11 2006

Crossing the Border?

Hybridity as Late-Capitalistic Logic of Cultural Translation and National Modernisation

Kien Nghi Ha

One of the most celebrated features of hybridity is its supposed characteristic to cross cultural and national boundaries and its ability to translate oppositional cultural spheres into innovative expressions of the so-called postmodern era of late capitalism. This era is apparently based on free circulation and intermingling of ideas and significations in a world increasingly shaped and reshaped by different forces and different meanings of globalisation and migration. This view, which stresses hybridity as the central term for the ongoing process of intercultural transgression became lately prominent in the mainstream academic discourse. Even in the more sophisticated parts of the multicultural integration industry sponsored by the state are obvious trends to refashion national representation through inclusion and appropriation of cultural resources, which belong to marginalized groups in the immigration society. At the same time there is also a significant and popular desire within the mainstream society to explore new forms of cultural consumptions, which are not purely based on the construction of antagonistic differences and fixed stereotypes, but rather on the culturalistic production "out of such hybridization

that newness can emerge" – to use a paraphrase coined by Salman Rushdie.

In this text I want to discuss the effects of cultural hybridization on the national as well as on the economic sphere. Both processes aim to translate the marginalized domains of discriminated minorities into national resources, while leaving untouched the enduring legacies and dynamics of colonial and racist patterns in almost every Western society. These forms of hybridization turn out to work as a form of political utilisation and therefore broaden the economic exploitation through cultural subordination. I suggest to discuss cultural hybridity and national identity not as conceptual oppositions, but as a functional relationship, which allows the nation to expand and modernize the symbolic field of national self-representation by creating a more colorful, joyful, and attractive image of itself. In the global competition of national economies and cultures it is even for the nation a task of growing importance to appear cosmopolitan and open for productive flows of migrating capital, creative subjects and powerful symbols. Meanwhile, the cultural industries have discovered hybridity to introduce the mainstream society with new mass markets by developing innovative transcultural products. There is nothing new about the fact that cultural translation is greatly helpful to raise material profits, but I would like to suggest that hybridity means much more. I call it a new mode of production in a globalized economy that is increasingly obsessed with the consumption of cultural signs and meanings. With intercultural competence and diversity training as new management guidelines for the 21st century, hybridity easily became not only a trendy, but a major method for new ways of commodification.

Hybridity as Cultural Dominant in Postmodern Late Capitalism

In recent years we have been facing, on a global scale, the appearance of hybrid constellations in a world system where historical dynamics and geopolitical superiority are calling for the horrifying return of a late-colonial empire. Ironically, it is often predicted at the same time that the globally overlapping cultural landscapes and economic conjunctures are transformed into a postmodern flow. As some optimistic commentators expect, the location of unbounded culture will become transglobal within this movement, and culture itself will turn into a negotiable site of both creative patchwork and mutual exchange. In this context, the term cultural hybridity serves to name the hope for societal transgression as well as the availability of new cultural forms, which are no longer determined by modernist exclusion and fixed belonging to identities. However, the longing towards heterogeneous and transnational cultures can be perceived not only in critical artistic or academic articulations, but also in the cross-border formations of popular culture within late-capitalist economies.

When discussing these issues, we have to look carefully on the fundamental question of how culture is defined in the era of globalisation and how rapidly its meaning has been changed in recent years. We nowadays live in societies where the cultural sphere is becoming more and more important, overwhelmed with meanings for the unanswerable questions of identity and cultural difference. This development is expressed in terms like the "linguistic turn" in the humanities or the latest "cultural turn" in social sciences. All these turns call for a dynamic, interactive, plural and always changeable understanding of culture. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, two leading figures in US-American Cultural Studies, suggested to label this epistemological change as "postmodern turn", expressing the search for a new paradigm,

where hybrid representations of intermediality and transculturalism appear on the horizon.[1]

Despite the fact that, according to Michail Bachtin, crossover, patchwork and organic hybridization are essential and unavoidable for any cultural development, we have to make clear that this way of thinking is a very unique experience for Western modernity, which is obsessively based on the recognition of the “either-or” principle and its violent outcomes. For the first time in Western cultural history, the idea of intermingling seems not to be connected with fear, devaluation, inferiority, sin or cultural crisis. In the Greek antiquity, the term hybrid derived from hubris (hýbris), describing the overweening religious offense to transgress the hierarchical border between the divine and the humane. It was also mythically associated with monstrosity (chimaera, sphinx, gorgons) and in Plato’s philosophy with socio-cultural and ethnic pathology. In modern times, these thoughts became the framework of colonial-racist theories by European masterminds on "racial bastardization" and cultural creolization.[2]

Under these historical conditions it seems that hybridity offers us a different approach to culture and society, because it disrupts the longing for homogeneity in colonial modernity and rethinks difference differently. Hybridity refers to a different cultural cartography of the world that is much more based on impurity and in-between categories. This is why hybridity serves as multi-layered scheme in a postmodern approach. As an alternative to traditional ideas of singularity and totality, hybridity highlights the irreducible positions of difference and diversity. Instead of binary patterns it prefers the liminal concepts of third spaces and border transgression. It thus celebrates the dynamic of mixture and intermingling. We are now in a situation in which postmodern late capitalist economy calls for aesthetical and technological

innovations through mix and endless (re)compositions. In this brave new world, cultural hybridity is apparently the catchword of the postmodern era for technological optimism and the telos of progress. It also offers a new mode of aesthetical production that – unlike the modern one – is not based on homogeneity, standardization or the myth of the isolated genius at work, but on inclusion and transgression of images, languages, sounds and subjectivities to enrich a cultural flow that promises to lead us to a transglobal popular culture and a dramatic change of values.

In view of the enduring Western cultural tradition of homogeneity, it is stunning to reflect the recent epistemological hyper-transformation in the thinking about hybridity. Although neglected and disapproved throughout the Western cultural history, the image of the hybrid turned within a few decades from a negative fetish into a wishful state of being and desirable obsession. Critical discourses have to be aware of a trend in which hybridity becomes a cultural dominant. According to Frederic Jameson's neo-marxist approach, cultural dynamics and technological progress as effects of dominant forces are not main causes, but results of capital developments. In his book *"Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism"* he insists on the genealogical relationship between late capitalism and postmodernity.[3] In this sense, it would be also fair to say that hybridity can be understood as the most advanced form of transnational postmodernity, operating under the conditions of economical and cultural globalisation. The british sociologist Barry Smart characterized postmodernity as "(i) future oriented, innovative temporal imagination; (ii) iconoclastic attack on the institution, organisation and ideology of art; (iii) technological optimism, bordering at times on euphoria; and (iv) promotion of 'popular culture' as a challenge to 'high art'".[4] It is not difficult to apply all these characteristics

to the conception of hybridity. Postmodernity and hybridity also share a revolutionary attitude based on the overcoming of modernity and the entry into a new historic era with its own meta-narrative.

But what are the consequences of the epistemologic change in the real world? There are more signs to indicate complex shifts in contemporary power relationships, but less to signify the abolishment of Western hegemony or dominance itself. These changes indicate a modernisation of capitalistic commodification and a new configuration of the nation state. Let us not forget that the history of knowledge production was always also a history of shifting power relationships and their underlying social forces. While it is right to assume that hybridity will have effects on processes of "othering" and dominant culturalistic world views, it would be naive to believe that hybridity provides a formula for an all-encompassing solution. It is much more realistic to think hybridity to be used to produce more advanced cultural grammars and idioms. There is no doubt that these cultural forms will be appropriated very quickly by an always demanding cultural industry hunting for creative innovation, which is essential for the marketing of new trends and fashion lines. Without effective transliteration, powerful miscoding or radical interventions, hybridity is becoming a cultural tool to reconfigure modern power structures. As Irmela Schneider points out "the hybrid is not the opposite of hierarchy and hegemony, but of binary and dichotomy"[5]. Almost ten years ago Douglas Kellner already wrote: "The forms of hybrid culture and identities described by postmodern cultural studies correspond to a globalized capitalism with an intense flow of products, culture, people and identities with new configurations of the global and the local and new forms of struggle and resistance".[6]

If we really want to challenge power in its productive postmodern appearance, it is necessary not to celebrate uncritically the rare moments of hybrid situations seemingly promising to liberate potentials and resist ruptures, but to focus on its pitfalls and shortcomings. It is worthwhile considering how hybridity as trope of postmodern aesthetics and cultural conception is linked to a late-capitalistic logic of utilisation. The hybrid state of the art promises efficiency, fascination, newness and appropriation. This, of course, has the side-effect of establishing new hierarchies of taste and the exclusion of those unwilling or unable to provide these desired services. But for those of us who can afford and enjoy this cultural economy, everything appears as unusual, fresh, and quite exciting.

One necessary presupposition of the contemporary hybridity-boom is the valorization of difference, which in the history of Western modernity functioned quite exclusively – as Michel Foucault and others have shown in their works – in the miserable and inadmissible figuration of Otherness. However, this prevalent development has become even more ambivalent and discontinuous. In the contemporary global cultural economy the hipness of global players is defined by their ability to create exceptional designs that really “make a difference”. Since the end of the 1990s trendy global players like *Apple* ("Think different), and *Braun* ("Designed to make a difference") have been investing heavily in advertisement campaigns to create a timely profile of their own that privileges difference as a resource of uniqueness, pleasure, attraction and creativity. In these contexts, difference is no longer the place of marginality and exclusion, but something we should yearn and pay for. Difference-sells-slogans attract young-dynamic, highly educated and wealthy social groups. These consumers are the core group of marketing strategies, which appeal to the growing desire

to "be different" as *Loewe*, one of the last German brand for high-end entertainment electronics put it as slogan for their self-image. The names of the following advertisement campaigns are just illustrative and should give us a more detailed outlook: Jewelry companies like *Rado* "A different world" or *Alfex* "Dare to be different", tourist services like the Swiss *Kuoni* group "A world of difference" or the Australian tourist administration "A different light", energy producers like *Mobil* "Feel the difference", high-performance textile companies like *Dupont Lycra* "Enjoy the difference"
or as the last example the German champagne producer *Geldermann* "Vive la différence" are highly lured into the political economy of cultural difference. Their business is "selling the difference" as the international marketing agency *Dorland* put it in their own advertisement campaign. One of the best sales arguments in the market of cultural commodification is the ability to invent and expand the dominant self through the usage of difference and desire represented by the wanted product. The message looks like this: Being different is profitable, because it is regarded as the defining sign for creativity and associated with upward social mobility.

Although popular culture and marketing strategies can certainly not denote social reality as a whole, they nevertheless represent a notable change in the cultural imagination of the mainstream society and their notions towards difference and Otherness. This "positive" discrimination of difference is by no means a way to full and unconditioned acknowledgment or affirmative action, but leads to further misrepresentation through entertaining and ornamental objectives. The appropriation of difference enables to acquire and maintain a positively charged image of cultural hybridity, which seems to introduce and inter-translate cultures with each other,

forming a global culture without boundaries and conflicts. From this simple but widespread perspective, hybridity can be best understood as an intense culmination of cultural translation driven to its climax. Imagining hybridity as cultural intercourse may sound weird, but one has to admit that the public celebration of cultural dialogue and truly international events as a wonderful and charming spectacle has to some degree pornographic side-effects of exoticism and sexualization.

In Kate Nash's description "global culture is often seen as postmodern: fastchanging, fragmented, pluralist, hybrid and syncretic"[7] and John Hutnyk asks "Is capitalism hybrid now?"[8]. One of the most important features of the postmodern condition are the transformations within the mode of production. Comparing to earlier stages, late capitalism is characterized by a remarkable shift from material to cultural production. In this process, the material usage of most commodities becomes less important. Furthermore, the material worth of products and its usage are increasingly replaced by the fetish characteristics of postmodern cultural commodity. Mike Featherstone describes in his book "Consumer Culture & Postmodernism" how products and representations are turning into a site for the creation and transfer of meanings, images, and feelings, which enable a different mode of consumption.[9]

While material production and consumption are principally limited in many ways for example by natural resources and certain human needs like hunger, these parameters are less restricting in the cultural sphere of virtual signs and symbols. Consequently, the cycles of production and consumption – as we see in popular culture – are dramatically accelerated. Cultural hybridity plays a crucial role in the aesthetical production of new forms. It can be used as a technology to create unlimited new cultural articulations,

to differentiate markets and to produce unprecedented desires through the repeated blending of differences.

After all it is not exaggerated to say that both mass and elite culture consumption markets are fascinated at different scale and speed by an emerging trend that calls for the dissolution and open composition of cultural artefacts. While postcolonial hybridity was concerned with parody, mimicry and carnival and their potential for cultural subversion, late-capitalistic hybrid forms don't seem to be much more than the latest version of a classic postmodern game called "anything goes". To put it in a different way: in the context of the political economy of culturalisation the once highly politically charged catchword of "crossing the border" turns into a depoliticized attitude of the mainstream society, referring to a phenomenon only attached to the colorful and entertaining surface of the economy of popular culture and not necessarily including any basic political questions such as institutional access, group interests, profits for whom, decision-making process, political rights etc. More than that, the principle of hybridity seems to change into a catch-all-word and an all-in-one-solution of neo-liberal ideas of permanent flexibility, innovation and transformation. To sum up: hybridity sells well, because it is regarded sexy. Considering that hype, it seems that we are at the beginning of an economy fundamentally based on the industrialization of models of hybrididy. Its potential is its promised ability to cross structural boundaries and barriers, to make possible innovation and improved adaptation, which allows more efficiency, functionality and aesthetic gains. Hybrid technologies exploit openness and transgression as a working method to translate cultural meanings into profitable commodities. Michael Hardt and Tony Negro wrote in *Empire*: "(...)

hybridization becomes a central and conditioning element of the formation of circuits of production and circulation".[10]

Hybridization as Mode of Production in the Culture Industry

The need to create and enlarge markets also applies to the culture industry, which until recently was largely dependent on linguistic translation and adaptation of a product in order to make it profitable in different cultural contexts. In the age of digital reproduction and heavy rotation in an increasing mass media entertainment culture, which is always hungry for fresh contents of sounds and images, it is quite easy to create new remixes with the necessary knowledge and technical equipment. All these measures are important to speed up the production cycles and to maximize the output. They also contribute to increase production-consumption-cycles, which is important for the invention of new markets and the expansion of existing ones and which is necessary to intensify socio-economical growth in global late-capitalism. The promotion of hybridity as a production technology to create cultural diversity expanded the range of options. For example the technologies of sampling, mix and remix are cost-effective production methods in the music industry, extensively used to recycle old songs, archive material, well known rhythms and sound patterns through endless variations of the same old song, appearing as something different and new. It is a viable tool to generate and renew compositions and musical elaborations through repetitions with shifting differences. A quite similar process is going on in the blending of different music styles and genres from any time and any culture or subculture.

Nowadays, cultural translation works increasingly in musical interbreedings and one of the most successful and radical

representatives of this form of world music is the London based multiethnic music-collective *Transglobal Underground* with complex arrangements including, but not limited to, Arabian vocal style, rap and reggae interludes, techno music, sometimes arranged with Western classics, Latin grooves, African rhythms etc. Their eclectic and moving music concept is well documented in the names of their albums "Dream of 100 Nation", "International Times" and "Interplanetary Meltdown". But this sympathetic and affectionate attitude to cultural synthesis does not help much to keep the culture industry and their powerful interests out of these cultural contact zones.

Nowadays the music industry is probably the best example for a cultural production already largely relying on hybridization. If the postmodern "anything goes" can claim some formal evidence, the field of contemporary musical expressions is its reference. In the citations and rearrangements of shifting sounds and rhythms, social class conflicts and cultural time-space-barriers seem to have vanished. Everything seems fine and happy in the mix of this fruitful cultural contact zone. After the waves of African-American music genres like R&B, soul and rap or world music from Third World performers, Western pop culture is now enriched by the latest crossovers called bhangra-pop, latin soul and oriental house. These new music styles may entertain and enrich White mainstream societies for one or two seasons until they get boring and have to be replaced with another hot, exotic, and vivid hybrid music style. The mixes of various musical styles are additionally amplified by the embodiment of ethnic difference and "racial" intermingling. When it comes to the celebration of cosmopolitan and fashionable pop-mass-culture, formerly unwanted cultural and human resources of marginalized migrant communities are now desired as hot and vivid ingredients.

The blending of gendered and racialised bodies, images and sounds from different national, ethnic and local contexts to create a consumable products is nowadays a common marketing strategy constructing innovative products and increasing their cultural attractiveness. It is also not coincidental that recent Hollywood productions make use of intercultural settings and "racial" stereotypes to enrich the cinematic atmosphere and to direct humor. The range of these body and identity politics in mega-selling movie sequels starts simply with mixed heroic duos, as in "Men in Black" (Will Smith/Tommy Lee Jones) or "Rush Hour" (Jackie Chan/Chris Tucker). At the other end of this scale stands the perfectly designed philosophy of the "Matrix"-trilogy, exhibiting hybrid ornaments and transcultural settings to an unprecedented extent in mainstream cinema. Although it is stimulating not to overdramatize the impact and logic of a globalized late capitalist cultural industry, it would be worth analyzing the racialized product-philosophy of postmodern commodities like the "Matrix"-sequel more closely. The representation of Otherness and misuse of People of Color for the purpose of increasing the progressive image and sex appeal of this movie is distorting. Paradoxically, its controlled diversity, its tasty sense for the right balance of flavored Otherness serve to underpin the dominant representation of masculine Whiteness by exploring a certain kind of Otherness on the behalf of the Other. This is why Keanu Reeves hybrid and translatable Otherness appears as widely acceptable in the eyes of the White audience. On the other hand, undoubtedly Laurence Fishburne's undeniable Blackness and Anthony Wong's strong Chineseness disqualify them from a mainstream perspective for the role of the ultimate "top dog" rescuing human wo/mankind at the end of history. Rather it is Keanu Reeves' ability to pass as White that gives the White audience the choice to identify with him without feeling alienated.

Within this constellation, the White subject gains the freedom to extend the cultural and racialized boundaries of his or her own self-definition while still sharing the privileges associated with Whiteness. This mapping of cultural intersections does not destabilize power relationships in the different construction and placement of identities. On the contrary, it saves the dominant subject position from the enforcements of separation to negotiate a superior identity. Through the integration of difference, the cultural iron cage of identity becomes broader and, by playfully accessing and appropriating Non-White contexts, White identities turn into a more colorful, self-satisfying, and valuable self-image. To imagine the dominant Self as an Other allows one to deny historical inscriptions and structural differences in the construction of cultural identities. The problem of amnesia occurs and lays the ground for a relaxed cultural consumption without the burdens of the colonial past.

While postcolonial theory tends to discuss hybridity within a critical analysis of colonial discourse and the possibility of the enunciation of subversive effects through repetition and displacement of the meaning of dominant signs in the articulation of marginalized subjects, the cultural industry and its inscriptions of the dominant in the discourse of marginalized minorities seem to be interested exactly in the opposite. After all, it is necessary to differentiate between hybridity as a process of cultural subversion and subaltern resistance as in Homi Bhabha and hybridity as an industrial conception for "marketing the margins" – to use a term coined by Graham Huggan. [11] Commercial cultural hybridity comes often as exoticism, leading to the cultural commodification of certain stylish images of Black and immigrant people. While the first understanding of hybridity is based on everyday cultural practices, on ambivalent ways of artistic expressions and the

ongoing identification process of marginalized groups, the second conception of hybridity allows the dominant White self to extend his/her range of self-definition by consuming and appropriating fashionable and permitted forms of Otherness. Meanwhile, excluded and unwanted Others, who are perceived as traditional or fundamentalist, are forced to remain silent and invisible. Therefore, there is a need to ask if transgressions are free from utilizing interests, societal hierarchies and cultural exclusions, and if they are regulated and exploited by the cultural industries and national agencies to achieve pleasure and improved performance. It is important to acknowledge that dominant subjects and national projects are to a certain degree willing to make use of the advantages that cultural diversity and intercultural management is offering.

Hybridity as National Modernisation

The ongoing fascination with cultural hybridity is on its way to set up a new meta-narration of third spaces, which has been discovered and cartographized for a demanding economy of desire. This development encourages transnational immigrants to construct themselves as especially authentic hybrid, which is one of the few ways to self-promotion and social upward mobility. However, the intercultural vision of hybridity can be analyzed as a postmodern update of an outdated multiculturalism. Like its predecessors, the discourse of hybridity is not free from essentialist presuppositions and ethnic stereotypes. Often hybridity has been described as a cultural mix based on stable and holistic national cultures that do not consider internal differences. The externalization of cultural differences and social antagonisms constructs an oppressive model of cultural identity and does not transcend national and ethnic formations. Instead, hybridization as the new paradigm of dialogical

imagination and cultural harmony can veil the violent presence of racism and structural inequalities in relation to gender, class, sexual and cultural identities. Hybridity might oppose cultural binaries and dichotomies at its best and emphasize them at its worst, but in most conceptions cultural hybridity does not deal with power relationships and hegemony.[12] While the borders of prosperity and the so-called homeland security for Western societies are increasingly policed, we are not surprisingly facing the undeniable effects of globalisation and migration. These forces have shaped a traveling economy of bodies, signs and idioms that operates through combination and recombination of diverse cultural elements. Instead of celebrating the space won for cultural freedom and permeability, one should be cautious when thinking about the political potentials of cultural transgressions.

With the flourishing of Cultural and Postcolonial Studies, hybrid constellations and in-between categories in the world of art have became a prominent and fashionable style in recent years. After the dangerous liaisons of modernity with ideologies like colonialism, racism, nationalism and fascism[13], which were always based on the violence of imagined purity and closeness, exploring the long neglected possibilities of cross bordering was in the first moment an easing cultural and political task. Today we have to admit that even the examination and exhibition of cultural differences and how they collapse and intertwine remain political ambivalent. This is the case since the doubtful celebration of a just discovered (and later to be exploited) "newness" and transcultural dynamic of immigrant and Black diaspora cultures are welcomed by public institutions and multinational companies. To perceive immigrant communities as a useful economic tool to increase national competitiveness or to utilize them as a now needed transnational ethnic network of human and cultural capital to satisfy a desired

cultural consumption, is a form of objectification. These practices tend to exhibit Otherness as a way to serve the taste and the interests of the mainstream society framed by the dominant nation state.[14] Such a process creates new hierarchies and borderlines of visibility and invisibility, but also new forms of recognition and exclusion among marginalized people. It is obvious that immigrants, who are perceived as "traditional" in the White gaze, are under pressure to conform as good, integrated, but still exhilarating Other. Those immigrants who fit in the requested definition of the integrated Other will be celebrated, while those who fail to do so will be punished in one way or another. In the end, the established positions in the ongoing contestation of the object-subject-relationship are not questioned, but reinforced.

Moreover, hybrid immigrants and their Diaspora cultures are also needed to modernize the aging and declining nation. Even a country like Germany, which is well-known for its political failure to acknowledge its transition to a modern immigration society, is now obsessed with immigrant newcomers. The purpose of this revaluation is to place the White nation in the midst of a colorful Otherness. Formerly rejected cultural resources of migrant communities are now desired as productive and exotic ingredients when it comes to the celebration of the cosmopolitan and performing national culture. After a selective procedure, certain immigrant and Black voices, which fit into the prescribed categories of beauty and attraction, are now regarded as suitable, entertaining and representative. The German pre-selection for the European song contest "Grand Prix Eurovision 2004" in a nationwide televised event called "Germany 12 Points!" serves as a good showcase. As the exclamation mark in the title indicates, the imperative form demands uncompromisingly the top position for Germany in Europe. Obviously, the participation of immigrants

and Germans of Colour is welcomed in order to secure the top position for Germany. Following the trend over the last years the national preliminary contest presented above average performers with migrant or different German backgrounds like the Arabian-German Laith Al-Deen, the Indian-German Sabrina Setlur and the "multiracial" boy-group "Overground". Fabricated by a TV casting show, which was sponsored by a major music label, Overground together with other test-tube newcomers like "Become One" and the girl-group "Preluders" (all three bands were set up in November 2003) represents only the latest outcome of an extremely successful pop product line that started with "No Angels" in 2000 and "Bro'Sis" in 2001. All these industrially composed bands share in different colour tones an aspiration for a "multiracial" and sexy appearance. The girl-group "Preluders", a name apparently connected with sexual availability and stimulations like "hussy" (which could be translated into German as "Luder"), are most consequent in executing this conception: the Preluders represent a female mixture of Albanian-German-Italian-South-African-Vietnamese features. This form of "privileging" hybrid Otherness in selective cultural contexts with industrially defined role models is reductive and can reinforce racist and sexist stereotypes. It shows that Germany can bear the presence of ethnic minorities only when it comes as comedy or as singing and dancing acts. To imagine culture as a monolithic and pure essence of the nation and as a collective way of life for its people seems nowadays an old-fashioned manner of thinking. But the fact is that the political significance of the nation state is uninterrupted and remains a untranslatable powerful and determining force.

This text is a shortened and revised part of the book Hype um Hybridität. Kultureller Differenzkonsum und postmoderne

Verwertungstechniken im Spätkapitalismus *(Bielefeld: transcript Verlag 2005)*.

---

[1] Best, Steven/Kellner, Douglas (1991): Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations, Houndmills - London: MacMillian Education.

[2] More detailed Ha, Kien Nghi (2003): Hybride Bastarde. Identitätskonstruktionen in kolonial-rassistischen Wissenschaftskontexten, In: Eva Kimminich (Hg.): Kulturelle Identität. Konstruktion und Krise, Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, p. 107-160.

[3] Jameson, Frederic (1991): Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, London - New York: Verso.

[4] Smart, Barry (1993): Postmodernity. Key Ideas, London - New York: Routledge, p. 19.

[5] Schneider, Irmela (1997): Von der Vielsprachigkeit zur "Kunst der Hybridation". Diskurse des Hybriden, In: Dies./Christian W. Thomsen (Hg.): Hybridkultur: Medien, Netze, Künste, Köln: Wienand, p. 13 – 66, p. 43.

[6] Kellner, Douglas (1997): "Critical Theory and Cultural Studies", In: Jim McGuigan (ed.): Cultural Methodologies, London: Sage, p. 12-41, p. 23.

[7] Nash, Kate (2000): Contemporary Political Sociology. Globalization, Politics, and Power, Oxford-Malden/Mass.: Blackwell, p. 71.

[8] Hutnyk, John (1997): Adorno at Womad. South Asian Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk, In: Pnina Werbner/ Tariq Modood (ed.): Debating Cultural Hybridity, London: Zed Books, p. 106-136, p. 128.

[9] Featherstone, Mike (1991): Consumer Culture & Postmodernism, London: Sage.

[10] Hardt, Michael/Negri, Toni (2000): Empire, Cambridge/ Mass, p. 317-318.

[11] Bhabha, Homi (1994): The Location of Culture, London – New York: Routledge; Huggan, Graham (2001): The Postcolonial Exotic. Marketing the Margins, London – New York: Routledge.

[12] Ha, Kien Nghi (2004): Ethnizität und Migration Reloaded. Kulturelle Identität, Differenz und Hybridität im postkolonialen Diskurs, Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Berlin.

[13] Broeck, Sabine (2006): Das Subjekt der Aufklärung – Sklaverei – Gender Studies. Zu einer notwendigen Relektüre der Moderne, In: Gabriele Dietze/Sabine Hark (Hg.): Gender kontrovers. Genealogien und Grenzen einer Kategorie, Königstein: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, S. 152-180.

[14] Steyerl, Hito (2004): "Gaps and Potentials. The Exhibition 'Heimat Kunst' - Migrant Culture as an Allegory of the Global Market", In: New German Critique 92 (Spring/Summer 2004), Special Edition: Multicultural Germany: Arts, Performance, and Media: Cornell UP.