a daughter, denying her daughter's independence. The daughter is a symbol of freedom and sought to deny the mother's authority, get rid of the shackles of the mother. In fact, the conflicts between the two cultures and contests, the mother is the representative of Chinese culture, and, like millions of Chinese people, mothers take huge responsibility to design their children's future. The growth of second-generation immigrants in the United States, show their strong sense of self-protection.

System and parents nurture the traditional Chinese culture so that they cannot be the average American. In *Bonesetter's Daughter* Tan succeeds in borrowing the historical background to embody fictional characters and scenes. Living in San Francisco, Chinese woman Rose and her cohabitant feel neither good nor bad in particular, and her elderly mother suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Their own special experience as mothers plus their lack of communication between Alzheimer patient and the story itself is like a maze leading to complexity and serious cases. Tan once again in the slightest touches the strands of emotional entanglements between mother and daughter. The emotion is like water,

moistening the aged dust, calling back; searching for the grandmother, mother, daughter, the three generations' lives. Love and hate, joys and sorrows. The reader is deeply moved by curiosity and mystery oriental culture voyeurism. Three generations of experience, time of turmoil and crisis, Eastern mysticism along with the story of mingling of Yin and Yang are appearing and disappearing. In Western eyes, these oriental mysticism are expanded by flattening, grafting, and is implemented through the magic of the wizard, shuttling between characters and story. To Western readers with the fate of characters in the novel have a common fate and fears.

### **Linking Chinese and Western cultures**

American-born Chinese descendants are raised in U.S.A. They grew up in the context of American culture, and Chinese culture is cultural ties to from their parents or grandparents basically on the recollections of past events, and other indirect channels to be established. On the surface, they seem to have a lot of things in common - namely, the conflict and suffering in the reverberation of Chinese and Western culture. But in fact, it's much more complicated. This American-born generation unconsciously have been passed on to Chinese culture, so that they cannot be identified as Chinese nor American.

Cultural Conflict and integration, that is the U.S. mainstream culture and edge culture, is also one of the greatest concerned issues. Tan faced personal experiences and interprets to enlarge the course of history and cultural development, not only to see the contradiction and confrontation of two cultures, but also the possibility of two cultural exchange and integration and necessity. She works in the two distinct cultural differences among, contradictions, conflicts and collision with the integration process, through a misunderstanding between the characters, shows the readers conflict, communication and understanding to the description of art.

Amy Tan's success has become a cultural phenomenon. She blends a lot of memory, imagination and material reality. In these mixed memory, imagination and reality of narrative, the use of progressive creative strategy, the use of traditional Chinese culture, creating the "China story, American books," centre of marching to the mainstream culture.

## **Oriental Feminism**

Tan sees the Chinese culture from a feminist's point of view and interpretation, and represents women in traditional Chinese culture. The environment suffered all kinds of oppression and discrimination, in order to attract a mainstream audience's attention. In traditional Chinese culture, family and marriage expression to the feminist perspective is the memories of the patriarchal and patriarchal image of China, which have fully demonstrated to the Western readers, to meet the psychological needs of their culture. In Tan's first four works, we can see the suffering of Chinese women bearing the traditional patriarchal marriage, taking the role of a housewife. *The Joy Luck Club* are the memories of childhood experiences of Gong Linda who had arranged marriage. Jinmei recalled her widowed mother after being misled and a series of unfortunate life experiences. For such women in memory, the writer's own view of feminism has already reflected in the novel. They cannot be stated. They cannot escape. That is their destiny. "Tan attributed to the suffering of women in that era and the Chinese patriarchal authority of the husband, in order to win the attention of the eye.

On the perspective of Orientalism, Amy Tan expresses the memory of the traditional Chinese diet and superstitious culture, fatherly attracts the Western audience. She makes use of Chinese food and culture of the description of superstition, but also gives a vivid demonstration of the authenticity of interpretation, arouses western readers' curiosity of the ancient history, more easily sets off the Western civilization and progress, which can prove mainstream American culture. On the description of the Chinese diet and superstition, Amy Tan reflects a modern, civilized, developed life before otherness.

## **Conclusions**

Amy Tan, with her several limited famous American literary works, shows her extraordinary insight and superb writing skills, and the blood in the deep charm of oriental culture rich in cultural diversity. Her work is based on reality, with memory and imagination as a base, which later attributes to the reality. She moves into the mainstream of cultural centres and creates the coordination. With the emotions and relations between ordinary people, her novels move into the mainstream of cultural centres.

Amy Tan makes use of historical and artistic history and the consensus is now forming staggered, and then the body in the construction of a new generation of Chinese Americans in the history of the Chinese nation and Chinese Americans are the inheritance and development of relations. Her unique, elegant and witty writing style, fresh and moving stories, twists and turns, forms the melodious sounds of Chinese and Western tunes symphony reverberation, again and again, shakes and surrenders American readers as a bridge building between Eastern and Western cultural ties.

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