

Immigration

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



s Asian in the United s Immigration has always been a controversial issue in the United States, but according to Lisa Lowe, it is important to develop a sound understanding of the subject to help gain insight into the stratified economic and political dynamics of the contemporary American society. Lowe bases her arguments fundamentally on Asian immigration and their citizen status on American soil that is perpetually labeled as that of a foreigner. Despite the rising number of immigrants, who have adopted the United States as their homeland; Asians are vastly rendered isolated by American nationalist ideology that often sparks in to widespread discrimination and intolerance towards them and their culture.

The failure to successfully integrate the Asian culture values and norms in the American culture is ostensible through their education and the accounts of Asian American writers, who relate the hardships Asian students face in schools because of their ethnicities in an Asian American journal called “Burning Cane” (Lowe, 1996, p. 53). Lowe cites the story by Monique Thuy-Dung Truong that tells the story of a Vietnamese-American woman in a predominantly white school. She feels overwhelmed by the vast majority of white population in her school. Her feelings of isolation were further deepened by her nationalistic history teacher, Mrs. Hammerick, who constantly made her feel like “ she was telling all the boys that her first name of Pearl and her last name was Harbor”. (Lowe, 1996, p. 55)

Truong’s story highlights how the teacher particularly left her feeling isolated around the boys in class, as she indoctrinated them with her nationalist and bigoted ideology and forewarned them from developing any ties with her. The feelings of being ostracized were indeed painful but the narrator was

able to find long-lasting friendship in outcasts like her, Kelly and Michelle. However, it was not race that had set them apart but Kelly's weight and Michelle's poverty. Truong's story creates a contrast between the various ways the society has now been divided. In the midst of this social turmoil, the girls develop a unique bond that is created as a result of their empathy for one another; even though their struggles were different, but they were able to cross the boundaries of race, physical appearance and socioeconomic class.

While Truong's protagonist was reduced to a status of an enemy in the eyes of her peers, another story by Patrick Leong in the *Burning Cane* describes the struggles of a Chinese-Mexican in America, who is torn between the value system of his father and the Catholic beliefs of his mother. Such individuals feel as if they are in the "no man's land" as they are apparently a part of two distinct cultures but belong to none (Lowe, 1996, p. 54). Not only interracial marriages, but Asian Americans in general are on a crossroad, where they are supposed to create a balance between two highly diverse cultures that does not match with each other in any way. Therefore, the bigoted economic and political policy in the American society further deepens the divide between Asian immigrants and the American culture. Lowe argues that these are the repercussions of the education system that establishes this sense of isolation within the young Asian American population. Teaching history is essential, but using the historical events to project the identities of the victors and enemies on to the students will only set off resentment and negative feelings between the minority and majority groups in class. The author further suggests that school curriculum should

incorporate texts that depict the strong alliances that have been developed between Asians with the American population. Such as Truong's story that depicts how to overcome racial barriers and help the general masses to understand the ambivalence of contemporary Asian Americans, who constantly battle to embody the values of two cultures. (Lowe, 1996, 58-59)

Work Cited

Lowe, Lisa. "Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics". Duke University Press. 1996: P. p 54, 55, 58-59