INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF POST-HYBRIDITY
DANGERS AND POTENTIALS IN NON-SYNTHETIC CYCLES

CHIH-YU SHIH
National Taiwan University, Taiwan

JOSUKE IKEDA
University of Toyama, Japan

ABSTRACT

The term hybridity is losing its critical potential in the study of globalization, both because no one is not hybrid anymore and because awareness of hybridity might encourage violence. Whereas hybridity initially appeared as either cosmopolitanism or post-coloniality, it has however turned into a subversive celebration of unavailing indoctrination of any orthodoxy or canon. It is also the evidence of sited subjectivity or agency, whose unique genealogy cannot be entirely subsumed by simulating the sanctioned orthodox.

This paper instead advocates the emergence of post-hybridity, which is different from hybridity in its assumption of multilayeredness, memory, reconnection, and, most importantly, non-synthetic and yet cyclical historiography. It uses the example of Hong Kong, where both dialectical and cyclical modes of existence are central, to clarify post-hybridity. The paper is primarily a pedagogical reminder of, and a remedy to, the problem of the term hybridity for the teachers and students of International Relations.

KEYWORDS

Hybridity; post-hybridity; sited-identity; cyclical historiography; Hong Kong
Biography:

Josuke Ikeda is associate professor at the Faculty of Human Development, University of Toyama, Japan. His latest publications include ‘The idea of the “Road” in International Relations Theory’, Perceptions (2014) and co-edited book of Eikoku Gakuha no Kokusai-Kankeiron (The English School of International Relations, In Japanese from Nihon Keizai Hyouronsha) (2013).

Contact Information:
Chih-Yu Shih, Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University, No. 1, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Taipei, Taiwan 10617.
Tel: +886-2-3366-8316, E-mail: cyshih@ntu.edu.tw

Josuke Ikeda, Faculty of Human Development, University of Toyama, 3190 Gofuku, Toyama, Toyama, 930-8555, Japan.
Tel: +81-76-445-6370, E-mail: ikeda@edu.u-toyama.ac.jp.
INTRODUCTION

The term hybridity, one of the most popular concepts in international, ethnic, migrant, cultural and civilizational studies of the 21st century, is losing its critical potential, both because no one is not hybrid anymore (Hutnyk, 2000: 36) and because awareness of hybridity might encourage violence. (Kraidy, 2004) For the pedagogical and epistemological sake, we believe it is necessary to acknowledge the irony of “hybrid violence,” cosmopolitan as well as indigenous, in order to move beyond. The cosmopolitan hegemonic power claims to represent the highest form of hybridity, qua globalization, and vows to protect globalization by targeting both failing states and terrorist forces. In this conceptual striking back, a neo-conservative form of governance in the cosmopolitan centre comfortably claims hybridity while an indigenous, hybrid product of the Cold War’s making acquires nationalist and/or religious fundamentalism. Hybrid actors at both levels can apparently seek dominance in their own peculiar way and abandon the option of tolerance expected of a hybrid actor, cosmopolitan as well as post-colonial. In brief, the faddish and political use of hybridity conflates discursive post-coloniality and its material condition. To recover the ontological insecurities addressed by post-colonial hybridity requires a specific notion that can show the potential danger of all being hybrid.

Before hybridity became an indicator of cosmopolitanism, it used to denote the unfortunate incapacity of a post-colonial actor to escape scrutiny of the established canon. (Delanty, 2006; Sajed, 2010; Ong, 1998; Neilson, 1999). A hybrid actor recognizes but evades his or her own inferiority. (Fanon, 1986; Paolini, et al., 1999; Cabán, 1998) However, hybridity has later turned into a subversive celebration of unavailing indoctrination of any orthodoxy or canon. It is the evidence of sited subjectivity or agency, whose unique genealogy cannot be entirely subsumed by simulating the sanctioned orthodox. Much later, it appears that hybridity’s own suppressive potential emerges in its political call for such sited subjectivity that generates sited hegemony. However, it is the Bush Doctrine’s insinuated appropriation of hybridity as a feature of globalization that fully exposes the unanticipated irony of “hybrid fundamentalism” in both terrorism and the new conservative.
The question is therefore not just about how one has been synthetic of one’s own sited cultures and the encountered/assimilated hybrid civilizations. Rather, it is about what happens afterwards. (Arxer, 2008) The undecidable conditions allude to the suppressive potential of agents of hybridity that is in need of more research, theoretical as well as empirical, in addition to its already applauded potential for emancipation. The political use of the term hybridity does not make it an insignificant concept, though. We intend to further develop the theory of hybridity in order to recover its original critical power registered in the teachings of Fanon (1986), Said (1993), and Bhabha (1994). To understand the cycles of hybrid dominance and hybrid tolerance and behold the dangerous as well as emancipative potential of hybridity, we propose the concept of post-hybridity.

The aims of this paper are to bring forth a temporal perspective to supplement the overly spatial sensibility registered in the quest for a synthetic kind of sitedness in post-Western International Relations theory, reflect upon the danger of hybridity that is reduced to the desire of conquest, and release hybridity’s burden of emancipation in a cyclical mode of historiography. Such historiography transcends obsession with the geo-culture of space emerging in the post-Western pursuit of sitedness while at the same time cautioning the use of genealogy or linearity to implicate sitedness. The Newtonian ontology that undergirds the culture of space and linear time has been the root image of the Western worldview, (McMullin 2001) to the effect that the post-Western quest for sitedness risks reproducing Western hegemony by relying on imagined geography to mark and illustrate hybridity.¹ We believe that this is the source of confusion that renders globalization hybridity and post-colonial hybridity indistinguishable. While each post-colonial site, being “differently different,” (Bilgin 2012) resists synchronizing pressure under the circumstance of global governance, sitedness may inadvertently materialize post-coloniality to become a Newtonian process of forces colliding in demarcated space to make a new combination.

In short, post-hybridity is emerging to show how hybridity may generate

¹ These possible sites that can reproduce existent and generate new borders include, for example, India, the Caribbean, Eurasia, the Andes, China, Japan and Southeast Asia. (Tickner and Blaney, 2013).
the pressure on the national or other group actor to present itself as a synthetic identity in order to win acknowledgement in a largely capitalist, multi-cultural world. (Jameson, 1991) Hybridity rejects the possibility of “purity”; not starting from a rigid “self” nor seeing the external as an “other’. Post-hybridity is not so promising in its awareness of multilayer, cultural memory, reconnection and most importantly, non-synthetic and yet cyclical historiography. Katz (2013) calls this trans-hybridity, likewise with a focus to cultural transformation not only in spatial but also, and perhaps more, in temporal aspect. The paper tries post-hybridity’s ontology in the temporal and cyclical sense to remind us of the absolute space or time emerging in post-Western International Relations. The discussion continues with a case of post-hybridity – the intellectual history of Hong Kong. Here both the dialectical and the cyclical modes of existence are becoming central, indicating the unpleasant possibility of post-hybridity being dangerous as well as emancipative.

SYNTHETIC HYBRIDITY IN IR

(i) Emergence of Sited Hybridity

Hybridity is a term originally never used in the discipline of IR. After all the mainstream IR has been talking about a horizontal community of “the self” as constituting the international order or a vertical process of “othering” as the imperial order (and its reaction) (Keene 2002), but hardly anything “in-between” has existed until recently. Recent introduction of the post-colonial approach has brought IR to witness what is called the “post-Western” standpoint. Unlike “non-Western” IR (e.g. Acharya and Buzan 2009), or the claims for national reconceptualization of own worldviews, it is clearly aware of being “in-between’. The sense of “unhomeliness” (Bhabha, 1994), together with the idea of “provincialization” (Chakrabarty 2000/2007) became the major strategy for their engagement (e.g. Shani 2007, 2008; Vasilaki 2012). Here what all expertise may share is not only a critical reassessment of IR, but also its re-formulation from the point of in-betweenness. Continuous criticism is in tandem with the notion of “identity as iteration” (Bhabha 1994: 12).

One challenge for post-Western IR is, however, coming from its very
foundation – where they are. Importantly the idea of hybridity may entail “in-betweenness” both in the spatial and temporal sense. But an error may occur when (mis)interpreting it exclusively as the first. If one sees hybridity as a project, philosophical as well as empirical, against the process of a pure, fixed, totalizing identity and theorization, and yet if one takes hybridity only in the spatial sense, there may remain the same pitfall “ending up reproducing the very hegemony they set out to critique” (Shani 2008: 723). What can be derived from this is the irony that a hegemony has to be hybrid or, at times, *vice versa*. It may convert attempts of non- or post-Western IR into a pursuit towards intellectual dominance based on sited-hybridity.

Another hurdle is how to re-locate the post-colonial actors’ own critical practice with less, if not without, Western-centeredness. Intellectually speaking, a practice with hybridity does not go far beyond Western values. The problem with it is not that criticism is coming from the West, but that its mode of practice is considerably influenced by modern enlightenment thought (Gay 1977). Regarded as the “struggle against the absolute state” (Eagleton 1984/2005: 9), criticism has been “the continuation of politics by other means” (Eagleton 2003/2004: 29). As a counterpart of absoluteness, the idea of plurality has been seen as another normative pillar. The critical has been linked with “the political” in an organic manner, constituting an antagonistic field (Mouffe 1993/2005), and aiming at bringing “the political” back (Edkins 1999). The point is that a quite similar story can be applied to post-colonial thought as well as post-Western IR. In the former realm this is expressed when Fanon iterates his criticism towards white universalism (Fanon, 1986) or when Said argues "there are two sides" and identifies three themes of resistance (Said 1993, see also Said 1994). In the latter attempts have been pursued as “democratization” of the discipline (Chen 2011: 3), and the idea of hybridity has been a major strategy. To participate in the democratization of IR, a materialized site and a synthetic hybridity to conveniently represent it are the strategic prerequisites. It may also go along with a similar line in post-colonial thought as Spivak called for temporary essentialism as a strategy. Nevertheless, still a site is needed, which is both a matter of criticism and of identity. Once we accept the first point of challenge and see hybridity as the strategic representation of a spatial site, any activity of post-Western IR may square a fundamental deadlock that
post-Western is always already somewhat Western.

In such a situation, it is certainly ironic to see the emergence of hybrid fundamentalism. Indeed what may be commonly shared among hybridity, post-hybridity and non/post-Western IR is the rejection of purity qua fundamentalism. Ontologically speaking, post-hybridity may mean, in the long run, no synthetic subjectivity to own a site or no site to synthesize subjectivity. Epistemologically it attends to the changing times of the world, self and other. Finally, as a methodology it may suggest dialectic conversion, even rupture, instead of the genealogy that is oriented toward Newtonian absolute time, as a different mode of critical engagement that may transcend sited “critics’.”

(ii) Dangers of Post/hybridity

Globalization generates the political pressure in all actors to eagerly claim hybridity. Hybridity's opposition to purity requires either imagination of an object of purity and/or isolation from the object's post-hybrid conditions. For example, former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui once justified his pro-Taiwan independence campaign by alleging that Taiwan was no longer part of feudal, i.e. pure, China and imposing a curb on his countrymen from investing in China. (Cheung, 1988: 118-120) Pure feudalism is no longer existent but to make hybridity a foundation of non-Chinese subjectivity seems his only choice, (Corcuff, 2012: 56-58) Ironically, China’s adoption of the one-country-two-system formula to reunite with Hong Kong was likewise a deliberate exercise of hybridity made of socialism and capitalism on the one hand, and Chinese and British on the other. The last case suggests that reunification does no damage to the degree of hybridity. This innocence of being always hybrid breeds the first danger of post-hybridity as the green light to exercise conquest of any kind.

Conquest of a presumably hybrid target is not for its purification since the conquering subject is already hybrid. In fact, all the post-colonial nations owe their post-coloniality to the historical forces of colonialism, which brought modernity to the indigenous society. Immigrants who chase after the modern lifestyle in order to rise from a subaltern identity transform hosting
societies likewise into hybrid societies, albeit portrayed in the much more prestigious term “cosmopolitan.” The colonial scope is usually more hybrid than any particular post-colonial identity and even takes hybridity as an ideal. (Andrews, 2012) Worse, victimization of a self-claimed hybrid target in whatever way is the fault of the less-hybrid, whose resistance to cosmopolitan absorption wins it the notorious label of fundamentalism. This has been the fate of so-called failing states that defied the American intervention arriving in the name of global governance that transcends and synthesizes hybrid conditions in the most magnificent scope.

Cosmopolitanism itself originally assumed and aimed at overcoming member’s purity, making them tie together. Such “cosmopolitan culture” has once become a site against parochial nationality through proposing denationalized citizenship (e.g. Sassen 2006: chapter 6). Here cosmopolitanism was a counterpart against a particular type of sited-identity: nationality. And yet it does still value another kind of space, which cities may best represent. Thus, basically no cosmopolitan culture is without city culture. Two implications follow. One is that hybridity becomes a vital factor for cosmopolitanism while the latter becomes the site for the former. The other is that as long as globalization involves a particular process of urbanization of the world we cannot, in principle, escape from the dynamics of becoming hybrid. Everything may become hybrid because it requires cosmopolitan culture or the culture of global cities, and we are fixated with a culture of space.

The other danger is accordingly internal conquest. Hybridity, which assumes difference between one another, expects each to be hybrid in their own peculiar way. Sameness, or even similarity, with another national actor could discredit a claim to hybridity since hybridity can no longer be conveniently defined by opposition to purity, real or imagined. Both Confucian Vietnam and Confucian Korea breed scholarship that painstakingly pursues all the trivial variations from Chinese Confucianism in order to present an indigenously synthetic cultural legacy.² The second danger that post-hybridity touches upon rests in the tendency to protect the image of hybridity amongst local leaders who point fingers at some others for being traitors of indigenous identity. Traitors are those who connect with

² For a comparison between these specially separate Confucianisms, see Richey (2013).
presumably alien cultures and civilizations to undermine synthetic identity and risk loss of sited distinction.

Internal conquest takes place everywhere in the world even though the spread of hybridity should have deprived any attempt at conquest of the morale to do so. After all, no conquest can be complete or even effective in setting up the future direction of the conquered population. Nevertheless, internal conquest gains momentum wherever a site, allegedly one of a kind, acquires a synthetic identity. This makes, for example, both Inner Mongolians in China not Mongolian in the eyes of contemporary Mongolian citizens and the Han Chinese in China a different race than the Han Chinese in Taiwan in the eyes of pro-Taiwan independence activists. (Bulag, 2004: 109; Brown, 2004) Both Mongolian and Taiwanese civilizations are celebrated to be nobly hybrid and yet synthetic in their own way.

Theoretically, conquests do not always result in dominance or exploitation. Cosmopolitanism is supposedly a tolerant and on-going mechanism to constantly embrace yet another different component via soft conquest, soft intervention or soft governance. (Schelkle, 2007; Koremenos, 2001; Brandsen, Boogers, and Tops, 2006) Practically, though, cosmopolitanism and military campaigns often arise from the same colonial leadership at different times or on different issues, while isolation and openness compose the two post-colonial modes of self-synthesizing over different times or issues. Pre-WWII Japan’s approach to Taiwan attests to the former cycles of cosmopolitan assimilation and military annihilation, (Leo, 2001) and contemporary Singapore’s approach to China testifies to the latter cycles of closure and access. (Klingler-Vidra 2012) Figure (1) portrays two different modes of evolution. Under hybridity, all components combined into a unique synthetic subject, which evolves from Time 1 to Time 2 in the genealogy of the same synthetic subject despite new components added and/or old components adapting. The subject defines the way to combine civilizational identities under hybridity. In contrast, under post-hybridity, the process is dialectical with only one particular identity taking the lead each time. The identity discourse defines the non-synthetic subject under post-hybridity.
Figure (I): Synthetic vs. Non-synthetic Hybridity

Hybridity
A+B+C...(Time 1) → A+B+C...(Time 2) →...

Post-hybridity
A, b, c...(Time 1) → B, a, c...(Time 2) →...

As all are hybrid, sited or territorial hybridity composed of at least two purer civilizational components at the same time loses behavioural relevance to a certain extent because actors are no longer hybrid of two inconsistent sets of standards represented exclusively by place. In short, one cannot simply sit between the United States and China because the values and self-understandings of the two places are not internally consistent or even expressible without serious distortion. Korea, for example as place, may still represent Confucianism, and yet it can represent Buddhism and Christianity, too. On the other hand, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity can all use Korea (or China, Japan, and Taiwan) in turn as models so Korea (or others) becomes temporally divided. Hybridity not territorially embedded is unfamiliar to the literature. Rather, saying Korea is hybrid of these religions is much more familiar than saying these religions are hybrid of Korea, China, Japan and Taiwan so as to change sitedness into style that comes and goes. Mutual mingling and learning breed inconsistent standards at any selected site indeed, but these processes exist not merely in place, but also in time.

A Multi-tiered set of identities of this temporal nature moves the control away from the sited (sovereign as well as non-sovereign) subjectivity, which the literature on hybridity has tried philosophically praising and empirically demonstrating. Under the conditions of post-hybridity, the territorially irrelevant call or urge of a particular mode of self-identification answered by indigenous leadership decides what reigns for the time being. The same Korean intellectuals, for example, could take pride on the recognition of their English-written scholarship by their American colleagues in one moment, but denounce liberalistic suspicion toward nationalism in the next moment in order to promote Korean unification as the utmost life goal of all Koreans. Multi-tiered values and identities do not oblige a synthetic
solution to all acquired and internalized values and identities. Rather, they may surface and submerge dialectically without a scientifically decidable pattern.

NON-SYNTHESIS AND RECONNECTION

The theme of non-synthesis defines the extent that post-hybridity may be different from hybridity. Post-hybrid identities have to be practically re-incurred while the power of hybrid identity comes mainly from discourse. The factors that makes post-hybridity epistemologically different are threefold, namely its multilayeredness, memory, and reconnection. They are all counterparts of major tenets of hybridity, which are subjectivity, uncertainty and difference. At the deeper level more fundamental differences exist in between the spatial and temporal ontology. They do share one thing that ontology changes: but while hybridity may focus more on spatial change, presumably via a sited subjectivity, post-hybridity is interested in its temporal cycle that requires no synthetic subjectivity, nor forward time.

Multilayeredness may describe coexisting strings in our identity. Its starting point is the recognition that no identity is a tabula rasa in the geographical and/or cultural sense. Here it is worth recalling that post-colonialism does not simply support the plurality of identity as postmodern people often argue (Bhabha 1994: ch.12). It suggests that our identity can be a discontinuous construct so that it cannot be fully understood through discourse analysis, nor is it as powerful in subverting hegemony as discursive re-interpretation is. Multilayeredness suggests that our identity, and very existence, belong to more than one mode of social ontology, and in this sense it is similar to its predecessor, plurality. What differentiates multilayeredness from plurality, nevertheless, is the rejection of synthesis premised upon a sited subjectivity. In the international context this is sometimes connected to nationalism, which constitutes the affiliation of the self to a particular political community. The theme of plurality requests all to subscribe to a higher level of identity. In Taiwan, for example, this means not asking where one’s ancestor comes from (aboriginal, dynastic migrant, Japanese colonial, or Civil War refugee, etc.) in order to be treated equally as “new Taiwanese”. (Fan, 2011: Conclusion)
The problem with plurality is, despite the very claim for plurality, that it is oriented towards civic nationalism, which is reproduced to the effect of synthetic subjectivity that cannot reflect the multilayeredness and open-endedness of non-synthetic dialectics. It is even possible to extend such nationalism under a new banner of “cosmopolitan culture”. Thus a similar difficulty can be identified in the current mode of cosmopolitan citizenship, not because of its cosmopolitan character but because of its reduction to citizenship. Multilayeredness, composed of a contemporary thesis and many anti-theses, is here proposed to avoid the pressure for sited synthesis. It attends to the non-synthetic process that does not assume any subjectivity to represent a site in the long run. The non-synthetic multilayeredness enables one to appreciate the return of a lost anti-thesis despite that it may have disappeared for a long period of time. Any anti-thesis can be retrieved to obscure the identity of a particular site or personality. In the case of Taiwan, the aboriginal may re-identify with the Polynesians, Han heirs with the aboriginal, the post-colonial subjects with the Japanese, the civil war refugees with the Chinese, not to mention the range of other options available to those originating from a hybrid family.

Cultural memory instead of uncertainty is a ground to remain cognizant of multilayeredness so that all anti-theses can potentially be re-enacted. Its principle is that all are capable of (re)incurring an imagined past. In the world of hybridity, social formation of the subject may take place via either the infliction or the totalization by one character over the other. While the future is always uncertain there is no way to return to the past, hence “unhomeliness” (Bhabha 1994). Such synthesizing pictures often stress the fact that there are always two symbiotic stories to tell (Hollis and Smith 1990) from the same identity discourse at the same time. However, what cultural memory may suggest is that the practical, as opposed to the discursive, switch between the thesis and a non-symbiotic anti-thesis can be conscious and abrupt. Lee Tenghui, for example, turned himself from a communist to a Christian, or from a follower of Chinese unification to a leader of Taiwanese independence. Also, his re-identification with Japanese

---

3 A case for such practical use of memory through “the balance of relationship” or “the balance of role” has already been presented through the example of Urban Chinese. See Shih (2013), p.88.
colonialism resulted from more than just uncertainty. He was incurring from a distinct past from memory. In a similar way, the modern history of Okinawa reflects the island’s cultural memory, explaining the fact that oppositions towards the USA, Japan, and China have always existed in tandem with a sense of affiliation towards either of them.

What may be the link between multilayeredness and memory is the third tenet of reconnection. Reconnection describes how, at times, the incurring of an earlier layer may occur to reconnect with those others who were conceived of as belonging to a different other. The concept is contrasted with “difference”. Cyclical practices of different theses reflect the duty of the subjects to fulfil their social roles as the time changes. The duty is therefore not about how different the subject is from the other. Rather, it is about how the subject copes with time and its context. Moreover, because the subject is expected to hold multi-layered identities, the act to reconnect is always strategic. To provide another East Asian example, note that growth, nuclear weapons, national unification, regime stability, family history, etcetera, all inspire cycles of reconnection in Pyongyang in reference to China, the Chinese Communist Party, South Korea, and kinship. (Kim 2011: 26-27) Each cycle emerges out of a discernable rationale at a certain time, whether it be socialism, nationalism, comradeship, or something else.

The post-hybrid capacity for reconnection informs the non-synthetic dialectics of a site, a person, or a history to practically switch identities. In contrast, a successfully synthesized hybrid site relies on re-interpretation to resist domination. Genealogy is the basic method of cultural sociology to track how one hybrid condition evolves with a traceable string, (Mukerji, 2007) hence uncertain and yet sited subjectivity. Accordingly, hybridity proceeds with the participants and observers providing symbiotic and yet contradictive meanings to the same practice; however, reconnection is what characterizes the post-hybrid subject exercising cycles of plausible canons one after another because the reigning one fails to achieve success. Democratic Taishao turned to imperialist Showa in the aftermath of the Washington Conference because it was perceived to have subjected Japan to the US dominance. (Nish 2002: 26) Genealogy between different canons is unnecessary in this particular change as democracy and imperialism were
parallels in history rather than hybrid at the same site. Changes were not merely discursive; they were practical under the post-hybrid condition.

Together with these points, the idea of post-hybridity projects an attitude to think of ontology in a temporal way. To be fair, hybridity does not discard social ontology in a temporal sense (Bhabha 1994: 6). As thought by Fanon and typically written by Bhabha, the problem of "the location of culture" is one of the "ambivalent temporality of modernity" (Ibid.: 239). Yet the situation was so often shown that social ontology has been interpreted in the sense of belonging, which has had a tendency to see identity in terms of "where" rather "when". From this point of view, post-hybridity can be closer to the Derridean idea of différance, which states that the present and the presence is always a mixture of temporally different existences. However, as shown by Fanon and indeed by Derrida himself, différance already carries some meaning of iteration, criticism through deferring, which eventually brings us back to the question whether one does or does not do what one tries to avoid. Social ontology must deal with Bhabha’s question on modern ambivalent time, which is "often ignored" in the tradition of stressing spatiality (Id.). In terms of identity, differences can only emerge as such from previous identities of the self. Genealogy is thus the proper method to explain the evolution of sited hybridity. However, multilayeredness and reconnection via strategic incurring of memory make post-hybridity a temporal process of dialectics and rupture. This can be called “cyclical historiography", which will be discussed more in the case study of Hong Kong.

HONG KONG’S POST-HYBRID IDENTITY CASE

The dangers of post-hybridity reside primarily in the desire for conquest. It can arise internally from an imagined sitedness to gather, as a cosmopolitan centre does, another exotic model to enhance the universality of the centre. The US’ intervention in the Middle East is the archetype of a cosmopolitan centre seeking dominance over sites of different civilizations via an allegedly multi-cultural institutional frame. (Cheng, 2012: 7)

4 The post-colonial literature usually enlists words that indicate our existence in any spatial sense – such as “site”, “displace”, “home (and the world)”, “unhome”, “space”, and so forth.
Alternatively, internally imagined sitedness can sever, as an independent subaltern does, trans-border connection(s) to protect a distinctive hybrid identity. Singapore’s pursuit of a non-Chinese identity via a national English curriculum represents a quintessential case of self-reconstruction. (Stroud and Wee, 2011)

The externally triggered action transcends the sited distinction and presses actors constantly in response to the call for performance against standards that are externally prepared, e.g. human rights, economic growth, nationalism, peace, and so on. Nations are merely agents of cycles as China’s coping with Myanmar, North Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines dissolve the nation into different modes of relationship each embedded in a series of bilateral historical trajectories. Subjectivity is no longer premised upon the ability to re-appropriate civilizational mingling for the use of national self-actualization. From a historical perspective, almost all national actors demonstrate the intellectual capacity for dialectical change in accordance with the demand of the time.

Post-colonial Hong Kong is distinctive in its combination of Chinese, British, American and several other Asian civilizational resources. Chinese immigrants have been arriving in different generational cohorts in a historical span as long and wide as over 300 years, and nascent immigrants have started joining from Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the Cold War. Hong Kong is a typical site of non-synthetic hybridity. Canonic thoughts and beliefs that sustain differing identity strategies of Hong Kong’s intellectual and elite strata remain tenaciously within their own genealogy with their own version of tradition and self-identity. Hong Kong thus exemplifies a geo-cultural path that the literature on hybridity has not seriously considered. Hong Kong’s particular geo-cultural path is different from what the literature refers to as hybridity because Hong Kong’s identity encompasses non-synthetic, lingering Confucian, Christian, liberal, patriotic, and other identities that exist parallel to each other, rather than that they merge into a certain hybrid identity. Because of this, the allegedly hybrid identity of Hong Kong could disintegrate at any time because of re-imagined or re-enacted traditions. In other words, the non-symbiotic parallel identities support a cyclical historiography rather than the celebrated post-coloniality
that moves Hong Kong irrevocably away from any fixed past.

However, Hong Kong would not be considered essentially distinct in the post-colonial literature, which considers hybridity a common-sensual phenomenon in all post-colonial societies. In fact, metropolitan centers anywhere in the world display post-coloniality to a certain extent and are therefore accessible subjects of study on the post-colonial agenda. Accordingly, post-colonial and global cultures constitute two sides of the same coin. Hong Kong embraces both sides. This is a reason why Hong Kong has also been considered an example of cosmopolitanism (Studies on Global Cities). Although the two agendas do not move in the same direction, post-colonial historiography stresses variety while historiography on globalization stresses synchronized practices and representations, they similarly conceive a local history moving forward on its own track that denies any possibility of reproducing existing canonic thoughts or hegemonic values. The post-colonial agenda treats this forward move either as one into or away from a global agenda, or a little of both. The contemporary history of Hong Kong seemingly illustrates this as a move away from any specific meaning of being Chinese.

At this seemingly nontypical hybrid site Hong Kong, two popular modes of historiography are readily available to approach its geo-cultural history. Both fail badly. One is the so-called “end-of-history” kind of historiography that expects a linear and progressive evolution toward an individualist, civilian culture that is able to transcend sitedness. The other is the challenging deconstructive historiography that is emerging in different schools of deconstruction, including those advocating “post-colonial modernity,” “multiple modernities,” “post-Western international relations,” and so on. The deconstructionists endeavor to discover geo-cultural morality is presumably unshareable elsewhere. The problem is that neither of the two options can cope with the paralleling, coexisting, and yet non-confrontational cultural, religious, and political identities in Hong Kong after its return to China in 1997. The rise of the confrontation between pro-democratic and pro-Chinese forces brings forth an unfamiliar challenge because one can detect different strings of intellectual belief coexisting in the same identity. Despite a hybrid outlook of the agent, the two hardly synthesize. Each
appears in cycles contingent upon the context and the judgment of the agent. The case of Hong Kong thus has wider philosophical implications to the extent that indigenous and colonial thoughts considered mixed during cultural encounters do not substitute each other. Instead, they parallel or layer.

The capacity for intellectual return or appeal to a perceived past string cannot be a phenomenon just specific to Hong Kong. Therefore, post-colonial hybridity fails to appreciate many powerful intellectual foundations to which later generations can resort. Incurring an alternative origin to situate a different contemporary identity is always possible because of the longevity of human intellectual history. Hong Kong demonstrates this constant re-appealing that takes place on the basis of solid traditions in Confucianism, Christianity, and patriotism, in addition to the familiar liberalism and anti-Communism. Chineseness has become extremely difficult to define, and attempts at doing so generate bitter feelings because neither of the above intellectual identities have mixed well. This makes hybridity a misleading notion in the sense that there is no reference to the intellectual mechanism that brings back the past. The past in the present is always re-imagined, and such a past is always portrayed in the post-colonial literature as being for some contemporary purpose. In other words, the epistemology of hybridity treats the cultural past in Hong Kong that encompasses all these different identities as sheer strategic resources that can be enlisted by contemporary people for their own purposes. In doing so, it omits the nature of culture as an internalized memory that inspires spontaneous action.

For example, if you take a past intellectual resource such as Confucianism. Confucianism has implanted a cultural memory that enables contemporary people to naturally and instantaneously respond to Communist symbols with a readily affective aversion that imposes barriers on certain strategic options. Since the above constitutes an intuitive response, this would not be considered a strategic choice. However, if Confucianism would ally with Christianity in order to be anti-Communist, then this would constitute a strategic choice. Post-colonial hybridity only focuses on the latter, while omitting the former.
Cycles make a legitimate concept only if arriving civilizations each remain in their own momentum. In the modern history of Hong Kong, these should at least include Chinese immigrants that arrived in Hong Kong in separate waves, colonial immigrants, and missionaries. The result has been coexisting non-synthetic intellectual resources embedded in Confucianism, anti-Communism, Christianity, nationalism, and liberalism. These resources parallel, not merge, in a community undergirded by the geological demarcation of the colony and the Cold War camp. These values could each replace one another contingent upon the event, the political condition, and the individualized experience as well as the choice of the agent. Hong Kong’s intellectual history thus illustrates an entirely unfamiliar, and yet potentially ubiquitous, post-colonial condition that the notion of hybridity is unable to catch.

To begin, Hong Kong’s Chinese immigrants have been determined to avoid sited identity. This does not mean that they gained no sitedness, but rather that they preferred a distinctive non-Hong Kong identity. The first cohort of Chinese immigrants consisted of those Chinese that lost the political battle during the Manchurian (Qing) conquest of China. The overthrowing of the Qing Dynasty brought another generation of Confucian scholars that was still loyal to the dynasty. They despised the colonial Hong Kong population and therefore naturally became the faithful ally of the cultural conservatives in China, who were opposed to those characterized as Westernizers, modernizers, or cultural revolutionaries. Lu Xun, an important leader of the May Fourth Movement, was critical of these Hongkongnese Confucians whom the colonial administration found an ironic ally in its attempt to deprive labor movement of its legitimacy. The Communist revolution in 1949 brought in another cohort of Confucian immigrants, who this time were anti-Communist. The most recent intellectual Chinese immigrants arrived after the suppression of the Pro-Democracy Movement in 1989, likewise anti-Communist but hardly Confucian.

Each carrying with them a peculiar mission of restoration, the above mentioned different generations of Confucian immigrants multiplied the cultural layers in Hong Kong. Especially because their ideological enemies
have varied widely over the years, going from Manchurians, to Westernizers, to Communists, and finally to the Communist party-state. Hong Kong has never been a real home for them despite the fact that most of them spent the rest of their lives there. Love for certain Chinese cultural identities combined with an aversion to the current regime made them unfit for both the colonial lives in Hong Kong and possible new lives in China. The wished temporality of their stay in Hong Kong kept them from attending issues that seriously affected them. Nevertheless, they always stood firm facing colonialism.

Despite the brief alliance between the British colonial government and Confucian scholars during the Republican period, which witnessed the establishment of the Chinese Department in the University of Hong Kong, synthesis or mutual conversion has not apparently occurred. The colonial government did not intend to reproduce a particular kind of Chineseness for Hong Kong. As a result, pedagogy under colonialism had no patriotic goal. Rather, it prepared the population for capitalist competition. Nevertheless, Chineseness remained strong via the practice of Chinese cultural life and through receiving the exodus of Chinese refugees and the ubiquitous appropriation of Chinese cultural symbols. However, not only did indigenous Chinese and colonial British components not synthesize, different cohorts of Chinese immigrants did not, either. Both are more than just cultural resources for use in accordance with the context and the judgment. They additionally make a hybrid repertoire of cultural memory that can be triggered into action for achievement often of opposite ends—most noticeably Chinese patriotism and colonial modernity. By cultural memory, the concept refers to the evaluative intuition that generates agency for action. A non-synthetic kind of cultural memory in Hong Kong is destined to cause cycles in identity strategy in the population as well as in each individual.

Because of the above situation it becomes possible for people like, for example, Seto Wah to be a leader of the pro-democracy movement after 1989 and a determined patriot at the same time. His simultaneous critical perspective on Chinese Communist-Party rule and his unreserved leadership in campaigning for the recovery of the Diaoyu Islands sovereignty from Japan, embarrassed at times his followers, who could often only agree with one of his two positions. Also, university professors specialized in China
studies, for example, have to rely on different layers of Chineseness in order to research their Chinese subjects empathically, practice activism in Hong Kong, engage Western colleagues professionally in academic conferences, and re-appropriate their network in Singapore, Taipei, or among Chinese diaspora elsewhere. Their intellectual capacity of adaptation and shifting brings to light the non-synthetic hybrid condition they are in. In this condition all the cultural resources have the opportunity to prevail on their own and make the dialectics of cultural memories an on-going process.

Non-synthetic hybridity can be illustrated by the mutually estranging relationship between different generations of Chinese immigrants to Hong Kong, too. In favor of liberal democracy, the latest anti-Communist generation of the 1990s does not possess the same anti-Communism embedded in Confucianism of the earlier days. Nor was it similar to the one brought forth separately by the Church tradition, which included Sinology, but no Confucianism. The cohort that arrived after the Communist takeover largely experienced the war with Japan during childhood. Their strong patriotism alienated them from the cultural nationalism that arrived one generation earlier or the China watchers who came to Hong Kong for the purpose of solidifying American containment. Chinese scholars that have been coming to Hong Kong during the last two decades with a Western academic degree are lukewarm to anti-Communism, which makes them block communication with the earlier nationalist cohort. Furthermore, there have been intellectuals growing up in Hong Kong who can represent yet another indigenous layer with acquaintances to liberal and nationalist discourses at the same time. In brief, the values, identities, and cultural memories in the culturally hybrid Hong Kong have not synthesized. Since all can emerge and submerge separately, strategic adaptation has become an inevitable process of life that depends on pragmatic concerns of the actor as well as his or her evaluative intuition.

Hong Kong’s case makes Singapore or, for that matter, differing Chinese diasporic communities, cases of comparison. Singapore similarly has Chinese immigrants who arrived in different cohorts. The first generation arrived amidst the transformation of dynastic China into a republic while the second generation grew up during the anti-Japanese war. Even though the latter
has preserved major intellectual resources that sustained the Chinese humanities and identities, it nonetheless watched the third generation drift away from Chineseness. The leadership under Lee Kuan Yew initially suppressed Chineseness in order to cope with an unfriendly attitude of the neighborhood towards it, the multi-racial and religious politics in the nation, and potential communist infiltration via Chinese patriots overseas. Granted that the third generation was bred according to English pedagogy, Lee was able to revitalize Chineseness first under the disguise of Asian values and then upon the fast rising Chinese economy. New Chinese immigrants have begun to arrive from the Chinese mainland before the start of the new century to make a non-synthetic parallel to those that had come from Hong Kong a decade earlier. Non-synthetic hybridity causes integrative problems to some extent, but also enriches the hybrid identity for a potentially quicker and more drastic adaptation in the face of a fast-changing global geo-culture.

**CONCLUSION**

Post-hybridity warns against the loss of critical and analytical usefulness of hybridity. One function of post-hybridity is to show how, in a world of all being hybrid, conquest nevertheless proceeds upon the quest for sited subjectivity. Second, post-hybridity adds a temporal dimension to the analysis of hybrid conditions to enable an understanding of how and why a wholeheartedly claimed sited subjectivity can be merely a temporary phenomenon. Third, post-hybridity points to the methodology of genealogy as a reason for preoccupation with sited subjectivity and suggests adding dialectics to the study of hybridity as a remedy. Finally, post-hybridity deconstructs hybridity’s obsession with difference and subjectivity by analysing how subjects can be sheer media between contexts and acquired civilizational resources instead of self-actualizing agents.

Another observation from the case of Hong Kong may also be added in its relation to (post-)Western IR. In the first place, IR theory has been basically the theories of and among sited identities, while what Hong Kong shows is a fact that in the study of global relations or globalization such framework is too narrow in its scope and analysis. Second, even Hong Kong’s case may make post-Western mode of IR inquiry insufficient as the latter
does see the uncertainty of a particular identity, but only in a spatial aspect. As mentioned, the newest addition to the inquiry is the possibility of temporal reconnection out of strategic choice, while in post-western IR it has still been a matter of reinterpreting sited identity. Even though it is true that some works have already attempted to do so (Sassen 2006; Ling 2013), it is still necessary to bring time/history back to IR theory, but in a very different sense. Cyclical historiography may thus become a gentle reminder to reflect upon how one may situate the self, the other and the world within theories of globalization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is supported by the Ministry of Science & Technology Project 103-2420-H-002-043-MY3, Taiwan (Shih), JSPS Kakenhi grant (number 26882042 and 15H01855) as well as the Hokuriku Bank Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists (AY2015), Japan (Ikeda).

REFERENCES


Corcuff, Stephene. (2012). The Liminality of Taiwan: The Case Study in Geopolitics, *Taiwan in Comparative Perspectives* 4 (December), pp. 34-64.


Keene, E. (2002). *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Richey, J. L. (2013). *Confucius in East Asia: Confucianism’s History in China, Korea, Japan, and Viet Nam* Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies.


