

***BETWEEN PRECONCEPTION AND SPECULATION.  
BEING AMERICAN, LABELING AMERICAN, VS. BEING CHINESE,  
LABELING CHINESE IN AMY TAN'S 'THE VALLEY OF AMAZEMENT'***

**Drd. Maria Cristina CHINTESCU  
Universitatea din Craiova, România**

**Abstract:** *This piece of writing focuses on the theme of 'Otherness' in Amy Tan's novel 'The Valley of Amazement' but from an opposing view now, that of a genuine woman and mother who skillfully struggles to mingle and adapt to the Chinese way of life proposing a cultural theme now, that of the Courtesan Houses in China. The balance switches for the time being. We are dealing in the reversed In-group (the genuine Chinese) and Out-group (Lucia Minturn, born American and who came to China in the hope to marry the father of her daughter, Violet). The article brings the following themes to the center of attention: assimilation, ethnicity, family, prostitution, Chinese and American worlds. The article underlines the alterity between the In-group and the Out-group. The connection is made by Violet, who, as a regular half-Chinese, is hesitant to learn about her Chinese origins. We focus on the constant gap between Lucia's life and Violet's. What is spectacular about this novel is Lucia's return to America and Violet's staying in China.*

**Keywords:** *The Valley of Amazement, Chinese world, identity, Courtesan House, immigration, marriage in China, prostitution, Shanghai, kidnapping.*