

READING ISABEL ALLENDE'S *IN THE MIDST OF WINTER* USING BHABHA'S THEORIES OF AMBIVALENCE, MIMICRY AND UNHOMELINESS

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Abstract

This research explores the different aspects of identity seeking and cultural hybridity in terms of post-colonial discourse in various nations in Isabel Allende's *In the Midst of Winter* with a focus on the liminal space. It also exposes the way marginalized groups are influenced ultimately by hybridized space and consequently they possess hybrid and fugitive identities. This study uses Bhabha's theories of ambivalence, mimicry and unhomeliness from his book, *The Location of Culture*. It is revealed through this analysis that the liminal quality which is created as the consequence of colonial discourses will result in creating a third space in which the oppressed ones undergo radical changes in terms of identity, and this transformation leads to them gaining a spectral identity in the liminal space.

Keywords: Isabel Allende, Identity, Ambivalence, Mimicry, Unhomeliness

INTRODUCTION

The novel of *In the Midst of Winter* was published in 2017, and it revolves around three significant characters from three different nations, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala, who are brought together because of a conflict over which they unavoidably share their life story. It begins with a minor traffic accident by Richard Bowmaster; he hits the car of Evelyn Ortega who is a young, undocumented immigrant from Guatemala in the middle of a blizzard in Brooklyn. When Evelyn turns up at the professor's house seeking help, Richard asks his Chilean tenant, Lucia Maraz, for her advice. This event becomes the impetus for an unexpected and moving love story between these two people, Richard and Lucia, who thought they were deep into the winter of their lives. These three very different people are brought together and they ended up sharing their life stories. Richard recalls his life in Brazil with his Brazilian ex-wife, Anita, and how he got his wife and his child, Bibi, killed in an accident. Lucia talks about her familial life in Chile and she explains how she had to abandon the country for a period because it has become apolitically unsafe space which is exacerbated by her brother's political activities. She reminisces her life when she gets back to her country. Evelyn, the Guatemalan girl, describes her escape from Guatemala due to it being unsafe to live in their village, Monja Blanca del Valle. She elucidates on why she had to immigrate to America to live with her mother, who had left Guatemala when Evelyn was a newborn.

In the Midst of Winter depicts the unfair attitude a society might have toward a distinctive idea, person or identity. This uncommon factor is not necessarily due to the different regional spaces they come from, but it can be associated

to a different temporality or historical period. As it can be perceived in the novel, the main characters are undergoing different hybridizing and ambivalent alterations. One of the most significant viewpoints is the attitude American society have toward the immigrant population especially the Latinos. It is generally believed that the age of slavery has ended and racial points of view toward immigrants have eroded. Yet in this very modern age and in this very developed country, there are some refugees and immigrants who must comply with whatever rules and behaviors that are imposed upon them. These behaviors are reminiscent of the unfair and domineering attitude of the white race toward the black race at the apex of the slavery era, with a difference in which the novel has an implicit colonizer who is tyrannizing the subordinate ones and monopolizing all the rights. In this study, Allende's main characters was analyzed using Bhabhaian theories to expose how the identities of the main characters in the novel are prone to instability, yet this very unstable identity can be a means of survival.

FEELING OF UNHOMELINESS

In *In the Midst of Winter* begins in present time of the three characters' lives whose life stories and the tribulation they had been through is narrated throughout the novel. The novel's beginning is in winter and the fierce snowstorm which hits New York is very indicative, since it is in fact the reason why these three characters have come together. All of the main characters in this novel were experiencing the return of their chaotic past at an international scale. They all had been forsaken in a foreign country in which they were brought together owing to comparable feelings and experiences, due to the feeling of unhomeliness. These characters are thought to be scattered, but the commonality of feeling unhomeliness pushes them to create a semi-nation. The space they are left in is not inevitably a geographical one, but it can be of other types like a diverse temporal space, since unhomeliness is "ways of living at home abroad or abroad at home" (Huddart 2006: 53). Therefore, this feeling does not necessarily have to occur only in a foreign country.

Unhomeliness is one neologism which Bhabha deploys in order to depict the ambivalent nature of the third space which is a psychoanalytic terminology borrowed from Freud. From the onset of the novel, the feeling of unhomeliness is vigorously sensed. Based upon Freud, "the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (Freud 2003: 124). Furthermore, the feeling of unhomeliness is "essentially an involuntary recurrence of the old and familiar" (Huddart 2006: 55). Unhomeliness is evoked through "a series of familiar ideas" (Huddart 2006: 53) by which the past and present intrude into each other or it complicates the simple division of self and other and "makes any distinction between the self and other problematic" (Huddart 2006: 67) or the private and public become part of each other (Bhabha 1994: 9). So, these characters are going through a "half-life" in which they are undergoing a "partial presence" (Bhabha 1994: 139) where they try to live a life which is similar to their life back in their own country whether it is their own vernacular territory (country of origin) or the temporal territory, but they fail to replicate it. They attempted to replicate the same thing, but according to Huddart's explanation on Bhabha's theory "this repetition is not identical" (2006: 53). Accordingly, since the power relationship in a colonial space is defined based upon self and other, unhomeliness is scrutinized in this novel.

One of the main characters in this novel is a sixty-three-year-old Chilean woman named Lucia Maraz who is living in New York to embark on a career at New York University upon her friend's invitation, Richard. Following the political tension in Chile, Lucia was compelled to flee to Canada to seek refuge there in the 1980's. She lived in Vancouver for several years, and when the political situation eased in Chile, she returned and got married, but her marriage was unsuccessful and she was abandoned by her husband because of her illness. Being through a lot owing to her divorce and disease in her 60's, she found herself revived again and is now living in the USA. From the commencement of the novel, with the omniscient narrator's description of Lucia's life, the feeling of unhomeliness is felt when the narrator describes and compares Chile's nature with America's. Rarely is Chile confronted with such a snow which paralyzes the city and problematizes communications. In fact, snow has always been "pristine from a distance" where it was not near enough for people to touch, whereas Brooklyn was heavily covered with a "mountain of snow blocking the doorway" (Allende 2017: 1). Considering it as "pristine in a distance", snow has always been a desire with which Lucia had encountered in this city and formerly in Canada, where she used to spend her exile period. At the same time, it can represent the feeling of repugnance which manifests unhomeliness of the space. Therefore, although the snow is the desire she could never experience or attain in Chile, yet she is still defeated by the intensified feeling of unhomeliness, and that is why she starts cooking and calls Richard to accompany her, though he refuses.

"What are you doing?" she asked, trying to conceal her apprehension.

"Playing the piano. Is the noise disturbing you?"

"I can't hear your piano. The only noise down here is the crash of the end of the world. Is this

normal here in Brooklyn?"

"There's bad weather every so often in winter, Lucia."

"I'm scared."

"What of?"

"Just scared, nothing specific. I guess it would be stupid to ask you to come and keep me company for a while. I made a Chilean soup." (Allende 2017: 8-9)

In spite of going through the sense of loneliness and uncanniness, Lucia is inclined towards living her life in another country owing to the fact that she thinks, in her country, "she was condemned to be a lonely old woman besieged by pointless memories; in another country, there could be surprises and opportunities" (Allende 2017: 11). Furthermore, the omniscient point of view reveals the fact that there is not meant to be two counter spaces, one of which is deemed to be the home and the other as the host country and accordingly one feels affinity and belonging in one of them, and homesickness or unhomeliness in another. The point is that one cannot exert a boundary between them and classify them to two distinct groups. Lucia feels lonely even in her own country, but later she seems to be finding love in America. Therefore, the uncanny is not supposed to be negative integrally, but it can be perceived as an opportunity in which one's identity might be problematized and questioned yet it can help re-evaluate it. Another noteworthy point is that, when one feels homesick even in her own country but aspires the challenges and surprises in another country, it is as though the outside and inside are blended and the boundary between them is not clear cut.

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the unhomely be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself [...] in a state of incredulous terror. [...] In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. (Bhabha 1992:141)

Therefore, Homi Bhabha maintains that unhomeliness has nothing to do with homelessness, nor is it necessarily related to a strange place where one is recognized as a stranger and consequently an 'other'. In her 20's, having lived her life in exile in Canada, Lucia managed to make a life for herself, she could learn English, she could find a job and attend university, she could even buy a house there. But even then, at that time she was still immersed in her memories in Chile and ruminated of her hometown as the real home, despite the life she had made in Canada, she did not regard it as a home, yet when she returns to Chile, she perceives that it is far too different from the time she had abandoned it and little could she find the similarities with what she already knew. "The capital, Santiago, had changed so much that" she could not recall "the streets she had grown up in". Even "Their former names" which had been derived "from saints and flowers" was substituted by "those of military men and heroes from past wars" (Allende 2017: 152-153). The appearance of the city had also faced radical changes;

The city gleamed with the cleanliness and order of barracks; the socialist realism murals had disappeared, replaced by white walls and well-tended trees. Parks for children had been created on the banks of the Mapocho River, and no one remembered the garbage or the bodies the river had once carried away. In the center, the gray buildings, the traffic of buses and motorbikes, the drab poverty of office workers, the weary passersby, and the boys juggling at the streetlights to beg a few pesos were in stark contrast to the shopping malls of the rich neighborhoods. (Allende 2017: 153)

Not only was the country physically unrecognizable to her, the morality of society had also altered. The society was split in two groups; "two nations coexisted in the same space: the small, affluent one with cosmopolitan pretensions, and the large one that included everyone else" (Allende 2017: 153). She grasps the fact that there is not such a thing as originality anymore; there is a layer of pretension and ostentation among people.

She found herself as a stranger in her own country "She realized she was a foreigner in her own land, disconnected from the network of social relationships without which almost nothing was possible ... she did not understand the keys or codes", she was also alien to "the sense of humor" and the language which "was peppered with euphemisms and caution". She could not fulfill the desire she formerly had in Canada about her country which had made her to come back to Chile. She was "lost in what remained of a past that did not fit into the bustling present-

day Chile". It was as if time had devoured every possible thing which was related to her past even her feeling and conception; nothing was similar to the feelings she had experienced before. It is well worth mentioning that the interval she lived in, because of which she had to abandon the country, was removed from the country's history and it was as though there was a unanimous yet undeclared pact among people not to remember or talk about it, because "there was still the aftertaste of the censorship of the tough times". In fact, Lucia's past was "erased" on account of the fact that it was part of a "secret history" which nobody was allowed to talk about unless in "euphemism". Nobody dared to reveal any information about this secret history, "No one asked her about the years she had been away, no one wanted to know where she had been or what her life had been like" and it meant Lucia's past and memories were buried, and since memory and past are significant criteria in shaping identity, her identity was problematized (Allende 2017: 154). She was even considered as a fugitive who had forsaken the country when it was hit by the crises.

The feeling of unhomeliness is also found in Richard's life. Richard was from a hybrid family, a Jewish French father and a Portuguese mother, he was born in New York and later for his education, he travelled to Brazil where he fell in love with a girl, named Anita. Having gotten married and had a baby, Richard had to stay in Rio de Janeiro. After losing his daughter, he made his wife follow him back to New York, and since then he lived in Brooklyn. Richard constantly found himself lost in both physical and temporal space. For instance, in the beginning of the novel, when he is taking a route which he had formerly taken several times, "for a minute he thought he was lost" (Allende 2017: 24). It apparently looks as if he thinks he is lost because of the snow and the thick fog, but these emotions are deeply rooted in his own mind; in other words, these feelings are the cause of the thoughts which were embedded in his past. Richard is terrified with being dead or lost and not being found. Richard is similar to a haunted person who is possessed by temporality. It is as if his migration is not physical but it is temporal. Just like a migrant who is in exile and is compelled to live in another place far from his homeland, Richard was expatriated to live in the present time; he was expelled from the past and was coerced to live in another time span. The remarkable point is that one cannot say whether Richard is living in the past time of his life or at the present. There is a third temporal space between past and present where he is trapped involuntarily. According to what Pratt describes in his "Criticism in the Contact Zone", intercultural contact is usually accompanied by "asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (1992: 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: 212). By analogy, this inter-temporal contact will lead to a lopsided power relation, which in this respect the uneven sides are past and present that intrude each other. This space is, according to Bhabha, the third space because of which his life is divided in two parts; the past and the present. Therefore, Richard is unhomed in this both physical and temporal space and he feels alienated or estranged from what was most properly his own. But this alienation can transform into an opportunity in which one can "re-evaluate" his identity (Huddart 2006: 56). According to Huddart, "the uncanny ... opens a space for us to reconsider how we have come to be who we are" and this is exactly what occurs to Richard (2006: 56). Through unhomeliness of his space, he could trace his past and what had eventuated in his present situation. His identity could also be re-evaluated by such characteristics which is not negative.

In fact, the hybridized space which Richard lives in is not necessarily attributed to geographical location; Richard is, in other words, lost in temporality. As it was mentioned earlier the colonized fails to establish a fixed identity living in a hybridized space and particularly when being distant from the native territories. This person does not belong to the new space nor is, he accepted in his home space anymore. This is exactly what has happened to Richard; he is misplaced in time; he lives in the present but is constantly absorbed in the past. In other words, Richard is neither connected to his past anymore nor can he find any connection with the present time of his life. It is as if he had been deserted by both intervals and he cannot cling to any of them. Even when the narrator is describing Richard's life, his life began from the present time and in some parts, it was twisted with the past. Unlike Lucia and Evelyn's life stories which is entirely concentrated in the past and it reached the present time, Richard's life story was an amalgamation of present and past. Some fragments were related to current affairs and what he did at the present, some were concerned with two months ago when he had invited Lucia to New York University for a speech. Among these bewildering time losses, narration was abruptly switched to Richard's affair with a woman named Susan when he was married to his former wife, Anita. By and large, there was not a clear-cut borderline between these temporalities. In comparison with Lucia and Evelyn's life that one could obviously find out which parts were attributed to their present and which were left behind in their past, Richard's story was not in that way. In fact, Richard's hybridity was not peculiar to the location but it was rooted in temporality. Therefore, he is caught in a space between the past and present, with neither of which he can find any association.

FUNCTION OF MIMICRY IN RE-ESTABLISHING IDENTITY

Mimicry as the performative aspect of identity is an agency to gain inclusion into an alienated space with the aim of settling identity. According to Bhabha, mimicry "represents an ironic compromise" and is a strategy which shows the "desire for a reformed, recognizable 'other'". Bhabha also contends that this performative strategy must constantly "produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" to be effective. Therefore, it resembles the so-called authentic source of imitation but not quite; consequently, ambivalence is instrumental to mimicry. Mimicry is supposed to be a means of servitude and inferiority but the "mockery" which ensues from it is notable. Consequently, the colonizer's purposes which include the "civilizing mission" and "reforming" or "controlling" are threatened by mimicry. The process is meant to be an imitation but it can result in "mockery" instead. This is the main reason which leads to the ambivalent characteristic of mimicry; "almost the same but not quite" which stands for the fact that the colonial subject is neither the person he once was, nor is he similar or adoptive of the totality of the colonizer's values. That is why the colonized gains a "partial presence" which fuels uncertainty. What Bhabha maintains is "the source of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha 1994: 86).

Camouflage is one of the results of mimicry, and mimicry is a way to circumvent the dominant identity. It is explicitly shown in the novel that being white or American stands for authenticity and it creates a boundary which determines those activities conducted by the white are considered legitimate, but the same tasks embarked on by non-white or non-Americans as 'others' are considered illegitimate. In one part of the story, being white is deployed as a means or weapon which is, based upon what Bhabha contends, a camouflage with the aim of bypassing the dominant identity and struggling against it. Thus, the migrants can easily make their target meet through disguise.

Therefore, being white could "secure the boundary of the home" which can "mask" people "in their revolutionary activity" (Bhabha 1994: 63). When these three characters wanted to transfer Catherine's body to the hut in the midst of a deserted jungle, Lucia and Richard were arguing over the issue of who should drive the Lexus which contained the dead body. Lucia initially turned it down due to her anxiety. Evelyn could not drive either because she was an "undocumented immigrant" (Allende 2017: 103). Only by Richard driving the Lexus could they be safe, since as Lucia says, "you are a white Male, [therefore,] no cop is going to ask for your document" (Allende 2017: 121). They are aware that they might be facing complications if they drove the car owing to their different appearances apart from being female.

Thus, by employing such a strategy, they attempted to circumvent the racial American laws to get their task done without attracting much attention. In fact, they tried to attain their goal by ridiculing their own identity through deploying the fact that white men are the superior race. In other words, in American there is assurance and confidence in the white to an extent that "even if a human foot [of a dead body] is sticking out of the trunk", police do not pay much attention (Allende 2017: 121). It might sound like exaggeration, but Allende endeavors to question and challenge this kind of system and mindset in which huge transgressions and disasters might occur, and how the inferior race can only exert their contestation and protest by adopting and emulating the superior race.

A further illustration of mimicry or adopting and adapting is about Richard and his life in Brazil when he strives to assimilate into Brazilian society and absorb in their values and in the vibrant life of Brazilians in order to gain inclusion. Therefore, he starts a life which is teeming with drinking, dancing, spending nights in clubs and bars. He even decided to learn dancing when he met Anita, in order to get to know her better and he fell in love with her and her dancing and eventually married her. They had a daughter, Bibi and a son who passed away a month after he was born.

The fact is that the very assimilation resulted in catastrophe not only for Richard but mostly for his in-laws who were Brazilian. Richard became so absorbed in regalement that he withdrew from his family. He tried to adopt Brazilian demeanor in encountering his predicaments. When their new born son died and Anita retreated in her loneliness, Richard started spending most of his time in bars and getting drunk, he even started an extramarital affair and spent most of the nights out of the house, and he returned home in the mornings usually not knowing where he spent his previous night. Eventually, one morning when he had returned home drunk and semi-conscious, he ran over his daughter by car and got her killed. After that his wife became acutely depressed and ultimately committed suicide. Therefore, this dominant identity which had gotten Richard to gain inclusion was first and foremost an impersonation which was similar to the authentic one but not entirely and causing harm to the dominant one (Bhabha 1994: 86).

An additional notable point of mimicry is in Evelyn's life in which mimicry is a means of survival and its deficiency corresponds to death. Therefore, mimicry is a strategy which can grant them life or death. When crossing the borders of Mexico, Evelyn and her companions must imitate Mexican language so that they can be considered as

bona fide citizens and they manage to not arouse any suspicion. At the same time, it reveals the fact that they are deploying mimicry as a means to both endure the situation and also mock the Mexican police and superior ones to permit them to cross the borders. Evelyn and her companions had to learn the "Mexican national anthem and some commonly used words that were different in two countries; this would help them pass as authentic Mexican" (Allende 2017: 90). Even their clothes had to be in a way that does not represent any variety or diversity. The "coyote" had told them "to dress in their best outfits and to wear shoes or sneakers rather than flip-flops, as it would make them look less suspicious" (Allende 2017:91). Their outfit was to be an emulation of noble people, thus they had to adopt mimicry to get their crossing done without discomfort. Hence, in order to be admitted in a new gathering all their demeanors had to be similar to the authoritative one and they could not possess their own formerly-shaped identity. Consequently, it does also disclose the extent an identity can be shaky and unsettled which can easily adjust to a new circumstance; they can and should be able to have a floating identity in fleeing, to the point that migrants and refugees had to even hide inside the tombs in a cemetery. In fact, it shows how these immigrants' identities are meant to be a volatile and fluctuating one; in order to survive, they have to be in disguise of death although they are not dead. In other words, they are neither alive nor dead; they are caught between them and they have to employ ghost-like identity to endure.

They passed a cemetery ... then suddenly they heard the hiss of a train getting ready to set off, and the burial ground came to life as dozens of migrants who had been hiding there emerged. Adults and children appeared from among the tombs and bushes and started to run, jumping on stepping stones across the filthy water of a sewage canal, desperate to reach the railcars. Berto explained that the train was known as the Beast, the Iron Worm, or the Train of Death, and that some migrants would have to ride thirty or more such trains to cross Mexico. (Allende 2017: 124)

Therefore, the notion of instability and inconsistency is central in this novel and one cannot expect steadiness in the characters' identities. This story is demonstrating how stability is fatal and life flows in movement and is ever changing. Even the birds "who had forgotten to migrate" and were "fooled" by the devastating weather condition, were killed, therefore fixity is even lethal for animals (Allende 2017: 7). Lucia was the one who not only was aware of this fact but she also appreciated it; she knew that "if she had any attraction, it lay in movement". She even hated the mirror because her image on the mirror was just like "photographs", since her image on the mirror and photographs "both showed her immobile" (Allende 2017: 12).

INSTABILITY AND AMBIVALENCE

Lucia is a character who seemed to be living in ambivalence all her life between changes and oppositions. First and foremost are her parents who were entirely different and Lucia did not know which side she belonged to. Her mother was a serious woman whereas her father was a laidback man. Losing her father in young age, Lucia was always obsessed with him and his absence, and knowing him was like a "locked room" which she did not know what might be found behind it (Allende 2017: 54). As it is written in the novel, "it was as if he had never existed, although the idea of a father continued to float like a mist around his two children" (Allende 2017: 51). In fact, she was never allowed to know him until her mother was dying, it was due to her mother's hatred toward him that Lucia and her brother were entangled in a dilemma and they had ambivalent feelings toward him. Aside from internal ambivalent feelings, there was also an upheaval in her country which resulted in Salvador Allende's suicide and Pinochet's domination in Chile. Lucia could see her mother and other people seem to be euphoric but she could not deny the fact that she was concerned about her brother Enrique who was one of the guerillas supporting Salvador Allende whose government had just been sabotaged. Despite these inconsistencies in her life, Lucia seemed to be embracing a life teeming with ups and downs.

Richard was a character who, unlike Lucia, was tied to tranquility and did not enjoy any forms of change; he preferred living in a "perfectly controlled environment where there were no surprises or upheavals". It is worth mentioning that this attitude toward instability was in fact a change from his past behavior when he had experienced "few adventures", therefore in spite of his resistance to alteration, there is still a sense of change in un-changeability and fixity (Allende 2017: 25). Yet, in fact, this state of his life was necessary for the forthcoming revelation he will be undergoing, when he admits his past with all the adverse events, and embraces his new life and falls in love with Lucia.

Just like a ghost who is excluded from both the living side and the dead, Richard was formerly excluded from every possible side. During his married life in Brazil, he was constantly ignored by his in-laws and he was not allowed to settle the problems with his wife on his own. Sometimes he doubted his existence because he thought he was imperceptible and invisible, he was like a phantom, an example of which is that Richard and Anita used to spend their time listening to music and dancing in the bars, Richard could realize how Anita is the center of men's attention "whether it was because they recognized the queen of the Anita Farinha Academy or simply out of admiration or desire", that is why he had to give way to those "who were lighter on their feet" and that is when he had to "retreat to drink at their table and watch her tenderly, vaguely wondering about his existence" (Allende 2017: 189).

By the passage of time, when Anita was trying to have her second child, she underwent some miscarriages, yet eventually they could have a son who passed away when he was one month old. That was when she succumbed to depression and their problems began. Richard did not want to share his problems with his father in New York. At the same time Anita's family did not allow him to settle the problems or alleviate his wife's pain and suffering. He was "excluded" from the "deep, dark sorrow, an unfathomable cavern" that Anita had fallen in (Allende 2017: 190). He did not belong to any world, he was neither alive nor dead, neither American nor Brazilian, neither single nor married. In fact, this hybrid identity forms his entire life from the age of thirty-five to sixty and owing to this hybridity, he was forced to choose and cling to one side. He decided to be single, American and not to possess particular characteristics such as negligence. During his life in Brazil, due to being regarded as a stranger, Richard was made to find tranquility in drinking and spending nights in vibrant clubs and bars. One morning, being intoxicated from all that he had drunk the previous night, he rammed his daughter when he was trying to park his car in the yard and got her killed, since then he accused himself of "negligence: the word still made him shudder" (Allende 2017: 269). Therefore, this ghost-like and ambivalent subjectivity determined his fate and future life.

A further focal point of ambivalence in the novel is Evelyn and her family who are attributed with hybridity. Evelyn has a hybrid identity due to her dislocation in different countries. She was born and raised in Guatemala but she was compelled to immigrate to America through Mexico to live with her mother and escape from the predicament she had been entangled in. Prior to her abandonment, she seemed to have been living in interstitiality in several different cultural context. On the one hand, she was not allowed to talk to or about her brother, Gregorio, in light of the fact that he had joined one of the most dangerous gangs in Guatemala known as MS-13, and at the same time, her grandma, Concepcion, had forbidden any contact with Gregorio. Concepcion was believed to have been a nice and decent woman who was respected by Father Benito, the priest in the city, and she looked after her grandchildren after their mother's abandonment and she truly loved Evelyn. Therefore, she had been caught in a dilemma, since she loved her grandmother and she had to obey what she said while she had a "blood tie" to her delinquent brother and she felt a "combination of fear and admiration" toward him (Allende 2017: 45).

Following her migration to North America, she went to stay with her mother and step father in Chicago. Evelyn did not have any I.D. card there and the American court had not informed her of her status. Her mother was quite sure that her file must have been lost by that time. She had also lost her birth certificate and all document which was a proof of her nationality. What is noteworthy, is this incident may well indicate the fact that not only has she lost the physical document and papers to proof her identity but she is also undergoing a process of losing her formerly-shaped identity. She lived in Chicago like a ghost and could finish her high school but she did not have any official document "without anyone asking to see any proof of who she was" (Allende 2017: 199). The loss of documentation can metaphorically convey the fact of how a typical migrant's identity can be lost in the process of migration.

Living in Guatemala, Evelyn's family was constantly helped by a priest whose name was Father Benito. Father Benito's dislocation was also noteworthy. He was a Jesuit and had seen a lot of the world, one of which was Guatemala. He was a Basque, which is indicative of his nationality. Since Basque is an area on the border of France and Spain whose people consider themselves as a separate nation that does not belong to either France or Spain. Father Benito was proud of this fact but no one in Guatemala seemed to care and "appreciate" (Allende 2017: 37). In spite of being a foreigner, he truly loved Guatemala particularly the village of Monja Blanca del Valle where Evelyn was born and raised. He took a lot of effort for the villagers' well-being and had devoted his life and effort to help them. Although "The villagers accepted him as one of their own, because he truly was" (Allende 2017: 38), but there were times when someone would "suggest that if he did not like Guatemala he should go back to his own country" particularly when he was complaining about the "delinquency" and high crime rate in the country (Allende 2017: 40). The fact that he was considered as an 'other' cannot be denied; but the fact of otherness is not merely peculiar to being a foreigner in an alien land; he was truly different from other people although he was not an apathetic person about people's suffering. Therefore, the key point is that, in spite of having no fixed identity which can be attributed to a firm locational region, Father Benito is more caring and benevolent than the endemic habitants. He helped a lot of children

and provided them with educational supplies. He was the one who saved Evelyn's life. This characteristic made him distinct from other indigenous people.

CONCLUSION

This research applied Homi K Bhabha's postcolonial theories and identity formation on Isabel Allende's *In the Midst of Winter*. The crucial notions of Bhabha's postcolonial theory, which was deployed in this study, are mimicry, uncanny and ambivalence. These notions which were from Bhabha's collection of articles, *The Location of Culture* were presented in order to manifest fluidity and unfixity of identity and also to show that formation of identity is dependent on historical, temporal and cultural context that a subject is placed in. All these notions were presented to reveal the fact that identity is not a fixed entity, which is established once and not bound to alter whatsoever. But diasporic identities can be defined as "those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and differences" (Hall 1990: 235). The article 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. The idea that the colonized are always submissive is refuted by exposing how the immigrants adopt mimicry as a weapon.

The issue worth consideration in this novel is the way the characters can resist the colonizing authority by challenging and questioning the racial and social stereotyping which is manifested as a compelling justification by the colonizer to practice its power. However, Bhabha cleverly pinpoints the ambivalence and the anxiety that exist within the colonial power due to the very fact that they can apply counter-strategies to resist the fixity of stereotypes. In *In the Midst of Winter*, the main characters, particularly Lucia grow into a paradigm of characters who swims against the tide and do not adhere to the established norms by resisting the mocking as a consequent of her mimicry. They might have shown they were obeying, but in fact they were adopting a disguise to accomplish what they intended to. Mimicry demonstrated that these immigrants are not supposed to maintain their previously-shaped identity, nor can they be precisely similar to the Americans. So, they appropriate this agency to deride the Americans. Besides, the strategy of mimicry was adopted to show that the effort of adapting and adjusting in a new society, which is to gain inclusion, does not always benefit the colonizer or the dominant identity, but it was employed as a weapon to demonstrate resistance which did more harm than good to the marginalizer. This event took place in Richard's life, when he was married to Anita, a Brazilian girl. Richard tried to copy Brazilian lifestyle to gain inclusion among them, but it led to a disastrous ending.

The notion of uncanny was deployed in these analyses in two ways: the first is that uncanny can be regarded as a blend of postcolonialism and psychoanalysis which highlights the connection between the outward and internal feelings, when faded but hunting memories and feelings of colonized subjects' abandoned past are brought to surface by external incidents in the outside world. That is precisely what happened to Richard who was deserted from his past life and found himself alienated and dislocated in the present time of his life. A further employment of uncanny was associated with physical sense of home which Lucia was dealing with. During her asylum in Canada she was constantly longing for returning to her own country. But the epiphany happened when she was back in Chile and saw that not only had the country undergone huge physical change but even people's behavior and humor were not what she reminisced. Therefore, she found herself alienated, and lonely like a stranger even in her home and it was discussed that the feelings of unhomeliness and strangeness are not necessarily the result of being away from one's homeland. In Lucia's case, even in her own country of origin and among her fellow people she felt isolated.

All these incidents were occurring in ambivalent circumstances. They were in constant instability because of the liminal space they were entangled in. They did not know which side they belonged to. This ambivalence is central in mimicry because these characters were neither themselves with their formerly-shaped identity nor were they associated with the imitated identity. Ambivalence was also peculiar to uncanny particularly in those situations when Lucia and Richard, perceived that not only did they not belong to the foreign space but they were even deserted from their own home space. All in all, the characters possess ambivalent life and an irresolute identity, Richard's past life was overflowing with such ambivalence; he was married, though he was not allowed to have any control over his life. He tried to be similar to Brazilians, yet he was always regarded as a foreigner. One significant issue to take into consideration is how he was lost between the past and present time of his life; there was not a clear-cut borderline between his memories and his present life and his memories constantly intruded into his life and haunted him. Thus, prior to getting involved with Lucia, he was like a ghost whose presence was doubted. Thus, ambivalence is embedded

in these characters' lives and consequently it can be attributed to their subjectivities, given that they are dealing with ambivalence in every moment and part of their lives.

These analyses were carried out with the aim of presenting the fact that how these oppressed nations or individuals can establish new identities according to what they had been through so far in their dislocation. Identity is shaped and reshaped in different situations and this re-establishing is actually beneficial, since if it was fixed, these characters would not be able to adopt and adapt in their new lives. Therefore, the liminal space does not comply with stability, fixity and immutability. It requires volatility. Thus, neither of Allende's characters in this novel will remain stagnant in the interstitial and hybridized state forever. The narration of *In the Midst of Winter* is from the viewpoint of the oppressed and marginalized people who voluntarily or involuntarily have to stay in a space which is not theirs. They inevitably have to embrace the changes and conform to the new situation by pulling free from the so-called stereotypes and traditional viewpoint about their capitulation and submission. Some of these characters, like Evelyn, are coerced to reshape and reestablish their identities owing to various incidents in their lives, some of which are individual and make them relocate with some external consequences. The main male character in this novel, Richard, who strived to maintain his predetermined subjectivity, had to surrender toward the fixity and engage in embracing a new self. He initially used to show no tendency toward change, but at last he had to admit to discover a new identity and exchange the old one with a new subjectivity. Unlike Richard, the female protagonist of the novel Lucia was the one who started walking in the path of embracing different roles and filling contradictory positions based on the events which had occurred in her life. It is well worth consideration that she refuses to maintain any tendency to fixity. It is this character whose role is so significant that the novel begins and ends with her. Lucia is so influential that she can exert her influence on other characters and impress them. This quality is mainly due to the fact that she willingly and eagerly takes on new selves in her life and she was not defeated by uncertainty and the sense of un-belonging in foreign lands. It does not stand for the fact that she did not undergo the feeling of strangeness, but her domestic internal world was invaded by the public external world, yet the point is that she and her identity were so flexible that she could successfully go through this predicament and her ceaseless physical and mental movement can metaphorically imply the "open-ended process of identity formation" (Shirdelpour 2013: 109). That is why she deserves to be the protagonist of the novel. In fact, she was affected by spectral identities like other characters but she was the survivor of her migratory and spectral identities.

The last issue worth taking into consideration is that in a hybridized space, there is not merely a matter of either-or; in fact one who is settled in a liminal 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 countries language and values in which they reside. In the third space there is a "third choice" and according to Bhabha it is an "ambivalent choice" and that employs "camouflage, mimicry, black skins/white masks" (1994: 120). The point is that immigrants are stricken with shattered identity and they do not own their supposed pre-given identity. They are not accepted in their cultures anymore, nor are they regarded to hold the host cultural identity. Hence, the immigrants can resolve their identities but is a contingent one, a liminal identity by going through three stages of ambivalence, mimicry and unhomeliness.

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Endnote

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