

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Pearl S. Buck: Life and Work**

Pearl S. Buck, a child of American parents, was born in Hillsboros, West Virginia, in 1892. She was taken to China when she was of three months. She lived there for next forty years. Her father struggled for decades to change Chinese people into Christianity

Buck's childhood seemed to be extraordinary. When she was four years, she was able to write Chinese and English. Her contemporary Chinese children made fun with her blue eyes. They called her foreign devil. In her childhood, she got opportunities to hear the stories of devils and fairies, of magic swords and daggers and of the fearsome dragons. She spent her childhood as a minority person that became an important experience for her to understand interracial phenomenon within a single society. She became interested in the sexual caste system in which the Chinese women were trapped. The psychological state of Chinese people at the time of the birth of a baby girl and baby boy made her spellbound. In another case, she noticed that the funeral systems were different for the baby girl than that of baby boy. The practice of female infanticide became another heart rendering event for her. These phenomena proved her the superiority of male in Chinese culture at that time.

Pearl S. Buck spent most of her childhood in Chinkiang where she wandered the streets watching the various types of people. By analyzing New year's festivals, wedding and funerals, she noticed that red and white were the color of luck and death respectively.

In 1900, Pearl's life was affected by Boxer Uprising, a revolution conducted by Chinese nationalists who killed hundreds of people including missionaries. They also

kidnapped Pearl's father. After that, her father continued his missionary work but Buck found out that all the westerners were considered as unwelcome outsiders.

In 1909, when she was sent at Miss Jewell's school in Shanghai, she despised the place. In this school, she got a chance to learn the best and the worst of Shanghai. She also did not hesitate to serve as a volunteer service person in a shelter for Chinese slave girls. In this place, she got a chance to hear women's stories of brutalities. She concluded that the main reasons of this degraded condition are the poverty and caste of gender.

After sometimes, she returned to the United States. She had been joined in Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia. Though she got high grade and was elected as a class president, she always felt like an outsider.

After her graduation, she returned to Chinkiang due to her mother's declining health. When she was in America in 1912, there had been a greater transformation in Chinese political system. The Ching dynasty of the Manchus had been ended and there was the establishment of a republic.

Meanwhile Pearl's life had also been changed. She met John Lossing Buck, a Cornell Graduate and an agricultural economist. They got married in 1917. She lived in Nanhsuchou where she learned actual degrading condition of rural people that becomes the primary setting of *The Good Earth*.

The successive years of Pearl's life were not satisfactory. She gave birth to a child whom she named Carol. Later she came to know that she would not have any more children. At the same time, her mother also died. Her sterilization, Carole's condition and her mother's death became the causes for her unhealthy relationship with her husband.

After that, she tried to reconstruct her life by redefining the gap among herself and her daughter, her husband and her work. She made formal decision of divorce in 1934. She became serious by seeing her daughter's condition. For daughter's care and for her own identity, she concentrated on writing a novel. *East Wind, West Wind*, her first novel, was published in 1930.

Her second novel, *The Good Earth*, appeared in 1931. It is the reflection of Chinese peasant's life of that time. She tried to prove that the power of nature is greater than that of human being. The main cause of suffering is not the human being but the draught, flood, locusts and bandits. The protagonist of the novel, Wang Lung, knows that only the nature can endure these sorts of disasters. So, this novel is a mixture of different events in human life such as birth, marriage, success, failure, death etc.

Buck married to Richard J Walsh, a *New York publish* in 1935. Since then, they lived in the United States. After World War second, Buck established Pearl S. Buck Foundation to support illegitimate children of U.S serviceman in Asian countries.

In 1936, Buck became a member of the National institute of Arts and Letters. She received a novel prize in literature in 1938. She was the third American to win the Nobel Prize when Sinclair Lewis and Eugene O'Neil were the first and second respectively.

Buck played a vital role in the Second World War. She gained a clear concept about the relationship between male and female in different cultures. One of the major themes of her writing was interracial love. The love between a southerner, Tom, and a farmer slave, Bellina, was shown in her work "*The Angry Wife* (1949). In the same way, the love between the Japanese girl and an American soldier was shown in *The*

*Hidden Flower* (1952). It also depicted the state of mind of Japanese family when their daughter falls in love with an American.

After the communist revolution in China, Buck was unable to make a clear decision about bilateral cooperation. In her work *The Patriot* (1939), she depicted the emotional development of an university student, who was deeply affected by the brutality of war. After that, her concern rested upon the side of childcare. She coined a word that included those children who were deserted by their American fathers stationed in Far East. Her family consisted of nine adopted children and her own biological daughter. Her work, *The Child Who Never Grew* (1950), depicted the original story of her own daughter whose mental development had stopped at the age of four. This story also related with her novel, *The Good Earth*. This novel was followed by two sequels *Sons* (1932) that focused on the youngest son Wang the tiger, and *A House Divided'* (1935) that concerned with the story of Yuan. These three novels were published in a single title, *The House of Earth* in 1935.

Buck had keen interest in the atomic power also. Her work *Command the Morning* (1959) concerned to the Manhattan project to make the atomic bombs, and rules to drop in Japan. In 1954 her husband, Richard met a strike that became the major cause of his death. He became weak for six years and died in 1960.

Facing various troubles, she kept on writing. She published *The Living Reed* in 1963. In its preface, Buck described different important aspects of Korean history until a treaty was signed between Korea and United States.

One of Buck's most unusual novels, *The Time Is Noon* (1935) had been written much earlier in 1938. The protagonist of this novel, John Richards, had many similarities with Buck. Buck's personal involvement was remarkable in her another

novel *The Godden Abides* (1972). This showed the two men's love affair with a single girl. Both of them called her 'The White Goddess.'

Her famous short stories published posthumously were *Mandala*, *The New Year*, *All Under Heaven* (1973), *Secrets of Heart* (1973) etc. At that time Buck established relationship with a young man, Theodore Harris, who was a dance instructor in Arther Murray Studio. Harris, later on, became the director of the Pearl S.Buck Foundation. She moved out of Green Hills farms and lived her last years with Harris in a small town in Vermont. She died there in 1973 and was buried at Green Hills Farm.

Some of Buck's non-fictional writing included *My Several Worlds*, *A Bridge for Passing*, *Children for Adoption*, *To My Daughter*, *China Past and Present* etc.

Thus, Buck changed her life from a poor person to a millionaire. She got highly acclaimed literary prizes. Her concern in human being, i.e. in human right seemed to be remarkable. As a whole, she was able to establish herself as one of the most powerful women of the century.

## **Synopsis (*The Good Earth*)**

*The Good Earth*, Buck's famous novel, deals with the life cycle of birth, marriage, work, struggle and death in a Chinese family. It also shows the change of a culture's entities from one state to another, i.e. from poor to rich, from rural to urban, from farming to mercantilism, and so forth.

Wang Lung, the protagonist of the novel, married O-lan, a slave girl from the house of Hwang. He, including his father, believes in the character of a girl rather than her beauty. Both of them work in a farm facing various difficulties to change themselves. They are able to value their labour. They give birth to three sons and one retarded girl child- a veiled reference to Buck's own parental experience. They cultivate the family in sympathy of movement and grandly come into their own land.

When there is the scarcity of food due to droughts, Wang Lung's family moves to town where Wang pulls a rickshaw. O-lan and her children are busy to beg in the streets. In the town, Wang Lung sees and experiences the revolt concerning the equality of peasants. At the time of turmoil, Wang Lung and O-lan steal gold and jewels which help them approach in their original land and add some more. The Hwangs degenerate into idleness and indulgence. As Wang Lung's earning increases, he spends more time in town at a tea shop, with lotus whom he brought home as a means of entertainment.

Eventually O-lan dies of chronic stomach disease. Her younger son declares his independence and leaves home as a soldier to free the good land of China.

Gradually, Wang Lung reaches near his death. Realizing his past life and present condition, he again returns to his good earth. When he hears the discussion among his sons about selling the land, he warns them "to sell the land, it is the end". Buck, in the novel, also brings one reference to Christian faith and life. When Wang Lung is in the

city, a person gives him a paper with a picture of white men hanging blooded and dead on a piece of wood. He becomes horrified that he cannot read the message written on the paper. He cannot understand why this man has given him this image. His wife O-lan later uses it to make her shoes firm.

### **Significance of The Novel**

In general a culture is believed as the totality of the ways of life of a particular group of people. Two cultures are neither exactly alike nor totally different. So there are various aspects of culture that can be compared and contracted while conducting cultural study. Some cultures are simple which have no written language and some are complex which develop into civilization. Every culture has its own cultural traits. Several traits of a culture may be closely related. Different cultures mark different traits. Those important traits that influence other traits are called key traits. Bhabha says in the liminal space, such key traits influence each other and a new trait is created; this new trait will be the foundation of creating totally new culture. Bhabha further says that one cultural trait passes through the liminal space and relates to another cultural area with new identity.

Pearl S. Buck's novel *The Good Earth* reflects the Chinese peasant's life in the first half of the twentieth century. In this novel, two cultural traits, i.e. southern and northern, can clearly be seen. There is the existence of third space through which the southern cultural identities pass to approach northern culture. There is a clear interaction between two cultural identities. A new trait or identity is formed out of the cultural differences between two cultures. This present study focuses on how a culture's identity is changed into another, what the role of hybrid space is and which creates the cultural identities.

This research concerns with the cultural difference, culture identity, change of cultural traits and the role of liminal space which creates the cultural change. How a family of poor economical status changes into a rich family, how a society full of gender discriminations can reach in the state of gender equality, and how the cultural traits change, are the main issues of this study. In totality, this study focuses on the role of the third space for the initiation of cultural difference. The major concern over here is how the cultural values of two different cultures are negotiated to form a new value. The identities of a culture concerning race, class, gender and cultural traditions are negotiated in the third space which is the interstitial passage between fixed identities that shows the possibility of cultural hybridity that indicates difference without fixed hierarch.

Here, liminal negotiation means the state of compromise between two different cultural identities. Liminal indicates the space between two cultures and negotiation indicates the absence of any sorts of imposed hierarchy. It is not the state of the antagonism but the acceptance. Liminal negotiation does not show the reflection of cultural identities but it is the creation of new identities. In this way, the remarkable issue is how new identity appears rather than how the existing identities are shown.

The primary source of this analytical research is Buck's text, *The Good Earth*. Homi K. Bhabha's liminal theory will be the theoretical modality. The research will be made specific by focusing on the cultural differences of southern and northern Chinese culture in the beginning of the twentieth century. The main concern here remains in the phenomenon that happen in liminal space. The change in generational issues and the issues of gender and class from southern to northern Chinese culture are the central focus of the research.



## **Chapter II: Theoretical Modality**

### **Culture**

The term 'culture' indicated a multi-dimensional word that includes the state of mind and the reality that exists in a certain geographical area. The English word culture is derived from the Latin word 'culture' that means the practice of cultivation or the method of cultivating the soil. Culture expresses a dynamic concept that cannot remain same everywhere and in anytime. It includes wider human consciousness. Culture is the outcome of different aspects of human life such as geography, history, religion, society and custom. Human existence and identity depend upon that type of culture in which he/she lives.

James A. Banks gives the answer of the question, 'what is culture?', by including different areas of human life. For them, "Culture is the government we organize, the tools we use, the art and recreation we develop, the religion we believe in, the values we accept, the custom and tradition we follow, the knowledge we share, the food we eat, the things we made, the shelter we live in, the clothe we wear" (23).

His Definition suggests that culture is the amalgamation of history, philosophy, literature, language, as well as the three basic things of human life: food, shelter and cloth. Anthropologists insist that there is not any activity of human being beyond culture. They suggest that to be human is to be cultured. There are varieties of culture in the world such as Eastern culture, Western Culture, Chinese culture, Indian culture, Nepalese culture and so on.

Similarly, Sir Edward Taylor, in 1871, defined culture as "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (qtd. in Ramjee Gautam, 13). This definition of culture includes both the behaviorist as well as mentalist school of thoughts. That means culture is not only the matter of physical exercise but also the product of human mind.

In the late nineteenth century, Richard Hogard, Raymond William, E.P. Thompson, and Staurt Hall defined culture as people's whole. Gradually, culturalism became one of the means of analyzing people's social behavior as well as the textual documentation of people's ideas within a certain culture. William presents three ways of looking at culture:

First there is the ideal in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values. Second, there is the documentary record, the recorded texts and practices of culture. Third there is the social definition of culture, in which culture is the description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and value not only in art and learning but also in institution and ordinary behavior. (58)

In his first perspective of culture, it is the play of human values according to which the culture is working. Another way shows the text in which different social phenomena are depicted. The text includes the formation and reformation of different cultural activities. Similarly, the actual behavior of human being in a certain context is another issue of cultural analysis. As the cultural values and behaviors change, the culture itself changes. This change can be maintained by a text.

Cultural study can also be done under two sides: cultural revolution and cultural evolution. The theory of cultural evolution emerged in the nineteenth century as unilinear theory. The anthropologist E.B. Taylor (1832-1917) of England and Lewis H. Morgan (1818-1881) of the United States were the major theorists. They considered culture in general but not in individual. Their theories include the overall evolution of man and civilization. This theory was supported by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) also concluded in the same way. He said that an unknown and unknowable absolute force was continuously operating in the material world. He also accepted the theory that the natural selection is one of the causes of biological evolution.

Twentieth century multilinear theory appeared as another theory of cultural evolution. In the turn of the century, the theorists found that philosophy, history and science have been influenced by new approaches of viewing matter, life and society. This theory consists of a number of forward paths of different styles and lengths.

Cultural change can also be seen in revolutionary side. Mao Tse-tund (mao zedong) in the association with Red Guards had greater contribution for the cultural revolution. Revolutionary changes can emerged because of the conflict between the traditional and progressive impulses in a certain culture. In this sense, traditional perspective regards culture as static or fixed but progressive side considers it as an ongoing, process of formation and reformation.

Modern theorists on cultural study adopted a different view about culturalism and literature. Famous nineteenth century cultural critic Mathew Arnold argues, "Culture is a total pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matter's which much concern us, the best which has been thought and said (1)". As a

conservative critic, Arnold divides upper and lower culture and has greater concern about tradition.

Cultural criticism in postmodern world seems to be in condensed space. The emergence of postcolonial theory of discourse has been the milestone for cultural criticism in present time. Foucaultian concept of power and discourse, Gramsci's concept of hegemony and the division of world into three dimensions i.e., first, second and third world, are the major issues of postmodern age for cultural criticism.

### **Cultural Difference**

Many cultures generally resemble each other. But in specific case, they differ greatly. From the beginning of human civilization, people lived in different groups for thousands of years. The division of group and the determination of their identity are determined by different kinds of environments in which they live. Many of the groups were separated from other groups and their culture. Every group behaved to adjust themselves in the particular conditions.

Cultural difference does not indicate the fixed objects with diverse identity but how these objects are known and how they exist. So, cultural difference is not the matter of fixed and static diverse object. Cultural difference does not mean the difference in totality. It is clear that cultures neither can be unitary in themselves nor can be dualistic as self and other.

For Bhabha, 'difference' concerns with radical ambivalence that is clearly be seen in all colonial discourses. He also makes clear that this sort of ambivalence can easily be seen when the production of meaning in the relation of two systems requires a third space.

The idea of difference seems similar to the idea of deferral in poststructuralist criticism. According to Saussure, a sign can be meaningful when it is different from other signs. Similarly a single culture comes into being when it is different from other cultures. Cultural difference in the third space can also be compared with the Derrida's new concept of difference, i.e., deferral and possibility. So, cultural difference means not a fixed concept but it is ambivalent and self- changing concept.

M.H.Abrahm, in his book *Glossary of literary Term*, discusses the cultural difference as the intertwining part of social, economical and political and the power structure. For him, these cultural aspects produce, sustain and propagate the relative status of diverse cultural phenomena.

Chris Barker, in his *Cultural Studies*, clarifies that the basis of new racism is not the physical discourse of superiority and inferiority but it is the cultural differences. From his discussion we can deduce that in modern world the social discriminations do not concern with the traditional concept of center and margin but with the modern concept of cultural difference.

The cultural difference is shown basically by the differences of race, class, gender, language and cultural traditions. The work of word hinders the visible assimilation of different cultural meanings. This assimilation of cultural identity in the third space raises the question of signification. This is not simply due to the linguistic difference but it is, for Bhabha, due to the culture's representation of difference, manner rituals, custom time and so on.

When diverse cultural identities appear in a certain spatial boundary and within a fixed temporal duration, the articulation of cultural difference becomes problematic.

Then there is the lack of temporal and spatial proximity. So the temporal and spatial nearness is the essential precondition for the enunciation of cultural difference.

Derrida's vision on the opposition or difference created confusion. We can not put clear line between two diverse cultural identities while considering Derrida's philosophy of deferral and possibility. Bhabha claimed that colonial signifier always indicates the ambivalent signification that creates indeterminate condition between opposite. That means the presence of Derrida's philosophy and the colonial strategy makes the issues of opposition weaker and helps the cultural assimilation. Bhabha says:

Derrida's inter that sows confusion between opposites and stands between the opposition at once. The colonial signifier neither one nor other-is, however, an act of ambivalent signification, literally splitting the difference between the binary oppositions or polarities through which we think cultural difference. It is in the enunciatory act of splitting that the colonial signifier creates its strategies of differentiation that produce an undecidability between contraries or opposition. (128)

Bhabha answers the question, how the contradiction on difference originates; by connecting it with the splitting strategies of colonial discourse. When the ideas concerning two polarities of human consciousness, i.e., reality and ego play in a single field, they produce multiple range of diverse ideas. When these ideas become familiar in a certain culture, the contradiction originates. After sometimes, these ideas pass from one culture to another culture through liminal space or third space. In this space they negotiate each other and a new idea is formed. In this respect he says:

Splitting constitutes an intricate strategy of defense and differentiation in the colonial discourse. Two contradictory, and independent attitudes

inhabit the same place one takes account of reality the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality. This results in the production of multiple and contradictory belief. (128)

Culturally diverse ideas can not be meaningful in themselves but they can get meaning when they are negotiated in the third space. Movement of cultural identity becomes significant where there is the presence of change in third space. The third space can not be represented in itself. It makes clear that the cultural meaning is not fixed in advance but it can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read a new.

Though cultural difference helps to create a new identity, it also creates some problems. The major drawback of it is intellectual uncertainty. No people can be confident about the development of cognitive aspect of human civilization due to the unending process of cultural change. This uncertainty takes place because the truth does not remain in the same position forever. When one truth comes in contact with another truth in hybrid space, it changes itself. So truth is not provisional because of the cultural difference. In this condition of uncertainty, Bhabha says:

Underlying the intellectual uncertainty generated by the anomaly of cultural difference is a question of the displacement of truth that is at once between and beyond the hybridity of images of governance or the undecidability between codes and text, or indeed the impossibility of Sir Henry Maine's colonial problematic: the attempt to keep true time in two longitudes, at once. (134)

### **Liminal Negotiation**

The word 'liminality' is derived from the word 'limen' meaning in-between space or threshold. It is basically used in psychology. The liminal space represents the

hybrid space or in between space in which cultural change occurs. This space does not indicate the space of reflection but the space of creation. The continuous process of cultural movement or interchange takes place in this space. So there is the possibility of the creation of new identity. It does not simply indicate the transfer of identity from one culture to another but it is a continuous process of engagement. Homi K. Bhabha, while dealing with these "in-between" categories of competing cultural differences, attempts in his introduction to *The Location of Culture* to shed light upon the liminal negotiation of cultural identity across differences of race, class, gender and cultural traditions: "It is the emergence of the interstices the overlap and displacement of domains of difference that intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural values are negotiated (2).

In modern world, cultural identities of a culture indicate the race, gender, generation, class, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation and so on. Sometimes new identities appear due to the interaction among these diverse cultural identities. This emergence of new identity takes place in a space where cultural values or community interests are negotiated. To define liminal negotiation Bhabha raises two questions:

How are subjects formed in-between or in excess of the sum of the parts of difference (usually informed as race class, gender etc)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? (2)

Bhabha also suggests that representation of difference is not the reflection of previously existed cultural identities that "set in the fixed tablet of tradition" (2). He



says "The social articulation of difference from the minority perspective is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in movement of historical transformation" (2). In this sense, for the creation of new identities, there is a certain process. There should be the presence of different cultural issues; these values or issues are continuously negotiated; and this negotiation makes the cultural hybridities authentic. This process happens at the time of historical transformation.

Bhabha quotes Renee Green's description of stairwell as "a liminal space, a pathway between the upper and lower areas each of which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness" (4). Here stairwell is presented as the liminal space when cultural hybridities can be seen without any fixed hierarchy. That means liminal negotiation is not the state of imposed hierarchy but it indicates the mutual existence of different parts. Negotiation shows the rupture of fixed authority or the fragmentation of the concept of centre and margin.

While defining liminality Bhabha describes that the words post-modernity, post-coloniality, post-feminism are meaningless if post indicates after. These terms represent a liminal space of interaction, movement and change. For him, the liminal space in post-coloniality can be seen by "the narratives of cultural and political diaspora, the major displacement of peasant and aboriginal community, the poetics of exile, the grim prose of political and economic refugees" (5)

Post-colonial intellectuals attempt to elaborate a historical and literary project from the liminal location of cultural values. Post colonial criticism compels up to "engage with culture as an uneven incomplete production of value and meaning often composed of in-commensurable demands and practices produced in the act of social survival" (23). In this concern Bhabha points out:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translation. It is transnational because contemporary post-colonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of displacement. It is translation because such spatial histories of displacement [. . .] make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (qtd. in Ghimire, 23)

Negotiation on the other hand, does not refer to the rejection negation but the compromise. When two identities either of antagonistic or of affiliative come together; they interact continuously and reach in the conclusion which is different from both of them. This is the negotiation of identities. Negotiation neither indicates the rejection nor shows any type of hierarchy. It tries to satisfy both the sides by making an innovation. In this regards, Bhabha describes:

In such a discursive temporality, the event of theory becomes the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects and between theory and practical political reason. (25)

While describing negotiation Bhabha further says "By negotiations I attempt to draw attention to the structure of iteration which informs political movement that attempts to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of sublation or transcendence" (26). Here he discusses about the political change, "the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation or translation of element that are neither the one nor the other but something else beside" (28). The negotiation, either in political change or in ether cultural changes, at first eliminates the hierarchy of self and other. The innovation or the formation of new social block is

possible only through the negotiated will. Negotiation takes place when the mode of representation and its temporality are not the same. Negotiation helps us to display the 'in-betweenness' of that sort of interaction.

The cultural difference appears as the focal point of the problem of ambivalence of cultural authority. In any culture, some identities are considered as superior and some others are inferior. That sort of concept puts the questionmark for the upliftment of a certain culture. For the linguistic difference, Bhabha says that the subject of proposition and the subject of enunciation should pass through the liminal space to produce the meaning. In this space, there is the presence of the particular application of language and general description of it. There should be the negotiation between these two polarities of language. For him:

The production of meaning requires that there two places be mobilized in the passage through a third space, which represents both the general condition of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot in-itself be conscious. (36)

This means that even in linguistic environment, there should be negotiation between two major aspects of a language. A single language has one aspect concerning the structure of words, phrases, clauses and sentences and other concerning the particular use of it in a specific situation or context. The language can express meaning only when there is the mutual relation between form and function of it.

Liminal space can also be described as a third space. The function of negotiation takes place in this space. Different cultural identities should pass through the liminal space to create meaning in another culture. It is clear that "cultural

statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" (37). Though the third space cannot be represented in itself, it plays vital role to create new cultural identities. It is the space that is not fixed. It indicates the process of formation and reformation. In this space the same identity can be modified into another form of identity. Here Bhabha describes:

It is that third space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbol of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the some signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read a new. (37)

He also insists that the liminal space indicates the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference. In the liminal space, the assimilation of differences takes place to create the new cultural identity, it has the capacity of production which is the colonial or post colonial provinance. This space does not concern with cultural diversity but with the articulations of cultural hybridity. To create meaning in the third space, there should be the elimination of polarities. Bhabha says:

To that end we should remember that it is the 'enter'- the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space-that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the people. And by exploring this third space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the other of ourself. (39)

## CHAPTER III: Textual Analysis

### Southern and Northern Chinese Cultural Difference

Pearl S. Buck's novel, *The Good Earth*, is a text full of diverse cultural issues with distinct identities. In the novel, one can see southern and northern cultural differences through the issues like gender, class, race, cultural tradition and so on. In every issue, there is the presence of duality. At last a new identity is created due to the negotiation between them. In the novel, Pearl S. Buck presents the northern and southern Chinese culture as two diverse cultures. Northern culture is presented as ignorant, barbaric traditional emotional and flirtatious where as, southern culture is presented as civilized, educated, balanced and modern. At the same time, the mutual influence of these cultures can also be seen.

Northern people accepted the southern culture as higher culture. One day when Wang Lung was on the way to south, he persuaded his children by saying "you are too big man. You are travelers to the south. There is warmth there and food every day, while rice everyday for all of us and you shall eat" (63). According to Bhabha, cultural negotiation represents the acceptance of compromise but not the rejection. From the expression of Wang Lung, one easily understands that northern people were in the crisis of their life but southerner was free of these things. So, the academic, economical, and cultural environment to move forward supported them. Similarly there was the tradition of movement from north to "the rich cities of south to work, to beg and thus saved the price of food" (66).

Wang Lung's family became surprised in the southern city and his father murmured "You see how fat they all are, these southerners, and how pale and oily are their skin. They eat pork every day, doubtless"(68). This is the hypothetical statement

of northern people towards southern people's life style because their statement did not base on the factual variation.

There was the linguistic variation between southern and northern people. If northern people "listened to the language of these southerners it could be understood, with difficulty" (76). In northern city, Anhwei, the language is slow and deep and it utters from the throat. But in the northern city, Kiangsu, "people spoke with syllable which splintered from their lips and from the ends of their tongue" (76). The linguistic variation appears when it passes through the third space . For Bhabha , to be a meaningful statement in different linguistic group, language should pass through the liminal space.

Northern people respected southerners and they considered that southerners were the civilized people. But southerner neglected them as dirty animals. When one southerner with garlic passed by the northern people, he said "now here is reeking, pig-tailed northerner" (78) by raising his nose. In the southern city Wang Lung's family found themselves as foreigner when Wang Lung was there. In the city, there was the presence of foreigners from other different countries.

When Wang Lung returned to his own land, he found a new and great tea shop opened by a man from the south. It proves that in any new initiation of the north one can see the southern influence. Similarly, Wang Lung brought Lotus from the big tea shop due to southern influence. When the migrated people raised the question of quality, it had the connection with south directly or indirectly. One day "Wang lung brought snarl of dried birds' nest from the south to brew for soup" (141). Every time Wang Lung brought expensive foods imported from southern cities. These things show the cultural difference of south and north, and it also indicates the southern influence for northern cultural change.

Southern culture was superior to northern cultural even academically. One day Wang Lung's son told his father that there was no one to teach him to be scholar. Then Wang Lung asked for the solution of this problem. His son said with hesitation, "well, and if I am to be a scholar, I would like to go out to the south to the city and enter a great school where I can learn what is to be learned" (170). It clarifies that the northern people became educated with the help of southern culture or southern society. There were not good schools in north but they were in south. Bhabha's theory of mutual influence applies in these conditions.

These distinct cultural identities negotiated in a space so that new identities originated. While Wang Lung decorated his rooms in the great house of Hwang, he used northern as well as southern materials. He brought cotton cloth from local market to cover "the carved tables of southern blackwood" (216). That sort of mixture as well as negotiation of cultural identities can be seen in some specific issues.

### **Gender and Liminal Negotiation**

As one observes the Chinese culture of that time, he/ she sees Buck's presentation of patriarchal dominance and change. In the beginning of the novel, *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung seems positive toward even ugly appearance and negative toward the character specially of sexual. In this respect he said:

And what will we do with a pretty women? We must have a woman who will tend the house and bear children. She works in the field, and will a pretty woman do these things? [. . .] it is better to be first with an ugly woman than the hundredth with a beauty. (6)

It does not only concern with the woman appearance but also the birth of male child. People in the northern China expected male child and they thought that the birth of boy

was the good destiny. They also realized that the birth of a girl was the sign of debased condition of their family. They were strong hearted and they said, "If it is female child, it is better to die" (36). They thought that the birth of son was greater than any sort of treasures. The response like "it is a man child! You are grandfather and I am father" (7) makes them laugh.

The quote makes clear that the people of northern China felt that the birth of a female child was unnecessary part of the society. This is the sign of their ignorance towards the importance of females. They compared the birth of a female with the earth yielding weeds. At the birth of a female child of Wang Lung's uncle, his wife put her view as:

Ah, it is something you do not know-to have an evil destiny! Where the field of other bears good rice and wheat, our bears weeds; where the houses of other stand for a hundred years, the earth itself sakes under ours so that the walls crack; where other bears men, I although I conceive a son, will yet give birth to a girl -ah, evil destiny! (42)

Sometimes the gender issue became the major means of measuring the family quality. At the same time, the distance appears between husband and wife due to the birth of female child. When wife gives birth to male child, the husband begins to love his wife as the source of good luck. For them, the family full of women was the evil. That phenomenon is also very much traditional. It does not have any type of factual basis. That seems clear in Wang Lung's uncle's expression as:

If it had been my good destiny to have married a wife as your father did, one who could work and at the same time produce sons, as your own



does also, instead of a woman like mine who grows nothing but flesh and gives birth to nothing but females. (44)

People considered females as the commodities. Some involved in the business of women and some other in the exploitation of them. Female children were sold in the market as animals. At the same time, young women were decorated in the shop as the objects in the showcase. Male did not concentrate on the demand of women. They thought that there was not any right concerned with female. The business of female child in northern as well as in southern city and the decoration of women in the new tea shop in northern town are the examples of female's position as the second grade citizen.

There was strategy of exploiting female as other. But the articulation of other does not appear clearly. For Bhabha, at the time of change, the issues are taken neither the one nor the other but something else beside. The male created a sort of environment in which female thought as if they had known all. But women did not know that they were inside very parochial boundary. They even did not try to search the reality out of it. That strategy of diminishing the world and making the leader of it appears in the tea shop. While entering into the tea shop, Wang Lung became strange among the experienced women. When he reached in Lotus' room, being an ignorant male, he said "I don't know anything – teach me!" (130). In that situation, women were more forward than the male figure. This negotiation between experience female and ignorant male creates a new personality with strange characteristics. The change in Wang Lung's behaviour is the result of the negotiation between the strategic male and ignorant female in the liminal space.

The females looked so ignorant that they could not prove their identity independently. They tried to prove their identity but they thought that there should be the presence of male directly or indirectly. Sometimes they realized their position due

to the presence of husband and sometimes due to their son. James A. Banks also defines the culture as the mixture of different aspects. So, one can gain cultural identity through the presence of other aspects. While struggling with male for their existence, they attached themselves with the existence of son. They realized that they were because there was the son from them. While searching her own position at the time of Wang Lung's negligence, O-lan tried to prove her existence as "I have borne you sons—I have borne you sons" (140). That proves the female's inferior condition in this society.

In the process of gender discrimination, men regarded women as immature personality. People considered women's visions and activities as childish. Women were put in the rank similar to the children. Man did not believe on them because they had the concept that women were not rational and reliable in their behaviour as well as vision. While showing men's mentality towards women, Pearl S. Buck described as "where is his market? Although, idly, because it was woman's talk and likely to come to nothing"(160).

Beside these issues of gender discrimination, there was the acceptance of female existence. Females involved in the position of decision-making and they also became the center of social phenomena. The decision of female seemed to be more far sighted as well as strategic. At the time of movement from north to south, O-lan's decision not to sell the land but to sell the furniture was one example of a more strategic decision. That proved the acceptance of female position by male.

Females were considered as second-class creature at the same time they were taken as the important source for social change. In the novel, it is proved that the discrimination within female helped the woman to collect the possibility of change. On the other hand, the change is possible due to the interactive presence of the women from two different classes with distinct identities. Presentation of the women of two

different levels and the initiation of struggle between them was another strategy to exploit the female at the time of social change. The submissive woman, O-lan, changed into the confident woman when there was the presence of the modern fashionable woman with distinct values in her mind. Due to the rejection of O-lan, the change took place in Wong Lung's household. He tried to manage another kitchen with different oven. This change was possible due to the negotiation between two different genders with different values.

In the novel, the male's acceptance of female's existence seemed also clear. This is the ambivalent behaviour toward the gender issue. People rejected the birth of baby girl. They even blamed women for giving birth to a girl. At the same time, they accepted the girl after her birth. That is the outcome of the miniature of two different gender issues. Due to this phenomenon, there was a change from one condition to another. Wang Lung, at first declared that 'the poor fool' was the sign of his bad luck. Later on Wang changed his concept toward her and he said "that poor fool of mine brings me more comfort than all the other put together" (168).

Male's mentality was changed from the beginning to the middle part of the novel. Wang Lung, the male figure, rejected the female's existence at first. In the middle of the novel, he seemed positive toward female identity. For Bhabha, new identity transforms through the liminal space which is the precondition of cultural change. At first he considered O-lan as the animal to serve him and produce children. Later on, he accepted O-lan as equal as himself and his land. At last he came in to conclusion as "this is I cannot bear! I would sell all my land if it could heal you" (185). This suggests that the value of O-lan is proved due to the negotiation between Wang and O-lan in the liminal space.

Male mentality was changed toward female even at the end of this novel. Female's ambition also got value and they were able to demand whatever they wanted. At the same time, they had the capacity to reject the thing, which was not in their favor. The confidence can be increased, for Bhabha, from the mutual acceptance of the existence of both. The increasing ambition of Wang Lung's eldest son's wife was another example of increasing female's superiority. Lotus described the condition of Wang Lung's eldest son as, "but the eldest son worries of his wife's complaints of this and that -too proper a woman for a man, she is, and always talking of what they did in the house of her father, and she wearies a man" (250).

This change in male perspective toward female is possible due to the continuous interaction between male and female in the liminal space and the negotiation between them. In the course of time, that sort of change moves the society from one level to another. This is the cultural change. There was the presence of two distinct aspects of human civilization. The reason of Wang Lung's economical, mental and behavioral change is the negotiation between gender issues.

People developed different thought toward female's existence basically in so-called civilized southern and northern society. In higher-class northern family, males intoxicated with different drugs and wine and females held the superior position. At the time of Wang Lung's arrival in great house to take wife, Buck defined the old lady's activity as:

She looked at him out of small, sharp, black eyes, as sunken and sharp as a monkey's eyes in her thin and wrinkled face. The skin of the hand that held the pipe's end was stretched over her little bones as smooth and as yellow as the gilt upon an idol. Wang Lung fell to his knees and knocked his head on the tiled floor. (12)

In this condition female superiority was not the outcome of conscious mind but it was the reflection of ignorant mind. Great lady of house of Hwang seemed as one good example of female superiority. Great lady was the center of House of Hwang. All the responsibilities were given to her to move the home properly. The male figure in this house became nominal. The same thing happened in the second time of Wang Lung's arrival in this house. At that time also the center of economic transaction remained in the female slave but not in the male.

In northern Chinese culture, patriarchal culture, the birth of female children had taken as the bad luck. Similarly, these people accepted female's existence with the help of their son. The presence of female proved their equality to commodities. Despite the strategic patriarchal society, there was another culture that accepted the female in superior position.

People supported female as the superior figure not from their intellect but from their beauty. Beautiful females stood as equal as the expensive ornaments. Females were praised as 'the women in dream'. Males seemed spellbound a front of the great beauty. Wang Lung adored Lotus not for any reason but for her beauty. He kept himself as a slave of her attractiveness and luxury. Wang Lung saw Lotus at first as:

[ . . . ] Hands so small and bones so fine and fingers so pointed with long nails stained the colour of lotus buds deep and rosy. Little feet thrust in to pink satin shoes no longer than a male's middle finger and swinging childishly over the bed's edge- if any one had told him, he would not have believed it. (129)

Humanity helped females prove their superiority. That seemed to be more powerful weapon to establish female in the praise worthy position. Male attracted

toward the female's attractiveness at the same time, he developed his vision about humanity. Males knew that only the beauty was not the standard of human life. They realized that women could be superior after the development of humanistic qualities of their life. For Bhabha, liminal negotiation is the first step of social change and the negotiation tries to authorize cultural hybridities that appear at the time of social transformation. So, people gradually accept the changed identities. Wang Lung promised to keep his poor fool, his daughter, with him until she died. Similarly, his second son chose his wife by fixing the standard concerning with the qualities of girl i.e. values of humanity but not with the amount of money and level of beauty. That sort of change in male's mentality was the product of gender negotiation that the male had been witness during his life.

### **Class and Liminal Negotiation**

The novel begins with the rejection of poor people by those of rich ones. People who had access to money and land were rich and those who were deprived of these treasures were poor. Powerful wealthy people considered the poor as second grade citizen. The House of Hwang was the representative of rich and wealthy family when Wang Lung's family was the simple and poor. The gateman in Hwang reacted the appearance of Wang Lung as "you cannot appear before a great lady with a basket on your arm- a basket of park and beancurd! How will you bow?" (11). Wang Lung's position in the use of Hwang was not accepted more than the slave. Within the Hwang house, there was the great division of lord and the slave. The position of the slave appeared no more than the animal.

Northern people's position in the southern city remained as equal to animal. The migrated northern people got the identity as slave in the south. Poor were unable to get

space to stay. The place outside the great wall became their home. In this city, rich or higher class people lived inside the great building and the poor servant stayed outside it. The wall appeared as the broader line between these two classes of human being. At the same time, the inhabitant of the big building did not pay attention towards the slaves. For them, the life of poor people was not the life. They compelled the poor to work even during the night.

Though the rich people rejected the existence of poor or accepted the existence as the second grade, the poor people accepted their existence as inferior one.

The idea of class also developed due to the lower class people's inferiority accepted by themselves. The major means of poverty was not the rich but the inferiority complex of the poor people who accepted the higher class's existence in the advance manner. At the same time, they felt content about their lower position. As Bhabha clarified that the negotiation indicates the acceptance but not the rejection. Wang Lung responded the negligence in Hwang by accepting his inferiority as "True-True, I am only a coarse person, great and ancient lady. I do not know what words to use in such a presence" (12). The acceptance empowers the higher class people to extend the distance between lower class and higher class.

The gap between the classes also created the distance due to the pretending acceptance of the existence of higher class by lower class. In the inner level there was the intense impulses of rejection, at the same time, greater praise of higher class was there in the surfacial level of lower-class mentality. That sort of acceptance was necessary to sustain the poor people's life in the southern cities. In south, Wang Lung's family was fed up of the misbehaves of southern rich people. Despite that, they respected the southern people as "unless you give, good sir, good lady, - this child dies - we starve - we starve" (72).

There was the compulsion for the lower class to accept the superiority of higher class. That seems ambivalence. Bhabha makes clear that the ambivalence appears when the production of meaning in the relation of two systems requires a third space. To create even a narrow space, lower class people should respect and accept their existence of southern rich people while pulling him in the rickshaw. If he rejected the man, he would not get a chance even to stand in this space.

The lower class accepted the superiority of higher class due to their ignorance, pretending capacity and compulsion. By bearing that, lower class got some sort of insight to change their condition.

Movement from one place to another paved the way for the lower class people to get insight about the condition of their own life as well as the higher-class people. Migration of northern poor people towards south helped them to get different opportunities to get knowledge about the real world. Involvement in different condition made the comparison easier. From comparison and contrast new ideas appear. For Bhabha, every new identity should pass through the liminal space to be meaningful. New identities are created through the constant struggle. Northern people collected some information's while they moved from north to south they saw big houses and rich men. By observing them, one found out that "the hearts of the rich are hard like the hearts of the gods. They have still rice to eat and from the rice they do not eat they have still making wine, while we starve" (64). Wang at first went in to the great house of Hwang and derived some ideas by observing the phenomenon inside this house. Their people were able to get new ideas from intense observation and diverse appearance.

People got very sharp and revolutionary ideas from the interaction with the experienced people. The transformation of already existed ideas cleared the way for further movement. One's idea can be the motivational factor for an other. Wang Lung,



the lower clan personality, got new vision from an old man of the next hut. The man said, " No and not for ever, when the rich are too rich there are ways, and when the poor are too poor, there are ways"(84). Wang was enlightened by that type of knowledge and it became pushing factor to challenge the established class mechanism similarly, northern poor people got new ideas from a white skinned and hairy man in southern city. He trained the poor and made clear that the main cause of their poverty was the rich man. The white skinned man expressed his ideas before the poor people as:

The dead man is yourself: and the murderous are who stabs you when you are dead and do not know it is the rich and capitalists, who would stab you even after you are dead. You are poor and down trodden and it is because the rich seize every tings. (85)

The level of consciousness was raised in the poor people's mind with the help of such types of projects, which are undertaking at the time of social change.

Poor people became conscious through their involvement in different condition of the society which are not totally different. Bhabha also clarifies that "Cultures are never unitary in themselves nor simply dualistic in relation of self to other" (207). When people involved in different social activities, they either suffered or got delight. On the process of suffering as well as getting delight, people got the opportunities to know something. At the same time, this knowledge became the key for social change. At the time of Wang's son's movement from home to work, he involved in pulling wagonloads of boxes. At that time, he understood that the boxes were filled with silks, cottons, fragrant tobacco and the jars of oil and of wines. When poor people were suffering from hunger, the rich man employed the poor to transport the goods of luxury that the poor realized as unjust act. Due to that event one slave made the conclusion as "There is gold and silver in them, but the rich cannot take all they have away, and some

day it will all be ours" (93). Similarly from the activities in public kitchen, poor got conscience that the public kitchen was managed by the rich to stop the poor from participating in the revolt. The poor considered it as the strategy of rich people to exploit them.

The poor people got knowledge from their movement, their interaction with different people and their involvement in different activities of the society. That sort of knowledge inspired them to participate in the revolt.

Hungry stomach in conscious mind leads to the revolt against the opposition group. Hungry stomach encourages to get the access towards the things with the help of power. On the other hand, conscious mind inspires someone to use the sources in a proper manner. Through the combination of them, the social change takes place. Desire of power is the first point to struggle with the dominant group. The power is created when there is the property in someone's hand. Northern people desired the treasures. So one said, " I had the gold that he has if I had the Pearls his concubines were ... " (87). Similarly, another slave wanted power to change his social condition. The slave at first, got insight then he express his anger as " oh, if I had an instant strength in this hand of mine, I would set fire to the gates and to those houses and carts within, even though I burned in the fire" (64). This expression of the slave shows the sign of revolt.

Rebellious minds were the foundation for cultural change. The revolt helped the poor to get the share of property. Karl Marx declared that the social change to place from the class struggle. At last, the slaves were able to group the treasure from the house inside the wall. The same thing happened in the house of Hwang. This helped the poor to change their life style. This struggle made easier for the slave to get access to this great house. This was another step towards cultural change.

At first rich people rejected the poor and the poor accepted the superiority of the rich. In the course of time the poor got knowledge about them and their environment. This knowledge led them towards revolt and the revolt initiated the cultural change.

Change in ambition showed the change in society. The interaction between higher and lower class increased the ambition in lower class people. In fact, the ambition was the tonic for change. Lower class people became ambitious about the activities of higher class people so they were able to get the higher position. Wang Lung and O-lan saw the New Year cake in House of Hwang. They desired it to make in their home. For that, they struggled hard and at last they were able to prepare it. That showed the change in their life standard. Because of the ambition and devotion, Wang Lung changed himself from slave to the land lord.

Economical change also increased the level of confidence. The degree of confidence was low in slave people. When they transformed from poor to rich person, the confidence also raised. When Wang went to the house of Hwang to purchase the land, he saw a slave women and said "[. . .] seeing that you are only a slave, how can I do business with you? "(110). The rejection of slave indicates that Wang Lung considered himself as a lord and he used the word slave for the woman. This is the change in cultural identity due to the interaction between higher and lower class people in the liminal space.

The cultural change appears due to the presence of higher and lower class in a single space, that is, the liminal space. According to Bhabha, liminal space does not indicate the space of reflection but the space of creation. There was the rejection of lower class. Similarly, the acceptance of the superiority of higher class, acquisition of knowledge by lower class, the initiation of revolt took place in this space. These activities indicate the interaction between two groups. This interaction, leads to

negotiation. Likewise, one class got the change. Slave Wang became landlord; ignorant Wang desired education. So, he spent greater amount of money to make his son scholar. Wang, as a master, became liberal toward the slave. He respected his slave, Ching before and after Ching's death. Offering the coffin of good quality for Ching and Wang's expression of mourning towards Ching's death indicated Wang's Respect towards his slave. At last, Wang was able to live in the great House of Hwang. This is the outcome of negotiation in the liminal space.

### **Cultural Tradition and Liminal Negotiation**

Buck presented different cultural tradition in this novel: northern lower class, southern higher class, northern farmer and southern businessman. There was the natural and original cultural tradition of northern farmer. They seemed strict to protect their tradition. Simple living, simple vision, greater dependency and presence of pure humanity were the characteristics of northern farmer tradition. For James A. Bank culture or cultural tradition is "[. . .] the food we eat, the things we made, the shelter we live in, the clothes we wear" (*What Is Culture*, 23). The liminal negotiation can be seen in these aspects of culture.

Farmers in the northern China tried to protect their tradition as their identity. These people loved their culture more than themselves. For them the tradition was their gift from their ancestors. Northern farmers kept their braid as their tradition. In the beginning, Wang Lung rejected the barber's offering to cut his braid. At that time he cried out, "I cannot cut it off without asking my father"(8).

The marriage tradition of the northern farmer was very much simple. In their tradition, getting married was not to show the power but to show service. For them, a man needed a woman not for beauty and treasure but to sustain the life even in difficult

situation. Wang Lung gave the importance of his wife as "we must have a woman who will tend the house and bear children" (6). In then cultural tradition, dowry had no importance.

Sex is the sign of purity in northern Chinese tradition. Though there was the tradition of selling and buying of slave women, there was not the tradition of exchanging sex with money. For northern people, sex was the evil for their life while selecting life partner Wang said, "It is better to be first with an ugly woman than the hundredth with a beauty"(6). It shows that the northern tradition did not allow the sexual openness. It also suggested that the cultural tradition did not expose the capitalistic ideology that every thing could be exchanged with money.

Northern tradition showed pure not only in terms of sex but also in terms of wine and dice. Northern people were pure farmers. They believed on their land and labor. They became clear that only those people could survive who loved the land and labor. Wang Lung's constant struggle in the field proved it. One-day Cuckoo raised question about wine as "there is no such wine as ours-have you tasted it, Wang Lung?"(125). This showed the innocence pure and simple northern tradition towards the devil of human life.

The clothing and feeding tradition of northern China was also very much simple. Northern people used the local material to make their wearing. They wore hand made shoes and the women sew their clothes by hand. At the same time, they prepared food in their kitchen from whatever they had grown in the field. For them, "tea is like eating silver"(3). They also understood that " We are not rich enough to eat white sugar and lard"(33). They rejected the imported things due to their weak economical condition.

The northern farmer tradition was simple and pure in every aspects of life like marriage and sex, wine and dice, feeding and wearing. In this novel, there were sophisticated northern and southern cultural traditions, which were different from that of northern farmer tradition.

Sophisticated northern as well as southern culture considered the marriage as the exposition of power with the help of money. For them, dowry was the sign of their standard position in their society. Pure love and humanity were nothing for the higher-class society. When there was the daughter's marriage in the great house of Hwang, they gave greater amount of treasure as dowry as O-lan said, "the third daughter is to be married in the spring and her dowry is a prince ransom and enough to buy an official seat in big city" (36).

The tradition of believing in the life after death spread in southern culture. Southern people helped other for the betterment of their soul in the heaven. They thought that the establishment of the public kitchen was to save the life of poor people so that they could get better position in the heaven. For the matter of public kitchen northern people said, "It is the rich and gentry of the town who do it and some do it for a good deed for the future , that by saving life they may get mercy in heaven" (70).

The western influence became another aspect of southern Chinese tradition where as the northern tradition was away from it. Southern culture stood as a foreign culture for northern migrated people. Buck said, "Wang Lung and his wife and children were like foreigners in this southern city "(76). On the process of pulling rickshaw, Wang Lung approached two types of people. After approaching the destination one person gave a small silver coin saying, "Now I never pay more than this and there is no use of complain (76). In another day, a person with light hair and light eyes gave him two silver coins without saying anything. From their situation, Wang Lung understood

that in southern culture there were two types of people that of black hair and black eyes and of light hair and light eyes. Similarly, a man gave Wang Lung a picture of a man who was hung on a cross piece of wood. Wang did not know who he was. In fact this was the picture of Christ. This showed the influence of western Christianity in southern Chinese cultural tradition.

Tradition of clothes and food appeared more advanced in south than in north. Southern people wore expensive clothes imported from other countries. Similarly they ate the food of higher quality. In totality southern life style was high. For that, Buck said:

Rich man clothed in satin and in velvet soft flesh rich man with their skin covered with garment of silk and their hand like flowers for softness and perfume and the beauty of idleness, will all of these for the real beauty of the city, in that part where Wang Lung lived there was not food enough to feed savage hunger and not clothes enough to cover bones. (81)

Business of sex seemed another well-known tradition of southern society. Southern people utilized the opportunity of sex market. The great tea shop in the style of western pagoda was an important example of this. This shop was full of beautiful women ready to be sold. These women were neither from that farmer tradition nor suitable for any farmer. When Wang Lung reached in this tea shop, Cuckoo laughed at him with sharp whisper" well, Wang Lung the farmer! Who would think to see you her"(125). For these women, the appearance of farmer Wang seemed strange. This made clear that the sexual freedom was the sign of southern tradition.

These two distinct cultural traditions interacted to each other in the liminal space. From interaction there was the negotiation between them. So, there was the change in cultural identities.

Different changes in Wang Lung's life took place from the outcome of liminal negotiation between southern and northern cultural difference. According to Bhabha "two contradictory and independent attitudes inhabit the same place, one takes account of reality the other is under the influence of instincts which detach the ego from reality" (128). From the negotiation between two attitudes, one new attitude appears. Due to the interaction between two different cultural traditions of marriage, Wang accepted some ideas from southern tradition and he celebrated the marriage ceremony according to southern standard instead of selling her daughter in the slave market. From the liminal negotiation between two traditions concerning with sex, Wang changed himself from the ignorant farmer to the man who spent huge amount of money in great teashop for Lotus, the whore. By forgetting the purity, he brought Lotus in his home due to her beauty after that Wang changed his habit and behaviour and involved in a new culture where:

There every light were lit, bright oil lamps which are to be brought in the foreign cities of the coast, and man sat under the lights drinking and talking, their robes open to the evening coolness and everywhere fans moved to and fro and good laughter flowed out like music in the street. All the gayety which Wang lung had never had from his labour on the land was hold here in the walls of this house, where men met to play and never to work. (127,128)

Bhabha also suggests that the representation of difference is not the reflection of previously existed cultural identities that "set in the fixed tablet of tradition" (2). Wang



Lung's strict mentality towards his own tradition was changed because of the liminal negotiation between two different cultures. Wang Lung cut off his braid, which proved the change in cultural tradition. When he flowed the pure farmer tradition, he rejected to cut his braid, after the involvement in southern cultural tradition, he accepted to cut it easily. One day, Lotus criticized his braid as "now the men of the south do not have their monkey tails" (132). Immediately after it, he moved towards barber and cut it off. At the same time o-lan said, "You come out off your life"(132). For this rejection Wang Lung raised his logic as " and shall I look an old fashioned fool forever? All the young men of the city have their hair cut short " (132).

There was the greater change in Wang Lung's clothing tradition. He put aside the clothes made by his wife and brought black stain sleeveless coat and black velvet shoes, like the old lord had worn. This was also the product of the interaction between two different cultural traditions. Pearl S. Buck showed the cultural change though the change in Wang Lung's behaviour as:

He brought also new stuffs for clothes, and although o-lan had always cut his robes, making them wide and long for good measure and sewing them stoutly this way and that for strength, now he was scornful of her cutting and sewing and he took the stuffs to a tailor in the town and he had his clothes made as the man in the town had theirs, light gray silk for a robe, cut neatly to his body and with little to spare, and over this a black stain sleeveless coat . (132)

## CHAPTER IV: Conclusion

Being a child of American parents, Buck spent her most productive time in China. From her childhood, Buck suffered from different hindrances. Her academic contribution for Chinese culture was remarkable. Buck seems to be the agent of Chinese cultural changes. One can see a greater level of change in her life. Buck was changed from a poor person to a millionaire. There was the mixture of east and west in her life. She spent one half in Asia and another half in the west. In this way, the presence of negotiation, the interaction between two different culture and the change in life can be clearly seen even in her single life.

The novel, *The Good Earth*, has some sort of connection with Pearl S. Buck's life. It depicts the reality of Chinese society in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The basic focus is paid in the northern society but it is not untouched with Southern as well as other cultural variation. When the central government could not control all the parts of Chinese culture as well as geographical areas, there were different cultures with their social tradition, linguistic values and social norms and regulations. In the novel, one can see the combination of different cultures with their distinct identities.

While studying these cultural traditions, one sees the way of cultural change from one condition to another. There are various ways to get new identity. One of them is liminal negotiation. Here, the liminal indicates the space between two cultures where the mixture of two cultural values is presented. In this space, the interaction between two cultures takes place. So this space is also known as the space of creation but not of reflection. Homi K. Bhabha said that the liminal space cannot be realized in itself. He also clarified that two cultures are neither totally same nor totally different as self and other.

Liminal space is not the place within a single culture. It is the space between them where the new identity is borne after constant interplay between them. In any cultural transformation, the transforming identities should pass through this space. The negotiation between different cultural identities takes place in this space. In short, it is the hybrid or in-between space.

Negotiation indicates the conclusion of conflict as mutual acceptance. When two conflicting identities interact in a liminal space, they reach in a meeting point which is different from the previous ones. In this respect, the negotiated identity is not the reflection of previous identity but it is the creation of a new one. For Bhabha, liminal negotiation of cultural identity should be studied across differences of race, class, gender and cultural tradition.

Similarly, culture and cultural differences are two crucial terms to prove the liminal negotiation in distinct Chinese cultural identities. Culture indicates the amalgamation of politics, gender, class, economy, morality, religion, science, ethic, language, education and so on. It is the dynamic term that does not remain the same in different time and space. Culture is the totality of human being. As human interests, desires and needs change, human identity also changes. That is the fundamental condition for cultural change.

The idea of cultural difference is another important factor to analyse the cultural interaction in the liminal space. Cultural difference is not the study of different cultures with fixed identities but it is the study of dynamic aspect of different cultures.

Within this circumstance, one can see the liminal negotiation clearly in *The Good Earth*. The negotiation within gender issue is the remarkable. In the novel, there is the presence of repressive male figure, Wang Lung and repressed woman

figure, O-lan. At first, male did not accept the existence of female. Males treated female as second class people, female accepted it. The interaction between superior male and inferior female created the change in thought and behaviour of male and female. Females were able to search their existence and male understood the female values. This change became the major cause of cultural change.

The interaction between two different class is i.e. higher and lower, appeared as another important issue of cultural change. Higher class rejected the lower class in every field of public concern, either in the house of Hwang or in southern Chinese city. Lower class people were so weak that they accepted the higher class activities by killing their desires. The acceptance of the higher class seemed clear in house of Hwang, public kitchen and the southern street. Despite the acceptance, lower class got opportunities to gain knowledge about this phenomenon. They gained the real ideas about the distribution of wealth and the unnecessary activities inside the great wall. Similarly, they understood the real purpose of public kitchen and night work. This knowledge about different aspects of their life developed a sort of rebellious idea which became the fundamental source of cultural change.

The liminal negotiation between different cultural traditions created the place for cultural change. There was the constant interaction between the cultural tradition of northern poor farmer and southern rich businessman. Similarly, the interaction between higher class tradition and lower class tradition appeared as remarkable. The cultural tradition concerning with marriage, sex, food, clothes, wine and dice seemed different from one culture to another. These different traditions involved in a single space and interacted to each other. The interaction ended with negotiation that showed the change in cultural tradition.

One can observe the novel, *The Good Earth*, from the oriental perspective. The depiction of Chinese culture can be seen as other. Similarly, Marxist theory can be another important angle from where researchers can make the analytical reading of the novel.

The presence of two diverse cultural traits in the liminal space paves the way for cultural negotiation. The negotiation between different cultural identities indicates the adoption or modification of the different cultural traits that leads to the cultural change. The cultural change in Buck's novel, *The Good Earth*, seems clear due to the liminal negotiation between southern and northern cultural difference.

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