

Negotiating Ethnic Identity
in Philip Kan Gotanda's *Fish Head Soup*

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the negotiation of ethnic identity in Philip Kan Gotanda's play *Fish Head Soup* from the perspective of social identity theory. The play explores the experiences of Asian American characters as they navigate their cultural heritage, racial identity, and belonging in American society. Drawing on social identity theory, the analysis focuses on how the characters negotiate their ethnic identity in relation to their social group membership and the broader societal context. The characters in *Fish Head Soup* grapple with the complexities of their Asian American identity within a multicultural society during the 20th century, facing challenges such as stereotypes, cultural expectations, and the impact of historical and societal factors. Through the lens of social identity theory, the current research explores how the characters' self-concept and sense of belonging are shaped by their identification with their ethnic group. Furthermore, the paper highlights the role of social categorization and intergroup dynamics in the negotiation of ethnic identity. It investigates how the characters' interactions with individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, including both Asian and non-Asian individuals, and how experiences of discrimination, and assimilation pressures, influence their self-perception and the construction of their ethnic identity. Through an analysis grounded in social identity theory, this study seeks to illuminate the intricacies and implications of the characters' negotiation of their ethnic identity, thereby broadening our understanding of the representation of Asian American ethnic identity in the realm of contemporary dramatic literature.

Keywords: Asian American, ethnic identity, *Fish Head Soup*, Social Identity, multicultural society, Internalized Racism.

التفاوض على الهوية العرقية في مسرحية "حساء رأس السمك" لفيليب كان جوتاندا
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الملخص

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية دراسة التفاوض على الهوية العرقية في مسرحية "حساء رأس السمك" للكاتب فيليب كان جوتاندا من منظور نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية. تستكشف المسرحية تجارب شخصيات امريكية آسيوية وهم يبحرون في تراثهم الثقافي وهويتهم العرقية وانتمائهم في المجتمع الأمريكي. ومن خلال الاعتماد على نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية، يركز التحليل على كيفية تفاوض الشخصيات لهويتهم العرقية فيما يتعلق بانتمائهم لمجموعاتهم الاجتماعية والسياسي المجتمعي الأوسع. تتصارع الشخصيات في مسرحية "حساء رأس السمك" مع تعقيدات هويتهم الأمريكية الآسيوية في مجتمع متعدد الثقافات خلال القرن العشرين، وتواجه تحديات مثل الصور النمطية وتوقعات الثقافة وتأثير العوامل التاريخية والمجتمعية. من خلال نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية، تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيف يتشكل تصور الذات والانتماء لدى الشخصيات من خلال تحديد هويتهم لانتمائهم لمجموعاتهم العرقية. علاوة على ذلك، تسلط الورقة الضوء على دور التصنيف الاجتماعي وديناميات المجموعات في تفاوض الهوية العرقية. وتبحث الورقة ايضا كيف تؤثر تفاعلات الشخصيات مع أفراد من خلفيات عرقية مختلفة، بما

في ذلك الأفراد الآسيويين وغير الآسيويين، وكيف تؤثر تجارب التمييز وضغوط التكيف على تصور الذات وبناء الهوية العرقية. من خلال تحليل مرتكز على نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى إلقاء الضوء على تعقيدات وتداعيات تفاوض الشخصيات لهويتهم العرقية، وبالتالي توسيع فهمنا لتمثيل الهوية العرقية الأمريكية الآسيوية في مجال الأدب المسرحي المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمريكيون الآسيويون، الهوية العرقية، حساء رأس السمك، الهوية الاجتماعية، المجتمع المتعدد الثقافات، العنصرية المتجذرة داخليًا

Introduction:

In the vast fabric of published literature influenced by social psychology, ethnicity often emerges as a prized possession of the individual, a canvas where they paint their chosen identities. But identity is not just a function of personal preference but a symphony of group processes (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996). These identities are collectively woven like intricate social cues, defining the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. What captivates our interest, however, lies not in the choices individuals make for themselves but in the profound meanings and signifying practices that sub-ethnic identities bear, carefully constructed by the collective in this captivating study.

Indeed, identities are not formed in isolation but collectively woven through intricate social cues that define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. These cues can be subtle or overt, and they serve to reinforce and perpetuate social hierarchies and power dynamics. Thus, studying identity and ethnicity requires a nuanced and multifaceted approach considering the complex interplay of individual and collective agency. However, what truly captivates our interest is the choices individuals make for themselves and the profound meanings and signifying practices that sub-ethnic identities bear. These identities are carefully constructed by the collective and reflect the unique historical, cultural, and social contexts in which they emerge. They provide a window into the diverse and dynamic cultural mosaic of human experience and offer insights into how individuals and groups navigate their social worlds.

Each generation of Japanese Americans has confronted unique challenges, from the farms and small businesses established by the first immigrants in the early 20th century to the tragedy of the World War II relocation camps and the search for new ideals in a more diverse society. Playwright Philip Kan Gotanda has created four powerful dramas (*Yankee Dawg You Die*, *the wash*, *Song for a Nissei Fisherman*, and *Fish Head Soup*) that explore the complex intergenerational ties between the Issei (first generation), Nisei (second generation), and Sansei (third generation) of Japanese Americans. The interactions of engaging characters in these dramas reveal various aspects of Japanese American life. Gotanda demonstrates a keen understanding of the pressures that this traditional culture faces and sensitively captures them, not only in regard to the diverse society that surrounds it but also within the generations that

make it up. As the dramas unfold, the audience gains insight into Japanese American culture's rich and complex world, including the tensions and conflicts between generations, the challenges of preserving cultural traditions in a rapidly changing society, and how Japanese Americans navigate their identities within the broader American context. Gotanda's work is a testament to the resilience and dynamism of Japanese American culture and a powerful reminder of immigrants' contributions to American society (Omi *Fish Head Soup* intro, 1995).

the family is a crucial setting, for the development and reproduction of labor power, class relations, gender and sexual relationships, and ethnic and racial identities. It becomes a symbol for community, race, and nation, a conduit to solidarity, as Paul Gilroy (*Small Acts*, 1993) contends. Within the contemporary theatre, we can trace the significance of the ethnic family in the discourse of the day, particularly in works crafted by minority authors.

The history of contemporary theatre can be used to trace the emphasis on the ethnic family in contemporary discourse. Family dynamics are fundamental to many plays written by minority authors. In each of these pieces, the family is portrayed as a microcosm of a particular culture or ethnicity. In other words, the family denotes a group identity that is linked to the wider group conceptions of race and ethnicity. For instance, using words like "brother" and "sister" to denote membership in specific racial and ethnic groupings is not merely a matter of language change. Because of the apparent "biological" ties and the more general connection of a claimed common experience, these family metaphors are essential to the interpellation of the ethnic subject. If the family has played a significant role in staging "American-ness," individuals in marginalized positions whose cultural legitimacy is in doubt have valued it even more. The question of the family becomes more pressing for people attempting to identify a unique place in American culture that is comparable to and separate from other "families" (Ibrahim, 2016).

The family bridges the private and public domains and between notions of self and community. It is a basic structuring principle of identity. As a result, it can advance a wide range of group identities, including those who oppose cultural supremacy and those who occupy those positions. Therefore, the family concept is as crucial to ethnically specific political agendas as hegemonic or "universal" ones. Domestic realism is a particularly viable way for playwrights of color to stage acts of self-definition since the family serves as the fundamental site of identity awareness and formation for them. Even if the focus on the family is not unexpected, the prevalence of actual formal structures—on many iterations of the "well-made play"—needs to be investigated further. This is not to argue that all of these shows have radical political views or even that they explicitly promote social change. Frequently, traditional

gender roles are perpetuated, or conservative middle-class ideals are promoted (Ibrahim, 2016).

The alienation affecting labour, class, gender, racial, and ethnic identity interact and overlap is "produced and reproduced" within the family and family drama framework. Conflicts between Asian American fathers and sons can thus be seen in a new way; what is rejected or passed on through generations reveals the layers of alienation itself. Other dads may withhold the legacy while the inexperienced sons desire it. Or, the fathers and the boys may equally misunderstand each other, stuck in their self-alienation. These fathers may carelessly pass down their alienation, and the sons may revolt. The play center on Japanese American families, including elderly traditionalists Nisei who are still concerned by the message of the wartime camps, women looking for new roles, and boisterous youngsters grabbing chances in a bigger world. *Fish Head Soup* is a traditional--three acts, a traditional setup, Gotanda adds to the structure.

Fish Head Soup like the author's previous works, *Song for a Nissei Fisherman* and *The Wash* portrays a Japanese-American family going through difficult times. A mother, father, and brother are forced to confront their own demons as well as the inherent inconsistencies of Asian Americans to both the consequences of being non-white in a white society as well as the complexity of cultural dispossession—the unsettling loss of identity that occurs in the uprooting and transplanting. According to Gotanda, such a loss of self-esteem manifests as aggression .It is also the reason why the Japanese-American family in *Fish Head Soup* breaks down completely (Breslauer, 1993).

Victore: Family ? Family ? what about this family ?
THIS family. Not those goddamn Japanese. They
Don't care about you, Mat . You're just a retarded
JA gook to them. And I am not a ...(Act 1 p 32).

After the untimely "death" of Mat, Papa's son, caused his mental state, which has been manifested as mental abstraction in. Mama is overwhelmed. She works a job and uses the necessity for the money to justify working excessive hours. Their other son, Victor is responsible for most of Papa's care. Victor, a Vietnam veteran with his fair share of racial injustices in the military, works part-time as a taxi driver for a Japanese hotel. But aside from Papa, his main focus appears to be fixing the house, which, like the family, is disintegrating. The impact is volcanic when Mat, believed to have drowned (the specifics of his death are hazy), resurface. He represents cultural repression, shattering the family's previously precarious balance of normality and denial. Mama's secrets and Victor's inferiority complexes are revealed, self-feeding misery in Mat's illuminating presence. The play deviates from the stereotype of an Asian-American play. The drama's characters are visceral and emotional, and sub-textual violence is brewing. according to Gotanda:

The fact that these characters are not necessarily, healthy people.

In *Fish Head Soup* it's very dysfunctional family. I think they're really interesting families, but they're not your role models. But that to me doesn't matter as much as that they're interesting people. Think they're interesting families and dysfunctional.

As are a lot of people in our community (Ito, 2000, 177).

If not for a change in the course of events that proves Gotanda's assertion that "something else" is happening, the story would have ended there. The play then resumed its sensual nature, according to Gotanda. "Then Japan-bashing started to escalate. He adds "I started receiving phone calls. The same people who'd rejected the play were now interested in doing it. It's so peculiar: Whatever is floating around at the time can dictate the interest." (Breslauer, 1993). The core causes of the family's dissolution in *Fish Head Soup* have to do with questions of what constitutes Japanese-American and vice versa Japanese, as well as what the nature of the love-hate connection between whites and Asians is, and that may have been the issue *Fish Head Soup* is about a Sansei son who returns to his family to make a film about their lives. Along with the usual Hollywood obstacles, the son also encounters opposition from his mother, who tries to persuade him to make a more "normal" film that is "not just about Japanese Americans."

Dorothy: Your movie? Maybe you shouldn't do it just
About Japanese Americans. I mean, we were talking
About this, my friend and I who's interested in that
Kind of thing? You should do a regular story. A more
normal one (Act 2 p 46).

Dorothy assumes that adding a white character makes the play more appealing to others since it deals with internalized racism and that no one would be interested in a story about simply Japanese Americans. She is an intriguing character because she values her Japanese and Japanese American heritage and accepts the notion of being a second-class citizen simultaneously. Moreover, she thinks there is something bigger going on. Cause they're probably superior and that any in white culture. It's an extremely challenging psychological frame of mind. Gotanda declares that he has discovered among many Asian American artists. They inform the neighborhood:

We've been we are struggling to complete our work while no one supports us. As soon as we have some success in "white," You're a major artist, you're a big star, the community exclaims after the press recognizes your contribution to culture. We want to come watch your work because you are a celebrity," . So it's that kind of thing that I've certainly felt and that a lot of other artists have complained about(Ito, 2000, 183).

In this notion, Gotanda reflects his ideas in his work, that emphasizes the idea of racism which is depicted in many sentences revealed by the characters. Gotanda criticizes Asian Americans for their complicity in escalating the effects of racism by tolerating it without protest. He says:

. Internalized racism is a fact of life. If you live in America, you
Have been infected by it. By internal I mean how we buy into
racism, how we participate in it, and how we engage in a kind
of dance of allowing ourselves to be victimized (*Omi Fish
Head Soup and Other Play, Intro, 23*).

Victor reveals his internal conflict with racism, which affects the construction of his identity. He ignores his real identity as a Japanese and turns to be an American; even though his language is American, he doesn't know how to speak Japanese. He admits that by saying, "I know I don't speak Japanese, but they spoke English so I mean, we laughed about it ,I try to speak and it comes out all mixed up" (Act 1 p 28). As the incarceration of Japanese Americans being a direct result of their ethnicity, many Japanese Americans have been persuaded to either intentionally or unintentionally leave the Japanese culture and become "200 percent Americans." Due to the extent to which they had to give up their cultural self to fit in with White society, many Japanese Americans have recently suffered serious identity issues (Yamamoto, 1968; Suzuki, 1977)..

The psychologist, Tajfel (1984), states that the Social Identity Theory (SIT) assumes that individuals create their own identities in relation to social groups and that these identities work to uphold and reinforce one's sense of self. Sometimes one situation creates a big transition in one's life; Victor, in his early life, faces a form of racism which deeply affects his internal life, his attitude, and his beliefs and eventually constructs his identity. Matt and Victor were very young when they faced the first step of racism.

Matt negotiates with papa by saying:

Remember that time downtown when that big guy
Came up to you? " Hey, you China Man? "You
mumbled something and pushed Victor and me
into the backseat of the car.You had this funny look
on your face all tight "No no excuse me. "Victor
and I had our noses press against the widow
waiting for you to yell at this ugly man to put this
ugly mean man in his place(Act 3 p 57).

Victor starts to create a negative perspective against his identity; furthermore, what adds to his feeling is his reaction to what happened to him during the American – Vietnam war. Actually, he trapped in a dual identity. He almost died when American solders thought of him as a Vietnam solder

Victor: When I was in Nam? You know when I was hit by some
Viet Cong mortar? They wouldn't pick me up, the medics. I was

lying there, bleeding all over, they were picking everyone else up
, I kept screaming, I'm an American, I'm a Japanese American,
I'm not VC," But they wouldn't pick me up. They walked right
Past me. They thought I was...(Act 2 p 37).

Here Victor's self-esteem is starting to break down and creating a negative stereotype about his race. The emotional component (self-esteem or satisfaction) involves the emotional investment made in one's group membership and may include feelings of belonging or not belonging to the group, according to Tajfel's article "Human groups, 1981" . Finding these occurrences will assist in identifying the intergroup conflict because SIT offers major insights into social identity-based prejudice and discrimination from the perspective of critical psychology. Racial minorities suffer from the terrible double whammy of being likely to combine these unfavorable stereotypes held about them by the dominant majority with their ingrained bad identities.

In addition to lacking external objects to project their bad identities, oppressed minorities are compelled to adopt the negative identities of the majority. Minority members tend to despise and reject themselves due to these circumstances, which causes them to adopt their own wicked personas. Minority races do not voluntarily adopt and internalize these unfavorable stereotypes. Most of the time, it happens subconsciously and subliminally. Freire (1970, p. 36) states that "domesticating" is how oppression functions. That is, an oppressive reality submerges one's consciousness as it absorbs people who are a part of it.

When one becomes immersed in an oppressive world, the opposite of self-hatred and rejection is frequently identified with the oppressors. A vicious circle of identity conflict and low self-esteem for the oppressed is created by racial minorities' inherent connection with the White race and its need to preserve its positive identity. Because White racism is so pervasive in our society, Asian Americans often struggle with their identity. Many Asian Americans have negative identities due to the dominant forms of Asian-American identity conflict, such as feelings of inferiority, alienation, self-rejection, and self-hatred. Furthermore, Asian Americans' quality of mental health is negatively impacted by this negative identity. After returning to his home, Mat notices that Victor's mental health is collapsed:

" Mat: I know this is a bit of a shock – I mean, after all this time and everything. But it's me". (Victor, desperately confused, begins to make high – pitched whimpering sounds.)

Mat starts to calm down his brother cause he knows that he has some mental issues: " Mat: No, no, don't do that, Victor, don't do that you're all right, you're going to be just fine" (Act 1 p 13).

Victor in many occasion rejects his own identity and internalized his own race " they 're assholes. They 're ass—" "Eating insects and roots because the land was dried up and dead' (Act 1 p 13). Later in a dialogue in the same act, Mat addresses Victor and uses the term "gook" to refer to a derogatory racial slur often used towards Asian people. By saying, "You don't have to be a gook," (Act 1 p 32). Mat is acknowledging the negative stereotype associated with Victor's racial identity and implying that Victor does not have to conform to that stereotype. Furthermore, Mat mentions Victor's father, Papa, suggesting that Papa may hold prejudiced beliefs about their racial or ethnic group. Mat implies that Victor should not internalize Papa's negative perception and should have a more positive and empowered self-concept.

From a social identity perspective, this dialogue highlights the influence of social categorization and the impact of group membership on individual identity. Victor's racial identity as an Asian person is being invoked and acknowledged through the use of the racial slur. Mat's response suggests that Victor's identity and self-concept can be influenced by how he perceives himself in relation to his racial or ethnic group and how others, like Papa, perceive and categorize him. The dialogue also touches upon the concept of social identity threat, which occurs when individuals experience anxiety or discomfort due to negative stereotypes associated with their social group. Mat's statement implies that Victor may feel pressured to conform to and live up to the negative stereotype of a "gook," but Mat reassures him that he doesn't have to internalize that identity.

From a social identity perspective, the young adult respondents in this context utilize negative identity labels, such as "FOB" (Fresh Off the Boat) and "whitewashed," to socially categorize and define their co-ethnic peers who are on different acculturation trajectories. These derogatory labels are derived from racial prejudices and assumptions prevalent in mainstream society and are applied to co-ethnics who align with the extreme ends of the acculturation continuum, often with an intention to mock them.

The young adults' usage of these derogatory labels is an attempt to establish a non-stigmatized identity for themselves within the bicultural middle of the acculturation spectrum. By disparaging their co-ethnics as either too "ethnic" (FOB) or excessively assimilated ("whitewashed"), they aim to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes associated with their racial/ethnic group. In doing so, they assign a wide range of negative traits to their co-ethnics, including those commonly attributed to their racial/ethnic group as a whole (Goffman, 1963; Pyke and Dang, 2003).

This behavior can be seen as an adaptive reaction to the racial oppression experienced by sub-ethnic identities such as "FOB" and "whitewashed." By engaging in this form of social categorization and labeling, the young adults seek to navigate and negotiate their own identities within a society that perpetuates racial biases and stereotypes.

They strive to distance themselves from the perceived drawbacks associated with extreme acculturative positions by applying internalized racism in an attempt to carve out a more accepted and balanced identity within the bicultural middle ground.

Internalized racism refers to embracing and using as one's own the derogatory racial stereotypes of minority groups that are pervasive in society (Williams and Mohammed, 2013). In the past, social psychologists believed this phenomenon was common and bad for self-esteem. Research from the 1940s to the 1960s asserted that members of marginalized minority groups internalized unfavorable cultural stereotypes of their groups, which made them despised by their members, compelled them to want to join the dominant group (which rejected them), and caused them to feel low self-esteem and demoralization. (Kardiner and Ovesey; 1951; Proshansky and Newton, 1968).

In Philip Gotanda's play *Fish Head Soup*, the character of Mat is suggested to have attempted racial passing; in his first-act monologue, Mat recalls his attempts to change into Italian Paolo.

I didn't like myself, I didn't like everything about myself. No I hated myself. Yes. I hated my yellow face. My flat nose. The name that no one could ever pronounce correctly. So I got rid of them. Got rid of them and started all over (Act 1 p 14').

In this regard and as it is seen Mat also has Internalized Racism (IR) in the beginning of his life. He had this protest soul which revolted for everything. He wanted to be someone else in another name and another identity.

I hung out with whites. Yes, I made fun of other "oriental" Kids, cracked jokes about them - hell, I wasn't one of them
I mean, why would I want to be like one of those quiet shuffling cowards? Why would I want to be like my Papa?
(Act 3 p 58).

He had this dream of being a movie star. He tried and tried moving from place to place and from one identity to another, trying to find his dream "My name was Paolo. I loved saying it. And when other people said it, "Paolo? Paolo?—YesI was a million miles from here." (Act 1 p 14). He thought that when he would get another identity in this way, he would get his ambition.

Status is a significant factor in SIT since it is connected to the prestige and self-worth one may ascribe to group participation. According to SIT, belonging to a social class or group is a source of self-esteem. Being a member of a low-status group would encourage someone to look for personal mobility, cognitive inventiveness, and social competition. This method implicitly assumes that individuals from underprivileged

classes and groups have lower self-esteem. This theory is part of the hypothesis that a lack of or threat to one's self-esteem would be an antecedent to or a reason for the favorable social perception of the in-group, as well as for ethnocentric attitudes of prejudice and behavioral discrimination (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Insofar as an individual possessed a salient role identity, the judgment of his or her performance would influence emotions of self-esteem. Self-esteem was implicated as a motivator. The self-esteem of the individual would increase if the role received positive feedback similarly, if the one succeeded in the role, he or she would feel good about it given the reviews and approval of others (Franks and Marolla, 1976). *Fish Head Soup*, a difficult analysis of the concerns and fears circulating inside the minority household, reflects this. The drama explores the struggle between embracing the part society has given them and rejecting it, acting their race as they should and destroying it, and accepting alienation and wanting connection. At the play's conclusion, the characters are forced to make a decision that will affect how they will perform racial issues in the future. Mat: "I became Joaquim. Joaquim, dressed in black exclusively, drank only espresso". (Act 1 p 15). Only to be reminded of his Japanese American identity by his father's voice calling his name. "Your voice like a big hand reaching right out through it and grabbing me" "Mat, Mat." "Then one night as I lay in bed, I begin to change..". (Act 1 p 15). But eventually, he realizes the truth that his own identity is the real one, and through it, one can achieve his dreams. He discovers that one without his real identity will be discarded. "Mat: I was in the middle of the scene, this was on the second shootingWhen I saw the rough cut, My face wasn't even part of the scene." (Act 1 p 25) He feels regret of being like this, so he gets his turning point:

I look into the mirror. The face, the face staring back at me. Who is this guy? The nose, the nose ... It's not pointy and huge, but it has a subtle turn and a size that is just right. And the black hair. It seems strong, The deep richness so potent - a lighter color would seem washed outHow clever, how perfect. A double eyelid seems overdone, gauche _ less is more

(Act 1 p 33)

This turning point makes him awaken; it awakens his self-esteem as well. The self-esteem only applies to people who identify with their social groups, i.e., people who think of themselves as belonging to a group and think that their in-group has a big impact on who they are as a person (Gagnon and Bourhis, 1996; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). "Mat: You can speak up, you don't have to be silent. I was in Japan. Hey, we're a part of a voice the whole world is listening to." (Act 2 p 38). Group beliefs have power because of the sense of unity and similarity that may be displayed by group members who are aware of shared beliefs. Knowing that a group's members share a certain belief conveys cohesion and implies a common destiny. This knowledge gives the group's members strength. They feel cohesion, inclusion, and integration. Group

members may base their demands, aspirations, or goals on their shared beliefs due to these intense sensations (Bar- Tal, 1998). People with little or no in-group identification are unconcerned with their in-group or how their place in it affects their self-esteem. Victor, who has less unity within his group, loses this identification, damaging his self-esteem. He is no longer a Japanese member, and the matter was very hard that he could not bear it. It damages his spirit, and he needs a miracle to pick him up from his wrack and take him to a safe place. Gotanda focuses on a contemporary Japanese-American family torn apart by historical injustices and recent betrayals inside and beyond the domestic sphere. In *Fish Head Soup*, the Iwasaki home reaches a raging boil and does not let up. They act on deadly emotions, yell, rage, and rant while smashing objects. They also explicitly state that racism is a "cancer" that erodes feelings of kinship and self-esteem. However, the play shows negative stereotypical images of Victor, Dorothy, and Mat. The play also reveals many situations which show the characters have a positive stereotype, for instance,

Dorothy:

Look, Victor, look. (Back to Mat) Japanese are just too smart, huh. Whatever they want to do - cars, TVs, no one can keep up with them. I keep telling Victor, learn to speak Japanese, go work for the Japanese
(Act 1 p 21)

Positive or negative stereotypes can have a negative effect by taking away people's individuality, escalating the use of scapegoats, and amplifying bias and prejudice (Steele, 1997). In addition to fostering prejudice, stereotypes encourage it. Individuals and cultures that are more ethnocentric and support racist beliefs are also more likely to stereotype, racially profile, and discriminate against minorities. Consequently, stereotypes directly reinforce and contribute to IR and its deleterious effects. Stereotypes can cause discrimination and negatively impact Asian Americans (Avery et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2011). Even good stereotypes can be harmful since they interfere with an individual's right to self-expression, and this depersonalization might arouse unfavorable feelings, especially among more Americanized Asian Americans. Internalizing a stereotype that many researchers explain as taking on the dominant group's biased ideas, views, and behaviors that can use social labels to its advantage (David et al., 2019; Gupta et al., 2011; Pyke, 2010).

"Dorothy: This Kakeji, this scroll, has been in my family for generations. And thisI had you touch it, smell it so that you would remember, so you would always know who you were, where you come from ". (Act 2 p 49) She wants to remind Mat about his roots. Although she sometimes has another idea because she wants to go with the mainstream. She has this belief that the minority is a second-class citizen. Dorothy's early life got some questions about being a minority and being from a low status, treated as inferior, especially after being captured in a big camp. " as I lay in bed, I kept thinking, " We must have done something bad. I mean, why else would they punish us

like this? " (Act 2 p 43). The playwright depicts how Japanese Americans responded to post-war issues facing the American system and people. In reality, Gotanda examines the internment experience after the war in his internment plays to examine the psychological effects of racism and the camp life on the Japanese Americans, "including internalized racism and self-hatred" (Guiyou Huang 2009; Kaplan 2002).

Undoubtedly one of the most dramatic incidents in American history this century was the internment of more than 100,000 Japanese-American citizens during World War II. Unavoidable irony in the name of fighting fascism overseas, one of the greatest democracies in history wrongfully imprisoned a segment of its citizens. Issei and Nisei, first and second-generation Japanese Americans, felt ashamed due to their detention in camps with barbed wire (Torky 2013, 148). They were regarded as a national security threat. Despite having no criminal convictions, they were treated like criminals. Despite having no criminal convictions, they were treated like criminals. Their identities were assigned numbers (Takaki 1989, 379). Japanese Americans thought that they had been stripped of their humanity as a result. In her 1995 article "Internment and Identity in Japanese Art," Kristine C. Kuramitsu illustrates the damaging effects of this historical period on the Japanese psyche: For the Japanese-American community, imprisonment during the war was a "shameful" incident. The 1940s marked a long period of silence, and many parents tried to hide their internment from their children (621). Elaine H. Kim claimed that because Japanese Americas were isolated from their children by paper-thin walls and could not see them most of the time, parents could no longer discipline and guide their kids (1982, 134). Papa gets mental health after the departure of his son " Mat"; he stays many days beside the river watching and waiting. Victor reveals the truth about Papa's sickness when he negotiates with Mat by saying:

He wasn't going to let the river take his son. " I want him back, I want my son back." I think all the skin-divers and people with equipment felt sorry for him so they kept on. Mama and I thought it was no use but we were too scared to say anything (Act 2 p 41).

He thinks his son is drowned in the river, while Mat leaves without saying anything or even looking behind. This situation creates the main plot of the drama. Papa falls in deep sadness, and he follows his memories throughout the play. Identifying with Asian cultures is part of Asian Americans' search for ways to express the developing Asian American identity (Elaine Kim 1982, 242). Asian Americans cannot affirm their identity without their ancestry. Gotanda depicts this notion by the appearance of Papa's memories, which show his attitude towards his values, traditions, and culture.

Papa: Remember how I used to take the kids out to Ohii-Chan's farm and show them around? From over there to

Over there, that's all Grandpa's land. Biggest in the whole San Joaquin Valley. They don't care, they just want to pick up the potatoes and throw them at each other.
(Act 1 p 24).

The Iwasakis conduct rhetorical monologues outlining the causes of their psychic agony when they are not having bizarre tantrums or stumbling toward flimsy truces. Papa refers to what happened in the camp as a sickness, and everybody has been infected. "sickness" here is not a physical one; he means a spiritual disease that almost refers to the psychological impact of racism. People of color whom they captured in this big camp suffer a lot from injustice and inferiority; Papa depicts the camp as the world where there are many aspects of oppression and inequality:

I don't want to see it, but I see it, the sickness.
I see it everywhere. In the eyes, the eyes of Papa's former friends, smiling, filled with so much
Smiling hate,And Mama looking at Papa
"The camp did that, the camp did it," (Act 3 p 64).

Throughout the play, many changes can be seen in the characters' attitudes, for example, the attitude of Victor, who is seen in the beginning as a person who neglects and belittle his own identity, but in reality, he holds on to his old tradition. It is seen when he and Mat decide to care for their dad. They search for a traditional way; according to this, they have to catch a kind of fish that live in a special place. Mat states that a Japanese guy advises him by saying: "The blood of Japanese carp, you know, koi, the real old ones, has special chemical properties. ...that heal certain types of mental illness"(Act 2 p 34). Mat has an idea about the place of this fish " Victor ? Remember that old koi in the fishpond at the Buddhist Church? You used to be able to make him come to you like a pet dog " (Act 2 p 34). Victor who is very interested and caring about his father, decides to go and bring the special koi. To catch the fish, he has to follow the traditional way that he used to do; in this regard he eventually appears as a Japanese identity.

Victor enters with a flashlight. Stops, stares out at
The pond. Agitated. Proceeds to take off his shoes
and socks, to roll up his pant legs. Now he's ready
.....he quickly jerks both ends making a snapping
Sound. Blackout.(Act 3 p 58) .

A family is a place where cultural differences are marked—by the language or dialect used or the food that is consumed—but it is also a place where cultural commonalities are marked by a set of shared relationships that serve as the fundamental building block of society (Pyke and Dang, 2003). Fish head soup is a traditional meal that many

Japanese families used to eat. They gather all the family around and start to eat. It's a reference to the families' unity. In act three, when Mat decides to leave the house again after he fails to sell the house and produce a private film, Papa prepares a fish head soup and gathers all the family, even Mat, around the table. He said:

Fish head soup. (starts to ladle it out) just like old times
huh? Your grandpa used to make this dish for the family
on special occasions. Soup. Fish soup. It's made from all
the leftovers After you clean the fish fillet it good, what's
left? The real good stuff (Act 3 p 61).

He adds: "Fish head soup, when it's good, and the family is all sitting around eating together - Mama, Papa, the kids - a man can never feel alone" (Act 3 p 62). It is noted that Gotanda, in this play, uses Papa as a reference to the old tradition, reminding his family and the audience about Japanese culture. When the individual knows his roots and the value of his culture, he will be able to balance his attitude and others so he will get satisfaction about himself and his race. This way, Papa can unify his family and spread the power to face any difficulties.

Conclusion:

Many of Gotana's plays depict the real life of Asian Americans society, and the main concern is to prove their identity within two cultures. He illustrates theme of the family to reveal the suffering within identities issue. Considering the family as the root of constructing the individuals personality. In *Fish Head Soup* Gotanda demonstrates the conflict between the generations by the conflict of his characters. Papa, Mama, Victor, and Mat. Throughout the play they depict the psychological impact of racism, internalized racism, and the identities matter. Their soul can find peace only by remember their own tradition, and the fish head soup as a meal is like the way to this peace. Papa uses this soup to gather his family again after being lost in the life issues. The author covers Asian Americans' experiences, but does so in a way that will allow readers to relate to the suffering and joy of those who are marginalized. A grim examination of the deeply ingrained dysfunctional tendencies of a Japanese American family is presented in *Fish Head Soup* (1995). Gotanda demonstrates his capacity to comprehend racism's internal effects and external manifestations, as well as how deeply it affects every family member. He also blames Asian Americans for their complicity in racism's negative effects by tolerating it without protest. Gotanda send this message by his play, he paves the way to his generation and to the next one cause the literature is the best way in this scope.

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