

Editing my own papers can be difficult; I always tended to see any revisions as a personal affront to me, not just my writing. Grammar is easy to edit for, and I seldom make mistakes with it. Problems in my argument or phrasing are a different matter all together. I especially had problems with this essay, in which all of the characters are unnamed. Distinguishing whether I was talking about the mother, the aunt, or the narrator became not only a challenge but a frustration at times, particularly when I need to be wordy to overcome any possible ambiguity. I felt like this section of my first essay, my conclusion, showed how I overcame that problem particularly well. This piece of my writing also, I believe, effectively showed my blending of style with technical clarity.

In this conclusion, I tried to distance my writing from the themes of confusion and uncertainty reflected in the rest of the essay. I tried to present not only my specific edits, but also my reasoning behind the changes. Whenever I make a significant change in my writing, I consider not only what would be better, but why exactly I chose something else.

First Draft:

She takes away exactly what her mother is unconcerned with; refusing to see things in black and white, in morals and sins, the narrator seeks answers about what led her to that deep, dark well. Her generation is left trying to fit warped notions of cultural identification into obsolete schemas. This is not a uniquely Chinese emigrate phenomenon: it has become, in an age of borders ill-defined and restless transience, a generation searching for the cool summit of the Golden Mountain. The definitions

Comment: Unclear who "she" is

Comment: Unnecessary conjunction. Warps structure

Comment: Unclear modifier. Add Aunt.

Comment: Whose generation?

Comment: Quote necessary?

for culture, for **tradition** have evolved so rapidly that there is no one left versed in the new shifting tides of identities. As the narrator realizes, the simplicity of the past might never again be attained.

Comment: Shift to earlier

Second Draft:

She takes away exactly what her mother is unconcerned with; **refusing to see things in black and white, or in morals and sins**, the narrator seeks answers about what led her to that deep, dark well. Her generation is left trying to fit **warped notions of cultural identification into obsolete schemas**. This is not a uniquely Chinese emigrate phenomenon: it **has** become, in an age of ill-defined borders and restless transience, a generation searching for the cool summit of the Golden Mountain. As the narrator realizes, the simplicity of the past might never again be attained. The definitions **for culture, for tradition** have evolved so rapidly that there is no one left versed in the new shifting tides of identities.

Comment: This is still slightly awkward. Maybe it is the or?

Comment: Wordy. But I think all the modifiers are necessary.

Comment: It has become a generation is nonsensical; Change to a transitive verb

Comment: Weird structure

Final Draft:

The narrator takes away a lesson with which her mother is unconcerned: Refusing to see things in black and white, in absolute morals and sins, the narrator seeks answers about what led her aunt to that deep, dark well. The narrator's generation is left attempting to fit warped notions of cultural identification into obsolete schemata. This is not a phenomenon unique to Chinese emigrants: emigration has created, in an

Comment: Slightly more repetitive, but necessary for clarity.

age of ill-defined borders and restless transience, a generation searching for the cool summit of the Golden Mountain. As the narrator realizes, the simplicity of the past might never again be attained. The definitions for culture, for tradition and self, have evolved so rapidly that there is no one left versed in the shifting tides of identities.

Comment: I really liked this sentence, so I did not want to change it around too much. I wound up just shifting it to the end.