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An Analysis of Olivia's Doppelgängers in Amy Tan's *The Hundred Secret Senses*

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the exploration of Olivia's doppelgängers in Amy Tan's *The Hundred Secret Senses*, using Freudian theory and Lacanian mirror stage theory to examine her fractured identity. It explores the interplay between Olivia and her doppelgängers as follows: figuring out the relationship between Olivia and the two characters who are identified as her "doubles", the operation of Olivia's doppelgängers, the relationships between Olivia and her doppelgängers, the significances of the existences of Olivia's doppelgängers. It also analyses how Olivia's doppelgängers influence her identity and how she resolves her frustrated self-identification. Since the characters of Olivia and her doppelgängers are not represented as destructive images throughout the novel, the idea of the doppelgänger as constructive or benign, will be involved in the exploration of Olivia's "doppelgängers". To sum up, this thesis shows how Freudian theory and Lacanian mirror stage theory work towards a resolution of Olivia's problems of identity and self-identification and concludes that Tan's portrayal of the doppelgängers and Olivia's confused identity, both as a Chinese-American and as a human being, dramatises the post-colonial and Orientalist tension between self and other, but also locates this struggle as a fundamental and universal aspect of human experience.

Key words: Amy Tan, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, Doppelgängers

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