

Seminar series of the Center for Research and Practice in Cultural Continuity

“Decolonizing approaches to studying history and linguistic-cultural heritage. Methods, tools, results and challenges”



Atef Amri

Faculty of “Artes Liberales”
University of Warsaw

Homi Bhabha: *Hybridity and mimicry*

Alongside Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Aimé Césaire, Homi Bhabha is considered one of the most important scholars of postcolonial theory. His most important contributions are:

1. *The Location of Culture* (1994) - This book is considered Bhabha’s most significant work and it outlines the first concept of this presentation which is “hybridity”, loosely defined as the mixing of different cultural elements and is considered as an important characteristic of postcolonial societies.

2. *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse* (1984) - In this seminal short essay, Bhabha examines the concept of mimicry as a form of incomplete imitation that the colonized societies use in order to conform to and challenge the cultural norms of the colonizer.

Although the essay *Of Mimicry and Man* is quite short, it is a very complex and obscure piece of work, a criticism that has been addressed to Homi Bhabha on several occasions. Another criticism is that, while Edward Said has been criticized for his lack of attributing agency to colonized societies in his works, Homi Bhabha has been criticized for focusing too much on the exchange and blending of cultures while disregarding the power structures involved therein.

Nevertheless, Homi Bhabha offers a fresh perspective on colonial and postcolonial studies, and it is of paramount importance to be familiar with his concepts of hybridity and mimicry.

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ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/98037235262>