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# The Melting Pot That Could Not Melt An Academic Research

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## 1 .Introduction:

For ages, the American society has been known for its diverse and multi-ethnic nature. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, sociologists exerted great efforts to investigate the American social structure. These efforts have been triggered by the hypotheses of considering America as the dream land for all immigrants and their following generations, where all Americans are one and equal. Therefore, these analytical efforts have begun with theorizing America as an assimilated society .

On the contrary, by the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, those Assimilation theories had been criticized. That critique introduced America as a society of pluralism rather than assimilation. The ‘Pluralism theory’ raised more awareness of the diversity in the United States. This theory has recognized the American society as a diverse society, which includes various Ethnic communities celebrating their Ethnic background cultures within the American identity frame. However, this theory has ignored the Ethnic American dilemma of reaching adaption with the American other. Thus, these suggested compound social

structures have highlighted the fragmentation and alienation in the American society rather than proving the American society as a harmonious one. As a result, these suggested theories have been proven to be myths, that could hardly be achieved in today's globalized world.

From Assimilation to Pluralism a set of myths have appeared. These myths have aimed to prove that the American society is the ideal integrated society. One of these myths has been the melting pot myth. America being a melting pot has been a great controversial subject, illustrating that “immigrants come to America and blend their unique contributions into a homogeneous broth that is an ever evolving American culture” (Friedman *resultaccountability.com*). This view have totally ignored the existences of difference in the American society, as Friedman illustrates that the “children and grandchildren of first generation immigrants gradually lose their cultural identity and become more or less indistinguishably American” (*resultaccountability.com*). As a result, ethnic second and third generations have been suffering discrimination, exploitation, and alienation as long as they are stuck between their ethnic cultural background and the attempt to adapt to the American mainstream . Thus, America has come out to be a multicultural society in which ethnicity and diversity have been controversial issues creating an inner cultural identity dilemma.

## 2 Assimilation:

Most of the twentieth century research on immigration have focused on the issue of America as an assimilated society. This has resulted in a great wave of assimilation theories in the social American context. Some of these theories have been prominent enough to affect the sociological context. Among these influential and well-noticed theories are the Straight-Line theory, the Melting Pot, Acculturation, Structural Assimilation, Americanization, and others.

The concept of 'Assimilation' has long been mistaken by the simple notion of "Accommodation". This confusion has led to the identity crisis of many Ethnic and Multi-Ethnic Americans. Hence Park & Burgess have been first to resolve this confusion by limiting the term Accommodation to modify

the process of adjustment, that is, an organization of social relations and attitudes to prevent or to reduce conflict, to control competition, and to maintain a bases of security in the social order for persons and groups of divergent interests and types to carry on together their varied life activities. (Park & Burgess 460)

Thus, 'Accommodation' only legitimizes and systemizes the way immigrants and ethnic minorities can feel free to take part in the American society. Yet, this notion does not exceed the limit of legislation, and organization, to the point

of creating integrative social canals for those ethnic minorities to mingle into the social structure of the society to reach a point where they can be considered as Americans.

On the contrary, 'Assimilation' has been identified as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, which are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (Park & Burgess 460). According to this definition Assimilation appears to be a process in which diverse and distinct groups merge together culturally and socially producing a united cultural outcome. The Assimilation theory has clearly called for the disappearance of any difference among the American groups. Thus, 'Assimilation' suggests a social translation and solution for the Ethnic Americans to be regarded as fully Americans.

As a result, the Assimilation theories in the United States have aimed to keep the 'Americanization' or the 'Anglo-conformity' of the society. These theories have set the criteria, according to which one could be accepted as an American. This criteria is based on attaining "the English language and the British-type institutional patterns created during the early years of American society" (Healey & O'Brien 33). Thus, according to the assimilation theories, the only way for minor-ethnic groups to gain acceptance and a good access to better education, jobs and opportunities in the

American society is to lose their ethnicity and then acquire the Anglo-American culture as their own. Some ethnic groups have found it easy to Americanize, whereas others have faced inner conflict, anxiety, resentment, and demoralization. In conclusion, the assimilation theories have illustrated that for ethnic-Americans to become real Americans they should go through a complex process towards adaption, otherwise they are doomed to suffer discrimination and inequality.

### 3. The Melting Pot:

Since 'Assimilation' is a great transnational process, it has introduced several scientific notions to the study of the American social structure. One of these notions or trends is featured as 'The Melting Pot' which is "a process in which different groups come together and contribute in roughly equal amounts to create a common culture and a new, unique society" (Healey & O'Brien 33). This view has stressed the importance of hyphenated Americans to construct the multicultural American society. Thus, The Melting Pot has considered assimilation as a process that emphasizes sharing and inclusion.

Before 1960, most sociologists had argued that the conditions and aspects of the American life would create a 'Melting Pot'. They had also believed that this melting pot would "transform immigrants of different ethnic and

religious groups into Americans sharing a common culture–developing attitudes, values, and lifestyles” (Bisin & Verdier 955). Therefore, America being a melting pot is a developed form of assimilation of all ethnic, racial and multi-cultural groups of the society producing only one well-built culture and social group. According to the Melting Pot theory, ethnic groups engage in a shared–fusion process. This process “can take either of two forms: 1) all ethnic groups acculturate to a universalistic set of values and symbols with no ancestral connotations, or 2) there is two-way influence between ethnic groups in the society such that no ancestral group achieves symbolic dominance” (Kiwuwa 17). In assumption, ‘The Melting Pot theory’, like its framework theory, calls for the disappearance of any ethnic background to a person who seeks to be American.

Consequently, many scholars have coincided that the melting pot is a theory suggesting that racial and ethnic divisions would eventually vanish or decrease in the American society. Therefore, the “melting pot image is typically used as a straw man to the assimilation theory in most studies” (Hirschman 412). By representing the core of the assimilation theory, America has been considered by sociologists as the crucible in which diversity and difference melt producing the American unique culture. That culture has been described to include aspects of various ethnic cultures with the prominence of the Anglo-American

culture. In a word, as Elena Vesselinov states, “the melting pot offers an idealistic vision of U.S. society and identity, combining people from diverse ethnic, religious, political, and economic backgrounds together into a single people”(576). However, this culture is dominated with the Anglo-American white society.

### 3.1 The Origin of The Melting Pot:

The Melting Pot concept first appeared in 1782, by an American farmer Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur. Crèvecoeur was a French immigrant who settled in New York. He was the first to define an American and popularize the concept of America as a melting pot. Crèvecoeur proposed America as a vast melting pot of cultures in which Europeans assimilate as others to become part of it. This concept has developed to include other Ethnic-Americans, considering it the core of the Assimilation theory.

In his book *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), Crèvecoeur coined the definition of an American as: “he is either a European, or the descendant of a European; hence that strange mixture of blood which you will find in no other country.... Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world”(13). Accordingly, the melting pot simplified the American society as a Euro-centric society where other ethnicities do not belong. Thus, the

assimilation happens only among European immigrants and their descendants. Crèvecoeur influenced others, who helped popularize the image of the United States as a melting pot, such as Zangwill and Ralph Waldo Emerson. However, “the term has served as a receptacle for a wide variety of paradigms, ... its *telos* admits of no less than a fusion of all the groups known to mankind through the democratic association” (Parsons 353–56). Therefore, the concept of ‘Melting Pot’ expanded to include other Non-European immigrants.

### 3.2 Zangwill’s Melting Pot:

Zangwill was a British Jew and a confirmed international sociologist, who “worked with the International Territorial Association to resettle Russian Jews in the United States. He was influenced by the internationalist Jewish thinking of the late nineteenth century that pre-dated Zionism” (Lissak 143). He was also influenced by Robert Park and the “Chicago School”. Park and the “Chicago School” of sociology were the founders of the modern sociological theory and research on race and ethnic relations in the early twentieth century. Park and his contributors settled the basics of what appeared lately as the postmodern and contemporary dominant sociological theories of race and ethnic change.

In 1909, Zangwill titled his play; *The Melting Pot*. Even though American liberals like Emerson and Jefferson had made rhetorical use of universalist statements in earlier eras, this play was the first to support the Melting Pot vision of America clearly, aiming to prove America as a promised land of diversity. This play of “ethnic intermarriage, *The Melting Pot*, furnished a key term expressing national expectations of immigrant assimilation. Forced Americanization as well as setbacks to national integration, threatened national unity especially in war times” (Overland 140). Zangwill’s play ignored the cruel reality of the Ethnic American discriminated society, as David the hero appeared to believe that the divisions of nationality and ethnicity will one day disappear in America, leaving behind all Americans leading an Anglo-American lifestyle. This appeared in his words;

DAVID. America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming!...here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries...Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen, and Englishmen, Jews and Russians-into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American. (Zangwill 33)

David’s words reflected Zangwill’s own belief that America is the crucible in which cultural diversity melts to reform a melted White-centric culture. Apparently, these words aimed to prove that the new outcome represents the

real American self, which ignores all differences of race and culture. To prove this belief, the play ended with David falling in love with a Russian Christian immigrant who just happens to be the daughter of the man who led the massacre of David's family. Thus, Zangwill's *Melting Pot* suggested the disappearance of any sort of discrimination, hatred, and prejudice among the White-American descendants.

The main aim of Zangwill's play was emphasizing the amalgamation of races in the American popular culture, and popularizing Assimilation theories that call for melting into the American mainstream culture and history. However, for many sociologists and literary critics the play ignored much of the diversity, discrimination and isolation that the minor and ethnic American groups were exposed to. It excluded all Non-White Ethnic-Americans from being able to melt into the American society. In short, Zangwill's contribution to the theory ignored the multi-ethnic nature of the American society. This marked the beginning of the literary concern towards 'Assimilation'. Zangwill urged others to study and contribute to 'The Melting Pot' theory.

### **3.3. Variations on the Melting Pot Theory:**

Moreover, Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of the main supporters to the Assimilation theory and specifically the concept of America being a melting pot. His contribution to the theory included people of colour, other than White

Americans. Emerson's vision of a merged society has been a future vision that went beyond the description of his time's American structure. For Emerson, America turning into a melting pot was regarded as an inevitable future. He believed that to achieve a typical melting pot, Americans should take time and effort within a democratic environment to mingle socially and culturally.

In contrast, Frederick Jackson Turner has considered that the melting pot had already existed. His view of the American melting pot appeared in his essay on the frontier thesis. His essay portrayed the American frontiers "as the catalyst that had already fused the immigrants into a composite new national stock" (Parrillo 12). Turner's *Frontier Thesis* followed the 1890's declaration of the Census Bureau; that the "unsettled area has been so broken into ... that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line" (Henretta 16). Therefore, Turner's vision of the American frontiers proved many signs of an American melted society, yet, could hardly be classified or divided.

Furthermore, in his book, *The Frontier in American History* (1920) where he expanded his 1893's essay, Turner stated that:

the Middle West was teaching the lesson of national cross-fertilization instead of national enmities, the possibility of a newer and richer civilization, not by preserving

unmodified or isolating the old component elements, but by breaking down the line fences, by merging the individual life in the common product—a new product that held the promise of world brotherhood. (17)

Illustrating, he argued that because pioneer immigrants had confronted many problems and harsh conditions to become Americans, their adaptation had required new solutions that they should have shared with others. Out of this, a requirement evolved to create a new and distinct culture. This new unique culture, as Turner believed, represented a blend of shared cultural contributions, where each community loses its ethnic background culture. Turner's argument popularized further the romanticized notion of a melting pot, that was previously introduced by Crèvecoeur. Unlike Emerson's, Turner's update of Crèvecoeur's melting pot was greatly influential for many sociologists throughout history and led a trend of thought that lasted for over forty years.

On the contrary, Turner's vision was criticized for being so romantic and irrationally noticeable. As immigrants have done their best to adapt to their new environment, the main culture remained Anglo-American in form and content. Beside Turner's reference to many homogeneous ethnic groups, such as Germanic and Scandinavian communities, in his book, still those cultures appeared to be separated culturally and socially. So it is hard to believe that a new

culture could appear from these immigrants and next generation's adaption could be inevitable. In short, though Turner's argument was influential, it did not prove the real existence of the American melted society where no frontiers or differences exist.

By the sixties of the twentieth century, the melting pot had become the symbol of the liberal and radical vision of the American society. In a sense, it was a political symbol used to strengthen and legitimize the ideology of America as a dream land. A land of opportunity and equality where race, ethnicity, religion, and gender are not barriers to social integration. Therefore, Gordon described the melting pot as 'the emphasis on "Americanization" of immigrants around the turn of the century. While the melting pot image suggested a blend of cultures, the process was essentially one of "anglo-comformity"' (Gordon 276). In brief, with the break out of the second half of the twentieth century, sociologists admitted that the core culture of America is the Anglo-American culture. Moreover, other ethnic cultures were expected to disappear or be excluded from the melting pot process, while the dominant Anglo-American culture was strengthened.

Even though sociologists have argued upon issues of immigration, belonging, equality, and justice; these critical issues have seemed to be unresolved as minority Ethnic-American groups are marginalized and neglected from the

melting pot. As Healey & O'Brien illustrated that "the legacies of racism and exclusion continue to affect these groups today, and...American minority groups continue to suffer from inequality, discrimination, and marginalization" (4). Therefore, it has been hard for many critics to accept the notion of America being a melting pot, overlooking all aspects of diversity and discrimination that minority groups create in the American postmodern to contemporary society.

It may have been hardly accepted to think that the different immigrants coming to the land of dreams, and with the industrialization of the society, would one day merge in the mainstream society producing a new unique outcome. As Timothy Taylor has criticized; "the melting pot metaphor is a relic of a bygone time, when melting different metals together was a common for many industrial workers...melting different metals together produces a desired outcome only if you adhere to a formula....If you just dump different metals into a melting pot, what comes out is likely to be flawed and brittle, not strong or useful" (*StarTribune.com*). Taylor has criticized, as well, the way the supporters of the melting pot have never shown a mental and logical formula through which this melting process would be achieved. Therefore, according to critics such as Taylor, the melting pot process has appeared to be a random suggestion that cannot be measured. Taylor's and other critics' critique have been accepted to be more rational. To conclude, the

main criticism that the melting pot has received by sociologists and literary writers have proven the melting pot to be a mere myth that can hardly be achieved in such a diverse and multi-ethnic society.

### **3.4. The Melting Pot Versus Diversity:**

Diversity has been the real core of the United States since the discovery of the new world. America has been populated by successive waves of immigration to the land of the Native Americans, constructing a diverse society. Parrillo criticized that “the prevailing belief that this nation was essentially a culturally homogeneous launching pad for the new nation is steeped in the historic myth that the 13 colonies were almost entirely populated by English immigrants and their descendants”(Parrillo 7), yet, this was proven to be a mere myth throughout history. So what has been special about the American culture has not been its homogeneity, as the melting pot claims, but rather its great ability to embrace the elements of various cultures that have been passed around by different ethnic American communities. This diversity has stimulated controversy regarding the relationships between races, classes, ethnic groups, religious groups, sexual groups and political groups.

In addition, Friedman stated that the “past approaches to solve the problem has failed in the face of this complexity. The challenge has not, and never was, how to absorb the

latest wave of immigrants. The challenge is how to live together as a healthy multicultural society” (*resultsaccountability.com*). These words show that the American society’s main challenge has been accepting and adapting with the other. According to Friedman, the American identity dilemma is cored in the challenge of forming a multicultural plural society. As Payant and Rose argued, “all immigrants are perplexed by the dilemma of assimilation into the mainstream culture of the new world and maintaining their diasporic identity in a multicultural society” (7). So social diversity is valuable and any attempt to eliminate it seems as a detrimental issue to American vitality.

As the melting pot and assimilation supporters have falsely stressed the concept that America is originally European, the melting pot’s expected results should be the Anglo-American culture. Thus, the main step in the Americanization process has become the adaption of the Anglo-American culture and social structure. As a result, racism and prejudice have been thought to fade away for that particular group only. Therefore, these theories of assimilation ignored and eliminated any aspect of diversity or Multi-Ethnic culture in the American society. By advocating assimilation as a melting process of all cultures to form one acceptable culture, beginning of unconformity and discrimination among Americans-of different ethnic

backgrounds, genders, races, and cultural beliefs is assumed to flourish. For further explanation, these assumptions have been harking back to Theodore Roosevelt's repressive political strategy. Roosevelt stated: "there can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag ... and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is loyalty to the American people." (236). This restricted definition of being an American was criticized for its ability to increase "the confusion that arises from the poly-ethnic and multi-vocal condition of American culture which resulted in reiterating the hegemonic nature of Eurocentric American culture, and not taking into consideration that Ethnic Americans display a shared preoccupation with identity" (Alapat 2). Thus, the melting pot metaphor inscribes racism and intolerance as chronic conditions of the American society.

Adding up, it has been unfair to consider different, minor or ethnic groups only as immigrants, yet those are an essential part of the multicultural American picture. Assimilation sociologists have minimalized those ethnic groups to multicultural immigrants, whose only social function is to pass a homogeneous Anglo-American society through inevitable assimilation. So cultural diversity has been considered as a pass way for assimilation. However, not all

Americans have agreed with this sentiment of assimilation but have focused rather on a need for multiculturalism.

### 3.5 Critique of the Melting Pot Theory:

By the late 1950s and 1960s, the melting pot concept had begun to be discredited by many sociologists. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan were the first to demonstrate the problematic aspects of the melting pot in their inspiring book *Beyond the Melting Pot* in 1970. They illustrated that ‘ethnic backgrounds and identities can provide resistance to “melting” and are quite central in structuring the immigrant incorporations...The essence of Glazer and Moynihan's argument is... that the melting pot did not happen’ (Vesselinov 577). This vision paved the way for new perspectives and modified the American and Ethnic-American components, producing a more noticeable attack on the melting pot concept. Accordingly, more attention was expected to be paid to the ignored multi-ethnic communities in order to discredit the fake assimilationist hope that ethnicity or difference could once disappear. More than four decades later, most scholarly evidence seemed to support that conclusion.

For more justification, Horace Kallen and Randolph Bourne were prominent in supporting alternative conceptions of what American identity was or should be

away from the idea of achieving an assimilated or melted society. Both Kallen and Bourne criticized the concept of “the melting pot to mean Anglo-conformity (or at least conformity to some reified ethno-cultural type entailing the loss of one’s own heritage, i.e. “Americanization”)” (Kallen 392). Their interpretation of the American identity challenged the more liberal conception of the melting pot, as they disbelieved in the existence of an integration among American ethnic communities to reach a homogeneous type dominated in character by one element. They valued ethnic and racial diversity and saw in it the core form of an American nation that was truly unique. In 1915, Horace Kallen, an immigrant from Eastern Europe, advocated his ideology in an essay in *Nation* entitled “Democracy versus the Melting Pot”. According to Kallen, “the United States was not a fondue of amalgamation but a symphony of accommodation... Kallen saw the orchestra—that is, the Society—as consisting of groups of instruments—nationalities—playing their separate parts while together making beautiful music resonant with harmony and good feeling” (Peter 193).

Therefore, Kallen was credited with coining the term “cultural pluralism”, which referred to as a great step towards a Multicultural and Multi-Ethnic American integration. Horace Kallen proved that any attempt of melting different ethnic backgrounds, into one specific mould distinct from

their own, appears to be a betrayal of all the democratic ideals and core political principles of the American society. For him, the accepted form of Americanization is achieved as the Ethnic minorities integrate with the other but without losing their Ethnic background. Kallen supported his concepts and beliefs; “Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent; they cannot change their grandfathers” (122–123). These words implied that one cannot simply be forced to get rid of his culture, or his ethnic beliefs, values and other concepts that feature his or her biologically attained and hence unchangeable identity. He also characterized ethnicity as “inalienable” in the sense that it forms the core of any American individual. Thus, according to Kallen being an Ethnic is a main component in the American identity.

Besides, Kallen argued that America will gain its greatness from the maintenance of its distinctive cultures. He believed that integration and equality were possible without extensive acculturation and the American society could be a federation and mosaic of diverse groups, cultures and peoples. In his view, “the melting pot is both a futile attempt to create a homogeneous ethno-cultural group out of components that can never be fully transformed and a violation of the democratic principles the US is supposed to value” (Kallen 392). Since Kallen, it has been realized that ethnicity and diversity among Americans could never be mingled in one

crucible producing one culture and one homogeneous nation.

Similarly, Randolph Bourne argued for much of the same sort of social configuration. Like Kallen, Bourne saw the Americanization programs of his time as undemocratic, but for different reasons. Kallen's understanding of ethnicity led him to conclude that since the individual is situated in a particular ethnic group, democracy for the individual is the same as democracy for the group. The absence of democratic practices at the group level through forced abandonment of cultural heritage has meant the absence of democratic practices at the individual level. Whereas, Bourne (1916) held a constructivist view of ethnicity and was more concerned with the lack of voice given to immigrants who were forced to adjust. He believed that the American ethnic identity crisis appears as the Anglo-American desire for Americanization to take place on their own terms. This view was unaccepted by critics, who believed that ethnicity and being an American do not rebel, yet, they stand together to form a unique Multi-Ethnic American identity that can cope with the contemporary globalized world.

Bourne's central concern was focused on the existence of such a diverse society in the US with an extraordinary opportunity to create a unique type of nation; "whose culture is cosmopolitan yet whose society has not succumbed to that "weary old nationalism" of Europe which is "belligerent,

exclusive, inbreeding'” (Bourne 91). Thus Bourne advocated for a unique American culture and national identity to which every group contributes. He, as well, supported the idea that ethnic groups do not lose their cultural background. America then does not have one culture but appears as a multicultural society. From this point the sociological interests moved from believing in a melted society to a multicultural and plural society where each respects the difference of the other.

With Bourne’s multiculturalism, assimilation was proven to be a mere myth. This was clarified through Parrillo’s words; “today’s cultural diversity is perceived as different, more widespread, and resistant to assimilation...thus making it not only a new construction, but somehow also a threat to the cohesiveness of society” (7). Parrillo’s illustration clearly declared the threats behind losing the diverse nature of the society on the way to an assimilated multicultural society. Consequently, the melting pot idea itself carried great danger to the actual multicultural spirit of the American society.

So the Melting pot theory was challenged by multiculturalists who consider it a cover for oppressive assimilation. In addition, Multiculturalism was a movement that insisted that the American society has never been a homogenous one, but rather multiracial and diverse. It aimed to preserve distinctive ethnic, racial, or cultural communities without melting them into a common culture.

Multiculturalists believed that the assimilated common culture of the Anglo-Americans that had been sought by the melting pot is a culture of bigotry and discrimination. However, Multiculturalism emphasized the separate characteristics and virtues of the hyphenated American groups. In a word, Multiculturalism appeared to be the developed approach of the 'Pluralism Theory', rejecting the 'Assimilation Theories'.

#### **4. Pluralism Towards Multiculturalism:**

Pluralism has been developed to act as a rebel to the Melting notion of the US society. Pluralism has called for the respect of diversity within the American society- where groups maintain their individual identities as they attempt to take equal share of the American rights. In a pluralistic society, groups remain diverse, keeping their cultural and social differences which do not seem to be problematic. However, Pluralism might include Assimilation in a variety of social combinations. Some communities may be assimilating whereas others are "maintaining (or even increasing) their differences...every minority group in the United States has, at any given time, some members who are assimilating and others who are preserving or reviving traditional cultures" (Healey & O'Brien 32).

Nevertheless, as pluralism gained new advocates, another influential sociological voice reaffirmed

assimilationist patterns. One of the remarkable sociologists who made a provocative reanalysis of the role of ethnicity in the American society is Steinberg. In 1981, Steinberg questioned the logic of the supporters of ethnic pluralism. In *The Ethnic Myth* (1981), Stephen Steinberg argued that “minority groups willingly compromise their ethnicity to gain economic security and social acceptance. Moreover, he claimed that the United States was closer than ever before to welding a national identity out of its mélange of ethnic groups”(Parrillo 10). So he had great belief in the goal of Assimilation in the American society. Steinberg condemned the way pluralists have called for social and economic equality for ethnic groups and at the same time have sought to maintain exclusive social and cultural organizations for those ethnic groups. In addition, Steinberg considered the emphasis on ethnic pluralism as an effort to resist the ethnic minorities’ integration and participation in the American society. According to Steinberg, resisting the melting pot image is a mere attempt to isolate the ethnic minority. Yet he supported the ‘Melting Pot’ over ‘Pluralism’ stressing that it is the only way for ethnic minorities to be equal.

By the end of the twentieth century, others had condemned the idea of Pluralism. A wave of Sociologists claimed that Pluralism has the ability to move the society unwillingly to more isolation and difference. Minor groups sought separatism to enforce their different and unique

identity. For example, African Americans expressed both separatist and pluralist goals, while separatism was pursued by some African American organization such as the Black Muslims. More and more subgroups were identified with pluralism creating a society full of complex fragments that were very difficult to connect. Therefore, pluralism's separation consequent enforced the idea that the Anglo-American community is the only un-fragmented and well identified American core unit of the society.

In brief, the attempts of pluralism, separation and exclusion of Ethnic-Americans have not helped the American society to become one unit, however, they have glorified the differences and fears among the minority and majority. The actual proof of the failure of the Assimilation, Melting Pot and the Pluralism Theories came to surface with September-Eleven attacks on the United States. The American society with all its diverse communities was forced to adapt new attitudes towards specific ethnic groups. With the blame of Islamic extremists over the attack, Arab-American or other American communities that originated in the Islamic world were automatically exposed to prejudice, racism, and violence. However, the fact that neither all Arabs are Muslims nor all Muslims are Arabs was not considered when it came to ethnic discrimination. Though it has been over sixteen years since the attacks took place, it is uncertain

if the negative attitudes toward Middle Eastern immigrants have faded as well.

Hence, with the election of president Obama as president of the United States in 2008, some have thought this has been a remarkable end of prejudice and discrimination on all levels of the society, and specifically the ethnic level. However, social scientists have argued that prejudice has not decreased so much as it has changed to indirect and more disguised forms. This has been proved with the election of President Donald Trump and his first orders of banning immigrants not only from the Arab and Islamic world but even from the Latino and Mexican borders too. With Obama and Trump's administrations not only do Arabs, Latinos and Islamic minorities suffer, but also Asian minor communities suffer to melt and become a real part of the American society. Asian-American dilemma is believed to be as complex as the Arab-American one. As all Arab- Muslims and Christians have been accused of being terrorists, all Asians have been treated to be western slaves fleeing to America after W.W.II. Accordingly, on the fragmental basics, both the Melting Pot and Pluralism have been proven to be a myth on the gender level. By passing the first decade of the Twenty First century still American women in general and Ethnic-American women in particular face great discrimination and inequality in jobs, politics and education.

## 5. Literature from Melting Pot To Multiculturalism:

The various aspects of the Melting Pot concept have been reflected and criticized in literary genres including novels, poetry, and drama. This began as Crèvecoeur used literature to introduce the idea of the Melting Pot through *Letters from an American Farmer*. Though he idealized the concept of a melting pot, he was not accurately portraying the reality of his century. His characters were typical members of the eighteenth century American family, who refused any ethnic hybridity or intermarriage that may cause assimilation. Also Zangwill's play, *The Melting Pot*, remarked the great relationship between the Melting Pot theory and the power of literature to express the real image of the American society. As Zangwill's play idealized the American dream of achieving a harmonious unique society where all ethnicities disappear into one, contemporary playwrights such as Betty Shamieh, Diana Son, David Henry Hwang, Lynn Nottage, and Suzan Lori Parks have criticized such dream to be unrealistic and unfair for the coming generations.

With the critical stream of the Melting Pot image by sociologists, Ethnic characters have been used by writers to resist the melting pot image. Instead of excluding hyphenated characters from the mainstream, literature condemned the idea of isolation and separation within the American society.

Ethnic or hyphenated writers have used ethnic characters to prove the impossibility of excluding the marginalized communities from the American citizenship.

There are three main issues that feature the multi-ethnic American society and drama as well. Those three issues are ethnic identity crisis, contemporary ethnic feminism and the American hybrid communities. Hyphenated writers have focused on these themes in their works specifically after the great change in the American society and the increase of the Ethnic-American suffering after Nine Eleven acts. Thus, Ethnic-American playwrights have paid much attention to their minority groups lives, aiming to highlight the tensions that have been inherited in American national identity. They have used protagonists of mixed ethnicities and they literally embody the hybridity within themselves. These hyphenated writers have took several paths to reach the same aim. Some have written to show their attachment with their ethnic background, attempting to emphasize the fact of their inner identity crisis.

On the contrary, others have been attached to the main track of showing the real identity crisis and hybrid challenges they face in everyday life due to marginalization. Briefly, the Ethnic-American theatre has not only served as a noticeable record of the Americanization of ethnics, but it has also served as a visual documentary of how discriminated and separated ethnic minority groups have been from the

American mainstream culture. This appears in the works of Betty Shamieh and Diana Son.

### **6. Conclusion:**

In short, both ‘Assimilation’ and ‘Pluralism’ have failed to identify a fair definition of ‘The American’. This failure has led sociologists to seek a more flexible analysis and description of the American society. Among these remarkable sociological outcome has been the Salad Bowl and the Mosaic theories. Those closely related theories have aimed to celebrate the multicultural spirit of the American society. Though these theories have declared the diversity and difference in the American skeleton, they have not been proven to be inevitable. So the whole Melting Pot Theory, Assimilation and Pluralism have been proven to be mere myths.

Subsequently, recent comparative studies aim for shedding light on the stereotypical images of multi-ethnicity in the contemporary American canonical drama and shedding lights on the challenges that such ethnic minority groups encounter. This historicizing of drama is confined to American plays of two female Ethnic American writers– Betty Shamieh and Diana Son. Betty Shamieh and Diana Son are remarkable playwrights who use drama to reflect the complexity of the relation between Ethnic–American identities and the American mainstream. The analysis of their

plays attempts to convey the truth about the multi-ethnic identity crisis, ethnic-women's voices in contemporary America and the importance of hybridity in the American society.

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