

Homi Bhabha and Edward Said on the Migrant's “Hybrid” Identity and the Possibility of Resistance and Human Agency

Azam Rezaei*

PhD Graduate of English Literature, Department of English Language
and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Kharazmi
University, Tehran, Iran

Fazel Asadi Amjad**

Professor of English Language and Literature, Department of English
Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities,
Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

(Received: 27 August 2019, Accepted: 31 October 2020 Date of publication: August 2022)

Abstract

Migration and particularly the migrant's transnational identity occupy a special place in postcolonial studies. Separation from homeland and living in an alien culture make the migrant develop a “hybrid” identity that undermines the binary oppositions which have served as the basis of colonialism throughout history – including the opposition between self and other. Migrant's “hybrid” identity, accordingly, questions the traditional views on identity and serves as an agent of change and resistance against fanatical nationalist and racist ideologies. In this study, the viewpoints of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, two of the leading postcolonial thinkers, have been studied to decide the extent of the practicality of their views on the assumed anti-colonial potentials of the migrant's identity and the possibility of resistance and human agency on his part. This investigation reveals that Bhabha's poststructuralist and optimistic views on the migrant's hybrid identity are far removed from the lived experiences of the migrants. However, Said, as an eclectic thinker who discusses the potentialities of the migrant's identity mainly from a humanistic viewpoint, presents more practical and close-to-reality views.

Key words: Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, migrant, hybrid identity, post-structuralism, humanism

* std_arezai@khu.ac.ir; arezai@ut.ac.ir(corresponding author)

** asadi@khu.ac.ir