

Homi Bhabha, modernity and differences¹

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ABSTRACT

Since the postmodernist theses on 'the death of man', postcolonial discourses such as Homi Bhabha's have been trying to present a new version without involving the Hegelian thesis. However, in this paper, it is my argument that Homi Bhabha's discourse is still influenced by the Hegelian thesis. This paper begins with the analysis of Bhabha's theoretical work, including the discussion of the relationship to poststructuralism and modernity. It then turns to an examination of new theoretical inventions, such as 'temporalities' and 'inbetween' theses. I then elaborate Bhabha's thesis of two 'temporalities': temporality of proposition, and temporality of enunciation. This paper concludes with critique of Bhabha's 'in-between space.'

Introduction

At the beginning of his book, *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha tells us of his primary intention in writing such a book. Citing Frantz Fanon and Jonny Mercer, Bhabha says,

The architecture of this work is rooted in *the temporal*. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of *time* (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, italics mine).

You've got

'Ac-cent-tchu-ate the pos-i-tive .,

E-li-mi-nate the neg-a-tive,

Don't mess with Mister *In-be-tween*

(Refrain from 'Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive' by Jonny Mercer, italics mine).

I wish to underscore the idea of temporality, manifested in the above phrases as *the temporal*, *time*, and the space of *'in-between'*, as fundamental to Bhabha's revision of modernity.² Modernity, Bhabha argues, is a project concerning 'the moment making a name for oneself that emerges through the undecidability' (Bhabha, 1994e: 242). This 'undecidability' keeps us looking at Bhabha's theory on the present. For Bhabha, the present is an historical construction which is set in order to signify a specific position of historical enunciation and address for those who 'bear witness' and who are 'subjected.'

For Bhabha, the idea of temporality is articulated as being the signified cutting moment of 'the present' in the line of history that comes from the 'in-between' space of time and space the discourse of postcolonialism. In one sense, 'temporality' gives Bhabha the significant insights for his postcolonial discourse from which he thus constructs his 'in-between' thesis (with a vocabulary such as 'ambivalence', 'hybridity' and 'in-between-ness') of postcolonial subjectivity. In another sense,

'temporality' offers Bhabha a sharp methodological cleavage that cuts the present from the past and the future, the inside from the outside, us from them, the coloniser from the colonised and so on. It is Bhabha's intention that by doing so, he could distinguish the very moment of the present that allows him to further a methodological strategy for enunciation and address. Bhabha is trying to propose a breakthrough within the discourse of postcolonialism. Yet, from my point of view, there are certain warnings to heed regarding his new attempts. To some extent too, his strategy shows the naivety of his thinking and makes his postcolonial discourse questionable. In what follows, I shall briefly introduce Bhabha's revision of modernity and associated concepts such as difference and temporality. Then I shall elaborate the idea of temporality broadly in two main folds: (1) Bhabha's observations (ie. the subject of proposition), and (2) his strategies (ie. the subject of enunciation). After this, the adequacy of Bhabha's founding concept, temporality, will be discussed.

Modernity, different and temporality

Bhabha's postcolonial discourse presents a complex form of Hegelian thesis based on his idea of temporality. Bhabha first critiques the Hegelian dualism by introducing an 'inbetween' space for the temporality of the encounter between the master and the slave. He constructs his 'in-between' thesis on the basis of the binary dualism between master and slave. Then, Bhabha shifts his theoretical position towards a poststructuralist stance by arguing that the temporality of being, of nation, of community and selfhood, is disjunctive, incommensurable and different. Arguing for the 'performative' function of being, Bhabha comes back to focus on the temporality of the present in order to argue his own version of modernity. Regarding the problematic issue of identity, I will investigate whether or not Bhabha's revision of modernity is, in fact, a breakthrough.

Bhabha's discourse on postcolonialism, as a whole, presents a Hegelian thesis and is revealed as (1) thesis: the discourse of the temporality of modernity is founded based on theses of poststructuralism plus Habermas, (2) antithesis: a recognition of a hybrid culture, an 'inbetween' discourse between the master and the slave according to every temporality of modernity, (3) synthesis: a new vision of modernity which is, again, another discourse combining discourses of poststructuralism and Habermas. First, by applying Mladen Dolar's definition of modernity, Bhabha begins his thesis on the temporality of modernity, the being of the present and the ethics of self-construction. Dolar's definition of modernity is as follows,

What makes this attitude typical of modernity is the constant reconstruction and the reinvention of the self... The subject and the present it belongs to have no objective status, they have to be perpetually (re)constructed. (Cited in Bhabha, 1994e:240)

On the basis of a familiarity with discourses of poststructuralism and critical theory, Bhabha works for a revision of modernity, in his words, 'contra-modernity.' While Bhabha critiques both poststructuralism and critical theory³, he also acknowledges the convincing arguments of poststructuralism - in particular the notion of difference - and Habermas' theory on rationality in order to remain the project of modernity which makes the utterance of the postcolonial subject at any particular present possible. Bhabha maintains that we need to go 'beyond' the prefix of 'post' and 'find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity'⁴ (Bhabha 1994a:1). At first, like a poststructuralist, Bhabha denies foundationalism and sees the incommensurable fact of modernity and the impossible project of total emancipation. But, in the end, he comes to embrace Habermas' modernity thesis. This is evident in Bhabha's discussion on multiculturalism.

First, he raises a 'culture-as-difference' thesis. In agreeing with T.S. Eliot's notion of culture, Bhabha asserts that what is at issue today is not the essentialised or idealised Arnoldian notion of culture but "a certain incommensurability, a necessary impossibility, in *thinking* culture" (Bhabha, 1993: 167). Based on the observation of cultural dynamics of an immigration group, Eliot reminds us that, from the beginning of departure, from hometown, the 'immigration culture' is different from

that of its parent culture. This 'immigration culture' is always changing and reconfiguring itself according to 'whatever relations are established.' For instance, after this immigration group lands in a new country and starts interaction with 'some native' and with immigrants other than the original source, a certain form of culture is formed and "peculiar types of culture-sympathy and culture-clash appear" at different times. At any temporality of this immigration culture, the boundary of such culture is blurred and overlapping. Contradictions happen due to different temporality of historical circumstance. Bhabha, thus, contends, 'this "part" culture, this *partial* culture, is the contaminated yet impossibility of culture's containedness and the boundary between. It is indeed something like culture's "in-between", bafflingly, both alike and different.' (Bhabha, 1993: 167)

The 'culture-as-difference' thesis further offers Bhabha a different view on multiculturalism and, by claiming his discourse on multiculturalism, Bhabha later shifts to Habermas' modernity Reason. Following a poststructuralist line of argument, Bhabha recognises the facts of multiplicity and contingency of 'culture' and the social group (eg. from minority discourse to postcolonial critique, from gay and lesbian studies to chicano/a fiction). He asserts that 'multiculturalism has become the most charged sign for describing the scattered social contingencies that characterise contemporary *Kulturkritik*. The multicultural has itself become a "floating signifier" (Bhabha, 1993: 168). Nevertheless, theoretically, in order to legitimise 'temporality' and to further an enunciative temporality, Bhabha draws upon Habermas for 'Reason'; the progress of modernity. Quoting Habermas, Bhabha says that the effect of the (postmodern) scattering condition of the modernity is,

[an] ever more finely woven net of linguistically generated intersubjectivity. *Rationalisation of the life world means differentiation and condensation at once* - a thickening of the floating web of intersubjective threads that simultaneously hold together the ever more sharply differentiated components of culture, society and person (Bhabha, 1993:168).⁵

To be sure, within the 'multicultural' discourse, Bhabha is different from Habermas in that, while Habermas argues for a 'ideal speech community', Bhabha holds on to poststructuralist anti-essentialism and suggests that we focus on the temporality of location and temporality of enunciation. Habermas' ideal speech community assumes a pre-given identity of each subject and acknowledges that the contradictory fact occurs within and outside the subject. Modernity, for Habermas, suggests an ever-ending communication among subjects within this fine-tuned ideal speech situation. However, Bhabha doesn't believe in a pre-given identity and comes to disrupt a solution based on Habermas' speech community. His focus on the 'moment' - temporality - helps him to stay with the project of modernity. By arguing the temporality of the 'in-between' nature of subject positions in terms of time and space, Bhabha solves the problematic of a 'fixed' identity and the incommensurable problematic of/among subjects. It is an 'unhomely' subject position that Bhabha maintains. By arguing the temporality for enunciation, Bhabha turns his back on the notion of empowerment.

The focus on the present, and the argument of giving up the original and initial subjectivity, indicates Bhabha's refusal of a sheer Hegelian binary opposition thesis. Bhabha argues that his 'in-between' thesis is not a Hegelian synthesis. The difference between Bhabha's 'inbetween' thesis and the Hegelian subject is that while 'the negation' is the Hegelian subject's basic principle, 'the interstitial space' is Bhabha's standpoint. It is the hybridity of the subject position and culture in the social that stands out in Bhabha's major theoretical innovations. For Bhabha, in seeking his place of enunciation, a subject is always standing upon the common ground shared by the master and the slave. In other words, if the Hegelian subject looks for what is negative, Bhabha will look for what is positive between the master and the slave.

This point is clearer when we realise that Bhabha accepts poststructuralism only as a supplementary understanding of the 'condition' of the modernity. He maintains that what is required is the need to '*understand cultural difference as the production of minority identities that "split" - are estranged unto themselves - in the act of being articulated into a collective body*'

(Bhabha, 1994a: 3). Nevertheless, in citing Renee Green's words, Bhabha shows his Hegelian intention in terms of the historical significance of raising a multicultural movement:

Multiculturalism doesn't reflect the complexity of the situation as I face it today ... It requires *a person to step outside of him/herself to actually see what he/she is doing* (Bhabha, 1994a: 3, italics mine).

If Dolar's definition of modernity suggests that the persisting split [of the subject] is the condition of freedom, would Bhabha further argue for the necessity to 'specify a historical condition and theoretical configurations of "splitting" in political situations of "unfreedom"'? (Bhabha, 1994e: 240) Bhabha admits that he is convinced by the argument that "the catachrestic postcolonial agency of 'seizing the value-coding' ... enables the diasporic and the postcolonial to be represented." (Bhabha, 1994e: 240) Modernity, for Bhabha, reveals a 'deliberate' return to considering the temporality of the postcolonial subject as a project of empowerment.

Yet, it must be recalled that since the understanding of poststructuralist anti-foundationalism is basic to Bhabha's postcolonial discourse, temporality of postcolonial enunciation does not suggest a fixed moment or project. Bhabha's 'in-between' thesis is always looking for interstitial space alongside the line of time, space and epistemology. Temporality appears whenever and wherever there is a necessity for enunciation as well as a possibility for the demonstration of a hybridity. In the following paragraphs, I am going to show in more detail Bhabha's observation of the hybridity of subject positions; the case of Frantz Fanon's decolonisation.

Temporality I: Subject of proposition

In Fanon's case, Bhabha's 'in-between' thesis is understood when the occurrence of the disturbing distance of the colonialist Self (or the colonised Other) constitutes the figure of the colonial other. In understanding the 'in-between' or 'ambivalence' of subject identity and the practice of colonialism and de-colonialism, the shared symbolic and spatial structures between the master and the slave becomes a prolific space for investigation. For Bhabha, 'inbetween' suggests a 'positive' revision of one's subject position alongside different temporal, cultural and power relations.

Bhabha repeats one of his favourite Fanonian expressions: *'The Negro is not. Any more than the white man'* (Bhabha, 1994c: 40). While Fanon expresses this statement with antagonism Bhabha interprets it differently. Bhabha argues that Fanon's Hegelian negation is, in fact, a breakthrough, and an inevitable but powerful strategy for the de/anti-colonialism project. Fanon's Hegelian negation first comes to the conclusion that the fact of being a black man is nothing more than an artefact of the White. The Hegelian negation is further applied with a political concern; that is, the colonised is to involve with a political action in negating his enemy, the coloniser Other. For Bhabha, Fanon's de-colonisation practice is extremely successful except for a different version of de-colonised theory.⁶ The mistake of Fanon's discourse is found that Fanon 'too quick to name his Other, to personalise its presence in the language of colonial racism' (Bhabha, 1994c: 60).

Instead of engaging with the Hegelian negation, Bhabha demonstrates the 'hybridity' of Fanon's own hybridity and dissolves Fanon's strong Hegelian dichotomy. Fanon's own hybridity was found within the discourses of the dialectical experiences within the colonised, both in the fields of personal identity perception and political interest. Bhabha critiques Fanon in wrongly proposing a polarity of the Same and the Other in construing his discourse. Yet, a fact of 'hybridity' and 'ambivalence' perception appears in 'naming' between Fanon himself and his 'wretched people.' For instance, when his people announce, 'you're a doctor, a writer, a student, *you're different, you're one of us*' (Bhabha 1994c: 44). To be sure, for Bhabha, the significance of 'ambivalence' resides in its 'positive' use of the meaning of 'different.' As he explains, 'to be different from those that are different makes you the same' (Bhabha, 1994c: 44). In other words, according to the temporality of de-colonisation, how 'you' are different from 'us' is not important, as long as the 'in-between' space shared by 'us' bonds 'us' together.

On the political level, if Hegelian negation is always the case for Fanon, Bhabha argues that, for the White man, 'the real Other is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely.' (Bhabha, 1994c: 60) In Bhabha's view, such a position may lead Fanon to a more pessimistic misunderstanding towards his successful emancipatory project, although Fanon restores a dream in a proper political time and cultural space. Another instance of ambivalence occurs when those liberatory people present a discontinuous 'intertextual temporality' in their anti-nationalist movements. Even with a shared anti-colonial cultural imposition, these people break their continuities and constancies away from the nationalist tradition, by applying modern Western forms of information, technology, language and dress. It is significant that there is a discontinuity appearing within the colonised Same. Moreover, this 'intertextual temporality' indicates a hybrid identity of those liberatory people. As the principle of dialectical reorganisation, a newly formed culture is adopted from the Western discourse into their national text enabling the liberatory people to negotiate and translate their cultural identity. Thus, Hegelian negation suggests an ambivalence that ironically split the colonised Self. On the one hand, this 'in-between-ness' reveals a dangerous place where identity and aggressivity are intertwined and. On the other hand, it opens up a place for the colonised subject to interrogate.

Central to Bhabha's theory of identity is that identification always comes from the ambivalence between the master and the slave. In Bhabha's account of the Hegelian negation, the space of splitting becomes a questionable arena which is later transgressed into a positive site for power. Because of this, I would argue that Bhabha does not abandon the Hegelian thesis and he even includes a Hegelian negation in considering a temporality of political strategy. This is also evident in his discussion of 'doubling' in Fanon's decolonising strategy.

The concept of 'doubling' is introduced in articulating necessary scenarios that happen when the slave encounters the master. According to Bhabha, doubling suggests a 'dissembling image of being in at least two places at once that makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable *évolué*... to accept the coloniser's invitation to identity.' (Bhabha, 1994c: 44) For instance, while Fanon asks about 'what does the man want?', Bhabha would advise us to look at the problematic of this identification as 'a persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, *where the image is confronted with its difference, its Other.*' (Bhabha, 1994c: 46, italics mine) I believe there are necessarily interactions happening between the master and the slave as long as the Hegelian subject always looks for what is lacking.

Furthermore, 'doubling' suggests 'the discursive and disciplinary place from which questions of identity are [not simply interrogated but] strategically and institutionally posed' (Bhabha, 1994c: 4 7). When the colonised skilfully employs the coloniser's strategies of modernity, the ambivalent site is in fact a useful common area which helps the colonised 'gaze at' the coloniser. Bhabha naively argues that, after a Hegelian space of splitting, 'the fantasy of the native is precisely to occupy the master's place while keeping his place in the slave's *avenging anger*' (Bhabha, 1994c: 44) Thus, if Foucault claims the subject is dead, Bhabha would find a way out by arguing a double vision, which disrupts its authority, based on the ambivalence of colonial discourse. In Fanon's case, *Black Skin, White Masks* is successful in its 'doubling', a dissembling image of being in at least two places at once as well as being a mimicry strategy for subversion. Bhabha says, 'it is a mode of negation that seeks to unveil the fullness of Man but to manipulate his representation. It is a form of power that is exercised at the very limits of identity and authority, in the mocking spirit of mask and image' (Bhabha, 1994c: 62).

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the importance of Hegelian negation in Bhabha's theory of temporality in his postcolonial discourse. In Bhabha's own words,

[t]he access to the image of identity is only ever possible in the negation of any sense of representation/repetition) renders it a liminal reality (Bhabha, 1994c: 51).

Temporality II: Subject of enunciation

With the same framework as Bhabha's 'in-between' thesis, temporality of subject of enunciation is also defined on the basis of a Hegelian negation. The Hegelian negation thesis is further applied to a project of 'negotiation' between communities. The problematic of this project is construed based on Bhabha's revision of poststructuralism and critical theories and, the basic concept to Bhabha's thesis on multiculturalism is 'hybridity.' Bhabha says, within the multicultural society, 'communities negotiate "difference" through a borderline process that reveals the hybridity of cultural identity: they create a sense of themselves *to and through an other*' (Bhabha 1995: 114).

In fact, Bhabha's strategy of empowering the colonised indicates a more or less mutual recognition and it is argued about, always, based on the traditional ascription. As Bhabha says 'the enunciative process introduces a split in the performative, the struggle is often between the historicist teleological or mythical time and narrative of traditionalism' (Bhabha, 1994b: 35). Bhabha's strategies are presented as follows: first, he splits the master and the slave; for instance the traditional culture of the master's and that of the slave's. Then, Bhabha argues for the significant meaning of a performative present of cultural identity by reinforcing the hybridity of the master and the slave and the importance of 'time.' Finally, Bhabha rejoins the traditional cultural identity of the slave and the political and necessary negation of the certitude in resisting the master.

Hybridity, Bhabha suggests, carries a political dimension. Borrowing James Baldwin's notion of empowerment, Bhabha argues that, in the line of the colonial subject, a similar subject of the American colour line, the power of the colonised subject relies in the ubiquitous everyday experience lived in the recognition of cultural and psychic hybridity. Baldwin writes,

Alienation causes the Negro to recognize that he is a hybrid... In white Americans he finds reflected ... his tensions, his terrors, his tenderness. Dimly and for the first time, there begins to fall into perspective the nature of the roles they have played in the lives and history of each other. Now he is bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh... Therefore he cannot deny them, nor can they every be divorced... *It is difficult to make clear* that [the African-American] is not seeking to forfeit his birthright as a black man, but that, on the contrary, it is precisely this birthright which he is struggling to recognize and make articulate (revised from Bhabha, 1995: 114).

From this statement, it is interesting to note that the 'birthright' functions as a dual meaning: the birthright of a black man and that it is because of this birthright that the black man needs to be as a black man. Applying the postcolonial discourse, the traditional culture is thus disguised as, not a 'historical memory', but 'a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic' (Bhabha, 1994b: 35). As the hybridity of culture indicates an ambivalence between discourse of the master and the slave, Bhabha would argue that this ambivalence signals a 'Third Space' that represents not only the general conditions of language within the social but also carries 'the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot "in itself" be conscious.' (Bhabha, 1994b: 35) These are exemplified by the discourses of Edward Said and Frantz Fanon; both of them are hybridity produced from/in the social which is constituted of the nature of the ambivalence. In fact, Bhabha agrees about the different forms of linguistic positions (eg. social position) between any master/slave relationship.⁷ Yet, when the issue comes to the temporality of enunciation, he argues that the hybridity of the linguistic difference in the social allows any cultural performance to be 'dramatised in the common semiotic account of the disjuncture between the subject of a proposition (*enonce*) and the subject of enunciation.'" (Bhabha, 1994b: 36) Moreover, the culture of the social is 'not represented in the statement but which is the acknowledgment of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific space' (Bhabha, 1994b: 36).

By introducing the temporality of enunciation, Bhabha clarifies a closure within the 'difference' in the social. The discourse of colonial history affirms the cultural and historical dimension of the Third Space. For Bhabha, it is because of the temporality of enunciation that this Third Space offers a powerful cultural change and; it is because of the temporality of enunciation that the Third Space

may accompany the 'assimilation of contraries' and 'creating that occult instability.' Nevertheless, it is because of the temporality of enunciation that this Third Space, in Bhabha point of view, represents a productive capacity, which has a colonial or postcolonial provenance. It is precisely this point too that Bhabha disputes with Foucault, arguing that Foucault fails to elaborate the 'certain position' of the postcolonial subject and the historical constitution of colonial history. It is in Bhabha's content that his in-between thesis - working as a curious indeterminacy which is able to enter the chain of discourse - offers a 'discursive temporality', which is not a fixed discourse but an another place (of enunciation). In Bhabha's point of view, if Foucault refuses to acknowledge the colonial moment as an enunciative present in the historical and epistemological condition of Western modernity, he can provide little about the transferential relation between the West and its colonial history (Bhabha, 1994d: 195-196).

Temporality. ∞ (Infiniteness): Metaphysical 'non-place' v the 'in-between space'

It is nothing but the space that divides them, the void through which they exchange their threatening gestures and speeches ... it is a 'non-place', a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice (Foucault, 1984: 84-85).

Both Bhabha and Foucault deal with time and scene of historical experiences. While Bhabha argues for 'astringent' postcolonial moments, both in the temporality of proposition and temporality of enunciation, Foucault claims a 'disperse' nature of scene and time. My critiques upon Bhabha's will rely on my application of Foucault's notion of 'non-place.'

Central to Foucault's genealogical thesis on historical experience is to see human history as a stage, a scene, which is composed of struggles of forces. As descent and emergence have shown in the genealogical discussion of historical experiences, these forces are not resulted from, and, will not result in an ultimate reconciliation between them; instead they are, by nature, proliferation and variegation themselves. As Judith Butler suggests, force is to be understood as 'the directional impulse of life, a movement, as it were, that is constantly embroiled in conflict and scenes of domination.' Or, in another way, force indicates 'the nexus of life and power, the movement of their intersection' (Butler, 1987: 180). If we perceive postcolonial experience as one force, among others, which is staged on human history, Bhabha's theory of temporality of (subject of) proposition and temporality of enunciation will be subject to question because both temporality of proposition and temporality of enunciation presents, respectively, one force among others and should be viewed as variation from each other.

First, I would like to point out that there is a theoretical gap between temporality of proposition and temporality of enunciation. Bhabha's postcolonial discourse aims to find a subject position for the ever colonised to speak loudly in the postcolonial world by arguing the hybridity of selfhood and culture. Yet these two temporalities are not compatible with each other; they are grounded on different historical discourses. Benita Parry considers Bhabha's in-between thesis as 'a solidarity fashioned in the *intersubjectivity* of dispersed subjects' (Parry, 1992:30, italics mine). On the one hand, like Edward Said, Bhabha argues for a decentred subject and a hybrid culture. On the other hand, while Said contends a strategy of 'simultaneous affirmation and cancellation of an insurgent native subjectivity and a resurgent cultural nationalism' (Ibid, p.30), Bhabha would claim a strategy of empowerment, which is precisely advanced and based on the common space between the master and the slave.

In fact, I would not accept Parry's 'intersubjectivity' account of Bhabha's thesis in that it seems to me Bhabha's in-between thesis designates a rather static scene of the intersection of the master and the slave. As I have shown, along the time axis of history, temporality suggests to us that we see the in-between space in terms of moments when the postcolonial subject is concerned. As far as temporality of enunciation, Bhabha sees an unequal power relation between the master and the

slave. But, as far as the temporality of (subject of) proposition, the 'in-between' common space does not take a past history of imperialism into account, or Bhabha deliberately ignores that part, in order to distinguish that common space happens after those ugly histories. I would thus argue that the 'in-between' thesis is different from 'intersubjectivity', which is advocated by Habermas with strong connotations of unequal power relation between the master and the slave. The analysis of the dynamics of power has been a major theme in critical theories including those in the field of culture. If Bhabha's apolitical and ahistorical 'in-between' thesis accidentally neutralises the hybridity of selfhood and culture, he will thus also be accused of the ignorance of the role of the state and its associated impact on colonial history such as cultural imperialism.

Foucault wishes to point out 'non-place' or 'a pure distance' as the nature of the scene of confrontation of forces. Butler (1987) explains that, according to Foucault, emergence of 'value', or what Nietzsche would call 'instinct', 'is not specifically the energy of the strong or the reaction of the weak', as it is within the Hegelian dialectics, but 'precisely this scene where they are displayed superimposed or face-to-face.' Butler goes on to point out that 'significantly, the strong and the weak, the master and the slave, *do not share a common ground; they are not to be understood as part of a common "humanity" or system of cultural norms*' (p.180, italics mine). For Hegel, the scene of the confrontation between the master and the slave always has to occur on a shared social reality; for instance, the concepts of domination and subordination are coexistent. But, what Foucault does is

to revers[e] the Hegelian claim altogether, arguing that historical experience 'emerges' precisely at the point where common ground *cannot* be ascertained, ie., in a confrontation between differentially empowered agencies whose difference is not mediated by some more fundamental commonality (Butler, 1987: 181-182).

The importance of 'non-place' of emergence that Foucault suggests is the generative moment of history itself. For instance, Foucault argues dominance is not the ultimate result of certain historical narrative, but domination is a repeated scene in which values are proposed and power is produced. The fact of conflict of forces accounts for the conflict scenes and moments that different values are taken and power is deployed. Moreover, we are living in an uncertain age since the moment of emergence suggests an historical innovation, which occurs when these oppositional forces produce some new historical configuration.

According to Foucault's notion of non-place emergence, we may argue that Bhabha's hybridity oversimplifies both the coloniser and the colonised. The danger of looking for 'common shared space' of the master and the slave is an attempt of finding a consensus among difference voices. When Bhabha argues a temporality of enunciation for the postcolonial subject, he is suspicious of arguing a consensus among the postcolonial subjects. Examples against Bhabha's thesis of the ontological shared space are many. For instance, in New Zealand, before the British colonial history, there was not 'one Maori', but 'Maoris' of different tribes (Peters, 1994). Cameron McCarthy (1990) also shows us a number of 'non-synchrony' existences of subject identity among minority in terms of the different arrays of groups of 'race', gender and class.

I also want to argue that Bhabha's temporality does not necessarily affirm a hybridity and, if there is a hybridity happened, it may not be necessarily enjoyable as Bhabha believes. Because Bhabha seeks to urgently apply temporality into his postcolonial discourse, he thus needs to cut the present from the past and the future. However, in this cut in order to find a space of 'in-between' Bhabha fails to think about those discourses which are not able to participate in the public sphere and which can not be asserted in the 'in-between' space. It seems simple for Bhabha to argue for a cross-point as a result of two crossing lines and an inter-space of two overlapping discourses. Bhabha might be naive in maintaining that there certainly is 'an interface' between three, four and even more discourses. When there are more discourses existing simultaneously, it will be harder to find a temporality which is able to come across every discourses and further find an inter-space among them. As Rod Edmond (1995) argues, Bhabha makes the same mistake as Walter Benjamin:

'Bhabha seriously underestimates the way in which such apparently transgressive discourses are sidelined or incorporated' (p. 39).

Hybridity selfhood or culture does not necessarily assure an enjoyable experience and result in a harmonious hybrid culture. As Edmond (1995: 39) asserts, 'for many people the position of "in-between" is life-threatening, and their fragmented identities are the sign of damage rather than of discursive possibility.' I found an interesting case is when Pakeha refute Maori political objections questions are often raised such as 'how many *pure* Maoris are there in the current New Zealand society?' Indeed, almost all the Maori people could be deemed as 'hybrid', yet only very few Maori & Pakeha claim their ethnicity as Pakeha. Most of them regard themselves as Maori. I am more interested in discovering the reason why those whose 'hybridity' is turned from Maori & Pakeha intend to claim themselves as Maori. I would argue that the issue here is more political than Bhabha imagines. Bhabha's in-between thesis naively argues for a happy temporality and a common space but, it is not too far to find another example of 'the disturbing political blindness' that much critical theory in this century fails to consider (Ibid, p. 39).

Notes

1. This paper was first presented at 1997 NZARE conference, 4-7 December, University of Auckland, Auckland.
2. It is important to note that, in the beginning, for Bhabha, discourses of French poststructuralists and German critical theories are included under the umbrella of 'modernity' within his postcolonial discourse. Bhabha says 'my interest in the question of modernity resides in the influential discussion generated by the work of Habermas, Foucault, Lyotard and Lefort, amongst many others, that has generated a critical discourse around historical modernity as an epistemological structure.' Later he states, 'I want to pose my questions of a contra-modernity: what is modernity in those colonial conditions where its imposition is itself the denial of historical freedom, civic autonomy and the "ethical" choice of refashioning?' Bhabha does not, as most historians do, distinguish poststructuralist discourses from that of critical theory which is often assumed as part of the project of modernity (Bhabha 1994e: 239-240).
3. Bhabha (1993:167) attacks the poststructuralist, implicitly satirising Foucault's and Lyotard's literary works, and says, 'the death of the author, or the internal of intention, are occurrences that arouse no more scandal than the sight of a hearse in a palermo suburb.' Later in the same text, Bhabha shows his fearless business on critical theory, saying, 'whenever I look these days I find myself staring into the eyes of a recruiting officer ... who stares at me intensely and says "Western Civ. needs you!" At the same time, a limp little voice within me also whispers, "Critical theory needs you too!"'
4. I would argue that Bhabha applies poststructuralist meaning of 'incommensurable' for his own purpose. If Bhabha wishes to stay on the ship carrying the project of 'modernity' and argue for a recognition of acting in 'the present', he would certainly disagree with poststructuralist gist of 'incommensurable' which maintains a multiple and fragmentary public sphere. The adoption of certain aspects of the concept of incommensurability in order to fit into the project of modernity becomes the most significant weakness of Bhabha's theory - a position I will critique in the later part of this section.
5. It is originally from Habermas 'The Normative Content of Modernity', *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, Cambridge: M.I.T. Press. (1987, p. 346).
6. For instance, Bhabha (1994e: 236) states, 'It is Fanon's temporality of emergence - his sense of the belatedness of the black man - that does not simply make the question of ontology inappropriate for black identity, but somehow impossible for the very understanding of humanity in the world of modernity.'
7. For instance, 'black or minority intellectuals committed to an antiseperatist politics of community have no option but to place themselves in that dangerous and incomplete position where the racial divides are forced to recognise - on either side of the colour line - a shared antagonistic or object terrain. It has become a common ground, not because it is consensual or "just", but because it is

infused and inscribed with the sheer contingency of everyday coming and going, struggle and survival' (Bhabha 1995:114).

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