

Personal identity essay sample

[Psychology](#), [Goal](#)



The goal of this paper is to convey the portrayal of personal identity through the three essays – Ten Thousand Things, Guardian Angel and More Rooms.

Ten Thousand Things. Wayson Choy did not realize that he was looking for something or that he needed to look for something until he heard the “crazy” say “I saw your mother last week.” From his vantage point, this statement was very much absurd as his mother died nineteen years ago. This initially absurd statement led him to say to the “crazy” that his mother died nineteen years ago. His comment led to the “crazy” saying that she was speaking of her “real mother.” The initially absurd statement started the wheels turning on what Choy did not realize was a search that his soul was bound to begin, finish and accomplish. Through all of these, he conducted an outward search which then turned into an inward search.

His search was first an outward search or empirical search, which entailed him to questions to his relatives in relation to the claim of the “crazy” with respect to his real parents. His questions were not left hanging and unanswered. His question was answered in a straightforward manner – yes, he was adopted. His search then turned inward. Choy then started to realize that there may have been traces of his biological parents thriving in his blood that he did not think were indications of a discovery with respect to his identity at all. He thought that there may have been some sort of link with his inklings and thoughts when he was younger with who his real parents were. Take for instance his ultimate fascination with Chinese Opera only to find out that his parents performed in these things. Search was first outward and then inward.

It is worthy to note that in this discovery, there was no indication or hint of hatred or remorse on the part of Choy in relation to his adopted parents. In fact, he understood why he was given up for adoption and why his parents adopted him. He found the explanation in the history and culture of China in the 1930's and 1940's. He understood and did not blame anyone for his predicament. He was even thankful that his parents adopted him. He felt blessed that his parents took him in and raised him to be the man that he is – “[h]ow lucky I am to share the fate of the man and the woman I came to know as Mother and Father, decent and good people, who all my life, loved me as their own (Choy, 17).”

The Guardian Angel. In this essay Gary Soto seemingly appears to talk about the Catholic belief that each and every individual has a guardian angel that looks after him/her. However, as one reads deeper, this really is not about the belief in a guardian angel *per se*. This could not be about this as Soto portrays the angels as favoring one human being over another. This is not how Catholic teaching goes. This leads one to conclude that this really is not about a guardian angel as the Catholics portray them to be.

Ultimately, this essay of Soto speaks of fear and uncertainty. Initially he compares himself to his brother. He tells us that he was guarded more and taken care more of by his guardian angel compared to his brother. His brother often gets into trouble, while he, stays out of trouble through the guidance of his guardian angel. Then, he goes on to compare his younger self with his present self. He tells us that now that he is older, he seems to be less and less guarded and taken care of by his guardian angel. He

conveys that he is no longer as fortunate as he was when he was younger. Actually, the initial comparison is also a conveyance of his younger self as against his older brother.

This speaks of fear and uncertainty as while he grows and matures as an individual, he cannot count on anyone else but himself. Unlike when he was younger he had people to turn to, to seek advice from and to blame in case things go wrong. Now that he is older, he can only count on himself to make decisions, and if in case it turns out to be the wrong ones, he has no one else to blame but himself. The guardian angel is actually a metaphor of someone in his life who provided him guidance and ultimately certainty.

More Room. Judith Ortiz Cofer conveys the identity of her grandmother in this essay. She describes how their ancestral house grew more and more rooms as the family members increased in number. What is more important however is how specific items and details in this house define the identity of their *Mama* .

She discusses how she identifies her *Mama* with the jars filled with herbs as *yerba buena* and *yerba mala*, with the monstrous *chiffobre* that she kept locked, with the crucifix that hangs on the wall against her bed, with the post cards that covered the walls in her room, with her bed in which she sleeps alone, with papa with whom she did not sleep beside anymore.

This essay is filled with symbols but it is quite difficult to decipher how these different symbols come together to define her grandmother and ultimately Judith. What is clear from the essay however is the strength of the

personality of her grandmother or her *Mama* . It is clear also how unique the personality of her grandmother was with how she treated and disciplined her children and grandchildren, and also with how she treated her own husband.

Conclusion. It is ironic that this essay is entitled “ Personal Identity” as it discusses essays that talk about the personal identity of its authors only for their identities to be discovered and conveyed as against another. This is true insofar as the first two authors are concerned. As for the last author, she discusses the identity of her grandmother in and by herself although in relation to her identity’s manifestation in the objects in their ancestral house. It appears that the discussion of one’s personal identity is always something metaphorical and is always difficult to make tangible or concrete. This is why one’s identity or another’s identity is always described and compared as against something tangible and concrete. Take for instance the first essay, his identity is described as against his parents, real parents and his Chinese heritage. In the second essay, his identity is described as against his brother’s and his younger self. In the third essay, her identity is described as against the objects that are found in her house and as against the house itself.