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## EXPLORING THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP FROM BIOGRAPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Annotation

Amy Tan's novels serve as an in-depth study of mother-daughter relationships, intergenerational conflicts, and the thirst for identity amidst cultural and familial dynamics. Through her extraordinary narratives, Tan delves into the complexities of immigrant mothers and American daughters, revealing the impact of family lineage and collective memory on individual lives. The key to Tan's exploration is the theme of reconciliation, as daughters seek to understand their mothers' pasts and forge deeper connections with their cultural heritage. Through acts like storytelling and introspection, the characters embark on transformative journeys of self-discovery and healing, defying generational wounds and embracing their identities. Tan's portrayal of the collective unconscious and familial memories underscores the intergenerational nature of trauma and resilience, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the past for healing and reconciliation. In essence, Amy Tan's writings offer outstanding insights into the complexities of mother-daughter relationships and the transformative power of understanding and reconciliation.

**Keywords:** Mother-daughter relations, Amy Tan, Integrational conflict, Cultural heritage, Reconciliation

**Introduction.** From all the information about Amy Tan's life, we learnt that she had not yet fully understood her mother and realized what she inherited from her mother before her mother passed away. This became one of the causes of her confusion, so Amy Tan used her mother's stories to construct the stories of her novels, and through literary imagination, she fulfilled her unfulfilled wishes in the writing of a mother-daughter relationship with substitute wishes. The reconciliation model of the novel to some extent reflects the author's strong inner needs and unconscious creative pursuit.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan wrote "To my mother and the memory of her mother"; [1] in *The Kitchen God's Wife*, she wrote, "To my mother, Daisy Tan, and her happy memories of my father, John (1914-1968) and my brother Peter (1950-1967) with love and respect."; in *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, she wrote, "On the last day that my mother spent on earth, I taught her real name, as well as that of my grandmother. This book is dedicated to them." Here we can see that the writer's unfulfilled wish was finally realized in the creation, completing the reconstruction of the mother-daughter relationship and family connection.

Therefore, in her novels, the obvious contradiction and conflicts between immigrant mothers and American daughters are finally resolved, and mother and daughter reconciled. Reconciliation cannot be achieved without mothers' strong love and good intentions towards their daughters. Whatever mothers and daughters have experienced, mothers have always kept strong love and good intentions towards their daughters. Ying Ying told Jing-mei about her mother that she was a strong woman who possessed good character besides, she loved her daughter the most even more than the mother loved herself [2]. An-mei emphasized her daughter Rose the fact that the mother is the best person she should be closed to the most and only mother knows what's inside her daughter [3]. Therefore, the mothers wait for a proper time and chance to let the daughters know about their past and family lineage. The following are the approaches or efforts from both sides of mother and daughter, which contribute to the improvement and reconciliation of the relationship between mother and daughter.

On the side of the mother, it is the storytelling of her past. In *The Joy Luck Club*, the four mothers in turn tell the stories of their childhood, the stories of their marriage and experiences, and even the stories of their mothers. Their stories sound like a monologue, but the target listener are their daughters. Suyuan told her daughter Jing-mei many times about her experience during the wartime, how she managed a hopeful life with other female friends in Kweilin, how she had to escape from Kweilin to Chongqing, and what she saw and did on the way. Lindo told her daughter Waverly what she had experienced as a daughter-in-law since her two years old, and how she managed to escape from her unhappy sexless marriage. An-mei told her daughter Rose that she suffered from a pot of soup which left a forever scar on her neck, but it was nothing compared with her mother's suffering. Her mother was raped not long after her husband's death. What made the misfortune worse was that her family attributed the disgrace to her fault and drove her out of her family. Therefore, the author employed mothers' storytelling to reveal their suppressed hidden desires and expectations for their daughters, showing readers the mother's true emotions and hidden desires. The author's continuous extension and expansion of the stories also reflect the significance of family lineage in getting reconciliation between generations.

Carl Gustav Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, proposed the concept of "collective unconscious", which refers to the unconscious mind and shared mental concepts. Carl Gustav Jung once said that the memory of a family is hereditary and with a collective unconscious accumulation. "Jung considered the collective unconscious to underpin and surround the unconscious mind, distinguishing it from the personal unconscious [4]. The lack of maternal family memory affects the understanding of the potential impact of family, which in turn further affects the relationships between family members.

The rupture of family memory affects the daughter's understanding of her mother, grandmother, and lineage. In *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, LuLing thought about some questions and realized that "the first word a baby learns to speak must have been: ma. For a long time, that was the only word the baby needed. A mother is always the beginning. She is how things begin [5]. Amy Tan said that she thought her mother was a wonderful person created by a specific historical period and location therefore, she travelled to learn about her mother.

However, when daughters in their thirties, encountered some problems in their lives and marriages, at the same time, their mothers are no longer their strong opponents but failing old ladies. They feel it is high time to know about their mothers before it is too late. Just Waverly realized that her mother had become “an old woman, a wok for her armor, a knitting needle for her sword, getting a little crabby as she waited patiently for her daughter to invite her in [6].”

In *The Joy Luck Club*, Jing-mei, as the core character of the novel, went to China to find her sister at the novel's end. On arriving in China, Jing-mei asked her father the story about her mum. At that moment, Jing-mei wanted to know more about her mother, to make up with her mother and to find out the part of herself as Chinese. Through the story, she better understood her mother and felt her part Chinese. On the train, she thought of her mother's words, “Once you are born Chinese, you cannot help but feel and think Chinese. Someday you will see... It is in your blood, waiting to be let go [7].” When Jing-mei saw her sisters at the airport, she was very excited that she felt “And now I also see what part of me is Chinese. It is so obvious. It is my family. It is in our blood. After all these years, it can finally be let go [8]. Jing-mei's sense of familiarity with Chinese ancestry, realizing the cultural and psychological inheritance in herself, arouses her instinct to seek roots, which expresses her desire to explore blood and family lineages. Jing-mei identified with her mother through blood and spirit, hoping to reconcile with her, but her mother had passed away, and this wish could not be truly realized.

When Lindo told Waverly that she didn't look at Chinese, Waverly did not look pleased. Though maybe ten years ago, she would have been very glad to hear that, now she wants to be Chinese and feel proud of it. Taking her mother's advice, Waverly postponed her wedding with Rich and her honeymoon to China. When mum explained the reason for Rich “It is too hot in the summer. You will only grow more spots and your whole face will become red! [9]” At the remark, Rich was not angry but grinned and even gestured his thumb toward Lindo, and said to Waverly, “Can you believe what comes out of her mouth? Now I know where you get your sweet, tactful nature [10].” When Lindo hinted to go to China with them, Rich reacted excitedly. Though Waverly thought it a disaster to stand up with her mother's complaining, “Yet part of me also thinks the whole idea makes perfect sense. The three of us, leaving our differences behind, stepping on the plane together, sitting side by side, lifting off, moving West to reach the East [11].”

Ying-Ying, after many years of indifference and keeping away from her daughter, when her daughter was faced with problems in her marriage, reflected, “I will gather together my past and look.... The pain that cut my spirit loose. I will hold that pain in my hand until it becomes hard and shiny, clearer... I will use this sharp pain to penetrate my daughter's tough skin and cut her tiger spirit loose. She will fight me because this is the nature of two tigers. But I will win and give her my spirit because this is how a mother loves her daughter” [12]. Then, she deliberately broke the vase on the table so that her daughter Lena would come upstairs. Lena said that it did matter and she knew that would happen. Ying-ying awoke her with a simple question: “Then why don't you stop it? [13]” In this parable way, Ying-ying helped her daughter and Lena gained emotional recognition for her mother. Similarly, Rose also accepted her mother's suggestion to speak to Ted directly and prove her worth.

In *The Hundred Secret Senses*, in the beginning, Olivia disliked Kwan talking about stories in the world. She disliked almost everything connected with Kwan and Chinese history and culture [14]. Though she got divorced from her husband, they made a trip together with Kwan to China on business. Her ex-husband got lost in a valley, then Kwan set off to look for him. At last, Olivia's ex-husband was found but Kwan disappeared forever. During the process, Olivia had a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of love, hope, and responsibility. She appreciated the love of her sister Kwan and felt grateful to her. She got a reunion with her ex-husband and saw the Chinese part of herself further.

In *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, faced with various confusions, Ruth, with the help of her lover, knew about her mother's memoirs so that the memory chain of three generations of women in the family is connected, achieving emotional resonance. Finally, she accepted her mother's apology: “I'm worried that I did terrible things to you when you were a child, that I hurt you very much. But I can't remember what I did... I just wanted to say I hope you can forget just as I've. I hope you can forgive me because if I hurt you, I'm sorry [15].” Therefore, the conflict between mother and daughter was eventually resolved and they achieved a true reconciliation. About the theme of *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, Amy Tan once said in a review that “it is a book about family inheritance, the core of the novel's story is the secret tragedies of my own family. The characters in the novel are emotionally based on my grandmother. My mother inspired the image of LuLing; Ruth is like me.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, Amy Tan's novels unveil the complexities of mother-daughter relationships, intergenerational issues, and the search for identity amidst cultural and family-related dynamics. Through her emotional narratives, Tan explores the themes of reconciliation, understanding, and self-discovery, illuminating the profound impact of family lineage and collective memory on individual lives.

The author's works of immigrant mothers and American daughters navigating cultural integration, generational variations, and unresolved past pains echo deeply with readers, highlighting universal truths about the nature of human experiences. Through this wonderful lens of storytelling, Tan reveals the suppressed desires, hidden pains, and unspoken truths about her characters, fostering empathy and insight into their emotional landscapes.

Central to Tan's narrative arc is the theme of reconciliation, which emerges as daughters involved into their mothers' pasts, seeking ways to understand the hindrance of their family lineage and cultural heritage. Through acts of storytelling, introspection, and reconciliation, the characters embark on transformative journeys of self-discovery, healing generational wounds, and forging deeper connections with their mothers and their own identities.

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