

Hybridity



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

According to Bhabha, hybridity is the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference. Bhabha developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequality. For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority tries to convert the identity of the colonized within a singular universal framework. The colonizers would look at the colonized in their own environment and judge their behavior and practices from their own frame of reference.

Bhabha contends that a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges from the interweaving of elements of the colonizer and colonized challenging the validity of any essentialist cultural identity. Hybridity is positioned as an antidote to essentialism, or the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity. (The Location of Culture 1994) According to Ashcroft, most postcolonial writing has focused on the hybridized nature of postcolonial culture as strength rather than a weakness. It is not a case of the oppressor obliterating the oppressed or the colonizer silencing the colonized.

In practice it stresses the mutuality of the process. The clash of cultures can impact as much upon the colonizer as the colonized. It is proof that even under the most potent of oppression those distinctive aspects of the culture of the oppressed can survive and become an integral part of the new formations which arise. (Papastergiadis 1997) Ashcroft says how " hybridity and the power it releases may well be seen as the characteristic feature and contribution of the post-colonial, allowing a means of evading the replication

of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth”.

In conclusion, I believe that hybridity is everywhere. It represents in many instances the triumph of the postcolonial or the subaltern over the hegemonic. The resistant always appropriates the cultural onslaught and modifies its products or processes for its own purposes. Hybridity can be a history of slavery colonialism, and rape, inherited in terms of race. It is a difficult and painful history of interracial identity. It deals with issues of choosing one's affiliations or having ones affiliations thrust upon one.