

## **Representing Post-Colonialism through Visual Arts: From Bhabha to Kress and Van Leeuwen**

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### ***Abstract***

This article expounds upon two different theoretical frameworks, post-colonialism and semiotics, with the purpose of creating a bridge between the two. For the analysis of literary post-colonial verbal texts, Bhabha's proposed notions work as proper and efficient tools. However, not all literary works are limited to a verbal text; they can contain a visual discourse as well. In addition, the graphological and pictorial representations on the cover of books are also involved in the process of reading even before the reader engages with the verbal text. Therefore, visual illustrations can be considered as a second medium for delivering the concept. Hence, a need for a tool that can assist Bhabha's post-colonial notions be applicable on pictorial inclinations rises up. This article is a sematic theoretical contribution that tries to fill this gap through creating a link between Bhabha's ideas (on the verbal level) with visual semiotics. For this aim, Kress and Van Leeuwen's proposed grammar of visual design seems to be an appropriate resource to show how visual arts can be investigated as post-colonial discourse.

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This interdisciplinary study will discuss how semiotics and post-colonial theories could benefit from each other and work harmoniously when applied on both the verbal and visual texts with the help of a comparative literary criticism that paves the way for further all-inclusive analyses of discourse in literary works. This article is a theoretical contribution that strived to add to the realm of comparative literary criticism by linking visual arts to post-colonialism.

### **Key words**

Inter Disciplinary Studies, Comparative Literary Criticism, Bhabha's Post-colonialism, Kress and Van Leeuwen's Grammar of Reading Images.

### **Introduction**

Homi k. Bhabha elaborates on his post-colonial theories in his book *Location of Culture* first published in 1994. With the belief that theory itself can contribute to practical political change, Bhabha starts rethinking and negating questions of social agency and polarization of the world into the binary opposition of the self and other (colonizer/colonized). Bhabha attempts to provide a theory of cultural hybridity by deploying some concepts such as stereotype, mimicry, ambivalence, agency, and third space arguing that cultural production is most productive when the previous fixed assumptions are destroyed to be reconstructed again. Scholars have benefitted from Bhabha's perceptions through years; there are books published with the purpose of elucidating his theories (Huddart, 2006). Many researchers have employed Bhabha's key concepts to base their studies on in the realm of post-colonialism such as Masschelein (2003), Smith (2004), Nyman (2007), Taylor (2007), Muñoz-Larrondo (2008), Frenkel (2008), Matsuura (2009), Paudyal (2010), Javan Mowlai (2012), Salarvand (2013), Shirdelpour (2013), Shojaan (2013), Harper (2014), Barzanji (2015), and Dowlatyari (2016).

For the analysis of literary post-colonial verbal texts, Bhabha's proposed notions work as proper and efficient tools. However, not all literary works and masterpieces belonging to post-colonial genre are limited to a verbal discourse; illustrated editions of classic literature such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945), works belonging to fantasy genre such as Rowling's popular *Harry Potter*

series (1997-2007), or best-seller literature written for young adult and children such as Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008), or Sharmat's *Nate the Great* series (1972-1998), etc. all contain a visual discourse as well. In addition, every book has a book cover that contains graphological and pictorial representations that are involved in the process of reading even before the reader engages with the verbal text; with their images, they deliver a fleeting first impression of what the book may contain (Gupta, 2003). "Several articles have been written outlining the various roles of illustrations" (Houghton & Willows, 1987, p. 90). They view "illustrations as a means of dressing up books, making the page easier on the eye, making reading pleasant and inviting, assisting the author to 'spin the magic;' and providing resting points within lengthy text" (Houghton & Willows, 1987, p. 90). In short, illustrations exist to support, clarify, complement, and show what the text is about; therefore, they can be considered as a second medium for delivering and representing the concept (Houghton & Willows, 1987, p. 91). Hence, a need for a tool that can assist Bhabha's notions be applicable on post-colonial pictorial inclinations rises up. This article is a semiotic theoretical contribution that tries to fill this gap through creating a link between Bhabha's ideas (on the verbal level) with visual semiotics. For this aim, Kress and Van Leeuwen's proposed grammar of visual design seems to be an appropriate resource.

In the following sections, first, the article efforts to expound upon Bhabha's key concepts namely stereotype, mimicry, hybridity, ambivalence, agency, and third space to show how he pinpoints marginal states within post-colonial literary texts on the verbal level. Then, the study debates the key concepts of the semiotics proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen. Their "pictorial semiotics is not a purely textual approach but a context-based analysis of visual texts" (Atashi, 2013, p. 30) which makes it very suitable for sustaining the overall aim of this interdisciplinary study as to adjoin post-colonialism to visual arts in order to make it applicable on pictorial demonstrations. This study will discuss how semiotics and post-colonial theories could benefit from each other and work harmoniously when applied on both the verbal and visual texts with the help of a comparative literary criticism that pays the way for further all-inclusive analyses of discourse in literary works.

### **The Literature of the Margin: Bhabha's Post-colonialism**

Frenkel (2008) argued that for Homi K. Bhabha post-colonialism is not equal to after colonialism but “it refers to the assumptions behind the ideological discourses of colonialism” (p. 925). In his proposed theories, Bhabha (1994), criticizes the mimetic logic of the colonial discourse and discusses the hidden ideologies behind the seemingly true and realistic description of the other. Bhabha (1990) endorses that the power relations shape the image making and representation of self and other. He tries to revise the aim of post-colonial criticism by declaring that the firm modernist discourse is troubled by ambivalence. Colonial logic, the binary of the developed/underdeveloped, is constantly reiterated and the repetition of it strengthens its validation; however, “the postcolonial critic must strike a change and reveal the homogenizing ideology behind what is put forth as the truth” (Atashi, 2013, p. 35). They should resist the homogenizing processes and be concerned with the discrepancy between the taught and the practiced.

Huddart (2006) explains that Bhabha tries to recognize both the colonized and the colonizer. He claims that the in the colonial discourse the colonized is looked upon as the stranger other who is yet utterly visible and knowable (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 70-71). Huddart (2006) discusses that for Bhabha the relation between colonized and colonizers cause the latter to be alienated from its true self and identity. For Bhabha colonial discourse is not simply the colonizer's discourse for it unavoidably pulls “the colonized into its circulations of identification and disavowal” (Huddart, 2006, p. 44). Some concepts of Bhabha's postcolonial theory including of hybridity, mimicry, stereotype, ambivalence, agency, and third space are going to be applied as the tools in the analysis of marginality depictions in this article; therefore, further amplification of them is required.

### **Hybridity**

Bhabha (1994) with the help of some of his concepts tries to negate the process of polarization of the world into self and other. He puts emphasis on the 'hybridity' of cultures, which refers to their impurity as they are not discrete phenomena; according to Bhabha cultures always interact with one another, and their communication results in cultural mixed-ness (Huddart, 2006, p. 4). Hybridity reveals that “culture is an arena of struggle, where self is played off against the purportedly other” (Smith, 2004, p. 252). For Bhabha hybridity happens when a dominant

discourse becomes impure as a result of the invasion of a minority (Matsuura, 2009). “The hybrid is a product of colonial culture’s inability to replicate itself in a monolithic and homogeneous manner” (Muñoz-Larrondo, 2008, p. 15).

According to Bhabha (1994) discrimination is dependent on the process of splitting as the condition of subjection; “a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different -a mutation, a hybrid” (p. 111). Hybridity is created when two cultures confront in the ‘third space’ to reconstruct a new identity (Javan Mowlai, 2012, p. 35) which is “neither the one nor the other” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 53). Though hybridity is created in the dominant discourse by the oppressors, nonetheless, it can diminish the dominant’s stability because of the rules of recognition (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 114). Sometimes hybridity is used to personify the monstrosity of a character with multiple races (Harper, 2014, p. 5).

Bhabha’s proposed theories are concerned with more than the simple domination of a colonizer over colonized. He tries to bring to focus those unexpected forms of the colonized’s resistance that result to the unexpected anxieties of the colonizer despite his obvious mastery. Bhabha achieves this aim by elaborating on the circulation of the stereotypes in the colonial discourse for the reason that in this phenomenon both the colonizer and the colonized play a part (Huddart, 2006, p. 5).

### **Stereotype**

In colonial discourse, the phenomenon of stereotype is circulated thorough both the colonizer and the colonized (Atashi, 2013). According to Bhabha (1994), the self tries to take control over the other with the help of stereotypical knowledge in the racist stereotypical discourse; the other is acknowledged as the inferior, both racially and scientifically, and the self is acknowledged as the superior who has the burden of governing the inferior on his shoulder. Bhabha believes that the other is not essentially inferior, but is “constructed, defined and redefined as being so” by the prejudicial and discriminatory assumptions of political control (Atashi, 2013, p. 38). To him, stereotypes are not a mere simplification of the given facts, but are a false representation of a reality (Lateef, 2017, p. 43).

Racist stereotypical discourse, in its colonial moment, inscribes a form of governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power. Some of its practices recognize the difference of race, culture and history as elaborated by stereotypical knowledges, racial theories, administrative colonial experience, and on that basis institutionalize a range of political and cultural ideologies that are prejudicial, discriminatory, vestigial, archaic, 'mythical', and, crucially, are recognized as being so. By 'knowing' the native population in these terms, discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control are considered appropriate. The colonized population is then deemed to be both the cause and effect of the system, imprisoned in the circle of interpretation. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 83)

The colonizer employs the strategies of hierarchization and marginalization to justify the exploitation of colonized people (Shirdelpour, 2013, p. 39). Colonizer iterates the supposed inferiority of the colonized through the stereotypes that seem to be stable; however, these stereotypes are not as stable as they appear to be and, according to Bhabha, are anxious colonial knowledge (Huddart, 2006, p. 24).

Bhabha (1994) debates that colonizer justifies its dominance by considering the binary opposition of self and other as fixed. However, in reality this fixed assumption is destabilized by the different culture and races that exist within each of the two categories (Loomba 2005, p. 90). Bhabha recognizes stereotype as an “ambivalent mode of knowledge and power” “that must be anxiously repeated” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). He asserts that dependence on stereotype as “offering, at any one time, a secure point of identification” leads to the negligence of the stereotyped character’s peculiar own sense of identity and self (Bhabha, 1994, p. 69).

Bhabha (1994) claims that the most important and central ideology behind the construction of otherness relies mainly on the concept of fixity. According to him, colonial discourse sees “the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 70). Bhabha recommends that every time anyone encounters a stereotype, that person has better to “look at it afresh, as a singular instance rather than just another example of general

patterns that are so easily dismissed” (Huddart, 2004, p. 26). Nonetheless, Bhabha presents his notion of mimicry as a response to the colonial discourse’s stereotypes.

### **Mimicry**

Bhabha tries to focus on the anxiety that is created by the colonized’s stereotypical representation believing that this anxiety can provide instances of resistance for colonized population (Huddart, 2006, p. 39). He considers mimicry as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies” of resistance in the colonial discourse (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126). Huddart (2006) states that for Bhabha mimicry is not just an imitation; it is “an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas” of the colonizer (p. 39) that causes the colonized to be “almost the same but not quite” (Bhabha, 1984, p. 126).

According to Frenkel (2008), for Bhabha, mimicry is a twofold strategy that forms similarities between colonized and colonizer, making the unfamiliar colonized familiar as to be controlled better by the colonizer (p. 926). More to that, by highlighting the differences between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized, mimicry marks the privileges of the first and forces the latter to import the superior culture “in order to become better [...] so the colonized can better serve the needs of the colonizer” (p. 926).

Colonizers always tend to highlight and preserve their difference from the colonized group. (Lateef, 2017, p. 34). The colonizers stereotype the colonized as inferior and create this desire in colonized population to internalize the superior’s manners and imitate their ways and values; however, for Bhabha mimicry is not a mere imitation of or assimilation to the dominant culture for the fact that the colonized’s imitation is not a precise copy -a mockery- and causes a split in the colonizer’s domination (Barzanji, 2015).

According to Hawley (2001) “the closer the mimic man resembles the colonizer, the greater the potential for a transgression of authority” (p. 62); this could refer to the menace that exists within the heart of the colonizer as the colonized subject, not quite precisely, misrepresents the colonizer’s identity while he finds traces of himself in the colonized (Barzanji, 2015). Thus, mimicry results in the colonized’s double consciousness which is perceiving the world in a way that is divided between two opposing cultures of the colonizer and

the local community (Tyson, 2006, p. 421); this state of in-betweenness leads to the emergence of the feelings of ambivalence in the hybrid identities.

### **Ambivalence**

Ambivalence is a significant term for Bhabha in comprehending the anxiety that is embedded in the colonial discourse. It confirms the fact that the colonized and the colonizer are not totally divided from each other (Salarvand, 2013, p. 28). Ambivalence produces a slippage that transforms “into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence” meaning incomplete (Bhabha, 1984, p. 127). Colonial discourse presents colonized with an adored description of colonizer; however, when the colonized subject contemplates the violence and cruelties of the colonizers, he cannot help but be confused about the gap between their high-valued philosophy and civilization with their brutalities and oppressions (Dowlatyari, 2016, p. 25-26). Therefore, Bhabha claims that otherness is always constructed with a trace of ambivalence or anxiety in the colonial discourse (Dowlatyari, 2016, p. 54).

For defining the other, the articulation of difference is important; the colonizer is credited with superior characteristics and the colonized is described with some inferior characteristics that are believed to be innate. The made definitions articulate the fundamental differences between the self and the other who is viewed as a known object for the self (Atashi, 2013, p. 39). When the other is turned into a narrative construct through articulation it should be reiterated repeatedly. This repetition shows the elusiveness of the stereotypes since they are “always in need of proof and reiteration” (Atashi, 2013, p. 39). Thus, colonizer’s articulation of these stereotypes as social realities neglects the individual differences of the colonized subjects and considers them as knowable objects. Bhabha reminds that having a thorough knowledge about only one person is somehow impossible, let alone the entire colonized population; hence, what goes beyond the colonizer’s knowledge keeps haunting him with uncertainty, ambivalence, and anxiety (Atashi, 2013).

### **Agency**

The notion of agency plays an important role in Bhabha’s thinking. The term agency refers to the ability to perform an action and in the colonial



discourse; this concept is used to describe the resistance of the colonized against the domination of colonizer (Dowlatyari, 2016, p. 37). In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) strives to highlight the marginalized's agency through the conceptions of stereotype and mimicry; he writes "what is at issue in the discourse of minorities is the creation of agency" (p. 231).

Bhabha lays emphasis on the interaction between the self and the other; he draws the attention to the colonized's active agency in resisting the colonial power (Barzanji, 2015, p. 61). The colonized's endeavors for active agency are facilitated through mimicry for the reason that mimicry rejects the splitting of cultures to two groups of the superior dominant and the inferior subservient (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha claims that the interaction between the colonized and the colonizer influences both of them and leaves none of the two in a fixed and pure state (Barzanji, 2015, p. 62).

According to Taylor (2007) postcolonial agency "provides the postcolonial subject the ability to make choices and act independently without being determined or limited by an oppressive, controlling authority" (p. 7). Bhabha considers literature as a medium through which the colonized can be given the lost voice; according to him, literature allows margins to express their unexpressed histories; empowers them to convey their cultural inheritance; and instead of submissively admitting the pedagogical norms of the dominant discourse helps them to become active agents (Barzanji, 2015).

### **Third Space**

Bhabha (1994) believes that cultures are constructed in a space that he refers to it as the "Third Space of Enunciation"; therefore, for him the colonized and the colonizer's transcultural interaction creates a third space that results in the formation of hybrid identities (p. 38). He asserts that third space is a notion that reveals the interdependence of the colonizer and the colonized; a space where different identities negotiate and blend their cultures without the domination of one over the other, and where one can speak about his/herself and the other (Barzanji, 2015, p. 9). The third space criticizes the colonial discourse's encouragement for defining the cultures as unitary and homogenous by breaking the binary cultural constructs; it is a space that causes the emergence of flexible hybrid identities (Barzanji, 2015, p. 73).

The notion of the third space implies the coincidence of two states through which meaning is produced as the cultures encounter. In Bhabha's proposed post-colonial theories, the cultural home of the colonized, where they live or come from, is referred to as the first space that is and goes with people everywhere (Dowlatyari, 2016). The colonizer's values and cultures that are imposed on colonized population are referred to as the second space. Then, despite the colonized society's attempts to carry out the colonizer's structures," the second space does not allow them to articulate their identity. Therefore, these people turn into hybrid manifestations of both spaces" (Dowlatyari, 2016, p. 25). Third space is the in-between space in which the original opposing cultures negotiate meaning, and influence both colonized and colonizer's identities.

According to Bhabha the flexibility of the third space allows the reconstruction of identity and offers the colonized with a chance to try to reshape his/her identity in order to react to his/her marginal situation (Shojaan, 2013). For Bhabha (1994) though meaning can never be clear, the search for meaning creates a third space that shows its ambivalence: "the meaning of the utterance is quite literally neither the one nor the other". In the third space, the words have no fixed primordial meaning and "the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (p. 36-37).

Cultural identity is reconstructed through interaction with other different cultures. The contact between the culture of the colonizer and the colonized results in the creation of new identities for the latter that neither resemble his own identity before the colonization nor the colonizer's (Shojaan, 2013, p. 44). Though the struggling powers are unequal in the third space, still, it reminds the unfixed and changing condition of the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized.

Those who are stuck in the third space experience feelings of unhomely as their previous constructed binary identities collapse in order to be reconstructed again. The unhomed subject in the third space confuses the borders of the home and the world (Bhabha, 1994, p. 13); and uncannily suffers from feelings of "being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both" (Tyson, 2006, p. 421).

Next section would elucidate Kress and Van Leeuwen's proposed semiotics in order to show how Bhabha's post-colonial concepts can

break the boundaries of verbal discourse and be applicable on visual representations too.

### Colonial Discourse Meets Image Studies: Kress and Van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design

Gunter Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (2006) propose their grammar of visual design based on the analysis of paintings, photographs, sketches, maps, diagrams, and other visual texts produced in western culture. They consider images as means "for the articulation of ideological positions" and use discourse analysis to show the visual signs' role in the power structures of society (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 14).

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) believe that visual signs function in a social system that is shaped according to the interests of the cultural group to which they belong; therefore, the analysis of the visual signs should not stand in isolation from the background context. The grammar put forth by Kress and Van Leeuwen is a practical descriptive framework that works as a tool for visual analysis. Their model strives to elucidate the narrative potentials of an image, the role and position of the viewers, their relation with the picture plane, the role of geometrical shapes and the vectors they form, and the compositional significance of the pictures; the truth modality entails the analysis of color scheme and perspective. These tools are going to be applied in the analysis of the visual marginality depictions in this article, therefore, further amplification of the key points of Kress and Van Leeuwen's grammatical model is required.

### Geometry

While angularity refers to the technological and artificial, circularity refers to the mystic, the irrational and the uncontrollable (Atashi, 2013, p. 51). The use of circular shapes for the depiction of colonized population confirms the stereotypes held against them as inferiors visually. The geometrical shapes can function as manipulative vectors leading the viewer's eye to a certain point; this imposes a narrative quality on the picture by screening the supposed starting and ending point of the story (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Elongated shapes that resemble a pointer can also function as vectors such as a stretched arm, the barrel of a gun, tree branches, and even plants tilted to one side with the wind; horizontal vectors connote a sense of narrative progress and

vertical vectors imply hierarchical structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 57). When all the vertical vectors of a picture plain are directed at or lead to the colorizers, it enforces the stereotypes about their superiority and legitimizes their dominance visually.

### **Horizontality**

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) contributed to art criticism by allotting pictures a narrative voice. They unfolded the narrative line of horizontal pictures by analyzing the role of the left side and the right side of the pictures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Western viewers, due to their convention of left to right writing, read the horizontal picture from left to right (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 4). The known, the familiar, and the given whose authority is taken as granted is positioned on the left side of the picture plane and on the right, the new that has informational value is given (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 57). In post-colonial pictorial inclinations, the superior self is placed on the left side while the inferior colonized as the unfamiliar object of investigation is positioned on the right side emphasizing his or her state of otherness.

### **Verticality**

In pictures that are structured along a vertical axis, the upper section symbolizes glamour and fulfillment and the lower section visualizes the mundane and the actual existence; therefore, the ideal is depicted in the upper section, and real is depicted in the lower section (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 256). In vertical pictures, "there is usually less connection, less ongoing movement, between the two parts of the composition" and instead of narrative movement and progression, there is a sense of contrast and opposition between the lower and the upper parts of a vertical picture (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 186).

In the process of stereotyping a large number of people are labeled as the other by the colonizers in the colonial discourse. Thus, a fixed identity will be imposed on the colonized as irrational, savage, immoral, lazy and inferior to shape a binary opposition between the self and the other. In order to retain "the colonized people submissive to the colonial rule", the colonizer exploits the colonial power to justify his superiority over the colonized's inferiority by constantly circulating the stereotypes (Barzanji, 2015, p. 60). Placing the colonizer on the upper and the colonized on the lower sections of a picture plain emphasizes the

stereotypical binary oppositions made between the two helping the iteration of discriminatory stereotypes visually.

The vertical picture can also be used to convey a bias towards hierarchy as to place the strongest, most important, and dominant on the top and relegate the weakest, less important, and subservient to the bottom (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 57). The upper part of the picture, therefore, comprises "the idealized essence of information" that is the colonizer and "the lower part presents more down to earth" colonized (Atashi, 2013, p. 54). Bhabha tries to draw attention to the rights of the margins and minorities through hybridity based on their cultural difference; he claims that in the colonial setting margins are not addressed and minor societies are denied by the imperialist principles (Javan Mowlai, 2012, p. 38). The co-existence of different cultures in the third space results in the formation of hybridity. For Bhabha third space is "neither assimilation nor otherness but is a sort of coalition that constructs transnational and hybrid identities" (Paudyal, 2010, p. 18). It is a state of in-betweenness that breaks down the cultural binary oppositions and reconstructs new hybrid identities (Nyman, 2007). Bhabha states that "for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerge, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). When the hybrid character is portrayed on the lower section of a vertical picture, it iterates its inferiority visually; placement of hybrid characters on the middle of a picture can deconstruct this binary opposition for it represents Bhabha's notion of third space graphically.

### **Composition**

Composition helps the viewer relate the different parts of the picture, "the representational and interactive meanings of the image to each other through three interrelated systems" which includes the information value, salience, and framing (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). The information value of a picture is measured through attending to the placement of its different elements such as the participants and the signs that relate them to each other or to the observer; placement endows these elements with specific informational values that belong to the different 'zones' of the picture including left and right, top and bottom, center and margin (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). The idealized colonizer is placed on the left, top and

center of a picture plain while colonized population are placed on the right, bottom and margins.

Saliency pertains to the degree to which the participants and represented objects in an image attract the observer's attention; factors such as placement in the foreground or background, the relative size, and color contrasts determine the saliency (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). The iteration of good stereotypes about the colonizers result in their idealization and saliency which visually exhibits itself through their placement on the foreground, with bigger size and color contrasts that the easily attract the attention of the viewer. The stereotypes about the inferiority of the colonized and their ambivalent otherness are reinforced by their placement on the background or their depiction with smaller size compared to the salient self.

The presence or absence of framing devices in an image can create or cut a connection between its different parts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). Elements which create dividing lines such as a column, a spear, or a vertical line placed between two groups of people can unveil a communication gap (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). The framing devices connect or disconnect different parts of an image and reveal the interaction or the absence of interaction between its different elements (Atashi, 2013). According to Bhabha, hybridity is important for the reason that it weakens the distinctions and divisions made between self and other by colonial power as to justify the inequalities present in its colonial rule (Huddart, 2006). The absence of framing devices in picture plains that contain hybrid beings reveals the possibility of interaction deconstructing the binary oppositions.

### **Models of Reality and Color Schemes**

The colors in an image usually move along a continuum which means that, for instance, a foreground with highly saturated and modulated colors is set apart from the background with colors of lower saturation and modulation; this presents the foregrounded object (self/colonizers) as salient (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Models of reality are based on the degree of contextualization, which refers to the scale that runs from the absence of background to the most fully articulated and detailed background. Lack of background connotes generality, for instance, figures painted in an "empty background has no individuality and the scene is not one of particularity but one of

universality" (Atashi, 2013, p. 56). Pickering (2001) discusses that stereotypes are generally incorrect for the fact that they represent a social group in a homogenous way with certain characteristics taken out of a context and attributing those features to all the members of that group. Overlooking the role of difference and relying on a "fixated form of representation" establish the colonized as a misfit other (Bhabha, 1994, p. 75). Bhabha strived to present a redefinition of the stereotype to highlight the uncertainty, and changeability of it toward the colonized; fixing the colonized with certain characteristics is a strategy of the colonizer to keep his dominance. When a member of a second-rate group (other) is depicted in an empty background, it connotes the generality of that stereotype, labeling all members of that group with inferior characteristics.

### **Perspective**

Pictures have either a frontal or an oblique (angular) perspective; however, this either/or distinction is not very strict as obliqueness has different degrees; for Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) an image has a frontal angle as long as the vanishing points fall within its boundaries.

The difference between the oblique and the frontal angle is the difference between detachment and involvement. [...] The frontal angle says, 'What you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with.' The oblique angle says, 'What you see here is not part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 136). Post-colonial illustrations tend to portray hybrid others in oblique angles to emphasize the estrangement.

Frontal perspective leans towards action invites the viewer to believe or learn a statement and perform action. On the other hand, top-down angular perspective puts the world at the viewer's feet rather than at an interactive level and conveys the maximum power of him or her. The angular perspective thus decreases involvement and provides the viewer with enough distance to make a judgment, evaluate or measure (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 145). Bhabha tries to bring to focus the voices of those colonized subjects who assert their agency by negating the condition of being defined by the colonizers. For him, post-colonialism is an opportunity for achieving fresh spaces to go beyond the current controlling discourse with encouraging the voiceless and the marginalized to claim their agency (Barzanji, 2015, p. 32). For

this empowerment to be achieved visually, hybrid others had better be demonstrated in frontal perspectives rather than angular ones.

### **Offer and Demand**

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), pictures in which the represented participant addresses the viewer directly must be distinguished from the pictures in which the viewer is positioned as only an observer. In demanding images, viewer's presence is acknowledged; participant's eyes or any shape that represents an eye return the viewer's gaze as if wants something from him or her or tries to establish a contact (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 250). For instance, the portrayed person in the photo might look at his/her audience with a smile, establishing a social affinity with him/her based upon a common feeling or experience or might look sideways regarding him/her with suspicion and cold disdain (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118).

According to Bhabha (1994) the outcome of the colonizer's construction of stable stereotypes is a colonized subject with the belief in the superiority of the first and the inferiority of the latter; therefore, the colonized is encouraged to mimic the colonizer's culture and manner in a way that is "almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). Hybrid state is always anxious; the hybrid other has to wonder between two (or more) monolithic identities. Ambivalence refers to the "complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft, 2001, p. 12). The other's sense of ambivalence leave trace in their eyes, gazing the colonizer with adoration or hatred highlighting their anxious in-betweenness.

There are other pictures that address viewers indirectly and make no demand, letting them gaze on as invisible onlookers without being gazed back at. In such images viewers' presence is not acknowledged and no social affinity or challenge is established between the viewed and the viewer. This kind of pictures only offer the represented participants as objects or items of information for the contemplation and scrutiny of the viewer (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119). Demanding and offering pictures "suggest different relations with different others and make the viewer engage with some and remain detached from others" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 120). To represent the unknown, different other whose lifestyle and customs are not approved upon by the self, and whose culture must be investigated,



it is customary to use an offering picture. To represent the familiar world which has enough authority to challenge the viewer or to find affinity with him/her, demanding pictures are used.

### **Social Distance**

The distance people keep from each other is determined by their social relation. Personal distance is kept between "subjects of personal interests and involvements" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124). 'Close personal distance' shows the possibility of touching between two intimate people, and in 'Far personal distance' touching is possible only if both sides stretch their arms.

'Close social distance' refers to the outside of the personal realm in which formal, impersonal and business issues occur; and, social interactions conducted in 'Far social distance' have a greater degree of formality and impersonality. "Public distance" refers to the distance kept between strangers and is used when no interaction happens between them (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 125).

In the close personal distance, only the head and the shoulders of a human figure are visible. Far personal distance offers the portrait of the other person from the waist up. The whole figure can be seen in the close social distance, and in the far social distance the space around the figure come into view as well. Finally in the public distance the torso of at least four or five figures are visible too (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 125). Little connection is allowed between the viewers with the represented figure who is viewed at a social distance; maximum degree of detachment is suggested by figures drawn from the public space since it is "the distance between people who are and are to remain strangers" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 125). "The other, who must remain a stranger, is not usually viewed from the personal distance" (Atashi, 2013, p. 59).

### **Concluding Remarks**

This interdisciplinary article elaborated on two different theoretical frameworks and strived to create a link between the two in order to be employed and work harmoniously together. Bhabha's notions of hybridity, stereotype, mimicry, ambivalence, agency, and third space were discussed in detail. Circulation of stereotypes depend on the fixed believe in the supremacy of the colonizer and inferiority of the colonized; this creates a desire in colonized population to mimic the

colonizer's manners in a way that is only nearly, not entirely, the same. Thus, mimicry results in the colonized's double consciousness and this state of in-betweenness leads to the emergence of the feelings of ambivalence and anxiety in the hybrid identities in the third space.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar was expounded in detail since their proposed semiotics was used to show how visual arts can be investigated as post-colonial discourse. The discussion of meaning of colors, compositions, perspectives, geometry, distances and framing revealed the possibility of simultaneous contribution and/or deviation of the visual arts to/from the post-colonial texts. This article was a theoretical contribution that strived to add to the realm of comparative literary criticism by linking visual arts to post-colonialism.

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