

A Call To Save The Culture Of Chinese Ethnic Groups In America With Reference To Cultural Erosion In The Accidental Asian: Notes Of A Native Speaker By Eric Liu

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Abstract

*The study aims to explore the correlation of history, new cultural identity and its impacts on Asian's life because the erosion of the traditions followed by the ancestors has become a regret for the Asians in America due to their assimilation (Simons, 1901). It is a descriptive and qualitative study in nature while Hall's theory of Cultural Identity and Diaspora (1996) has been applied as a theoretical lens to explore the relationship of language, identity, and cultural diversity which is interconnected with the exploration of history and new cultural identity. Stuart¹ Hall (1996) focuses on the traumatic characters' and their distorted selves under the influence of past and present as Eric Liu (1998), the author, narrates in his book *The Accidental Asian: Notes of Native Speaker*. By applying Close textual analysis technique, the study proposes that the narrator in the text (1998) is guilty and regret on being assimilated with the American culture. The focus of the study is that Eric Liu's culture (Chinese) has been forgotten while being in America; he has lost his culture, identity and, most importantly, language which is the cause of regret for the author. The findings show that though he has an emotional attachment with his family, culture, and language of his ancestors yet he is unable to read the writings of his father which is due to his assimilation. The study concludes as a harbinger for the Asians to save their language, culture and norms before it is too late to undo the damage. Being aware of the importance of their own culture, traditions and identity while having a new identity is the need of the time in the multicultural settings of the world.*

Keywords: Assimilation, culture, identity, erosion, Chinese, heritage and ethnicity.

Introduction

Asian Americans experience assimilation and dislocation of their cultural identity in the western society which is evident in the Asian American writers notes, books and interviews. They represent the conscience of the social situations and reality of this experience through their literary contributions. The writers sometimes become the characters in the stories and describe the human condition and harsh realities of westerns in their writings. Asians

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Americans move to Western nations for their lust of a good future and get themselves assimilated with a new identity according to the requirements of western society and forget their tradition and cultural identity (Liu, 1998). However, later on they regret their assimilation because they can not fix themselves in another nation and can not become the white; the new identity becomes a regret for them. Eric Liu (1998), Mohsin Hamid (2007), Maxine Hong Kingston (1993), Jhumpa Lahari (2015), Amy Tan (1989), Kamila Shamsi (2017) and many others gave the picture of regretting assimilation in western world through their writings. Cultural assimilation is the process through which a minority group or culture adopts the values, customs, and beliefs of a dominant group or becomes more like that group. While some conceptualizations only view cultural assimilation as one phase of acculturation, others regret it later. Additive acculturation is another form of assimilation in which a person broadens their cultural repertoire while maintaining aspects of their original culture. Assimilation is composed of the traces of life experiences that people face psychologically, culturally which are cognitive representations of memories, past events, identity, and thoughts. The voices within a person are the experiential traces. They include aspects of regression, corresponding to the initial experience, which triggers or "wants" to be expressed (to speak or do something). Assimilation is a latin term used for the similarities, like language change, behavioral change, and other ethnicity change individuals adopt in other nations. It is the extreme form of acculturation, where individuals are involved in different ethnic cultures which are dominant in the society. The protagonist of *The Accidental Asian: Notes of Native Speaker* (1998) got assimilated in the society of America as he is good at English language, changed his lifestyle and forgot his ethnic heritage. He faced the cultural complexities due to blindness of the past and his second generation identity. Assimilation across the boundaries is like force shaping a person because Asians Americans assimilate themselves into the culture of that society. Eric Liu (1998) said that "my own assimilation started before I was born when my parents migrated for the "appetite for westerns"(p.29). He was raised in a situation where he acts like Americans. Liu's (1998) race is indicated by color and his class is linked to fixation; both are entangled in a conflict where Liu's quest for a white identity necessitates giving up his original culture. He asserts that an assimilate "cannot gain the world without losing his soul" and that he is a "traitor to his kind, his class, and his own family" (p.36). These consequences made the Asian Americans distanced from their culture and caused the erosion of cultural identity they once owned . As Eric Liu said there was a time when assimilation was just associated with whitening. In the twenty-nine years that I have lived, there has been a revolution in the definition of "American," a revolution involving color, class, and culture. However, the language surrounding "assimilation" has stayed constant over time: it is still associated with whiteness, which is still our preferred synonym for power, and it is associated with guilt, which people of color are supposed to experience for accepting power (p.28).The American-born Eric assimilated and grew up in the United States, unlike their parents. Initially, he accepted cultural assimilation, but later on, Eric regretted it because of his emotional attachment to his father and grandmother and other problems he had as a Chinese immigrant. The tragedy of assimilation, we discover, is the unavoidable alienation between the American son who strives to establish his belonging and the immigrant father who imagines himself still in exile. Later when Eric Liu recognized his self identity he explored that Assimilation is other than being white; the moment he observed assimilation as more than merely a series of losses he also realized that not everything that is lost is inherently sacred yet "As I mentioned earlier, I've let my Chinese heritage fade. And I frequently make a commitment to do more to protect and safeguard my inheritance, this is the process of unencumbered self".

The Accidental Asians (1998) title highlights the Asian Americans issues of assimilation as a second generation. It explores the race and Ethnic dispersion of the immigrants in the United

States. The subjective nature of each nation's historical record makes it easier to highlight the uniqueness of history and culture as well as the persistence of cultural identity. The west links different individuals to specific historical eras, for example, "the East is backward in its history," while emphasizing how civilized the west is. The Accidental Asians: A Notes of a Native Speakers (1998) explored the personal and inner conflicts related to cultural identity of Eric Liu the writer of this non fiction book. He narrates his personal experiences of cultural identity and the consequences of identity crisis and assimilation while adjusting in the dominant society. As an Asian American immigrant he narrates the personal and family narratives in his seven essays and highlights the racial discrimination and ethnic identity issues faced in American society. He explored the issues of assimilation while adjusting in the new culture and also highlighted the understanding of emotional and cultural regrets faced due to assimilation. Asian American immigrants faced the complexities of culture, language, and values while adjusting in the new culture but due to stereotypes and emotional attachment with their cultural background individuals regret their assimilation.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the reasons of Cultural erosion of Chinese ethnic groups in Liu's The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker
2. To highlight the effects of assimilation on the self of Asian American immigrants in Liu's The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker.

Research statement

This study focuses on the nostalgic phase of the life of narrator where remembers his past and regret the loss of his Chinese heritage, culture and language caused due to assimilation as mentioned in Eric Liu's memoir The Accidental Asian (1998). The researcher explores the struggles of the Asian-Americans in the modernized world of the United States because of his parents' wish of a good future. Therefore, the aim of this research is to concentrate on this perspective of lost culture, effects of assimilation and individual struggle to connect with the past.

Significance of the Study

Asian-Americans regret assimilation and complexes of erosion of their culture remains poorly understood. Different literary studies investigated the themes of illogical Assimilation, Identity Fetishism, Role of color and Ethnicity in Eric Liu's nonfiction work The Accidental Asian (Leiwei, 2004; Perkins, 2005; Trie t& Minh, 2015). This paper encompasses the life experience of Eric Liu in America and frames the cultural identity conflicts which he faced being an Asian American. In addition, it also overviews his acceptance of new cultural identity while showing great respect to his native cultural heritage, his ancestors writing and his Chinese identity. The researcher focuses on the problem of Erosion of Culture of Asian Americans as they are no more connected to their native cultural identity; new culture affects Asian-Americans and in an attempt to defeat the feelings of otherness, Eric tries hard to create his own unencumbered self identity where he welcomes his own identity while clinging back to the original identity. Nevertheless, Eric does not substitute the cultural assimilation and social integration of the native identity. He seems to suggest that cultural assimilation should never undermines the immigrants cultural identity.

Literature Review

Assimilation is the process through which immigrants adopt another culture, language, beliefs, and other modes of daily life to fit in in another country. The problem of regretting assimilation and erosion of culture faced by the Asian-American is a common problem as immigrants'

cultural identity suffers as a response. Hall's (1996) notion of language, identity, and cultural differences are all related to one another. Cultural identity is the representation of each person's past that is connected to the present. The *Accidental Asian* (1998) explores the themes of regretting of cultural assimilation as individuals' cultural identity is determined by the past cultural identity and emotional attachment to ancestors language and tradition. Assimilation of immigrants' cultures becomes essential for immigration to be both socially and economically feasible. Similar to this, Constant, Gataullina and Zimmermann (2008) developed a subjective measure of the intensity of immigrants' ethnic identity, and used it to classify migrants into four states: 'assimilation, integration, marginalization', and 'separation'. They did this by combining data on language proficiency, ethnic self-identification, and other individual domains included in the SOEP data set. According to Marger in his work *Race and Ethnic Relations* (2003) the "cultural dimension of assimilation involves one ethnic group adopting an other's cultural attributes,". Cultural assimilation, or acculturation, denotes the adoption by a minority ethnic group of dominant group's cultural patterns-language, political beliefs, and so on (p.87). The process of immigrant groups and host societies interacting and sharing traits which might be sociocultural or economic are known as assimilation (Brown & Bean, 2006). In order to study the social element of assimilation, researchers observe a certain behavioral change, change of dialect, experiencing a new lifestyle, and making a new identity. For the following reasons, grading practices in the academic setting are culturally rooted and can be used as a sign of assimilation. According to Christine J. Yeh (2003) "Assimilation is the strategy associated with rejecting one's cultural values in favor of entrance into the dominant cultural practices" (35). Immigrants actually have a tendency to think that the host nation's culture is better than their own. Berry (1992) states that "people are using the assimilation strategy" when they want to avoid maintaining their cultural identity and instead seek out everyday interactions with different cultures. The term "Asian American" was credited to historian and activist Yuji Ichioka (2002) during the late 1960s ethnic consciousness movements. To embrace this identity is to reject the label assimilation which comes from the West. Identity frequently causes non-native Americans to toss and turn in a multicultural nation like the USA as they fight to be acknowledged by mainstream white people. Despite the value placed on multi ethnic and multicultural characteristics, Americans' inherent tendency toward cultural essential-ism when defining their national identity stems from cultural anxiety. Literature is a therapeutic means for students to explore their multi-ethnic identities in America because themes like integration, dual-identity, freedom, and the survival spirit are current because of the political and economic difficulties affecting this different nation. The question of American identity becomes complex, because there are many different cultures represented in the country. Because of the freedom that the United States of America offers, some ethnic groups have immigrated to this nation. On the other hand, certain American ethnic communities are unique in that they attempt to weave American values into the culture of their native countries (Fain, 2023). Li, Melody Yunzi in his work *Remapping New York's China town* (2022) in Eric Liu's *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) examines that the themes of dislocation, lack of place, homesickness, and homelessness have been prominent among the Chinese diaspora. The location of the American Dream, New York, gets rewritten and reinterpreted as either hell or heaven, or as neither. The ways in which these two works rewrite the landscape of New York and the American ideal further muddle the dynamics of Chinese migration in the city, creating multilayered maps made up of intricately layered and overlapping locations that compose the emotional landscape of Chinese immigrants' conflicts. In Li's *Affective Geographies and Narrative of Chinese Diaspora* (2022) it addresses the sociopolitical dynamics of border cape and analyzes how dangerous it is to draw borders and cross them. Li investigates how migrant literature has "rewritten and reinterpreted" the city's Chinese communities, and more significantly, how this literary transformation represents the dynamic process of Chinese immigrants' identity reconstruction. China towns, defined as "self-

imposed," "invisible," and "permeable" walls separating them from the outside world resemble bubbles with conflicting emotions.

According to Nguyen Minh in his writing *Identity Fetishism and Cultural Essentialism* in Eric Liu's *The Accidental Asian* (2015), the Asian Americans life experience and associated issues of racial discrimination. Liu (1998) remarkably examine how minorities construct their identities in American society in terms of cultural essentialism and identity fetishism. In a multicultural country like the USA, Identity frequently causes non-native Americans to toss and turn when an Asian American struggles to recognize the mainstream of the whites. Fetishism is a fundamental philosophical dilemma that underlies the development of identity in America, a largely capitalistic nation. Liu (1998) consistently emphasizes his 'Chineseness' and the cultural heritage of his self-disciplined father and his Chinese grandmother in *The Accidental Asian*, while also highlighting his distinctions from them, particularly with regard to identity. He also explores that Identity constructing and cultural preservation are two incredible concepts that could draw the complete picture of Asian Americans life associated in Eric Liu's work *The Accidental Asian*. Eric's idea of identity Liu's (1998) identity is characterized by the fact that people frequently use something's preferences to identify themselves. He acknowledges, "an assimilationist cannot gain the world without losing his soul and is a traitor to his kind, his class, and his own family" (Liu, p. 36). By engaging in such behaviors, he chooses to define his identity and defend his obvious whiteness since he is particularly conscious of the fact that being white is associated with achieving and learning ways of the upper class.

Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) considered to be the best meta-fiction written by the Asian American author, Hamid; the narrator tells about the identity crises and assimilation of the protagonist Changez who was assimilated in the American society lived the lifestyle of the white people. However later he got marginalized because of his ethnicity after the 9/11 event and being called terrorists makes him regret his assimilation. *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai (2006) is the story of Biju, an undocumented immigrant who struggles to make ends meet while working odd jobs in the United States. The story alternates between India and New York, as an Indian Asian-American, characters face the class struggle, cultural issues in America. This novel is about Class conflict, marginalization, class consciousness, economic determinism, socioeconomic hierarchy, communism, capitalism, materialism etc. Liu (1998) consistently highlights his Chinese heritage and the 'Chineseness' of his disciplined father and his devoted Chinese grandmother, while also highlighting his distinctions from them, particularly with regard to identity. In Chapter Two, "Notes of a Native Speaker," Liu (1998) writes a series of single, first-person statements to demand that Native Americans recognize him as a mainstream white citizen and refrain from discriminating against him. He makes the decision to adopt these behaviors in order to define his identity and rationalize his obvious whiteness since he is particularly conscious of the fact that being white is associated with "achieving and learning ways of the upper middle class" (p. 36). His aim, feeling like he fits into American society, is apparent; preserving people's capacity to interact with the group to which they belong.

According to David Leivei Li in his work *Illogic of Assimilation* (2004) states that *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) tackles the fundamental democratic tension of an Asian-America caught between the normative disciplines of acquisitional and ascriptive American culture and illogical assimilation. Liu (1998) begins the narrative investigation of his American identity and begins a thematic detachment of racial and cultural identities by paying respect to his late Chinese father. He remembers the Chinese 'chapbook'

his father's childhood Taiwanese friends had collected, but he is unable to understand it and remarks on "how opaque an inheritance one's identity is" (p.6). There are a minimum of three aspects to Chao-Hua Liu's 'Chineseness': racial, cultural, and national. But after his passing, the racism remains. His father's 'Chineseness' has lost significance in terms of both cultural practice and national devotion as a result of naturalization and extended stay (Li, 2004). Asian American experiences show where certain paradigms are inaccurate and offer a more accurate path. Remembering the proverbial "Don't think" of Wittgenstein. In my effort to dispel false assumptions, some of which result from thinking too much and not looking enough I try to say, "Look!" Real cultural processes must be examined, and their fluidity and dynamic nature must be noted (Olberding, Amy. 2008).

In Min Zhou's *Are Asians Americans Becoming White?*(2004), he describes Asian Americans are frequently perceived as being on the verge of becoming "white" and because of their high rates of achievement, they have been called a "model minority". However, becoming white involves denying one's ethnicity or putting distance between oneself and people of color. Not many Asian-American Americans and even fewer Asian Americans, would voluntarily identify as Asian. Instead, they identify more strongly with their countries of birth, including Vietnam, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, India, or the Philippines. The model-minority myth elevates Asian Americans above the rest of the American population. The belief that many Asian Americans achieve at levels above the national average is the foundation for the celebration of Asian Americans as a model minority. The majority of Asian Americans appear to understand that being "white" means being mainstream, typical, and normal, and they use white people as an example for rising in the social hierarchy but Liu (1998) clarify this state as well when he says "I never asked to be white, I am not literally white. I do not have white skin and white ancestors, I have yellow skin and yellow ancestors" (p. 34).

In Margaret Dilloway's *How to Be an American Housewife?* (2010) the protagonist Shoko and her daughter are brought up in American culture and the process of assimilation has affected them as they were also marginalized . She has to acculturate to American culture and diminish her own culture, like it or not. Assimilation is actually all about the process through which people or groups adopt the language, values, and behavioral patterns of the dominant society, as well as the way in which groups are integrated into it. *How to Be an American Housewife* (Dilloway,2010), a book about moms and daughters who assimilated because they have no choice. Asian Americans faced the tragedy of assimilation when they survived in the white society. Liu (1998) stated that "I was aware of the negative stereotypes associated with Asian Americans, such as the idea that we are inherently strange and exotic and that we follow rather than lead"(p.38) . Similarly, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) is about language traits, indoctrination, objectification, and assimilation as examples of how others express themselves and it's also about understanding and awareness of the 'othering' process and the its unfair treatment in society as a whole. In Kazuo's (2005) point of view 'othering' can take the form of assimilation as well as rejection, such as objectification, which devalues, excludes, and discriminates against the other by using derogatory language. Concealing an act of objectification is the goal of assimilation. The integration process elevates others through the use of positive language or discourse. Since a superior group demands acceptance and reduces the sense of being "the other" of an inferior group, it is sometimes referred to as "othering by valuing." Nevertheless inferior groups are still treated unfavorably and are still being discriminated against whites. in this context assimilation gives the notion of same but not equal. A notable work of Amy Tan's *A Joy Luck Clubs* (1989) portrays the life of second generation immigrants of a Chinese mother and her children in the United States. Amy Tans describes the characters' journey of assimilation into American culture and erosion of their Chinese heritage.

The Chinese mothers accepted pluralism, while their American-born daughters embraced acculturation and assimilation. However, as the daughters grew older, they came to value their Chinese cultural history and were able to create an effective combination of their ethnic and American cultures.

Theoretical Framework

Asian American history is about the Asians culture, identity and struggles that faced by the Asian people in America during migration. The study considers theoretical framework that comprises Asian American studies, based on Assimilation of the diasporic people's struggles in the white society. Hall's Cultural Identity and Diaspora (1996) focuses on the relationship of language, identity and cultural diversity that are interconnected and have an impact on one another. Cultural Identity (Hall, 1996) is more than exploration of history and new cultural identity as it defines the relationship of history and the new cultural identity. Hall explores the question of Cultural Identity and its representation as cultural identity and diaspora are simultaneously political, historical and personal. It is concerned with investigating the subaltern, marginalized or dominated identities as it is a reflection of the two aspects: first, Hall (1996) analyze cultural issues (1989) from the identity as People's understanding of identity and cultural issues is based on the practice and structure of certain cultures. The first relies on an essentialist interpretation that highlights the shared characteristics that are said to constitute the oneness or fundamental nature of people. Every social and interpersonal interaction involves the production and exchange of meaning through language and meanings give us the sense of identity (Hall,1996). Hall discusses the subject of cultural identity from two different, yet related, points of view. He explored cultural identity as a unifying factor or as the common cultural practices that bind a particular group of people together. Secondly, he believes that within cultural identities, there are distinctions as well as similarities, identity is the reflection of cultural issues and it also comprehends the historical and social volatility of identity . If a group of people have historical cultural practices that set them apart from other groups and demonstrate their shared cultural identity, then it can be argued that they share a cultural identity. The concept of "cultural identity" refers to those cultural norms that are considered to be unchangeable, consistent and genuine behaviors. A person's cultural identity defines him in this context, "people" refers to a group of individuals who belong to the same racial or ethnic group and share the same language or religious culture (Hall, 1996). Assimilation is a tool used by the West to distinguish cultural identity from binary opposition. These include things like sophisticated and historical, civilized and uncivilized, mainstream and off-mainstream, and so on. All of these conceal irrationality. According to Hall (1996), there is a connection between language, culture, identity and cultural differences; he argues that culture is a means of sharing meaning and language can link to make sense of the things in produced culture. He also said that language is essential and a key container of the values and meaning of a culture (Hall,1995). Language is the essential means in a culture where we share our social lives, and language is the medium of reflecting our identity and culture. Culture can be shared through society (Hodg & Abraham, 1988). According to Hall (1997), language is one of the "media " that a culture uses to communicate its ideas, feelings, and thoughts. He says, there exist multiple interpretations for the term "culture"; a society's culture might be defined as "the best that has been thought and said" (Hall, 1997, p. 2).

Analysis

Eric Liu's *The Accidental Asians: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) has redefined the experiences of Asian American immigrant, their culture erosion, reminisce of their culture and the regret of assimilating themselves. It highlight the issue of declining of the culture of the immigrants' second generation; specifically the remembrance of Chinese culture, norms and

written scriptures as narrated by author in his 'Notes of a Native Speaker'. Chinese and Western culture is fundamentally different and their perspective is different as Chinese people are more concerned with traditions and history; having different set of norms, Chinese culture has various distinctive features and developed progressively on its own gradually after independence. It differs from other civilizations as their written scripture and legal system are way different. Even while two cultures have certain similarities, it is apparent that they are not the same. Asian cultures, however, differ from Western cultures due to their own systems and structures (Li, 1996). According to Lu Xun (2012) the process of creating a distinct "subjectivity," he drew on his own traditional Confucian background and culture, other philosophical systems, and the writings of other Chinese scholars. Even though, Lu Xun (2012) originally referred to these conventional influences as "illnesses of thought." Overwhelmed by the oppressive systems of society, customs, forefathers and his own history; he declines to acknowledge and confront it. Lu Xun (2012) is deeply divided between her European-American influences and her Chinese heritage. These overwhelming ethical duties may be related to China's writing heritage, which saw literature as a means of bringing about political change(Ho, 2012).

Assimilation and Asian American's Identity

Asian American immigrants mostly renounce whiteness yet assimilate to the white people's community and forgets their previous identity. Assimilating with a new culture and blindness of the past is the emerging issue of the current generation of the immigrants of Asian American origin. Race matters in a society and Asian American immigrants faced the racial complexities in America while adapting to the new cultural identity. Liu (1998) describes that Asian Americans faced societal pressures due to their racial identity as shared his personal conflicts based on the cultural heritage and assimilation in *The Accidental Asians; Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998). Every Asian American immigrant has their past cultural identity just like Liu who struggles with his identity and loss of the heritage as second generation of the immigrants; once owned by his parents now he describes it as "glaucoma of memory" (p.135) where the past becomes distant. Asian Americans were characterized as illiterate, undesirable, and unassimilable immigrants more than a century ago, yet today they lead the nation in terms of educational attainment, marriage rates and rates of residential segregation. Asian culture or values that encourage remarkable outcomes, but rather a circular process specific to Asian immigrants in the United States today. As Hollinger notes, this system of classification leads to some internal flexibility where people negotiate how much their ethnicity conforms to a traditional ethnic culture; often referred to as levels of "authenticity". Nonetheless, from the perspective of the non-Asian outsider, one is not more or less "Asian" along racial borders (Hollinger, 2000).

Assimilation portrays the series of losses of the original culture, language and tradition because "to conceive of assimilation is more than a series of losses—and to recognize that what is lost is not necessarily sacred" (p.55). Assimilation is the process where an individual loses or distances himself from their traditional and cultural background specifically language which made them think of regretting their assimilation. But that loss is not necessarily sacred for many immigrants as they adopt the new cultural identity and adjust themselves into community in order to feign whiteness which enables them to get opportunities for work . Immigrants who are connected and emotionally attached to their ancestors' culture, language and norms regret their decision of detaching them from their origin but once they lost everything. In *The Accidental Asians: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) Liu experienced the cultural shift in his generation because he lost the values, norms and language of his father due to immigration of his parents. He felt the loss of Chinese culture and language because he lived the life of a second

generation in America while his father experienced the first generation Chinese culture. He experienced the complexities of assimilation and seamless integration of immigrants' cultural heritage. Liu (1998) realized that this forfeiture of losing Chinese language is because of his father's possession ; a diary which made him think of the loss when he is unable to read and understand the notes written by his father. Liu (1998) forgets his cultural heritage and his ancestral language and somehow regrets the consequences of immigration now at this stage by saying, "What a Luxury is to express such a regret"(p.18). With the indulgence of time Asian Americans realized that loss of forgetting their cultural heritage because of the luxurious life and cultural identity they adopt made them feel so. Cathy Park Hong's *Minor Feelings* (2020) also explains that Asian American identity is one that is both hard to define and sometimes ignored because of the wide range of ancestry it encompasses. Hong says that the white gaze plays a crucial role in the construction of Asian American identity since it integrates immigrants with various national backgrounds into a single minority group. Throughout *Minor Feelings*, Hong's (2020) point of view revolves around her actual experiences, integrating her own academic trajectory into the pieces. She effectively exposes the racial power systems at western and explains the harshness and emotions felt by Asian Americans in the society of the United States (Jones, 2022). *Minor Feelings* (Hongs, 2020) and *The accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) are the critical in portraying the lives of the Asian American immigrants and their experiences by describing the personal and inner conflicts of the writers themselves. Liu (1998) focuses on the question of identity and assimilation while distancing from his cultural heritage. On the other hand Hong portrays the psychological and racial problems of immigrants and their nuanced feelings of others in the United States. Both works explored the racial minorities and diverse cultural impacts on the immigrants in the dominant society. The central point of *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1996) is Liu's (1998) realization of assimilation is more than a series of losses as he faced the dislocated cultural identity. Migration to a new country may cause individuals unfamiliar with their historical-cultural identity, language of their parents and their norms which is a loss. Regretting assimilation is common in Asian Americans due to their emotional attachments with their parents culture , language and norms of their homeland. Erosion of culture is the main reason for regretting assimilation. But there's another perspective: due to migration individuals learn new cultures, languages and values and make their new self identity. The truth is that Asians unwittingly end their pasts and sentimentally search for a new identity. Asian American culture is insofar so different and reconciles the culture, tradition, and language in different ways.

Immigrants' Cultural Erosion

Eric Liu's *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) is based on his life experience of assimilation and his new cultural identity in the United States and erosion of the culture of Asian Americans (specifically China here) who migrated from their homeland and got themselves assimilated to get a new identity to live a life like white people in white society. This Asian-American assimilation happens when a group of people migrate from one place to another and share their culture, language, and their values. Traditionally it has been believed that Eastern Asians compare themselves to western white people. Due to practices of different cultural identity many Asian Americans forgets their historical cultural background and their historical language and the values that ancestors shared. According to Hall (1996) language, identity, and cultural distinctions are closely related concepts. He said that language is a tool used to "make sense" of things and that meaning can be created and exchanged, in contrast to culture, which is concerned with "sharing meaning". He also said that language is the fundamental object of cultural values and meanings and that it is vital to culture and meaning, as it works as the representation system. In *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998), the author explains that through language individuals can share their feelings and it's the way of communication between people. But due to writers assimilation he was not familiar

with the language and culture of his ancestors and regretted his own assimilation. Being a migrated Asian American he had a different cultural identity than his ancestors, but he wanted to read the Chinese language text which he wasn't able to do so. Liu (1998) views English as a sign of "unimpeded access to every avenue of American life" echoing Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory* (1982). Liu (1998) does not see a generational conflict emerging from his loss of Chinese, in contrast to Rodriguez, whose celebration of English is qualified by a sadness over the departure of a familial connection made possible by Spanish. Liu (1998) associates his father's English proficiency with the formation of his American identity, even as he disavows the linguistic and cultural aspects of "Chineseness". He appears to be saying that learning English and assimilating into American culture precedes any person's lineage and defines their American identity (Liu, 1998). He claims that "the Asian American identity was born as I was, roughly thirty years ago" (p.57). Liu (1998) said it had difficulty maintaining relevance and a clear voice during those three decades. The identity of Asian Americans rejects being white. The potential to overcome the fear and blindness of the past gives it power. It is the distinctly American result of a rejection of the limitations of history, with roots only in its own invention from a generation ago. "As I am now. To Conceive of Assimilation is more than losses, and to recognize that what is lost is not necessarily sacred" (p.55). To conceive of assimilation is more than losses of Chinese culture, tradition, traditional language and norms simply the loss of original cultural identity but what is lost is not necessarily sacred. Immigrants experience the new cultural identity in the new country or community, and sometimes letting go of cultural heritage is not a loss because of new opportunities and economic advancement. *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) deals with the issues of the second generation of Asian Americans immigrants; it is possible for children born in a new nation to be unfamiliar with their parents' language and culture which is the biggest loss. The benefit is that instead of being just an immigrant or resident alien, the native-born child speaks the language and embraces the customs of the new country of origin. Liu (1998) argues that just as certain contemporary cultural classifications and lifestyles such as the term "Asian-American" are not always legitimate, so too are some outdated ones. "Asian-American" he claims, is a made-up word that encompasses too many groups, both culturally and otherwise, to accurately describe a true community (Josephine, 2021). American born Chinese fictional work by Gene Lueng Yang (2006) explores the assimilating identity of a Chinese born boy who migrated from China to United States and faced the cultural shock there. The story revolves around the character Jin who faced the complexities of culture, language and identity compared to his traditional one. He realized the assimilation and rejecting their original cultural heritage can be a gain or loss for the immigrants. Just like Liu (1998) he accepted his new identity and let go of his past cultural heritage in case of his own good he made his own identity and conquered himself in the United States. As he said, "I am the Producer of my own culture" (p.27), he made his own identity different from Chinese people. In Liu's concept, individuals can shape their self identity through immigrants' experiences of cultural adaptation and dislocation. Asian Americans emphasize the cultural ethnic identity but that's the reason behind Asians having cultural boundaries with white people. Asian Americans are second-generation citizens who have to navigate both their parents' and the mainstream American cultures. Others made similar arguments, but they focused on how their ethnic culture will eventually disappear and be gradually replaced by mainstream American society. Every family has its own culture in many ways, "Chinese Asian Americans characteristically stir-fried flavors, invented traditions, inside jokes in a hybrid tongue" (p, 23). Chinese people have different traditional cultural identity and norms and also have different colors and features which make them different from white Nations. The writer described that my assimilation started long before he was born because of my parents who moved into white society in the lust for a good future. Their thoughtful attitudes proclaim, "We are Serious Young Men, and we are preparing for the Future" (p.13). Asian Americans immigrants are the people who are serious about their future, their success and avail

opportunity to get the success in the developed country. Immigrants faced the complexities of cultural clash and identity crisis for their better future.

Liu (1998) does not believe that his loss of Chinese will lead to a generational clash. Liu (1998) identifies his father's English proficiency with the formation of his American identity, even as he rejects the linguistic and cultural aspects of "Chineseness". He appears to be saying that learning English and assimilating into American culture precedes any person's descent and defines their American identity. With its intentional Whitmanesque evocation, "Song for My Father" appears to be an aria on the English language that unites the various American peoples in a shared national genealogy, in addition to the immigrant and native generations. He describes himself as the "second leg of a relay race" (37), having "moved away from the outside world and toward the center of American life," becoming, in his words, "white inside" (Li, 2004). Cultural identity itself has identity, and cultural identity is a changing process by sharing the culture, language, and values formed a new identity. Liu (1998) was totally assimilated because of living a lifestyle of white people talking like white people also sharing the same cultural norms and values makes him assimilate. But the author regrets the consequences now, he regrets that he merely completed the assimilation of his father. The tragedy of assimilation, we discover, is the inevitable alienation between the immigrant father, who imagines himself still in exile, and the American son, who struggles to show his belonging. We had our own culture, identity but we let ourselves feel like first generation life is not cool and we fully formed ourselves into the 'Americanness' of the second generation (Liu, 1998). Daniel Harris says in his *The Rise and Fall for Gay Culture* (1999) a little bit of subculture is being absorbed, or appropriated by the mainstream assimilated. He regrets this, feeling that a true cultural legacy is disappearing. However, he does not regret it to the point where he longs for the homophobic attitudes that gave rise to the subculture in the first place. I do not intend to imply that Asian Americans can live free from prejudice in the modern world, that the majority of Asian American activists support cultural segregation. "You can take a Chinese out of China, but you can't take the China out of a Chinese" (p. 17). Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996) is the reflection of the past and can link to the past. With the passage of time, he faced many cultural issues in the USA due to his historical identity. He believed that one can not run from his original cultural identity as highlighted by Liu (1998) "One can take Chinese out of China", one can migrate from china and get another cultural identity but assimilation does not mean you forget your own historical self, for instance, "you can't take china out of chinese". Liu (1998) got the different cultural identity as he was assimilated while living in white society totally different from his ancestors, but the writer still feels kind of regretful for forgetting his past cultural identity. The second generation of immigrants are attentive towards the issue of identity and culture of their ancestors and the problems are also described while adopting the the mainstream culture in a new cultural setting with a new identity while rejection of the ancestral cultural background occur as a consequence. Liu (1998) forgot about his own historical cultural background somehow, the culture of his ancestors language, and tradition; the writer was too emotionally attached with the language of his father and grandmother and that made him sad. Due to this erosion of his culture, he was not able to read the diary of his father as he further describes in his essay titled *The Song for My Father*, the love for his father and his handwriting which make him feel like "he has already forgotten the previous one", his ancestral cultural identity. His identification as a Chinese boy he forgets the language, sometimes he tries to read the context of his father's writing but he couldn't understand the text even the meaning was elusive for him. "I can relate to this mindset, even though I now regret some of its effects. I am also aware of how rare it is to express regret on this level" (p.18). Liu (1998) was emotionally attached to his father and his writing, which made him regret his own assimilation. In *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker* (1998) he expresses his assimilation to American culture as he adopts which made him guilty and regret while he is in

his thirties. Distancing from his Chinese culture came from assimilating the culture identity and language he learned.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complex cultural and emotional struggles faced by second generation immigrants in the dominant society who regret their assimilation while focusing on the Asian Americans who regret assimilation due to their distanced-selves from their cultural heritage and ancestral language. Eric Liu's *The Accidental Asians: A Notes of Native Speakers* (1998) narrates the cultural and language erosion of the Asian American immigrants while adapting the culture of the dominant society. He (1998) explores his personal experiences and inner conflicts he experienced in America while adjusting in a new country and his emotional attachment with his parents and their culture, language, and norms made him regret his assimilation later on. He believed that it's a loss to forget one's ethnic heritage when he faced the consequences which made him struggle with his inner self. Asian American immigrants faced struggles due to identity and inner conflicts, their dual identities made them disconnected from their ethnic heritage. They faced the problem of language barrier in another countries because as a second generation they learned other languages and made themselves distanced from their ancestral language which is a loss for them. Liu (1998) considered this loss, the loss of their ancestors' language as he just remembered the stories and sounds of his ancestral language and was not able to write and speak the language. Stuart Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996) examined that cultural identity is the embodiment of the past and it links to the past as people shared the histories and their ethnic cultural experiences and traces of histories which defined their race, color and background. According to Hall (1996), culture itself has an identity where the common people share the ancestral cultural background and traces of history and the language they adopt and learn from their ancestors. As Liu (1998) who has strong emotional attachment with his father's language and his writings but due to being a second generation immigrants he experienced the mainstream of white people and his assimilation leads to the consequences further. Asian Americans balanced them with dominant culture and their ethnic cultural heritage. American born immigrants are far distanced from their ethnic cultural heritage and their ancestral language which made them regret their assimilation due to the complexities they faced. Furthermore, assimilation starts far earlier than immigration itself occurs.

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