

# Analyzing: a pair of tickets essay

[Environment](#), [Air](#)



“ Theme” is commonly described as the central idea for literary work or ideas explored within a piece of literature. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines theme as: “ a subject or topic of discourse; an artistic representation; a written composition; a melodic subject of a musical movement. ” However, theme can also serve to convey a “ moral” of a story, and as such possesses the unique ability to challenge the reader’s own moral compass, providing new perspectives, rather than simply telling a story.

A good theme influences its characters on how to act and does so with authority. Taking a stand or committing oneself thematically, so to speak, makes writing clearer and creates more opportunities that can actually change the way a reader thinks or believes. We see this presented in Amy Tan’s narrative, A Pair of Tickets. In this story, the theme is used in such a way where we actually see the narrative’s protagonist recognize and respond to the themes call to action. This method is very appropriate for Tan in A Pair of Tickets.

Tan’s writing was influenced by real-life events where she and her story’s protagonist, June, both face the struggles and frustrations that accompany cross cultural relationships. As readers of this narrative, empathy builds quickly as we discover just how frustrating (and frightening) cultural barriers can be, most especially between the sacred bond of a mother and daughter. This analysis will dig deeper into the undertones of the narrative and explore these questions: what is the moral of this narrative and what perspective can readers glean from it?

What archetype would best describe the protagonist? How can readers relate to her? Interestingly, every character usually has an archetype that can give the reader better insight into the character's personal consciousness. For example, by asking " what specific things did June discover in this story? " the reader can gain insight and perspective. The moral of this narrative surfaces easily: self-discovery and finding joy in the midst of pain. This can be interpreted in many different ways, but the most evident for this particular narrative can be described by the thoughts of June herself.

After making her long journey to China, she sees her twin half-sisters approaching her in the distance and says, " And now I also see what part of me is Chinese. It is obvious. It is my family. It is in our blood. After all these years, it can finally be let go" (157). June's identity had always appeared opaque to her, and with the recent passing of her beloved mother, June came to the realization that part of her Chinese heritage would be buried with her mother. She carried the guilt of not understanding how to fully appreciate who she was, Chinese.

June's immersion in American culture had, to her view, prevented her from fully appreciating her rich Chinese heritage lived out daily by her mother. However, her journey caused June to face many convicting things within herself, and revealed truths both startling and redemptive. When June reunited with her two half-sisters, and as a family they acknowledged what they had lost, they found that much more still remained. This is the journey of life. Each of us struggles with identity at one time or another, and often this can be just as tragic to us as death.

We can often become easily confused and jaded as to the reasons why we exist, and somehow be separated from who we truly are. Like June, we can begin to feel guilty for not being able to fully understand or appreciate what makes us who we are. However, if we accept life and our tragedies, in whatever form they might appear, we have begun the journey to freedom, for therein lies our true self. Upon meeting June (Jing-mei Woo), we could agree that she is quite a unique woman.

Her extraordinary circumstances of life have marked her by a dynamic nature and through this narrative we see June come to realize just how impacting the hyphen between “ Chinese” and “ American” truly is. “ I stand five-foot-six,” June observes, “ and my head pokes above the crowd so that I am eye level only with other tourist” (148). In reality only fragments of June actually exist because June is a fictional character in a narrative but her archetype is very real and ever-present. We have read about her in other works of literature, and we’ve seen her featured in the films of our day.

We also see June reflected in the faces of many in our modern-day world. For she, like millions of others, is the child of an immigrant to the United States, who enjoy the blessing and burden of being juxtaposed in the clash between two cultures, two nations, two identities ever struggling for preeminence. Tragedy is universal and death is inevitable. June had suffered a tremendous loss when her mother died. The loss paled in comparison to the guilt of not knowing her mother as she desired and the confusion she faced by not fully knowing her true self.

However sad and frightening June's responsibility to her sisters may have been, in the end, June finds that it is also a wondrous role in which she gets the opportunity to fill in the gaps for her two half-sisters and their intrinsic need to know their mother. " My sisters and I stand, arms around each other, laughing and wiping the tears from each other's eyes. " June and her sisters stare into a developing Polaroid. " And although we don't speak, I know we all see it: Together we look like our mother.

Her same eyes, her same mouth, open in surprise to see, at last, her long cherished wish. What could have been an extremely uncomfortable conversation or situation in reality revealed itself to be a wonderful discovery, of family and in essence, of self for June. She learned that not everything that appears bad externally is the same internally and it is who we are at our core, whether it be Chinese, American, Latino, European, African or Arabic. Who we truly are at our core will give us the tools necessary to valiantly face the external, no matter what it presents, and confidently allow our internal self to blossom.