

Symbolism in "Two Kinds"

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Literary Analysis Essay

Symbolism in "Two Kinds"

In the short story "Two Kinds" (1989) written by Amy Tan, a Chinese mother and daughter are at odds with each other. Ni'kans mother is an immigrant from China who only wants the best for her daughter. She wants her and her family to live the American dream. Ni'kans mother had dreams and plans of her own when she was Ni'kans age, but was not able to exactly to pursue her dreams. Ni'kans mother did not live out all her dreams, in a sense she projects her dreams through Ni'kan. She believes that in America, her daughter can pursue any dream and be a star. Ni'kans mother wants nothing more than for her daughter to be a prodigy. Ni'kans mother continually pushed Ni'kan to play the piano and Ni'kan did not feel loved unless she played. It is evident that the piano is the source of problems between Ni'kan and her mother but will symbolize Ni'kans connection to her mother.

Ni'kan wanted nothing more than to make her mother happy and to feel loved. Ni'kan being a young adolescent was so happy about the idea of her becoming a young prodigy just as much as her mother was. In the beginning Ni'kan starts to picture herself starring in different movies. She believes that "once she has achieved her status as a prodigy, her mother will adore her and she will become perfect" (1) Ni'kan has the awkward feeling that if she does not reach or complete the goals that are set for her then her mother will not love her. Almost every adolescence wants to satisfy their parent or parents that believes in them or having faith in them.

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TRI Development

Relevance?

Ni'kan started to "become impatient she felt the prodigy side of her saying, "If you don't hurry up and get me out of here, I'm disappearing for good," it warned." And then you'll always be nothing.'" (1). this may possibly point out that Ni'kan is starting to get very irritate and impatient. She worries that if her becoming a prodigy does not take place soon then she will never amount to anything in her mother's point of view.

Relevance?

Ni'kan wanted nothing more than to please her mother but after all the "nagging" her mother did, Ni'kan started to lose interest. After a while, Ni'kan mother continuously reminds Ni'kan of all the other young adolescence who have went ahead and became **prodigy** playing the piano. Ni'Kan may feel as though she is not half as good as the successful adolescence or maybe even believes that her mother sees her not to be as superior as the others. Ni'kan's mother sees the piano as Ni'kan's chance to make something of herself which will give her the chance for a more improved life. The mother seems to think that the piano symbolizes success and joviality. However, her mother thinks that the only way to attain success and joviality is through perfection, so she continues to push Ni'kan to become a prodigy. After a while all the frequent "pushing" Ni'kan to be a prodigy, Ni'kan started to become unconcerned and detest the idea of being a prodigy. After trying for so long Ni'kans mother become saddened and let down and gives up., "Once again, my mother's disappointed face; something inside me began to die"... "And then I saw what seemed to be the prodigy side of me - a face I had never seen before. I looked at my reflection, blinking so that I could see more clearly. The girl staring back at me was angry and powerful" (1). Ni'kan starts to be rebellious and at this moment she realizes that the piano and the "prodigy" in her as the reason for her rebellious ways.

TRI Development

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Relevance?



The mother's appeal in Ni'kan's as the mother's prodigy is changed in a couple of weeks or so, after watching a very gifted young lady playing the piano on the television set. After

TRI Development

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seeing how wonderful the young girl on television played, Ni'kan's mother had an epiphany. She had the idea to set up piano lessons for Ni'kan. She later on buys a piano for their home. Ni'kan dreaded playing the piano; she hated the fact that her mother would make her take piano lessons. The piano became symbolic of the conflict between Ni'kan and her mother. "Why don't you like me the way I am?"... "I'm not a genius! I can't play the piano. And even if I could, I wouldn't go on TV if you paid me a million dollars!"(2). Ni'kan hate the fact that she could not understand why her mother did not accept or her why she had to do things her mother had interest in, instead of her own interests. Ni'kan's having no interest shows when she has to perform in a talent show. Ni'kan does terribly and disappoints a lot of people including her mother. After Ni'kan's performance her mother was lost for words. A lot changes when Ni'kan thinks about the kids her mother lost and she tells her mother "I wish I'd never been born!" "I wish I were dead! Like them." From that day on Ni'kans mother would no longer push Ni'kan to play or practice the piano. Ni'kan's mother would not burden Ni'kan with the thought of her being or becoming a prodigy. The more they disagreed, the more they grew apart. It becomes evident that the piano was the source for Ni'kan and her mother's complications.

Relevance?

 It is apparent that piano was the reason for Ni'kan and her mother's problem, but ultimately the piano will be the answer as well. Even though the piano was an evident source of problems for Ni'kan and her mother, Ni'kan's mother offers Ni'kan the piano. Ni'kans mother giving Ni'kan the piano seems to be "as if it were a shiny trophy that I had won back." (2). After Ni'kan mother passes, she tunes the piano she goes over to the piano and play two songs  "Pleading Child" and "Perfectly attended". The two pieces of music she finds symbolizes the conflict Ni'kan and her mother had. She played both pieces of music and had an understanding. "'Pleading Child" was shorter but slower; "Perfectly Contented" was longer but faster" (3).

Ni'kan realized, "after I had played them both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song" (3). The two pieces of music symbolized Ni'kan's life. "Pleading Child" signified her childhood, while "Perfectly Contended" characterized the person she is now. Ni'kan and her mother being totally opposite like the songs, her relationship with her mother may have been catastrophic and distant, but at the same time they shared a great bond that makes them complete. Ni'kan actually seeking to play the piano again demonstrates the respect that she has grown for her mother. Although Ni'kan and her mother did not see eye to eye, like the two pieces of music, they compose one delightful song.



FINAL GRADE

61 / 100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Thanks for your revision, Ms. Charles.


There are clearly similar areas to the previous plagiarized version, but it reads a bit better and seems your words.

The problem, though, is the lack of organization. You have a clear thesis, yet the support doesn't follow. You must establish a topic for each supporting paragraph if you're to prove your point.


Please note this for future references in your academic writing that calls for thesis support.

Let me know if you have any questions.

PAGE 1

 1. Isn't this the same as your previous draft?

TRI

 2. You should be supporting the symbolism as you've stated. The only aspect you should focus on is the piano as a symbol. This is essentially irrelevant. This is a summary.


Connection to the thesis?


 3. Are these the pages from the source I provided? With no Works Cited, I cannot tell if this is correct.

PAGE 2

Connection to the thesis?

TRI

 4. Summarizing.


 5. +5

 6. If this is what the mother thinks, how does your argument differ?

 7. Say who?


Connection to the thesis?


TRI

 8. Summary.

PAGE 3

Connection to the thesis?

 9. Show that the piano is the symbol.

 10. Again, this is the point of the selection. Two kinds of music. . .

PAGE 4

 11. Where is the Works Cited page? This is a huge omission in MLA.

CONVENTIONS (25%)

2 / 5

EXCELLENT (5)	Assignment is an analysis of a specific poem or related poems OR short story. Adheres to the academic conventions of formal writing and research, writes confidently, organizes logically, proofreads prior to submission.
GOOD (4)	Assignment is a breakdown or examination of a literary work but may lack in a minor academic expectation.
SATISFACTORY (3)	Assignment lacks two or more SPA expectations. Eg., lapses in formality, research, vague references, word choice, coherence.
UNSATISFACTORY (2)	Assignment does not meet reader's expectations in most instances. Summarizes instead of analyzes.
UNACCEPTABLE (1)	Assignment does not resemble a literary analysis.

MLA CITATION (20%)

1 / 5

EXCELLENT (5)	•Includes parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page. •Cites consistently and correctly, paying attention to source type and formatting.
GOOD (4)	Minor errors in citation, but contains both in-text citation and a Works Cited page.
SATISFACTORY (3)	Source or sources are present but lack in consistency; may lack thorough information and citations or works cited entries.
UNSATISFACTORY (2)	May lapse into a mixture of citation styles.
UNACCEPTABLE (1)	Formatting is careless or lacking. Assignment does not meet the Citation requirements. Assignment contains no Works Cited page. Assignment may be plagiarized.

DIRECTIONS (15%)

5 / 5

EXCELLENT (5)	•Provides at least 3 pages in length (not including the heading), cited in MLA. •Incorporates 1 inch margins rule all around (top, bottom, left, and right) •Includes academic title and heading. •Produces a double spaced Word document •Types in Times New Roman 12 pt. font
GOOD (4)	Assignment meets page requirements but may lack in one minor requirement such as margins, academic heading, or font /size.
SATISFACTORY (3)	Assignment meets page requirements may be missing a minor and a major requirement such as academic title.
UNSATISFACTORY (2)	Assignment almost meets page requirements, but contains major omissions such as spacing, MLA omissions, and proofreading/spell check.
UNACCEPTABLE (1)	Document does not follow assignment instructions.

LANGUAGE (25%)

4 / 5

EXCELLENT (5)	Style, tone, and expression appropriate for academic writing; diction well chosen; syntax and mechanics virtually error-free.
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GOOD
(4) Style and tone suitable for academic writing; syntax and mechanics have minor errors; diction appropriate in most instances.

SATISFACTORY
(3) Style and tone fall short of academic standards; distracting usage, diction, and mechanical errors.

UNSATISFACTORY
(2) Little resemblance to academic writing in most respects.

UNACCEPTABLE
(1) Frequent errors inhibit clarity and meaning.

FOCUS (15%)

4 / 5

EXCELLENT
(5) Clear introduction, historical significance evident, framework evident; title and thesis that indicate a connection and the thesis is a clear analysis. Academic title and supporting paragraphs are effective. Concludes satisfactorily.

GOOD
(4) Introduction may be clear and thesis may be present, but document may stray somewhat from the analysis. Title connects; supporting paragraphs may need to be more development. Conclusion present.

SATISFACTORY
(3) Introduction lacks engagement and connection and thesis present; however, the document lacks in connection and support. Title may not connect to the analysis. Conclusion present but may not end effectively.

UNSATISFACTORY
(2) Introduction fails to properly signal topic of literary work. Title and thesis do not connect. Thesis is wordy, convoluted, or unclear. Title is insignificant. Underdeveloped conclusion.

UNACCEPTABLE
(1) No achievement in any of the focus criteria.