

Compare contrast on gilbert and tan essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Amy Tans " Fish Cheeks." and Elizabeth Gilberts " The Best Pizza in the World." separate American women (one being an adolescent the other adult) in two different countries. These two contrasting accounts highlight a difference in maturity, acceptance of who they are, and appreciation of how the different cultures are of great value. Both women describe their experiences involving life, food, and their inner most thoughts.

When Amy Tan falls in love with the minister's son at the young age of fourteen, she takes for granted what her mother was trying to show her about life. Young Amy's trying to impress her boyfriend by appearing as a traditional American girl not wanting to appear in any way Chinese American. Tan, still not experiencing life yet, had not grasped that being different is what makes someone who they are. It wasn't until many years later that she came to realize that all her mother was trying to express to her was that she should be proud of her Chinese heritage. " But inside you must always be Chinese. You must be proud you are different. Your only shame is to have shame." (117) She was not appreciating the diversity of different cultures and how both cultures have their own richness and value. Tan was embarrassed the whole time at Christmas dinner when she was trying to impress her young love Robert not realizing that her mother was making the meal for her. " For Christmas Eve that year, she had chosen all my favorite foods." (117) Elizabeth Gilbert almost forgot that she, herself, was an American. After giving young girl directions to a train station and feeling like she was missing out on a great travel; she realized that she too was a traveler.

Gilbert felt like she was a civilian in Rome because she paid bills there but she was, in actuality, just traveling. So in an instant Gilbert and her friend Sophie hit the road to Naples. Gilbert, in contrast was indulging herself in the food, lifestyle and traditions of this small Italian villa. Gilbert, of course was much older than Amy, and had no ulterior motive. Gilbert was on a mission to find herself and to discover new lifestyles. She met many new people, some of whom she was happy to meet and some she could live without. Without realizing it, Gilbert was happier than ever. It wasn't until she looked in the mirror at the Pizzeria in Naples. " I see a bright-eyed, clear-skinned, happy and healthy face. I haven't seen a face like that on me for a long time." (166) It was there while enjoying some lovely pizza that Gilbert realized how happy and healthy she truly was. Both writings were descriptive in nature.

Amy Tan describes how mother had fashioned the strange Christmas menu; " pulls black veins out of the backs of fleshy prawns." " A slimy rock cod with bulging eyes that pleaded not to be thrown into a pan of hot oil." " Tofu which looked like stacked wedges of rubbery white sponges." (117) Gilbert describes the pizza that she enjoyed while traveling in Naples. She describes the pizza as, " Thin, doughy, strong, gummy, yummy, chewy, salty pizza paradise." (165-166) " You try to take a bite off your slice and the gummy crust folds and the hot cheese runs away like topsoil in a landslide, makes a mess of you and your surroundings, but just deal with it." (166) All of these bring the food to life in their own way. It puts the reader in the scene with them as though you yourself are dining with them.

No matter what the age (young or old), life is still a learning experience. It is the challenges and journeys throughout lives that make people who they are. People may not be able to change their past but it's what done in the now and in the future that makes one's life unique.

Works Cited

Gilbert, Elizabeth. "The Best Pizza in the World." *The Brief Bedford Reader*. Ed. Kennedy, X. J., Kennedy, Dorothy M., Aaron, Jane E. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2012. 163-166. Print

Tan, Amy. "Fish Cheeks." *The Brief Bedford Reader*. Ed. Kennedy, X. J., Kennedy, Dorothy M., Aaron, Jane E. New York: Bedford St. Martins, 2012. 116-117. Print