

Chapter 3

HOMI K. BHABHA

3.0 INTRODUCTION:

Homi Bhabha was born into the Parsi community of Bombay in 1949 and grew up in the shade of Fire-Temple. He is an alumnus of St. Mary's High school, Mazagaon, Mumbai. He received his B. A. from Bombay University and his M.A., D. Phil. from Christ Church, Oxford University. After lecturing in the Department of English at the University of Sussex for over ten years, Bhabha received a senior fellowship at Princeton University where he was also made Old Dominion Visiting Professor. He was Steinberg Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania where he delivered the Richard Wright Lecture Series. At Dartmouth College, Bhabha was a faculty fellow at the school of Criticism and Theory. From 1997 to 2001 he served as Chester D. Professor in the Humanities at the University of Chicago. In 2001-02, he served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at University College, London. He has been the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University since 2001. He is currently a professor in the Humanities at the University of Chicago where he teaches in the Department of English and Arts. He also serves on the Editorial Collective of Public Culture, an academic journal published by Duke University Press. Bhabha's work in postcolonial theory owes much to poststructuralism. We observe the great influence of Jacques Derrida and deconstruction; Jacques Lacan and Lacanian psychoanalysis; and the works of Michel Foucault. In addition to these, he also stated in his interview with W. J. T. Mitchell (in 1995) that Edward Said is the writer who has most influenced his

thought. Bhabha is a popular lecturer, and is regularly invited to speak at universities across North America, Europe and Asia.

Homi Bhabha is a leading voice in postcolonial studies and is highly influenced by Western poststructuralists, theorists, notably Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michael Foucault. In *Nation and Narration* (1990) he argues against the tendency to essentialize the Third World Countries into a homogenous identity. Instead he claims that all sense of nationhood is narrativized. He has also made a major contribution to postcolonial studies by pointing out how there is always ambivalence at the site of colonial dominance. In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha uses concepts such as mimicry, interstice, hybridity and liminality all influenced by semiotics and Lacanian psychoanalysis to argue that cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent.

He is one of the most important thinkers in postcolonial criticism. He has contributed a set of challenging concepts, such as: Hybridity, Mimicry, Ambivalence, the Stereotypes, the Uncanny, the Nation, Otherness, etc. to postcolonial theory. All these concepts reflect the colonized people's ways to resist the unsecured power of the colonizer. Bhabha succeeds in showing colonialism's histories and cultures that intrude on the present demanding to transform our understandings of cross-cultural relations. Bhabha states that we should see colonialism as straightforward oppression, domination, violence only but also as a period of complex and varied cultural contact and interaction. His writings bring resources from literary and cultural theory to the study of colonial archives.

Homi K. Bhabha seems to be very much a thinker for the 21st century. Recently his work has begun to explore the complexities of a world by-colonial and neo-colonial wars, counter-globalization movements and widespread cultural confrontation. He does not study the revolutionary agency- anti colonial

struggle as like others. He proves himself an original by providing a conceptual vocabulary for the reading of colonial and postcolonial texts. He also highlights how the West is troubled by its 'doubles'- or the East. According to him, these doubles force the West to explain its own identity and to justify its rational self-image. In other words, he states that the Western civilization is not unique and no one can accept their superiority in the presence of other similar civilizations. Bhabha examines colonial history as well as he rethinks the present conditions too. He believes that the colonizer's cultural meanings are open to transformation by the colonized people. He states that there is an element of negotiation of cultural meaning when colonizer and colonized come together. He further states that the identities of both can be structured when both of them interact. According to him, the colonialism is marked by a economy of identity in which colonizer and colonized depend on each other. Bhabha accepts the importance of language in this process and so he has developed a linguistic model of anti-colonial struggle agency.

Homi Bhabha's work transformed the study of colonialism by applying post-structuralist methodologies to colonial texts. He used the term 'difference' for works of many distinct writers. So he explores and extends the relevance of post-structuralism for cultural difference. Bhabha states that the domination of the colonized depends on the assertion of difference: the colonized are inferior to the colonizers. Bhabha also believes that the colonial authority knows that this supposed difference is undermined by the real sameness of the colonized population. So he states that the tension between the illusion of difference and the reality of the sameness leads to anxiety. This anxiety opens gap in colonial discourse- a gap that can be exploited by the colonized, the oppressed. So Bhabha remarks that everyone should know where one's identity ends and the rest of the world begins, and it will help to define that world as other, different, inferior and threatening to your identity and interest.

According to Toni Morrison, Homi Bhabha is one of those small groups occupying the front rank of literary and cultural thought. He is a leading voice in postcolonial studies and is highly influenced by Western post-structuralist theorists notably, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. His theory is expounded in his books, *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *The Location of Culture* (1994). He, a diasporic person like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak has popularized postcolonial theory by giving new terms such as, Hybridity, Mimicry, The other, etc. to it. His contribution to postcolonial studies is noteworthy one.

Homi Bhabha claims that a salient characteristic of colonial culture is its hybridity, its “in-betweenness”. He is the theorist of cultural hybridity and in-betweenness, so he himself is “a mediating figure between activists and academics”. His colleague, W. J. J. Mitchell states that his work is so powerful because he can negotiate and interpret both positions to both sides- that is why his work speaks to people from all kinds of situations and backgrounds. According to Glen Worthey, Bhabha’s work (writing), never simply academic and never singly theoretical, has restored a third (or even perhaps adds a fourth) dimension to critical discourse of the past ten years. He also adds further and states that one would hope for many more years of fruitful observations, conversations and challenges. Long before *The Location of Culture* (1994) brought together in a volume a dozen of his seminal essays in the field of cultural criticism, Homi Bhabha had been acknowledged as a theorist of uncommon power and brilliance who looked at familiar texts in innovative ways and transformed questions of identity, social agency and national affiliation by dissolving their familiar coordinates.

Homi Bhabha develops a distinct idea of critical thinking by following the logic of Iteration. He writes of critical thinking as a process, rather than the adaptation of pre-arranged, pre-determined positions; he refers to ‘the

boundary and location of the event of theoretical critique which does not contain the truth (1994:22). He states that the critique or reading is a process rather than a procedure. He asserts strongly that thinking something before reading anything cannot be called a reading at all as it merely tries to find what we expected or in other words, our expectations are likely to be confirmed. Bhabha argues that critique, critical thinking, tends to dissolve certain commonplace oppositions, which in the case of colonialism are inherited from the colonial discourse under consideration. He writes against the dialectical form of argument. The concept 'deferral' is central to Bhabha's understanding of dialectical thinking. From Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks*) Bhabha has drawn the need to look at each situation in the light of its particular specific history. Bhabha has developed a general and productive rethinking of issues around colonial and post-colonial power and psyche through the reading and re-reading of Fanon's work. His reading of Fanon is only the most obvious example of conceptual ignition, and its effects are ongoing. His Works include:

1. *Nation and Narration (ed)*
2. *The Location of Culture*
3. *Cosmopolitanisms in Public Culture. (ed)*
4. *Edward Said: Continuing the Conversation (ed)*

Homi Bhabha's work in postcolonial theory is heavily influenced by poststructuralism, most notably the writings of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. In addition to this bulk of writing and books, he has also published contributed many more journal articles and book chapters. We find his homepages and profiles on the external link section too. He has been interviewed by many eminent figures.

Bhabha's engagement with the concept of the nation led to his editing a volume *Nation and Narration* (1990) which has had long-term influence on literary and cultural studies. His introduction to the volume takes off from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), but his own essay in the volume pushes the discourse to the borderline of history, to the limits of race and gender, not in order to formulate a general theory, but to consider the productive tension of the perplexity of language in various locations of living. He offers an exhilarated sense of alternate possibilities in which a culture is in permanent transition and incompleteness. Bhabha's theories of mimicry and hybridity have coloured postcolonial discourse so deeply that even those who have not read Bhabha's work now use them as points of reference.

He edited the first book *Nation and Narration* in which he strongly argues against the tendency to essentialize Third World Countries into a homogenous identity. Instead he claims that all sense of Nationhood is narrativized. Here he also challenges the tendency to treat post-colonial countries as a homogeneous block. This leads, he argues, to the assumption that there is and was a shared identity amongst ex-colonial states. Bhabha argues that all senses of nationhood are narrativized. Then he goes on to identify a relationship of antagonism and ambivalence between colonizers and the colonized. This study includes only his significant ideas: Homogenous identity, mimicry, interstice, hybridity and liminality reflected in his literary work.

In *The Location of Culture*, a collection of his important essays, Bhabha generates a series of concepts that work to undermine the simple polarization of the world into Self and Other. Here, Bhabha advocates a fundamental realignment of the methodology of cultural analysis in the West away from metaphysics and toward the 'performative' and 'enunciatory present.' Such a shift, he claims, provides a basis for the West to maintain less violent

relationships with other cultures. In Bhabha's view, the source of the Western compulsion to colonize is due in large part to traditional Western representations of foreign cultures. His argument attacks the Western production and implementation of certain binary oppositions. The opposition targeted by Bhabha includes centre/margin, civilized/savage, and enlightened/ignorant. Bhabha proceeds by destabilizing the binaries insofar as the first term of the binary is allowed to unthinkingly dominate the second. Once the binaries are destabilized, Bhabha argues that cultures can be understood to interact, transgress, and transform each other in a much more complex manner than the traditional binary oppositions can allow. According to Bhabha, hybridity and "linguistic multivocality" have the potential to intervene and dislocate the process of colonization through the interpretation of political discourse. In this book he uses the concepts such as mimicry, interstice, hybridity, and liminality to argue that cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent. Speaking in a voice that combines intellectual ease with the belief that theory itself can contribute to practical change. His work, *The Location of Culture* is a collection of his writings. They are characterized by his promotion of ideas of 'colonial ambivalence' and 'hybridity' and also by his use of aesthetic terms and categories (mimesis, irony, parody etc.) to mobilize an analysis of terms of inter-cultural engagement within the context of empire. For him, the rich text of the civilizing mission is remarkably split, fissured and flawed. According to him, the question of the ambivalence of mimicry as the problematic of colonial subjection arises from the colonial encounter between the white presence and its black semblance. He also states that the obligation on the part of the colonized to mirror back an image of the colonizer produces neither identity nor difference. Thus the 'mimic man' who occupies the impossible space between cultures is the 'effect of a flawed colonial mimesis in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English'. According to him, occupying the precarious area between mimicry and mockery, the mimic man seems to iconic both of the enforcement of colonial authority and

its strategic failure. Bhabha has become one of the leading post-colonial theorists of this era.

Bhabha's interest in these figures or figurings of the 'in-between' of colonial discourse is evident also in his invocation and transformation of the Bhaktian notion of 'hybridity'. In Bhaktin, hybridization destabilizes univocal forms of authority whereas; Bhabha sees it as a 'problematic of colonial representation. According to him, the production of hybridization not only expresses the condition of colonial enunciation but also marks the possibility of counter colonial resistance. In other words, hybridity marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility as a sign of spectacular resistance. He further extended the theory of resistance in his theorization of the 'Third Space of Enunciation' as a assertion of difference in discourse. He also states that the 'transformational value of change' lies in the rearticulating, or translation, of elements that are neither the one nor the other, but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both.

The radicalism of Bhabha's work lies in its deployment of the idea of difference within an analysis of colonialism as a 'cultural text or system of meaning'. He accounts the need of the performative dimension of cultural articulation. This thinking provides the development of a postcolonial practice as a guiding concern. This practice also recognizes the 'problem of cultural interaction that emerges at the significatory boundaries of cultures, where the meanings and values are read or signs are misappropriated. Bhabha's clearest statement of the 'postcolonial perspective' is outlined in the essay, '*The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency*', which also forms a defense of his interest in 'indeterminacy' against charges of the formalist orientation of his work.

In 1999, *Newsweek Magazine* listed Bhabha as one of the '100 Americans for the Next Century.' Bhabha has become something more than the

everyday cultural critic, contributing to worldwide debates in contexts like the World Economic Forum. You will see that even the most critical commentators accept Bhabha's importance. Many feel that the lesson of his work needs serious qualification before they are turned once again to the colonial and neo-colonial contexts. Almost every text in the post-colonial studies references Bhabha's work at some point.

3.1 THEORY OF HYBRIDITY:

The development of hybrid and reclaimed cultures in colonized countries is uneven, disparate, and might defy those notions of order and common sense which may be central not only to Western thinking but to literary forms and traditions produced through Western thought. The concept, 'Hybridity', an important concept in post-colonial theory refers to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. Homi Bhabha states that the assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as oppressive. He further states that it is also useful concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures- or colonizing cultures for that matter- are monolithic, or have essential, unchanging features. The term, "Hybridity" of Homi Bhabha is very much important and is currently in fashion with postcolonial critics. It refers to the kind of political and cultural negotiation between the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonial studies have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolization, and with the in-betweenness, diasporas, mobility and cross-overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism. Robert Young in his book, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* states:

A hybrid is technically a cross between two different species and that therefore the term hybridization evokes both the botanical notion of inter-species grafting and the ‘vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right’ which regarded different races as different species. (1995:10)

Here Young refers the term Hybrid as a cross between two different species. He states further that it is both the botanical notion as well as an inter-species grafting.

Homi Bhabha’s term ‘hybridity’ can be well explained by referring a long quotation from Ania Loomba’s book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* :

It is Homi Bhabha’s usage of the concept of hybridity that has been the most influential and controversial within recent postcolonial studies. Bhabha goes back to Fanon to suggest that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of the colonial condition. For Fanon, you will recall, psychic trauma results when the colonial subject realizes that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, to shed the blackness that he has learnt to devalue. Bhabha amplifies this to suggest that colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony. It is always, writes Bhabha in an essay about Fanon’s importance of our time, in relation to the place of the other that colonial desire is articulated, correct. (1998:148)

We can refer the discussion of Terry Collits who asks the question, whether the image of ‘*black skin/white masks*’ suggest hybridity or a violated authenticity? Collits examines the idea of Fanon who states that ‘skin is not just assumed like a mask but it is a god-given even if its meanings are social, discursive. He further states that skin, mask is the border, and they mark the interface between the self and the world. For Bhabha this image evokes ambivalence that not just as marking the trauma of the colonial subject but also characterizing the workings of colonial authority as well as subjects the dynamics of resistance. He suggests that colonial authority is not being able to replicate its

own self perfectly. Bhabha points out that even the Bible is hybridized in the process of being communicated to the natives. He states that the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference. So he strongly asserts that this gap is failure of colonial discourse and is a site for resistance.

Homi Bhabha generated the concept: hybridity of cultures refers to mixedness or impurity of cultures knowing that no culture is really pure. According to Bhabha, every culture is an original mixedness within every form of identity. He states that the cultures are not discrete phenomena, but being always in contact with one another, we find mixedness in cultures. Bhabha insists on hybridity's ongoing process- hybridization. He further asserts that no cultures that come together leading to hybrid forms but cultures are the consequence of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities. He directs our attention to what happens on the borderlines of cultures, and in-between cultures. He used the term, liminal on the border or the threshold that stresses the idea that what is in between settled cultural forms or identities is central to the creation of new cultural meaning. He further states that *The Location of Culture* is both spatial and temporal: so the terms- hybridity and liminality do not refer only to space, but also to time. So he asserts that the people living in different spaces are living at different stages of progress. (Huddart, 2006:6-7)

Bhabha rejects Fanon's idea, colonial authority works by inviting black subjects to mimic white culture, and states that this invitation itself undercuts colonial hegemony. He also stresses that both the colonizer and the colonized are independent. He further states that they are not only present together but also act on one another and there are many reversible reactions between them. The term 'hybridity' being an integral part of postcolonial discourse, we should as Ella Shohat rightly suggest, try to:

Discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence. (1992:110)

Homi Bhabha's term, 'hybridity' in colonial text, answers Spivak's question '*Can the Subaltern Speak?*' in the affirmative way. It indicates that subaltern has spoken. Here the term 'hybridity' conjures up the notion of 'in-betweenness' which is further elaborated by the accompanying concept of 'Diaspora'. The term 'Diaspora' evokes the specific terms of displacement but it loses its poignancy due to the effect of 'hybridity'. It means that the term 'hybridity' bridges the gap between the West and the East that is the colonizer and the colonized.

Christopher Bracken rightly suggests that Bhabha's term 'hybridity' opens up the possibility of an international culture of hybridity in the following words:

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha sites repetition as a mode of resistance to today's neocolonialism, particularly the recolonization of migrants within the contemporary Western metropolis. For Bhabha, the human subject is not grounded in a fixed identity but rather is a discursive effect generated in the act of enunciation. When migrants, refugees, and the decolonized take up positions in Western discourse, they divide it from itself by repeating it and a clear space within it for new, hybrid subjectivities. The hybrid postcolonial subject negotiates the interstices of Western discursive systems, operating in-between the dichotomies of colonizer and colonized, self and other, East and West. Once a mode of Western discourse is altered through repetition, moreover, it loses its "Westness" and exposes itself to difference. Iteration is therefore a way of

translating between cultures. It opens the possibility of an international culture of hybridity generated through discursive activity. (1999:506)

Homi Bhabha observed the society and found the unexpected forms of resistance of colonized and unexpected anxieties that plagued the colonizer despite his apparent mastery. He achieves these ends simultaneously, by picking on one phenomenon in which both colonizer and colonized participated, such as the circulation of colonial stereotypes. Bhabha also tries to challenge and transform our ideas of what it means to be *modern*. He states that modernity and post-colonialism are inescapably connected. He suggests the post-colonial perspective on modernity. He states further that modernity has repressed its colonial origins. So we need the new analysis of modernity to uncover this repression. Bhabha's project foregrounds modernity's complex hybridity. We should see modernity as something that needs to be hybridized. We should acknowledge and explore all ways and contributions for complete understanding of the modern world. In his article, '*Signs Taken for Wonders*', Homi Bhabha addresses the problematic of colonial representations of authority. Here he provides a compelling philosophical framework for analyzing native interrogation and British authority in relation to the hybridization of power and discourse. He uses the term, hybridization, to describe the effects of the relative transparency of colonial presence on the acknowledgement of its authority. (Viswanathan: 1989)

Bhabha's essays are complex, fragmented mosaics of quotation, neologism, poetry and cultural analysis. They are not coherent mosaics in which all the pieces fit together harmoniously as pieces often have jagged edges. They are mixed critical texts that use concepts or quotations in a patchwork critical form. His work shows poetic qualities that incorporates a range of styles, juxtaposing historical descriptions, psychoanalytical analogy, and literary criticism. Bhabha attacks the Western production of binary opposition, traditionally defined in terms of centre and margin, civilized and savage,

enlightened and ignorant. He further questions the easy resource to consolidated dualism by repudiating fixed and authentic centres of truth, suggesting that cultures interact, transgress and transform each other in a much more complex manner than typical binary oppositions allow.

3.2 CULTURE AND HYBRIDITY :

Homi Bhabha expresses his views on the relation between the culture and hybridity. According to him, just like colonial culture, contemporary culture is also hybrid. Hybridity idea characterizes the mechanism of the colonial psychic economy. He states that the important point to recognize is that cultures are always retrospective constructs means they are consequences of historical process. So he adds further that cultural hybridity is not something absolutely general and so hybridity appears in all cultures. It blurs all deference into difference, making all hybridity appear the same. His theory of hybridity is associated with mimicry and sly civility and also a denial that there were cultures already there that became hybrid. He makes it more clearly in the following passage of the essay, '*Signs Taken for Wonders*':

Colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures which can then be resolved as an issue of cultural relativism. Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority- its rules of recognition. (1994:114)

Here he stresses two things: we do not start with two or more cultures, more or less pure and trace their historical movements of hybridization. He states further that two different cultures are 'not the source of conflict', but are instead 'the

effect of discriminatory practices'. He also points out that cultures are effects of stabilization produced by authority. Bhabha contends that hybridity is not a consequence of other allegedly 'pure' positions trust together. According to him, hybridity is not the consequence of dialectical sublation- a synthesis of thesis and anti-thesis.

Greek thinkers like Hegel, Marx, and many more state that the logical structure of hybridity is not merely logical, but has pertinence to the understanding of social structures. It is interesting that Will Kymlica (political philosopher) should use the term 'hybrid' to characterize the complex cases (in-between cases) which may lead us astray. But Bhabha's sense of hybridity would not only refer to the complexity of certain demands for rights but also to the complexly hybrid histories from which those demands issue. Here he states that hybridization is banal, it is everyday. He goes a step further and states that hybridization is not just everyday banality, especially in terms of international law. According to Bhabha, if cultures are the consequence of hybridization process, then this view necessitates a rethinking of international agreement exemplified by the universal declaration of Human Rights.

In short, Bhabha's idea of hybridity is important. It suggests that cultures come after the hybridizing process, rather than existing before. He proves that, in colonial relationships, this is just as true of the colonizer as of the colonized. Bhabha reminds us that cultures are part of an ongoing process. He further suggests that majority liberal cultures in the West must view themselves through the post-colonial perspective. We observe that Bhabha's theoretization of hybridity has important consequences for discourses of rights. Bhabha points out that minority cultures have tended to be ignored or, alternatively, asked to assimilate.

3.3 THEORY OF MIMICRY:

The term 'Mimicry' underlines the gap between the norm of civility presented by European Enlightenment and its colonial imitation in distorted form. This notion is based on Foucault's term that was based on Kant's notion. Bhabha's term 'mimicry' is a part of a larger concept of visualizing the postcolonial situation as a kind of binary opposition between authority and oppression, authorization and de-authorization. He states ahead that all modes of imposition including the demand on the colonized to be like the colonizer results in mimicry. According to him, the mode of asserting authority over the colonized gave rise to mimicry. He further asserts that mimicry can be taken as a way of eluding control that also gives rise to postcolonial analysis by subverting the colonial master's authority and hegemony. Leela Gandhi explains the term 'mimicry' in her book, *Postcolonial Theory: An Introduction* as:

But mimicry is also the sly weapon of anti-colonial civility, an ambivalent mixture of deference and disobedience. The native subject often appears to observe the political and semantic imperatives of colonial discourse. But at the same time, she systematically misrepresents the foundational assumptions of this discourse by articulating it. In effect, mimicry inheres in the necessary and multiple acts of translation which oversee the passage from colonial vocabulary to its anti-colonial usage. In other words, 'mimicry' inaugurates the process of anti-colonial self-differentiation through the logic of inappropriate appropriation. (1999:149-50)

The above discussion indicates a little difference in the term mimicry that Homi Bhabha has given. Christopher Bracken has made a perceptive comment on Bhabha's term 'mimicry' in the following words:

Homi Bhabha exposes the ironic, self-defeating structure of Colonial discourse in the essay, "*of Mimicry and Man*". He notes that when English

administrators dreamed of converting India to Christianity at the end of the 18th century; they did not want their colonial subjects to become too Christian or too English. Their discourse foresaw a colonized mimic who would be almost the same as the colonist but not quite. However, since India's mimicry of the English blurred the boundary between the rulers and ruled, the dream of anglicizing Indians threatened to Indianize Englishness—a reversal the colonists found intolerable. Mimicry is therefore a state of ambivalence and undermines the claims of imperial discourse and makes it impossible to isolate the racialized essence of either the colonized or the colonizer. (1999:506)

Bhabha expects that an anxiety of colonizer has to open a space for the colonized to resist colonial discourse. This anxiety is matched by mimicry, with the colonized adopting and adapting the colonizer's culture. But this mimicry is not slavish imitation and the colonized is not being assimilated into the supposedly dominant or even superior culture. According to Bhabha, mimicry is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners and ideas. And this exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference, and so it is not evidence of the colonized's servitude. This mimicry is also a form of mockery as Bhabha's postcolonial theory is a comic approach to colonial discourse because it mocks and undermines the ongoing pretensions of colonialism and empire. In short, mimicry is one response to the circulation of stereotypes.

The comic quality of mimicry is important because colonial discourse is serious and solemn, with pretensions to educate and improve. Bhabha says that mimicry represents an ironic compromise between two ideas— that things are eternally the same and that there is continual change (1994:86). Homi Bhabha finds mimicry as central to colonial discourse. He defines colonial mimicry in following words:

Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excesses, its difference. (1994:86)

Colonizer discourse expects colonized to be like colonizer or identical. But the absolute equivalence between the two may fail to highlight the colonial rule and its ideologies. As these ideologies assume that there is structural non-equivalence, a split between superior and inferior that explains one group of people can dominate another. Homi Bhabha argues that ambivalence, mimicry is never quite accurate. It undermines colonialism's grand discourses of humanism, enlightenment. So he states that there is an obvious disjunction between the material effects of colonialism and its discourses of moral and intellectual superiority. He argues further that mimicry does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. According to him, the play between equivalence and excess makes the colonized both reassuringly similar and also terrifying: so mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (1994:86)

Homi Bhabha suggests that the partiality of presence in colonial discourse leads to a kind of drive to become authentic: authentically British perhaps, although as might be implied this could always slide into being mere British than the British. So he states further that "the desire to emerge as "authentic" through mimicry- through a process of writing and repetition- is the final irony of partial representation (1994:88). The colonial discourse at once demands both similarity and difference in the figures of the colonized. The mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask. In mimicry, identity is never identical with itself. So Bhabha points out that identity normally operates in terms of metaphor, but that in mimicry it explicitly operates through metonymy: a

substitution along a vertical axis in terms of parts for whole, a never ending substitution that cannot reach any point of full presence.

Mimicry being a strategy is characteristically visual. Bhabha insists on the visual as the key element in mimicry, making the connections with stereotype absolutely clear. He states that the visibility of the mimicry is always produced at the site of interdiction. Mimicry is itself a markedly ambivalent phenomenon. Bhabha's idea of mimicry needs to be, thought of as a process that mimics no fixed, final, foundational identity. The colonizer has no absolute pre-existence identity which can be mimicked, and the colonized likewise has no real identity which he or she is betraying through mimicry. V. S Naipaul's '*The Mimic Men*' (1967) is the central in Bhabha's lineage of mimicry.

Bhabha suggests that the structure of mimicry derives from a fundamental but unstable urge on the part of colonial authority. There must be intermediaries or collaborators with whom the colonial power can work in the exercise of its authority and these intermediaries are come to seem a little too similar to the colonizer, undermining ideologies of superiority. A further consequence of mimicry is the undermining of the colonizer's apparently stable original identity. The identity of the colonizer is constantly slipping away, being undermined by effects of writing, joking, sly civility and repetition. In conclusion, mimicry implicitly offers an opening for agency, and even a model for agency.

3.4 THE UNCANNY:

Homi Bhabha uses the concept of 'the uncanny' to characterize the post colonial experience. He describes the colonial psychic economy of monstrous doubling with his uncanny to explain the feeling we get when experiences of childhood that have been repressed return to disrupt our everyday existence.

Bhabha states that in the beginning of modern Western history something is repressed that inevitably breaks through the veneer of civilization. Bhabha suggests the uncanny concept as the unhomely too. He evokes the uncanniness of migrant experience through a series of familiar ideas like- half-life, (like the partial presence of colonial identity), repeats the life lived in the country of origin, but this repetition is not identical, introducing difference and transformation. He also says further that this difference in repetition is a way of reviving that past life, of keeping it alive in the present.

The idea of the uncanny is itself ambivalent and is used in many contexts throughout Bhabha's work. All the hesitations, uncertainties and ambivalences with which colonial authority and its figures are imbued are characterized in terms of the uncanny. In other words, the split in the political subject, and the way new contexts change the meaning of a statement- can also be described as uncanny. Due to the term's (uncanny) general currency in cultural theory, everything in Bhabha's work begins to seem a little uncanny. Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva (psychoanalytic literary critics) use the idea of the uncanny. This inspired Bhabha's sense of the hybrid, post-colonial perspective.

The German term '*Das Unheimliche*' was translated as the '*unhomely*' or '*un-housedness*'. This term was translated in English as uncanny that indicates:

- i) Mischievous, careless, unreliable dial.
- ii) Untrustworthy or inspiring uneasiness by reason of a supernatural element; uncomfortably strange or unfamiliar; mysteriously suggestive of evil.
- iii) Dangerous, unsafe dial.

The above explanation focuses the nature of the term uncanny in a very clear way. The term uncanny is something that we can control or access directly- the feeling

of uncanniness is essentially an involuntary recurrence of the old and familiar. The uncanny is something we can analyze only through self-observation and self-objectification. The uncanny is close to what Freud calls repetition compulsion. The feeling of uncanniness is, the feeling you get when you have guilt-laden past which you should really confront, even though you would prefer to avoid it. For psychoanalysis, the traces of past beliefs and experiences remain present in the mind.

Homi Bhabha uses the meaning of uncanny as that opens a space for us to reconsider how we have come to be who we are. He states that as like colonial discourse, culture has a dual identity. On the one hand, it is homely or realist, asserting its coherence and stability: it is made meaningful by those to whom it belongs. On the other hand, it is unhomely because it is always changing: it is always being made meaningful by others. According to Homi Bhabha, the culture has dual identity, as it is never quite coherent and self-sufficient. Its narratives seem stable and confident, but they always get drawn into strange displaced relationships- with other cultures, or texts, or disciplines. So he states ahead that the migrants can exemplify the dual nature of culture, always situated in relation to both an original culture and a new location. (1994:694)

The idea of the uncanny helps Homi Bhabha to think about the possibility that the last sector of humanity, forced into remaining static, has a relationship to home which is actually similar to the migrant's. Bhabha argues that the uncanny may have even more power when it is applied to the homeliness of the colonizer, when it is used to explore the foreignness necessarily central to the apparently original and self-sufficient source of colonization. Bhabha points out that the relationship of self and other is always an uncanny one. He states further that, uncanniness is not only a question of place, but also of time: because our sense of national identity is both static and open. We do not 'own' our nation, as it is something that is simultaneously our own and not our own, because its identity

is always coming from the future, or, in short, changing. Bhabha points out that history confront its uncanny doubles. (1994:194) He adds further that like culture, Western knowledge is homely and unhomely or canny or uncanny. Bhabha concludes his discussion stating the important contribution of the uncanny science-psychoanalysis. He views that this science reminds us that a change of object requires a change, or at least a transformation, in the procedures of observation.

The idea of the uncanny describes the dual quality of all identity, but is particularly useful in the study of colonialism. Bhabha uses the idea to complicate divisions between Western and non-Western identities, in other words, large and abstract identities. As uncanny concept undermines the stability of concepts in general, it seems to be a slippery concept. Homi bhabha is supposed to be an expert in transforming concepts as his theoretical strategies. The slippery quality means that it tends to elude definitive theorization. Bhabha further states that literature is a source of many intriguing examples of uncanniness and continues to produce uncanny effects for post-colonial criticism. Bhabha uses the term uncanny, which has a wide contemporary critical currency, associated with monstrosity, repetition and doubling. He uses it to interrogate the superficial self-sufficiency of Western modernity's narratives. Using the term canny and uncanny, Bhabha focuses the colonial relationships- as the simple division of self and other. The category of the uncanny allows Bhabha to emphasize the connection between what troubles 'our' concepts and what troubles 'our' sense of self. In relation of using the concept, 'uncanny', the great impact of Sigmund Freud and Kristeva is observed on Homi Bhabha.

3.5 THE STEREOTYPE:

Homi Bhabha reads with particular care the discourse of stereotypes in colonialism. The stereotype is a form of anxious colonial knowledge. Bhabha's

writing on this anxiety revise traditional studies of colonialism. The colonizer circulates Stereotypes about the laziness or stupidity of the colonized population through racist jokes, cinematic images etc. Bhabha states that these stereotypes seems to be a stable if false foundation upon which colonialism bases its power, and are something we should perhaps simply discuss. He analyses Edward Said's classic book *Orientalism* and presents the comments in the third chapter entitled, 'The Other Question' in his book, *The Location of Culture* (1994). Here, he explores the ways stereotypes and discrimination work in terms of a theory of discourse. Bhabha calls this project as 'a theory of colonial discourse' (1994:66). This theory is based on the ambivalence he finds central in the colonial discourses of stereotyping.

Bhabha suggests that stereotypical knowledges are recognized as a means of practical control, and are also kept separate from the philosophical 'civilizing' justifications of the colonial mission. According to Bhabha , a stereotype have a problem of fixing individuals or groups in one place, denying their own sense of identity, and presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge , usually knowledge that is at best defective. Bhabha states further that all forms of colonial identification need to be seen as modes of differentiation, realized as multiple, cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse, always demanding a specific calculations of their effects. (1994:67) Many agree that stereotypes are undesirable. The different stereotypes function in similar ways. The differences among them are most interesting and so each time we come across a stereotype we need to calculate anew its effects. We should also see how it has been produced and what it goes on to produce in its turn.

Homi Bhabha points out that realism is inadequate to analyze the colonial discourse. He tries to connect realism and colonial discourse, stating if realism is not always colonial discourse then colonial discourse is always a form of realism. In other words, not all realistic narratives have connections with

colonialism, but colonial discourse is always claiming to directly represent colonial reality. Bhabha says the stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. He further states that stereotype impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of “race” as anything than its fixity as racism (1994:75). He believes that the mirror stage encapsulates what happens in colonial discourse’s stereotyping productions: the mirror stage is at least a good model for the colonial situation. He further suggests that like the mirror phase the ‘fullness’ of the stereotype, its image as identity, is always threatened by lack. (1994:77) According to him, visual identification might always hold out the fantasy of full and stable identity, but that identity is immediately threatened by loss because visual identification is part of a circulation of relations rather than a one-way fixed relation. He states that the self and other are locked together. For Bhabha, there is no fact of blackness, and there is no fact of whiteness, not if those facts or identities are imagined as permanent. Homi Bhabha observes that whiteness is transparent, whiteness studies make whiteness opaque. Whiteness is made visible for what it has been and continues to be a strategy of authority. Whiteness seems to have a coherence, stability and finality that justify its authority, in contrast to the coherence and instability that explain why whiteness will always be inferior. Stereotypes function to enable colonial authority, providing the justification that the colonizer rules the colonized due to innate superiority. The authority recognizes its bases in stereotypes, producing prejudiced and discriminatory structures of governance and colonial rule is informed by supposedly civilizing ideals. The modern forms of Western political and economic institutions coexist with the ideologies of superiority. The coexistence enables the real exercise of colonial power, but at the same time that anxiety troubles the source of colonial authority. Bhabha states that this ambivalence or anxiety is necessary for the production of new stereotypes, but is also the space for counter-knowledge and strategies of resistance and contestation. Bhabha suggests that authority is only ever complete if we take it at its word- something that colonized

peoples obviously resisted, and that the postcolonial critic must continue to resist it too.

3.6 THE NATION:

The concept of 'Nation' is very important in the discussion of colonialism. The idea of nations means the forms of nationalism involved in anti-colonial struggle and post-colonial reconstruction. Many writers have pointed out that oppressed people have identified with clear national identities. So nations have been seemed a vital organizing principle for many writers in post-colonial studies. On the contrary, Homi Bhabha rejects the well-defined and stable identity associated with the national form as he wants to keep this identity an open one. He claims that nations have their own narratives, but very often a dominant or official narrative overpowers all other stories of minority group.

Homi bhabha, like many other thinkers is impressed by Benedict Anderson's book- *Imagined Communities* (1983), to start thinking about the concept- 'Nations'. Bhabha tries to emphasize the connection between nation and narration: Nations, like narratives, loose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. (1990:1) Bhabha, as like Walter Benjamin states that even in the most testing historical moments, the nation hangs together, utterly simultaneous, and at one with itself. He further states that in this process of simultaneity, those are excluded that do not fit in that. Bhabha seems to be impressed by Anderson and Walter Benjamin in regard the concept of nation.

Bhabha points out, the disjunctive time of a nation's modernity and we all are caught between the shreds and paths of cultural signification as well as the certainties of a nationalist pedagogy. (1994:142) He states further that the whole idea of the people emerges from a double narrative movement. The people,

like the nation, are a strategy: a rhetorical strategy. The double movement is that of pedagogy and performance, of certainties and anxieties which always go together. Bhabha explains the double movement and its strange temporality as:

We then have a contested conceptual territory where the nation's people must be thought in double-time; the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin in the past; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principles of the people as contemporaneity; as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process. (1994:145)

Here Bhabha points out that on the one hand, pedagogy tells us that the nation and the people are what they are; on the other, performativity keeps reminding us that the nation and the people are always generating a non-identical excess over and above what we thought they were. Bhabha further writes that 'in place of the polarity of a pre-figurative self-generating nation "in-itself" and extrinsic to other nations, the performative introduces a temporality of the "in-between"'. (1994:148) He adds further that the polarity of pedagogical and performative is constantly blurring, so that the pedagogical is never as stable as it wants to be, and the performative itself becomes pedagogically important.

Homi Bhabha explains the concept of nations as forms of narration in following words:

The linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity. However, the narrative and psychological force that nationness brings to bear on cultural

production and political projection is the effects of the ambivalence of the 'nation' as a narrative strategy. As an apparatus of symbolic power, it produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or 'cultural difference' in the act of writing the nation. What is displayed in this displacement and repetition of terms is the nation as the measures of the liminality of cultural modernity. (1994:140)

Here Bhabha argues that our sense of nationhood is discursively constructed: it is narrativized. He also points out that the colonial authority, the power of the national narrative seems entirely confident of its consistency and coherence, but is all the while undermined by its inability to really fix the identity of the people, which would be to limit their identity to a single overpowering nationality. He adds further that the narrative of nationality is continually displaced by other identities, like sexuality, class, or race, and there can be no end to this displacement. Bhabha also sees the nation as the most important symptom in an ethnographic study of modernity in which the observer must simultaneously be the part of the observed. Here, the impact of Claude Levi-Strauss (Structuralist, anthropologist) is observed on his work. Focusing on the concept of Nationhood, Bhabha writes that "Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture- and the people- as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life". (1994:157)

Homi Bhabha presents the concept-'*dissemination*' in regard with the notion of nation. Dissemination superficially seems to imply a dismissal of the usefulness of the nation as a category and as a political structure. It also seems to devalue notions of community in their most familiar forms. Bhabha outlines the post-colonial challenge to liberal notions of national identity, particularly emphasizing the importance of dissensus. Here he points out the notion of *Nation* as:

I don't think we can eliminate the concept of the nation altogether, at a time when in many parts of the world- in South Africa, in Eastern Europe- people are actually living and dying for that form of society. You can't completely do away with the nation as an idea or as a political structure, but you can acknowledge its historical limitations for our time. (1990:82)

3.7 THEORY OF OTHERNESS:

Postcolonial theory is built in large part around the concept of 'Otherness'. The term otherness includes doubleness, both identity and difference, so that every other, every different than and excluded by is dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define. Bhabha's concept of 'Otherness' is derived from Jacques Lacan's 'other' and Fanon's idea of 'other' as binary opposition between the White and the Black. The significance of his theory lies in his suggestion that Colonial authority is rendered 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' in the postcolonial era. Here Bhabha opens the spaces for the colonized to subvert the master-discourse. In his essay, "*The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse*" he emphasizes on how the colonial subject is taken as 'other leading to the construction of a stereotype in colonial discourse'.

Though the term 'other' refers to the colonized subject, it is not a plain term as it is more ambiguous. This is related with a number of approaches to epistemology and cultural identity. The term 'Other' is used by many theorists like- Sartre, Derrida, Lacan in their writings. The term used by Sartre explains the relation between 'Self' and 'Other'. This use of the term is helpful in creating an awareness of 'Self' and 'Identity.' Freud applies this term as the formation of subjectivity. The psychoanalyst and cultural theorist, Lacan makes a distinction between 'Other' with capital 'O' and the 'Other' with small 'o.' Here the small 'o'

designates the other who resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. The capital 'O' refers to the great other in whose gaze the subject gains identity. According to Homi Bhabha, the other with capital 'O' can be compared to the empire (the empirical centre) which makes the colonized subject conscious of one's identity as somehow other and dependent. This thinking reminds Gayatri Spivak's coinage of the term, 'othering' which means that the empirical centre creates its 'others'. In other words, the colonizing 'other' gets established when the colonized 'others' are treated as subjects.

Homi Bhabha states that 'colonial discourse' depends on the ideological construction of 'otherness'. He further states that it gives rise to 'the stereotype'. Here he says:

An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness.....it is this process of ambivalence, central to the stereotype that my essay explores as it constructs a theory of colonial discourse. (Newton,1997:293)

Bhabha evaluates the complete question of colonization: that is, how the colonizers came to build their colony and colonized, the native people, who are now, termed the 'other'. By studying this situation he states that the stereotype image of the colonized is a negative one. In other words, they are considered inferior to the colonizers in colour, race, knowledge and culture. Here he states that colonial discourse is an apparatus of power. He further states in the following words as:

The objective of colonial discourse is to construe 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. Despite the play of power within colonial discourse and the shifting

positionalities of its subjects (for example effects of class, gender, ideology, different social formations, varied systems of colonization and so on). I am referring to a form of govern mentality that in making out a 'subject nation', appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity. Therefore, despite the 'play' in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible. (1994:57)

Here he points out that colonial discourse highlights the inferior status of colonized before the colonizers. It also states the power politics of the colonizers that always try to dominate the colonized in all sense.

Many critics have studied the work of Homi Bhabha and expressed their views to locate his position in Indian literary critical history. Robert J. C. Young says:

If Bhabha changed his interpretative methods in response to the objections of his critics, he would no longer be Bhabha, the brilliant insights would be lost, and he would become a conventional cultural or historical critic. (2001:347)

Young refers Bhabha as one of the 'Holi Trinity' of post-colonial theory, alongside Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak. He further compares Bhabha with Ashis Nandy (political psychologist) and states:

There are parallels, influences and convergences of which we should be aware when we consider post-colonialism. Both critics in their writing characteristically violet the historical integrity of the theoretical tradition from which they draw and thereby deinstitutionalize its scope. (2001:347)

Aijaz Ahmad analyses the work of Homi Bhabha and gives his comments in following words:

History does not consist of perpetual migration, so that the universality of 'displacement' that Bhabha claims both as the general human condition and the desirable philosophical position is tenable neither as description of the world nor as generalized political possibility. He may wish to erase the between commerce and revolution, between 'the mercantile and the Marxist', and he is welcome to his preferences; but that hardly amounts to a 'theory' of something called post-coloniality. Most individuals are really not free to fashion themselves anew with each passing day, nor do communities arise out of and fade into the thin air of the infinitely contingent. (1995:16)

Benita Parry comments on Homi Bhabha's work and says:

a critical consciousness or a literary imagination alert to the crossing of borders and the boundaries is not by definition indifferent to the diverse situations of those communities, without prestige or privilege, which not only experience but effect sea-changes in existing cultural formations. (1987:132)

Benita Parry diagnoses the concept of indifference in his work. She compares Spivak and Bhabha on the question of the 'Subaltern Voice' and points out:

For Bhabha, the subaltern has spoken, and his readings of the colonialist text recovers a native voice. (1987:40)

Parry also objects to Bhabha's apparent readings of Fanon as a premature post-structuralist. Here she pleads the cause of it as:

It obscures Fanon's paradigm of the colonial condition as one of implacable enmity between native and invader, making armed opposition both a cathartic and pragmatic necessity. (1987:32)

Rasheed Araeen gives critical comments on Homi Bhabha's Work in following words:

Since his concept hybridity and in-between space has created a separate space, specified by the cultural differences of non-white people, it has created a separation or dividing line between whites and non-whites; the result is that white artists can carry on what they always did, appropriating any culture they liked and without carrying with them any sign of their culture identity, non-white artists must enter the dominant culture by showing their culture identity cards. (2000:16)

Here Rasheed Araeen states that Bhabha is some kind of native collaborator. He disagrees with the terms of Bhabha, the 'Third World' or 'Black' art magazine, stating that these terms are exactly required by globalization, being incorporated or produced by it. His criticism seems to be ungenerous and works as a representative of a certain vein of response to Bhabha's writing.

The next critics, Hardt and Negri analyze Homi Bhabha's work and comment that:

Bhabha's work is the clearest and best articulated example of the continuity between post-modernist and post-colonialist discourses. (2000:143)

Here they discuss Bhabha as an example of critical work suitable for the age of imperialism, but no longer appropriate in an age of post-modern empire. They see his work as symptomatic of the inability to come to terms with the radically new qualities of empire- a word which is roughly refers to what is more often called globalization. They also point out that Bhabha's work as like, post-colonial theory

is generally concerned with dialectical structures and the analysis of power as self-identical and monolithic, it is an appropriate form of analysis for imperialism.

Peter Hallward considers post-colonial theory in general and Bhabha in particular to be examples of what he terms a singularizing critical tendency. Pointing out Bhabha's view, behind every utterance there is a possibility of creativity. He states that this behind-ness operates as an absolute singularization:

Escaping from a situated position relative to other positions, the post-colonial slips between every possible position because it refers back, immediately, to that one logic that positions every possibility. (2001:26)

Here he views that Bhabha is a clear example of a singularizing tendency in post-colonial theory. Pointing out the post-colonial theory- with concepts like hybridity- operates on terms of its own creation, as opposed to more politically committed relational or specific forms criticism. Hallward adds ahead that, the category of difference in Bhabha licenses a particular kind of de-contextualized theory. In short, many cultural critics agree that bhabha's work is foundational in post-colonial criticism. But they also state that there is a lot of uncertainty about the value of his contribution.

Jaswant Guzder, McGill University comments Bhabha's book, *The Location of Culture* as, a post-modern and post-colonial exploration of the 'subject' voices relevant to the transcultural scholar, therapist or artist... this book deepens our understanding of cultural hybridization. In the *Voice*, Literary Supplement, Bhabha is analyzed as: Homi Bhabha greatly expanded the discipline of critical studies as he liberated it from the narrow scope and social indifference of much structuralist and poststructuralist thought. Bhabha speaks in a voice that combines intellectual, even poetic, density with the belief that theory itself can contribute to practical political change. Terry Eagleton once wrote about Homi Bhabha in the *Guardian*, 'Few post-colonial writers can rival Homi Bhabha in his exhilarated

sense of alternative possibilities'. In rethinking questions of identity, social agency and national affiliation, Bhabha provides a working, if controversial, theory of cultural hybridity, one that goes far beyond previous attempts by others. A scholar who writes and teaches about South Asian literature and contemporary art with incredible virtuosity, he discusses writers as diverse as Morrison, Gordimer, and Conrad.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha uses concepts such as mimicry, interstice, hybridity, and liminality to argue that cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent. Speaking in a voice that combines intellectual ease with the belief that theory itself can contribute to practical political change, Bhabha has become one of the leading post-colonial theorists of this era. Toni Morrison, Princeton University comments Bhabha as; Homi Bhabha is one of those small groups occupying the front ranks of literary and cultural theoretical thought. Any serious discussion of postcolonial/postmodern scholarship is inconceivable without referencing Mr. Bhabha. Edward Said, Columbia University appreciates Bhabha as; Homi Bhabha is that rare thing, a reader of enormous subtlety and wit, a theorist of uncommon power. His work is landmark in the exchange between ages, genres, and cultures, the colonial, post-colonial, modernist and postmodern.

3.8 SUMMING UP:

In 1999, *Newsweek Magazine* listed Bhabha as one of '100 Americans for the Next Century'. Bhabha has become something more than the everyday cultural critic, contributing to worldwide debates in contexts like the World Economic Forum. You will see that even the most critical commentators accept Bhabha's importance. Many feel that the lesson of his work needs serious qualification before they are turned once again to the colonial and neo-colonial

contexts. Almost every text in the post-colonial studies references Bhabha's work at some point.

The influence of many Western writers is observed on the work of Homi Bhabha. He has developed his ideas from the work of M. M. Bakhtin, Antonio Gramsci, Hannah Arendt, W. E. B. Du Bois, Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, and many more. We also observe the key influences of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, on his development as a critical thinker. He takes two terms- '*Iteration*' and '*the statement*' from Derrida and Foucault respectively. (Iteration means the necessary repeatability of any mark, idea, or statement if it is to be meaningful and statement refers to a specific meaning). His work reflects the significance of reading that helped him to derive some ideas, concepts, views from his influences. He takes an analysis of thought's complexity and a philosophical approach, stressing difference from Derrida and Foucault. This helped him to understand how the meaning of terms and ideas change in accordance with context. From that he also has developed a critical thought emphasizing process. We can observe that this thinking is specific to each situation, and cannot offer a 'global' answer to specific problems or issues without understanding specific histories.

Many critics leveled the charge against Bhabha that he is dense and obscure in his writings. He answers the saying, 'I use the language I need for my work'. He adds further that he was not interested in being a descriptive and expository writer. He made all theoretical framework of his own and so attempting new connections, articulating new meanings, always takes the risk of being not immediately comprehensible to readers. He also expressed his satisfaction with the empowerment that get from his work as well as empowering others.

Homi Bhabha has become one of the most recognized names in the critical current known as postcolonialism, a current with a distinct interest in

ethnicity and culture. He is certainly a thinker to be reckoned with across a broad range of critical concerns. By writing of the colonial subject's slyly civil, but finally subversive, tactics of mimicry, he himself invites us to read him as a possible practitioner of this mimicry and sly civility. His ideas of colonial culture has its hybridity, its 'in-betweenness' are greater than the sum of the two cultures, colonizing and colonized. He even invites us to read his own story and writings as some sort of super salient hybrid. Bhabha is the theorist of cultural hybridity and in-betweenness, so he himself is "a mediating figure between activists and academics". His colleague, W. J. T. Mitchell admired Bhabha as "His work is so powerful because he can negotiate and interpret both positions of both sides—this is why his work speaks to people from all kinds of situations and backgrounds". (Gilman, 1998:2) Bhabha's writing, never simply academic and never single theoretical, but restored the third dimension to critical discourse of the past ten years.

To sum up, Bhabha's work is widely recognized for its emphasis on hybrid identities, diasporas, migrancy and border-crossings. Here Bhabha seems to be extremely hostile to nationalism. He states that the identity of a nation is something narrated, but the process is two-fold: there is a pedagogical dimension that foregrounds total sociological facts, and there is a performative dimension reminding us that those total facts are always open and in fact are being subtly altered everyday. He adds further that the national subjects are inventing the nation at every moment, changing its ideas of itself as well as its institutions. Bhabha's thinking about the nation re-emphasizes temporality, the non-identical qualities of the nation, best explored by its minority groups. Homi Bhabha's work complicates our understanding of majority and minority identities, and this complication has clear implications for majority and minority cultures. Homi Bhabha and his fellow postcolonial critics (e. g., Gayatri Spivak) have countered

that the “postcolonial condition” requires novel concepts and formulations to capture the increasingly complex postcolonial world we live in.

