

**MULTICULTURAL ETHOS IN SELECTED WORKS
OF PEARL S.BUCK**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

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in

English

By

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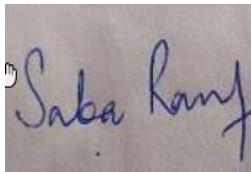
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**LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB
2024**

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the presented work in the thesis entitled “Multicultural Ethos in Selected Works of Pearl S. Buck” in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Sukhvinderjit Kaur Chopra, working as Associate Professor, in the Centre for Professional Enhancement, of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigators. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other university or institute for the award of any degree.



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph.D. thesis entitled “Multicultural Ethos in the Selected Works of Pearl S. Buck” submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of the **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the English/ School of Liberal and Creative Arts, is a research work carried out by Saba Rauf Rafiqi, (Registration No.) 41800912, is bonafide record of her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

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Abstract

This study focuses to accentuate the intersect of Pearl S. Buck's views with the conceptual framework of multicultural theories thereby highlighting how her fictional writings constitute a reflex of multiculturalism. Therefore, this research aims to uncover the subliminal multiculturalism in her oeuvre by using Will Kymlicka's concept of 'multicultural citizenship' and Charles Taylor's 'politics of recognition'. In order to advance this research on Buck's multiculturalism, two lines of thoughts are established. First, to trace the origin and development of the theory of multiculturalism and explore its concepts. Second, to apply some of these concepts to Buck's fiction as well as non-fiction to establish an affinity between the two lines of thought. Hence, the purpose of the research is to explore multicultural issues in the works of Pearl S. Buck. She is essentially a humanitarian and her works exemplify her advocacy of human rights especially of marginalized people. She also redefines the concepts of culture and nation. Her works have been studied from many critical approaches but not investigated through the lens of multiculturalism. Charles Taylor essay "Politics of Recognition" firmly asserts that 'recognition' is a vital to an individual's social presence and Will Kymlicka believes that any attempt to make a nation homogenous will not result in its growth and progress. Needs of different groups within a nation are different and therefore can be catered with the group-specific rights or in the words of Kymlicka "group-differentiated rights". Therefore, applying the concepts of 'recognition', 'identity', 'diversity' and 'rights' to the works of Pearl S. Buck, the study shows how she definitely was much ahead of times and is literally a prescient to the theory of multiculturalism which was acknowledged formally during last decades of twentieth century. The fiction and non-fiction selected for the study raise multicultural issues that predominate in each of these writing and endorse equal rights for everyone irrespective of one's origin, culture or nationality and envision of a future prioritising recognition, equality and diversity.

Pearl S. Buck's writing explicitly deals with issues, which, in the 1990s and beyond, became focal points around which the philosophical discourse on multiculturalism got constructed. She believed in what is called 'cultural competence,' the ability of a person to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. All her works resonate with the fears and hopes of individuals etching out a meaningful existence, especially as immigrants and Amerasians. Buck explores the primordial human longing for rootedness, dignity and freedom in multicultural settings, whether they are in mono-nations or multi-nations. The novel, *The Hidden Flower* is a story of interracial couple and their anxieties about the future of their mixed-race child. These Amerasian children are not only less privileged, they also do not have anyone to defend their rights. *The Newyear* is another novel that talks about the rights of Amerasian children and their mothers. *Peony* draws attention to the assimilation of Jews into Chinese culture to the extent that Jews took exception to not being called Chinese. Buck is unraveling the tension ridden existence of such ethnic groups who live a marginalized life and have no autonomy to establish their unique identity and culture. *Kinfolk* deals with the life of younger generation of immigrants to the US who voice their sense of rootlessness and, in search of a meaningful existence, want to return to their homeland. They experience alienation because they are not 'recognized'. In all these works Buck advocates for political and legislative policies so that the 'marginalized' and the 'minorities' have equal participation and opportunities especially for the people who have migrated to other countries and the Amerasians. Hence Buck's literary works accentuate on the challenges faced by the amerasians and all those who have migrated to other countries. Another finding of the study is that even if legal and legislative rights are granted, the amerasians and the immigrants continue to suffer an internal and psychological turmoil where they are not able to break the 'cultural make-up' of their beliefs and habits that hinder a fruitful life that is before them. This inner conflict is more agonizing than the need to feel 'accepted' because the connectedness to their roots is deeply embedded into the collective subconscious and even the political and legal sanctions would not nullify its effect.

Pearl S. Buck's contribution is not limited to the field of socio-political activism and literature, but it is relevant for an understanding of the scenario of the present day world from different perspectives; political, social or geographical. At a time when we are witnessing racial discrimination, xenophobia and injustice across the world, Buck's work will assist present and future generations to foster a humanistic understanding of the world and make it a better place for everyone to live.

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Choosing Pearl S. Buck as an author my for research was due to the fact that her appreciation of diversity and plurality had been incredible and to make her legacy of advocating for the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society live forward. I consider myself fortunate that through my research I could bring awareness and educate about her being a woman of influence and her humanitarian sensibility.

I give endless thanks to the members of RAC committee for their insightful suggestions and recommendations that made my research better and the librarians of Lovely Professional University, Kashmir University, and Pearl S. Buck foundation for supporting and helping me in the completion of my thesis.

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Saba Rauf Rafiqi

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Introduction

Tracing the rise in the demands for recognition and identity of the marginalized globally, which has influenced world politics; new perspectives on the concepts of gender, race and ethnicity have surfaced and gained momentum. However, at the same time, the rampant and increasing incidents of violence and discrimination all over the world, based on gender, race and ethnicity prove the contention of multicultural theorists that somehow, nations, in order to maintain their solidarity and homogeneity, have become isolationists and nationalists. These nations consider an individual to be a mere political cog and for them the existence of a nation is primordial so they resort to an authoritarian approach which creates a chasm between a nation and its subjects, and may often overlook the concerns to the marginalized. Therefore, the scenario of the world today calls for an urgent action against these divisive forces to harness a universal understanding that places the dignity of a human being above race, ethnicity, culture and gender.

Multiculturalism accords a great value to 'culture'. For it is culture that gives meaning to one's presence in a society and at the same time sets a tacit framework within which actions are carried and authenticated. As individuals we live our lives around our cultural frame, it is the premise that governs our beliefs and practices as well. From these views it is clear that culture being normative, requires an open-mindedness appreciating its diversity, where every culture is equal and worthy of recognition and dignity. So before multiculturalism is understood as a theory, it is important to discern culture.

Multiculturalism believes in cultural equality and seeks to promote cultural competence and toleration. It is a liberal thought that accredits every culture with an intrinsic and ultimate value. Hence the focus of multiculturalism is on uneven power relations among people due to racial, cultural and ethnic bias, how people encounter such uneven or imbalanced realities and the need to bring

social justice to these minoritised groups. Multiculturalism is not only acknowledging and recognizing diverse cultures but also empowering and encouraging the minorities to seek equal participation and expression.

As a result of large-scale migration, especially to the Western countries, more and more people from diverse cultures and ethnicities are living in the same country, however historical facts reveal that the host nations have not been just and liberal while dealing with its diverse population that include immigrants, ethnic groups and refugees. These nations have been quite orthodox and exclusionist as a result minorities have faced exclusion and exploitation. However, in the recent decades, the 'movements' for the rights of minorities has gained momentum and has reshaped the world's socio-political order. Multiculturalism is a contemporary political theory that challenges this orthodox, political orders in nations, where a single policy exists for its diverse population and this homogenising of cultures is kind of injustice as it ignores the due recognition and valuing of minorities. Multiculturalism opines an inclusive and competent approach to the diversity, where members of society from diverse cultures can hold on to their identities and ancestry, no matter how different from one another. As such multiculturalism is vitally linked to identity and provides us with a political scenario where the interests of minorities are acknowledged and respected.

In literature, this multicultural sensibility has found its way in the writings of many writers all over the world, belonging to different ethnicities and other minority groups. However, the initiation of this movement, which took place in the first few decades of twentieth century, was not easy, as at that time, the minds of people were still shackled in the chains of dominance, hierarchy, and unequal power relations on the basis of race, gender and culture. Therefore, writing against such powerful socio-political narratives certainly needed due accreditation and acknowledgement. The writer who precedes what later formed the basic principles of multiculturalism is Pearl S. Buck who, in her writings, initiated a 'wave' that definitely was a 'movement' in future. She was much ahead of her times and being politically active could gather how the nations

need to own their responsibility for its diverse population. Her writings about China bridged the gap between the East and the West and developed cross-cultural ties. She was also a political activist who knew that there had to be a radical change in existing diplomatic policies of the US if it had to qualify as a democratic and a developed nation on the world's political platform. In one of her speeches, "What America means to me," Buck talks about American political scenario and also highlights the self-contradictory discourses of American democracy and imperialism. Being an American, she could discern the lacunae in her nation's polity and wanted to see it change for good as America was an ideal from which many others drew inspiration. Buck's novels have been studied from different theoretical perspectives like feminism, comparative literary analysis, and literary techniques. Her own non-fictional writings and biographical studies verify her lifelong involvement with 'multiculturality,' which denotes "the quality of being multicultural." Substantively, it refers to Buck's insistence on institutionalized empathy for peoples of different cultures, races and ethnicity.

Tracing the history of multiculturalism and expounding the multicultural concepts, this research explores the multicultural issues in Pearl S. Buck's fiction and non-fiction and understands the affinities between these multicultural concepts and Buck's ideas. The thesis is divided into five chapters including. The first chapter titled, "Multiculturalism: An Overview" gives a brief introduction of theory of Multiculturalism with special reference to contemporary multiculturalists like Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor. The chapter highlights the rise in movements concerning the rights of minorities all over the globe led to the birth of multicultural thought which is a liberal theory of rights of marginalised sections of society like immigrants, racial minorities, ethnic minorities, children, women, and people with disability, refugees, and many more. The chapter aims to highlight the concerns of multiculturalism of seeking equality for minorities and fighting against violence and discrimination, it also identifies Pearl S. Buck, as a prolific author, whose works on multicultural issues has received little scholarly attention until recent times.

This chapter examines Pearl S. Buck's thematic concerns in her writings establishing her as a writer with a multicultural sensibility and also as a true humanitarian. The study examines how Buck's fictional writings constitute a reflex of her multiculturalism, therefore, this research aims to uncover the subliminal multiculturalism in the body of her writings.

Chapter II titled, "Amerasians and the Politics of Recognition" traces the origin of the concept of 'recognition' through the analysis of Charles Taylor's essay "Politics of Recognition" in the book *Multiculturalism and Politics of Recognition*. Taylor asserts for 'recognition' because the marginalized groups were mis-recognized, which affected their self-image adversely and restricted the opportunities in the society that they lived in. The chapter highlights Taylor's contention of 'recognition' as a vital component of 'identity' and how the concept of 'identity' has shaped and evolved down the centuries. The chapter also examines how 'identity' as an idea came to focus with the enlightened ideas of many philosophers like Montesquieu (1689-1755), Rousseau (1712-1778), Herder (1744-1803) and others in Europe. In the works of these philosophers, for the first time, the emphasis was on the individual and became the centre of their discourse. The chapter elucidates how the concept of 'identity' is linked to understanding and experiencing a deeper and true perception of Self, which according to Taylor is intrinsically connected to 'recognition' and is the basis of struggle of minorities for their rights. The chapter analyses Buck's essay "American Children: Alien by Birth" and narrates about the off springs of American men and Asian women. As we know, the US has had military operations in many Asian countries, and the association of the American soldiers with local women resulted in birth of their children, who, unfortunately and unfairly, were never recognised as Americans. These children, firstly, are not welcome in America, secondly if they do get to enter America, are not accepted as Americans and are subjected to neglect, harassment and humiliation leading to a deep psychological hurt, demotivation and an uncertain future. This chapter analyses the theoretical basis of 'recognition' with Buck's exposition of 'recognition' in her essay, "American

Children: Alien by Birth” which is a telling tale of human misery and a sense of loss. The essay is based on a real life situation wherein Buck had received a letter from an American ex-military officer, who has a family in Korea but cannot unite with it due to his country’s immigration laws. His desperation to be with his children is a representative case of thousands of such families who are parted and are suffering at the hands of discriminatory citizenship policies for the Amerasians.

Chapter III titled, “The Dialogical Relation between Recognition and Identity” draws on the Taylor’s concept of ‘recognition’ and its relation to ‘identity’. The chapter aims at expounding the multicultural concept of ‘recognition’ in two novels of Pearl S. Buck: *The Hidden Flower* and *The New Year*. This chapter establishes how the Amerasian children are denied due recognition which is exploitation and they continue to suffer at the hands of the American authorities who do not recognise them as their citizens. This mis-recognition results in trauma, violence and discrimination that continue to haunt the lives of thousands of Amerasians. The study focuses on Pearl S. Buck’s novel *The Hidden Flower*, and brings forth how inter-racial love is not respected and is doomed to fail as the relationship is not recognised by the social and political setup. Josui, a young Japanese girl falls in love with Allen, an American lieutenant stationed in Tokyo during WWII. Their relation sees a bitter end with the birth of their child Lenny, who is an Amerasian and has no country to call his own and has to be given for adoption. The chapter analyses the conditions responsible for the separation and discrimination faced by such children who are unsure and insecure about their future. The second novel *The New Year* is a work that reflects on the plight of an Amerasian child, Kim, a seven year old boy. who wants to go to his father’s country and is taken to the U.S. However, his hopes are soon dashed when he realises that his father, Christopher, is not ready to accept him as his son for the fear of jeopardizing his political career as Christopher is one of the candidates for presidential election. Kim, suffers a lot, emotionally and physically in a foreign land but with a lucky turn of events his father realises his responsibility and accepts him

publically.

Chapter IV titled “Pathway towards Multicultural Citizenship”, explains in detail Will Kymlicka’s theory of ‘Multicultural Citizenship’. Bringing forth the tenets of this theory which is rooted in contemporary analysis, Kymlicka’s argument for group-differentiated rights is a part of liberal thought based on equality and freedom. Kymlicka in his article “The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism?” argues that ideas regarding “the legal and political accommodation of ethnic diversity has been in a state of flux for the past forty years around the world.”(Kymlicka 98) From 1970-1990, Western democracies were open to recognition and accommodation of diversity through minority rights, however, mid-1990s saw a backlash against multiculturalism. This was partly driven by apprehensions of majority groups that accommodation and assimilation had gone too far and was a threat to their status quo. The chapter analyses Pearl S. Buck’s essay, “On Discovering America” vis-à-vis Will Kymlicka’s concept of ‘Multicultural citizenship’ and explores how Buck sees the need for equality and protection of minorities. She highlights the contribution of immigrants and also that immigration is an inevitable phenomenon. The essay also highlights racial discrimination. Buck is championing the legislation for protection of immigrants under special rights. Peter Conn’s biography, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* provides an insight into her multicultural upbringing, where she grew up in China but was brought-up according to American lifestyle by her American parents. These sources uncover multicultural influence on Buck, which enabled her to encapsulate cultures in a realistic and humanistic way. Liao Kang’s *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Bridge across the Pacific* discusses the important role Buck played in the field of cultural exchange. She believed in cultural harmony between the East and the West. Liao stresses the cognitive value of Buck’s major work and their relevance in today’s multicultural studies in the first chapter of titled “A Paradoxical Enigma”. Jay Cole and John Haddad in their book *Transnational Perspectives on Pearl S. Buck* underscores Buck’s insistence on cross cultural understanding. These biographical studies not only

enhance our understanding of her rendition of China, but also exhibit her finely modulated multicultural thought. Her concern for Asian women, her advocacy for setting up adoption homes for biracial children and championing for immigrant rights testify to her being an ambassador of cross-cultural ties.

Chapter V titled “The Rhetoric and Reality of Assimilation” critically examines two approaches suggested by the philosophers of multiculturalism. The first being assimilation theory or the ‘Melting-pot’ theory which believes in a common culture where other cultures get assimilated into the dominant one and the second, the ‘accommodative difference-sensitive’ theory also known as ‘salad-bowl theory’. The study highlights how the former stance is ‘difference blind’ and can potentially harm the minorities of a nation-state and how ‘group-differentiated policy’ is a favourable approach wherein interests of all members of nation-states including minorities are protected and expressed. This chapter analyses Pearl S. Buck’s novels *Peony* and *Kinfolk* and draws a comparison of the policy of assimilation and acceptance. In the novel *Peony*, the central character is a maid named Peony who works in a Jewish household and the setting is China. Throughout the novel there are references of forced assimilation of Jews into the Chinese culture to the level that many of these Jews are not even aware that they are no longer Jews in their day-to-day life. However, the feeling of claustrophobia in the Jews while living in China is rendered aptly as the readers are apprised that many Jews do not observe any of the Jewish customs or rituals and are living a life of pseudo-Chinese. The second novel of study in this chapter is *The Kinfolk* which follows the story a Chinese family in America. Dr. Liang moves to America hoping of a better life. Soon, his children want to go back to their motherland because as immigrants they have to deal with lot of adjustments and assimilation. Even on returning to China, they don’t find peace and contentment as they are perceived as ‘outsiders’ or Chinese-Americans. The chapter examines how immigrants suffer due to discrimination as the host country does not respect their customs and rituals and in face of forced assimilation the minorities feel marginalised and the only hope for them is to return to their roots.

Buck as a writer could foresee that a political order which grants equal dignity and freedom to individuals belonging to diverse cultures and ethnicities can secure a peaceful existence. Being an avid humanitarian, she believed in respect for every human being. Her writings are a microcosm of the experiences of different minorities all over the world and confirm that multicultural conviction supported by political policies of multiculturalism can ensure dignity to the immigrants and in doing so it challenges the divisive social and cultural forces responsible for marginalisation of minority groups. All her works resonate with the fears and hopes of individuals, considered to be belonging to the minority group, desiring a meaningful existence under challenging circumstances. Buck explores the primordial human longing for rootedness, dignity and freedom in multicultural settings. At a time when we are witnessing rampant incidents propelled by racism and xenophobia across the world, Buck's work assist the present and future generations to foster a humanistic understanding of the world to make it a better place.

In her autobiography, *My Several Worlds* she tells her sister Grace, "In the night or a dozen times a day I find myself thinking furiously about people of world, as if they are my personal responsibility"(Buck 87). When we take a close reading of her works it reveals the fundamental unity of human perception that rises above cultural and geographical differences. Her works transcend cultural boundaries and being a 'Third Culture Kid' according to David C. Pollock and Ruth Van Reken who in their book, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Among the Worlds*, explore that she had a chance to see commonalities between two cultures, she realizes it is not necessary to conform to the American model and countries other than America cannot be labelled as "other" or "evil". She was a conscious writer who knew that literature has the potential to bring a transformation. In a true sense she was a revolutionary and a champion for the cause of less privileged like the Amerasian orphans, ethnic minorities and people under oppression of imperialism. Her works helped Americans to bring a shift in their perspective of other cultures particularly Eastern the cultures. She could discern the self-contradiction of the American

rhetoric of 'ideal democracy' and exposed its imperialist ideology. All she wanted was to foster a universal fellow- feeling.

Chapter 1

Multiculturalism: An Overview

Over the past few decades the debates on the issues of cultural and ethnic diversity have risen, thereby providing an impetus to researchers to respond to the challenges associated with it. The world is witnessing a change as contemporary politics is stressing on the need for recognition and acceptance of people from diverse backgrounds. Will Kymlicka, in his essay “Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East” maintains that prior to WWII, the hierarchy of positions in social institutions were not democratic and liberal. After WWII equality of races and people was demanded that gave rise to political and social movements like struggle for decolonization, fight against racial segregation, Afro-American Civil Rights and minority rights movement. The advent of globalization increased the mobility of people from one country to another which led to huge migrations across the world. This resulted in cultural confrontations and subsequently, the demand for equality and identity. The growing awareness regarding the modern nation states where the political systems are still traditionally organized, has led to the political philosophies like multiculturalism for equal participation and representation of marginalized groups.

Multiculturalism is used to describe a linguistically, racially, religiously and territorially diverse society and it believes that all cultures are equal in spite of being different from each other. In the light of this concept every citizen has a right to practice and follow his culture, without the pressure of having to sever his ties with his ‘roots’ because of the policies of the state. As stated in the essay “Liberalism”, “... The first supposes that government must be neutral on what might be called the question of the good life” (Dworkin 127).

The concept of multiculturalism began as a philosophy in the second half of twentieth century. Canada was the first country to acknowledge it in 1970’s as a political manifesto to deal with ethnic pluralism, followed by Australia. During these years there was a growing political awareness among minority groups that

expressed it through ethno-cultural nationalism, in many parts of U.S. and Europe. In the past, some nations considered all forms of diversity; cultural, ethnic or racial, as a potential threat to their political stability, however with the passage of time, when multicultural manifesto was declared, non-whites and people of different ethnic backgrounds were allowed to immigrate as immigrants. Along with this the indigenous people were granted rights. These policies focused on encouraging cultural integration and acceptance of minority cultures without being forced to assimilate.

Multiculturalism is also known as cultural pluralism. David Jary and Julia Jary in *Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology* refers to multiculturalism as promotion of cultural pluralism.....multiculturalism celebrates and seeks to promote cultural variety. At the same time it focuses on the unequal relationship of minority to mainstream cultures. According to *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism* multiculturalism incorporates perspectives of women, minorities, and non-Western cultures, giving them their due recognition.

Ever since the hegemonic colonial powers came to an end, the minorities questioned political agendas that were racially biased. Terence Turner in *Anthropology and Multiculturalism* claims: “Multiculturalism is one manifestation of the modernist reaction to the de-legitimization of the state and the erosion of the hegemony of the dominant culture in advanced capitalist countries” (416).

Analysing the study of the settling of immigrants in the West, particularly America, two models of Multiculturalism have been identified namely the ‘melting pot’ theory and the ‘salad bowl’ theory. ‘Melting pot’ theory is used to describe ‘cultural assimilation’ when immigrants from different parts of the world came to America and blended into its culture and lifestyle; which is known as ‘Americanisation’ in America. In this model the minorities group and the immigrants are not striving to be segregated from the dominant group.

On the contrary, 'salad bowl' theory, which is a recent phenomenon, suggests that people from different cultures and the minority groups are not forced to assimilate, rather they maintain their distinctness and co-exist alongside different cultures; maintaining diversity and at the same time not letting diversity to fall victim to the overbearing dominant culture. In *Introduction to Multiculturalism*, the author candidly explains how multiculturalism is rooted in egalitarian opportunities without any discrimination. He writes:

I have highlighted the element of integration within multiculturalism, and will do so subsequently, to emphasize that multiculturalism has never been about encouraging separation and segregation. It has involved the creation of structures in which the incorporation of immigrants and ethnic minorities occurs fairly and with the recognition that the desire of immigrants and minorities to retain aspects of their cultures is reasonable, and that cultural diversity is itself desirable and benefits the nation in a variety of ways (Rattansi 22-23).

Multiculturalism claims that diversity is the essence of life. Since ancient times the societies have been culturally diverse, however mere coexisting of many cultures within a society cannot be labelled as multiculturalism; there has to be equal distribution of opportunities and resources. Following one's culture or holding all cultures equal means recognition of each group based on their ancestry. A multicultural society contributes to the development and prosperity of its members. Multiculturalism is an idea of solidarity beyond cultural and racial boundaries. As a concept, it debates over discourses that manage diversity and promotes integration and cultural competence thereby encouraging diversity. Hence according to the philosophy of multiculturalism, every identity is relevant and deserves due recognition. In order to maintain this crucial tenet of multiculturalism it is pertinent that this diversity is recognized through public policy.

Multiculturalism is not just a concept or an idea but a policy that aims at addressing the needs and demands of cultural groups within culturally diverse

societies by attending to the problems of immigrants, ethnic groups and minorities and their relation with the State. As a policy, multiculturalism focuses on management of diversity and equality of its members, although there are many challenges to this. Stephen May in “Critical Multiculturalism” mentions the obstacles for multiculturalism as:

- The ongoing critique of multiculturalism from the right
- The tendency of multiculturalism to concentrate on culture at the expense of structural concerns such as racism and socioeconomic inequality
- The challenges that postmodernist understandings of identity present for (May 200-201).

In the second half of the twentieth century there was a manifold increase in immigrant population arriving to U.S. and Europe from different parts of world, particularly the Asian countries due to globalization, increase in cross-border communication and ease in international travel. However the challenge was how to accept and acknowledge immigrants as their fellow citizens and grant them equal rights. To accept immigrants and give them an opportunity to integrate is beset with a colossal hurdle of racism as immigrants of different ethnic and racial background have always been considered as inferior to ‘whites’.

It is understood from the world history, that as a result of certain inevitable and indispensable modern practices like immigration, communication, and globalization, the world we are living in, can no longer keep itself restricted or isolated from other cultures and countries. The multicultural social set-up these days has reached a state where the debate whether diversity is a strength or not is irrelevant because our economies and development depends on inclusion of skills and potential from diverse backgrounds.

Will Kymlicka, a leading proponent of liberal multiculturalism endorses the concepts of multiculturalism that play a vital role in squashing the ideologies of hegemony because of which the minorities are marginalised. According to him,

when the focus was to impart rights to ethnic and marginalized groups so that they maintain their cultural distinctness, it resulted in two schools of thought: the 'orthodox liberals' and 'contemporary liberals'. The former maintained that a country should have uniform set of rights and an individual is solely a political being with rights and duties but no personal identity. 'Orthodox Liberals' do not favour 'group rights' hence are difference-blind and are of the belief that supporting group differences leads to 'fragmentation' of nation-state. In *Real Knowing*, the author believes that it is important to understand the unequal power relations to avoid "flattening-out" differences (Alcoff 15-20). On the other hand, 'contemporary liberals' support 'group rights' and are 'difference-sensitive' and are also known as 'liberal multiculturalism.' But this school of thought has received a lot of criticism from 'orthodox liberals' and are accused of initiating fragmentation or diluting the influence of the host nation, under the pretext of rights for ethnic or minority groups. However, the philosophers of "Contemporary Liberals" maintain that a person can never be detached from his roots, they believe culture provides a person with norms, beliefs and reasons of morality around which his/her actions revolve. On being denied to adhere to his natural inclination towards his/her culture, creates disappointments and frustration. Historically, whenever due rights are avoided, suppressed or ignored, it has resulted into ethnic conflicts. Thinking on the same lines Stephen May in "Critical Multiculturalism" has argued for a greater public recognition in public realm of their ethnic, cultural linguistic and religious identities (May 200). He also opines that any attempt to enforce ethnic, linguistic or religious homogeneity is far more likely to foster disunity than ameliorate it (202).

Supporting the 'difference-oriented' approach Kymlicka coined the concept of 'Multicultural Citizenship'. He holds it is the duty of the state to support laws that defend rights of its citizens and the state must have laws to encourage the existence of diverse cultures. Kymlicka believes that no single formula can be applied to different groups within a state and defends difference-sensitive citizenship. The aspirations and needs of immigrants are different from those of indigenous groups.

To augment his views he cites the example of Canada-the aboriginal people. In Canada the aboriginals demanded for their rights. Finally, the Canadian government had to accept their demands and that is how the Canadian Charter of Rights came into existence in 1982. Canada recognized the Quebecs as a distinct group by creating several regulations including linguistic protection as a mark of support to them.

Working within the ambit of liberalism, Kymlicka focuses on ethno-cultural groups like ethnic groups, national minorities and others and offers a more egalitarian perspective. Explaining liberalism Kymlicka writes:

I believe that societal cultures are important to people's freedom, and that liberals should therefore take an interest in the viability of societal cultures...The defining feature of liberalism is it that ascribes certain fundamental freedoms to each individuals. In particular, it grants people a very wide freedom of choice in terms of how they lead their lives. It allows people to choose a conception of the good life, and then allows them to reconsider that decision, and adopt a new and hopefully better plan of life (80).

Kymlicka defines multination state as "a country which contains more than one nation," where a "nation" is a community living in a particular geographical state with "shared culture and language" (17). America like many western countries is a multi-nation state having many national minorities like American Indians, New Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Native Hawaiians and many more. He believes that these groups must have group rights as its members have shared group values and have every right to practice them. Kymlicka believes that group-rights accommodate cultural differences within a nation state and calls these rights as group- differentiated rights which means the rights entitled to a group rather than its individual members. In *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Kymlicka distinguishes two types of ethno-cultural groups namely 'national minorities within a multination state' and 'ethnic groups in poly-ethnic state.' Although there are some exceptions like refugees who do not fit in either of above groups and Kymlicka accepts that his

approach does not cater to this challenge. However he argues that focusing on group-differentiated rights in a nation-state can help in combating racism, isolationism and ethnocentrism.

In *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, he discusses three forms of group-differentiated rights- ‘self-government rights’, ‘polyethnic rights’ and ‘special representation rights’. In ‘self- government rights’, the national minorities demand some form of political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction. Kymlicka cites the example of Canada, how it has executed self-government rights under federal division of powers between central government and Quebec, (Quebec is a province of Canada with eighty percent of population being francophone). Various ethnic groups and religious groups demand certain rights to freely practice and express their culture and religion, these rights come under the ambit of ‘polyethnic rights’. Kymlicka then exemplifies Jews and Muslims in Britain, wherein they are exempted from slaughtering animals on Sundays. ‘Self-government rights’ and ‘poly-ethnic rights’ are demanded by ethnic minorities, however the ‘special representation rights’ are demanded by both ethnic and non-ethnic minorities, who according to Kymlicka, feel they have been oppressed and their representation in the political process has not been adequate. Non-ethnic groups include people with disabilities, people living below poverty line, women etc. Kymlicka argues that “minority rights are not only consistent with individual freedom, but can actually promote it” (75).

Kymlicka in *Multicultural Citizenship* discusses certain characteristics that are universal to the ethnic and national minorities, some groups considered as a minority are the natives who have a history of living in that country for a very long period. Also, these groups are often territorially concentrated at one place, for instance the Quebecs and Catalonians are located in specific geographical region of Canada and Spain, respectively. Along with this, their cultural practices and the social institutions are reflected in various political, social and economic aspects of society. Kymlicka believes that freedom is a prerequisite to practice culture in a true sense and culture is important to individual’s freedom

which ultimately leads to a good life. Commenting on the importance of culture he states:

So we have two preconditions for leading a good life. The first is that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value of life. Individuals must therefore have the resources and liberties needed to their lives in accordance with their beliefs about value, without fear of discrimination or punishment. Hence the traditional liberal concern with individual privacy, and opposition to 'the enforcement of morals. The second precondition is that we be free to question those beliefs, to examine them in light of whatever information, examples and arguments our culture can provide. Individuals must therefore have the conditions necessary to acquire an awareness of different views about the good life, and an ability to examine these views intelligently (Kymlicka 81).

Taking the concept of 'multicultural citizenship' forward in a critique to 'orthodox liberalism,' Charles Taylor highlights the importance of culture and identity. Taylor introduced the concept of recognition in 1994 in his essay, "Politics of Recognition" in which he confirms the need for recognition as it is directly related to the formation of identity. Taking historical instances where people who have been exploited or marginalized, leading to a poor self-esteem, he shifts his focus to the conditions responsible for rise in demand for recognition and refers to many thinkers like Montesquieu, Rousseau, Herder, Hegel, and Kant whose philosophical treatises serve as a watershed in this struggle for recognition. Taylor maintains that any kind of mis-recognition is a form of oppression. He champions 'politics of difference' (Taylor 233), focusing on promoting cultural difference and identity and supports the struggle of Quebecois for promoting and protecting French Canadian culture. Taylor argues that the impetus behind the movements fighting for racial and gender equality, political freedom and other is the human need for recognition. He writes, "Non- recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of

being” (Taylor 232).

In the same essay the author has contributed to liberal multiculturalism by giving the concept of the ‘Politics of Difference’ (Taylor 233) which is based on his idea of recognition. He recognizes that all humans have **the** right to hold on to their cultural identities no matter how unique and emphasizes the right to collective uniqueness, hence not forced to be assimilated within the dominant culture. He argues “politics of difference grows organically out of the politics of universal dignity” (Taylor 227-232). He believes that a state should not endorse any particular culture but should be neutral and allow all citizens freely to express their culture.

Kymlicka’s and Taylor’s views on immigrants is deconstructed by Jacques Derrida in “Derelictions of the Right to Justice,” in which Derrida explains that many nations consider ‘hospitality’ a crime (133) By ‘hospitality’ he means the acceptance of people from different cultures/backgrounds. He uses this concept in the context of hostility of European nations towards immigrants in the 1990s. These nations have passed laws permitting prosecution and even imprisonment because of the “crime of hospitality.”(133) Derrida is critical of these laws as he tries to explain the concept of ‘hospitality’ in “Ethics of Hospitality” by mentioning at the very onset of his essay that there is an inherent lacuna in the understanding of ‘hospitality’. He elucidates that on the one hand there is a “law of unlimited hospitality” (77) without restrictions and conditions, and on the other, there are “laws of limited hospitality,” (77) imposing conditions of duties and obligations immigrants have towards host nations. In every act of hospitality there is an inescapable violence as a result of the host nation’s exercise of sovereignty over their nation. These nations give immigrants a conditional right to hospitality without which they are considered illegal. So the only possible solution for ‘hospitality’ to work in the present scenario, according to Derrida, is that there should be a balance or negotiation between these two types of hospitality. The inherent contradiction between these opposing views of ‘hospitality’ needs to be acknowledged and fixed.

The contradiction that Derrida identified is resolved in Jurgen Habermas’s

concept of “tolerance” in “Religious Tolerance as Pacemaker for Cultural Rights.” He argues that tolerance is a bilateral process, in which hosts and immigrants need to respect each other’s position wherein the former is not forcing themselves on the latter nor are the immigrants disrespectful of the culture of the host nation. (5) Habermas believes that tolerance is rational, dialogic and inclusive, allowing for differences between hosts and immigrants. Today nations practice toleration involving exclusion and inequality. But the actual ‘tolerance’ which Habermas talks about decentralizes unilateralism by constant deliberations between the tolerated and the tolerating, in order to foster diverse cultures.

Defending the contemporary multicultural liberalism Ayelet Shachar approves a model of governance known as ‘transformative accommodation’. This model is based on a joint governance of minorities as well as the dominant group and is well equipped to address many issues of inequality and justice in culture and gender relations.

In the first wave of multiculturalism the focus was centered on ‘difference-sensitive’ policies of governance for different groups. However in the recent second wave of contemporary multiculturalism the debate has shifted to justice and rights within the groups. It is aimed to protect the minorities with respect to the members of their groups. There is a contention that the policies which are group-differentiated could favour some of the member over the other. In this second wave of multiculturalism the focus is on doubly marginalised members- one belonging to a particular minority group and second being a minority within that group.

Children are vulnerable members of any minority group and are victims of abuse in many forms-sexual, emotional, physical. Being subject to abuse their psyche gets scarred for life and prevents them from developing into a healthy individual. In a minority group, the group-differentiated rights can undermine the needs of children. Therefore rights of such children need to be protected. Along with children, another vulnerable category is women, as most of the societies in the world are patriarchal and gender biased. The policies framed to

protect the rights of minorities can pose harm to women because if women are granted freedom, men of the group tend to be more dominating which may curb the freedom of women even if group-rights are recognized. Therefore the contemporary multiculturalists focus on those rights for women that can empower them and protect them from the exploitation by men of their group.

Contemporary multiculturalists do not hesitate to mention the fact that exploitation can still occur even after granting due rights to the minorities but it cannot be an impediment in giving equality and protection to the members of minorities. Moreover avoiding and suppressing the rights of these minorities can lead to conflict and 'fragmentation'. Contemporary multiculturalists believe that within a nation-state, different cultures can stay together and every culture has a right to exist without being forced for assimilation with dominant culture. As the term 'multiculturalism' implies, the central multicultural claim is that many cultures should live together without being merged into one overarching culture.

Multiculturalism suggests a critique to political approaches where diversity is not appreciated in the name of nationalism, isolationism, racial purity and ethnocentrism. Multiculturalism envisions beyond the protection of basic rights of individuals in a nation-state to group-differentiated rights for providing them freedom to maintain and express their distinctness. The challenge to multiculturalism currently is whether or not it is an appropriate way to deal with diversity and integration of immigrants. Ali Rattansi in *Multiculturalism: A Critical Introduction*, believes that multiculturalism is seen as a fairer system that allows its individuals to express themselves freely; it is a more tolerant and more adaptable to social issues. Critics of multicultural debate argue whether it is possible for a welfare multicultural state to maintain its solidarity with co-existence of diverse cultures (45-47).

In recent decades there are events that have given impetus to diversity like immigration, communication and globalisation. Multiculturalists maintain that during second half of the twentieth century there has been a large-scale immigration to the western countries especially the USA and the UK, as there

was a demand for cheap labour from developing countries. Along with this, developed countries have experienced significant influx of refugees in the last quarter of the twentieth century as a result of wars, ethnic conflicts, and political upheavals in Iraq, Libya, Syria and natural calamities. Millions of people were displaced and entered western countries as refugees.

PEARL S.BUCK AND MULTICULTURALISM

Pearl Sydenstriker Buck was the first American woman writer to be awarded The Nobel Prize (1938), Pulitzer Prize (1932) and William Dean Howell's Medal (1938). Born to missionary Presbyterian parents on 26th June, 1892 in Hillsboro, West Virginia, she was taken to China, when she was three months old by her parents and spent her formative years in China. Her literary contribution extends to over eighty works including short stories, plays, biographies, children literature, essays and journals. Pearl S. Buck is the first American writer to write about China and revive the nation and its culture. Buck is an avid humanitarian who has worked for the betterment of marginalised groups of society. As a writer she focused on strengthening cross-cultural ties across Pacific. Her works act as a counter-discourse that subverts the insular mentality and also tries to construct the ways of acceptance and accommodation. Being herself a "third-culture kid" (Pollock; Reken, 93) she had the understanding of fundamental unity of mankind and it added to her multicultural development. **Having being exposed to different cultures during her childhood** she proved to be an effective mentor for cross-cultural understanding and her works act as vital mediators for cultural understanding.

Pearl S. Buck's works are a proof of her belief in transcultural competence, cultural diversity and racial harmony. She was actively involved in Civil Rights Movement and in enterprises regarding equality of women, children and immigrants. Buck tried to decentralise the Western discourse of racism and bring everyone on the same plane. She was a visionary who understood how the

future of America depended on the contribution of immigrants. Buck endorsed the concepts that later formulated into the philosophy of multiculturalism. Her uncanny insightful understanding of cultural diversity and justice helped her to disseminate values that act as a cultural binder. As a political activist she criticised America's unilateralism, racism and narrow nationalism.

After returning to America in 1935 Buck became a strong advocate of civil rights and women rights. In America the concept of Civil Rights was still gaining momentum when Buck started writing articles for NAACP- National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. She was actively involved in activities focused towards equality of Afro-Americans. Buck was writing in *Crisis*, a NAACP magazine and *Opportunity*, both published by NUL, National Urban League to end racism and discrimination. Walter White the secretary of the NAACP at the time spoke at a rally at Madison Square Garden in 1942 and said only two white Americans understood the reality of Black life, and both were women: Eleanor Roosevelt and Pearl S. Buck. In 1941 Buck and her second husband Richard Walsh founded East West Association, an educational treatise for West about East. During WWII, Buck continued to work for racial minorities. In 1942 she chaired the committee against racial discrimination which was an initiative of American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The committee championed the cause for equal employment opportunities, the establishment of federal Anti-Lynching Laws and an end to segregation in the military. In 1949 she co-authored, *American Argument* a book on racism with Eslanda Robeson.

Buck worked hard against gender-bias and produced a number of works advocating equal rights for women. She was a supporter of Equal Rights Amendment and during 1930s and 1940s spoke at many rallies and conferences about Equal Rights Amendment for women. In May 1943 Buck presented in Congress her argument to repeal Chinese Exclusion Laws. Later in October 1943 Congress abolished Chinese Exclusion Laws which barred Chinese immigrants from entering America. She also contested for independence of countries under British imperialism.

During WWII Buck visited many countries like Japan, Korea, and India. She witnessed the plight of war-torn places and appealed to the administration to end the conflict. She worked along with her husband as a volunteer to supply medicines and relief during the Chinese War. Buck also joined War Writers Board, which was associated with office of war information. The Writers Board used different platforms like films, radio and newspapers to support the initiative. She became a public supporter of China's struggle against Japanese occupation. Buck was quite aware of the increasing tensions between America and Japan during 1941 which was evident from the ill treatment of Japanese-Americans in America. She warned that the unfair treatment meted out to the immigrants especially the Asian-Americans, jeopardised any hope of successful alliance between Asia and America. In 1942 Buck wrote many letters to Eleanor Roosevelt opposing mass removal of Japanese Americans and she also joined Japanese American Committee for Democracy (JACD). She became a member of Japanese American Citizen League in 1947 that advocated granting of citizenship rights for Japanese immigrants.

One subset of literature on Buck includes biographical studies that reveal her lifelong endeavor to redefine culture, nation and people through the prism of concepts that were to emerge in multiculturalism in the 1970s. This body of work is indispensable for establishing the essentials of her views vis-a-vis the conceptual framework of multicultural theories. Some of her biographies are; *My Several Worlds: A Personal Record* is Pearl S. Buck's biography, a story which she characterizes as "incomplete" on its opening page, testifies to a life lived on "opposite sides of the globe." In this life spent in geographically and culturally separated worlds, she recounts "...Asia was the real, the actual world and my own country became the dream world..." (Buck 121). If her autobiography records her sweeping view of her life, biographies like one by Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* (1998) provides profound insight into her multicultural upbringing in the American world of her parents and Chinese culture. These sources uncover Buck's multicultural or bifocal influence, which enabled her to encapsulate cultures in a realistic and

humanistic way. Liao Kang's "*Pearl S Buck: A Cultural Bridge across the Pacific*" (1998) discusses the important role Buck played in the field of cultural exchange. She believed in cultural harmony between the East and the West. Kang stresses on the cognitive value of Buck's major work and their relevance in today's multicultural studies in first chapter of the book, "A Paradoxical Enigma." Jay Cole & John Haddad in *Transnational Perspectives on Pearl S. Buck* (2019) underscore Buck's insistence on cross cultural understanding. These biographical studies not only advance our understanding of her rendition of China, but also exhibit her finely modulated multicultural thought. Her concern for Asian women, advocacy for setting up adoption homes for biracial children and immigrant rights prove her being an ambassador of multiculturalism. In "On Chinese complex in my several worlds" Ruihong Peng shows Buck's inclusive and humane attitude towards cultural exchange between China and the West. Pearl S. Buck's culturally rich and highly mobile childhood gave her a true breadth of hands on experiences in many places, all of which contributes towards an indelible authenticity of her works (Peng 1237-38).

Feminist studies of Buck's women characters uncover the disadvantages they have suffered. Gao Xiongya in *Pearl S. Buck's Chinese Women Characters*, describes how women in China were caged in social traditions in a patriarchal society. Arupa Kalita's *A Study of Women Characters in Pearl S. Buck's Selected Novels* throws light on an array of unforgettable women characters in Buck's novels. In the dissertation "Analysis of Works of Pearl S. Buck and Bharati Mukherjee: A Portrayal of Women Characters," J. Sreeja focuses on the cross-cultural conflicts of identity and alienation in their encounters with different cultures.

In addition to biographical and feminist studies on Buck, her proximal experience of different cultures has engendered comparative studies, in which Buck's work is juxtaposed against writers from different countries. In her research thesis titled "Themes and Techniques in the Novels of Pearl S. Buck and Kamala Markandya: A Comparative Analysis", Anila Joseph handles the

socio- cultural issues in their novels and the resemblances in narrative strategies of two writers from two different countries. In “How 20th C Western Fiction Imagined China through the Kaleidoscope of Exoticism, Modernity and Imperialism”, Herlinger examines the works of the British, Sax Homer, the French, Victor Segalen and the American, Pearl S. Buck and delineates the shift in representation of China from an evil to exotic land and finally to a realistic portrayal of Chinese peasants respectively.

A fourth line of research on Buck has focused on her stylistics techniques. Basabi Bhattacharya in her research thesis “Retention of Saga Tradition in the Works of Pearl S. Buck” describes how Buck draws from the Chinese saga of tradition and Biblical heritage. George Cevasco reveals the influence of Chinese oral tradition in “Pearl S. Buck and the Chinese Novel” (Cevasco 439-440). And in “The Art of Pearl S. Buck” by Philis Bentley argues that her art lies in depicting China in such a way that even a foreigner can easily get hold of the land. The paper identifies aspects of her writing technique that speaks to her readers directly and with accessible clarity. Her portrayal of Chinese culture and life have also engaged researchers (Bentley 792-795). In “The Good Earth: The Representation of Chinese Farmers in Revolutionary China”, Ambri Shukla shows how Pearl S. Buck gives a convincing portrayal of China, leading to an unbiased understanding of its land and people (Shukla 250).

Pearl S. Buck questioned the moral imperialism of the US in the East. In the paper entitled “The Native Informant and Missionary in China: On Pearl S. Buck and her Autobiographical Cameos in Good Earth”, Samuel Lee explores Buck’s views on missionary activities in China. The reason for missions, according to Buck, should be “sharing a life” with the people that missionaries serve. (Lee 2) Buck gives an account of her efforts at improving cross-cultural ties across the Pacific in her book, *China as I see It*. The eighteen chapters of this book discuss varied subjects like China and its history, its youth and future and its relations with America.

Pearl. S. Buck worked on almost every front concerned with marginalisation

and exploitation of human beings all around the world. Her works and initiative were above the barriers of gender, race or culture. James Michener who worked as Board of Directors at Welcome House, recalls his association with Pearl S. Buck in Peter Conn's *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* as:

She was a spokesman of all sorts of issues: freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the adoptability of disadvantaged children, future of China, especially the battle for women's rights for education. If you followed in her trail, as I did, you were put in touch with almost every major movement in the United States-intellectual, social and political (quoted in Conn, preface).

The present study focuses on highlighting and examining the essentials of Pearl S. Buck's thought in light of multiculturalism. The research approaches the works selected from a multicultural perspective and reflects on the issues of cultural diversity, cultural competence, immigration and racism. The thesis explores the plight of women, biracial children and immigrant characters from a multicultural perspective. Buck's works stress the need for recognition and self-identity and speak for the marginalised and the discriminated individuals.

Chapter 2

Amerasians and the Politics of Recognition

Before World War II, an individual was essentially a political being and assumed that a country should be governed by single political party. Nations still suffered 'class system' in the society, because of feudalism that had prevailed for centuries. However, when democracy came into existence, different political parties were organized that promised to look after the concerns of the common man. According to Simon Thompson, such change in scenario of politics can be understood in the light of 'recognition'. He attributes in his book, *The Political theory of Recognition*, such a shift from class, equality and economy to identity, culture and diversity to rise in the focus on politics of 'recognition' (Thompson 2-3).

This chapter applies Charles Taylor's concept of 'identity' and 'recognition' to Pearl S. Buck's essay, "American Children: Alien by Birth". Taylor endorses the term 'identity' and traces the origin and development of 'identity' to 'Self' and 'dignity'. He believes that identity is achieved through 'recognition' and is dialogical in nature. Also, any form of mis-recognition is exploitation. Applying this concept to Buck's "American Children: Alien by Birth", where Buck talks about Amerasian children, who are the offspring of American soldiers and Asian women. This essay unfolds the tragic tale of an American GI who was stationed in Korea during WWII and has a family there, whom he wanted to bring to America, but the procedure for this was extremely complicated and there were no governmental policies to grant legal citizenship to Amerasian children and their struggle for recognition continues till date.

Charles Taylor a celebrated Canadian philosopher proposed a liberal theory of Multiculturalism and supported recognition of group rights of different minorities for which he has been felicitated with Kyoto Prize, Templeton Prize and John.W. Kluge Prize. In "Politics of Recognition" in *Philosophical*

Arguments he argues that ‘recognition’ is important for an individual both on personal plane as well as on political one making it a vital social and political principle. In order to show what situations led to the growing need or urgency for recognition, Taylor cites examples of dissent involving marginal or subaltern groups in different societal contexts. In these scenarios of marginalized groups fighting to be recognized, he focuses on how these people, who were denied due recognition or in other words were mis-recognized suffered from issues and challenges relating to identity. In his essay, Taylor talks about suppression of women in a patriarchal setup, ill-treatment of Blacks at the hands of Whites and how colonisers presented the colonised as inferior, to justify their hegemony. In all the above contexts, people suffered identity crisis to such an extent that they internalized their mis-recognized images which proved detrimental to their self-worth and self-respect. Taylor in his “Politics of Recognition” examines how “a dominant group tends to entrench their hegemony by inculcating an image of inferiority in the subjugated” (Taylor 233). Taylor also states that to solidify their superiority, the dominant group needs to perpetuate the narrative of ‘inferiority’ among the dominated group through certain cultural constructs. Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth introduce psychological understanding of the individual in the struggle for identity. Taylor views that people who fail to experience due recognition, will find it difficult to express themselves. Taylor in ‘Politics of Recognition’ writes:

Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it...The projection of an inferior or demeaning image on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that the image is internalized (Taylor 232).

He believes that recognition is inherently associated with ‘identity’. And this proven connection between the two has led to the demand for recognition. To highlight the nexus between ‘recognition’ and ‘identity’ Taylor acknowledges that Hegel’s dialectic of ‘master’ and ‘slave’ is very pertinent in understanding ‘recognition’. But to understand the binary of ‘master’ and ‘slave’ one has to go

the history lane of colonization and before that, feudalism. Taylor cites instances of political situations during feudal days where the structure of administration in a society was established on positions of hierarchy based on the rules of monarchy. This system of feudality was challenged by people influenced by philosophers like Montesquieu, a French philosopher who questioned the concept of 'honour'. He gave a more liberal and egalitarian version of 'honour' in his work, *The Spirit of the Laws (De l'esprit des lois)*, in which he writes that 'honor' is a desire to be preferred and to be distinct (qtd in Taylor, 226). It is "honor" where subjects are not reduced to helpless entities in a system of a despotic power.

Taylor holds that at present we have replaced 'honour' by 'dignity' which everybody deserves. This concept of dignity was endorsed when the feudal system came to an end and democracy was established. By the end of 18th century, we witness a radical shift in how an individual was viewed in terms of morality. Before 18th century, an individual was limited to being an instrument of God. The concept of morality changed and people were encouraged to understand that they have a relation with their own selves and that a person needs to connect with his own Self.

This Self is what Rousseau calls 'voice of Nature' within us. Being a firm believer in individualism and rationality, Jean Jacques Rousseau came up with the notion of "authenticity" in his philosophical treatise, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker (Les Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire)* where he maintains that "our salvation comes from an authentic moral contact with ourselves" (qtd in Taylor 228). He believes that this intimate connection with one's self is the source of pure joy or "sentiments tendres." (qtd in Taylor 228) Following Rousseau's opinions oriented towards individuality, we see Johann Gottfried Herder not an essential philosopher on politics but his political ideals are relevant even today. Herder in *Complete Work (Samlitche werke)* gives the concept of 'authenticity' in a chapter "ideen" (ideas). (qtd in Taylor 228) In the chapter "ideen" Herder presents a term 'measure' (qtd in Taylor 229) which is an individual's innate moral capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, being true to one's self

and it cannot be found outside. This stance leads a person to self-realisation. Herder was an egalitarian who used this idea of 'self-realisation' not only at an individual level but also at the cultural level. He believed that freedom is important for one's 'self-realisation'. Elaborating the importance of self-realisation on a cultural level he argues that an individual finds his true worth when other cultures are not prejudiced to his culture. In the light of this argument, he implores his fellow Germans (*Volk*) not to imitate or conform to French culture but to develop their own language and culture. J. S. Mill an English philosopher in *On Liberty* claims that if a person is allowed to make his own choices, his own mode, he will be happy (Mill 73-74). For Mill happiness was the highest good and for this view he is labelled by many critics as a hedonist.

Taylor believes that letting an individual have his own choice or the freedom to choose his own way is the most powerful moral ideal that has come down to us as it gives an individual's self within a new moral capacity which needs to be exercised and not to be lost in imitation or assimilation. This concept of self-realisation or identity cannot be monological as Taylor explains that human existence is fundamentally dialogical, we humans express ourselves through dialogue. Illustrating psychological analysis of human behaviour, Taylor presents example of G. H. Mead's concept of "significant others", where he explains that an individual's behaviour is developed through his or her encounters and experiences with others. Others are significant to our lives. Mead in his book, *Mind, Self and Society*, explains that communication is an act that involves two or more than two people. In an interaction "I" (one person) becomes response to "Me" (other person) and vice-versa and this dialogue is very vital for learning of language (Mead 174-178).

Taylor believes that humans are made to interact with others, we cannot exist monologically. Even if we try to break away from social interactions like that of an ascetic, even then we are maintaining a dialogical existence with God. He writes:

But however one feels about it, the making and sustaining of our

identity, in the absence of a heroic effort to break out of ordinary existence, remains dialogical throughout our lives. Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolations, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others (Taylor 231).

Commenting on the importance of identity, Anthony Appiah in his book, *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, Creed, Country, Color, Class and Culture* maintains:

Identities “matter” to people. And they matter first, because having an identity can give you a sense of how you fit into the social world. Every identity makes it possible that is, for you to speak as one “I” among some “us” to belong to some “we” (Appiah 9).

Although we trace that the basic concept of identity and freedom have been hailed since the beginning of the 18th century but the most authoritative and strong exposition of recognition is put forward by Hegel

ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT OF RECOGNITION: HEGEL

As a concept ‘recognition’ (Annerkennung) (Hegel 229-232) dates back to the 19th century German philosopher Georg Friedrich Hegel who proposed that an individual’s identity is formed through process of recognition. Hegel writes in *Phenomenology of Spirit (Phanomenologie des Geista)* that recognition can be understood as a relation between recognizer and recognized. He placed ‘recognition’ as fundamental to ethical life as a result of positive association with family, society and the state. At the core of Hegelian concept of ‘recognition’ lies the principle of freedom and self-consciousness. In this book, he argues about the development of self-consciousness by taking into consideration certain subjects in human history. In one of the chapters in this book titled “The Truth of Self-Certainty,” (1977) Hegel clarifies about independence and dependence of self-consciousness, also of ‘lordship’ and

‘bondage’ and dominance and obedience in the struggle for ‘recognition’ (Hegel 111) (Anerkennung). Hegel says that in the tussle for recognition between a ‘lord’ and a ‘slave’, there is always surrendering of one consciousness to the other. The consciousness that surrenders becomes a slave and the one that maintains its freewill by not surrendering itself becomes a lord. The consciousness of master is acknowledged by the one who surrenders his own. So ‘recognition’ needs acknowledging of self by others, which means “it has to be mutual” Hegel, (232).

Avishai Margalit in giving an insightful understanding of Hegel’s ‘recognition’ holds that unless one knows one’s self or one’s coordinates, one cannot know the coordinates of others. He states:

Hegel’s dark story of the master/slave struggle for recognition is a story about triangulation. Forming the triangle are the master, the slave and an instrument. This is the rudimentary triangle that is needed for the acquisition of self- knowledge. The problem to sort out is the role of each vertex in the triangle vis-à-vis the self-knowledge of master and slave. The idea is that self- knowledge requires reflection for the acquisition: not reflection in the sense of introspection but external reflection mediated by another person (Margalit 128).

In *Encyclopedia of Subjective Spirit*, Hegel in the chapter “Self-consciousness” takes forward the concept of ‘recognition’ from being a unilateral process to a bilateral and reciprocal form. This idea of ‘recognition’ is definitely more mature philosophically as Heikki Ikaheimo, writes in “Hegel’s concept of Recognition-What Is It?”, “The Encyclopedia version also describes a state of reciprocal/mutual recognition in which domination by one party has been overcome” (Ikaheimo 15).

Hegel introduces the concept of ‘spirit’ in *Phenomenology of Spirit* as “unity of self-consciousnesses” (229) which is explained later in his work *Encyclopedia* as the basic state of mutual recognition. Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit* expresses, “Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that,

and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or “recognized” (Hegel 229).

In *Encyclopedia*, Hegel discusses the concept of ‘spirit’ and shows that recognition is connected to idea of ‘spirit’ and ‘freedom’. According to Hegel “essence of spirit is ... freedom ... or absolute negativity (6). In his work *Lectures on Philosophy of Spirit* he explains human being as, “natural and spiritual.”(7). It means spirituality is the essence of humans and since our essence is ‘spirit’, the ‘spirit’s’ essence is ‘freedom’. Our essence is to be free which is also our natural drive (*Trieb*) or vocation (*Bestimmung*) to realize (Hegel 8).

This ‘freedom’ Hegel identifies as a ‘concrete freedom’ which is “at home with oneself” and is based on ‘absolute negativity’ (11). The ‘absolute negation’ is also known as ‘negation of negation’ (11), where first negation is being limited by some otherness and the other is overcoming this limitation or hostility by which one is limited. For this concrete freedom recognition is vital and rights are the exact forms of it. He introduces the concept of ‘struggle for recognition’ (Hegel 231) (*kampf um anerkennung*) as an encounter between the two self-consciousness in which both seek to affirm themselves. In this struggle of giving certainty to one’s consciousness, there is always affirmation of one self-consciousness at the cost of annihilation of the other. In the Hegelian dialectic of recognition, a master requires recognition from a slave to gain self-consciousness and freedom whereas a slave receives no recognition from the master and his self-consciousness becomes secondary. For Hegel, recognition between un-equals leads to destruction of self. He explains:

However what prevents this from being genuine recognition is the moment where what the master does with regard to the other, he also does with regard to himself, and where what the servant does with regard to himself, he also is supposed to the other. As a result, a form of recognition has arisen that is one sided and unequal (Hegel 231).

However recognition between equals can be fruitful and lead to attainment of

freedom. As a result, two self-consciousnesses recognize themselves as mutually recognising one another (Hegel 231). Recognizing the ‘other’ is what makes the ‘other’ free, this sense of freedom that one experiences, imparts confidence and self-assurance. When such an understanding is attained between humans in a social setup, only then can harmony prevail in a true sense.

For Hegel each individual or consciousness possess an innate sense of his own status, however for Rousseau the sense of status is governed by the vices like pride and vanity in a civilization. Rousseau states that ‘recognition’ especially for the minorities is possible only if it is acknowledged by the majority. In his famous treatise *Social Contract*, he writes:

One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they.”(*Tel se croit le maître des autres, qui ne laisse pas d’être plus esclave qu’ eux*) (Rousseau 134).

Rousseau further explains in *Emile*, how a master and a slave, in their inter-dependent positions corrupt each other “*maître et esclave se depravent mutuellement*” (284). He further suggests that ‘recognition’ is associated with self-esteem. In a society recognition is a must for a healthy self-worth of individuals. In this context, Immanuel Kant has brought forth the concept of ‘equal dignity’ in his work *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, where he talks about the inborn ability of an individual to determine good and bad based on rational thinking. His idea of morality is quite rational. Taylor calls this quality as “*universal human potential*” (Taylor 233).

Since the beginning of 20th century human civilization has witnessed numerous movements and evolution of philosophies which have served as a watershed in the political scenario worldwide. The consensus for a democratic society was gaining momentum proving that people did not want to be dictated. Taylor’s concept of ‘recognition’ coincides with Hegelian belief where individual identity is shaped by social interactions. In this context, it is mentionworthy;

Hegel’s triangle of recognition hinges on idea that for each person

involved in the struggle, the point of view of the other is essential for the acquisition of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge that seems to be distinctly human (Margalit 134).

On **the** basis of above insights, Taylor constructs ‘politics of equal recognition’ (Taylor 234), wherein he argues that recognition can be understood at two levels. On a personal level, it is through our interaction with those we share our personal lives. On a social plane our identities are continually formed through an open dialogue. Taylor explains how the recent movements like feminism, race relations, and multiculturalism all are anchored in the belief that mis-recognition is a form of oppression and can inflict psychological damage.

Taylor focusses on recognition at social level, which has been put to question ‘Politics of recognition’ in public sphere is understood in two ways. One is the “politics of equal dignity” (Taylor 235) which suggests that every human being is to be respected, irrespective of their background or ethnicity. All individuals are to be treated on the same level of recognition with no class distinction. This aspect is focused on universalism. The second, Taylor feels has been ignored over the years and has been avoided because of forced assimilation is “politics of difference” (235) which asserts that an individual’s or group’s unique identity is to be recognized.

Acceptance to ‘different’ has been opposed by Liberals as being discriminatory and not universal; they claim that ‘recognition’ based on the principle of ‘difference’ **divides people**. Critics have accused multiculturalism of dismissing universalism and eulogizing particularism thereby eliciting social and political fragmentation. Liberals have been hostile to multiculturalism as Will Kymlicka observes the near universal response of liberals has been one of active hostility. Taylor in responding to challenges raised by orthodox liberals holds that an individual cannot be only a political being, refuting liberalism that considers an individual to be solely a political being without any private identity. As Dworkin and Rawls maintain in *Theory of Justice* that the dimension of private identity would lead to complicated business of state mediating between different conceptions of “good life” (223-251). In critique to

Liberalism, Taylor observes that identity “is who we are, where we are coming from. As such it is the background against which our tastes, opinions and aspirations make sense” (Taylor 248). An individual can never be separated from his social and cultural context. Stephen May in “Critical Multiculturalism” defends the accusations from liberals of “ethnic cheerleading” and “nationalist myth making” (May 203). He argues that liberalism in name of narrow nationalistic agenda creates a static national identity to which all should subscribe thereby hindering the possibility of dual or multiple identities. Taylor writes, “Liberalism is not a possible meeting ground for all cultures; it is the political expression of one range of cultures, and quite incompatible with other ranges” (249).

Defending multiculturalism, Taylor believes that one needs to understand unequal power relations. As Alcoff maintains that we should avoid making mistakes made by liberals of ‘flattening out differences’, making them appear equal.. Taylor in his theory focuses on structural concerns where culture is linked to institutions of power.

With the passage of time, as the study of human psychology developed, the concept of ‘recognition’ gained more and more importance. According to Taylor, in earlier times “general recognition was built into socially derived identity by virtue of being” (Taylor 234). It is mention worthy

If relations of recognition are broken or severely distorted, then psychological harm will result. Fanon, for one was convinced that the psychological problem which he described were the direct result of presence of French colonial power in Algeria (Thompson 20).

This idea of subjugated people is further elaborated by Simone de Beauvoir who claims, a woman is always defined as man’s ‘other’ or ‘shadow’ (8-9). Taylor moves on to cite many other movements of nineteenth and twentieth century, he discusses the American Civil Rights Movement which was a protest against the labelling of human beings as ‘white’, ‘black’, and ‘brown’. This discourse in America has run since ages and the ones at receiving end of this

narrative were blacks. Likewise Edward Said says in his work, *Orientalism* that in **the** discourse of colonialism, the imperialists constructed binaries to project themselves as superior to the ones they colonized and dominated and **justified their hegemony by forcing their belief of considering the colonized as barbaric and ignorant**. Thus in this practice of maintaining their domination, **the dominant group subjugate and suppress the marginalized by psychological tactics, wherein the narrative of the colonizer being superior to the colonized is internalized**. Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth (Les Damnés de la terre)* believes that such discourses “alienates black person from both society and their body,” (Fanon 17) as racism permeates consciousness of oppressed and this idea of the otherness gets internalized. Taylor says, “The notion of recognition focuses of acceptance of a person for who he is” (232). According to him, this need for recognition is continuous and cannot be neglected at any point of time. He adds “the need for recognition is not new. Human life is fundamentally dialogical in character” (Taylor 232). It has always been a central need. It is not just a need during a particular period of life but our need for recognition “continuous indefinitely” (Taylor 233). Simon Thompson writes in *The Political Theory of Recognition: An Introduction* (2006) that acknowledgement of what is different is the demand of these people which can be race, language, religion, and sexuality (Thompson 3-4). But in current times the focus has shifted, Taylor in “Politics of Recognition” says, “What has come about with modern age is not the need for recognition but the conditions in which attempt to be recognized can fail” (235).

Liberalists like Brian Barry offer stark opposition to recognition. In his book *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. **Barry** denies Taylor’s accusation of Liberals being “inhospitable to difference” **(62)**. He writes, “But this is a virtue, it is “difference-blind” liberalism that gets the right answers and the “politics of difference” that should be rejected” (Barry 63). Taylor believes that the idea of distinctness has been ignored or avoided by majority or dominant group till recently. For him recognition is acknowledging, “What is peculiar to each.” This is a radical shift in understanding of recognition

and identity. Taylor in his work, *Sources of Self* traces the development of the modern understanding of self through recognition. Liberalism accuses multiculturalism of mere sloganeering without any recognizable results. Richard Hatcher observes in *Race and Education: Two Perspectives for Change* that while

Culture is the central concept around which multiculturalism is constructed, the concept is given only a taken-for-granted common sense meaning, impoverished both theoretically and in terms of concrete lived experience. It is a concept innocent of class (Hatcher 187-188).

Taylor writes in *Sources of Self* that identity can never be achieved in isolation, it is always with respect to others and an outcome of acceptance by others. And even though the people who accepted others identity move away, the ones who are accepted always benefit. (26) He further explains: “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need. To treat people with dignity and respect, we need to take full account of their varied social situations.” (Taylor 26). Recognition extends to identities like ethnicity and gender also, as in words of Taylor; ‘this is especially important vis- à-vis those whose identities have been systematically degraded and whose rights to be treated as equals have been neglected.’ (Taylor 28). Axel Honneth in his *Theory of Recognition* (1995) writes about importance of recognition and the modes of recognition, where without love there can be no respect or esteem. He remarks: “For Hegel love represents the first stage of reciprocal recognition, because in it subjects mutually confirm each other with regard to the concrete nature of their needs and thereby recognize each other as needy creatures” (Honneth 32).

Taylor extends this concept of recognition to Education, where the contribution of non-European cultures are not given due accreditation. He calls for broadening of horizons or what Hans Gadamer in his book *Truth and Method* calls “fusion of horizons” (*Horizontverschmelzung*) (Gadamer 289) to be open to cultural studies of their relative value. Gadamer means by horizon a viewpoint that limits the possibility of having an impartial objective vision, he

also believes all humans inevitably inhabit a horizon that conditions our opinion and views. In a horizon the understanding of an individual is limited because it is confined or conditioned by socio-cultural setup. In learning about different horizons, we can be open to others experiences, welcoming different perspectives. This fusion of horizons helps us to understand and integrate with what is different and is an ongoing process.

In the light of principle of ‘politics of difference’, the fight for the rights of Amerasians is the demand for acceptance and group rights in spite of their distinctness. Pearl S. Buck in advocating for the citizenship rights of Amerasian children and accepting them as naturalized American citizens, is a true proponent of recognition and identity.

AMERASIAN:

The word ‘Amerasian’ was coined by American writer Pearl S. Buck and was given formal recognition by U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services. An Amerasian means a person born in any of the Asian country to an Asian mother and a U.S. serviceman father posted in Asia. Amerasians are also known as ‘war babies’ or ‘GI babies’. In Merriam Webster dictionary, the word ‘Amerasian’ means a person of mixed origin American and Asian descent. The Amerasians are children born in Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, and Laos. Most of these were born during WWII, the Vietnam War, and the Korean War and America had military bases there.

Pearl S. Buck mentions Amerasians in an interview in the Merv Griffin Show in 1966, where she said that she saw them for the first time when she was visiting Korea and Japan in 1960 with her biographer Theodore Harris. She describes them as “beautiful people who are getting wasted” (Buck 52). She also recalls her encounter with these mixed-race children in Japan in her book *For Spacious Skies* which is a collection of her interviews with Ted Harris. She describes them in *American Children: Alien by Birth* as:

...I know these displaced children who have no families, no country, no

opportunity. There were many of them in India, once upon a time when lonely young Englishmen were sent out to rule the “natives” in the cause of the Empire. They were born displaced too. Neither English nor Indian, they were a lost group (Buck AC 38-39).

Later she established Pearl S. Buck Foundation, the first adoption home for interracial children in 1965 funded by the money she received on being awarded with Philadelphia Gimbel Award. Pearl S. Buck foundation established an Opportunity Centre in Sosa, Korea in 1965, where Buck assisted two hundred children on daily basis and ninety six full time residents. Buck brought the issue of Amerasian children on an international platform.

Buck begins her essay “American Children: Alien by Birth” with the lines, “Rooted as I am in this countryside where I live...” (Buck AC 38). From her writings and actions it is evident that she is committed to serving people; she comes up as a cosmopolitan, belonging to world rather than a particular place. Having an experience of living in two different places bearing different cultures, made her a people’s person. She recalls in her memoir, *My Several Worlds*, “having lived in several worlds, one a small, white, clean Presbyterian world of my parents and other big, loving merry not-too-clean Chinese world” (Buck MSW 3).

In the essay “American Children: Alien by Birth” Buck talks about her first visit to Korea in 1960, where she saw a completely different race of human beings. She visited Korea as she was involved in a humanitarian project and witnessed the plight of the Amerasian children for the very first time. After returning from Korea, she wrote a novel about this country titled, *The Living Reed*, praising its tradition and culture. Buck says that she owed this novel to the Koreans.

Buck is nostalgic when talking about the time she was in Korea. After so many years something awakened in her a new responsibility towards Korea: a letter from an American soldier who served in Korea. From this letter Buck assessed that the soldier seems to be “a simple man, not well educated” (AC 38)

but the man was in trouble. The soldier mentioned in the letter that he was sent to Korea at the age of nineteen and was serving as an ordinary “private” (AC 38). He narrates his experiences and ordeal with simplicity. Being very young and away from home for first time, it was quite hard for him to adjust. He felt lonely and depressed, all he needed was love and companionship. On one visit to a night club set up by American authorities for soldiers, he met a Korean girl whom he describes as;

There was one girl however, a small, quiet girl, who spoke English quite well. She was the shyest of them all... speaking English because of her schooling in a missionary school. She was neither a camp follower nor a prostitute (Buck AC 38).

Their meeting gradually developed into a committed relationship but the soldier was denied permission to marry her. So they had a ceremony through a “Korean priest” (AC 38). During his tenure there, he had two lovely children on whom he doted. He had a complete family and was very happy but his happiness was short-lived when he was forced to return to America as his term to serve in Korea ended. He returned to the U.S. leaving behind his Korean wife and Amerasian children.. Buck writes;

...It was not long, however, before he became a father. In time there were two children, first a boy, then a girl. The years passed and his term of service was over. He applied for sixty day extension, and was refused. He was compelled to return to his own country without hope of seeing his Korean family. Of course there were promises... (Buck AC 38).

This article is not about one particular soldier and his family but many others who faced the same fate. The fact that the amerasians have to demand respect for their existence as human beings is humiliating because the modern democratic setup of the nations have made it clear that all human beings irrespective of their background deserve equal respect. “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need (Taylor 26).” The

soldier wrote the letter with a hope to get back to his family. For some time he could send some money to **them but after a while this provision was denied**. He was helpless as he knew that his children have stopped going to school due to the discrimination against Amerasians. The American father asks Pearl S. Buck about the possible solution to this problem as he is desperate to bring his family to America. Buck wants to help these children. She writes she has heard about Amerasians in Okinawa where U.S. still holds its bases. “Yes I have seen these half-American children in Japan too, and, yes I do not doubt they are beginning to be born in Vietnam” (Buck AC 39).

Buck is aware of the fact that there is no existing solution for any American soldier to bring his Amerasian children to America. All they can do is to speculate over their family in Asian subcontinent. Buck being raised in China knows the value systems in Asian societies. She explains:

There is a strong prejudice in Asia against the children born out of wed-lock. These Asian societies are family centered, and without a family a child has no chance for education or job. The danger is that the child, grows to youth, will have no recourse except at the lowest levels (Buck AC 39).

Although many of them find a place in orphanages, they face **decimation there too**. Buck is convinced over the superiority of their genes, “The child is usually a superior child, both in mind and body” (Buck AC 39). She remembers the first time she met an Amerasian child begging in the streets of Seoul and explains his physical traits as:

Before I could drop a coin into the child’s hand I looked down into the child’s face. It was not a Korean child. I saw an American face, the eyes dark blue, the skin fair, the tousled hair a reddish brown .I spoke in English, but the child knew no English and I knew no Korean (Buck AC 39).

Abandoned in their early life, living with the stigma of being **illegitimate, they are subjected to hate because of their physical traits. In addition to this,**

they are labelled with many derogatory terms like “left by ship, children of dust, goodbye to daddy”. (Lapinig 19) Black Amerasians are often called “charcoal” (Lapinig 19) or even worse. This is psychologically demeaning and traumatic as the amerasians are perceived and projected as ‘inferior’. (Taylor 232). So, she feels indebted to the people who supported these amerasian children and mentions of Henry Holt who brought many such children to America for adoption and ran orphanages in Korea.

But, the fact of matter, Buck writes, is that it is a very small number of the amerasian children who get to America, and for majority of others, there are no chances of leaving their native Asian countries. Unfortunately, their native land was not prepared to own them and this resulted in identity crisis as they had no place to call their home. As mentioned “Identity is who we are, where we are coming from. As such it is the background against which our tastes, opinions and aspirations make sense” (Taylor 248). But for the amerasians their hopes and beliefs have no value as they belong to nowhere. After returning to America, Buck was resolved to do something about these children and tried to reach out to the military authorities but to her dismay she was not supported. Later she sought help of her friend Art Buchwald, a columnist in Washington Post, who wrote about the tribulations of the amerasians in his column ‘Fathers Anonymous Club’. This writing elicited donations but was not sufficient. Buck was undeterred and she turned to government officials where she was shocked to know that it was a policy of government to dismiss the issue of Amerasians in Korea and their stance was the same for the Amerasians in Japan. Buck writes;

...My friend Miki Sawada, a Japanese saint of a woman who has devoted her life and fortune to these children, tells there is no chance for them in Japan. She is planning to send the ones left in her orphanage in Brazil. One half- Negro boy objected ... (Buck AC 40).

Buck writes that as long as America has bases all over the world, the birth of these half-American children is inevitable. And also acknowledges the fact that these bases are part of government policy so the remedy in her opinion, is that

they should not be left to suffer or get wasted as it can turn into something disastrous for whole world. America being a developed nation cannot afford to neglect this issue, it would prove detrimental to the country in the long run. Buck rationally admits the fact that the government and organizations have not assumed the responsibility. There are no state laws to protect these minorities. Being a responsible American citizen she writes:

I am an American, and I am a concerned individual. I believe that these children, cared for and educated, can be a blessing to the countries where they are born. I know that, uncared for and allowed to grow up in ignorance, they can be a source of trouble which will react upon us all (Buck AC 40).

The essay shows the stark reality of emotionless, dispassionate system of American army regulations. She turns to every responsible American whose conscience cannot let such injustice to continue. The Amerasian children have been excluded and ignored for quite a long time, which has resulted in low self-esteem and self-worth among them. "Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it (Taylor 232)." Their fight is against those authorities that resist their demands for recognition. Although U.S. Senate has passed bills like Immigration Reform Bill in May 2013 that made legal citizenship possible for immigrants without any documentary proof, but this bill does not address the issue of Amerasians who have equal right for legal citizenship. Christopher M. Lapinig in his article "The Forgotten Amerasians", published in *The New York Times*, narrates the efforts of an American soldier, to bring his Asian family in Philippines, to America but all in vain. The number of Filipino Amerasians outnumber other Amerasians living in neighboring countries due to the presence of military bases in Philippines for about ninety four years from 1898 to 1992 (Lapinig 19).

In 1982 the Amerasian Act passed by U.S. congress allowed Amerasian children from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand to immigrate to America. But for Philippines and Japan there was no such provision. Unfortunately the

immigration of Amerasians under this federal Act was not a successful endeavor as the process of documentation for immigration was tedious and expensive. Those who **did manage** to land in America longed for recognition and acceptance. Also none of these children had any access for obtaining legal citizenship or becoming naturalized citizens.

The Amerasian identity crisis is still relevant as America maintains its bases in **the Pacific**, Okinawa and Philippines **and some of the largest bases** are Subic Bay base and Clark air base. At present there are approximately two million Amerasian children in **the** Pacific alone. These Amerasian children in many Asian countries are abandoned both by their **native countries** and the U.S. government. **Their native countrymen justify their ostracisation on the premise that they are not pure-blooded but a mixed breed.** In 1948 Daniel Berrigan wrote an article in *Saturday Evening Post*, titled “Japan’s Occupational Babies” which informed about two orphanage directors in Japan who were arrested for starving orphans of mixed-race. In countries like Korea these children **were also subjected to** human trafficking.

Due to the efforts of many philanthropists, U.S. Government was pushed to act in some way. During Vietnam War, photographers Bill Kurtis and Andrey Tiernan **clicked** abandoned Amerasian children in **the** streets of Saigon, which garnered public attention. P. C. Kutschera in his doctoral thesis “Stigma, Psychological Risk and Stress Confronting Second Generation Military Filipino Amerasians in Central Luzon, Philippines, Multiple Case Study”, maintains on how being neglected, has led to psychological issues in **Amerasian children.**

Like many other subaltern group, **Amerasians** have been mis-recognized and marginalized over the last many decades. A study conducted on these children by a theorist, Invigill Mochmann reveals that often, these children fathered by soldiers from foreign land become victims of social harassment. “Often they fail to receive benefits available for other children of single parent. They are often socially stigmatized and denied most elementary education and social security. More fundamentally, they often suffer from identity crisis as many do not know their fathers and in some cases, not even their mothers” (Ingvill C. Mochman et

al 263-64). This social stigma attached to the Amerasian children and their mothers forced the mothers to keep the identity of their children, a secret. Mochman et al maintain that, “The reason which has played a part in the greater interest in the fate of children born of war is an increased awareness of children as a distant group with well-defined rights” (Mochmann 271).

Mochmann further argues that although Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 includes the treatise on the Rights of the Child which includes the rights of children in different aspects of life. These are right to education, right to non- discrimination, right to preserve his/her identity and many more. But in case of mixed-race children or babies of occupation, these rights are blatantly denied (Mochmann 280).

Buck exposes the motives of the administrative authorities with respect to children of American occupation, around the world. She speaks about the agony of these people with insightful portrayals of mixed-race children. She maintains that by acknowledging differences between individuals and groups we can create an environment which is not hostile to the flourishing of different cultures. She wants administrative authorities to engage in policies that promote and support cultural diversity. Like Taylor, she strongly believes that identity is influenced by culture and hence the cultural set-up has to be conducive.

Chapter 3

The Dialogical Relation between Recognition and Identity

In recent decades ‘recognition’ has come up as a universally accepted moral or ideal. ‘Recognition’ forms the base on which we can deliberate over the problems of wider and broader significance like racism and cultural incompetence. As a concept it has many connotations. According to Michael Inwood, the word ‘recognition’ can be classified into five broad meanings,

1. To identify a thing or a person as a particular individual or as of a certain type in virtue of one’s past experience of it or without such experience, in virtue of one’s knowledge of some distinguishing feature of it.
2. To realize one’s error or truth.
3. To admit, concede, confess or acknowledge a thing or person to be something.
4. To endorse, approve, to take notice.
5. To honour in a special way. (245)

From Inwood’s classification, Avishai Margalit ascertains that ‘recognition’ has three distinct stages or phases that ascertain it as the basis to self-consciousness and can ultimately lead to consciousness of others. **In the first stage, ‘recognition’ is a** sense of identification, being able to (re)-identify objects and events. **The second stage refers to,** ‘recognition’ in the sense of **identifying** or detecting mistakes-especially admitting one’s own mistakes. Finally, ‘recognition’ is the sense of “acknowledging and honouring the status of others” (Margalit 128).

This chapter applies Taylor’s concept of ‘identity’ and ‘recognition’ to the

two novels of Pearl S. Buck: *The Hidden Flower* and *The New Year*. The former analyses the identity crisis leading to the tragic ending of the love story of Josui, a Japanese girl and Allen, an American army personnel, stationed in Japan. *The New Year* explores the discrimination of Korean Amerasian child Kim and his mother Soonya. Kim and his mother are abandoned by Christopher, an American GI who leaves them behind in Korea and returns to America. When Kim was eight years old he wrote a letter to his father, expressing his desire to move to America. Kim is brought to America but is disowned by Christopher. However, at the end of the novel he is adopted by a family but has to live without his biological parents.

Multiculturalism is rooted in 'recognition'. Among many theorists, Taylor's Recognition theory does a lot to account for identity formation, it has proven as an ideal political and moral device in many liberal societies. His theory is an attempt to redesign the idea of justice in terms of recognition. His concept of recognition has been helpful to erase the discrimination due to difference-blindness against others. Stuart Hall in *New Ethnicities* (1988) remarks; "There is a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular experience, and a particular culture" (29).

As identity and recognition are interrelated, we see its significance coming to the forefront rapidly. Taylor mentions that our identity is partly shaped by recognition from others and the relation between the two is dialogical. The same belief is maintained by Stephen C. Rockefeller in *Multiculturalism and Politics of Recognition* where he contests that the formation of a person's identity is closely connected to positive social recognition which amounts to acceptance and respect from others. In the light of these statements it becomes quite mandatory for dominant and majority groups within a society to give due acceptance and recognition to minority groups. Otherwise a democratic idea of a just society is not possible.

Buck, an advocate of minority rights and equality understood quite early that her concept of an ideal society is only conceivable when the developed nations like America take the responsibility to do so. A place like America with diverse

cultures and ethnicities can prove to be ,a model for other nations in practicing ‘recognition’ and being ‘difference sensitive’. A lot of Buck’s literary output focuses and stresses on the importance and need of cultural competence and cultural exchange. Her works explore diversity in its true nature and they weave unique experiences into new possibilities in life and make us to think on diverse matters. Appreciation for diversity is one of central features of her writing.

Theodore F. Harris in *Pearl S. Buck: An Autobiography* (1966) explores Buck’s views on children. Having met her for the first time in July 1963, he confirms that the most striking part of her personality was her empathetic attitude. Harris, in his biography discusses Buck’s relation with her children and writes;

There is no “buddy-buddy” relationship between Pearl S. Buck and her children, but the deep mutual respect between the parent and child one finds in Asia. She respects her children as human beings, as individuals, as world citizens, regardless of their backgrounds or origin (Harris 336).

For Buck, children were never some minors who ought to be snubbed when they are curious. Stanley Finger and Shawn E. Christ maintain that Buck’s relation with her children was beyond the ties of blood, “...Pearl S. Buck never considered herself a maternal person, but rather an understanding woman with responsibilities”(Finger and Christ 50).

The Hidden Flower was written in 1952 and deals with the issue of mixed-race children, their mis-recognition and the social stigma on inter-racial marriages or miscegenation. The setting of novel is the post-world war II Japan, occupied by American military forces. After the defeat of Japan in World War II in 1945, allied forces led by America occupied Japan under the ‘Potsman Declaration’. The Allied military occupation of Japan had a drastic effect on its political and economic front. The novel captures the relationship between a young Japanese girl Josui Sakai and an American army Lieutenant, Allen Kennedy who was stationed in Japan. The novel is a critique of military occupation of U.S. and the exploitation of the natives, particularly women and

children. Buck exposes this hegemonic imperial exploitation resulting in the birth of Amerasian children in Japan who continue to suffer as they are not acknowledged as citizens of either of the two nations.

Dr. Sakai, father of Josui Sakai, chose to leave America rather than be confined to a concentration camp. Allen Kennedy is a young American soldier stationed in Japan who inherits family estate in Virginia. Their love story, although against the social norms, resulted into marriage, but it soon meets disappointment when they move to America and are subjected to harsh racial discrimination. As the romance unfolds, they have to face obstacles from all corners and finally Josui decides to part from her husband and put her child for adoption. The two lovers understand that their love is powerless before this hatred among races. The bubble of idealism could not hold for long and they had to pay the price of their rebellion. Josui faces mis-recognition as her marriage stands nullified by the existing anti-miscegenation laws in West Virginia and her child Lenny is also denied due recognition as an American citizen because he is an amerasian.

The novel works out some issues relating to racial discrimination, disparity and the American bias towards Amerasians. Buck was writing at a time when she was actively involved as an avid humanitarian activist in international politics during and after WWII. She highly condemned the military occupation of America in Asia, having lived almost thirty years of her life in China, she was a witness to plight of Asians particularly in China and Japan. After returning to the U.S. and understanding the situation of race, rights and diversity, Buck could foresee how America needs to change its attitude towards other cultures and people. And as an American, she felt it was her utmost duty to work tirelessly for humanitarian issues. As Buck writes in *My Several Worlds*, (1954) “The test of a civilization is in the way that it cares for its helpless members” (337).

The Hidden Flower, captures Japanese world under the military occupation of America. The American military occupation in Asia established it as a political superpower dominating and controlling the policy making in East. For

a common Japanese it was another form of governance but only few understood how it was a form of imperialism or colonialism. The novel opens with a beautiful and serene description of Dr. Sakai's home in Japan.

THE GARDEN WAS QUIET. Beyond its walls no echo of footsteps could be heard above the soft incessant splash of the waterfall. The silence was planned, as everything in the garden was planned though all seemed nature itself. Thus on the street side of the garden the water had been lifted by the most modern plumbing, concealed behind rocks, to make a brook running apparently from a height. A truncated hillock, half hidden by bamboos, built against the high stone wall, was so designed that it took on the dignity of a spur of the mountains behind the city. Over its rocky side the water splashed in a storied waterfall into a deep clear pool. Three large pines, curved with age, leaned over the pool to make reflection. Though so few, they conveyed the atmosphere of a forest in the distance. The house, north of the garden, was entirely Japanese (Buck, *The Hidden Flower* 1).

The readers are transported to the land of Japan through an idyllic and characteristic details of Japanese architecture. Dr. Sotan Sakai, a man proud of his Japanese ancestry, decided to return to his motherland from America as life was becoming hard for the Japanese Americans during WWII where they were relocated and put in concentration camps. The political animosity was taking its toll on common people living in these two countries. In the aftermath of attack on Pearl Harbor, America's naval base on December 7, 1941, by Japanese forces. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, issued executive order 9066 in February 1942 that resulted in the internment of Japanese Americans. Within no time the Japanese Americans lost their homes, businesses and private properties. According to U.S. National Archives, in the internment camps, four or five families, with their sparse collection of clothing and possessions, shared tar-papered army-style barracks. Most lived in these conditions for nearly three years or more until the end of the war.

Many of the Japanese Americans preferred to fly back to their motherlands

however it was a tough decision and relocation to their home country wasn't smooth. Dr. Sakai having lived all his life with his parents in America beating all obstacles to get admission in medical school, had to leave everything behind, which was devastating. Getting adjusted to Japanese way of living was quite challenging as for most of their lives they lived as Americans but since they were determined, they moved, except for Kensan, son of Dr. Sakai who chose to live in the concentration camp where he had offered his services in war and was killed in Italy.

It had taken him several years to return to the ways of his people, after his youth in the United States. At first it had been unbearable to fold his legs before the low table and write for hours at a time. But he had made up his mind that he would do it, even as he had decided, when he chose to leave that country to return to the land of his birth. He had made the choice because he was a proud man and he could not brook the notion of a concentration camp in Arizona. They had given him the choice, either the camp or repatriation to Japan. He chose Japan. The iron pride made him return completely to his ancestry (*THF 1*).

Dr. Sakai could very well understand the precarious situation in America where these camps were the places of racial hatred against Japanese and also a threat to their lives. The war wasn't easy for many Japanese Americans, the conditions became hostile abruptly. In an instant they were outsiders who were to be segregated, America had failed many like Dr. Sakai in not acknowledging them as its citizens and depriving them of being recognized as fellow citizens of U.S. This land of promise and hope was marred with race and segregation. The world of Josui, a teenager Japanese American had turned upside down.

She had been terrified by her American schoolmates, always so pleasant, so friendly, until suddenly one day they had changed into enemies. Their charming faces became ugly and scowls took place of smiles... The country she had taken for granted as her own, where she had been born, whose language alone she spoke, had rejected her and despises her (*THF 3*).

The above paragraph shows issues of identity because Josui was not accepted by the American children in school, as one of them which made Josui feel alienated. Psychologically this situation was proving to be devastating; people were getting displaced with apprehension of uncertain future. In such a scenario Dr. Sakai decided to return to Japan leaving Kensan, his son behind in the U.S. After sometime Kensan dies during a warfare and this assured Dr. Sakai that his decision to come back to Japan was appropriate. The political situation between the two countries and the recent occupation of Japan left no scope for a compassionate understanding and cross-cultural ties. The occupation unleashed racial hatred affecting millions of lives. After returning to Japan, everything had changed for Mr. Sakai as Japan surrendered to the U.S. and was under their military control. The political relations were extremely strained and the resulting hatred was obvious. The presence of American soldiers in the streets of Japan was a constant reminder of the threat from the 'enemy'. Being a father of a young girl, Dr. Sakai was apprehensive about her and wanted to marry her off. Josui was young, full of energy and feelings, given the current scenario of young American soldiers seeking company of Japanese women leading to many ill-fated relationships; Dr. Sakai tells her that American soldiers cannot be trusted.

Despite Dr. Sakai's cautious warnings, destiny had something else in store for Josui. On one of their vacations in Kyoto, Allen Kennedy an American Second Lieutenant saw Josui in a street and was infatuated by her. After some meetings, he paid a visit to her home in order to know her better but he wasn't welcomed at all. Within few days of their meetings they both were in love. Allen Kennedy was a young, good looking and a strong man, far away from home who yearned for company in these hostile conditions. He was very happy to find a girl whom he liked speaking his language. As far as Josui was concerned, she was also struggling to make friends in Japan, which was a new place for her. She was feeling displaced and was finding it hard to control her desire to be free, to be loved, to live her life. When she looked at him it reminded her of America. She was in her full bloom and bursting with youth

and energy as and wanted to fall in love.

He was so nice, so courteous, she thought, his mouth, half smiling, was so gentle. And she had been secretly longing to meet some Americans. She was lonely. It was hard to find friends among Japanese when none of them knew anything about the life she had lived in California most of her years. They even disliked her for that, envied her while pretended to like her (*THF* 14).

So it was hard for both of them not to feel attracted to each other despite the fact that such relations were socially unacceptable. It was well known to Josui that her father hated Americans and would not tolerate any kind of proximity with them. Buck compares her to a “volcano” (*THF* 14) that is hard as a crust outside and molten inside. Allen Kennedy who was in Japan from sometime had no relation with any Japanese girl yet although his other companions visited club houses. Meeting with Josui, gave him the emotional satisfaction which he did not get at the recreation centre of RAA. He knew she was a well-bred girl whose feelings could not be taken for granted.

Enemy and ecstasy, desire burned in his blood. The beautiful girl had upset all his careful controls, his schemes, his habits. He loathed the coarse and the casual ways of common men in wartime, and yet he felt the same lusts in himself. He would not believe that he was capable of taking a woman’s body, however refined, impatiently for his own sake...confronted with a harlot, as he had several times chosen to be, he was impotent. He envied the coarse louts who went in thirsting and came out boasting...The army was full of them and they lived a fine life. But he was made as he was. Ariel could not become Caliban. He got up, too restless to pretend that he needed sleep. (*THF* 28)

Dr. Sakai did not want his daughter to face social stigma, racism or an emotional break down so he is worried when he comes to know that Josui is in love relationship with an American soldier. He was not sure that Josui’s and Allen’s relationship will help them earn acceptance in the American society as

he himself had to suffer being a Japanese in America. In spite of being a U.S. citizen he was forced to flee, so in a way he knew this marriage was doomed.

He said;

It is not possible for you to marry an American. I say this because I know. Even this young man does not know what I know. It may be true that he loves you, or even that you love him. But love contains no wisdom. It is only an emotion. It passes soon, and life goes on...They will not have a damn Japanese in their family. "Many states do not allow marriages between white and colored people. Tell me, does your family sit down at table with them?"(THF 67-68)

Many clubs were set up in Japan after a few months of the U.S. occupation under the patronage of Recreation and Amusement Association RAA for American soldiers. These centres were mainly recreation hubs for the American army men. The facilities available in these centers included dance halls, restaurants, bars and brothels. *Japan Times* reported that around fifty thousand Japanese women worked in these places and by end of December 1945 there were more than thirty centers owned by RAA and these women were objects for fun and frolic. These recreation centres were the breeding ground of Amerasians. Some of these Japanese women who worked in these centres got pregnant by the American soldiers but were abandoned and their children were not accepted by their fathers. Even if they were accepted, they were not allowed to enter America due to migration policies. Furthermore, if these children did enter America, they were not accepted by the American society. Mark McLelland in his book, *Love, Sex and Democracy in Japan during the American Occupation*, (2012) shows how radical changes took place within few months of occupation. He argues that although both countries wanted to regulate fraternization between local women and American soldiers but due to complacent attitude of American authorities the prevention of fraternization was a failure. He writes;

In a few weeks between Japan's capitulation and the arrival of the first US soldiers, Japanese officials had warned the population to send young

women away to relatives in the countryside, or if their young daughters and wives must remain in the cities, to keep them indoors (Lelland 24).

The Japanese government also had a role to play to setup the night-clubs and brothels during the U.S. occupation, as a part of political strategy because Japan was receiving and earning a lot of money. An article in *Chicago Daily Tribune* reports that prostitutes and sex-workers generated two hundred fifty million dollars annually in foreign exchange earnings. In the middle of political motives of two nations, the Japanese women and the Amerasian children born to them, were paying the price by being ignored.

In the light of above statement, Dr. Sakai's fatherly concern for Josui was justified. But as destiny had planned something else for Josui, her father's worry seemed of little importance. Once, Kobori also expressed his disappointment and anger over the plight of mixed-race children due to the political scenario of Japan. He says;

The ones I feel sorry for are these thousands of little children now sheltered in the orphanages, whose fathers are American, whose mothers are Japanese and who are therefore orphans... "Poor little children," "Better for them never to have been born" (*THF* 60-61).

Kobori's words point out the fact that, these Amerasian children belonged to nowhere as both the countries refused to acknowledge them as their people. The only possible home for them was either an orphanage or an adoption centre. These children grew without any parental support and the perpetual hatred that they experienced deprived them of a normal and happy life.

Allen Kennedy appeared to be a responsible and a mature person and deliberated over the future of their relation if it progressed. The good in him could not be turned into evil. Contemplating over their relation, Allen thought that their relation would be nothing more than a scandal bringing shame and disgrace to both of them and their families. Dr. Sakai being adamant for his daughter's happy and secure future in Japan, wants Josui to get married to Kobori Matsui, son of one of his patients, Takashi Matsui. The Matsui family

was very traditional and believed in reviving the old Japanese customs. Josui knew Kobori and had met him many times, **when** he was studying in University in Tokyo. He was good looking and an educated man. Josui respected him but did not have feelings for him.

Allen Kennedy understood that he wanted to be sure regarding Josui as she demanded commitment. After much thinking he found himself asking certain questions;

Did he love enough to marry her? Was what he felt, this undying longing night and day, was this true love? He had never been in love, which he now knew. But was he in love now? (*THF* 56).

He couldn't believe that he was in love with a Japanese **girl**. **Allen was aware of the animosity between the two nations**. But Josui melted his heart and he was more than sure that he wanted to marry **her in spite of the hostile scenario**. His feelings gave him courage to ponder over marriage **vis-a-vis** relationship between America and Japan. So on one visit, he asks the Colonel about the number of American GI's who married Japanese women.

The Colonel looked unhappy. "I suppose we have the figures somewhere. I don't care to face them. Do you mean married or just—"

"I mean married."

"Not many probably," the colonel said hopefully. "If it is the other thing, who knows? (*THF* 57)

The colonel dismisses the issue by labelling it as **fleeting moment** and not of any significance. He sounds **very** sure that these relations between **Japanese women and American GI's are** not out of commitment but an **arrangement for sexual gratification**. **The words that he uses for these Japanese women were quite derogatory**. Colonel replies; "I suppose even the thousands of half-and-half babies would not be the gauge of what really happens. I don't understand why our men seem so oversexed, let us say (*THF* 57)." For the Colonel, **the** Japanese women do not qualify as wives of Americans. **He could understand the**

urge to satiate the biological need when men are warring in a foreign country but marriage was definitely not the reason for setting up the recreation centres. For him, Allen's decision to marry Josui was not acceptable. He says;

Whatever you want to call it! But I've seen men that couldn't go through the act unless it was romantic. It's a nuisance, to say the least. Unrealistic. You can't count on men like that. I'd rather have a fellow that stands in line for a couple of dollars and gets it over with and back on the job (*THF* 83).

The colonel would not consider any such intimacy that was 'crossing the line'. where the boundary between an army 'male victor' (57) and a 'defeated female' (57) got blurred and it was a disregard to the narrative that held U.S. citizens as 'superiors'. So the only possible solution was to send Allen back to America. The colonel was very much aware of the birth of mixed-race children, but their presence was not acknowledged by the American authorities. He was proud of America's legal system of anti-miscegenation laws as he himself was against the mixing of races. For him, men like Allen were undermining the position of America in terms of racial and cultural superiority.

The colonel, a representative of the American government was also aware of the presence of thousands of mixed-race children in Japan who suffered due to policies of the American government that denied the right to equal dignity and equal recognition. He knew that the birth of Amerasians was one of the side-effects of the American occupation and even Pentagon could not resolve this problem. Mark Gayn records in *Japan Diaries* that there were enforcement of policies to prevent fraternization of Japanese girls with GI's but still romantic encounters were common between American soldiers and native women which the U.S. administration ignored. The colonel's attitude towards this sensitive issue was imperialist. It was not only the American authorities who were simply ignoring the reality of Amerasians, the Japanese were also reluctant to acknowledge them. These amerasian children were denied their due recognition as American citizens and suffered social stigma and neglect that hampered their psychological well-being. William R. Burkhardt tracing the

roots of marginalization of Japanese Amerasians also known as *Konketsuji* writes:

Their social marginality appears to stem primarily from factors related to family life and racial prejudice. Common to both Japanese and Korean society is an emphasis on marriage and family stability and solidarity, the stigmatization of illegitimacy, and patrilineal ancestry as a source of individual identity (Burkhardt 523).

The *Hidden Flower* highlights Buck's concerns of American occupation of Japan, of Amerasian children and racism. Allen Kennedy realizes that the authorities **weren't concerned** about the thousands of Japanese Amerasians born during the occupation, because for them it was a part of strategic policies.

The presence of Amerasian children was not just an after- effect of U.S. occupation, **but also** a parallel reality. Maintaining the same belief, Koshiro Yukiko an expert on trans-pacific relations **mentions** in *Trans-Pacific Racism and U.S. Occupation of Japan*, "Ten months after American troops landed in Japan, A Japanese radio announcer proclaimed that a child of mixed Japanese and American parentage had been born that morning. Calling it a rainbow across Pacific" (Yukiko 159). However these children were never considered helpful for cross cultural ties. In fact their existence was either denied or hidden even by their mothers due to negative societal backlash. An article in the *Saturday Evening Post* by Darell Berrigan, reported the plight of these Amerasian children,

Babies with un-Japanese pigmentation are found dead in refuse heaps. More are found alive in crowded railroad stations, in the park in front of the emperor's palace, and in public baths...The foundlings who survive –most of those picked up in the parks and stations have pneumonia –are taken to one of the public or semi-private orphan homes in the city. Most of the homes I have visited are dirty, shabby places (Berrigan 24-25).

The novel lays bare the challenges to acceptance and **recognition** of inter-

racial marriages in Japan and America and the plight of unacknowledged mixed-race children. In spite of the hatred and social denial, the lovers in the novel are committed to each other. Allen assures Josui that after marrying they will fly to America and won't face any problems she herself was an American by birth.

Dr. Sakai wanted to save his daughter from her relationship with Allen as he considered it to be a mistake and to do so he brings up his past when he wanted to leave everything just to marry an American girl, but her family almost killed him. At present he had no regrets for not doing so as he was well aware of the racial hatred that exists. He was an understanding father who knows his daughter is in love but for the hatred in the world this love wasn't enough. He not only wants to save Josui but also Allen. As now again same issue has sprung up he reflects on his decision made many years ago and confesses to his wife Hariko,

"I will tell you, Hariko, I am glad indeed that fate kept me from such a marriage. What would have happened to me when they wanted to put me into the concentration camp? I suppose I would have had children. Where would they have gone? Also into the camp? I could scarcely have brought children of mixed-blood here to Japan. You know how they feel here about such persons. These would have been children of no country, exiles in the world. No, I am glad that I was shaken from such folly. I will try to save our daughter, also (*THF* 73).

He is happy that he hasn't brought any mixed-race child in this world as that child would be of no country. But as Dr. Sakai is threatened by his daughter of eloping, all he could do as her father was to agree to the marriage. The resistance to their union from Josui's father could not deter the lovers even when Josui was harshly told by her father never to come back to him if she is thrown out by Allen and his family. It was not only Allen who knew that their marriage was not going to be smooth, it was something of a challenge, and somehow Josui was also aware of the consequences during her conversation with Kobori.

Kobori's words had made Josui realize that their children will be also of mixed-blood and what will they do to them. But for now she was in love and "it was compelling her to the utmost cruelty" (*THF* 61). Allen being an American and that too a soldier knew how the authorities were reluctant to accept any such marriages. With some apprehensions and premonitions regarding their marriage the two were doing every possible thing to be united. Allen Kennedy could not conceal his marriage as he was a lieutenant in American Army and had to inform his superiors. His decision was thought as foolish and impulsive, the only response he got from the colonel was to think over it. According to the colonel there were meagre chances of promotion for a soldier with an Asian wife; Allen's prospects of rising to a rank of as high as 'five stars' wouldn't be materialized if he married a Japanese woman.

The couple decides to get married and before doing so Allen found it necessary to inform his immediate officer. On hearing this news, the colonel was surprised because in his perspective, Allen was ruining his career and life for a Japanese girl. After a lot of contemplation, the colonel decided to send Allen back home within a week's time. The colonel was sure, that once the boy is among his folks in America, he will forget about this girl.

Allen, after receiving the orders to leave Japan, was furious and could make out that this was a plot hatched by the colonel. He was given only two or three days' time to pack up and fly back to America. Not being given much time he was finding it hard to deal with the situation and all he wanted was to be with Josui, in spite of the fact that his parents did not approve of her. Allen wanted to prove to Josui that he would come back from America for her and the only way to do so was to marry her. Allen and Josui do get married according to Buddhist norms, although the very next day he had to leave and Josui felt a sense of "foreboding, premonitions that she would never see him again" (*THF* 98).

Josui faces rejection immediately after Allen reaches his home and is with his parents. Her identity as a Japanese becomes a hindrance because Mrs. Kennedy is not at all open to accept an Asian girl as her daughter-in-law. When Allen reveals his marriage to his parents, they were deeply shaken. How could they let

a girl, whom they considered to be their 'opponent' and an inferior race be a member of the family? Once again Mrs. Kennedy spoke in a tone of the racial superiority when she said that Josui is not 'white' and definitely not from a good lineage.

She replies to her son;

"Yes."

"Oh, I don't take that seriously," she said in her lightest voice. "I know how it was. You were way off there, and I dare say there weren't any nice American girls. But you're home now---" (*THF* 111)

Mrs. Kennedy couldn't imagine her grandchildren of Japanese blood, and she was sure that Allen and Josui would have kids soon because she believed "All those Oriental women breed like rabbits" (*THF* 117). In her disappointment and bewilderment she tells her husband about her fear; "How can it be a success? Marriage is something more than just two people, Tom. It's building a family. And they mustn't have children. They just mustn't!" (*THF* 117). Her hatred and fear makes her to question the credibility of Buddhism calling it a "no real religion" (*THF* 118) All she could understand was that his son was being manipulated by a Japanese girl, without acknowledging her son's emotions. Mrs. Kennedy calls Josui a "slant-eyed woman" (*THF* 118) who will end their lives. She portrays her as monster or "other" who has no place in their life (*THF* 118).

But despite the rejection and hatred of his family towards Josui, Allen was committed to bring her to America but her arrival was not how Allen had anticipated. Josui could sense something amiss as Allen does not take her to his home nor does he introduce her to his parents. She could make out that Allen was consumed by worry and it made her feel guilty. They were constrained to put up in a hotel and this shows Allen was not in a position to accept her as his wife although she had landed in America. All her fears turned out to be true when Allen's father visited them and informed them, regarding the illegal status of inter-racial marriages in Virginia. In America inter-racial marriage was

illegal in around sixteen states during 1940's. Carter G. Woodson states that these anti-miscegenation laws in America bears roots when slavery was practice. The denial of Allen's parents to accept Josui seemed of little important as compared to the legal system of the country. In such situation, Allen became grave and silent when his father spoke, "It's is not a legal marriage... There's an old law, forbidding marriage between the races. Your mother found it somehow." (THF 139)

W. Wadlington writes in *Virginia Law Review* (1942) about "Virginia Anti miscegenation Statute in Historical Perspective,"

"Legal restraints on miscegenation in Virginia date from early in colonial period .It is generally accepted that the first Negroes were imported into Virginia in 1619..." (Wadlington 1192).

These regulations were amended many times to differentiate between a 'white' and a 'coloured' person thereby prohibiting any mixing of races. Brendan Wolfe in, *Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930) Encyclopaedia Virginia* traces the genesis of these laws. These states saw racial mixing as a threat to their supremacy. Since 1691 interracial marriages were prohibited in Virginia and declared absolutely void. According to the *Encyclopaedia Virginia*, The Department of Health maintained that to protect 'whiteness' against negative effects of race-mixing. The miscegenation laws were reconstructed in 1924. The General Assembly passed Racial Integrity Laws in 1924. These laws prohibited inter mixing of races other than Caucasians and termed them unconstitutional. Allen now realised that there was no way that he could go to his family with Josui. There was no place for her. His plans and dreams of seeing Josui and their children running in his ancestral house were all thwarted; he couldn't bear even to think about it. He felt guilty for not being able to fulfill his promises made to her. He also felt ashamed to tell Josui about his racist mother, all he could think of was to move out of his state with Josui and get a new job there.

But moving out of state was not easy because Allen knew it was going to be

full of struggles. The bond between Josui and Allen was no longer the same as they could not accept this life and had to live with unfulfilled desires. Frustration and anxiety was taking a toll on their relationship as many factors coupled in making life miserable. They both continued to hide their apprehensions from each other for they did not want to accept the fact that their marriage was getting difficult. For Allen;

He became increasingly angry with thwarted love of home and childhood and parents. He thought about his parents, living in the house he loved, and he was angry with his father even more than with his mother. The man should insist and demand, should force his will upon the woman. Not to do so was weakness in the male. He did not know he himself was a man very different from his father (*THF* 144).

Josui's determination to make their marriage work was weakening day by day as she was feeling lonely and left out without any one to talk to. Allen's indifference was killing her. Soon she realizes that she is expecting their baby but does not reveal her pregnancy to Allen, assuming that Allen might not be able to accept it as he was stressed. So she kept her conception a secret and named her unborn child as Lennie.

How the world would receive Lennie, an Amerasian child was now quite clear to Josui who had been warned by her parents, before her marriage. When she left Japan for U.S., something serious struck Mrs. Sakai's mind and it was the possibility of Josui's children. As a woman of Japanese blood she was finding it difficult to imagine a mixed-blood grandchild. Mrs. Sakai thought of it as a shameful She could not free her thoughts from age old traditions and asked her daughter;

If there is a child...This child! What would he be? It was inevitable that he be born. But did they wish him to be born? Each woman asked herself the question. When there is love, must there not be a child? ...Yet could a Japanese woman really know an American Man? This remained to be discovered. After all, Sakai had been a Japanese man and

not different from other Japanese, though superior. Thus she knew that her children would be Japanese, black-haired, black-eyed, golden skinned, but how could Josui know what her child would be?(*THF* 124)

For Mrs. Sakai the uncertainty of the physical features of such child was in itself an embarrassment. Although Josui tried to comfort her mother but she was determined when she said,

I think it matters...It would matter to me, Josui, if when I saw you, your eyes had not been black. How can I feel the child is my grandchild if his eyes are not black? Oh, Mother” (*THF* 125)

To accept a grandchild **having non-Japanese physical features** was impossible for Mrs. Sakai. Although Josui tried her best to be patient, she was also quite unsure and felt strange about such a child. Josui tried to laugh, but she too felt unhappy for a moment. If the child had blue eyes, would she herself feel strange? Yet if the child was altogether like her.

So, we come to know that both Allen’s mother Mrs. Kennedy and Josui’s mother Mrs. Sakai are not keen on the children born to Allen and Josui. Each mother wants her grandchildren to have the lineage of their culture, wherein the grandchildren would have the physical features and the aptitude of their ‘race’. Mrs. Kennedy does not want her grandchildren to look like Japanese and at the same time Mrs. Sakai does not want her grandchildren to look like Americans. On top of it the laws and policies of America were not supportive. And hence the biggest sufferers were the Amerasian children. It is a testimony to the fact that Amerasians were not recognized and acknowledged by the families and countries of their parents. It is pertinent to mention

The repercussions of their marriage were outstretched as she understood that her child could not belong to America. It was the child who had to pay the price for these complications. It is tragic that the child was made to feel undesirable. She thought to herself that, She must keep her secret, after all. A world of peace and safety cannot be built upon anger. No, she must think, she must wait, she must consider what to do. The child would be

born against the law. Love had made him a tiny criminal, innocent as he was. They were all innocent, but upon him punishment must fall. They could part, they might even forget, but Lennie would have nowhere to lay his head (*THF* 156).

From the day Josui came to know about the law that did not provide legal sanction to Allen's and Josui's marriage, she was entirely focused on where to bring her child up. She feels helpless and desperate for her unborn child who has no place to call home according to law. Josui becomes aware of the painful reality that in this struggle for recognition and dignity, both she and her baby were denied the right of basic dignity. On one hand she is uncertain about her unborn baby's dignified life and on the other hand she is also agonized for Allen. Seeing Allen torn between her and his parents, she is constrained to take the hard step of severing ties with Allen. She finds a rental place as a shelter to move out from the home in which she lives with Allen. She goes away when Allen was away for Christmas to his parents place. When he came back to the apartment he realised that Josui had left him.

What she had seen, how much she had comprehended, he would never know. He sank down upon the edge of the bed, suddenly faint, overcome with heartache and self-reproach. Then he hid his face in his hands and cursed himself in his heart, not because she was gone but because, in the midst of remorse and consternation and shame, he knew that he was glad she was gone (*THF* 168).

So, this is a heart-breaking situation of identity crisis as a result of mis-recognition. All the marriage vows that Allen had made to Josui seemed meaningless. Initially he had thought that things would be easy as Josui was an American citizen. But the disapprovals and the oppositions from both the family sides, along with the hostile American attitude towards Amerasians, finally took a toll on their marriage. Although Allen's intentions were noble but prolonged challenges to his marriage to Josui, made it unbearable for both.

After moving away from Allen Josui gives birth to a boy. Josui, was aware

that she couldn't keep Lenny with her. So the only option was to put him up for adoption or give him to a foster mother. Josui's challenges of her identity as an Asian woman and her baby's identity as an Amerasian, don't come to an end even after moving away from Allen and deciding to put her baby for adoption because after she moves in a rented room in Los Angeles where she seeks the help of a welfare agency and its manager, Mrs. Bray informs her that adoption of a mixed-blood or an Amerasian baby is not easy.

“...Miss Sakai, I was about to say it will be difficult to place your child in any home. Adoption, you know, is almost impossible. No one wants to adopt a child of mixed-blood. I have tried it before, and it just cannot be done. Neither side wants the child” (*THF* 171).

In this situation, the only possible home for Lennie was a “Boarding Mother” (Buck *THF* 169), where Josui had to pay for keeping Lennie. So this Amerasian kid of Josui and Allen, begins a life of tribulations and complications right from birth. The ending of the novel is very heart wrenching because Josui, Allen and their Amerasian baby are all separated from each other. The hostile conditions of racism and the political apathy make it impossible, for any such love relation and the children born out of it, to get dignity and identity. *The Hidden Flower* examines the challenges to inter-racial marriages in the wake of military occupation post World War II. Josui, Allen and their Amerasian baby, all suffer because of this political and social apathy. Josui is forced to make a cold review of whether or not she should raise the child keeping it with her as she is aware her child would be subjected to neglect and disrespect in the American society, having the identity of an Amerasian. She is constrained to think

But how? Could she too live without home and family, only with a child? She understood very well how Allen had felt. She did not blame him. What he longed for was natural, and it itself it was good. Simply it could not include Lennie, even as her father's house, too, could not include him. No one was to blame, except the law was there. It was the law that forbade and yet could not prevent Lennie's

birth because it had not been able to prevent the love that had compelled his conception. Law never considered love (*THF* 173).

At the end of novel, we see Lennie, brought up by two women who have no blood relation with **him but have suffered racial hatred**. These women could relate with Lenny and the suffering that the child had to go through. They accepted him for what he was. Lennie's plight of being raised without his biological parents is the reality of thousands of mixed-race children born as a result of military occupations of America in Asian countries. These children definitely need to be recognised and be given their collective rights. The sooner this is achieved the better it will be **for social and political harmony and to have multicultural ethos in its true sense**.

Dr. Steiner appears as Pearl Buck's mouthpiece on her opinions about Amerasians children or children of mixed-blood. They are true representatives of racial diversity in Nature. Scientifically it has been proven that biracial or multiracial persons are genetically more advantaged. People born to genetically diverse parents have better traits physical as well as mental due to DNA mixing. Alon Ziv author of *Breeding between the Lines: Why Interracial People Are Healthier and More Attractive* (2006) maintains that mixed-race people are healthier and more attractive because of their diverse gene pools. Their chances of survival are better than persons of mono-racial genes.

Dr. Stein had suffered exploitation and discrimination due to her Jewish lineage. She had to spend her days like many Jews in a Nazi concentration camp as Hitler was against any kind of miscegenation with Jews and tried to exterminate the whole race. In Lennie, she could see her own sufferings and therefore associated with him.

Dr. Steiner was a woman of great wisdom, she knew how in Lennie, Nature represented its diversity and abundance. Lennie's physical traits were a testimony of cross-breeding, a miracle of Nature's bounty. In Josui's company, it was for the first time that Dr Steiner talked about her trials for being a Jew in Hitler's Germany. She could relate to Josui's grief and told her;

“At first, you must know, we could not imagine that they really killed little children of mixed blood. It was not your blood, but it was my blood, mixed with Germans. They said we must have only pure blood--- as though human blood is not pure wherever it is found! Your blood, my dear, is not different from mine. We bleed the same red stuff, though I am ugly old Jewess, and you are such delicate young Oriental girl (*THF* 186-187).

Through Dr. Steiner’s words Pearl S. Buck maintains that racial hatred is not just ruining lives of Asians at the hands of Americans, as in case of Josui, but this evil practice has also done a lot of harm to humanity everywhere, historically. The Holocaust of Jews was a result of racial hatred and many similar incidents of mass extermination of human beings.

Thanking Dr. Steiner profusely for adopting Lennie, Josui she left forever and goes to Kabori. On meeting Kabori she tells him;

“It is not possible for us to live together anywhere. It is no longer possible...” “The law no longer matters...Love is not enough, either. It is not enough for me. Perhaps it is enough for Americans, but not for me. I know that now” (*THF* 191).

Buck in her novel advocates representations of the voiceless or marginalized groups like **the** American war-brides and Amerasian children, thereby championing the representation of their culture and their ethnicities within a **multicultural society. Their struggle for recognition is beset with many hurdles.**

Another novel by Pearl S. Buck that highlights the Amerasian issue resulting from America’s military occupation in **the** East is *The New Year* (1968). Moving a step further from the *The Hidden Flower*, this novel **explores the journey of an Amerasian child’s struggle for recognition and rights, both in his native country and America.** The novel traverses across three decades and begins with a description of a happy married life of Christopher Winters and Laura Winters living in Philadelphia. The Winters couple is very much in love and quite busy with their lives, Laura being a scientist at the Institute of

Oceanography in New York and Christopher is a powerful candidate for the position of the governor and the president of US. Although **the couple does not have children**, they find happiness in each other. They don't feel the need of anything as long as **they have** each other. **However, the peace in their happy married life is shattered, when suddenly, Christopher has to confront a secret from his past life.** Buck artistically reveals the **complexities** and dilemmas of relationships, with reference to Christopher, who has to strike a balance **between acknowledging being a father of an Amerasian child and his political aspirations.**

One fine morning Christopher receives a letter from Korea and the course of his and Laura's lives change forever. The letter is from a person who addresses him as a father and in a moment Christopher is a "young, lonely soldier" stationed in Korea many years back. The letter comes at a point in life of Christopher when he is close to the commencement of his political career for which he has worked hard for a long time. And as everyone else he is sure of his success and achievement as Governor or future President of America. The letter which Christopher opens, reads

Dear American Father _____.

My mother talk I not write you never (Buck, *The New Year* 3).

From the letter it is obvious that it is from his son, Kim, who lives with his **biological** mother in Korea. He is hopeful that his father will acknowledge and accept him. **And this means, his father would invite him to America.**

On reading the letter Christopher's mind is flooded with the memories of Korea. A place where he was stationed as a young man of twenty four. The place was alien and he was home sick. All that mattered for any American soldier there was companionship as war was making it hard for them to keep faith. This experience was very challenging emotionally for Chris as days passed without any assurance of war

coming to an end or going back home. In such circumstances the administration had setup night clubs for recreation and entertainment of their soldiers. In one of such places which was “a shed thrown up among ruined buildings of Seoul (*TNY 5*)

Chris, as a twenty four year old soldier, had been sent to Korea, just few days after his marriage to Laura. While as a GI stationed in Korea, he met an eighteen year Korean girl named Soonya, introduced by his friend Tom Sullivan. Christopher remembers how;

Everyone was dancing: with every man in Uniform was a slim Korean girl, most of them in sleazy western dress but a few in the wide skirts and short bodices of their own culture (*TNY 5*).

And Soonya offered Christopher, who, at that time was “lost and lonely”, (*TNY 5*) to dance. Christopher remembers her vividly as:

Soonya had smiled, a sweet, frightened smile, and he had reluctantly taken her in his arms. She wore a pink brocaded skirt, long and full in the Korean fashion, and a short-waisted white silk bodice. In a few minutes he perceived that she knew nothing about dancing. She was not tall, a slight girl, though not as starving thin as most of them were in those days, and she was pretty. Few of others were really pretty, as he had already noticed, but Soonya was fine- featured, her skin pearly white, her eyes brown and big under soft brown brows. Her little hands were boneless. Yes, even now, years later, he remembered her hands, as tender as a child’s, her right hand in his left as they danced, and then later, both her hands in his. She spoke very little English. It was that, perhaps, which had led so soon to caresses. It became necessary to communicate and they had no language (*TNY 6*).

Chris was attracted to her but going out with her weighed on his conscience as a married man, and also, if he got involved with a Korean girl, his life would not remain the same. In spite of being aware of these complications, he started meeting her often and “at last he had yielded to the common behavior” (*TNY 5*).

Tom Sullivan, who had a wife in U.S. and Korean female companion, encourages Christopher to get friendly with Soonya saying that what one does in East remains only there. Tom's words are a testimony of the callous and irresponsible attitude of the American GIs' towards Korean women. Tom tells Christopher;

Who cares if I don't tell 'em? East is East and West is West, as the saying goes. Dolly knows there can't be anything serious. I'm married. She knows that. (*TNY* 7).

With the passage of time, while Chris was uncertain about his return to U.S., his relation with Soonya intensified.

He had been thrown into the battle just before the final mopping up: then an armistice had been declared and he had had time on his hands, time to be lonely and homesick. He had written to Laura and she had replied, but the letters had not been comforting. They were desperately in love, of course; but he did not know when he would get home, he did not know how to tell her about his strange distant life, nor how from his distance even to imagine hers (*TNY* 4).

Christopher finds comfort and affection in Soonya's company. Soon she realizes that she is carrying Christopher's baby. She loved him but was aware that Christopher being married would not be able to commit to her. Christopher was surprised to know about Soonya's pregnancy and for the first time, was desperate to be with his wife Laura.

Your baby, she had said.

Two simple words, but he fell into a chill. His mouth went dry, his head swam. He opened his mouth to protest and then he saw her face, lit by simple gladness...He simply had not thought of a child. He had supposed that she had ways of prevention. It did not occur to him, in his innocence that she would allow a child to be born (*TNY* 16-17).

When their son was born, he had to decide between "choice of return or reenlistment". (Buck *TNY* 17) Christopher decided to go back to US. He told

her. “I must go, Soonya,” he had said. “I have my parents.” He could not say “my wife” (*TNY* 17).

He promised that he would try to come back, for them. He left with a heavy heart, with Soonya on the floor, weeping bitterly. He soon forgot about Soonya and the baby upon his arrival to the U.S. because he did not communicate with them for twelve years. And now, when he received this letter, his Amerasian son, Kim, was eleven years old, writing to him with a hope of joining him in the U.S. Christopher’s hidden and forgotten past surfaced before him and this letter made it impossible for him to evade or conceal his past anymore from his wife. After being in a dilemma for a long time to deal with this complicated situation, he finally speaks to his assistant Joe Berman who says

As you say, it’s nobody’s business except that now it’s now everybody’s business. Plenty of young fellows, did the same thing and it don’t matter. There must be plenty of those half-breed kids, too. I never thought about it, but there must be ... Tear up the letter and forget it. You never meant to have a kid (*TNY* 24).

Berman also told Christopher that maybe that boy is not his, to which Christopher replied that he was confident that child was his. All Berman wanted was that Christopher keeps it concealed as the latter was a presidential candidate and this truth could tarnish his image and jeopardise his political ambitions. However for Christopher, the situation was quite taxing on his emotions, he felt uneasy before Laura and knew he had to tell her the truth.

Then suddenly as he had awakened he knew he could not even decide alone what he should do. The night magnified monstrously the burden which lay upon him. He might deceive the people, but he had no right to deceive his wife (*TNY* 25).

Christopher was apprehensive of Laura’s response. All he knew was that he loved Laura and he didn’t want to lose her. He felt miserable for not sharing this with Laura.

He wanted to convey to her somehow that what he had done had not been what he really wanted to do --- no wait, what he really wanted was to feel close to another human being. In those days, in the unutterable isolation of war, the separation from all that was normal and good, he needed warmth, something more profound than the rough comradeship of men (*TNY* 26).

Feeling short of words he summoned courage and told her about Kim and Soonya. Christopher also said that he would respect whatever Laura's decision would be about their relationship. "Laura, you are not to forget that I love you and only you. I will not allow you to separate yourself from me. If you leave me, I shall simply come after you" (*TNY* 29).

In characters of Christopher, Tom Sullivan and Joe Berman we get to know of the other side of American military occupation, which is a reality but not acknowledged. It has ruined the lives of many Amerasian children and their mothers. Buck questions how such a sensitive issue could be evaded for so long and she also shows concerns about the future of these Amerasians or mixed-blood children.

In the midst of his political campaigning, Christopher wanted to do something about Kim. When he saw Kim's photograph which he later found with the letter, it aroused fatherly love in him but as not ready to shoulder the responsibility of a parent.

The boy's face gazed at him, a gaunt young face, the neck too slender, the ears too big. Yet he recognized some ghost of himself, all but eyes. The eyes were Asian.

He felt his own eyes suddenly hot and realized that tears were burning there. His son! He had dreamed of a son as every man dreams, but not one like this--

-not with a face like this! His throat tightened and his heart cried out against this son of his, born of an alien woman (*TNY* 31).

The above lines exhibit the natural and the noble feelings of a father towards his son. But they also show the American pride and superiority which seemed

to overpower the feelings of love as Christopher is not able to accept Kim, primarily because he is not born out of an American woman.

Laura after much contemplation and deliberation decided to go to Korea alone and meet Soonya and Kim. She wanted to do something that would be fair for all four of them. On reaching Seoul, she took the help of Mr. Choe Yu-Ren, to reach to Soonya. Laura found that Soonya was young and graceful with a gentle face. Soonya tells Choe how she and her son Kim have faced the agonizing separation from Christopher and he in turn explains to Laura,

Here it is the father who is responsible for the child. When there is no father, there is no family. The child is lost. He cannot go to school, nor can he hold a job, because the father has not registered his birth. So far as we are concerned, the child has not been born. He has no family, no one stands behind him. Therefore, he does not exist (*TNY* 55).

After having met Soonya and understanding her suffering, Laura could no longer hold herself and told Choe that she is the wife of Christopher, Kim's father. Whilst in Korea, Laura sees many more Amerasian children in a pathetic condition because of neglect and apathy.

She saw a child who stood apart, a tiny girl, bone thin, whose age she could not guess. She paused, not heeding the clamor of the others. Now she put out her right hand and lifted the child's face and looked down into it. No Asian child, this! Yet the eyes were Asian in their almond shape, wide, lovely, yes but not dark, in spite of all. They were hazel, glints of blue through the brown. And the child's hair was not black. Straight as it was, hanging in tangles, it was a light brown. And the child's bones, fleshless, were nevertheless of a sturdy structure, without the delicate finials of Asian hands and feet (*TNY* 65).

Laura was very distressed to see a little girl looking for bits of food from a trash bucket near a hotel. Laura's journey to Korea and she got a hands-on experience of the painful off-shoot of American military occupation. Through her, Buck presents a first-hand experience of the plight of the

Amerasian children, who were subjected to live without emotional and financial support. As she spends her days in Korea, she becomes more empathetic and concerned about them and could not help feeling that Christopher is also responsible of causing pain to Kim and his mother. On her second visit to Soonya, she wanted to meet Kim and was surprised that Soonya could converse in English although it was broken, and she told Laura;

Not my mistake for this! He cannot go to school because he cannot be registered. And children are laughing at him there. They call him dirty words. Because his father is American. He asks me, why is father American. How can I explain such difficulty? (TNY 68)

Soonya felt the need to tell Laura everything about her relation with Chris. She told her how military occupation had made their lives miserable. She was constrained to work in bars, set up for the entertainment of American soldiers. She narrated to her, how she ended up meeting with Chris, while working in one of the bars.

At first it is true I am not in love with him,” She said at last. “I was very poor. After the war everyone is very poor. My father killed and house gone by bombing. I was only child. Many girls like me. So there is nothing we can do except to sing and dance and live with American man (TNY 69).

It was only later that her relationship with Christopher developed into something more mature and serious. Soonya soon fell for him as he was not a rogue but very kind towards her. Laura was shocked when Soonya told her that it was Chris who wanted a child; “He is saying that perhaps he die before he go home again. War is over but not end, he says. He will die in war, and leaving nothing of himself alive” (TNY 70).

Laura’s hurt and indignation knew no bounds but she was helpless. Still, she wanted to meet Kim, and when she finally saw him, she realized that he was a replica of Christopher.

Then she saw him. He came from the side of the house and stood before

her, the garden his background. She felt her breathe caught in her throat .The boy might have been Chris himself at twelve, a tall, clean-limbed boy, barefoot, barelegged, wearing blue shorts and a white sports shirt both ragged ,both not too clean. But the dark straight hair was neatly combed and still wet. Chris himself, she thought, except the eyes, the olive skin (*TNY 75*).

Kim introduced himself and Laura told him that she had come to visit him after reading the letter that he wrote to Christopher. Kim told Laura that he was eager to be with his father in America because he wants a good life. Being a mixed-blood child, he is not welcome in Korea. “Here I am nothing--- nothing .Supposing he send money for school, still I am nothing. I am not Korean. I am foreign. My father American. Why am I born?”(*TNY 76*)

Kim left in anger and Laura felt his desperation and pain. All she wanted was to help this little boy. During her stay in Korea she had met two American soldiers Jim Traynor and Lieutenant Lucius Brown. They were stationed in Korea and invited Laura to Walker Hill, a recreation centre for American soldiers.

She saw a large room, filled with small tables at which American men sat alone, in two’s or four’s, or with Korean girls, loud and raucous music contending with the clatter of dishes and shouts from the bar. At one end a dancer performed in the scantiest of clothing, a Korean girl, she saw but imitating with a grotesque grace the antics of a Watusi. On the floor American servicemen danced with Korean girls who wore short tight western dresses, their hair curled and piled on their heads in monstrous exaggeration (*TNY 78*).

When Laura asked what this place was about, she was told that these were just cheap Korean girls trying to please American men and trying to be like American girls. He tells her “If a fellow takes a walk these girls are at him like flies (*TNY 79*).

Laura for the first time, had a first-hand experience of how American soldiers

stationed in Korea behaved with the girls at the recreation centre. For the American soldiers, the girls at the recreation centres were merely objects of entertainment. The imperial mentality of these soldiers who boast themselves of being superior was indeed pitiable. Lieutenant Brown laughingly says;

One can't blame men entirely. I assure you. It's no temptation to me. I am engaged to a beautiful girl in Boston. Take the young fellow from little towns and farms, though, kids of eighteen, say, to twenty-five or so. They simply give up. It's not that the girls are so tempting but the fellows are in rebellious mood anyway and ready for anything. They don't like it here, they don't know why they're here, they are homesick (TNY 79-80).

The above views of the American soldier shows that their involvement with the Korean girls was frivolous and transitory, so it was but obvious that their attitude towards the Amerasian children was equally non-serious. For them, these centres were a respite from homesickness and loneliness. However, Laura is baffled at their sheer callousness and wanted to know more about the Amerasian children, to which General Jim replied, "Plenty of those," Jim said. "You should see them when you go out in the villages" (TNY 80). Laura is further apprised by Mr. Choe, that the Amerasian children suffer the same battered life in Japan where the Americans have military occupation, just like in Korea.

"There was a period in the last decade, Mrs. Winters, when mysteriously many of these children fathered by your men disappeared."

"Disappeared?"

"Yes .They died. In many ways. Also, some of the male children were castrated. Not only here is but also in Japan. It true" (TNY 82).

Laura was deeply moved. She was worried for Kim and wanted him to be in America with his father. She told Mr. Choe; "When I came here," she said, "my only intention was to put him in a school and give him an education . . . fit him

to earn his living in some honourable way” (*TNY* 86).

Laura decided to get help and more information from the American Embassy to take Kim along with her to America. The official at the embassy told her there was no American policy to help these children, in any of the seven countries in Asia, where American GI’s were stationed. The official further informed her that the only option for her was, either to take him to America or to leave him in Korea. However these children may be killed here or become communists.

The only way that Kim could have a better life was moving to America provided Christopher acknowledges him as his son. Laura decided to speak to Christopher in order to convince him to acknowledge Kim as his son so that the boy is able to move to America, and when she shares this intention with Soonya, she is very doubtful of her son’s well-being. All her life she has loved her son and now he wants to leave her for a father who “has never sent money or asked whether he lives” (*TNY* 97).

On the other hand, Kim is over-joyed to hear about his prospects to move to America because he wants to move away from the humiliation meted out to him. He had to bear cruel words like “your mother is a whore because your father is American, only whores sleep with Americans” (*TNY* 96). In desperation, he had often asked his mother, “Must I grow up a nobody? What shall I do with myself when I am a man? Am I to be a rag picker? A beggar?”(*TNY* 98) Kim even though a child, knew very well the future prospects of his ill-fated life, in Korea where he had no chance other than to end up in thieving, prostitution or human trafficking. He knew that his mother was getting paid for serving men at “House of Flowers” and he did not want to be part of this “girl-business” (*TNY* 98).His only chance for a better life was in America with his father.

Laura learns some more details about these mixed-blood children which are not only a blatant disregard of human rights and dignity but also impossible to digest as a woman. She comes to know from Lieutenant Brown that there were

hardly any teenaged, half-blood children left as many have been killed and others were castrated. The lieutenant also told that the girls working in the recreation centres were warned beforehand not to conceive and “Some of them have eight or nine abortions a year” (TNY 108). On her way through villages she saw them begging and fighting in dust over tossed coins like “dogs about a bone” (TNY 109). Many such Korean girls were sick and in bad health but did not have access to medical treatment. “Half of them have T.B. They have to keep working. Half of the children have it at least half” (TNY 109)

The more Laura witnesses the pathetic condition of these Amerasian children, the more she is convinced to take Kim along with her to America. Laura writes to Christopher

I don't see the future clear oh, not at all! The problem remains, what to do? But I must bring him home. The process is simple. You must send me an affidavit of paternity. I think the people at the embassy will be kind anyway, helpful. Declare that Kim Christopher is your son by Soonya and that I am your wife and that you wish me to bring him back with me. I will manage the rest. If you have this document sent to me the day you get this letter, within a week I should be home. Meet me in San Francisco. Of course we'll have to pay Soonya. She wants to rid herself of the life she's been living. She wants to live alone (TNY 114)

Meanwhile waiting for Christopher's reply, Mr. Choe reveals to Laura that he intends to marry Soonya if she leaves this recreational business and sends her son to America. Soonya knew that all along these years she had been fooling herself in waiting for Christopher and deep within she yielded to the future plan of Mr. Choe. After some days, Laura leaves for America with Kim. On reaching Los Angeles she comes to know that Christopher decided to put Kim in a boarding school in New Hampshire. Laura understands that Christopher is not willing to jeopardise his political ambitions and so he decides to provide education to Kim.

I recognize my obligation. I acknowledge that I am his father. I know

that I have a duty to him. But I do not believe that my duty requires that I give up my whole life to him, all my ambitions, all that I can do it I realize that ambition. I cannot think of one person now, Laura. I could not even if he were your son and mine. You ask too much (*TNY* 121).

So Kim was put to Waite School after a few days and Christopher and Laura flew back to Philadelphia. This came as a huge emotional blow to Kim, as he had always wanted to have the physical presence of his father. He came to America only to find himself alone in a foreign land. When they left him at the boarding school, he felt;

He had been foolish to leave that country where at least he understood what people said to him. Suddenly all his courage left him, the courage that had made him give back curses to those children in Korea who called him Round Eyes, American, Foreigner; the courage that had made him love his mother when he knew that she could not love him, now or ever; the courage that made him leave all he knew and come to this far country with a white woman who was his father's wife. And when he met his father he thought that he was safe. He was not . . . he was not. He was alone again (*TNY* 125).

Everything Kim had lived for and fought for had been dashed to pieces and in utter loneliness he cried "I am lost" (*TNY* 125). With no one to hold to except himself, he gradually gets adjusted to new life and hopes to see his father on Christmas. However too busy with his work, Christopher promises Kim to come to see him on the fourth of July but as Laura knew that Chris won't make it even then, she decides to go and meet Kim. She drove to New Hampshire, and notices that Kim had grown taller, but the insecurity and loneliness was evident in his demeanor. Laura on her return to Christopher, apprises him about Kim's loneliness but Chris evades the issue as the proceedings of elections were in full swing and he didn't want it to be "Scandal of the century" (*TNY* 148).

Laura believes that truth cannot be suppressed or concealed and eventually, triumphs. She goes to the extent of telling Christopher, that he was so

intoxicated with political and social Power that he was shunning his responsibility as a conscientious father and a human being. She further says that his grand speeches about values and responsibilities are a sham. Christopher was too engrossed with his political career and elections to pay heed to what she was saying. For Laura, Kim was not just a child of mixed lineage, who like any hybrid is better than any original but also a link between the East and the West. “Though this child, a hybrid, was the first who had presented himself to her, surely history was full of them, as men swarmed over the earth and met women of other peoples” (*TNY* 159).

After the elections were over, Christopher was elected as governor of the state. Laura, once again brought up the issue of Kim to Chris, especially as Christmas was nearby. This time Chris relents to meet Kim and the boy is overjoyed to see his father and they both get to spend some good amount of time together. Laura wanted to bring Kim home and willing to raise him as their son and provide shelter of a loving home. While spending time with his son, Chris is able to vent out his paternal feelings. On *New Year’s Eve*, once again Laura pressed the issue of bringing Kim home and being adamant she told Chris,

Haven’t I always wanted you to be free? But where this child is concerned, somehow I feel I have a right to know what is going on in your mind. In a sense, he’s my child now, too. He has no mother but me (*TNY* 182).

In above lines it is quite evident that Laura has a good heart and wants Chris to do what he should do, as a father. Christopher, now elected as governor of Philadelphia was throwing a party at his home *on New Year’s Eve* and had invited more than two hundred guests. Laura hoped that this year will bring something new into their lives and he wanted to begin it with honesty and goodwill. He understood that he no longer could and should keep his past as a secret and so while delivering the speech at the party, he confesses having sired a son from a Korean woman whilst serving as a GI in Korea.

I speak to you as my friends. I speak to you, too, as men and women

who have supported me in my ambition to be the governor of our state. I will not, indeed, I could not, hide from you what it means to me to have reached this point. Yes, I'm ambitious! Yes, I have my dreams! I shall continue to dream. I want to be a good governor. I want to serve you and all our people well. I believe I can. But tonight I want to share with you a part of my life of which you have known nothing (*TNY* 185).

Christopher talked about how many young American soldiers were serving the nation, being stationed in many countries far from their families and how he himself he had been in Korea as a young man. And then, he touches the sensitive issue of Amerasian children about which many Americans do not know. In Christopher's speech, Buck has given a first-hand experience of this reality and the consequences resulting from it. A reality, towards which America and the nations involved turn a blind eye although being very much responsible for it. **An issue which is still persists where due rights and equal recognition of victims is denied.**

These are our men .They are our sons and brothers. They are living and dying today in seven countries of Asia! They are very young, pitifully young. They grew up in homes like yours and mine----kindly, warm safe homes. Today they feel utterly alone. How do I know? Because I was one of them once, long ago, in a country called Korea. Our young men find what comfort they can, wherever they can. I neither blame nor defend them. I was one of them. They clutch at life with both hands, for they never know what hour they must die. I was one of them. They gather in dance halls. There is no other place to gather. They meet girls. They buy what love they can find. Yes they know it is a pitiful, tawdry kind of love, but it is usually all that is to be had. They live in the shadow of impending death and they seek refuge in the arms of a girl---a stranger, but a woman. I was one of those young men, but luckier than most, for what I found, though temporary, was not tawdry. But the story does not end there. Again and again it does not end there. From that brief union, which so often ends in tomorrow's death, sometimes there

comes a life. It is the life of a child. In those seven countries of Asia where our men are living, fighting, dying today, these children are being born. What significance they have? This---they are the new people, children of the, born too soon future, before the world is ready for them. No one is ready for them, no country, no man, no woman. They are born stateless. Do the fathers know? Sometimes they do, sometimes they do not. What they don't know is that in Asia the child belongs to the father. I was one of those who did not know---until such a child was born me. Now I know (*TNY* 187).

With these words Christopher welcomed his son Kim and accepted him. He acknowledged his past on behalf of so many American soldiers who are living this reality. Kim being accepted is a step towards bringing these Amerasian children out of their suffering and fighting discrimination. Christopher's acknowledgement of his responsibility which he has evaded for so long, is what Pearl S. Buck looks for, she knows that unless America recognizes and acknowledges these Amerasian children as its citizens, they don't have any chance for a better future.

Chapter 4

Pathway towards Multicultural Citizenship

Will Kymlicka is a Canadian philosopher whose concepts of ‘multicultural citizenship’ and ‘group-differentiated rights’ are of much repute in political studies. He introduced these concepts in his book, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995) where he aims to develop a liberal approach to minority rights. This approach is distinct from traditional liberalism although it shares some of the basic tenets of school of Liberalism which gives importance to individual freedom. In his theory of multicultural citizenship, Kymlicka not only champions minority rights but also focuses on promoting them. As a liberalist, who considers individual freedom to be of utmost importance, he examines the interconnectedness of freedom and culture. His theory is a very powerful tool to tackle the issues of cultural diversity. The culture which Kymlicka refers to is “societal- culture” (Kymlicka 76) as he believes that culture is societal. He defines societal-culture as “culture as a context of choice” (Kymlicka 76) and writes:

The sort of culture that I will focus on, however is a *societal* culture --- that is, a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres... (Kymlicka 76).

The chapter applies Will Kymlicka’s concept of ‘group-differentiated rights’ to the non-fictional work of Pearl S. Buck, “On Discovering America”. Kymlicka’s concept of ‘Multicultural Citizenship’ explores the group rights of immigrants and ethnic groups. For Kymlicka ‘multicultural citizenship’ is achieved when every individual has freedom to live his life according to his/her customs and cultural practices. Kymlicka talks about different types of minorities and the group specific rights catering to their needs and aspirations. Buck’s essay “On Discovering America”, raises the issue that there are no state

policies for protection of immigrant rights and other minorities due to which they continue to face discrimination of sorts. Buck highlights the positive role of immigrants in America's progress and advocates establishment of legislative policies and group-differentiated rights.

A societal culture is a sum of overall interactions of an individual including both in private and public life that encompass a lot of activities. When people move to a different country, they are naturally inclined to associate with their own cultural groups. Kymlicka asserts, depending on one's individual choice, he/she has the right to pursue his/her culture and reiterates that socio-cultural setup is the support system for self-realization that imparts a sense of freedom in a foreign land, and adds: "I believe that societal cultures are important to people's freedom and that liberals should therefore take an interest in the viability of societal cultures" (Kymlicka 80). He insists that individual freedom is a prerequisite to secure "cultural membership" (Kymlicka 84). He defines freedom as; "Freedom involves making choices among various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us" (Kymlicka 84). It is only through cultural association that an individual can understand freedom in its truest sense which Kymlicka explains that each person should have autonomy to choose his own view of good life. (80-81). A freedom that allows an individual to lead his life in accordance to his beliefs is true freedom and societal cultures provides meaning to one's identity. Charles Taylor also holds the same opinion on the importance of one's identity on one's culture.

In *Multicultural Citizenship* Kymlicka incorporates this concept of minority rights to highlight how he is working within the framework of diversity and cultural pluralism. According to Will Kymlicka, diversity in a contemporary society can be due to the presence of (1) National minorities and the (2) Ethnic minorities. A national minority is a group that has a common history, territory, language and culture but distinct from the majority group. Kymlicka states that these minorities are usually self-governing and territorially concentrated. An ethnic minority is an individual or group of people usually belonging to a

similar background who migrate to a foreign country where their number is small as compared to the citizens of that foreign country. These national minorities and ethnic minorities differ in the way they get incorporated with the majority. The mode, which can be voluntary or involuntary through which they get incorporated with the majority, affects the relation of the minority groups with the majority group of society. Depending on the mode of incorporation like political subjugation, immigration, civil wars or imperialism, Kymlicka distinguishes minorities as;

(1) National minorities: Groups incorporated into a larger state. These groups are self-governing and territorially concentrated. “They wish to maintain themselves as distinct societies alongside the majority culture, and demand various forms of autonomy or self-government to ensure their survival as distinct societies” (Kymlicka 20). (2) Ethnic groups/minorities: People who have immigrated individually or in groups to a new country. These people are immigrants whose incorporation is voluntary as they don’t own any territory. “They typically wish to integrate into the larger society and to be accepted as full members of it. While they often seek greater recognition of their ethnic identity, their aim is not to become a separate and self-governing nation alongside the larger society, but to modify the institutions and laws of the mainstream society to make them more accommodating of cultural differences (Kymlicka 20- 21). Hence a state on the basis of presence of minorities can be multi-ethnic or multination states or both. A multination state has people belonging to more than one country and form national minorities. A multi-ethnic nation has people belonging to many ethnic minorities. The source of incorporation is immigrants in countries like Canada, Australia and America. Kymlicka asserts that a country will exhibit cultural pluralism if it accepts larger number of individuals and families from other cultures as immigrants, and allows them to maintain some of their ethnic norms and customs.

According to U.S. PEW research centre report, among the destination countries America has the highest number of immigrants. Australia and Canada are also among nations having highest per capita rates of immigration in the world. However there are some groups that do not fit in the above two. The African-Americans are neither voluntary immigrants (because they were brought as slaves against their will and were prevented to integrate into institutions of majority culture) nor do they fit as national minorities (as they were not allowed to develop a parallel societal culture). Refugees from other nations also do not fit into the category of national or ethnic minority (Kymlicka 22).

Kymlicka in *Multicultural Citizenship* maintains that cultural diversity due to the presence of minorities, national or ethnic or both has given rise to some challenges. These issues are based over language rights, autonomy, naturalised citizenship, immigration, representation in political decisions and land claims. The nation-states are criticised by nationalist thinkers and orthodox liberals for the way they tackle these issues. Therefore to resolve these issues, there has to be changes in the policies governing these states.

Will Kymlicka argues that recent studies in the fields of anthropology, ethnic and racial studies have given a lot of impetus to the ongoing debates over the rights of minorities. The liberal multiculturalism is one such platform. The presence of diversity in social setups is not a new phenomenon; it has been there since time immemorial. From a historic perspective, the struggle for recognition has been a basic instinct in humans but in the past few decades the movements of struggle for rights has become more emphatic. Liberal multiculturalism works out to address the issue of diversity and minorities in a pragmatic manner. It is an approach of how nations, particularly Western ones should respond to the non-western minorities and immigrants. Every minority within a state has different origin and needs. Aspirations of immigrants are different from those of indigenous groups and national minorities, therefore no single set of rights can be applied to these groups.

Based on historical evidence, Kymlicka identifies a shift in the relationship between the state and its citizens. Prior to WWII, individual rights and democracy did not have a strong hold even in the western countries because the societies were governed by feudal set-up. Correspondingly the minority groups and people of different ethnicities did not have a strong presence in the society. After WWII the decolonisation movements across the globe supported by the equality of races and Civil Rights Movements strengthened the call for identity and rights of minorities. The demand for rights and acceptance of the minorities and immigrants has been in flux **since then**. As mentioned earlier, the needs of each minority **groups** are different. Kymlicka coined the term ‘group-differentiated rights’ which is a part of his liberal thought process. He also draws a distinction between rights of an individual within a group and as a group or minority known as ‘collective rights’ where the focus is on maintaining the distinctness of the group. He also clarifies that the ‘collective rights’ should not hamper individual liberty within that group. In the same vein, Kymlicka discusses three forms of group-differentiated rights or what he calls “special rights for accommodating cultural differences through protection of civil and political rights of individuals” (Kymlicka 27).

The first kind of ‘group-differentiated’ rights is the “Self-government rights” (Kymlicka 27). These rights are applicable mostly to multination states where most of the constituting nations demand some political autonomy so that they have decision making powers for the better interests of their group. Kymlicka remarks that the national minorities can also demand territorial jurisdiction or “at the extreme nations wish to secede, if they think their self-determination is impossible within the larger state” (Kymlicka 27). In many nation-states federalism is adopted as a form of self- rule where power is divided between centre and the federal units. For example, Canada has adopted federalism in its province of Quebec where the majority of people are French speaking. Kymlicka holds that political autonomy is not what indigenous people and most of national minorities seek. For them, having a say in their territory is of prime importance. Kymlicka claims:

In many parts of the world, however, the hope for political powers is almost utopian and the more immediate goal is to simply to secure the existing land base from further erosion by settlers and resource developers (Kymlicka 30). Whatever effective measures are taken, one thing is to be understood that the self-government rights should never be considered as ‘time-being’. They are permanent as they are inherent.

The second type of ‘group-differentiated’ rights is “Poly-ethnic rights” (Kymlicka 30); the rights that grants freedom of cultural and religious expression to the minority groups within a nation. Immigration is not a recent phenomenon and since ages the immigrants are forced to follow “Anglo-conformity.” (Kymlicka 30) Immigrants challenged this model as Kymlicka claims it was “imposing where immigrants should abandon all aspects of their ethnic heritage and assimilate to existing cultural norms and customs” (Kymlicka 31).

The demands of immigrants as Kymlicka notes, “have expanded in important directions” (Kymlicka 33). Policies are to be framed to address deep rooted social evils like racism. Some minorities demand public funding for their cultural practices like celebrating festivals, provision of immigrant language in schools, while others want exemption from laws and regulations that forbid them to follow their religious practices. Kymlicka cites examples of Sikhs in Canada who have sought exemption from wearing a helmet while driving a motor cycle and some Muslim girls in France allowed to wear hijab in schools.

Kymlicka commenting on poly-ethnic rights states;

These group specific measures --- which I call “poly-ethnic rights”---are introduced to help ethnic groups and religious minorities express their cultural particularity and pride without it hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society. Like self-government rights these poly-ethnic rights are not seen as temporary... (Kymlicka 31).

These poly ethnic rights are helpful in successful integration within a society as they encourage ethnic minorities to express themselves and their culture. They are permanent in nature as each group is distinct and multiculturalism doesn't seek to flatten these differences, but accepts them.

The third type of 'group-differentiated' rights is "Special representation rights" (Kymlicka 31). Special representation rights are **acknowledgement** of marginal groups within a nation. To enable the representation of all diverse groups in a nation-state irrespective of their belonging to an ethnic group, special representation rights were **established**. Western democracies understand the need of presence of minority groups in mainstream social and political activities. **Since ages, people who belong to the marginal groups have suffered exploitation, and to combat this, special representation rights can be called into action**

According to Kymlicka, all these group differentiated rights are formed **to protect the** minority. Liberal multiculturalism is an offshoot of the thought process **that does not support** homogenising a nation state under one dominant culture. In the past, the focus was on maintaining one dominant culture which was achieved by resorting to extremely cruel practices like genocide, extermination of races, forced assimilation, social **ostracisation** and denial of **b a s i c** rights to the minority groups.

The **endeavours** to bridge the gaps between **the** minority and **the** majority cultures have been many, Kymlicka records the number of bilateral treaties signed between Germany and Poland to safeguard certain rights of minorities of both nations. However in many instances they turned out to be dangerous as the nations started invading the other countries. For example Nazi Germany violated the treaty by invading countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia on the grounds of violation of human rights of ethnic Germans in these countries. Since the birth of United Nations in 1945, Liberals were content that human rights were sufficient in securing a good life of all individuals within a state. For them the universal human rights maintained a united nation-state. They argued that granting group rights or minority rights could undermine national

loyalty. Kymlicka states that in many cases ethnic identity of a group is denied recognition on the grounds that a state has nothing to do with the ethnic ties like culture or religion of a minority (Kymlicka MC 30). It is the group's private affair. This attitude of a nation-state towards its ethnic minorities, is identified by Kymlicka as what Nathan Glazer calls "benign neglect" in context of African Americans during President Nixon's tenure. He describes:

The members of ethnic and national groups are protected against discrimination and prejudice, and they are free to try to maintain whatever part of their ethnic heritage or identity they wish, consistent with the rights of others. But their efforts are purely private, and it is not the place of public agencies to attach legal identities or disabilities to cultural membership or ethnic identity. This separation of state and identity precludes any legal or governmental recognition of ethnic groups, or any use of ethnic criteria in the distribution of rights, resources and duties (Glazer 87-103).

The Liberals maintained that an individual is essentially a political being and that religion is an individual's private affair which implies that the state should not interfere in the cultural choices. Kymlicka critiques orthodox liberalist approach **by stating that distinctness of a culture vis-à-vis other cultures** is inherent and any effort to homogenise those differences is not the solution. He maintains;

But what most post-war liberals on both the right and left continue to reject is the idea of permanent differentiation in the rights or status of the members of certain groups. In particular, they reject the claim that group-specific rights are needed to accommodate enduring cultural differences, rather than remedy historical discrimination (Kymlicka 14).

In *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka asserts that human rights are limited in their effect as they do not provide us with an answer on the face of increasing ethno-cultural conflicts. Globalisation has given rise to immigration which has made political thinkers to come up with practical and more empirical policies.

Will Kymlicka focuses on addressing the issue of rights of immigrants and national minorities and how Western nations should cater to minorities and immigrants because the immigration policies of these nations are partial or biased.

Kymlicka states that America, Canada and Australia receive the highest number of immigrants. According to him, when an immigrant arrives in a host nation, they bring with them their historical narratives and language but leave behind institutionalised practices of their homeland. Discussing the significance of language of immigrants Kymlicka states; “They bring with them a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention but they have uprooted themselves from social practices which this vocabulary originally referred to and made sense of” (Kymlicka16).

Prior to 1960’s, immigrants were expected to shed their distinctive heritage and assimilate to the existing cultural norms. This model of “Anglo-conformity” (Kymlicka 30) was in compliance with ‘melting-pot’ theory or ‘assimilation model’ of immigration. This model of assimilation of immigrants was based on the premise of Immigration Act of 1924, where the immigration process was racial or biased. There were immigrant quotas established in this act favouring European immigrants and among Asian immigrants Chinese and Japanese were excluded. The immigrants having African or South American ancestry were marginalised or faced social ostracisation in host nations. Assimilation of immigrants was considered essential for political stability of the host nation.

In 1970’s, forced assimilationist was challenged in many Western nations by these ethnic minorities. Many countries like America brought changes in their immigration policies that lifted the ban on the entry of Chinese immigrants into America, and quotas set on number of Chinese entering US, was increased. However to be able to participate in public dealings they were required to learn and speak English. As Kymlicka holds, immigrants bring with them their language and ancestry. To maintain cultural practices in a new country is not easy without the help of governmental policies, but as mentioned earlier, the immigrants are made to assimilate within the dominant English speaking culture

so that they are able to get into the mainstream life, be it social, academic, political and economic. That means these nations are trying to follow one nation one language formula.

In America, immigrants are expected to learn English language and American history. They have to speak English at schools and offices **so they are constrained to use their mother tongue only in their private lives**. Kymlicka argues that rejection of Anglo-conformity model has allowed immigrants to maintain their ethnic heritage in private sphere but there is no establishment of “distinct and institutionally complete” (30) societal culture alongside the majority culture. This **practice** has serious consequences on the existence of ethnic culture of immigrants. In such cases Kymlicka remarks that for the third generation of the **immigrants**, English becomes **their** mother tongue and the original immigrant mother tongue is lost during this process of assimilation. In such a scenario, retaining mother tongue is difficult for the immigrants **in spite of the fact that they do their best to remain associated with their cultural practices**. Kymlicka maintains:

...For the third generation, if not sooner, learning the original mother tongue is not unlike learning a foreign language. Learning, the old language may be rewarding as a hobby or business skill, but for the children of immigrants, it is the Anglo phone culture which defines their options, not the culture from which their parents uprooted themselves (Kymlicka 79).

Kymlicka maintains that this situation is only faced by immigrants and not national minorities as **the latter are able establish** a parallel societal culture. However, if immigrants acquire self-governing powers they can become national minorities; as in the case of Spanish colonists in Puerto Rico and Mexicans in America. Kymlicka believes that although the children of immigrants have better educational and career opportunities in Western countries, they have so at the cost of **severing their ethnic and cultural ties or in other words they pay ‘ethnic penalty’**. This is **a heavy** price to be paid in order to become a part of the host nation.

Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism works best when nations allow immigrants from all parts of world and acknowledge their presence and distinctness. According to Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka in “Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State”, the opposition to immigration is rooted in factors that ethnic and racial diversity makes redistributive social policies hard to sustain because unity and uniformity is difficult to maintain and also that immigration policies undermine national solidarity and trust. However both argue that these statements from traditional liberals are overstated and don't have any evidence.(282-285).

On the contrary, the results differ. According to the survey by Gonzalez Barrera and Philip Connor, PEW Research Centre, 2019, more people, all over the world endorse immigrants as a strength than a burden. The empirical data shows that immigration leads to more innovation, better educated workforce, occupational specialisation, economic productivity and a positive effect on economy. By allowing the immigrants to fully integrate within the mainstream society there are chances of better socio-political-economical growth. This can only be achieved when there are no compulsions to follow any assimilative model and the immigrant integration is consistent with the multicultural policies.

It is quite clear from Buck's essay, “On Discovering America” how she wants to see her motherland in future. She understood the way immigration would shape America's future and all she focused on was to improve it by giving the immigrants an opportunity to excel, while maintaining their distinctiveness. According to PEW research centre, at present immigrants constitute 3.4 percent of world population which is around 244 million. And America has highest percentage of immigrants in the world.

Right from Buck's time till now, not much has improved in the immigration policy of many nations including America. In the past few years, America has cut down on immigration quota and at the same time there has been a 'slowdown' on granting green cards and visas. The Global Migration Group, 2013 generated an empirical data based on survey, interviews and memoirs .The

stories documented record the experiences of immigrants in America particularly in the northwest states like Washington, Oregon, Idaho. The survey shows how the immigration system is failing to provide meaningful path to citizenship. The immigrants often face discrimination at workplace and it has also been observed that some immigration policies have made it difficult to access social amenities and benefits. Will Kymlicka holds the same belief as Pearl S. Buck on the importance of immigration for future of a real liberal democratic nation like America. Kymlicka believes that there should be no quota system or limits of numbers for immigrants based on their ethnicity. He assures that multiculturalism works best when immigrants come from different countries.

Kymlicka worked for the cause of minorities within a nation state and provided the concept of 'group-differentiated rights'. While Pearl S. Buck in her essay "On Discovering America" stresses the need to address the underlying cause of hatred for immigrants, she also makes an effort to see how ethnic groups can function in an effective and prosperous manner within a nation state. Buck's essay endorses liberal multiculturalism where she states that differences among people are inherent and a true multicultural society should strive to respect those differences rather than making it a bone of contention.

Born to Southern Presbyterian missionary parents in U.S., she came to China with her parents when she was three months old. Growing up in China, she had two major influences, one was her mother's biblical teaching;

My mother's home was enlivened with memories of European culture. It became a part of her education and nature and layer of mine. To me, growing up in China, she imparted the best of the West, where I lived in the greatest and oldest culture of the East, and was thus doubly endowed. For this thanks be to life (Buck *MSW* 28).

The second profound influence was that of her Confucian tutor, Mr. Kung and her Chinese nurse. The latter gave her care as Pearl S. Buck was homeschooled up to age of nine years. Theodore F. Harris her biographer notes

in *Pearl S. Buck: A Biography* (1969) remarks

My old Confucian tutor, with whom I spent my afternoons saw to that. Under his tutelage I rose when my mother came into the room and remained standing until she bade me sit. I cannot say that I always behaved so decorously when he was gone, but his lessons took effect. Naughty as I could be in other ways. I was never saucy, nor did I answer back as I hear children do nowadays. And my Chinese training holds for another generation, for I do not allow impudence or even sauciness from my own children (Harris 21-22).

About her Chinese nurse Wang Amah, Buck says, “She is the one of the two clear figures of my early childhood” (*MSW* 31). Her stories filled the imagination of Buck life. She writes:

It was true that she had an inexhaustible supply of tales of magic, which she had heard chiefly from Buddhist and Taoist priests. The Buddhist stories were about wonderful daggers that a man could make small enough to hide in his ear or in the corner of his eye, but which he fetched out again, were long and keen and swift to kill. Or they were tales of this god and that and what they did to men. Heaven and hell she told me about too, the horrors of the Buddhist hell, and what heaven was and what the wheel of life that carries us along whether we will or not (Harris 33).

From the above quotes it is evident that she was able to get the knowledge and wisdom of this eastern country. Quite naturally, she could not relate to the derogatory narratives about the immigrants, especially from the Orient. Having been brought up in China during her formative years, America was a distant land only in her imagination, created by the stories of her mother. Buck records in her biography. “Thus I knew that I was American, and I never forgot it. I had a country somewhere of my own, where children were like me” (*MSW* 45).

Buck returned to live in America in 1933 and her essay, “On Discovering America” was published in *Survey Magazine* where she records her

personal experiences of living in China as well as in the the U.S. The essay explores what it means to be a “true American” (ODA 1). She also talks about immigration and the way Americans perceived it.

She writes in, “On Discovering America,” I thought I was coming to a country that was rich and I did not think of these riches as being selfishly gained or used”(Buck ODA 1). She wanted to be back to America to which she thought she belonged. But sadly America presented quite a contrary picture to what she had expected. To her utter dismay, she saw people suffering due to more insidious and grave problems than hunger and poverty like racial discrimination, prejudiced and bias towards the immigrants and narratives about eastern countries which were not true. In her biography, *My Several Worlds* she confesses that from a distance she always had a rosy picture of America, of which she always felt proud, and she had thought that social problems exist only in China. She confesses;

For I as an American in China am now ashamed before the Chinese. I speak to them less hopefully of the inevitable passing of their barbarous civil wars, because in my own country is this subtle wars, breaking out into such fearful open murder. I am less confident of their schemes of democracy, since I see that my own country, where the democratic theory has been most adequately put into practice, can yet allow, year after year, such recrudescence of the lowest, least democratic, least intelligent form of tyranny, the tyranny of the beast over the brain. I shall not be proud again until my countrymen make a lynching a major crime (MSW 157).

She knew that the racist mentality was thwarting the social fabric of the American society. Having a strong grounding both in Christianity and Confucianism, she wanted multiculturalism to be taken as an asset. The article, “Portrait of America” in Survey Graphic in 1937 mentions about Buck:

In a moving challenge to all Americans who foment prejudice and back legislation against the foreign-born, Pearl Buck, long an alien in foreign

lands, and recently returned a stranger to her own country, brings personal observation and the wisdom of the long view to her picture of America, as it is, and as it is bound to be. We are all immigrants---in the long view that Miss Buck expresses in our leading article this month (Graphic Survey 1).

Buck comes up as a humanitarian who understood that **racism** prevented people to unite and communicate. In order to understand the root cause of this problem she decided to start as any other outsider in U.S. and considered herself an immigrant. Coming from a land of one culture, one history, one race and even one political history Buck came to America with a promise of diversity and acceptance. She thought of it as a place having zero tolerance for any sort of injustice. In the beginning of the essay, “On Discovering America” she states her position,

I HAD LIVED ALL MY LIFE AN AMERICAN AWAY FROM America.

Then I returned, a sort of immigrant among immigrants, except that I came to my native land. But it was as new to me as though I came from Sweden or from Italy or Greece. I almost knew as little what to expect before I landed... But we all have pictures, we immigrants of what America is to which we come (*ODA* 1).

She wanted to see and know her countrymen and in order to look for a ‘true American’ she widened her social connections but all she could find were people of different ethnicities from countries like England, Europe and Asia. All these wonderful people had their ancestors who had come to America from different parts of the world. **It was quite puzzling for her but she couldn’t come across anyone as a ‘true American’.** She came to the realization that everyone in America has history of being an immigrant.

To my bewilderment everyone replied the same way that is, he was American, his ancestors had come over in the Mayflower or before the Revolution or before the Civil War or something, and he was the typical

American if there ever was one...AFTER REPITITIONS OF THIS SORT OF THING,... (ODA 1).

Buck's next practical recourse of searching for a 'true American' was the history and literature of America. She went through all sorts of books, records and documentaries to find the meaning of 'true American'. America's history and geography provided her with the information that all over US, there are people of varied cultural and ethnic background. Even the books were written by people who had their roots from different lands. Finally she concluded, that a 'true American' doesn't exist but was a propaganda of an ideal, placing the American citizens as superior to others. As the original inhabitants of America were the aboriginals also called Red Indians, she writes;

I came to see that these true Americans I had been looking for did not exist at all, and there are no typical Americans. I have come indeed to feel that if there is a typical American it is the one least typical of anyone except himself. The one hundred percent American, for instance, is one hundred percent nothing except himself, and represents nothing else (ODA 2).

So for Buck the 'true American' is the Red Indian, the aboriginal, who inhabited America since the beginning and the present day America is a nation of immigrants. People have immigrated to this land from different continents of the world and have contributed to the social and the economic growth of America. Susan Mary Grant taking a chronological approach claims that America's history is intertwined with immigration. She writes:

America was a land, and a later a nation, imagined before it was ever conceived. Although the dreams and ambitions of its first human settlers can only be surmised, whether crossing the Bering straits on foot or arriving by sea, early migrants to North America continent came in search of a better life. Whether their original intentions were settlement or possible trade routes, whether they sought a new home or simply new resources to take back home, the lure of a New World proved a potent

one (Grant 10).

History reveals that America came into existence when people from England and Europe immigrated. David Gerber in *American Immigration* maintains that America's people from diverse backgrounds have come from every corner of the globe for different reasons. American history has witnessed many waves of immigration till now. According to the reports on immigration by Northeastern University, Boston, the first wave of immigration started in the year 1800 when approximately four million Irish immigrants, who were mainly Catholics, moved to America to escape the famine in their homeland. The second wave began in 1880, wherein five million Italians and Russians arrived to get rid of disease and poor agricultural output in their country. Then the Chinese started arriving in the U.S., and the number of Asian immigrants swelled to approximately twenty million. At present we are witnessing the fourth wave in which, Latin Americans, Africans, Asians, and people from Middle East entered America and their number is exceeding twenty million. (Gerber 19-20) Pearl Buck after going through the American history and literature along with her travel experiences in the country, maintains:

I HAVE GONE BACK IN MY SEARCH, "CHINESE FASHION," TO our beginnings. I find we are all immigrants, we Americans. Not one of us is really native in any profound sense. Everybody in the United States, except the Indians, is now or was once, foreign-born (ODA 3).

The immigrants have contributed immensely to the growth of the American society so it is unfair to treat immigrants with apathy. This is contrary to the notion of what America meant for Buck. She writes:

And everywhere I was hurt and confounded by the amazing hatred among all these Americans for each other. I have heard such hatred for black Americans from white Americans, such venomous sullen hatred for white Americans from Black Americans, that in another country I would have been afraid of immediate race war. And the hatred burns like wildfire in a hundred different directions. There is the hatred of the

Jew and the Christian, of the native-born and the foreign-born, of the Protestant and the Catholic, and these are only a few of the greater hatreds...a sensitive mind at first cannot but be frightened and oppressed by the fearful prejudices of race and creed which possess the feelings of the average American (*ODA 2*).

In the light of above lines it is very clear that racial discrimination was and **still is** rampant across America. An average American was biased and antagonist to people from other nations. For a humanitarian like Buck, this caused disappointment and **apprehension**. She was fearful that if this hatred isn't nipped in time, it has the potential to show up as a political discontent. The same opinion is expressed by Philip Perlmutter in *Legacy of Hate: A Short History of Ethnic, Religious and Racial Prejudice in America*. (1999)

A plurality of historical illustrations will show that no minority group in America was immune to some form or degree of intolerance. It was religious sometimes racial or ethnic. Historically there was a simultaneity, accretion and pluralism of victimisers and victims throughout American history, wherein different groups always had or added a new target for their bigotry. (Perlmutter Preface)

Philip Permuter argues that America's history has always been caught in a vicious circle of hatred and bigotry and it has grown with the passage of time. The rampant, shocking incidents of racial and ethnic hatred across America "as lynching, as unjust treatment of Aliens, as inhuman deportation laws" (Perlmutter 1) was **unacceptable to** Buck and many like her but what perplexed Buck was the denial and unwillingness to **acknowledge** this hatred as a problem. Buck was oppressed by such **intolerance** and wanted to know the reason behind this.

Thus afraid and oppressed, therefore, I began to delve into these dark feelings which few Americans it seems to me, are willing to face and acknowledge...there is no cure for individual injustices until those causes are clearly understood (*ODA 2*).

Having held America in a highly idealist view, it was very difficult to understand injustices occurring like lynching, killing and deportation of fellow immigrants. Buck **raises** a very important **concern** as to why such negativity exists because in a way, the people who are already the citizens of **America** had ancestors who immigrated from somewhere. So this makes **these citizens**, immigrants too and if such people are against those who have recently arrived in America, it's like the immigrants against the immigrants or one immigrant considering **the** other immigrant as "alien" only for the reason that **the former's** ancestors came to this land much before. Buck finds this very ridiculous.

Buck's opinion on America as a nation is that it is a country built by immigrants and will continue to be so. **Her assertion is that any kind** of discrimination towards the immigrants is baseless because it is actually they, who hold the country together. Buck further says that the common **trait** among all Americans is that they are "restless" (ODA 3) people of "eleven nations". (ODA 3). The concept of eleven nations is explained by Colin Woodard in his book *American Nations*, in which he opines that there are eleven distinct cultures that have historically divided North America and they are Yankeedom, Deep South, New Netherland, Tidewater, Greater Appalachia, Midlands, New France, El Norte, Far West, Left Coast and First Nations (Woodard 5).

People from the **above mentioned states are** addressed by Buck as 'restless'. In this context James M. Jasper mentions in his book *Restless Nations: Starting Over in America* about the discontent, drive and hope that are characteristic features of American culture. The compulsion to move from one place to another is the defining characteristic of Americans. According to Jasper these restless people bring with them their histories and prejudices. (1-2) Buck reiterates same view as above when she writes:

BUT WHEN WE ENTER AMERICA, WE DO NOT ENTER ONLY as restless individuals. We came as races, as nations, as transmitters of the past to a country without a history, whose only past is that of forests and streams and mountains and plains and endless seashores and rivers flowing into the sea. America's history is what we

all ring as our own individual histories. What goes to make her is what has gone to make us (*ODA 3*).

Buck envisages that a true American culture is yet to be born where **cultural differences are respected**. Describing that ‘true American’ she writes:

It is foolish, because there will be ... a pure American. I cannot but believe he will be an extraordinary person, that pure American, who will be standing in my place five thousand years from today. He will have what no other human being has had in just the same richness, the inheritance of all ages, all races, all cultures. He will have a fine direct eagerness which will be our restlessness, refined by centuries, but concentrated, too, into a driving force which will carry him to heights of human knowledge which we cannot dream of now. He will be a true superman, standing on the shoulders of those from all nations and races of the earth (*ODA 4*).

Buck understands that every American has to work to make that dream come true and it is possible. She asserts that the strength of America lies in immigration and any attempt to plug it will be like severing its jugular vein and mentions, “When we cease to allow people to come in from all over the world, we shall ourselves begin to die, as other nations are dying” (Buck *ODA 4*). To comprehend immigration as a continuous or ongoing process, history is a witness to the fact that the movement of people across the countries or places is as old as origin of Man. Movement or migration is the essence of human existence. As Roger Daniels *Coming to America*, writes “Migration is a fundamental human activity.”(Daniels 1). He also adds “In any event, by prehistoric times, the human race has peopled almost entire globe by migration” (Daniels 15). Since ages, man has been migrating from one place to another in search of living, better future or freedom of expression etc. The reasons can be varied; religious, economic or personal. Although the times have changed, this primal trait of human beings has remained the same and will continue to be so.

Buck acknowledges the fact that her thinking and patient approach towards

life is the result of her Chinese influence on her. She says, “I REALISE THAT IN THIS THINKING ABOUT AMERICA I HAVE maintained to an exasperating degree the long view to which my Chinese-trained eyes are accustomed” (*ODA 3*). She is not willing to give up hope despite the challenges on the way to a multicultural society. For her, immigrants are not just people from other part of world having a different culture or language but also hardworking and talented humans contributing in making America a great nation. In this context she writes:

I see these “aliens” first as human beings, and I observe that many, indeed most of them, are honest and industrious, or as honest and industrious as the upstarts who dare, at this early date in our history, to call themselves, “the Americans.” Citizens or not, I cannot see why these good people should be deported. We need honesty and industry. No nation can have too many people with these qualities. I cannot see why they should not be relieved if they starve, nor why they should not send money back to Italy or anywhere else I should think the money circulates the better (*ODA 5*).

Immigration has been taking place since the origin of humans on this planet. Given the fact that the human beings are always moving to what they think is better in terms of food and shelter, they will continue to do so, but our approach and attitude towards this human trait has changed. People have created policies and regulations thereby restricting the movement or migration of people. These demarcations are against the natural flow of human life, as change is the essence of creation and sealing our borders in the name of nationalism or cultural singularism is thwarting a future of a multiculturalist society.

Ian Goldin et al in their book, *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped our World and Will Define Our Future*, mentions that migration is primal to human existence and has fueled human progress. He also believes that most nations are undermining the benefits of immigration. He proposes;

We begin the story of human migration where our collective history began— in Africa, the cradle of humanity. Migrants have propelled the advancement of human communities since these early days, some 150,000 to 200,000 years ago. Our biological evolution culminated in the Homo sapiens species, whose capacity for language and propensity for trading accelerated a new stage of social evolution that allowed humans to displace other hominids and eventually to develop advanced civilizations. The human gift for cooperation and collective learning made our ancestors particularly adaptive to new environments, and incremental migration gradually populated the earth with human settlements. People continued to move. Merchants, soldiers, adventurers, and religious teachers carried new ideas and technologies between human settlements and civilizations, creating dynamic patterns of growth (Goldin et al 21).

Daniel Grisworld in his article, “The Benefits of Immigration: Addressing the Key Myths” explains that immigration has benefitted America. He says,

Contrary to what some of our leaders or pundits tell us...immigrants strengthen U.S. economy by filling key jobs in jobs in important industries, starting businesses, filing patents, creating new products, and keeping America demographically younger...Immigration is both a sign and source of American dynamism (Grisworld 1).

From the above lines it is quite clear that immigration is a boon to a nation especially, America. Buck as a staunch believer in encompassing diversity holds the same opinion; she believes that a true American will have traits of acceptance and competence. People from diverse backgrounds will constitute ‘true Americans’. On the same lines, the theorist Kymlicka, believes that group-differentiated rights revolve around freedom and equality. He argues that granting group-differentiated rights is a way to help accommodate groups that otherwise feel marginalized. (21)

In this critical essay on immigration, Buck evolves as an avid humanitarian

who believes in acceptance and **compassion**. She is certain that time will erode these differences on basis of which Americans are dividing themselves. Trying to make her people understand as to what as a nation America stands for, Buck highlights the importance of immigration and its benefits. She is convinced that if America seals its borders to the outside world it will soon perish. The mantra of America's development is attributed to immigration. Reinforcing how new people bring new life she expresses:

They are a fresh infusion, uncomfortable perhaps, and even painful, but they are life. We cannot do without them. It is too soon to close our doors. It may always be too soon. For statistics show that those we call our foreign born are still our best. Crime is less among them than among the native-born. The foreign-born are amazingly the stronger in the creative arts. To shut them out would be to rob ourselves and the future not only of industrious laborers but of great exploring creative mental energy (*ODA* 5).

Many **scientists analyzing** international economies suggest that immigration adds to the growth of nation economically. Florence Jaumotte, Ksenia Koloskova and Shweta Saxena in their research entitled, "Migrants bring economic benefits for advanced economies" show how long term immigration benefits the host country by **raising** per capita income and living standards and how these benefits are broadly shared by the population (1). The study reveals **that** high as well as low skilled immigrants bring diverse talent and expertise. Joshu N. Feinman contests in "Immigration: Bane or Boon" that immigration is a source of vitality to a nation without which growth is impossible. He states; the most **significant** impact of immigration is **that it boosts** the **growth rate of the host country by increasing its population, labour force and base of consumption** (Feinman 5).

Immigration has proved to be a blessing to a host country although some policy makers believe that it is problematic, politically. Buck's conviction in endorsing immigration lies in her staunch belief that human traits are same irrespective of their culture, class, creed, race and use of the words like 'alien'

for an immigrant, is a **humiliation**. Buck fights for the rights of these foreign born or immigrants, who she believes are industrious and hardworking. For Buck, one should be able to see other person beyond these social prejudice and be considered first and foremost as God's creation, a human being;

Buck believes that diversity is the essence of life and it is something of which Americans should be proud of and it should not be the reason for hate. According to her it is this diversity that makes America a strong nation and this should be the slogan of every American. She maintains,

“Yes, in our diversity is our safety.” She as a true multiculturalist who understands that assimilation is not the solution. Every difference is to be accepted and let be. Homogenising will not benefit the people as well as nation of America. She writes, “Our country is based diversity of race and upon freedom of belief, and this is our chief claim to being unique and great” (*ODA* 3).

One should not be misguided that in encouraging immigration Buck is not aware of the possible challenges associated with it. She recommends a thorough screening process of allowing immigrants, where the criteria for letting immigrants should not be their religion, race or culture, and she also asserts that the immigration system of America has many loopholes and is quite partial. Discussing how the process **of immigration** should work she writes:

This is not at all to say that we are to allow anybody to come into America. We who are there do have the right to say who shall come into our nation. At the same time I believe we have not yet learned how to secure these values of immigration to our nation, because we have not yet the rational basis for quota immigration. It is not racial or national, it is not what proportion of Anglo- Saxons we should maintain. What rational man says, “I will allow so many Germans, so many Czechs, so may Italians, so many English, and no Orientals to enter my house?” Only a stupid and prejudiced mind could be so irrational. The wise man will open his doors wide to the intelligent and to the good, whatever

their race and nation, and he will close his doors to the criminal and the feeble-minded. I believe the only tests which should be applied to those wanting to become Americans are a test for intelligence and a test for inherent character. Brains and a sense of right and wrong should be the passport to America. I am glad for every restless eager heart and ambitious mind that looks Americaward (*ODA 4*).

For Buck there should be no reason apart from ones cited by her in the above lines. Realising how even from geographical aspect America needs to open its borders she argues;

For we are isolated in a fashion which no other nation knows. Other nations are subject to a constant interchange of language, thought and people between their close boundaries, but we are not. The two great oceans hem us in with silence, and north and south we have neighbours, good, but not enough beyond us for sufficient stimulation. We need new life for centuries to come, perhaps forever. I should like...and make their home (*ODA 4*).

What Americans or any country needs is to be able to see “in the largeness of time.”(Buck 4) To let immigration work smoothly, the measures taken shouldn't be short lived. The future generations should be able to reap benefits of immigration. She believes;

We must teach our children, native-born and foreign-born alike, that there is no final America yet-that they are making America, too, by what they themselves are-regardless of what others are (*ODA 5*).

In the essay “On Discovering America” Buck doesn't hesitate from bringing out America's weaknesses as a developed nation to which many countries look up to. She doesn't want to sound like a pseudo-patriot who only boasts of the positives of one's country and turning a blind eye to its flaws. She is a true humanitarian who not only sees the problems but also has the insight and courage to address them in the most humane way.

Chapter 5

The Rhetoric and Reality of Assimilation

Nearly all over the world, 'assimilation' has been a prominent mode by which the immigrants accommodate and then become a part of the mainstream society, in a host country. However in this process, their cultural distinctness gets diluted to a large extent which affects their life adversely. Assimilation has gained prominence in literary analysis because of ethnic studies vis-à-vis cultural studies and has been accused of imposing Western ideologies on minority groups. Nathan Glazer in his essay, "Is assimilation Dead?" explains that assimilation is often seen as a lop-sided concept because it is hegemonic and considers ethnic group inferior to the dominant one. Many ethnic minorities within a dominant culture around the world have been forced to assimilate (122-127).

This chapter explores how assimilation denies group-differentiated rights of the minorities in two novels of Pearl S. Buck: *Peony* and *The Kinfolk*. The former records the onslaught of assimilation on Jewish ethnic minorities in China, whose identity and culture are on the verge of extinction. There were no state laws or policies that granted rights or group-differentiated rights to the minorities, as China believed in one nation one culture. Kymlicka is of the opinion that for any culture to survive, it must be followed not only in private lives but also in public dealings and interactions. (76) *The Kinfolk* suggests a different perspective on Chinese Americans where they feel they are losing their identity as assimilation stifles their freedom of expression. They find that immigration is a process of adjustment, compromise and most of times a 'loss'. The only hope for them is to return to their homeland where they can re-connect with their 'roots'.

Migration being the quintessence of human existence has led to debates over

the importance of experiences of people who migrate. In the process of immigration, the immediate **fall-out** which the immigrants face is assimilation. IRA De A. Reid in “Immigration and Assimilation” writes that whatever be the reason for letting in immigrants, it is expected that they have to assimilate (306). According to *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, assimilation is “the absorption of a minority group into a majority population which the group takes on values and norms of the dominant culture” (Scott and Marshall 6).

Understanding assimilation from a historical context we **discern** that there have been many types of assimilation where the minority groups had to ‘dissolve’ into the dominant culture. The different types of assimilation **such** as— ‘Anglo Conformity’, ‘Americianisation’ and ‘Cultural Pluralism’, were models that the immigrants had to follow in order to get social recognition and acceptance within the dominant cultural practices. **The political set-up of the host countries endorsed assimilation, leaving the immigrants no choice but to follow any of the model of the assimilation.** In such a scenario, over the period of time, the minority groups gradually, though inadvertently, shed their cultural practices, rituals, language and religion. Susan E. Keefe and Amando M. Padilla define assimilation in *Chicano Ethnicity* as “Social, economic and political integration of an ethnic minority group into mainstream society or culture” (Keefe18).

S. N. Eisensdadt in his contemporary theory of assimilation gives different stages in the process of assimilation where cultural assimilation is followed by social assimilation. In the former type, the minority groups start adopting values, customs, and behavioral patterns of host nation giving way to social assimilation where they finally get absorbed into societies of host nation.

Since the past few decades, there has been immense resentment towards the process of assimilation from advocates of immigrant rights like Will Kymlicka. For multiculturalists, culture being societal is very important, because it imparts a sense of belongingness to one’s life so if assimilation is forced, it’s like getting ‘lost’. In “Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity”, Dr. Dinesh Bhugra and Dr. Becker examine the cause and effect of assimilation

with reference to United Kingdom. They focus on, how for immigrants, assimilation seems the only way to be able to survive in a foreign land. So social acceptance is gained, but at the cost of going away from who they really are. Bit by bit they lose their cultural identity which hits their self-esteem and has many long lasting repercussions cutting across many aspects of life. Bhugra believes that it leads to cultural bereavement, which is a kind of psychological grief or trauma caused by the loss of one's culture (Bhugra 19-20).

When someone feels disconnected to his or her cultural roots, it causes an emotional void somewhere. In the essay "To Assimilate or to Acculturate", Jay Patel maintains that immigration not only makes immigrants miss their culture abroad, but also widens the gap between immigrants and their kinfolk. The desperation to fit in becomes the reason of losing one's emotional ties. The contemporary multiculturalists have raised concerns about assimilation, calling it a sort of violence against ethnic minorities and immigrants. H. G. Duncan in "A Study in the Process of Assimilation" argues that "assimilation is a process for the most part conscious, by which individuals and groups come to have sentiments and attitudes similar to those held by other persons or groups in regard to a particular value at a given time" (852).

Buck's novel *Peony* is about forced assimilation of Jews into Chinese culture and poignantly highlights the longing of the immigrants to express themselves freely. Buck captures the emotional trauma that the Jews in China have gone through in the process of assimilation and their desperate attempts to preserve their culture within the dominant Chinese culture. With no state policies, that would grant them the freedom to pursue their life style as per their culture, these Jews felt helpless. Buck's novel is an authentic advocacy of the rights of the minorities in a foreign country.

China has a population of many ethnic groups like the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews and all these groups have migrated to China due to one reason or other. Jonathan Goldstein in *The Jews of China: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* writes that the first cycle of Jewish immigrants in China began around 900 A.D. during Tang dynasty when merchants were

travelling through silk route from Israel.(Goldstein, Introduction). After many years these immigrant Jews **established** their first settlement in the Kaifeng district. When their permanent settlements were built, they constructed synagogues, soon the Rabbi preached the Jewish religion and practices. Goldstein believes that the second cycle of Jewish immigration started around 18th century and they were mainly from America. And later, Jews from the Middle East and Russia also settled in China.

So, coming from many parts of the world over a span of many centuries, the Jews gradually settled in Kaifeng province of Henan. According to the historians, until 1126 A.D., the Jews settled only in Kaifeng and during the peak time of their settlements, there were around five thousand members. Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt in *The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng: A Millennium of Adaptation and Endurance*, believes that the reason for the Jews not having a synagogue in China for a long time was because of the conflict between Jewish theology and Chinese architecture. After thirteenth century, a synagogue was built providing the Jews with their much sought after place of worship. This enabled the Jews to celebrate and practice festivals and rituals such as Sabbath, Yom Kippur, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover, Shavuoth, Succoth, Purim and Hannucha. However in 1461 this synagogue was destroyed because of floods and a new one was built in 1489. Unfortunately, because of accidents and natural calamities this synagogue was destructed and repaired many times. According to the reports of Father Gozani, a Jesuit missionary, who visited the Synagogue in Kaifeng in 1704, it was a magnificent structure designed and decorated in gold and precious stones (5-7).

When the Synagogue was assigned to the Buddhist jurisdiction, Torah, the holy book of Jews, and religious scrolls were either given to libraries of other countries like the British Library and the Klau Library in Ohio or were lost. By the nineteenth century all the remnants of Judaism were completely lost. The observations of Bishop of Anglican church, Bishop Schereschewsky who visited the synagogue in 1866 are recorded by James Muller in his work “A Visit to Kaifeng Jews” as:

The community of Jews has come to an end. They have entirely lost their religion and are scarcely distinguishable in any way from the Chinese. They have idols in their houses, and ancestral tablets...They intermarry with the natives and have ceased to practice the rite of circumcision. In features, dress, habits, religion, they are essentially Chinese...They cannot read the Law, although the manuscripts are still in their possessions (Muller 189).

At present there are not more than five hundred Jews living in Kaifeng and most of them are not connected to their cultural roots. There are very few of them who can read Torah or speak Hebrew and Jewish rituals are no more practiced in Kaifeng. The present Chinese government passed a law in 2016, where all the visible signs of Jewish culture or history were taken down and all the Jews were indicted to practice their religion in private.

The above description is a testimony to the fact that the forced assimilation of the Jews has resulted in a situation where they no longer have a distinct identity. Buck's *Peony* is an attempt to highlight the rich heritage of Jewish community that was once prospering and thriving in China and also that how forced assimilation has taken toll on this ethnic minority. The novel is about a Jewish family that has lived in China for four generations but is subjected to forced assimilation. According to Kymlicka any culture that is not societal eventually dies (76). In such a scenario they have to choose between their Jewish identity and Chinese citizenship. They have suffered because of this forced absorption by losing cultural and emotional ties making them more alienated in Chinese society.

In the foreword of the novel, Buck writes;

...The story takes place at the period, about a century ago, when the Chinese had accepted the Jews, and when, indeed, most Jews had come to think of themselves as Chinese. Today even the memory of their origin is gone. They are Chinese (Buck *Peony*).

The above lines clearly indicate how once a minority yet a distinct culture is no longer distinct. The first step towards assimilation is in terms of language acquired. When an ethnic group starts to imbibe the cultural patterns of a dominant group, it is called acculturation. According to Milton M. Gordon in his book *Assimilation in America*, acculturation is first sub- stage of assimilation and is a very harmful ethnic process (40). Sarah E. Simons defines in “Social Assimilation” assimilation as

That process of adjustment and accommodation which occurs between the members of different races, if their contact is prolonged and if the necessary psychic conditions are present. The result is group homogeneity to a greater or less degree (791).

Peony opens with a description of Madame Naomi and Ezra Ben Israel, a Jewish family living for generations in China. The opening chapter provides a detailed description of the Jewish way of life. Madame Naomi is introduced as a lady who has an eye for detail regarding the upkeep and needs of the house. She comes across as a typical, stereotyped Jewish woman who takes pride in her ancestry which is reflected in the way she keenly observes her Jewish customs and rituals. She celebrates religious festivals of Sabbath, Passover and Yom Kippur with devotion and fervor. Even her room was different from other rooms of the house as it was full of Jewish artifacts and decorations. As mentioned in the novel “it was a room unlike any other in the house. The walls were hung with striped stuffs from foreign countries and with scripts woven into satin. The furniture was foreign, too, heavy and carved, and the chairs cushioned” (*Peony* 53-54). Along with this she does her best to preserve her cultural roots, which she is apprehensive about of becoming extinct so she wants to go back to Israel with her family.

The sense of longing and loss created by the ethnic assimilation weighs on her mind. Throughout the novel, Naomi reveres the Rabbi of their community, who is very old and she wants her son David to marry Rabbi’s daughter Leah, who is also a staunch Jew. In Rabbi and her daughter, Naomi sees the hope of preserving the Jewish traditions and culture as it is with them that she feels to be

a Jew. But to the utter shock of Naomi, David is in love with a Chinese girl, Kueilan. However Ezra Ben, the husband of Naomi was not a radical supporter of Jewish culture, as his parents were already assimilated since his mother was Chinese. He grew up witnessing and observing Chinese rituals and culture. He was a successful merchant, who wants his son to marry the daughter of his Chinese friend, Keng Chen. From Ezra's parental side, his Jewish lineage was already diluted but in David, Buck highlights the tensions, struggles and dilemmas of the future generations of Jewish ethnicity, caught between their cultural roots and their future. David represents the struggle of holding on to one's ancestry or pursuing love relation.

Another important character in the novel is Peony, who is a Chinese bondmaid to David. Being a bondmaid to David and living in his house, she is brought up as per Jewish traditions and in love with David. However, she is reminded by Madame Ezra that being a bondmaid she needs to understand her limits. Meanwhile, Madame Ezra's plans to get her son married to Leah are thwarted as Leah kills herself after some disagreement with David. After Leah's death, the Rabbi, her father becomes insane and dies after sometime. Their death is the end of Jewish inheritance because eventually, David marries a Chinese girl. Towards the end of the novel there is nothing Jewish in David's family, even the marriage ceremonies of his children are performed according to Chinese rituals.

The novel begins on an important Jewish festival with the preparations going for it. The festival is a very important **occasion to assert** the importance of Jewish culture and tradition as it nourishes the feeling of oneness and solidarity towards one's culture and roots. The observance of these festivals and rituals is something that provides meaning and hope in the lives of Jewish minority living in China since ages. Belonging to a particular group bestows an individual a meaningful life. According to Karmela Leibkind, ethnicity refers to a sense of belonging to a particular ancestry and origin. (147-185) This sense of belonging to a particular group is strengthened by festivals and occasions that bring people of same faith together. The opening lines of the novel give a vivid

d e s c r i p t i o n o f Passover in Ezra household during the spring season and gives a peek into Jewish culture.

On this occasion, Peony, the Chinese bondmaid had made arrangements of the feast of to be held in the great hall. The guests invited were the Old Rabbi, his daughter Leah and his son Aaron. Every year on this occasion, Naomi made sure everything was carried out in a true Jewish manner. Special silverware was to be used for the feast and the house was decorated with all symbols of Judaism by Peony and other servants.

...The dishes were kept the year round, unused except for this night before Passover. The silver spoons and chopsticks, the great seven-branched candlesticks, all were shining in the light of the lanterns hung from the high red beams. Upon a vast silver tray she herself had placed the symbols she did not understand, but which each year she prepared, a roasted egg, bitter herbs, apples, nuts and wine. They were curiosities of a foreign religion (*Peony 2*).

Following the Jewish customs many dishes were served except pork. Celebration of Passover was a reminder of their ethnicity, these were the occasions which the Ezra family celebrated with great fervor as it provided them a sense of kinship. The family and guests participated in the ritual of “leavened bread”, searching for bits of bread with joy and fervor. The Ezra family was united by Madame Ezra’s unwavering faith in her religions, she was a sturdy pillar of faith who dreamt of going back to the holy land before her death.

...All the house feared Madame Ezra...She was a woman nearing fifty years of age, tall and large, handsome, if one did not dislike a high nose and bright color. With all her warmth, she had also certain rigidities of belief and habit that could not be shaken. (*Buck Peony 3*)

Feeling a foreigner in this country, Naomi strongly held to her Jewish customs and rituals. When Peony witnessed the practice of Jewish rituals, it gave her a feeling as if everyone in Ben Ezra’s household, were from an alien

land. Peony noticing David on the feast of Passover;

But tonight he wore a blue and gold robe, and on his head his blue silk Jewish cap pressed down his dark short cap... The wine and feast was served in best of utensils,...The Rabbi rose and lifted his glass and blessed the wine, and they all rose and drank. When they were seated again Wang Ma led the servants and they poured water into the silver basins, and each person at the table washed and dried his hands. Then each took a bitter herb and dipped in it the salt and ate it. (Buck *Peony* 4)

This was followed by telling of story from Haggadah by the Rabbi which summed up the importance of Passover for Jews. With this Rabbi made a prayer, “Until we return to the land that belongs to us, our own land!”(Buck *Peony* 5)

This prayer symbolizes the longing and nostalgia of an ethnic minority living in a foreign country, to go back to their homeland and live amongst their ‘own’ people. The novel reiterates how immigrants live under constant apprehensions and fears of losing one’s identity and culture on the face of assimilation. Kymlicka writes “I believe that societal cultures are important to people’s freedom.”(80)

For Peony and Wang Ma, like other Chinese “Jews” were people from a different land and who had immigrated many centuries before.

...These foreigners, who prospered so well in the rich city, had come long ago from a far country, Judea, or as it was called, the Country of the Jews. Through Persia and India they had come by sea and land to China. At many times in history, in one generation after another, they had come as merchants and traders in a small steady human stream. But every now and again they came in a sudden crowd of some hundreds at a time, bringing their families and priests with them. So had Ezra’s own ancestors come, scores of years ago... (Buck *Peony* 6)

After the celebrations of Passover are over, the Ezra household no longer

reverberates with Jewish ambience. As the days roll over, the Chinese conventional lifestyle takes over. Here we witness that the dominant cultural practices eventually take over, no matter how fervent the ethnic practices are.

After last night's feast the round table had been taken away and the other furniture had been placed again in the conventional Chinese way about the room. (Buck *Peony* 10)

The Jewish sense of being religious was deeply embedded within the family and its essence and ethos were reflected in one way or the other. For Peony, David was the center of her life, the sun of her world, as she was growing into a young sensitive woman, her love for him was getting stronger, although warned by Wang Ma on many occasions that her feelings were futile and that in the end she would end up hurting her own self. And Wang Ma warns because she understands that David's mother would always want him to marry a Jewish girl, no matter how much Peony loved him. David's marriage is a means to carry forward the lineage of Jews, but this is a bone of contention between Ben Ezra and Naomi as the mother is hell-bent to marry off David to a Jewish girl but the father wants him to marry a Chinese girl. It was "A sacred promise, made before Jehovah to preserve our own people." (*Peony* 18) And David very well knew how much her roots meant to her mother. Unfortunately David's choice has no value.

Outwardly his mother had seemed to adopt all the ways of his father's house. But Ezra, her son, alone knew how untouched her heart was. In her own room, in the secrecy of her being, she had laughed at the foreigners with whom she lived. While she had enjoyed the pleasures of being a rich man's wife and had eaten until she had in her age grown immensely fat, her pretty features sunk in mounds of rosy flesh, she had given up nothing of her own ways, and had even influenced the man she had married. (Buck *Peony* 20)

It was not only her own self but she tried to make David understand the value of their culture and roots although a daunting task to make a child to so,

sometimes she faced resentment from David but she didn't stop in her efforts. She made David understand what his marriage to Leah means to her and his people.

“David, my son,” she began in her richest, softest tones, “do not break your mother’s heart. No, wait, I do not ask you to think of me, David. Think of our people! You and Leah, David---together---your children---carrying on the blood of Judah, in this heathen land! Such a good girl, David---a good wife, always loving you and the home, teaching the children about God! When the time comes for us to go back to our own country, our promised land...” (Buck Peony 22)

However, her last resort of preserving her ethnicity is soon lost as David confesses that he is in love with Kueilan, daughter of Kung a Chinese merchant. The poor lady always wanted to ‘protect’ her son from Chinese women. The honest attempts of Jewish family to preserve their culture, which they feel is dying, is highlighted in the description of a synagogue that is not in a good condition and very few Jews visited it. Gradually the Jews were getting absorbed within the Chinese culture and incorporating Chinese customs, rituals and language. **Assimilation was destroying their cultural membership.** The synagogue was a symbol of Jewish culture but it no longer represented Jewish faith; the ruins of the synagogue represented the ruins of Jewish community in China. The Rabbi and the people like him felt a sense of helplessness before this inevitable reality and could no longer bear the extinction of their culture.

The house of Rabbi was next to Synagogue on the Street of the Plucked Sinew. Long ago the street had been so named because of the mysterious Jewish rite of plucking the Sinew from flesh before it could be eaten. The Chinese called the synagogue The Temple of the Foreign God. But the Jews called it The Temple of God. Once passer-by had wondered at the sounds of weeping that came from within. The weeping had almost ceased as the years went on, and then the only sounds that came from the synagogue were the long, slow, wailing chants one day in seven. Even the sound of the chanting had grown weaker as more years passed, and

now those who passed by had to stop and listen, if they were to hear the voices within the heavy closed doors. The very building was falling into slow ruin. The typhoons of each summer tore at the cornices and the eaves, and when stones fell they were not replaced.

..The same decay was creeping into house of the Rabbi... (Buck *Peony* 30)

The Rabbi lamented at the current situation of Judaism in China because people had forgotten their culture and tradition. They no longer remembered that they were Jews and were more Chinese in their way of living. Their complete assimilation made them Chinese and only a few of them were mourning the loss. The Jewish culture was no longer flourishing, it was in regression and this was the grief for most of the Jews in China. There was no support from Chinese community to restore their culture. Rabbi sighed, “Alas, our people have forgotten the language of our fathers! When I die, there will not be one left who can read the word of the Lord” (Buck *Peony* 129).

The Rabbi spoke these words in a state of utter despair and hopelessness. He felt as if he was no one in this alien land. The culture and legacy in which he always took pride had assimilated into Chinese culture and was completely disintegrated. The future generations of Jewish blood would no longer know their culture and religion. The Rabbi tells Naomi:

I should have waked long ago,” “But the truth is, daughter, that our Passover feast rouses sad memories in me and I lie awake in the night, sorrowing. These poor eyes---he touched his blind eyes, “can still weep, even though they can no longer see (Buck *Peony* 32).

To Rabbi’s lament, Naomi replies that they all **long** for their **native** land. The grief of living in China makes some Jews feel as if they are in exile. The decaying synagogue is a constant reminder of their plight. In their conversation the author brings out the emotional state of nostalgia and longing of a minority group and a deep desire to keep one’s identity alive. Their apprehensions and fears of seeing their culture becoming extinct is making them more anxious

with each passing day. Their only hope is their children, who they think, have the responsibility of preserving their culture. Naomi and Rabbi also discuss what immediate measures need to be taken to restore the decaying state of synagogue as it represents Jewish culture. However there were no measures from the state to help these minorities to secure their culture.

“The synagogue should be repaired, Father, and we should revive the remnant of our people. As it is, our men are forgetting and our children never know our heritage. You should give Aaron the task of collecting funds for the repairs. A good idea Father, and I will promise five hundred pieces of silver as the beginning” (Buck *Peony* 33).

This loss of culture resulting from the assimilation policy was not only felt by the Jews but also by the Chinese who lived closely with them. Peony who grew up in a Jewish household knew that these people of foreign origin were suffering silently. She remarks;

These strange foreign people, Peony was thinking, the beautiful old man, the beautiful girl, even Madame Ezra handsome and stately, all burning from within! And why did their eyes glow and their faces glow rapt and their voices so grave while they spoke? Some spirit came out of them and enveloped them in a mystic unity that shut her out. (*Peony* 33)

Madame Ezra talks to the Rabbi about the marriage of their children which was promised and also about her hope to find a good Jewish woman, to take care of him, after Leah gets married. Both of them are happy about this planned marriage as they believe it is in accordance to God’s Will. The Rabbi commanded Leah by quoting the following lines from the Torah to accept the Will of the Lord,

“Thus sayth the Lord to his servant Leah; Go forth, remembering who thou art, O Leah! Reclaim the House of Ezra for me! Cause them to remember, father and son, that they are Mine, descendants of those whom I led, by the hand of My servant Moses, out of the land of Egypt, into the promised land. There my people sinned. They took to themselves women from

among the heathen and they worshipped false gods, and I cast them out again until they had repented. But I have not forgotten them. They shall come to Me, and I will save them, and I will return them again to their own land. And how shall I do this except by the hands of those who have not forgotten Me?" (*Peony* 43)

Leah happily accepted her marriage as a religious duty because she knew it would lead her people to salvation and the sins of her people will be forgiven. She made preparations to go to Ezra's household where she had happy memories of her childhood with David, who was now going to be her husband. She had always dreamed of them working together towards the betterment of their people and their survival. She was sure that she will motivate David to rebuild the Synagogue and fulfill her father's last wishes. A new start where David will lead his people and everything will be back to normal. With these happy visions in mind, Leah left her home with comforting words of her father that she was marrying David for all of them. She was warmly welcomed in Ezra family and was provided two rooms and new robes were made for her. Madame Ezra very well understood the religious sanctity of David's marriage to Leah and as any other religious duty it must be done with reverence. She felt indebted towards Leah, for accepting this marriage as a duty towards her people. Her words subtly suggest, as to how assimilation kills a culture.

She moved her chair nearer to Leah's. "Child you know ---and no one so well as you---what is happening to our people here in this Chinese city-- -how few of us are faithful anymore! Leah we are being lost!"

"Kindness ---I grow tired of it! Because the Chinese have not murdered us, does that mean they are not destroying us? Leah, I tell you, when I was your age the Synagogue was full on every seventh day. You know what a small remnant is there nowadays"(*Peony* 60-61).

The above lines are a typical example of ethnic assimilation where minorities are made to believe that there are no differences between cultures and one doesn't need a different set of customs and rituals when it can be done under a

unified system. Naomi expresses anger over this Chinese concept of one dominant culture, where the minorities are forced to assimilate into a majority one, such kind of tolerance serves no good. She always wants to go back to their holy land as she keeps on telling her son, “This is not our country. We have another.”(*Peony* 66)

Leah’s presence in Ezra family has an impact on David; he gets to see a different aspect of her persona and feels inclined towards his religion. She had an exceptional quality of being spiritual. David for the first time felt a desire to know his faith and people, their origin. For the first time in his life it seemed to him that he understood his mother and all that she had tried to teach him and all that had made her what she was. David felt like a true Jew who always belonged to his people. It was since Leah’s arrival and her participation in religious rituals that David was beginning to understand his religion and what his mother always taught him. He felt as if he had missed it for so many years.

..., but with his blood. Why should his people be killed? A perverse rose in him. If the world outside sought to destroy his kind, then here inside the safety of this country where he had been born he would do all he could to keep them living. He would begin seriously to learn about his own people. For two years he had resisted his mother’s wish that he take lessons in their religion from the Rabbi. He had no time, he had told her. There were still many books he wished to read, and his father pressed him for more hours in the business, and he wanted to travel. His mother would not let him travel, he knew, until he was married and his son born. His son! Until now the child had been a myth made by his mother. But now he perceived in some depth in him, having nothing to do with thought and reason that he thought to have sons. If his people were being killed, more must be born. Birth was their retaliation for death (*Peony* 78).

With this realization and guilt David was now a different person altogether. He felt he was connected to Leah through Jewish bond and how Jehovah has destined them to be together and he made a promise to his mother to visit

synagogue. He felt responsible Jew to “protect his culture, or to do God’s will” (Buck Peony 78).

The following Sabbath was a new beginning for David as he visited the synagogue and he felt the bond of Jewish blood. He soon started reading Torah, the holy book under the guidance of the Rabbi. These changes in David and Ezra’s house were something that disturbed Peony, the Chinese bondmaid to a great extent. Being in love with David, she didn’t want Leah to get married to him as Leah would then be the future Madame of the house and her presence would be threatened. Leah secretly started manipulating things so that David falls in love with a Chinese girl Kueilan and her position in this house would remain intact. Peony had to make things work for her own sake but this was not easy in Ezra’s household although Kueilan’s father, Kung Chen, believed that marrying his daughter into a family of different blood and culture was only way to make “blood one” (*Peony* 80). In addition to this, this alliance would prove beneficial to his business prospects.

The novel captures the life of Jewish community in China at a time when it was at the brink of becoming extinct due to the assimilation at all levels. **They were living within illiberal state policies where minority acceptance was out of the question.** The Jewish life was being lost into Chinese culture and the rituals of their ancestry were regressing with each passing day, even their number was decreasing, few of the Jews were left who were having a pure Jewish lineage. While in most of the instances the miscegenation and assimilation had done its harm, the synagogue that served as an anchor for Jews to remain together was decaying and there were not enough opportunities and support to get it reconstructed as most of the Jews were living in poverty. The following lines capture the real situation of Jews:

...But the synagogue was a place of peace. Ruin was not too evident---not yet. The curtains were old, but they were still whole, thanks to the women who mended them tenderly. Most of the Jews were poor, and their homes were clustered about the synagogue. Madame Ezra felt guilty sometimes that she did not share the poverty of the small

community, all that was left of the once large one (*Peony* 100).

The Jewish community in China was a victim of cultural assimilation and people like Naomi and Rabbi were more resolute to maintain their ethnicity. This cultural assimilation is captured artistically in the following question which to a lay man is a puzzling one.

Where had the Jews gone? It was a matter to puzzle them all. Without persecution or any sort of unkindness from the Chinese, they had disappeared, each generation fewer in number than the one before. It was, of course, easier to sink into becoming a Chinese, easier to take on easygoing godless ways, than it was to remain a Jew... A poor Jew might be constrained to choose between God and money (*Peony* 100-101).

The fear of vanishing within Chinese culture makes Naomi more certain of her decision of David's marriage to a Jewish girl. Although the Rabbi is blind, he is the first person who feels the changes happening within Jewish population. He often remarks how people have stopped visiting synagogue except for the Sabbath, even the cleaning of the synagogue does not take place. And to Rabbi's utter dismay, Eli the keeper of synagogue informed him that the silver vessels had been stolen from the synagogue. However there were people like Ezra within Jewish community who didn't see anything wrong in getting assimilated into Chinese culture. For them it was the only possible way for their survival in this nation. They were content with their present situation and in words for Ezra, longing to return to Palestine was impractical as they were living a happy and respectable life, doing business and making money.

...Riding among them Ezra, told himself it was folly indeed to cling to the dream of that narrow barren land of the ancestors. A good thing they did leave it, Ezra told himself. He was learned enough to know that Palestine was a small dry place, and how now been possessed for hundreds of years by nomads and heathen. Should we go back, he mused, would they let us come in? What madness not to stay here

where we are welcome! (*Peony* 112)

For people like Ezra, reminiscence about one's ancestral place is useless, when one is living a good life and the due course of assimilation is a natural process to get settled in a foreign nation. The ground reality was however different from the views of rich businessmen like Ezra.

I daresay it was the compromisers, for see how they have settled into our people! You have to look at their ruined temple. Who goes there now to worship on their sacred day except a handful of them?" ... The Jews are being killed again in the countries west of the mountains,"... (*Peony* 116).

So there were constant attempts on the part of Chinese to make Jews like them or keep the Jews indebted by helping them in their businesses. **The state had no laws that granted rights and equal participation of Jews in social and political matters.** Throughout the novel, the ethnic or racial hatred towards Jews is shown when they are referred to as "strange people", "sorrowful people", "worshipping a cruel god", "invisible god", "bemused with religion" etc (*Peony* 11).

Through Naomi's inference on how the Jewish festivals have been mixed with Chinese rites and also how Jewish rituals have been washed out since decades that Jews no longer remember the exact essence of them, the author is reiterating on how cultural assimilation is a slow death of one's unique heritage. Naomi notes,

For through so many years and generations in this heathen land she declared that even had grown ignorant. Thus the rites of Passover and of Purim had mingled with the Chinese Festival of Spring, and the Feast of First Fruits with the Feast of the Summer Moon, and the sacred ten days of patience before Yom Kippur came often at the Feast of the New Moon Year (*Peony* 125).

Noami's mourning over the loss of Jewish culture and roots was becoming

clearer to David who after spending time with the Rabbi discerned from his anguish how every Jew all over the world is torn between two worlds in a foreign land. David was beginning to respect his mother's resistance, his knowledge towards his religion was growing as to why it was a prime duty of every Jew to spread word of Jehovah.

He was beginning to understand it now. What his mother expressed in her own practical way in her careful observance of feast days and worship days, in rites and rituals, in her refusal to accept the Chinese name of Chao even in his community where nearly all the Jews were known also by Chinese names---all this was the outward manifestation of the burning spirit of the Rabbi. These two believed that their people were a special people, set apart by God, to fulfill a destiny in the world. To their people, his mother and the Rabbi believed, God had entrusted a mission, the sacred mission of persecuting the souls of human beings until they turned to God (*Peony* 126).

David was beginning to uncover the reality, layer by layer and was quite disturbed by this reality, towards which he had been complacent and almost ignorant. While visiting the synagogue once he was taken aback when he learned that there was no one except the Rabbi who could read Hebrew. They had lost their language in order to conform to Chinese culture as they desperately wanted to be accepted in a foreign land. This language-conformity forms the first and basic step towards complete cultural assimilation. The Rabbi laments that after him there will be no Jew left in Kaifeng who could read Torah or understand Hebrew. He wishes David to learn Hebrew, so that there will be someone to preserve their faith, but at the same time he understands that many Jews have no other option than to get assimilated within Chinese custom for survival. Kao Lien a Jew tells David, "But we are to forget the past and separate ourselves no more. We are to live now, wherever we are, and we are to pour the strength of our souls into the peoples of the world" (*Peony* 147).

Seeing David's restlessness and constant worry, Ben Ezra, relieves David, by telling him that he doesn't need to torture himself about his duty as a Jew, and

he won't let him suffer for others, "I am not Abraham, I will not sacrifice you, O my son!" (*Peony* 150). Ezra always believed that people like Rabbi who always cling to their roots without moving on can never be happy and they always suffer and want others to suffer too. For Ezra,

It was within a man's power to choose happiness and to reject woe. True, it was not within the Rabbi's power. He had chosen sorrow, the endless sorrow of a man haunted by God. He had even transmuted such sorrow into strange dark joy. He was most happy when he suffered most deeply, like the moth that flutters near the flame of the candle. Yes, the likeness was true. Man scorched his very soul in that ecstasy of God. But must all men find happiness in the same way? Let the Rabbi find his own pleasure where he would, but he should not compel the young men--and above all not the one who was his son (*Peony* 152-153).

Ezra's modern views rejuvenated David's desire to marry Kuelein. He wished to live as a free man. Ezra's advice that one can't always mourn the loss of one's roots and live in past keeps on haunting him and makes him introspect to choose between his people and China. To decide he questions himself:

...Would he keep himself separate, dedicated to a faith that made him solitary among whatever people, he lived or would he pour the stream of life into the rich ocean of all human life about him? Dare he lose himself in that ocean? But would he be lost? Nothing was ever lost. Nothing is ever lost... (*Peony* 171).

David finally decides to follow his conscience and be true to himself. He goes to Leah to confess his love for the Chinese girl and his decision to marry her. Leah couldn't bear this rejection and in a fit of anger killed herself by slitting her throat.

Leah's death broke Rabbi's spirit and he didn't talk for many days, he was shattered. Leah's death made one thing obvious for Naomi and Rabbi that they were losing the battle. Her death was a watershed of many events where Jewish assimilation showed its dominance and

victory. In Ezra household there were preparations of David's marriage to a Chinese girl just after a month of Leah's tragic death. David's heart was heavy with her death and decided to visit her grave on day of his marriage. His conscience was feeling guilty as if he was responsible for everything that followed his confession to Leah. The marriage ceremony took place under no strict Jewish customs, even the groom wore Chinese robes, it was "based upon the Chinese, but compromised, and like no others (*Peony* 198).

The marriage ceremony of David concluded peacefully but Naomi felt an unbearable sense of claustrophobia in her own house, the idea of a Chinese daughter -in -law in her household and Chinese grandchildren was too much to keep her in senses. She tells her husband sobbingly, that she is feeling restless as they have lost their Jewish heritage and with this loss every hope has died and she also wants to die. Gradually Naomi became grave and silent, everything she stood and fought for in this alien land was over and yet she could not completely mourn over it. Although still maintaining and practicing her religion she felt a darkness engulfing her and on the upcoming Feast days the house which was prepared for marriage phase was somewhat changed.

When the feast days of a Jewish ritual rolled around, the house retreated subtly into the Jewish culture. The ancient rites were performed, the traditional food prepared and eaten. "But there was no more going to the synagogue. No rabbi stood now before the Chair of Moses to read the sacred Torah. The great red satin umbrella over the platform where the chair stood was folded and laid away" (*Peony* 208).

With the synagogue getting closed nobody looked after it. In the city, the remaining Jews, "less than two hundred souls, went about their business and forgot who they are" (*Peony* 209). Even the feasts observed by Naomi were low-key as there was no Jew left to believe in them and to celebrate. Within a short span of time a lot had changed. Jewish families did not celebrate festivals or religious duties with the same fervour that was a few years ago "even the pretense of worship had been forgotten and the sacred days passed like any

other in business and in pleasure” (*Peony* 210).

With the death of Rabbi, Naomi felt a great void in her life and became more of a brooding and lonely person. All the Jews of the province agreed that with the death of Rabbi, the last essence of Jewish culture alive had come to an end.

...The remnant of his people in the city mourned his death...All knew that with the Rabbi’s death something of their own death had come upon them, too, and they remembered as he had been in the days when he was young, how good he had been, how strong, and how he had adjured them to remember their God, who was the One True God. Now that he was gone, who would remind them? There was no one to read the Torah at his grave... (*Peony* 211).

Rabbi’s death had brought a closure to the protest against assimilation. The last symbol of Jewish faith and culture, the synagogue was closed and was in ruins. When Naomi visited the synagogue after rabbi’s death she was disappointed and shocked to see it in shambles. The agony can be understood from the following lines.

At first she saw nothing changed except the dust the winds had blown there, and the leaves fallen and rotting under the trees. But when she had crossed the last court and had mounted the terrace and come to the synagogue, she saw change. The two stone lions that had guarded the great doorway were gone, and the iron urns were gone; curtains over the doors were gone, and when she went inside the candlesticks were not upon the great table, or the silver laver for washing the hands. The separate tables that had held the twelve rolls of the law were gone and the fine silken curtains that had hung over the roll of the Law of Moses were torn away. Madame Ezra stared at loss after loss. She could not speak. She stood in the middle of the synagogue, looking for one well-known object and then another. Then her eyes fell upon the western wall, and there she saw the most vile robbery of all. The very gold had been dug out of the deeply carved letters of the Ten Commandments,

which Jehovah Himself had given to Moses... (*Peony* 212).

Noami knew that soon there will be only ruins left. For night and day she felt the despair, she knew there will be no going back to the Promised Land. Within a year of grief that had spread its tentacles around her, she died in sheer pessimism and loneliness. She saw everything disappearing, Leah, rabbi and now the synagogue. Everything was finished.

All agreed to this. The western wall of the temple had fallen down in a great win that came up from the south, and curious people went to stare inside the foreign temple, which had been until now forbidden. It was true there were no images (*Peony* 218).

With Noami's death, one of the last patrons fighting for Jewish ethnicity in China came to an end. A community that survived for centuries ultimately gave in to assimilation. With no one to stress and emphasize on celebrating feast days, or keeping relics of Judaism, the Ezra household changed a lot. For Noami's sake, David wanted to fulfill his mother's last wish to visit Palestine but before that he wants to marry off Peony and convey to her,

"You know my mother and I planned to take the journey westward to the land of our ancestors. I have a wish to make that journey now, alone." He paused and then he said abruptly, "There is something restless in me."

"I feel some hidden guilt in me," David went on. "I have had the guilt ever since Leah died. Now my mother is dead. This journey would somehow be for them" (*Peony* 221).

David wants to revive Jewish religion and culture for his mother's sake, and decides to go to Palestine, along with Kueilan. But Peony did not want David to go to his motherland fearing he would develop an emotional bond and might not come back. So she plans of telling Kung Chen, that as a responsible father, he shouldn't let Kueilan to go a strange country where there is a risk of life for everyone. So the journey to Palestine was cancelled, instead now they planned

to visit north of China for some days with children, family and maids. Kung Chen lends his mule carts and muleteers and cooks. Therefore after much persuasion by Peony they left on one morning towards north of Kaifeng.

In the meantime Ezra being to himself was more into retrospection and guilt. He was feeling very alone and he cursed himself for being so critical of Naomi's religious shrewdness. He would rebuke her for being a staunch Jew but now he yearned for same faith from which he always abstained, he realized he was dying without any identity to relate or associate with. In this void he wasn't sure of anything except his loneliness. On David's arrival from a long journey of months Ezra told his son that the latter was designated as the head of the business as the father wanted to retire. Without Naomi, Ezra was living a meaningless life but the realization of never being proud of his Jewish ancestry made him more miserable. He confesses with teary eyes to his son;

“...I remembered all my life with your mother. Much comfort she took away with her when she left me, but here is something strange: I have never been devout, as you well know, David, but while she was in the house I felt all was well with my house before God. She was my conscience ---which pricked me sometimes and against which I kicked, but which I valued .Now I feel lost. God is far from me---if there is a God?”(*Peony* 249).

With Naomi's death, the remnants of Jewish culture are gone and Ezra's conscience is burdened without any anchor to hold onto. He laments on their current scenario as there are no Jews left. He tells David “we are no longer Jews, my son” (*Peony* 250).He knows his descendants would be completely assimilated into Chinese culture. “When indeed they would be as lost as a handful of sand thrown into the desert or a cupful of water cast into the sea” (*Peony* 250). This absorption will be to such an extent that his descendants will have a Chinese features in body and mind. With such repentance, Ezra passed away and was buried according to Chinese tradition next to his father where everybody else was lost forever in a foreign soil.

With death of Ezra, David again felt a pang and desired to revive his roots as there was no one except him who belonged to Jewish ethnicity. When at last the long funeral was over, David went home again, bearing this prick of conscience in him. He was vacillating whether “to keep alive the vestiges of old faith--- or let them die (*Peony* 260).

Now being the head of family he was taking interest in reviving his lost culture. Peony noticed a change in books he reads;

Such books she often examined. At first they had been books of poetry but now they were always books of history or philosophy, abstruse pages that assuredly he could not read aloud to his wife. Since they had come home, the books had been from his mother’s library, which for the first time he was beginning to read; why, Peony did not know, and she pondered very much what change had come into David, that in the last few days he should recall his ancestors (*Peony* 265).

However David very well knew that Jews and their culture was completely washed from Chinese soil and the few resisting were facing the consequences of being getting killed. The racial tensions were rampant and there were rumours of incidents of racial hatred. For the first time David was not sure of his future in China such situation he didn’t wish to risk Peony’s life. She being not interested in getting marriage, decides to be a nun and join a nunnery. And soon Peony found a new home, and her name was Clear Peace, many a times Kueilan visited her. It was only after three years that Peony visited Ezra household which was no longer a Jewish household, it was Chinese in every aspect. Even the restlessness with which she left David was completely gone and he was a happy man. In Ezra house there were no such things belonging to Jewish culture. His children were married to Chinese households, “and his sons’ wives were all Chinese” (*Peony* 280). The Ezra family once a thriving Jewish household was no longer existing, it was everything but Jewish, a perfect example of cultural assimilation. The impact of assimilation was not to be witnessed in Jewish family but was evident in the heap of ruin the synagogue had turned into. The ending of the novel captures the onslaught of assimilation

on Jewish culture.

In the city, the synagogue was now a heap of dust. Brick by Brick the poor of the city had taken the last ruin of the synagogue away. The carvings were gone, too, and there remained at last only three great stone tablets, and of these three, then only two. These two stood stark under the sky for a long time, and then a Christian, a foreigner, bought them (*Peony* 281).

The disappearance of Jewish community which was centuries old is what Buck focuses at and throughout the novel and the ill-effects of assimilation have been highlighted. The visible signs of Jewish history are all extinct, even the holy place has been vandalized and the remnants sold. Even the remains of synagogue like tiles, wood and other artifacts were used at other places like Buddhist temples or local temples. The only place to locate or claim one's Jewish ancestry in China would be the museums or libraries in West. According to Wendy R. Abraham the two tablets remaining were bought by Bishop White, Anglican Bishop of Church of England in Henan province and the Chinese-Jewish artifacts purchased by him were passed to Royal Ontario Museum in Ontario for safekeeping. For someone to believe that Jews once lived in China was unimaginable. Even Peony who grew up in a Jewish family was finding it hard to reconcile with the past.

...whatever happened was Heaven's will. That strong and powerful family, the seed of Israel and Ezra and David, were they one day to be no more, even as the synagogue was gone, which their ancestors had made for a temple of their God? (Buck *Peony* 282)

The attempts of members of Jewish community to revive their culture and roots in face of cultural assimilation were of no avail as it doesn't serve any purpose unless there is cultural competence and acceptance, the belief that diversity is essence of life is vital for multiculturalism. One precondition according to Kymicka for leading a good life, "is that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value of life." (81) A

country's efforts should not be divested in making it one culture and one nation, rather there should be celebration of difference and uniqueness. Buck's *Peony* is a novel about struggle of ethnic minorities against a dominant culture. It captures how in the face of assimilation, the people of Jewish ethnicity within Chinese nation make every attempt to revive and maintain their culture, however the characters very well understand how their efforts are futile as nobody not even the authorities believe in diversity, because their motto was to make everyone Chinese or to make one blood. The suffering of the minorities within a nation-state and their desires are portrayed through the lives of Ezra family. Buck had a deep understanding of what it is to live as a minority in a dominant state where there are no provisions or policies for them to express or practice their culture and religion. The ending of the novel explicates how assimilation leads to death of a culture and if nation-states continue with such an orthodox liberalist policy, then diversity will be under threat which will lead to a more illiberal and conflict ridden world. *Peony* is a novel that clearly speaks about minorities within a nation state who suffer barriers to practice their cultural and social norms.

Buck's endeavor as a writer has always been of a staunch believer of dignity of human life particularly minorities. Her advocacy of their rights and fighting for their cause in political arena as well, speaks volumes about her understanding of the importance of diversity and equality. Her writings appeared after WWII and at that time a multitude of concerns and debates particularly relating to minority rights were very vocal. Her views provided her an opportunity to forge further for minority rights and this legacy of hers is still alive through her works.

Buck's yet another novel, **that analyses the issues of immigrants** is *Kinfolk*. This novel features the life, struggles and dilemmas of **minority groups** in foreign countries, which **are** relevant even in present times. The novel offers a different perspective where immigration is not **just** about moving to a different country for better prospects, but also a process of adjustment, compromise and **most of all identity loss as a result of gradual disconnect with their ancestral**

roots. From her novel, the reader's attention is focused on the situations and circumstances that the immigrants have to face and endure in order to survive and sustain themselves and hence *Kinfolk* captures the psychological and emotional upheavals and traumas associated with immigration.

If we study the history of immigration in America, we come to know that this country holds a massive allure for people from all over the world who want to go and live there. They may have different reasons nevertheless, the 'American dream' is vivid in the minds of potential immigrants. As discussed previously, the immigrants had varied and selective reasons for the same and in this process several racial and ethnic groups have undergone some sort of assimilation upon their arrival. *Kinfolk* is about the immigrant experiences of Asian Americans during the twentieth century, and the complexities with which the immigrants of Asian descent live through, and at the deeper level it highlights the issue of racial discrimination.

The immigrants from Asia especially the Chinese had been coming to America for better future since many centuries. However the first marked wave of immigrants from China to U.S. or popularly called first-wave of immigrants was in the beginning of 19th century. Michael Teitelbaun explaining the Chinese immigration to America in *Immigration to United States: Chinese Immigrants* writes;

There have been three waves of Chinese Immigration to the United States. The first took place in the early 1850s. Drought, floods, government corruption, high taxes, poverty, and civil wars had led many in China to think about leaving their homes. When gold was discovered in California in 1848, many poor people left china in hope of striking it rich in America. More than 20,000 Chinese immigrants came to California seeking gold (Teitelbaum15).

With the influx of huge number of Chinese immigrants, the American society suffered rampant instances of racial tensions, following which the American government had to establish Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, which was a step

taken to curb the number of Chinese immigrants coming to U.S. However, this law was revoked in 1945. The second wave of Chinese immigration to America was in the year 1949 followed by the third wave of Chinese immigration to U.S. in the later decades of 20th century.

Commenting on the history of immigration of the Chinese into America, C. N. Lee in his work *The New Americans: Asian American Assimilation* asserts, “The early history of Asian Americans inevitably is a history of adaptation, resistance and assimilation” (Lee 15). The American Immigration process which is extremely complex and tedious is a big deterrent for the immigrants to integrate within the American society smoothly, because even after their arrival on the American land, they have to fulfill certain criteria to be able to settle there. Prima facie, it appears that America welcomes people from all over the world but in reality the immigrants face a tough time. Kevin R. Johnson discussing the dual sidedness of American immigration policies in *Opening the Floodgates* argues that American immigration is deeply nationalistic because the American citizens view immigrants as a threat to their nationalistic solidarity, their cultural distinctness and even to their jobs. Calling U.S. immigration laws ambivalent he believes that;

The United States often characterizes itself as open to the “huddled masses,” as the inscription on the statue of Liberty proudly proclaims. Consistent with the ideal the United States has historically allowed large number of immigrants to this land of freedom. America stands out in the Western world for its generosity in the admission of immigrants. At the same time, however, the United States has an immigration dark side. A mean spirited, anti-immigrant impulse has sporadically gripped the nation particularly during times of social issues... During these times, the U.S. immigration laws have been harsh, discriminatory, and aggressively enforced (Johnson 2).

Kevin Johnson’s work explicitly explains how America has been partial and prejudiced while framing policies and granting rights to the immigrants. For a developed country like the U.S., immigration continues to be one of the pressing concerns because “Immigration laws historically have been seen as a

way of regulating and enforcing a particular national identity” (Johnson13). The conflict of interests between the citizens of America and the immigrants has been long standing and even Johnson reiterates it. “Race and racism find themselves deeply intertwined in U.S. immigration history” (Johnson 14). The challenges of racism are augmented with the fact that most of the host nations believe immigration policies to be their own business and consider it as their right to implement restrictive immigrant policies in order to maintain cohesiveness and sovereignty within their country. Analyzing the aspects that are inherent within the American immigrant laws, Kevin Johnson points out that most of the immigrants have been the victims of exploitation and discrimination due to these policies. He confirms that;

The noncitizen in U.S. society is vulnerable. The United States has consistently afforded fewer rights to immigrants than to U.S. citizens. Immigrants are denied right to vote and access to public benefits (even for those who contribute tax dollars) for which citizens ordinarily are eligible. At times, federal state and local governments have adopted harsh policies towards immigrants, including engaging in efforts at coerced assimilation, attempting to force people to speak English, and invidiously discriminating against noncitizens living in the United States. In these and other ways, noncitizens are denied full membership in U.S. society. To make matters worse, deportation from the country is always a possibility facing noncitizens (Johnson 46).

This brings us to the understanding that America as a developed nation, should focus on implementing immigrant friendly policies that keep in account the welfare of immigrants that would save them from all sorts of exploitation. The fear of deportation is a constant emotional and psychological burden that the immigrants have to carry, whilst they are in the U.S. and this restricts the sense of belongingness with America and its citizens.

The fear of deportation haunts many immigrants. They know they can be torn away established lives, family, friends and community in an instant for lacking the proper immigration papers or for even something

minor as failing to file a change of address form with the U.S. government within ten days of moving...An immigrant's entire life in the United States is constantly at risk (Johnson 46).

The immigrants have no choice but to compromise in order to feel settled in America and adhere to the policies, although unwillingly. This is the ugly side of the immigration history that Kevin highlights and it is quite contrary to the image of America that the immigrants have, "The forced assimilation of immigrants is inconsistent with the nation's modern sensibilities and commitment to multiculturalism" (Kevin 47). And hence, it proves that multiculturalism as a policy, is to be understood and implemented in the right spirit, where it is not a mere coexistence of many ethnicities or culture but the existence of equal opportunities, freedom of expression and equal participation.

However theorists like Samuel Huntington, maintain that immigrant influx is a threat to nation's unity and cohesiveness and letting people of different races into a nation threatens its solidarity. Samuel P Huntington in *Who Are We? : The Challenges to America's National Identity* asserts that at any cost "American creed" (Huntington 3) needs to be maintained. Peter Brimelow in *Alien Nation* contends that the core strength of American society is its people, and the arrival and rise of immigrants, ruffles this very core and this would prove detrimental in the long run. Kevin Johnson argues that assimilation, as defended by Huntington or Brimelow is not reasonable. He rebuts their claims of assimilation as immigrant-friendly. He claims;

Assimilation unquestionably has human cost. It is difficult for immigrants to adjust to a new land, society, culture and language. They experience differences in nearly every aspect of life in United States. With massive adjustments in one's way of life come stress and strain. Such turmoil requires support and assistance through law and policy, rather than blanket demands to assimilate... (Johnson 74).

Immigration has to be understood as a continuous and an inevitable process

happening since ages, rather than an invasion into the host country, hence the focus should be on making it immigrant-friendly. The novel *Kinfolk* by Pearl S. Buck is another exemplary work of hers to make the readers understand the experiences of immigrants. The novel is about the Chinese American immigrants and each character gives the reader an insight to different levels of assimilation in a foreign country and explores the complexities of being an immigrant. As already discussed, the Chinese immigration history to U.S. has witnessed many highs and lows during its peak flux. On reaching America, the Chinese immigrants faced the reality that was discriminatory and isolating. Many of these immigrants, fearing segregation and isolation, assimilated within the dominant American culture but being Asians, they were victims of racial discrimination. Some of these immigrants and their children were in dilemma, whether to continue to live in America or go back to China.

Kinfolk highlights these complexities of immigrants living during the time period after the second wave of immigration and particularly in the second or younger generations of immigrants. For many of the Chinese immigrants, going back to China could raise many complications so they preferred to continue to live in America, although they were not entirely able to relate to the American lifestyle. And their settlements, which were the result of their desires and aspirations, came to be known as China Towns, a home away from home. According to Teitelbaum, “By end of the 19th century “Chinatowns” had developed in cities all across the United States (12). These settlements were the way of adjusting in a new land, gave them a feeling of ‘home’. Teitelbaum commenting on the first Chinatowns in America writes;

Like most immigrant groups, the Chinese clustered in one area of the city. This helped them feel more at home in their new country. They were with people who spoke their language and had the same customs. At first, this section of this city was called “little China,” “little Canton,” or the “Chinese quarter.” Eventually, it became known as “Chinatown” (Teitelbaum 29).

The Chinatowns were the way of keeping traditional Chinese culture alive in

America, providing Chinese delicacies and leisure activities, however, outside these towns, the reality was pretty different. The Chinese immigrants realized they ended up creating ghettos for themselves and their world appeared to be different from the American society and this gave them a feeling of being segregated. This was quite opposite to what they wanted so they had no choice but to assimilate within the American society. According to Wendy Rouse Jorae, the main reason for relenting to the coerced assimilation was the situation the immigrants found themselves in. She writes in her book, *The Children of Chinatown* writes:

However, the journey to America was only the beginning of Chinese children's experience with exclusion and segregation. Shortly after their arrival, Chinese immigrants attempted to deal with the sense of cultural dislocation by building institutions and establishing family relationships in San Francisco that replicated those in China. Exclusion laws created only the first of many barriers to the replication of such traditional family models (Jorae 41).

So collectively the above mentioned needs and situations led to the creation of Chinatowns but it was soon that these settlements met with criticism from anti-Chinese political movements. Wendy Jorae points that political scenario was getting hostile towards these immigrant settlements;

...prominent politicians and journalists generated propaganda that attempted to arouse the anger of the White voters, not only by highlighting the examples of vice and disease in Chinatowns but also by criticizing the Chinese immigrant men for failing to bring their families to America... (Jorae 43).

The **anti-China wave** and allegations against the Chinese immigrants failing to assimilate into America made life of immigrants more difficult. With no support from the administration or government, it was easy for many political investors to question their presence in America and label them as a threat to its economy and stability. Also in many states like California, with anti-

miscegenation laws at work, the threat was even more. Battling such situations, many immigrants started moving out of Chinatowns and relented to conform to the American norms but it was a daunting task. They found themselves often at crossroads making their lives very arduous. Many festivals and rituals of their culture continued to be celebrated in Chinese tradition in private, however many parents according to Wendy Jorae, were following the American way of life.

At home the parents sought to pass on Chinese culture and traditions as a way of countering the influences of Americanization both on the playground and in the classroom. A number of festivals provided opportunities for Chinese children to enjoy themselves while celebrating Chinese culture (Jorae 65).

The Chinese immigrants tried to combat the effects of assimilation at their own level, particularly when they feared losing their language. They started schools in Chinatowns with Chinese as medium of instruction. The Chinese parents feared the forced assimilation would make their children as Americans and consequently the parents may lose their authority and say over their children.

For Americans, cultural assimilation was the only way to protect American values. For them, Chinese were a threat to their social fabric and this made the Americans develop a negative attitude towards the Chinese immigrants. This very reason, of not to being accepted by the host country was too much of a risk in a foreign land and within few decades many Chinese-American immigrant groups wanted to get rid of being labelled as ‘minority’ and focused on their assimilation, so that they too could be considered as Americans and a part of the American society.

Coerced assimilation comes with a heavy price of losing one’s identity as it always seems to create split personalities of the immigrants. When Chinese – American immigrants adopted American standards, it led to the rise of new complexities. They felt anchorless, oscillating between living a life of their native culture and at the same time were forced to assimilate in the dominant

culture; as a result many felt a psychological disorientation while others rebelled against their Chinese culture. Wendy explains this dilemma,

As American-born Chinese children embraced and rejected aspects of American and Chinese culture, conflict and tension with their parents inevitably increased, families experienced the usual generational conflicts heightened by the divide that separated many immigrant parents from their American-born children. Chinese American society had undergone its own revolution of cultural ideals (Jorae 208).

The children belonging to this new social reality, who lived according to American life was a shock to their parents who found their young generation quite rebellious. Fearing the miscegenation with white race, the parents wanted their children to get married to people of Chinese descent. This was the reality of Chinese-American life in early 20th century. With so many social pressures that they faced every day, their life became a continuous struggle. Pearl. S. Buck's, *Kinfolk* is a saga of agony and survival of Chinese immigrants where even after generations of Chinese living in America, their place and position in American society is uncertain. The novel portrays this struggle of Dr. Liang and his family who had moved to America for better life and lived in New York. The family comprised of Dr. Liang, his wife and four children, out of which the youngest two were born in America. The siblings had different levels of adjustment to the American culture; the eldest two make a momentous decision of going back to China. At the same time the novel highlights the aspirations and troubles of Chinese immigrant groups in America during the 20th century.

Kinfolk opens with the description of a Chinatown in America, a second home for Chinese-Americans, and a place to feel belongingness to their culture. Buck mentions it at the very beginning of novel.

The theatre in Chinatown was crowded to the doors. Every night actors brought from Canton played and sang the old Chinese operas...The theatre was a home for them. Their children went to American schools, spoke the American language, acted like American children. The fathers

and mothers were not highly educated people and they could not express to the children what China was, except that it was their own country, which must not be forgotten. But in the theatre the children could see for themselves what China was. Here history was played again and ancient heroes came to life before their eyes. It was the only place in Chinatown which could compete with friends. Parents brought their children early and stayed late. They talked with friends and neighbors, exchanged sweet meals and gossip, and sat spellbound and dreaming when the curtain went up to show the figures who were contemporary with their ancestors... (Buck *Kinfolk* 1).

These Chinese ghettos served as emotional and cultural anchors. Wendy Rouse Jorae writes in Introduction of her book, *The Children of Chinatown* that on reaching America, the Chinese immigrants faced a lot of hardships. In introduction to her book she says,

... facing obstacles of immigration, exclusion, cultural dislocation, child labor, segregated schooling...Chinese American children struggled for recognition in society that increasingly resented their presence... (Jorae Introduction).

Upon reaching America, many of these immigrants fearing segregation and isolation were forced to assimilate within the American culture. **And the same** time, is reflected in *Kinfolk* that these Chinese immigrants were compelled to move outside these towns but occasionally visited the Chinatowns to feel connected. The description of a theatre in Chinatown narrates the visit of a celebrity from China. On this occasion, Dr. Liang Wen Hua, a professor and the protagonist of *Kinfolk* was the chief guest and was introduced as a “great mind” (*Kinfolk* 5) whom Americans praised. Many people, even the owner of Chinatown, Billy Pan was overwhelmed with Dr. Liang’s presence. Dr. Liang who was not a keen visitor to Chinatown but could observe that it was a “lively place” (*Kinfolk* 4) where;

From the darkness of the cab he looked out at Chinatown...He heard

their voices laughing and gay, and he saw fathers tenderly carrying little children while mothers led the toddlers. When did they sleep? Shops that were also homes were still lighted and viciously bright neon lamps shone down on windows of chinaware and groceries ...along the sidewalk. Families lived together closely, and parents struggled with their children to keep to the standards of a country the young had never seen (*Kinfolk* 4-5).

Dr. Liang was concerned about his children and their future, especially James, the eldest son, who was studying medicine and wanted to go back to China. James's decision perplexed Dr. Liang, who had spent all his life in America as a proud Chinese- American. He wondered how his children don't think like him and is confused on why James wants to go back to a "war ridden ruined country" (*Kinfolk* 5). He wanted to see James as a famous surgeon in New York.

All his life, Dr. Liang tried to conform to American standards and consequently assimilated into it. He suffered from low self-esteem and self-worth as he felt inferior to the Americans, sometimes he felt inferior about his wife and family, "He was often ashamed of her, like her habit of using ear pick in public" (*Kinfolk* 6), and she was primitive in her ways according to him. His younger children Louise and Peter were born in America and were typical Americans in their ways and thinking but his older children James and Mary didn't feel the same. In a way there was already a rift within the Liang family regarding their lives in America. Many a times Mrs. Liang tried her best to keep her Chinese ancestry alive and had made up her mind to get James married to a Chinese American girl Li and James supported her decision.

For James and Mary to live as Chinese Americans or as immigrants was something against their true self. They always felt a yearning to be with their kinfolk and wanted to go back to China. They never seemed happy with their lives as immigrants and now being adults, they were adamant to go to their motherland. In the novel it is not only these two siblings who have this desire, we see this longing in Mr. and Mrs. Li, who as immigrants were living in an

apartment on sublease, and felt as if they were living in an alien land and frequent incidents of racial discrimination were agonizing. Their ordeal was immense.

...It had been impossible to find an apartment on long lease and next to impossible to get a sublease. Almost any American, at the sight of Mr. Li's, Liang fat, kind, yellow face declared that he had decided not to sublet, after all. Mrs. Liang, who was the interpreter and manager on these occasions, had been filled with fury, but she did not wish to let her new friends know that they were unwelcome in this country of refuge. Besides, she knew that they were not unwelcome ... (*Kinfolk* 17).

The above lines express how the Chinese immigrants were desperate to fit into the American model of living, sometimes Mrs. Li wanted to vent out this suffering, she wished to be back with her people where this release was possible. The novel highlights how the new or younger immigrant generations do not feel the same about their homeland as they were born in America, they are Americans to the core and find this pressure from their families to keep up with their Chinese ancestry, ridiculous and futile. For instance Lili is very disappointed when James tells her about his returning to China and persuades him to stay in America where he has a great future ahead whereas China had nothing to offer.

Apparently the contentment of Dr. Liang has another story to it: the doubt that lingers in the minds of immigrants about their decision to settle in America. Dr. Liang, like many other Chinese immigrants feels guilty and remorseful that in order to settle in America, they had to compromise with their **culture and connect with their ancestral roots**. His younger children **had already conformed** to American standards and he had apprehensions about his daughter Louise, who looked **like** a typical American. Louise, in the novel, is an example of complete assimilation as she knows nothing of her culture because she considers herself an American and openly declares her respect for American culture.

“We are Chinese,” Dr. Liang said mildly. He continued to gaze at Louise. “Never forget my child—we are aliens here. This is not our civilization. We must not forget our sources. Our women are beautiful because they are natural” (*Kinfolk* 25).

The above words express the helplessness of an immigrant father in face of assimilation, which is clearly evident in younger immigrant generations as he is well aware of the state policies which have no group-differentiated rights for the immigrants. Louise could not comprehend her brother’s decision to go to China: a poor and primitive nation.

“...and she dared not to say no. Alone sometimes she was frightened at the thought of China. She loved America. Her days were pure fun, mingled with brief hours of work at high school and away from her family she lived a life which she concealed from them altogether” (*Kinfolk* 30-31).

As for Mrs. Liang, no matter how much she has conformed to the Chinese tradition of respecting her husband’s decision and being faithful to him, deep inside she regretted her decision of coming to America for her husband’s sake. She longs for returning to China and see her grandchildren grow-up according to Chinese culture. James’s dream of going back to China finally comes to fruition but at the cost of his relationship with Lili. He was engaged to her but neither Lili nor her father wanted James to go back to China- country ridden with civil war.

Lili and her father’s stance, made James realise that his dream cannot be understood by everyone. He is disappointed by Lili because he loved her very much and always wanted to marry her. But sadly, he had to choose between her and going back to China. He decides to follow his decision and on leaving U.S. for China, was deeply agonized on his break-up with Lili. On reaching the vibrant city of Shanghai, James witnessed poverty, crowd, dirt, hunger and starvation. The reality was more wretched than he had thought;

Far more dangerous than vehicles were these thousands of others who

came and went upon the streets. They spilled over the sidewalks and flowed among the traffic in a dark stream, cursed by drivers and cursing in return. The streets were a continuing brawl. Most of the people looked poor and their faces were strained and anxious, but among them were also the well dressed and complacent, winding their way unobtrusively among the others (*Kinfolk* 50).

Staying for a day in Shanghai, James left for Peking where he had applied for the post of surgeon in a hospital. Experiencing the ground reality of China he could very much understand the huge economic divide that segregated people as 'poor' and 'rich'. The rich and the educated wanted to leave the place as they thought China had nothing to offer to them. James met many people like professionals and businessmen, who advised him to go back to America as nothing meaningful could be done in China. He came to know that there were not many good schools, jobs or health facilities. On joining a hospital as a surgeon, he saw many patients suffering from tuberculosis and trachoma. James was moved by the agony of his folk and wanted to do something for his people, yet he was in of dilemma. When he received a letter from his elder sister, Mary who lived in America, that Lili was going to marry someone and also how their youngest sister had been giving them sleepless nights due to her tantrums; her ways were completely American and wanted to marry an American boy, Philip. The situation back home was quite disturbing for whole family; however, he came to realise that his decision of coming back to China was correct. James was sure not to go back to America, he was working hard and had met Peng who was a good friend.

After sometime James received a letter from his father telling him that both his younger siblings, who were born in America, were on a flight to China as the father decided that the siblings could no longer live in America. The letter laid bare Dr. Liang's regret and disappointment on his decision of moving to America. The ill-effects of their immigration were now visible. Not only had they lost their language but also their identity within the dominant culture. Desperate to save his children from Americanisation, Dr. Liang tells his

children, “We will have no peace until you are gone” (*Kinfolk* 93). For him, their going to China was going back to their roots, the place that they actually belonged to. He feels relieved once they leave America.

On leaving for China it was only Mary who was happy; however Louise and Peter were disappointed. They could not grasp the reality of going away from their native country. *Kinfolk* captures how immigration for a Chinese family proves to be failure even after decades, as the Liangs’ having lived for so many years in America could not come to terms with assimilation; many a times they were made to feel as outsiders and were still not accepted into the American society by some Americans.

This is what Kymlicka focuses in his book, *Multicultural Citizenship*, where he argues that culture is societal and an individual cannot come to terms with his own self where he has to suppress his expressions and behavior that are according to his culture. The novel is a true embodiment of multicultural spirit where every culture has its own value and nothing can erode it. The novel also explores the anxieties and complexities faced by Dr. Liang and his family. Here Buck stresses on the need to acknowledge and appreciate every culture and if we don’t respect this diversity, the world will soon witness disharmony and discord. The desire to be oneself or true to one’s identity which is achieved through proper recognition can lead an individual to happiness.

However, James knew that this shifting from US to China is a kind of ‘uprooting’ for his younger siblings as they are completely Americanised. He managed to get a house on rent in Hunting Street, but because it was not up to the standards that his siblings were used to in America, it took him more than a week to make it worth living for Peter and Louise. In the meantime he also managed to find a job for Mary in a children’s hospital and put Peter in college. All these responsibilities suddenly fell on James, and he himself was struggling to fit in this new place. Although he tried to sound and behave contented, there was still something amiss. He was going through a lot, emotionally.

Underneath satisfaction and contentment was the feeling that he was living a

superficial life, he was still considered an ‘outsider’. James wanted to belong to China so desperately that he could never return to the US. “He could not live airily the rootless surface existence of the other doctors” (*Kinfolk* 117). As a Chinese and a physician, he wanted to do something for his people, although he knew it wasn’t going to be easy. But he was determined not to go back to America. In America, Dr. Liang and his wife were happy about sending their children to China, “back to China to renew the bond with their mother earth” (*Kinfolk* 129). Although China was their country, going back and living there was a daunting task, particularly for Peter and Louise, as they had a longing to go back to America. Peter was rebellious against the old school thought of Confucianism that was responsible for making China “weak and people slaves” (*Kinfolk* 143), Peter believed that Confucianism was responsible to some extent, in oppressing people. But the eldest siblings were gradually getting engrossed with their work and this helped them to understand the realities of the lives of common people living in poverty, hunger and disease. Mary and James were becoming more empathetic towards their people. For once they wanted to meet their kinfolk, to feel their real ties and roots. Mary once told James, that she wanted to know their people and their roots and also that she wanted to go to their ancestral village.

James was a bit indecisive about his visit to the ancestral village but later on decided to go because he wanted to take the younger siblings along with him. Louise was seeing an American named Alec Wetherston stationed in Peking, which the family disapproved of. So taking Louise along to the ancestral village was an attempt to keep her away from the influence of Alec and the American culture.

The village appeared before them as, “It sat upon a swell of the land, and the mud wall surrounded it. The north gate was before them, and inside the gate would be their ancestral village” (*Kinfolk* 171).

They were welcomed by the head of the family Uncle Tao, Dr. Liang’s elder brother, his sons and daughter-in-laws, and their children all living together in an ancestral house. All four children were welcomed profusely and were

provided the best hospitality. However, it was clear that life in the village was not easy and the relatives of the Liangs' were poor as compared to them. At the same time James couldn't believe that their father could detach himself from all his ties and be selfish enough to move to America for his own good. For the Liang siblings, it was impossible not to feel anything and they really wanted to do something for their kinfolk, but they knew it wasn't easy. Mary reflected, "He was right. There was a world of difference between themselves and these kinfolk, centuries of difference, space and time crowded together into a single generation" (*Kinfolk* 183).

For James and Mary, the social setup and the customs were all new as well as primitive. Uncle Tao was a typical patriarchal male head who was against educating women or their undertaking any enterprise. He was even against James's ways of using modern-day medicines. Mary was quite disgusted over Uncle Tao's ignorance and his insular thinking and she was more resolved than ever to come back to the village and work for the betterment and empowerment of women. For that she needed money and decided to write to her father, expressing her desire she wrote:

"We think of going to live and to see what we can do for them," she wrote. "It made me sad to see the children growing up with no chance to go to school and no one even telling them to wipe their noses. Really, Pa and Ma, you should have told us what things here are like, instead of letting us think that our country is one beautiful cloud of Confucianism. But maybe you have been away so long that you have forgotten..." (*Kinfolk* 196).

Liangs were very happy to learn that their children were willing to do something for their people, especially Mrs. Liang, so she wanted to send some money which she had been putting into loan in Chinatown and was managed by Billy Pan, secretly from Dr. Liang. And she wrote to James, sending money and also mentioned that "Let your sister be friend with some Chinese boy" (*Kinfolk* 203) as she feared Americanisation. Mrs. Liang informed Peter that Dr. Liang has decided to let Mary have his share of rent from the ancestral home for

welfare of their people.

Getting financial help Mary and James were greatly relieved that the first step to help their kinfolk was achieved. Meanwhile Louise ended up marrying Alec and flew back to America. Her marriage came as a shock for Dr. Liang as his favorite daughter had defied his ways, but deep inside he knew, that this was coming. He couldn't make them Chinese while living in America. The eldest siblings decided to move permanently to their ancestral village without any delay and James resigned from his job at hospital telling his seniors, "We are only doing what we wish to do--- not what is right, not what is wrong" (*Kinfolk* 237) They were quite hopeful with their plans on their journey to their village except Peter who seemed solemn.

After living for over a month in their ancestral village, Mary was happy spending time with children and "she was full of stories and songs and games" and soon she was a favorite among children of village and Mary was ever busy with them. James was worried for Peter who was becoming, "unknown and aloof" (*Kinfolk* 253). Peter while in college is influenced by a group of boys who are communists. They convinced him to join them to blow up a bridge as a mark of rebellion against the government and in the process gets killed. Mary is so broken and dejected, she feels that Peter could not reconcile to coming back to China and did not have the maturity to understand the real problems of the Chinese society and that is why he fell an easy prey to the influences of the communists. She says,

"When I have children. I will not let them go to America. They must grow up here, where our life is. They must learn to do with what we have and if they want more they more they must make it with their own hands. They must not dream of what others have made" (*Kinfolk* 278).

Mary's words reiterate the importance of one's roots as she intends to get settled in China. However James was not sure enough about his life in China as some restlessness agonized him. Chen a Chinese doctor and James's friend and Mary decide to get married and were feeling more content. On hearing this

news the Liangs were very happy, “Dr. Liang felt relief at the news about Mary. There was pride in his relief,” and Mrs. Liang decides to go to China for some months to make arrangements according to Chinese tradition. Before leaving she bought some gifts for Mary and her would-be-son-in-law. On seeing Mary content with her life and little things, Mrs. Liang was happy for her daughter, however she could sense some restlessness in James.

Sometimes James contemplated whether this decision of coming back to China and uniting with his kinfolk and his roots was a mistake, as he was still not feeling **homogenized into** Chinese way of life. The fierce resolution to connect and reach his kinfolk seemed to be a failure and his desire to do something useful for his people seemed irrelevant. **After Mary gets married to a Chinese doctor. James relents to marry a Chinese girl saying,** “I should like to have a good tempered woman, one strong and healthy, and the daughter of a peasant---one of our own peasants” (*Kinfolk* 325)

Mrs. Liang’s happiness knew no bounds when she heard this. James for the first time started understanding the true meaning of being one with his kinfolk and he gave credit for all this to his mother whose visit proved to be a boon in teaching him to value one’s roots. Because of her visit, James **realized** his connection and association to the ancestral village. Before leaving for America, Mrs. Liang chose a simple girl of their ancestry, Yumei Yang, to be wife to James. “He had to live from his roots up. Well, he had found his roots, and it was time to begin living” (*Kinfolk* 345). With James’s marriage, everything started falling in place, Uncle Tao who was against modern medicine agreed for a surgery, Yumei adjusted in her new household and was dutiful in dispensing her responsibilities. James was very much into his work and life. For James, Yumei was someone who brought him close to his people as she was one of them and this helped him to connect better.

He knew that it was she who kept them safe. He understood more clearly with every day that Yumei was the bridge he had needed to his own people. When they feared his foreign ways, they went to Yumei and she came to him. Through her he saw them and comprehended what

he had not been able to know before. Thus through her he began to put down his roots into his ancestral land (*Kinfolk* 356).

Yumei played a vital role in bridging and connecting James to China and his kinfolk. Finally James achieved what was missing in his life, for which he was compelled to leave America and come to his land, that precious connection, that recognition and approval.

The novel ends on a very positive message regarding the significance of one's culture and roots without which, one's existence no matter how much comfortable, proves meaningless. Even after achieving everything, absence to connection to one's roots makes it all seem worthless. In *Kinfolk* Buck once again stresses the importance of one's culture and how it should be maintained at all costs.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism as a theory constitutes the bedrock of actual or possible legislation to promote diversity, equality and inclusion. The theory has generated a body of concepts that would determine the finer details of legal provisions. The study has employed Kymlica's 'multicultural citizenship' and Taylor's 'politics of recognition' as conceptual tools to identify and describe the minutiae of the lives protagonists in Buck's writings explored in this study.

The research has expounded the inherent multicultural themes in the works of Pearl S. Buck who wrote about the minorities, the marginalized, and their awareness of their rights. The study reaffirms that the exploitation and marginalization of the minorities like immigrants, Amerasian children, ethnic and other groups are the harsh realities of contemporary societies. The study explores the challenges like racism, gender discrimination and xenophobia in multicultural setups and the ways to deal and tackle these social and cultural issues and argues how Buck's works envision seeing modern nations prioritizing identity, recognition, equality and diversity and allows us to delve into the varied human experiences. It guides us to formulate and strategise methods in the contemporary global, social and political scenario that focus on diversity and equality. This will contribute to a better society by helping to support avenues **and opportunities to ward off social challenges.**

Buck's essay, "American Children: Alien by Birth", unfolds the tragic tale of an American GI who was stationed in Korea during WWII and has a family there whom he wants to bring to America. However, there are no existing laws to bring his children, who are Amerasian; his offspring with an Asian woman, to America. The US has no policies to grant legal citizenship rights to Amerasian children and their struggle for recognition continues till date. These children have neither 'identity' nor 'recognition'.

The chapter titled 'Dialogical Relation between Identity and Recognition' applies Taylor's concept of 'identity' and 'recognition' to the two novels of Pearl S. Buck: *The Hidden Flower* and *The Newyear*. The chapter analyses the identity crisis leading to the tragic ending of the love story of Josui, a Japanese girl and Allen, an American army personnel, stationed in Japan. Josui, Allen's wife experiences identity crisis on two accounts. First, as per anti-miscegenation laws of Virginia her marriage to Allen stands nullified and second, the state laws do not give citizenship rights to her Amerasian child, Lenny. In this novel we witness denial of rights of minorities. Lenny is misrecognized and is now 'stateless' and the only hope for him is the adoption centre or a foster home where he has to live without his biological parents. Another instance of misrecognition and rights of Amerasians is witnessed in *The Newyear*. The novel explores the discrimination of Korean Amerasian child Kim and his mother Soonya. Kim and his mother are abandoned by Christopher, an American GI. Kim is eight years old and writes to his father to bring him to America. Kim is brought to America but is disowned by Christopher; however, at the end of the novel he is acknowledged by the family.

The chapter titled 'Pathway towards Multicultural Citizenship' applies Will Kymlicka's concept of 'group-differentiated rights' to the non-fictional work of Pearl S. Buck, "On Discovering America". Kymlicka's in his theory of 'Multicultural Citizenship' explores the group rights of immigrants and ethnic groups. For Kymlicka 'multicultural citizenship' is achieved when every individual has freedom to live his life according to his customs and cultural practices. Kymlicka talks about different types of minorities and the group specific rights catering to their needs and aspirations. Using these concepts of rights to the immigrants in Buck's essay "On Discovering America", where Buck explores that there are no state policies for protection of immigrants and other minorities and they continue to face discrimination. Buck highlights the role of immigrants in America's social and economic progress. She advocates creation of

legislative policies and group-differentiated rights for the acceptance and dignity of immigrants.

The chapter titled 'Rhetoric and Reality of Assimilation' explores how assimilation denies group-differentiated rights of minorities in two novels of Pearl S. Buck: *Peony* and *The Kinfolk*. The former records the onslaught of assimilation on Jewish ethnic minorities in China, whose identity and culture are on the verge of extinction. There are no state laws or policies for protection of the rights of minorities in China as it believes in 'one nation one culture'. Another novel featuring the struggles of immigrants within the host nation like America is *Kinfolk*, which offers a different perspective on immigrants, family of Chinese Americans where they feel they are losing their identity as assimilation berefts them of living their lives as per their cultural beliefs and for them immigration is a process of adjustment, compromise and most of times 'a loss'. The only hope for them is to return to their homeland where they can connect with their 'roots'.

The main thrust of Buck's works and initiatives are that a nation should accept the diversities of race, gender, ethnicity rather than 'suppressing' or 'dismissing' the differences. The characters in her works depict variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds which shows the reality of the present world scenario which is diverse and at the same time, facing challenges, because of it. Buck as a writer has contributed a lot through her writings by bringing an awareness and a critical understanding of the nuances of diversity and immigration. Her works help to foster and develop feelings of respect, competence and dignity of other cultures and has helped in strengthening cross-cultural ties and relationships. Her works and initiatives being multicultural defend the critique from the school of thought, stating how any attempt to create a 'mono cultural' society dissipates the very fabric of cohesion and solidarity as the minority groups are suppressed and have to abandon their cultural ties forcibly, resulting in resentment and conflicts.

At a time when we are witnessing rampant incidents of racial hatred,

xenophobia and injustice across the world, Buck's work will assist present and future generations to foster a humanistic understanding of the world and make it a better place.

Far more significant than this finding is that the novels in particular reveal that the root cause of systematic problems in multicultural societies is the acculturation of society, creating distinctive groups with conflicting and confrontational perspectives on issues relating to ethnicity, culture and language. The research delves deep and analyzes the life situations where minorities suffer marginalization and mis-recognition because of the absence of laws or legislative policies for their recognition and participation in political processes. These minorities like Amerasian children, immigrants and ethnic and religious minorities continue to have no legal claim over rights. In the novels *The Hidden Flower* and *The Newyear* we have Lenny and Kim, the two Amerasian children who continue to suffer in their birth lands as there are no existing laws in America to provide them citizenship rights or the status of an American citizen. The American authorities do not recognize them as its citizen. In these two novels we also have characters of Josui and Soonya, Josui's marriage to Allen stands nullified because of the existence of anti-miscegenation laws at place in America. She suffers misrecognition on two counts, one as wife of Allen Kennedy and second as mother of Lenny, an Amerasian child who has no nation to call his own. Similarly Soonya although being the biological mother of Kim cannot claim the rights of Christopher's wife suffers mis-recognition and marginalization, her son is also suffering at the hands of the existing laws. The same injustice is meted out to other minorities like immigrants and ethnic minorities in the novels like *Kinfolk* and *Peony*. In *Kinfolk* we have of Dr. Liang's, a Chinese American immigrant and his family in America who suffer the onslaught of assimilation as there are no existing laws in America for the protection of Chinese culture and religion. They, like many other immigrants are forced not to use their language or pursue their cultural norms publicly, leaving them no other option except to leave America. These immigrants feel as if

they are suspended between two worlds and belonging to none. The same sense of rootlessness is captured in *Peony*; a family of Ben Ezra, a Jewish minority, living for many decades in China. This Jewish minority group is at the verge of extinction as assimilation has done a colossal harm to their culture and religion. There are hardly any Jews left in the real sense. The Rabbi in the novel laments that after him there will be no one who to read Torah. Jewish culture and religion has been wiped off by the dominant existing Chinese culture and there are no provisions by the authorities for the protection or revival of Jewish culture in China.

Not only do Pearl S. Buck's works present the real life situations where characters suffer at the hands of political administration and policies but also present a parallel reality where they suffer due to their inner battle, a conflict within their own selves, not able to break the shackles of their culture and are caught up in these complexes of collective subconscious. These limitations do not allow them to come not as a freer individual and continue to face exploitation and marginalization. Such is the impact of these deeply embedded impressions of culture that even if there had been laws and policies for recognition and participation of these minorities, they still would continue to suffer within themselves. For instance if there were laws existing to grant legal American citizenship to an Amerasian like Lenny and Kim in *The Hidden Flower* and *The Newyear*, they would still be unaccepted in their mother's country and their physical traits would make them stand out from the rest of their fellow social beings. Their lives will always be caught between the two worlds. For Mrs. Kennedy and Josui's mother, Lenny would always be an another kind of being. Even Kim in *The Newyear* who is brought to America and accepted as family will continue to suffer because of bi-racial identity which is not possible to conceal. These psychological complexes thwart the chances of a happy survival for these Amerasian children and their mothers. Also in novels like *Kinfolk* and *Peony*, even if the host nation's policies were for the protection of the cultural and religious practices of minorities, still the complexities within, of

belonging to a different race or ethnicity, would continue to prevail. Dr. Liang's family will always be a Chinese, because living in America does not imply that they will snap their ties from their roots. In *Peony*, the family of Ezra Ben like many other Jews in China will stand out because of their physical traits. This reality cannot be changed by any law or policy.

Therefore, Buck's contribution is exemplary because she presents the realities of the different minority groups, that bring forth their suffering and trauma, of their inner psychological battles and suggests a humane and compassionate redressal.

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