

**Literature, Culture and Media**  
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**Lecture – 24**  
**Said, Spivak and Bhabha**

Welcome dear participants to the fourth module of the fifth week. In the previous module, we have discussed the development of the postcolonial theory and arguments and also we have looked at the major terms which are used in the discussion of this particular theory. Today, we would begin our discussion with the major theorists.

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**Contents**

1. Edward Said
  - Orientalism
  - Otherness
2. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak
  - Subaltern
3. Homi Bhabha
  - Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences
  - Hybridity
  - Third Space
  - Ambivalence
  - Mimicry

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For the discussion, I have taken up 3 major theorists and their main arguments. Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak and Homi Bhabha. We begin with the discussion of Edward Said's Orientalism and Otherness.

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## Theorists: Edward Said

- *Orientalism* (1978), gives an account of the cultural representation of the Orient (non-white, non-European).
- Innovative use of Foucault's discourse analysis and knowledge/power dynamic to explore how production of knowledge is never innocent.
- Knowledge production is tied to the institutional discourses which mediate identity and community.
- The concept of otherness lies at the center of his arguments about the production, and dissemination of the Orientalist discourse in the service of colonial/imperial ventures.



Edward Said famous treatise *Orientalism* which was published in 1978. Begins by giving us a very detailed account of the cultural representation of the orient. The orient according to Edward Said has been constructed as being a non-white and a non-European entity. It is not a natural entity as such but it has been culturally constructed and promoted by the West.

In the discussion of his ideas, Said has used innovatively the discourse analysis of Foucault as well as the knowledge and power dynamics of Foucault in order to explore how the production of knowledge is never innocent. It has always mired and designed into certain preconceived notions. The production of knowledge is also tied to the institutional discourses which mediate identity as well as community.

And the concept of otherness in fact according to Said lies at the center of his argument about the production and dissemination of the Orientalist discourse in the service of colonial ventures. So we find that the Orientalist discourse is necessarily working in the service of the colonial ventures in order to support the imperialistic powers.

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**Major arguments in Orientalism**

1. The Foucauldian insight—production of knowledge is bound with power operations and social/cultural hierarchies—informs Edward Said's main argument
2. The 'knowledge' about 'the Orient' as it was formed and disseminated in Europe was an ideological accessory that justified colonial 'power'.
3. The Orient was a European invention: Orientalism is not about Eastern/non-European societies and cultures, it's about the Western representation of non-European cultures.

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The major arguments of Orientalism can also be taken up in a very summary manner. The Foucauldian insight about the production of knowledge and that the production of knowledge is bound necessarily with power discourse, the operations of power and it in turn generates social and cultural hierarchies is a basis of Said's arguments. The knowledge about the Orient as it was formed and disseminated in Europe came to become an ideological accessory and it justified the colonial empowerment.

The colonized nations and their stature was justified in terms of White Men Burden by the discourses which were deliberately constructed in terms of the oriental's knowledge. The Orient does according to Said was an European invention. It was not about the Eastern and the non-Eastern societies and cultures.

It was not an attempt to find out the differences between the two or it was also not an attempt to understand the culture of the orient. It was about the Western representation of the non-European cultures for a particular aim. And the aim was to present them in such a manner so that the hierarchies of the West would be continued without any challenge.

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4. The discipline of Orientalism was concomitant with the control and infiltration of the East by European colonial power.
5. Supported and reinforced by disciplines like literature, history, Anthropology, Philology, Philosophy, Archaeology etc.
  - Creative writers, statesmen, political thinkers, philologists and philosophers contributed to Orientalism as an institution
  - Provided the lens through which the 'Orient' would be viewed, and controlled
  - Thus knowledge about and power over colonized lands are related enterprises (Loomba, 2005)

So the development of the study of the Orient and the discipline of Orientalism as such was concomitant with the control and infiltration of the East by the European colonial powers. In this attempt, the discipline of Orientalism was supported and reinforced by various other disciplines. For example, literary studies, history, anthropology, philology, philosophy, archaeology, etc. were based on a creative dissemination of derogatory ideas about the Oriental.

So in a way, we would find that Orientalism became an institution. It also provided a lens to the Western powers through which the particular cultures could be viewed in a derogatory manner. Thus Loomba has commented knowledge about the colonized lens and power over the colonized lens were related enterprises and the two cannot be separated in any way.

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- Orientalism reconfigured the study of colonialism.
- The formal and academic study of the Orient along with literary and cultural texts produced certain ways of seeing and thinking that gave ideological impetus and justification for the spread of empire.
- Said argues "that certain **texts** are accorded the authority of academics, institutions, and governments. ... Most important, such texts can create not only **knowledge** but also the very **reality** they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a **tradition**, or what Michel Foucault calls a **discourse**, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it."

So we see that this idea of Orientalism reconfigured the study of colonialism in a major way. The formal and academic studies of the Orient along with the literary representation and other cultural texts produced certain ways of seeing and thinking that gave ideological impetus and justification for the spread of the empire.

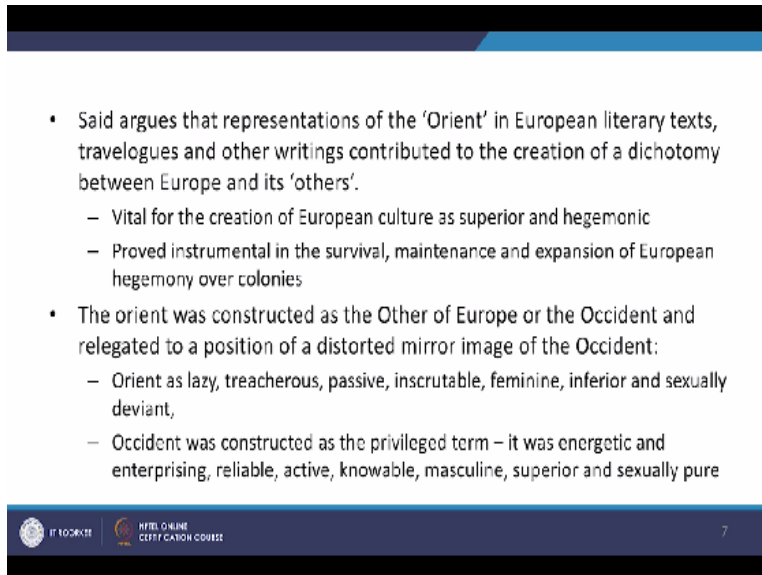
And here I am quoting from Said a quote which is highly pertinent and which also suggests how the Foucauldian interpretations of knowledge and power nexus are central to our understanding of the postcolonial theory. Said argues certain texts are accorded the authority of academics, institutions, and governments and most importantly as Said says such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe.

So what Said wants to suggest is the fact that certain texts have been deliberately created as a part of the orientalist study program which in a way disseminated not only knowledge about the orient as they considered it to be. But also they created the reality about which they were trying to spread a certain knowledge which they were trying to describe. So in fact the reality itself was created by the orientalist studies.

Over a passage of time, such knowledge and reality produced a tradition which Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author or an idea, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. So we can say that a whole discourse can be

created on the basis of the falsehood and there is no attempt to verify the originality either of the author or the content which it purports to represent.

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- Said argues that representations of the 'Orient' in European literary texts, travelogues and other writings contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between Europe and its 'others'.
  - Vital for the creation of European culture as superior and hegemonic
  - Proved instrumental in the survival, maintenance and expansion of European hegemony over colonies
- The orient was constructed as the Other of Europe or the Occident and relegated to a position of a distorted mirror image of the Occident:
  - Orient as lazy, treacherous, passive, inscrutable, feminine, inferior and sexually deviant,
  - Occident was constructed as the privileged term – it was energetic and enterprising, reliable, active, knowable, masculine, superior and sexually pure

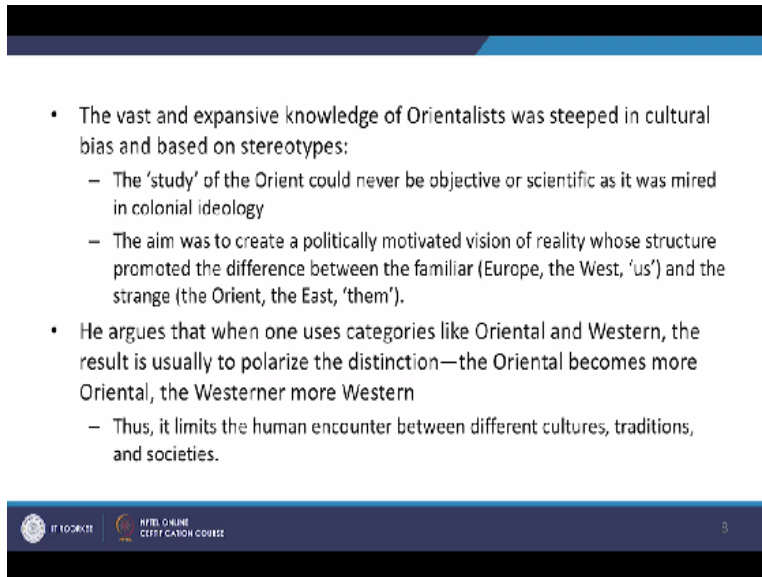
Therefore Said argues that representations of the Orient in European literary texts, in travelogues and other writings, contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between Europe and its others. This dichotomy was also vital for the creation, for the survival and for the maintenance and expansion of European culture as superior and hegemonic. And it was the colonized understanding of European culture as being superior and hegemonic which was the main stay in further strengthening the colonial empire.

So the orient was constructed as the other of Europe or the Occident. So we find that the 2 binaries have been created and the orient has been relegated to a position in which it functioned as a distorted mirror image of the Occident. So if we can say that Orient was lazy or treacherous or passive or feminine or inferior and sexually deviant than the occident has already been constructed as a binary which is privileged and therefore, as a privileged binary opposition, it necessarily is energetic and enterprising.

It is therefore, reliable active, knowable, masculine, superior and sexually pure. So we find that the studies of orientalist created binaries in which the West was privileged and therefore, these studies gave a particular tainted understanding of what colonization, the process of colonization

in fact is.

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- The vast and expansive knowledge of Orientalists was steeped in cultural bias and based on stereotypes:
  - The 'study' of the Orient could never be objective or scientific as it was mired in colonial ideology
  - The aim was to create a politically motivated vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them').
- He argues that when one uses categories like Oriental and Western, the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western
  - Thus, it limits the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.

Said further argues that owing to this nature of the discourse, the study of the orient can never be objective or scientific and it is mired in the particular colonial ideology. So the vast and expensive knowledge of orientalist which has been created by the West is a steeped in culture bias and it is based on stereotypical understanding of the East.

The aim was not to create a knowledge or a knowledge base but the aim was to create a politically motivated vision of reality where the structure used to promote the difference between the familiar and the other. Familiar was Europe, the West, us, the privileged binary and the estrange, the Orient, the East, them, was the other which was an underprivileged binary.

And therefore, necessarily the evil one. Said therefore, argues that when one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of either analysis or research or for that matter public policy, the result is normally to polarize the distinction. The Oriental becomes more oriental in the process, the Westerner becomes more Western in this process. And therefore, they limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.

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- Underscores the essential questions of unequal power relations focusing on how homogeneous cultural perceptions of “the Other” generated under the colonial rule continue today through the differentiation of races, as well as through the production and manipulation of knowledge
- Like Fanon he wants to unmask the hegemonic ambitions of colonialism
- Questions western scholarship regarding the Orient and the belief that the Orient and its people are incapable of understanding themselves and cannot speak for themselves
- Process of creating a necessary “Other” is strongly aided by the use of language and circulation of produced and manipulated knowledge. Fanon, on the other hand, was mostly concerned with the psychological relationship between the two races

Said also underscores the essential questions of unequal power relations focusing on how homogeneous cultural perceptions of the Other generated under the colonial rule continue today through the differentiation of races, as well as through the production and manipulation of knowledge. Said's idea is that this creation of knowledge under the Orientalist scheme of the West has not stopped.

It is still continuing in one way or the other. Very much like Fanon, he wants to unmask the hegemonic ambitions of colonialism. But we find that whereas Said believed that the process of creating a necessary others is strongly aided by the use of language and circulation of produced and manipulated knowledge and narratives. Fanon on the other hand was mostly concerned with the psychological relationships between the 2 races.

Said thus questions western scholarship regarding the Orient and the belief that the Orient and its people are incapable of understanding themselves or they are also incapable to speak for themselves. Another major theorist in the context of postcolonial theory whom I want to refer to during this module is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

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### Gayatri Spivak

- In her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak begins by noting the inadequacy of western theories of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari in understanding the positionality of postcolonial subjects.
  - Subalternity as a space of difference
  - Impossibility of understanding the meaning of the speech of subaltern
  - Epistemic frameworks are steeped in western thought, philosophy and metaphysics
- According to Spivak, the subaltern woman in postcolonial/third world countries is structurally excluded from the frameworks that render it impossible to understand these speech acts.

In her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak has started by noting the inadequacy of western theories of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari in understanding the positionality of postcolonial subjects. In fact, she has constructed through this significant essay Subalternity as a space of difference and also a space of impossibility of understanding the meaning of the speech of subaltern within the given frameworks that are steeped in western thought, philosophy and western metaphysics.

According to Spivak particularly the subaltern woman, woman in the postcolonial world, woman in the third world countries are excluded structurally from these frameworks that render it impossible to understand the speech act of the subaltern woman. Spivak has undertaken a deconstructive approach that lays bare the institutions that inhibit the articulation of the voice of the subaltern women.

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- Undertakes a deconstructive approach
  - Lays bare the institutions that inhibit the articulation of the voice of subaltern women
- Critical of both colonial/imperial structures and the Indian institutions of patriarchy – reveal how they exploit the structural inequity of women in order to fulfill their own interests
  - Studies the diverse and often contradictory responses to the practice of *Sati* in Bengal
  - The colonial rulers use the practice of *sati* to posit themselves as more rational and enlightened
  - Appropriate for themselves an ethical position by banning sati

She is critical not only of the colonial structures or the imperial structures, she is also equally critical of the Indian patriarchal institutions and shows how the patriarchal Indian Institutions have also exploited the structural inequality of women in order to fulfil their own interests. So in the views of Spivak, it is not only the colonial structures who have marginalized women, put her into the position of a subaltern whose voice cannot be heard.

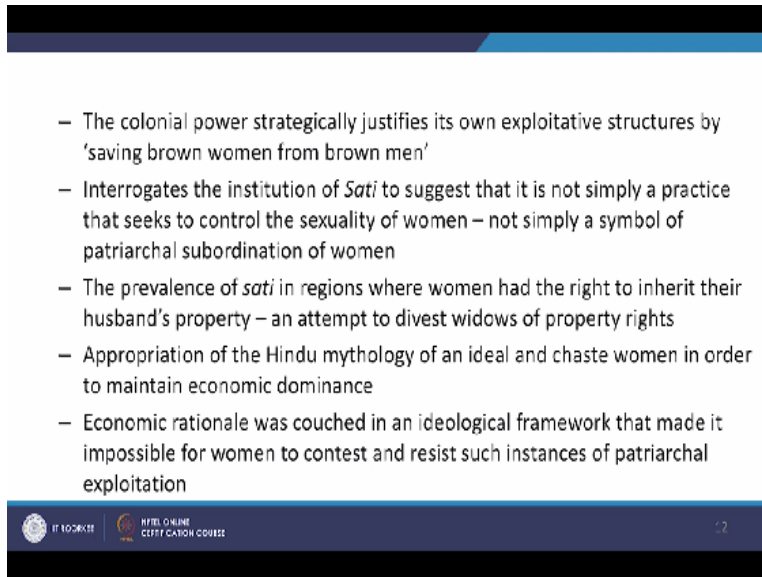
But it is also equally the responsibility of Indian Institutions of Patriarchy for putting the women into this impossible position. She has particularly studied the contradictory responses to the practice of Sati in Bengal. We find that the studies of Sati pratha, the tradition of Sati in Bengal have been diverse and often contradictory.

The colonial rulers have used the practice of Sati to posit themselves as more rational and thus they have appropriated for themselves in ethical position by banning this practice. Spivak wants to suggest that he colonial powers have strategically justified in their own exploited structures the fact that they are saving the brown women from the brown men.

So you would find that the postcolonial structures here are using or are constructing further the marginalization of women in a system of Indian patriarchal imperatives. She had further interrogated the institution of Sati and suggest that it is not simply a practice that seeks to control the sexuality of women. In fact, it is not only a symbol of patriarchal subordination of women

where she is always considered as being subservient to her husband.

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- The colonial power strategically justifies its own exploitative structures by ‘saving brown women from brown men’
- Interrogates the institution of *Sati* to suggest that it is not simply a practice that seeks to control the sexuality of women – not simply a symbol of patriarchal subordination of women
- The prevalence of *sati* in regions where women had the right to inherit their husband’s property – an attempt to divest widows of property rights
- Appropriation of the Hindu mythology of an ideal and chaste women in order to maintain economic dominance
- Economic rationale was couched in an ideological framework that made it impossible for women to contest and resist such instances of patriarchal exploitation

But the prevalence of Sati, particularly in those regions where women could have a possibility to inherit the husband’s property also finds out the fact that this custom was an attempt to divest widows of property rights by appropriating and abusing the Hindu mythology of an ideal and chaste women and the purpose of this custom was not only to safeguard the suggested chastity of a women but also to safeguard the economic dominance of the men of the family.

Thus the economic rationale behind the practice of Sati was couched in an ideological framework that made it impossible for women to contest and resist these instances of patriarchal exploitation.

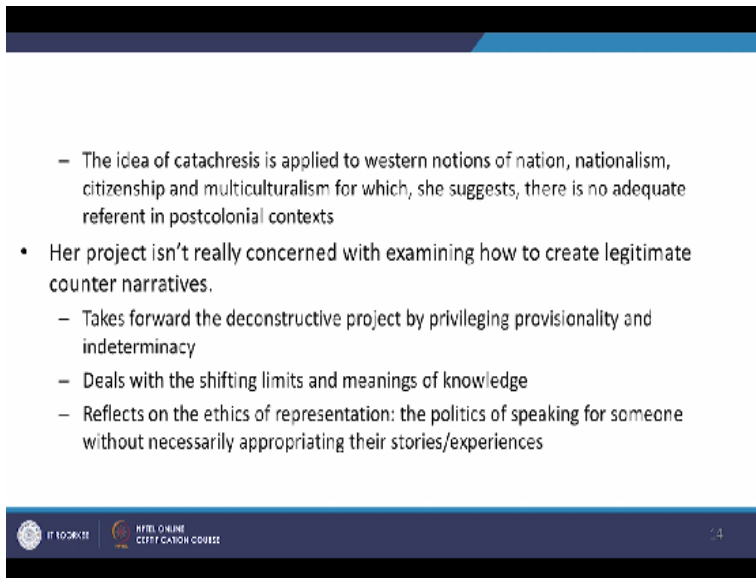
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- Spivak unearths the oral and alternative narrative of a young Bengali woman who uses suicide as a way to speak (in her death and through her death) against both colonial and sexist frameworks.
  - Even when this subaltern woman makes an effort in death to speak she is not able to be heard
  - A speech act is complete only when both speaking and hearing happen.
- Concerned with the impossibility of a speech act – centrally concerned with the unstable and catachrestical nature of language

Spivak has also suggested and unearths the oral and alternative narrative of a young Bengali woman who sometimes use suicide as a way to speak in her death and through her death, woman attempted to speak out against both colonial and sexist frameworks. But Spivak has argued that even when this subaltern woman is attempting to make an effort in death to pass on a message through her suicide to speak she is perhaps not being heard. Because the act of speech is completed only when both speaking and hearing happens.

But in these suggested cases which Spivak has taken up as pointer, we find that even though a woman is attempting to say something in the death throws, is trying to communicate a message through committing suicide, etc. through her death. Her voice is not heard because it leaves no imprint on the patriarchal manifestations of power. So Spivak is concerned with the impossibility of speech act because it is centrally concerned with the unstable and catachrestical nature of language.

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- The idea of catachresis is applied to western notions of nation, nationalism, citizenship and multiculturalism for which, she suggests, there is no adequate referent in postcolonial contexts
- Her project isn't really concerned with examining how to create legitimate counter narratives.
  - Takes forward the deconstructive project by privileging provisionality and indeterminacy
  - Deals with the shifting limits and meanings of knowledge
  - Reflects on the ethics of representation: the politics of speaking for someone without necessarily appropriating their stories/experiences

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the idea of catachresis as a metaphor without an adequate literal referent is applied to western notions of nation, nationalism, citizenship and multiculturalism for which she suggests there is no adequate referent in postcolonial texts. And therefore, it becomes a semantic misuse or error. In fact, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is not basically concerned with examining how to create legitimate counter narratives.

Rather she is more interested in taking forward the deconstructive project by privileging provisionality and indeterminacy. Thus she deals with shifting limits and meanings of knowledge and reflects on the ethics of representation, the politics of speaking for someone, narrating someone's experiences in stories in such a way that we do not necessarily appropriate them.

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- Keeping these points in mind: Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" should be reconfigured to be understood as "Can the subaltern be heard?"
  - The subaltern exists at the periphery of the symbolic order
  - Occupies a marginal position;
  - Erased and rendered silent because of the various institutional and discursive practices that structure language in such a way that it only encodes dominant and hegemonic ideas

So Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's contribution has been a very major contribution in which she has tried to align the postcolonial argument with the feminist arguments. In fact, keeping her points in mind, the question which she has raised, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," can also be reconfigured and can be understood as a question like "Can the Subaltern be heard? Because if they cannot be heard, the act of speech cannot be completed.

The subaltern by definition is someone who exists at the periphery of the symbolic order. And those who occupies such a marginal position are erased and rendered silent because of the various discursive practices which have been institutionalized and that structure language in such a way that it only encodes dominant and hegemonic ideas. And therefore, the voice of a subaltern, particularly of a subaltern woman can perhaps never be heard.

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- It is within this framework that Spivak politicizes the issues of subalternity by claiming that a subaltern cannot speak because their speech cannot be heard or understood.
- Access to speech and self-representation signifies an access to the symbolic order (language as the Law), and thus, symbolic and political power.
- A true subaltern lies outside of these structures. Spivak clarifies that if a subaltern is able to speak, he/she is not a subaltern anymore.

So it is within this framework that Spivak has politicized the issue of subalternity and claimed that a subaltern cannot speak because their speech cannot be heard or understood. Access to speech and thus access to self-representation signifies an access to the symbolic order, language as the Law, and thus, symbolic and political power too. A true subaltern lies outside of these structures and Spivak has clarified in some of her interviews that if a subaltern is able to speak or he or she does not remain a subaltern anymore.

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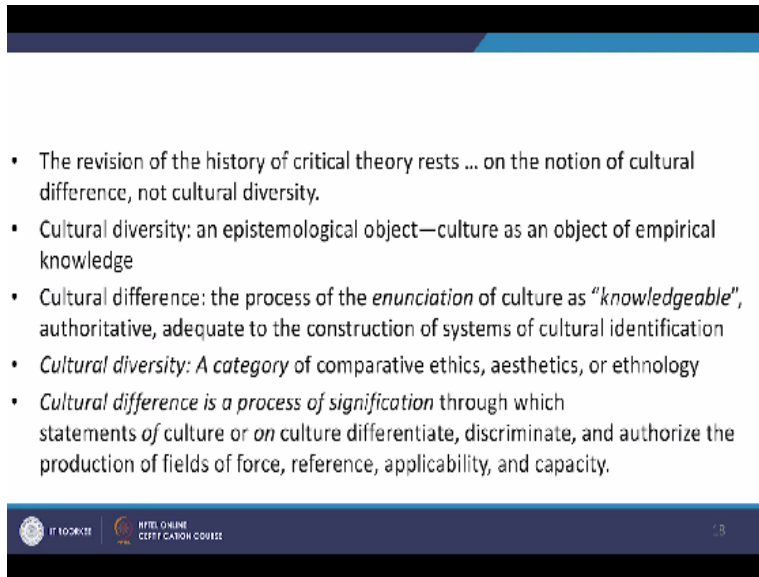
### Homi K. Bhabha: Cultural Diversity and Cultural differences

- Bhabha wants us to “rethink our perspective on the identity of culture” in the Post-colonial world.
- He begins by drawing a distinction between (what Kamau Brathwaite in “Contradictory Omens” has termed) “cultural diversity” and what he terms “cultural difference” in an allusion to the term ‘différence/différance’ so central to Post-Structuralist thinking.

The third most important figure in the context of postcolonial theory is Homi Bhabha who has talked about cultural diversity and cultural differences. He wants us to rethink our perspective on the identity of culture in a postcolonial world. He begins his discussions by drawing a distinction

between what Brathwaite had called cultural diversity and what Bhabha terms as cultural difference in a very clear allusion to the term difference and difference which has been so central to the post-structuralist thinking and the postmodern arguments.

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- The revision of the history of critical theory rests ... on the notion of cultural difference, not cultural diversity.
- Cultural diversity: an epistemological object—culture as an object of empirical knowledge
- Cultural difference: the process of the *enunciation* of culture as “*knowledgeable*”, authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification
- *Cultural diversity*: A category of comparative ethics, aesthetics, or ethnology
- *Cultural difference* is a process of *signification* through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate, and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability, and capacity.

The revision of the history and I quote from Bhabha, "the revision of the history of critical theory rests on the notion of cultural difference and not cultural diversity." Cultural diversity according to Bhabha is an epistemological object. Culture as an object of empirical knowledge whereas cultural difference according to Bhabha is the process of the enunciation of culture which makes culture as knowledgeable, authoritative, and therefore, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification.

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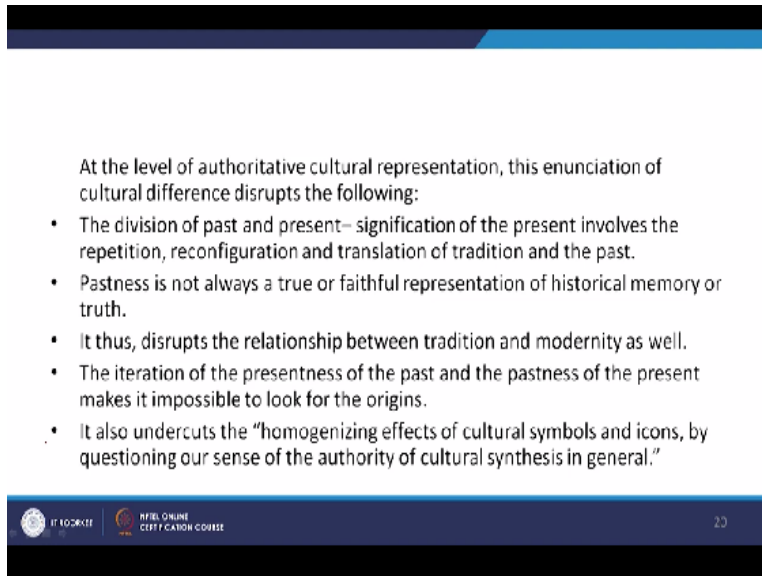
- Cultural diversity is the recognition of pre-given cultural “contents” and customs, held in a time frame of relativism
- It gives rise to innocuous and inoffensive – anodyne- liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange, or the culture of humanity.
- Cultural diversity also represents a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity.
- Cultural diversity may even emerge as a system of the articulation and exchange of cultural signs in certain imperialist accounts of anthropology.

So if cultural diversity is a category of comparative ethics, as Bhabha says, through which statements of culture or on culture can differentiate, discriminate, is the process of signification which can be termed as cultural difference. Cultural diversity according to Bhabha is the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs which is held in a time frame of relativism. It also gives rise to liberal notions of multiculturalism.

These liberal notions which are prevalent in the western thought, the notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange, or the culture of humanity are innocuous and inoffensive. In fact, that the word which Bhabha has used for these liberal notions is anodyne. So cultural diversity according to Bhabha thus represents a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures. These totalized cultures remain unsullied.

They have not been tainted by the intertextuality of their historical locations and they are safe, what Bhabha terms as the utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity. Bhabha thus suggests that the collective identity of these cultures is unique because it is not an exact memory, it is rather only a mythic memory and that too it exists in a sphere which Bhabha has termed as a utopia. So we find that cultural diversity thus may even emerge as a system of the articulation and exchange of cultural signs in certain imperialist accounts of anthropology.

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At the level of authoritative cultural representation, this enunciation of cultural difference disrupts the following:

- The division of past and present– signification of the present involves the repetition, reconfiguration and translation of tradition and the past.
- Pastness is not always a true or faithful representation of historical memory or truth.
- It thus, disrupts the relationship between tradition and modernity as well.
- The iteration of the presentness of the past and the pastness of the present makes it impossible to look for the origins.
- It also undercuts the “homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons, by questioning our sense of the authority of cultural synthesis in general.”

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At the level of authoritative cultural representation, this enunciation of cultural difference may disrupt various understandings. For example, it may disrupt the division of past and present. According to Bhabha, the signification of the present involves the repetition, reconfiguration and translation of tradition and the past. And therefore, pastness is never a true or a faithful representation.

It is always under construction and therefore, it disrupts the relationship between tradition and modernity also. the iteration of the presentness of the past and the pastness of the present makes it impossible for us to look for the origins. And therefore, it undercuts the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons, by questioning our sense of the authority of cultural synthesis in general.

Because as Bhabha has suggested, the present is also continually repeating, reconfiguring and translating the tradition as well as the past. And therefore, the boundaries between the past and the present cannot be very categorical. He also further suggests that the cultures are not unitary in themselves.

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- Need to reevaluate the way we look at identity of culture
- Cultures are not unitary in themselves
- They are neither simply dualistic or oppositional in terms of the Self and the Other.
- The idea of culture as a process of constant struggle suggests a “possible critique of the positive aesthetic and political values we ascribe to the unity or totality of cultures, especially those that have known long and tyrannical histories of domination and misrecognition.”
- “It is this “difference” in language that is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent.”

They are not only not unitary but they are also neither simply dualistic or oppositional in terms of the Self and the Other. The idea of culture as a process of constant struggle suggests a critique of those values, those values in the realms of aesthetics and political values which we normally ascribe to the totality of cultures. Particularly we tend to ascribe certain values to those cultures which have retained a long tyrannical history of domination and misrecognition.

But if we consider that culture is a process of constant struggle, then we find that our understanding of these cultures is also to be changed. And according to Bhabha, it is this difference in language that is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic or transparent.

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- Limitations of *cultural diversity* – it treats different cultures as mutually interacting and competing on the same footing
  - Assumes the stance of cultural relativity
  - Calls for cultural exchange, tolerance of diversity, and the management of conflicts through democratic means
- Bhabha uses the term “cultural difference” to underscore that the interaction of cultures in the postcolonial world is always imbued with power and authority.
  - Differences are manufactured through particular discourses at critical moments when the status quo is questioned.
  - Tension and anxieties are always heightened by the issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

– Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*



We can also say that there are limitations of cultural diversity when articulated within a liberal paradigm as it treats different cultures as mutually interacting and competing on the same footing. In this approach, we find that we assume the stance of cultural relativity which also calls for cultural exchange, the tolerance of the diversity and the management of conflicts through democratic means.

Instead we find that Bhabha has used the term cultural difference to underscore that the interaction of cultures in the postcolonial world is always imbued with power and authority. Differences arises not because these different cultures are existing side by side together but it is manufactured through particular discourses at critical moments when the status quo is being questioned.

Furthermore, the tension and anxieties which are elicited by cultural differences are always heightened by the issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, etc. as we have seen in our previous discussions. In fact, the differences of cultural diversity and cultural difference as Bhabha has suggested can be better understood with this particular slide in which we find that they have been juxtaposed against each other.

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<h3>Cultural Diversity</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An object of empirical knowledge</li> <li>• A category of comparative ethics, aesthetics, or ethnology</li> <li>• The recognition of pre-given cultural 'contents' and customs, held in a time frame of relativism, it gives rise to anodyne liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange, or the culture of humanity.</li> <li>• Cultural diversity is also the representation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity</li> </ul>	<h3>Cultural Difference</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process of enunciation of culture as knowledgeable, authoritative, adequate to the construction of the systems of cultural identification.</li> <li>• A process of signification through which statements "of" or "on" culture differentiate.</li> <li>• The problem of the culture emerges only at the signifying boundaries of culture, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs misappropriated.</li> </ul>
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23

It is the reiteration of what we have already discussed. But it has been given in a particular shape for a better understanding.

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- Bhabha stresses the need to rethink the traditional notions of cultural identity which have informed the process of decolonization
  - What Bhabha alludes to as an antagonistic view of "culture-as-political-struggle" and the concomitant growth of nationalism
  - Postcolonial setting possesses an oppositional relationship between previously "dominant cultures" and "the other"
- Bhabha's theory is to demand a reconfiguration of this relationship
  - Need for a zone in which the cultural relationship between former colonizers and colonized nations transcends the historical antagonism between them
  - "The Other" should not be perceived as a force to be submissive
  - It should not be one in which "First World capital" translates into "Third world labor."



24

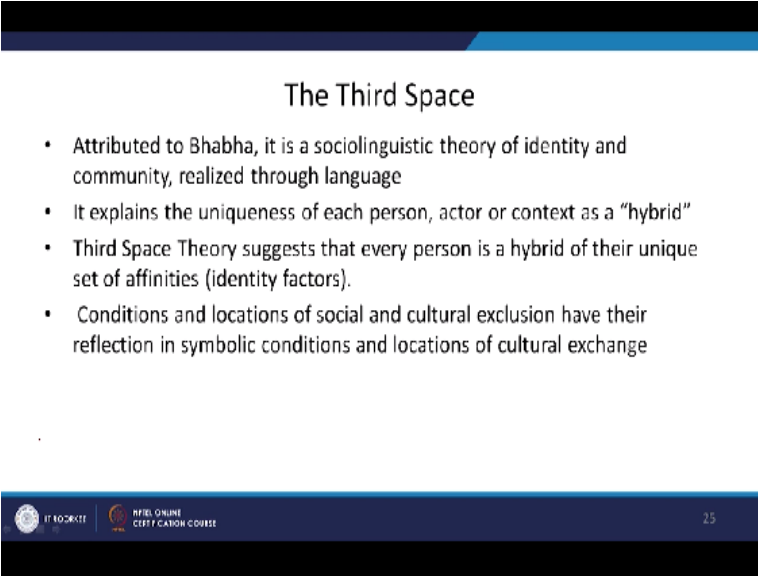
So we find that Bhabha stresses the need to rethink the traditional notions of cultural identity which have informed the process of decolonization. And the concomitant growth of nationalism. Postcolonial setting possesses an oppositional relationships between previously dominant culture and the other. And the imperialism may be understated and superstitious but at the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that it is still there.

So Bhabha's theory is to demand a reconfiguration of this relationship between the colonizer and

the colonized. There has to be a zone in which the cultural relationship between the former colonies and the former colonized nations is able to transcend the historical antagonism between them. Bhabha feels that the other should not necessarily be perceived as being submissive.

It should not necessarily be the one in which the First World capital translates into Third World labor. And according to Bhabha, these 2 nations, the set of nations, the colonized and the colonizer should be able to overcome the historical antagonism which has existed between the two. He has also talked about the Third Space.

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The slide is titled "The Third Space" and contains a bulleted list of four points. The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains logos for "IT TO SKILL" and "HIMALAYAN UNIVERSITY ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSE" along with the number "25".

### The Third Space

- Attributed to Bhabha, it is a sociolinguistic theory of identity and community, realized through language
- It explains the uniqueness of each person, actor or context as a “hybrid”
- Third Space Theory suggests that every person is a hybrid of their unique set of affinities (identity factors).
- Conditions and locations of social and cultural exclusion have their reflection in symbolic conditions and locations of cultural exchange

This idea of the Third Space attributed to Bhabha is sociolinguistic theory of identity and community which is realized through language. It suggests that every person is unique and every person is also a hybrid of their own set of affinities or the identity factors which are unique to them. And therefore, this Third Space is a space of cultural exchange. Conditions and locations of social and cultural exclusion have their reflection in symbolic conditions and locations of cultural exchange.

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- The idea of the third space comes from hybridity theory which refers to a mixture
- Suggests that people draw on multiple resources to make a sense of the world and create their identity
- Originally hybridity is a cross between two separate cultures: not diversity, but hybridity
- Cultural hybridity is an in-between place, which brings together contradictory knowledges, practices and discourses
- "same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew."(remixing culture)

So the idea of the third space comes from hybridity theory which refers to a mixture of 2 different cultures or races. It also suggests that people draw on multiple resources to understand their world better and to create their own identity. Originally we can understand the concept of hybridity as a cross between two separate cultures.

It is not diversity but hybridity. So cultural hybridity is an in-between place which brings together contradictory knowledges, practices, and discourses. And as Bhabha has said, same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. He talks in the context of the remixing of cultures.

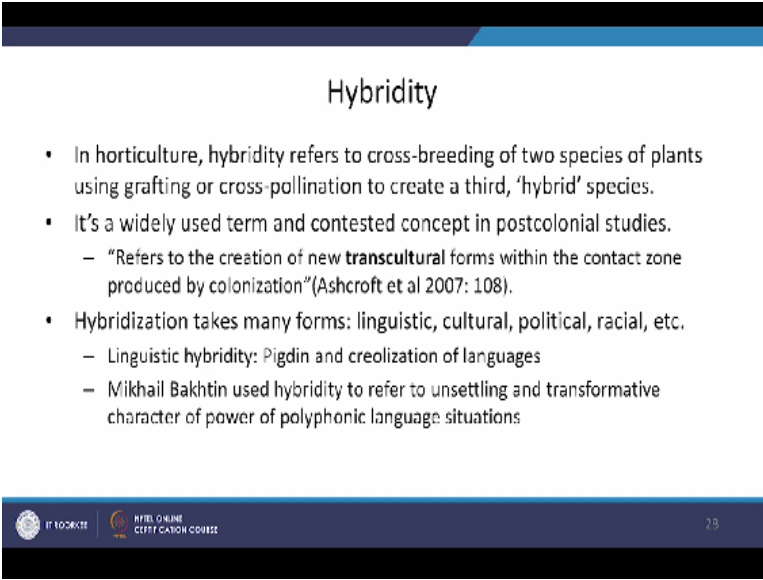
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- The Third Space, "though unrepresentable in itself ... constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity."(Bhabha 2006)
- By exploring this hybridity, this "Third Space":
  - Can transcend the politics of opposition and polarity
  - Reconstitute ourselves and our relationship with others
- Neither social capital nor cultural capital, alone or together, are sufficient to overcome social exclusion.
  - Suggests that policies of remediation based in models of the Other are likely to be inadequate.

The third space though is unrepresentable in itself, it still constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity. Bhabha concludes that by exploring this hybridity, this Third Space, we can transcend the politics of opposition and polarity and can think of reconstituting ourselves and our relationship with the others.

When he talks about the reconstitution of the self and our relationships with the others, it has to be understood in the context of the postcolonial theory and in the context of the postcolonial past of a particular country. Bhabha also suggests that neither social capital nor cultural capital, alone or may be together, are enough to overcome social exclusion. So the Third Space theory suggests that policies of remediation based on models of the otherness are basically inadequate.

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**Hybridity**

- In horticulture, hybridity refers to cross-breeding of two species of plants using grafting or cross-pollination to create a third, 'hybrid' species.
- It's a widely used term and contested concept in postcolonial studies.
  - “Refers to the creation of new **transcultural** forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Ashcroft et al 2007: 108).
- Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc.
  - Linguistic hybridity: Pidgin and creolization of languages
  - Mikhail Bakhtin used hybridity to refer to unsettling and transformative character of power of polyphonic language situations

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And in order to achieve adequacy and self-sufficiency, one has to overcome the politics of opposition and polarity. The concept of hybridity which is originally a concept of horticulture, which refers to cross breeding of 2 species of plants using different methods of grafting or cross-pollination, etc., has been used by Bhabha in order to create a new transcultural understanding within the contact zone produced by colonization.

Hybridization can also take many forms. For example, it can take up linguistic forms as we have seen the idea of linguistic hybridity like Pidgin and creolization of languages and particularly it



has been used Mikhail Bakhtin who has used hybridity to refer to unsettling and transformative character of power of polyphonic languages and polyphonic linguistic situations. So hybridization can take many forms. It can be linguistic, cultural, political, or racial also.

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- The term gained currency in postcolonial studies with the work of Bhabha
  - The colonizer and colonized do not constitute oppositional binaries as their relationship is one of interdependence
  - The mutual construction of the colonizer/colonized identities
  - Cultural systems, ideas and forms are created in what he calls the 'third space of enunciation'
  - Cultural identity and forms are a product of this liminal, ambivalent third space.
  - Hierarchical forms of culture based on 'purity' or 'originality' aren't possible.

So this term has gained currency with the work of Homi Bhabha in which he has argued that the colonizer and colonized do not constitute oppositional binaries as their relationship is one of interdependence. He argues for the mutual construction and reconstruction of the colonizer and the colonized identities and he also argues that hierarchical forms of culture based on purity or originality are not possible anymore.

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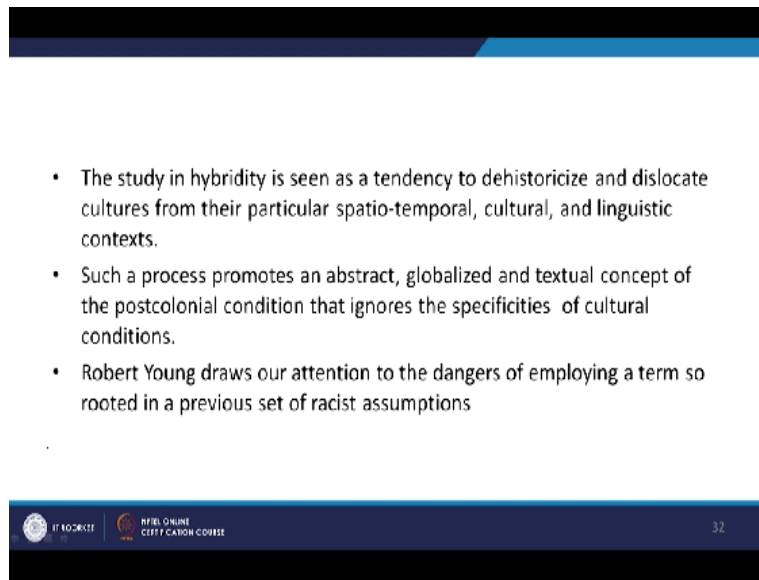
## CRITICISM

Several theorists of decolonization and anti-colonialism criticize the idea of hybridity:

- Emphasis on reciprocity hides the oppositional relationship between colonial and colonized cultures.
- It promotes dependence on colonized cultures.
- Ignores the hierarchical relationship on which imperialism functions.
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad and others have critiqued the textual and idealistic basis of hybridity in colonial discourse as it pays insufficient attention to the specificity of local differences

Bhabha's idea of hybridity has also been criticized by several critics particularly by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, by Benita Parry and by Aijaz Ahmad. They suggest that the emphasis on reciprocity hides the oppositional relationship between the colonial and the colonized cultures. It also promotes dependence on colonized cultures and ignores the hierarchical relationship on which imperialism has always functioned.

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- The study in hybridity is seen as a tendency to dehistoricize and dislocate cultures from their particular spatio-temporal, cultural, and linguistic contexts.
- Such a process promotes an abstract, globalized and textual concept of the postcolonial condition that ignores the specificities of cultural conditions.
- Robert Young draws our attention to the dangers of employing a term so rooted in a previous set of racist assumptions

the study in hybridity is seen as a tendency dehistoricize and dislocate cultures from their particular context be it spatio-temporal, cultural, or linguistic and this process thus promotes an abstract, and a globalized, and a textual concept of the postcolonial condition and ignores the specificities of cultural conditions as well as the specificities of experiences which different cultures and nations have undergone. A particular critic Robert Young has drawn our attention to the dangers of employing a term which is so rooted in a previous set of racist assumptions.

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- Young notes that the concept of hybridity has had a checkered history which problematizes its extensive usage without qualifications.
- It was used disparagingly to refer negatively to the union and mingling of races in colonial and imperial discourses.
- Until the turn of the century, it was a part of the colonialist discourse of racism that frowned upon any instances of a mingling of the races which was seen as an act that would destroy the purity of the Europeans.

And Young recalls how this concept of hybridity, the notion and the very usage of the word has had a checkered history which has problematized extensive usage without qualifications. The word hybridity was used in a disparaging manner, in a critical manner, in a very negative manner to the union and mingling of different races in colonial and imperial discourses. It was a negative term which insisted that hybridity should not be used if one has to ensure the races purity.

Until the turn of the century, this word hybridity was a part of the colonialist discourse of racism which frowned upon instances of mingling of the races which was seen as an act which would destroy the purity of the European races.

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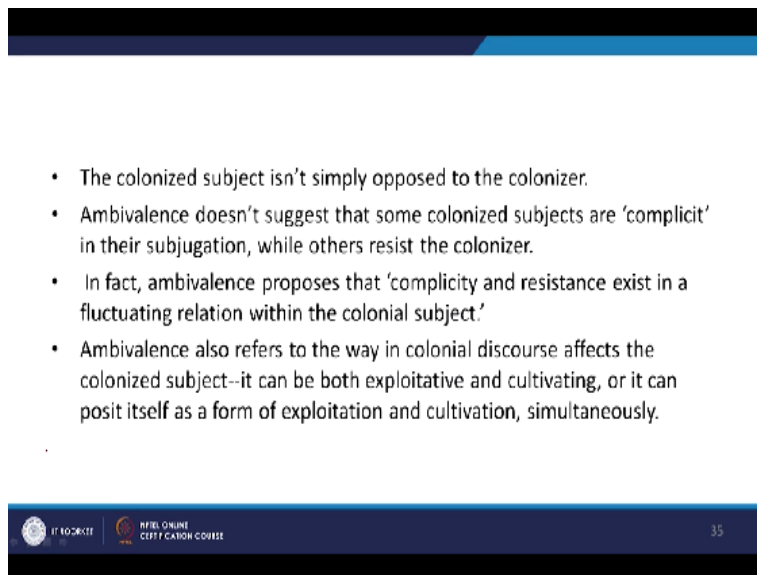
## Ambivalence

- First used in the field of psychoanalysis to denote the persistent state of wanting something and then wanting the opposite - a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action
- The term was later introduced by Bhabha into colonial discourse theory.
- Within postcolonial theory, it refers to the complex and complicated form of 'attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized.' (Ashcroft et al 10)
- The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is uncertain and ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply the 'Other'.

Another term which Bhabha has used is ambivalence. This is a term which was first used in the field of psychoanalysis to denote the persistent state of wanting something, desiring something and then not desiring it anymore. So a simultaneous attraction towards something and a repulsion from the same object, person, or action is known as ambivalence.

This term has been used and appropriated by Bhabha into his colonial discourse theory. So within postcolonial theory, it refers to the complex and complicated form of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The relationship between the two is always uncertain and ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply the other.

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- The colonized subject isn't simply opposed to the colonizer.
- Ambivalence doesn't suggest that some colonized subjects are 'complicit' in their subjugation, while others resist the colonizer.
- In fact, ambivalence proposes that 'complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject.'
- Ambivalence also refers to the way in which colonial discourse affects the colonized subject—it can be both exploitative and cultivating, or it can posit itself as a form of exploitation and cultivation, simultaneously.

The colonized subject is not simply necessarily opposed to the colonizer. Ambivalence, however, does not also suggest that some people may be complicit in their subjugation and whereas some people, they resist the colonizer. The idea of ambivalence is to suggest that complicity and resistance can exist in a fluctuating relationship simultaneously within the colonial subject. So ambivalence also refers to the way in which colonial discourse affects the colonized subject. It can be both exploitative and cultivating simultaneously.

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- Bhabha uses the concept of ambivalence to complicate and destabilize the authoritative aspect of colonial disposition.
- It challenges the authority of colonial supremacy because it disturbs the simple one-to-one relationship between colonizer and colonized.
- Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer
- Colonial discourse depends upon the production of submissive subjects who replicate colonial beliefs, norms, value systems, behaviors – that is, 'mimic' the colonizer.



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So ambivalence has been used by Bhabha to complicate and also to destabilize the authoritative aspect of colonial disposition and to question the significance and supremacy of the colonial discourse. It has challenged the authority of colonial supremacy because it disturbs the simple one on one relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Colonial discourse in fact depends on the production of those subjects who are by temperamental submissive and who also replicate colonial beliefs, norms, and values and systems.

They mimic the colonizer but at the same time, they retain a submissive attitude.

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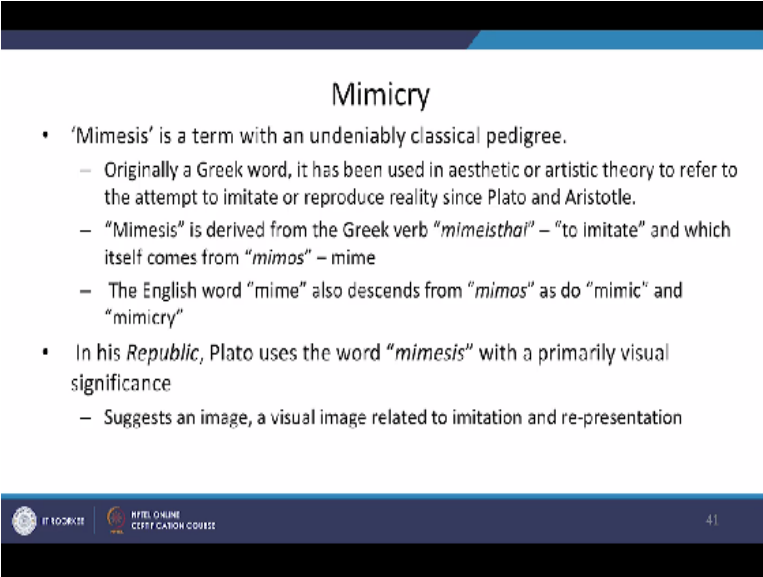
- But instead colonial discourse ends up producing ambivalent subjects whose 'mimicry is never far from mockery.'
- Thus, ambivalence refers to this shifting relationship between mimicry and mockery.
- Ambivalence essentially unsettles colonial discourse and dominance.
- In this way, colonial discourse doesn't always disempower or dispossess the colonized
- Thus, colonial discourse is *ambivalent* or 'two-powered'.
- The effect of this ambivalence (the simultaneous attraction and repulsion) is to produce a profound disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse.

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 37

However, instead of that colonial discourse ends up producing ambivalent subjects whose

mimicry is never far away from mockery. So thus ambivalence refers to this shifting relationship between mimicry and mockery. It essentially unsettles colonial discourse and dominance because it does not always disempower or dispossess the colonized. And therefore, Bhabha suggests that the colonial discourse is ambivalent or two-powered.

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**Mimicry**

- 'Mimesis' is a term with an undeniably classical pedigree.
  - Originally a Greek word, it has been used in aesthetic or artistic theory to refer to the attempt to imitate or reproduce reality since Plato and Aristotle.
  - "Mimesis" is derived from the Greek verb "*mimēsthai*" – "to imitate" and which itself comes from "*mimos*" – mime
  - The English word "mime" also descends from "*mimos*" as do "mimic" and "mimicry"
- In his *Republic*, Plato uses the word "*mimesis*" with a primarily visual significance
  - Suggests an image, a visual image related to imitation and re-presentation

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Another important term which Bhabha has used is mimicry. We know how traditionally it has always been a very significant word in the context of literary criticism right from the days of Plato and Aristotle. So according to Bhabha, the colonized subject mimics the colonizer by imitating the colonizers cultural habits, their language, the attire, the values, the food they eat, etc. But in doing so, the colonized person is not necessarily being subservient. He can also mock and parody the colonizer.

And therefore, we find that mimicry locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in the control of the behaviour of the colonized. So Bhabha notes that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same but not quite the same because it can contain both mockery as well as menace. It reveals the limitations in the authority to the colonial discourse almost as though the colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.

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- Mimicry describes the *ambivalent* relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.
  - It is never an exact reproduction of the colonial traits
  - The mimicry is always steeped in ambivalence as it is either a blurred/imperfect copy or denotes something in excess.
  - Mimicry is thus the site of challenging the certainty of colonial discourse.
  - It also shows how the colonial discourse's control of the subjects is always already ambivalent.
- 'The threat inherent in mimicry, then, comes not from an overt resistance but from the way in which it continually suggests an identity not quite like the colonizer.' (Ashcroft et al 126)

So we can say that mimicry describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and this is a process which is never in exact reproduction of the colonial trait.

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- "The copying of the colonizing culture, behaviour, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace'".
  - Exposes the inherent limitations of colonialism and its ambivalence
  - Discourse of colonial authority unavoidably contains the seeds of its own downfall
- "The mimicry of the post-colonial subject is therefore always potentially destabilizing to colonial discourse, and locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance." (Ashcroft et al 126)

It is always steeped in certain ambivalence and then we can also say that it is a site of challenging the certainty of colonial discourse. I would refer to what Ashcroft and others have said in this context because they say that mimicry also shows how the colonial discourse control of the subject is always already ambivalent. The threat inherent in mimicry then according to Ashcroft comes not from an overt resistance but from the way in which it continually suggest an identity not quite like the colonizer.

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- Mimicry is the process in which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite'(Bhabha 1994: 86).
- "The copying of the colonizing culture, behaviour, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', 'so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace'".
- Mimicry exposes the inherent limitations of colonialism, its ambivalence and thus, the discourse of colonial authority unavoidably contains the seeds of its own downfall.
- "The mimicry of the post-colonial subject is therefore always potentially destabilizing to colonial discourse, and locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance."(Ashcroft et al 125)

So mimicry is the process in which the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same but not quite. The colonized person may copy the colonizer's culture, their behaviour, their manners and values but at the same time, the colonized can also mock the colonizer and there may be a certain menace involved in this process.

So mimicry in a way exposes the inherent limitations of the colonial's power, it's ambivalence and thus the discourse of colonial authority unavoidably contains the seeds of its own destruction. So we find that these 3 theorists have given a particular shape to the postcolonial argument. In our next discussion, we would look at certain literary products as a case study to understand the implications of the postcolonial theory in literary reproductions. Thank you.