

Globalization goes in circles: Hybridities East-West

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Cut-'n'-mix experiences in consumption, lifestyles and identities are ordinary and everyday, for example in food and menus. Hybridity refers to the mixture of phenomena that are held to be different, separate. Hybridization is 'the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices' (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 231).

Hybridity has become a prominent theme because it matches a world of intensive intercultural communication, growing migration and diaspora lives, everyday multiculturalism, and the erosion of boundaries at least in some spheres. New hybrid forms are indicators of profound changes that are taking place because of mobility, migration and multiculturalism. However, hybridity thinking also concerns existing or, so to speak, old hybridity, and thus involves different ways of looking at historical and existing cultural and institutional arrangements. This suggests not only that things are no longer the way they used to be but were never really the way they used to be, or used to be viewed. Here I first review the way I use hybridity in earlier work (Nederveen Pieterse 2004) and in the second part I reflect on the theme of East-West hybridities.

Hybridity

Anthropologists studying the travel of customs and foodstuffs show that our foundations are profoundly mixed, and it could not be otherwise. Mixing is intrinsic to the evolution of the species. History is a collage. We can think of hybridity as *layered* in history, including pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial layers, each with distinct sets of hybridity, as a function of the boundaries that were prominent at the time and their pathos of difference. Superimposed upon the deep strata of mixing in evolutionary time are historical episodes of long-distance crosscultural trade, conquest and empire and episodes such as trans-Atlantic slavery and the triangular trade. Within and across these episodes we can distinguish further hybrid configurations. Taking a political economy approach we can identify several general types of hybridity in history: *Hybridity across modes of production*: This gives rise to mixed social formations and combinations of hunting-gathering, cultivation and pastoralism, agriculture and industry, craft and industry, etc. Semi-feudalism and feudal capitalism are other instances of mixed political economies; modes of production did not simply succeed one another but coexisted in time. *Hybrid modes of economic regulation*: The social market in Europe and Scandinavia and market socialism in China organize economies by combining diverse principles. The mixed economy and the social economy of cooperatives and nonprofit organizations are hybrid economic formations. Social capital, civic entrepreneurship and corporate citizenship—prominent themes of our times—are also hybrid in character.

Hybridization as a process is as old as history but the pace of mixing

accelerates and its scope widens in the wake of major structural changes, such as new technologies that enable new forms of intercultural contact. Contemporary accelerated globalization is such a new phase.

If practices of mixing are as old as the hills, the thematization of mixing as a perspective is fairly new and dates from the 1980s. In a wider sense it includes the idea of *bricolage* in culture and art. Dada made mixing objects and perspectives its hallmark and inspired the collage. Surrealism moved further along these lines and so do conceptual and installation art. Psychoanalysis brought together widely diverse phenomena—such as dreams, jokes, Freudian slips and symbols—under new headings relevant to psychological diagnosis.

While hybridity may be unremarkable in itself, the critical contribution of hybridity as a theme is that it questions boundaries that are taken for granted. Thus, hybridity is noteworthy from the viewpoint of boundaries that are considered essential or insurmountable.

Hybridity is an important theme also in that it represents one of three major approaches to globalization and culture. One is the idea that global culture is becoming increasingly standardized and uniform (as in McDonaldization); second is the idea that globalization involves a 'clash of civilizations'; and third is globalization as hybridization or the notion that globalization produces new combinations and mixtures. The hybridity view holds that cultural experiences past and present have not been simply moving in the direction of cultural synchronization. Cultural synchronization does take place, for instance in technological change, but countercurrents include the impact nonwestern cultures have on the West and the influence nonwestern cultures exercise on one another. The cultural convergence view ignores the local reception of western culture, the indigenization of western elements, and the significance of crossover culture and 'third cultures' such as world music. It overrates the homogeneity of western culture and overlooks that many of the cultural traits exported by the West are themselves of culturally mixed character if we examine their lineages.

The term hybridity originates in pastoralism, agriculture and horticulture. Hybridization refers to developing new combinations by grafting one plant or fruit to another. A further application is genetics. When belief in 'race' played a dominant part, 'race mixture' was a prominent notion. Now hybridity also refers to cyborgs (cybernetic organisms), combinations of humans or animals with new technology (pets carrying chips for identification, biogenetic engineering).

Hybridity first entered social science via anthropology of religion and the theme of syncretism. Roger Bastide defined syncretism as 'uniting pieces of the mythical history of two different traditions in one that continued to be ordered by a single system' (1970: 101). Creole languages and creolization in linguistics was the next field to engage social science interest. Creolization came to describe the interplay of cultures and cultural forms (Hannerz 1992). In the Caribbean and North America creolization stands for the mixture of African and European elements (as in the Creole cuisine of New Orleans) while in Latin America *criollo* originally denotes those of European descent born in the continent. The appeal of creolization is that it goes against the grain of nineteenth-century racism and the accompanying abhorrence of *métissage* as miscegenation, as in the view that race mixture leads to decadence and decay for in every mixture the lower element would be bound to predominate. The cult of racial purity involves the fear of and disdain for the half-

caste. By foregrounding the mestizo, the mixed and in-between, creolization highlights what has been hidden and values boundary crossing. The Latin American term *mestizaje* also refers to boundary crossing mixture. Since the early 1900s, however, this served as an élite ideology of 'whitening' or Europeanization; through the gradual 'whitening' of the population and culture Latin America was supposed to achieve modernity. In the United States, crossover culture denotes the adoption of black cultural characteristics by European Americans and of white elements by African Americans. A limitation of these terms is that they are confined to the experience of the post-sixteenth century Americas and typically focus on 'racial' mixing.

Hybrid regions straddle geographic and cultural zones such as the Sudanic belt in Africa. Southeast Asia combines Indo-Chinese and Malay features. The Malay world, Indo-China, Central and South Asia, Middle Eastern, North African and Balkan societies are all ancient *mélange* cultures. Global cities and ethnic *mélange* neighborhoods within them (such as Jackson Heights in Queens, New York) are other hybrid spaces in the global landscape.

What hybridity means varies not only over time but also in different cultures. In Asia it carries a different ring than in Latin America. In Asia the general feeling has been upbeat, as in East-West fusion culture. Hybridity tends to be experienced as chosen, willed, although there are plenty sites of conflict. In Latin America, the feeling has long been one of fracture, fragmentation and hybridity was experienced as a fateful condition that was inflicted rather than willed. The Latin American notion of mixed times (*tiempos mixtos*) refers to the coexistence and interspersion of pre-modernity, modernity and postmodernity. In recent times Latin America's hybrid legacies are revalued as part of its cultural creativity.

The domains in which hybridity plays a part have been proliferating over time, as in the hybrid car, hybrid organizations and management. Interdisciplinarity in science gives rise to new hybrids such as ecological economics.

The prominence of hybridity has given rise to a debate in which hybridity is being criticized as an élite perspective. A brief account of arguments against and in favor of hybridity is as follows. Critics argue that asserting that all cultures and languages are mixed is trivial; a rejoinder is that claims of purity have long been dominant. Critics hold that hybridity is meaningful only as a critique of essentialism; which is true, but there is plenty essentialism to go around. Some question whether colonial times were really so essentialist; a rejoinder is that they were essentialist enough for hybrids to be widely despised. Critics object that hybridity is a dependent notion; but so are boundaries. Some critics argue that hybridity matters only to the extent that people identify themselves as mixed; but the existing classification categories hinder hybrid self-identification. Critics claim that cultural mixing is mainly for élites; but arguably crossborder knowledge is survival knowledge also or particularly for poor migrants. Critics hold that hybridity talk is for a new cultural class of cosmopolitans; but would this qualify an old cultural class policing boundaries? If critics ask what the point of hybridity is, a riposte is what is the significance of boundaries? Boundaries and borders can be matters of life or death and the failure to acknowledge hybridity is a political point whose ramifications can be measured in lives.

A next step is to unpack hybridity and to distinguish *patterns of hybridity*. The most conspicuous shortcoming of hybridity thinking is that it does not

address questions of power and inequality: 'hybridity is not parity'. This is undeniably true; but boundaries do not usually help either. In notions such as global *mélange* what is missing is acknowledgment of the actual unevenness, asymmetry and inequality in global relations. What are not clarified are the *terms* under which cultural interplay and crossover take place. Relations of power and hegemony are reproduced *within* hybridity for wherever we look closely enough we find the traces of asymmetry in culture, place and descent. Hence hybridity raises, rather than erases, the question of the terms and conditions of mixing. Meanwhile it is also important to note the ways in which relations of power are not merely reproduced but refigured in the process of hybridization.

Thus, according to the context and the relative power and status of elements in the mixture, hybridity can be asymmetric or symmetric. For instance, colonial society is asymmetric. We can think of types of hybridity along a continuum with, on one end, a hybridity that affirms the center of power, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony and hegemonic styles, and, at the other end, mixtures that blur the lines of power, destabilize the canon and subvert the center. The novels of V. S. Naipaul are an example of the former and Salman Rushdie's novels often match the latter. Menus that mix cuisines and healthcare practices that combine diverse methods may offer examples of the symmetric end of the hybridity continuum, but completely free-floating mixtures are rare, for even at a carnival the components carry different values.

Hybridities East-West

The theme of hybridities East-West raises several concerns. East-West is a special way of dividing up the world. As a trope it goes back to the ancient divide between the Greeks and the Persians. From the outset this was an artificial and polemical division, not a description of actual relations. Reworked time and again it has been interpreted as, among others, 'occidental liberty' and 'oriental despotism' and was revisited during the cold war (the 'free world' vs. communism). All along it remained a manufactured divide, revisited most recently in Huntington's 'clash of civilizations'. For all the influence it exercised as part of the western classical legacy, what this divide conceals is the long term osmosis between East and West and between the East and the Hellenic world. As Martin Bernal argues in *Black Athena*, ancient Greece was shaped by influences from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia and Persia, and these in turn were influenced by Asian civilizations. The point of hybridities East-West is to uncover these interrelations. Part of this is to take a step back and hold the categories themselves to the light.

East-West mixing is a meaningful theme for several reasons. The first consideration is familiar: the need to overcome Eurocentrism and develop a polycentric perspective on world history. Perspectives on history, modernity and globalization are still steeped in Eurocentric assumptions. An example is world-system theory, but also Giddens' view that globalization is 'a consequence of western modernity'. In fact what is at stake is not just decolonizing world history but to make visible *how* the world's peoples have become more interconnected over time. Second, what matters is to shed light on the contemporary 'rise of Asia'. If this is not merely a rise but a comeback it sheds light on economics, culture and politics. Third, it is a matter of deepening our understanding of globalization, viewed not just from a western viewpoint but, indeed, from global viewpoints. It is probably

a good idea that globalization thinking should be global. Fourth, uncovering the layers in East-West relations and looking beyond present times contributes to a sophisticated take on hybridity. Like much else, hybridity thinking suffers from presentism; considering hybridity in the *longue durée* deepens our insight.

Global history is increasingly en vogue, yet Eurocentric habits die hard. According to a conventional periodization of globalization (Bayly 2004), its main phases are *archaic globalization* in the sixteenth century; *early modern globalization* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (with the emergence of a European-Atlantic economy and 1760-1830 as the 'first global imperialism'); and *modern globalization* from the nineteenth century onward. This recycles all the hallmarks of a Eurocentric view: the late start privileges Europe, Europe is the central stage and the lead actor. The time line matches the categories and curricula of Europeanist history (where early modern and modern history are the mainstay) and echoes the Eurocentric preoccupation with the post 1500 period, the 'long sixteenth century'. This account conceals from view the role of the East for other contributions become a mere prelude to western globalization.

A new literature follows global history, critiques Eurocentrism and presents an 'Orient first' thesis or oriental globalization (Hobson 2004, Nederveen Pieterse 2006). Most scholars in this vein situate *early globalization* much earlier, with varying time frames and accents: 500-1000 CE (Hobson), 1250 (Abu Lughod) centered in the Middle East, and 1100 (Hobson) or 1400 centered in China and India (Frank 1998, Pomeranz 2000) and Southeast Asia (Reid 1993, Gunn 2003). Table 1 sums up this literature and offers an alternative account of the phases of globalization.

Table 1 Phases of globalization

<i>Phases</i>	<i>Start time</i>	<i>Dynamics</i>	<i>Central nodes</i>
Prehistory	3000 BCE	Migrations, trade, conquest	East and South Asia
Early (Oriental, primary)	500 CE 1000	Integration world economy Productivity, technology	Middle East East to South Asia
Early modern	1500	Triangular trade, Americas	Multipolar & Europe
Modern	1800	Colonialism, industry, IDL	Euro-Atlantic economy
Contemporary (accelerated)	1950 1970 1980	MNCs, cold war NIDL Neoliberal globalization, flexible accumulation, Toyotism, offshoring, outsourcing	Triad US, EU, Japan NIEs Washington institutions, East Asian tigers, NIEs, Asia-US co-dependence
	2000	Trade, energy, security	BRIC(SA)

Obviously this is only a schematic, telegram style account. Against this backdrop let me briefly elaborate some major points and phases of East-West hybridization, signaling main trends only (a proper treatment would have to be book length).

Population movements and the travel of Stone Age tools and bronze and

iron technologies go back to evolutionary time. We could view this as the prehistory of globalization: prehistory because relations across space are relatively sparse and irregular and globalization because they lay the infrastructure for later traffic. A fundamental consideration is that the ancient civilization centers of Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus river valley and the Yangtze and Yellow River became interconnected over time. Ancient Egypt traded with Mohenjodaro and Harappa; Rome traded wine with Cochin in India. Besides, the interconnections were increasingly substantial. That Chinese silk played an important part in the foreign trade of the Roman Empire (Cohen 2000: 11) is possible only if the supplies were substantial, regular and direct.

A saying in ancient Rome was *ex Oriente lux*. Early East-West hybridization includes the East-West travel of fundamental technologies including literacy and numeracy. From the outposts of empire legionnaires brought eastern cults to Rome, the Egyptian worship of Isis, the Mithras cult, Mesopotamian cults, and one of these, Christianity, became the religion of the empire and a world religion. Relations ran in multiple directions, as suggested in Karl Jaspers' axial age ca 500 BCE when Buddha, Zoroaster and Socrates allegedly were contemporaries. This long period of civilizational osmosis laid the foundations for early globalization.

Population movements during the prehistory of globalization established the infrastructure; during early globalization the density and volume of traffic increased and a world economy took shape. Early globalization proper may be dated from 500-1000 CE, centered on the Middle East with Mecca, Baghdad and Damascus as hubs in long distance trade. During the second phase of early globalization starting ca 1100 CE (Hobson) or 1400 (according to Frank 1998, Pomeranz 2000) China and India resumed the key role they played early on, now as propelling forces in the world economy leading in productivity, innovation and trade. Goods, technologies and cultural influences traveled along the Silk Routes over land and sea, carrying printing, paper, gunpowder and the compass. The impact on the West was fundamental and tremendous. For instance the arrival of gunpowder in Europe in the fifteenth century essentially ended feudalism and the role of the castles and power gradually shifted to the towns, so the famous rise of Europe's bourgeoisie is connected to oriental influences.

In the third major phase, attempting to cut out middlemen, European chartered companies traded directly with the Orient and brought spices from the Southeast Asian islands and tea and porcelain ('china') from China. Sprinkled along the routes of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC), for instance in Cape Town, are the remnants first of Chinese ceramics, second, Chinese ceramics commissioned by the VOC (with VOC emblems), third, blue ware made in Delft mixing Dutch and Chinese motifs. From the Indies the Dutch brought the techniques of batik and introduced them in West Africa on the route of the returning ships, as in Elmina on the Gold Coast. This laid the foundation of the African wax prints and the central role, which endures up to now, of Dutch production of African wax prints and the company Vlisco, producing the irony that genuine 'African wax prints' neither originate in Africa nor are produced in Africa.

Interlaced with East-West flows were flows from West to East. Alexander's empire reached Central Asia and gave rise to the mixed Gandhara culture (in what is now northwest Pakistan). The Hellenic world—itsself a composite including many oriental influences—had a major influence on the Arab and Islamic world, as in

Ptolemy's Egypt. European influence was felt in other continents particularly after 1500, the journeys of reconnaissance, the ventures of the chartered companies and the triangular trade. But Europe's influence became dominant on a world scale only after 1800 with industrialism and commerce, improvements in shipping and growing military reach, colonialism and imperialism. The western impact includes science, nationalism and state institutions such as constitutions and modern bureaucracies. Attempts at industrialization in Egypt and Persia, the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire, the Meiji restoration in Japan, and in the early twentieth century, the Young Turks and Young Persians, Siam renamed Thailand, Japan and Indonesia modeling their armies, constitutions and bureaucracies after the German model reflect the impact of the West.

Current assessments in global history, quite unlike the Eurocentric accounts, hold that the leading role of China and India in world production lasted well into the nineteenth century. Agricultural technologies from China played a major part in modernizing agriculture in Britain (Pomeranz).

The 'orientalization of the world' and easternization, in contrast to westernization, resumed in the course of the twentieth century with the growing influence of Japan, the Asian tiger economies, the rise of Southeast Asia and eventually China and India and the idea of the twenty-first century as an 'Asian century'. Japan's 'Toyotism' or lean production has become a world standard (and Toyota the world's leading automaker) and Japanese management techniques such as quality control circles are widely adopted. The rise of East Asia gave rise to the (controversial) idea of an 'Asian model' (e.g. O'Hearn 1998) and a 'Beijing consensus' as a possible alternative and challenge to the Washington consensus.

A defining feature since the late twentieth century is the codependence of the United States (promoting liberalization and export-led development in East Asia and importing East Asian products on a massive scale) and East and Southeast Asia (in offshore production) and South Asia (in offshore software and services). In the twenty first century this takes the form of Asian vendor financing of American consumption. In Paul Krugman's words, 'we became a nation in which people make a living by selling one another houses, and they pay for the houses with money borrowed from China' (2006).

This Pacific economy is as defining a feature of twenty-first century globalization as the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Silk Routes economies were during previous rounds. Each of these came with characteristic patterns of intercultural osmosis, hybridity and global *mélange*. The various headings under which hybridity is acknowledged—such as creolization, *mestizaje*, crossover, fusion, orientalization—reflect the diverse vantage points and windows from which global *mélange* is experienced over time.

Conclusion

It is easy to say that history is multicentric, yet this can gloss over the actual direction of flows and miss the patterns of influence. Millennia of East-West cultural osmosis have resulted in intercontinental crossover culture and European and western culture are part of this global *mélange*. For a long time Europe was on the receiving end of cultural influences from the Orient and, according to recent assessments (e.g. Frank 1998), the dominance of the West dates only from 1800 onward. Several thousand years during which the currents of influence ran

predominantly (though rarely exclusively) in East-West direction overlap with a period of approximately 200 years of predominantly West-East influence (much shorter than is usually argued) and by the late twentieth century the currents of influence again turn East-West, but now at a much higher level of mutual integration.

The different epochs correspond to different eras and styles of industrialization: Asia and the Middle East paved the way with artisanal manufactures, Europe led in craft industrialism, the United States in mass production (Taylorism), and Japan in flexible production ('just in time' production). Each built on previous acumen. British producers copied Indian textile making techniques; textiles with Indian motifs produced in Paisley in Scotland and named thereafter were incorporated in the British Liberty style.

'East-West' reflects a segmented, binary division of the world. East-West is only part of the global field. Flows are not two-way but polycentric. East-East and South-South flows are as important as East-West flows. The thesis of Oriental globalization corrects the conventional paradigm of occidental globalization, which is an important contribution. But more important than establishing a merry-go-round of leading centers and centrism is the growing insight in interconnected and parallel histories East West North South (as in Subrahmanyam 1997, Lieberman 1999).

Examining East-West relations over time shows that globalization goes in circles: East-West, West-East, East-West, etc. Hybridization is layered. The layered and circular East-West West-East movements and influences are visible for instance in Istanbul—Byzantium shaped the Ottoman Empire as a 'second Byzantium' and the merry-go-round of influences (mosques modeled after basilicas and churches modeled after mosques) is on display in architecture (Findley 2005). Hybridities are braided and interlaced, layer upon layer, to the point that it is difficult to decide which is which. Besides, global interplay becomes increasingly multidimensional over time and if economic considerations are fundamental in defining the phases of globalization they are not the only ones that count.

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