

# Free similarities essay sample

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## **Introduction**

The fact that literary works are aimed at mirroring the reality of the human society whether local or global means that there will be a point of convergence among them. The mirroring of the reality of the human society is informed by the need to facilitate and sustain debates that will lead to the finding of solutions to better human society and life. The converse is also true that literary artistes have their works colored by personal, ideological and sociocultural settings and because of this, literary works will diverge on structure, ideas and themes. The case is exemplified by the two films, Like Water for Chocolate and Fish Cheeks. Like Water for Chocolate is a 1992 film that was adopted from a self-titled novel by Laura Esquivel. The film mainly uses magical realism as a style to perpetuate its plotline and themes, on the one hand. On the other hand, Fish Cheeks is similarly adopted from a narration by Amy Tan.

## **Thesis statement**

Laura Esquivel and Amy Tan's literary works Like Water for Chocolate and Fish Cheeks respectively, being cast from social environments, have some differences. However, because they tackle the same themes that are love, the reality of culture and the effect that culture clash has on people, (they) have similar salient features that are relevant to social introspection.

It is interesting to note that both Like Water for Chocolate and Fish Cheeks have coinciding themes: the reality of culture; the effect that culture clash has on people and love. In case of the latter, Amy Tan is recounting her childhood experience in America, a land where white Americans form the

culturally dominant population. Amy, a fourteen year old Chinese girl is in love with Robert, a son of an American minister. Amy's parents have invited Robert and his family for a Christmas dinner, much to the chagrin of the apprehensive Amy. While at the dinner table, Amy Tan is seemingly uncomfortable because of the fear that her parents will display their cultural beliefs and values. Her fears are confirmed when her parents lick their chopsticks and dip them into other plates and when her father belches loudly. According to the Chinese, the loud belch is meant to serve as a polite demonstration of being full and as a token of appreciation.

In respect to the above, there is lucidity in pointing out that both films build on cultural differences to underscore the themes of the reality of culture, the effect that culture clash has on people and the power of love. This feat is achieved by bringing about to the scene, a culturally variegated environment. This environment is important for the creation of the tension that leads the plotlines to their denouement. In *Like Water for Chocolate*, Pedro and his family meet Tita and her family. Because of cultural inhibitions, Tita and Pedro cannot be married off to each other; the fact that they deeply love each other notwithstanding. This leaves the suitors (Pedro and his father) with no recourse to settling for Tita's sister, Rosaura. The situation above is replicated in *Fish Cheeks*. Amy is in love with Robert but they are culturally worlds apart. Their families are very close acquaintances and thereby allowing for the facilitation of the plotline to its climax and conclusion.

As already mentioned, both *Like Water for Chocolate* and *Fish Cheeks*, find a point of convergence in the themes they are passing. The themes are:

culture, the effect that culture clash has on people and the power of love. In both literary works, the protagonists (Amy and Robert and Tita and Pedro) come from a culturally specific environment. The effect of the culture clash is seen in the instance where these protagonists come together and experience a stiff wall of resistance. This wall of resistance is the epitome of the strength of culture. For instance, Pedro and Tita are not allowed to marry because of culture. Amy loves Robert but differences in their cultural heritage keep them apart. The unforgiving reality of culture is seen in the manner in which Pedro and Tita and their immediate social circles are adversely affected because of culture. For instance, Pedro is forced by cultural circumstances to marry Tita's sister, Rosaura. The marriage is not happy and related circumstances claim Rosaura and Pedro's first child. Tita also descends into a catatonic state. Dr. Brown is also unhappy, seeing that Tita is unable to love and be fully faithful to him since she still loves Pedro (Esquivel, 1).

In a closely related wavelength, both literary works seem to extol the theme of love over culture and cultural inhibitions. In *Fish Cheeks*, it is interesting that Amy falls in love with Robert in spite of their being worlds apart, culturally. The same is communicated in *Like Water for Chocolate* as Pedro and Tita's love transcends cultural inhibition.

Both literary pieces converge in the use of literary devices such as symbolism. In both *Fish Cheeks* and *Like Water for Chocolate*, the protagonists (Amy and Robert and Tita and Pedro) have parents who are significantly attached to their cultural heritage. In this respect, the parents represent the generation of the undiluted culture and the culturally

conservative. This elderly generation is the preserving and perpetuating strength of culture and cultural values. It is no wonder that as Mama Elena dies, these cultural inhibitions atrophy and Tita and Pedro marry. Likewise, Amy's mother also lightly reproves Amy for being ashamed of her culture by telling her that, "Your only shame is to have shame." The protagonists (Amy and Robert and Tita and Pedro) represent the generation that lives in a culturally variegated environment and have thus become liberal. It is for this reason that the protagonists can afford to defy cultural restrictions and continue to love each other (Partridge, 101).

## **Differences**

However, it is important to note that the theme of love is stronger and more conspicuous in *Like Water for Chocolate* than in *Fish Cheeks*. In fact, it is notable that Tita and Pedro are not defying the cultural code. They are obedient to their parents: they part ways as their parents command and Tita withdraws herself from Pedro and Rosaura's family when Mama Elena becomes suspicious and orders for her withdrawal. Despite the fact that culture brings a world of difference between Tita and Pedro, Tita's cultural compunctions are overcome and they end up having extramarital sex. In the end, their love triumphs when they get married.

There are contextual differences between *Fish Cheeks* and *Like Water for Chocolate*. The former is cast against the backdrop of the United States, with Amy as the immigrant, while the latter is cast against Mexico at the time of the Revolutionary War of Mexico. In the former, the protagonist is also the playwright. This is not the case with *Like Water for Chocolate* wherein the playwright, Laura Esquivel is notably and unmistakably distinct from the

protagonist, Tita.

The two works of art also use different literary devices to facilitate the plotline and to underscore their selected themes. In particular, Amy Tan uses infodumping while Laura Esquivel does not. As touching infodumping, Amy Tan narrates her story not before the background information is shortly told and not narrated. Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* automatically picks on and expects the audience to fill in the gaps and decipher the setting of the movie.

Unlike *Like Water for Chocolate*, Amy's *Fish Cheeks* makes use of first person narration. In this case, there is no disassociation of the protagonist and the narrator. Both are called Amy. This allows the audience to key in on the author's views and strike a common ground with the same. In Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, the author is very distinct and detached from the protagonist, Tita. This allows the audience the ability to participate in viewing the plotline in an objective manner, independent of the playwright's views.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing clearly shows the reality of the differences between the two pieces of literature. The differences are informed by the fact that the playwrights are different authors who have different backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the point of similarity between the two literary pieces is also a reality and is informed by the fact that Amy and Esquivel are tackling the same themes which are culture, love and the effect of culture clash. All these themes are brought to the fore with the overarching intention of provoking

sociocultural introspection in light of emergent issues such as cultural identity and multiculturalism.

## **Works Cited**

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Partridge, F. L. Jeffrey. "The politics of ethnic authorship: Li-young lee, Emerson, and Whitman at the banquet table." *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 37. 1 (2004): 101. Print