

International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies

ISSN: 2308-5460



Post-Colonial Reading Of Isabel Allende's *The Japanese Lover*

[PP: 01-11]

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ABSTRACT

This research will explore the result of studying different aspects of identity seeking and establishing it as a liminal-prone one in a hybridized atmosphere among the colonized in terms of post-colonial discourse, based on Bhabha's theories in his book, *The Location of Culture*, and on Isabel Allende's novel, *The Japanese Lover* (2015). This study strives to expose the way through which the colonized characters' identities in the novel undergo radical transformation through the third space which is heavily laced with qualities like ambivalence, stereotype, mimicry, and unhomeliness. Isabel Allende is an author whose novels mostly are an attempt to delineate the process of identity shaping particularly in the USA, since identity has always been an obsession for human which is defined based on different properties, one of which refers to the nation, culture and the territories based on Bhabha's notion of hybridity which stems from confrontation of the cultures of the oppressor and the oppressed in the process of colonization. Generally, subject of identity in post-colonialism discourse is one in which people especially the colonized seeks for attachment. It will be divulged through this analysis that how liminal quality which is created as the consequence of colonial discourses will result in creating a space in which the oppressed one undergo radical changes in forming identity and how their identities are susceptible to alteration and likely to be unstable and fugitive.

Keywords: Isabel Allende, *The Japanese Lover*, Homi K. Bhabha, Colonized, Cultural Hybridity

ARTICLE INFO	The paper received on	Reviewed on	Accepted after revisions on
	16/12/2019	22/02/2020	08/04/2020

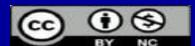
Suggested citation:

Cite this article as: Shabrang, H. & Karimi, G. (2020). Post-Colonial Reading Of Isabel Allende's *The Japanese Lover*. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 8(1). 01-11.

1. Introduction

The present study is going to seek the concept of identity and its formation within the characters. Identity has always been deemed as a key issue for those whose living place is either deliberately or inadvertently changed and they must adapt themselves to an alienated space to which they do not belong, yet they are forced to form a subjectivity which is adjusted to this new space. These people, who find themselves in interstitiality of cultures, can neither claim to belong to their native culture nor are they deemed as the native members of the host culture. This issue is even more intensified for the second generation who are born in the host country. These troubles can be sought in the language they deploy alongside contrasts between the cultures, values and beliefs. This circumstance creates a number of polarities and there is inevitably a classification of native and immigrants, oppressed and the oppressor, the centralized

one and the peripheral ones, east versus west, superior and inferior, to name but a few. But as it was already mentioned, one cannot assert to possess one of these poles; in other words, they are caught in a situation which is ambivalent according to Homi K. Bhabha, since the aforementioned states are not to remain eternally, thus the oppressed population is not marginalized forevermore. In Allende's *The Japanese Lover*, the critical point is addressed to the identity of the oppressed and it is going to reveal how their identities are susceptible to alteration and it is likely to be unstable and fugitive. Despite the changes, ambivalence and inability to establish a fixed subjectivity, this hybridized space can lead to self-realization in each individual and consequently in a group or even a nation. The same does also take place in *The Japanese Lover* which will be elucidated elaborately. In this process, Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical concepts of mimicry, stereotype, ambivalence and



unhomeliness will be adopted in order to identify the transformations in the colonized, the non-American population and establishing a hybrid identity in the selected text by Isabel Allende. At the outset, there will be an explanation about Bhabha's theories and the selected methodology and then the study will focus on the analysis of text based upon Bhabha's concepts.

The main part of *The Japanese Lover* is devoted to a Polish girl's life, Alma Blasco and her lover, Ichimei, a Japanese boy. They ended up living in the USA since the Second World War had begun, when Alma was eight years old. Succeeding Japanese attack to the Pearl Harbor, Japanese residents in the USA were declared as enemy and they were compelled to be living in camps deprived from any citizen rights in a stiff situation. Even then, Alma and Ichimei tried to stay in touch through letters. After the war, when circumstance was suitable, they started their confidential relationship, but Alma ended up marrying her cousin, Nathaniel Blasco and they made a life together, even though she tried to maintain her friendship with Ichimei through letters in succeeding years. The story is taking place as Alma is in her elderly age and she begins recalling and talking about her memories for her grandson, Seth Blasco and her caregiver, Irina.

Despite having Chilean parents, Isabel Allende was born in the city of Lima, Peru due to her father's job who was a diplomat. Since then she has lived in five different countries: Chile, Bolivia, Lebanon, Belgium, Venezuela and the USA. She was firstly a journalist but she was influenced by Pablo Neruda's suggestion, the Chilean poet, to "become a novelist instead of a journalist" (McNeese, 2006, p. 55). Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Colombian writer, had a huge impact on her. Allende experienced exile and migratory life in the aforementioned countries and since her immigration to the USA, she mostly tried to "analyze how an immigrant in the USA develops a sense of belonging" (Craig, 2013, p. 3). Therefore most of her novels, particularly *The Japanese Lover* deals with establishing identity in the USA.

Homi K. Bhabha, a twenty-first century intellectual has coined theoretical neologisms in postcolonial studies. The Ann F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language, and the director of the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University, was originally born in a Parsi family in Bombay, India. Bhabha's

outstanding works include *Nation and Narration* (1990), *The Location of Culture* (1994), *Cosmopolitanisms in Public Culture* (2000) and *Edward Said: Continuing the Conversation* (2005). The main source of his concepts and theories is *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha's literary theories were, to a large extent, influenced by Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Frantz Fanon. Needless to say that he was also inspired by Edward Said's Orientalism, but unlike Said's concentration and emphasis on colonizer and Fanon's focal point on the marginalized, Bhabha's perspective revolves around both colonizer and colonized and their ambivalent relationship.

2. Literature Review

The primary work in this research is *The Japanese Lover* by Isabel Allende (2015). She is renowned for depicting migrants' identities through migration and exile during political crisis or wars. The theme of multiculturalism and polyphony can be traced in her novels and it paves the way to seek the issue of identity in her works. Due to her exile on account of political crisis, Allende can masterfully depict the difficulties and troubles one may face in the process of migration. *The Greatest Hispanic Heritage: Isabel Allende* by Tim McNeese (2006) is one of the books in which her life, exile and the political crisis with which she faced are mentioned; in fact her personal experience can be a quite adequate reason why she can skillfully illustrate the difficulties, the impediments and the obstacle one might face in the process of abandoning one's country and settling in a new territory.

Another book which will concentrate on the American identity particularly in Allende's novels, is *Rewriting American Identity in the Fiction and Memoirs of Isabel Allende* by Bonnie M. Craig (2013). This book reveals the facts behind Allende's novels and the reason why she employs Spanish language despite being an American citizen that aims to subvert the "preconceived notions of the United States as a monolingual culture" (p. 7). Bonnie M. Craig (2013) also explains about some titles as 'California Dream' (p. 1) and 'The Politics of National Belonging' (p. 15) about Allende's novels in this book.

Since the scope of this study is concentrated upon postcolonial approach, the primary reference in this research is *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha which is a collection of his articles regarding

post colonialism, among which “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism”, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” and “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi” along with the concepts of mimicry, stereotype, ambivalence and unhomeliness from his standpoint are employed in this study. The articles in *The Location of Culture* manifest the ways through which the marginalized population can resist. This book discloses the extent of complicity of the relation between the colonizer and the colonized and addresses the questions of identity and subjectivity, which is why the researcher has selected this reference. The mentioned theories and concepts will be applied in scrutinizing *The Japanese Lover*.

Another useful source in decoding postcolonial discourse is *Post-colonial studies: the key concepts* edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. This book is a rich source which has accumulated different postcolonial neologism and terminology alongside the concepts which were employed by diverse critics such as, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The definitions of deployed theories like mimicry, unhomeliness and ambivalence were sought in this rich source. There is another book from the same authors, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* which is a collection of different postcolonial articles by different scholars among which “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” by Homi Bhabha is noteworthy.

3. Methodology

The concern of this research is postcolonial studying of Allende's *The Japanese Lover* and putting effort into deciphering it through lens of Bhabhaian concepts and contentions. Borrowing ideas from Bhabha's critical outlook, this research intends to expose the invisible facets of culture, identity and subjectivity within the migrant characters that Allende has masterfully depicted. One similarity in the Allende's selected novel is multiplicity of nations and their presence in another country, the USA. The departure from native land creates a liminal space in which the migrants find themselves excluded from both cultures. It creates a common ground between Allende's novel and Bhabha's theories.

Bhabha is not the only critic who has concentrated on postcolonial studies and addressed the questions of identity in a hybridized space. In z bring about a sort of balance in postcolonial studies. In his collection of articles, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha develops a set of challenging concepts which are central to postcolonial theory some of which encompass: hybridity, stereotype, mimicry, ambivalence and third space through which he illuminates how both the oppressed and the oppressor's identities are interwoven and cannot be scrutinized and explored individually, yet they dependent upon each other and one's change can pose another's transformation. The same will also be traced in the novel of *The Japanese Lover* and it will be shown how the idea of uncontaminated identity is shattered. “The colonizer's cultural meanings are open to transformation by the colonized population” David Huddart (2006) was quoted as saying in explaining about *The Location of Culture* (p. 2). Therefore Bhabha questions the purity of culture and nationhood, he believes the colonized and colonizer's gathering create an element as ‘negotiation’ which is a firm ground for how their interaction lead to structuring identities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 23). Bhabha's insistence on hybridity's ongoing process sheds the light on the fact that how “cultures are the consequence of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities” (Huddart, 2006, p. 4).

One of the neologisms through which Bhabha explicates his theories is ‘beyond’ by which he elucidates ‘border’ as a controversial position in which some are gathered (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). The paradoxical nature of border is in a way that both separates and joins different places. It helps us to revise our present thoughts about history, community and identity. Bhabha then stresses cultural and social differences that enable one to go beyond the fixed groups and categories and bring about fluidity and continuity in the process of cultural formations. Border is one of the noteworthy notions which is required to elucidate other concepts and it can also reveal the menace that is exerted to colonial discourse in the novels. It is owing to ambivalent nature of border that the colonized are to establish their identity, on the other hand the colonizer's identity is threatened. And as Bhabha asserts the real location of culture is this threshold.

The liminal or third space is another key factor in Bhabha's views about culture.



In the article “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” he contends that “it is that third space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew” (Bhabha, 2006, p. 208). They are always in a process of hybridization. He advocates “an international culture, based not on the exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity”. Therefore, “it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between, the space of entre [...] that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Ashcroft al., 2006, p. 209). For Bhabha the encounter always affects both. Bhabha explains that:

Colonialism, with displacements and terrible uncertainties that it brings, is such a radically unsettling “effective experience of marginality” that the colonized subject’s plight can be seen as prefiguring poststructuralist indeterminacy and fragmentation. (Bertens, 2008, p. 166)

Allende’s characters are initially entangled in a liminal space; they find themselves on the border of two cultures, between the culture of homeland and that of the host land. Nevertheless, the interstitiality is not an everlasting condition for the characters and they are inevitably led to hybrid state. Hybridity is indeed the product of cultural exchange through which the characters render mixed identities. For the researcher, Allende’s novels depict characters’ dislocation and unhomed feeling through which the process of self-realization in hybridity and settling the struggle of identity are manifest.

A further key concept in Bhabhaian outlook which is to be sought in Allende’s selected novel is stereotype. As Bhabha (1994) explains and clarifies in *The Location of Culture*, stereotype is a strategy through which the colonizer can justify the ways and behaviors he adopts toward the colonized by labeling them as ‘moralistic and normative’ practices of ‘amelioration’ which is known as the ‘burden’ of the colonizer toward the marginalized population with the aim to civilize them (p. 83). Stereotype is an agency at the service of the colonizer and it is targeted to create ‘separation’ and difference, which is defined as their supremacy over the oppressed. It is through

stereotype that the “royal road to colonial fantasy” is provided for the so-called superior ones, since they pursued to create distance between the colonized and their values so that there will be no threat of closure (p. 73). Stereotype does also render the colonized as an ‘other’ and is “the scene of similar fantasy and defense” (p.75) and “like mirror phase ‘the fullness’ of the stereotype – its image as identity-” Bhabha argues “is always threatened by ‘lack’” (p.77). This lack can refer to “differences of race, color and culture” (p.75). Since the iteration of the stereotypes will result in an uncertainty and anxiety which put the stereotyper into menace.

Another foremost Bhabhaian concept in the selected novel is mimicry through which the colonized manages to undermine the self-confidence and stability of the colonizer’s identity. Mimicry is a distorted way through which the colonized, either out of choice or under coercion, repeats the colonizer’s way and discourse. But this repetition is not ever complete because the colonizer is always afraid of creating a nation that is precisely like them and may undermine the binary opposition between the colonized and the colonizer which is formed by the false and fabricated stereotypes. So the colonizer’s discourse, which is his effective weapon, is less stable and secure than he thinks. This lack of control and dependency are not under the control of, either the colonizer or the colonized. But there is a conscious resistance on the part of the colonized.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This novel, specifically the part which focuses on the Japanese family’s narrative, shows a remarkable switch from “voluntary intercultural contact” to an “involuntary intercultural contact” (Jackson, 2012, p. 212). As Pratt (1992) describes in his “criticism in the contact zone”, intercultural contact is usually accompanied by “asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (212). Therefore involuntary intercultural contact lead to the imposition of meaning and cultural norms of the more powerful group upon the less powerful. (Kramsch, Uryu 2012, p. 212). Japanese interaction with American society used to be a normal and voluntary intercultural contact prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, however drastic changes were conceived subsequent to this assault and the Japanese were affected by unwelcomed transformation in the society, their language and the way they were treated by other citizens. These

changes and alterations are going to be scrutinized through Bhabhaian perspective.

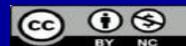
4.1 Mimicry

Mimicry as a “response to the circulation of stereotype” (Huddart, 2006, p. 39) does not stand for servitude or slavery as Bhabha defines, but it is an ambivalent strategy due to its double articulation; it is due to ambivalent characteristic of colonial discourse that mimicry approaches mockery; in this respect, this relationship is made ambivalent and unsettling. Mimicry is an agency which is deployed by the colonized and can be a strategy to exert resistance toward colonial discourse. It is “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). Thus it is the performative aspect of identity to gain inclusion into imperial spaces of the west which is an exaggerated form of imitation that can be both “resemblance and menace” simultaneously (Bhabha 1994, p. 86). It is a menace since it is accompanied by what Bhabha calls “mockery”, and this is something that cannot be disregarded in this novel.

The second generation of the Japanese immigrants had the most troubles adhering to one of the cultures. They were born in the USA but they could barely claim to be American since their fathers and ancestors were Japanese. They endeavored to impersonate diverse American behaviors and manners to gain inclusion. The four children of Fukuda's family were not exempt from such characteristics. They tried to adopt performative strategy to avoid provoking surveillance and gaze. First of all Ichimei could escape the undesirable consequences by mimicking and in fact mocking American pattern. Following their separation, Ichimei and Alma were in contact through letters which were supposed to be written in English language to be monitored by American military. In his letters, Ichimei pretended to be respecting and admiring the predicament in which they were trapped and the way they were treated by Americans. But in fact he strives to distract the Americans by employing their language so that he can emanate the truth through another medium which is not English language but it is painting. “Advised by others more practiced in the art of deception, Ichimei sprinkled his letters with praise for the Americans and patriotic outbursts” (Allende, 2015, p. 111-112). It might be disclosing that he aims to show them how appropriating the colonizer's

language helps the colonized to pretend to be obeying the dominant rules and becoming similar as it appeals to the colonizer, but deep down the colonized can manifest his resistance. The truth could dawn on Alma since “[Ichimei's] illustrations passed through censorship without a hitch, and so Alma was able to learn about the details of his life at Topaz as if she were looking at photographs” (Allende, 2015, p. 112). By using their language, but conveying meaning in some other way, Ichimei aspires to disclose the fact that not only can the language not transfer the real meaning, but it can be a way to deviate the American's concentration from the projected reality. Therefore he can circumvent them by imitating and concurrently mocking their etiquettes. To put it succinctly, Ichimei is questioning the American righteousness which apparently attempts to educate and civilize and control them. He is showing the flaws in American system without drawing their attention. According to Bhabha (1994) “Mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (P. 86) and what Ichimei is doing is to emulate the American's norms or what is renowned as the so-called colonizer's conventions; therefore he is creating resemblance but at the same time he is jeopardizing their discourse, since he is revealing how they brutally treated the marginalized population. Therefore the very employment of English language becomes an emblem of colonial ambivalence that paves the path for mimetic subversion and the susceptibility of colonial discourse to being mocked. In fact this adopted language by Ichimei is the way by which the colonized questions and challenges the fixity and irreducibility of American discourse and it enfeebles the foundations of authority. Moreover, it emancipates the colonized from the yoke of oppression and grant them a mode of resistance against the imperial tyranny. Apart from the aforementioned point, Ichimei is the least likely to appropriate and mimic western manners and be similar to them than his siblings. He is the one who does even travel to Japan.

Megumi, the daughter of this family, started imitating the trends which were found in American vogue magazines and was attracted to “movie idols” news (Allende, 2015, p. 89). Her father was concerned about the children being tempted by western manners but he had to admit that Megumi was about to undergo such drastic changes:



His daughter copied the ridiculous fashions of American girls and in secret read the magazines full of love stories and gossip about movie idols that he had prohibited, but she was a good student and on the surface at least was respectful. (Allende, 2015, p. 89)

Following living in the USA and interaction with other nations, Megumi did even change her religion and turned to Christianity due to some reasons: she wished to study medicine in the USA after war, therefore she attempted to gain more inclusion in American society. She also aspired to marry Boyd Anderson, an American soldier in Topaz Camp with whom she had fallen in love. In addition to Megumi, Charles and James were also eager impersonators and struggled to integrate into the western society and avoid being gazed by the natives as alien. They did not accept their ancestral religion and were absorbed in western culture. They were trying to subsume and blend into the western community so they will not be seen as other anymore; in other words they attempted to change into *us* rather than *them*.

Takao knew that his children were betraying him even over small things: they drank beer until their heads were spinning, they chewed gum like cattle and danced to the frenetic rhythms that were fashionable, with greased hair and two-tone shoes. He was sure Charles and James sought out dark corners where they could fondle girls of dubious virtue [...]. (The Japanese Lover 2015, p 89)

Another item of imitation is the celebration of American Independence day by Japanese residents in Topaz Camp which took place to serve two purposes: first and foremost the Japanese imitated this cultural norm since they were now considered as American-Japanese residents and they were expected to celebrate the July Fourth like millions of other Americans. Furthermore, they did also long to prove their faithfulness to the US government. Based on Huddart's explanations over Bhabha's theories (2006), "To fix one's identity in opposition to racist and colonial discourse is to play by the rules of that discourse" (P. 46). Therefore the Japanese found themselves obliged to impersonate those norms in order to fix an identity. Therefore this imitation is the undermining the colonizer's apparently stable and pure identity and as Bhabha claims anyone who could be almost white but not quite indicates the fact that "no one could ever be white" (Huddart, 2006, P. 51). By analogy it can be deduced that anyone could be American but not quite therefore American identity as the dominant one can

be questioned, thus there is no mere fact of being American or non-American. This apprehension is proven to be more devastating for the dominant identity than for the submissive one.

Unlike his family, Takao Fukuda as the father of the family and one of the thousand Japanese who were exiled in camps, suffered from his children's pliability toward western culture and did not aspire to succumb to American culture. In consequence of involuntary intercultural contact after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese were constrained to conform with American norms to the extent that they could not even hold their own traditional celebrations and customs. He made a huge effort to perpetuate, respect and cherish their own traditions but in some occasions he had to capitulate and assimilated so that he and his family manage to survive. But he was the one who got drawn to the orient culture or his homeland as the result of this third space; the culture to which he was ignorant prior to his migration. Therefore this third space could create a circumstance which beguiled Takao Fukuda to his homeland, however it does not mean he could evade the counter culture and cling to his native traditions, in view of the fact that the nature of the third space does not stand purity. Takao Fukuda did not attempt to mimic American behaviors to represent himself similar to them, he had acknowledged the fact of being other, and in fact he found no interest in denying his past and forming a new identity and history in America. He tried to get away with resemblance, which was highly expected by Americans. He did not fear the colonizer's gaze in contrast to his children.

Mimicry is, as Bhabha argues, a "metonymy" of present which "alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as 'inappropriate' colonial subjects" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126). It is an inevitable aspiration to impersonate the other. The metonymy of presence can be witnessed in Takao Fukuda's emergence as a Japanese in American society. He was a character who found himself more dependent on his own culture in spite of living as an immigrant in the USA, He tried to hide his sense of priority over his tradition and culture though, since he knew it was an unjustifiable deed in Americans' standpoint. As the first generation of the Japanese immigrants, he could not bear his children's adaptation to America's materialistic culture and as a

matter of fact he could not intercept it either. Living far from his native country, Takao Fukuda's passion to his own culture and even those strict traditions from which he had escaped, began appealing to him. On the other hand his children were more interested in western culture.

The process of adoption of divergent identities is indicative of two significant points: on the one hand the migrants' subjectivities are fluid which enables them to reform themselves and be similar to the colonizers or they can exercise this power whenever they were compelled like Ichimei and his father and in other circumstances they can deploy their native identities; on the other hand the enactment and performativity side of identity is emblematic of the fact that western identity can also be contingent, and volatility prone to a huge extent that the Japanese migrants as the marginalized can employ them.

Takao Fukuda did not want to embrace mobility as the "symbol of modernity" but the third space required him to adapt to the new circumstance in order to survive, in other words the third space does not concur with pure identity (Lahiri, 2003, p. 417). According to Shompa Lahiri in her article "Performing Identity" (2003), tendency to change and transformation is emanated from the fact that the "outsider" does wish to present himself as an "insider" and "able to insinuate himself into elite political and social circles" (p. 418). Takao did not seemingly wish to emerge as an insider but on the contrary, his children were more willing to be rendered as a Native American. But the significant point is the idea of camouflage that cannot be denied, as Lacan (1978) explains in 'The line and light':

Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called in itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage ... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare. (p. 99)

This is exactly what the Japanese adopt in spite of living in the USA, being captivated in the camp, living a tough life, going through hard times and being intercepted from speaking their own language in letters. Americans could not have them desert their patriotic devotion; however the Japanese did not express their loyalty to their own country explicitly. They endeavored to seem to be faithful and devoted to American norms and conventions

to settle the differences. They deployed concealment, disguise or what Bhabha (1994) and Lacan (1978) calls "camouflage" (Bhabha, 1994 120-121; Lacan, 1978, p. 99). There is a sense of "civil disobedience within the discipline of civility" which Bhabha (1994) considers as the "signs of spectacular resistance" (p. 121). Therefore the colonized population is not always the compliant and yielding people ready to conform and obey; they can mock the colonizers by their sly yielding and resignation. They can appear in disguise of submission, but deep down their defiance and opposition is manifest.

4.2 Stereotype

Another key notion in Bhabha's theoretical framework is stereotype by which the colonizer introduce the colonized as lazy, stupid, indolent and unstable, whereas he is the superior one with civilized and sophisticated nature. The colonizer aims to "construct the colonized as a population of degenerate types" so that they can rationalize their unjust behavior and lay the foundation of racial system in conjunction with disdainful point of view toward the marginalized population (Bhabha, 1994, p.70). This strategy was adopted by American in *The Japanese Lover* in order to initially differentiate and render the Japanese as other and they do also want to justify the way they exercise power over the Japanese.

Colonial discourse foundation is laid upon distinguishing between the colonizer and the colonized. Through this differences, the American state and armies in the novel can render themselves as the superior race. The first action they take is to separate the Japanese from other residents and assemble them in a remote camp far from other nations and native people and deprive them of any civil rights. The very action of assemblage of the Japanese is on account of "the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, color and culture". The American as the stance of the colonizer strive to undermine the Japanese people's traditions and showcase a false representation of their inferiority and impotence to guarantee the racial difference and present themselves as the civilized ones. According to Bhabha (1994) "disavowal of difference turns the colonial subject into a misfit" that result in a "grotesque mimicry or doubling" which was elucidated earlier. Therefore the Americans sought to create a distance and label the Japanese as uncivilized nation (p. 75). The Japanese were not allowed to get married to other



nations, could not have job or benefit from insurance, they could not even purchase anything in their name. A good illustration is when Takao bought a house but because he could not officially and legally possess it, he had to vest it to David Blasco, his manager. They could not cherish their own religion or traditions and the only celebration the Japanese could openly hold was the July Forth and this participation was to show and prove their allegiance to the American state. They could see “Ancestral traditions began to disappear” and “parents and grandparents saw their authority diminish, couples were trapped in a proximity without intimacy, families began to disintegrate (Allende, 2015, p. 89).

Another noteworthy point in stereotyping is the idea of internalized ideology, which stands for the fact that the Japanese themselves especially the second generations believe in the western strength and power and they barely stand up for their own culture, religion and customs. Even Ichimei depicts American power in his letters and drawings to Alma. The US longs for infusing them with its so-called fixed identity, however Takao does not acknowledge this idea and craves resisting. Megumi had also believed and admitted their inferiority when the reality dawned on her that she cannot marry an American in spite of abolishment of interracial marriage prohibition because she was a Japanese, accordingly she could not even study in a normal university just like other nations or as an American:

The laws prohibiting marriage and cohabitation between races had been abolished in most states, but a relationship like theirs was still considered scandalous; neither of them would have dared tell their parents they had been together for more than three years. (Allende, 2015, p. 144)

She quickly learned that here too, the facts of being a woman and being of Japanese origin were insurmountable obstacles, just as her mentor Frank Delillo had warned her. (Allende, 2015, p. 145)

Another reason she does not consider herself deserved to have social human rights like other races, is her brother, James’ confinement. James was incarcerated because he kept disobeying American guards and ultimately turned down assisting with Americans in responding the “questionnaire” to show their “loyalty” (Allende, 2015, p. 134). Accordingly, Megumi made sure she has no opportunity to be educating in light of what her brother had done.

A few universities [...] did accept a small number of students of Japanese origin, chosen from among the most brilliant in the concentration camps, and these lucky ones could get financial help from the government, but James’s arrest was a black mark against the Fukudas, and so Megumi did not have that option. (Allende, 2015, p.137)

4.3 Unhomeliness

Unhomeliness, according to Ashcroft et al. (2007), is another term to depict “the experience of dislocation” (p. 65). The Heideggerian term *unheimlich* or *unheimlichkeit* was also employed by Bhabha (1994) to explain the “space for the negotiation of identity and history” (p. 198) and it was also sometimes “translated as uncanny or uncanniness” (Ashcroft et al. 2007 p. 65). Following living in a hybridized space and being confronted with the dominant identity and being distant from the native territories, the colonized finds it hard to establish a fixed identity, since neither do they belong to their own culture nor to the colonizer’s. It seems as though they are deserted by both cultures. Therefore adapting and adopting a stable subjectivity is challenging on account of living in a hybrid space and being exposed to the superior culture. Needless to say that unhomeliness is a feeling of unhomed within oneself apart from the physical aspect. The characters of these novel possess unhomed identity in light of the fact that their previously set identity has now overlapped with the new identity and their subjectivities are now intermediary between two cultures.

The initial symptoms of *unheimlich* is witnessed in Alma subsequent to abandoning her parents and homeland, Poland, which was falling down because of war at the age of eight. Having arrived and living in her aunt’s house, the “Sea Cliff mansion” in the US, Alma, from the outset, could see the dissimilarities between her and her cousins, Martha and Sarah, who “lived in such a different world from [her]”. They were mainly “concerned [...] with fashion, parties, and potential boyfriends, that whenever they bumped into her [...] they were startled, as if unable to recall who this little girl was or what she was doing there”. She secluded herself in the closet at first nights and cried, but later she could take refuge to her cousin, Nathaniel and formed a friendly bond with him. Although Alma’s advent in the Sea Cliff mansion created a homogeneous feeling in Nathaniel and he used to “escape” from her and had incongruous feelings about his cousin, but

by the passage of time he “surrendered”. He was the one who “could not ignore her” and apparently Alma was also dependent on him and “followed him around from the very first day, determined to replace her beloved brother, Samuel” and his “gentle disposition” made him the most “approachable” for Alma in Blasco family. Therefore, as the result of dislocation, Alma could find her shelter with Nathaniel to some extent (Allende, 2015, p. 55).

Unheimlichkeit is also seen in the Japanese family's identities. Initially, they used to be like other immigrants from other nations but due to the consequences succeeding the Japanese assault, they were segregated from other nations, were treated cruelly and they were even “more hated than the Germans” (Allende, 2015, p. 146). They were constantly scrutinized and could not educate just like other nations or Americans, at first they could not marry to the people from other nations specifically the Americans. But despite demolishing this law in succeeding years, the mutual feeling of abhorrence between Americans and Japanese still existed. What is striking is that the Japanese did not find any time to settle their identities; in actual fact their identities were perennially oscillating and they were altering from homeliness to unhomeliness. It is owing to unhomed identity that they turn to adapting and adopting colonizer's manners. After Japan's “surrender on August 14, 1945” they were allowed to live in any state in the US but the space of the country at that time was heavily laced with the feeling of revulsion and hatred (Allende, 2015, p. 143). Thus their subjectivities and sense of self were invariably imbued with the feeling of unhomeliness and they did not know where they belong to. This circumstance was mostly unbearable for the first generations of the Japanese; they could not bear assimilating and integrating into American society and being the submissive under their power. They had principled stand toward preserving their own culture. This new approach in serving Americans, conforming to the American authority and being meekly obedient intensified the feeling of unhomeliness.

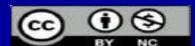
Unhomeliness is a feeling which was evoked in Takao Fukuda more than anybody else particularly in the period they were obliged to live in the camp and he found no affinity to the imposed culture. He was constantly recalling Japan, his religion, the traditions from which he found himself physically distant yet he tried to revive them

in his mind so he could take refuge and retreat there whenever he was conquered by the feeling of unhomeliness and alienation. However this feeling made him lonelier given the fact that he was living in the camp where he could not even enforce those traditions explicitly, but at least this refuge could alleviate his sufferings. That is mainly the reason he is exposed with a floating identity and he does not know whether he belongs to any of the cultures or he is alienated to both of them. Some questions which raise are that if he belongs to the Japanese customs so why he and other thousand Japanese in the USA are being blamed because of their nationalities. At the same time if he is considered as an American citizen since then, so why are they being treated as prisoners? If the USA is meant to be their home, why are they confined in home? Therefore the double notion of prison/home is ascribed to the location they are currently living. It is like a home theoretically due to the fact that they are going to stay there for a long time and they will be accustomed to the environment but at the same time it is a prison in practice since they are constantly being monitored and their entire life, even their letters, photos and relationships are under surveillance.

4.4 Ambivalence

Ambivalence unsettles the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed and makes it fundamentally fluctuating. According to Bill Ashcroft et al. (2007) in *Postcolonial studies: The Key Concepts*, ambivalence is considered as the “unwelcomed aspect of colonial discourse” (p.10). Therefore since the colonial discourse is inherently ambivalent, it can lead to its own downfall. The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is characterized with ambivalence, due to being on the border, in desires among which simultaneous feelings of repulsion and attraction is remarkable and it can be found within the characters of *The Japanese Lover*.

Double feelings of attraction/repulsion is first and foremost attributed to Megumi. She was confined in Topaz camp together with other Japanese, and she was deprived of normal human rights only due to her nationality and was charged with her country's attack to Pearl Harbor. In the meanwhile, she could take up nursing course in that camp and paves the way to fulfill her wish to become a doctor. She did also manage to find the love of her life who was an American soldier. Thus on the one hand, she abhorred American state owing to their



unjust behavior with them, on the other hand she fell in love with one of them and could find peace near him.

Ambivalence can also be imputed with the relationship between Takao Fukuda and his employer David Blasco. In spite of being the employer, David Blasco turned into an apprentice when it came to his favorite practice, gardening. He became a novice and Takao was in the stance of a master. In this respect, assuming that David Blasco is deemed as the superior and Takao who was his worker, as the stance of inferior, their position is reversed and the superior cannot deny his attraction to the weaker one. Therefore this ambivalence is also witnessed in David Blasco's relationship with Takao.

A further noteworthy vacillating and irresolute identity is assigned to Alma; ambivalence is a peculiarity which Alma is renowned for. Neither can one accredit a fixed geographical place to her nor are her life and identity established and stable. She was originally born in Poland but was sent to the USA owing to Poland's downfall in the Second World War and was raised in there. Not only is there ambivalence in her social life as an immigrant but it is also a component in her subjectivity too. This polarization existed in her entire life, first of which is the culture and country she belonged to; she was born and lived in Poland merely eight years, but all the memories of her life there with her family accompanied her everywhere. Nevertheless she spent rest of her life in America and made a life for herself, even then the USA was always considered her second nation and she was an immigrant Jew who had taken refuge there. Apart from fluctuation in her nationality, there was oscillation within her personal life as well. She was in love with two persons, although her type of love was not homogeneous. She did marry Nathaniel, her cousin, yet she preserved Ichimei's love in her heart forever. Nonetheless she could love both of them just similar to an immigrant who feels fidelity with both his mother country and the host. Nathaniel was like a home for her where she could find peace and she was accepted in every circumstance, but Ichimei was like the host country which Alma tries to adapt with and does anything to gain his consent; he is like a desire for her just similar to the desire a colonized feels for the colonizer. This ambivalence is also witness over her old age when she would rather live in a care center, the Lark House despite owning the mansion.

5. Conclusion

So far the concepts of ambivalence, stereotype, mimicry and unhomeliness were explored in Allende's *The Japanese Lover* through Bhabhaian viewpoint and it was tried to show how the immigrants' identities, as the colonized, were contingent and they were trapped in a third space whose hybridity does not allow its residents to assert that they possess a pure self and identity; yet in this process it is not solely the colonizer that exert authority over the permanently-acquiescent colonized. Thus, the traditionally-known polarization of colonized and colonizer is not characterized with purity and the borderline between them is blurred. The idea that the colonized are always submissive is refuted. The colonized can resist and reclaim their identity and mock the so-called colonizer's civil conventions. What is well worth being mentioned is that in a hybridized space, there is not merely a matter of either-or; in fact one who is going to be settled in a third space, cannot choose from two options; this person can neither stick to the native language, tradition and beliefs nor forsake them and begin patronizing the host country in which they reside. In the third space there is a "third choice" that according to Bhabha (1994) is an "ambivalent choice" and that is "camouflage, mimicry, black skins/white masks" (p. 120). Therefore mimicry is a disguise of subjugation that can be a means for survival and settle a contingent identity which the colonized deploys. Thus the colonized reach a liminal identity by going through four stages of ambivalence, stereotype, mimicry and unhomeliness.

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