Hybridity as Given and Gift: Macao and Samaria

Chin Hei Leong[1]

For some decades, postcolonialism has offered valuable new interpretations of the biblical text. One of them, however, Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity has not gained popularity among biblical interpreters. This theory holds that, in colonial relationship, the colonized are not solely passive, forced to act and become like the colonizer, but at the same time, the former retain their own identity, differentiating themselves from the latter. And hybridity is engendered in this process. To situate the discussion of hybridity within the deuteronomistic theological framework seems difficult. Nevertheless, this paper tries to demonstrate otherwise. It examines the high degree of my place of origin, i.e., Macao, which has been reintegrated to the People's Republic of China in 1999 from Portuguese colonial rule.

In the first part of this paper, it briefly discusses Bhabha's theory of hybridity in postcolonial context. In the second part, it reviews the political and religio-cultural hybridity in Macao. In the third part, it proceeds to read 2 Kings 17 in light of Bhabha's theory of hybridity. Insights gained from this part bring the readers back to the hybridity of Macao, and demonstrate an alternative way, other that the one provided by the Deuteronomists, to better appreciate religious syncretism from a biblical perspective.

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Introduction

After studying the Holiness Code in the book of Leviticus, Mary Douglas famously concludes, "Holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused."[2] This biblical conception of holiness certainly leaves no room for hybridity, which postcolonialists celebrate. For instance, Bhabha, one of the chief theorists of hybridity, proposes that hybridity reminds both the colonizer and the colonized of the presence of the other, but at the same time creates a new conceptual reality, "neither the one nor the other," to estrange the established conceptualization of political reality.[3] In other words, in the colonization process, the colonized survives through imitation of and resemblance to the colonizer, which the colonizer considers the fulfillment of the (self-proclaimed) mission of civilizing the colonized. However, the ambivalence of this process produces "civilized" colonial subjects which are "almost the same but not quite" imitation and resemblance of the colonizer. Such production may or may not be directly intended by the colonized, but in the end it symbolizes the rebellion of the colonized against the colonizer, and as such, destabilizes the established authority of the colonizer. At first glance, it seems that, at least under the topic of hybridity, postcolonialism and the Hebrew Bible have rarely anything in common and thus, an exchange between them can hardly take place.

Triggered by my own postcolonial background,[4] I study in this paper 2 Kgs 17 to show that the Hebrew Bible knows both the problem(s) and benefit(s) caused by hybridity, more than two millennia before postcolonialism came into being. In order to achieve this, I will show in the first part of this article how

[2] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 54.

[3] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 39.

[4] I come from Macau, which has been a colony of Portugal for centuries (the exact period of the colonial time is still a historical debate, see below). Its sovereignty was handed back by the Portuguese government to the People's Republic of China in 1999.

the colonial status of Macao[5], my place of origin, correspond to Bhabha's notion of the dissolvance of the dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized. The second part will illustrate how this political hybridity engenders cultural and religious hybridity under a Catholic colonizer. In the third part, I will discuss 2 Kgs 17, focusing on how the Deuteronomistic Historian deals with religious hybridity. Finally, the conclusion of this article will briefly reflect on how followers of the biblical religion could treat religious hybridity in light of our interpretation of 2 Kgs 17.

Macao in History: Hybridity Inherited

In 1514, four years after Malacca fell to the Portuguese power, Jorge Alvares was the first of this nation who landed on Macao. Driven by commercial motives, there had been Portuguese fleets commissioned by King Manuel of Portugal to liaison for a trade port in China. Yet, it was not until 1557 that the Portuguese permanent settlement was granted by the Ming Dynasty through an annual payment of 20,000 taels of gold.[6] In other words, at the very beginning, the Portuguese rented Macau from China on a yearly basis. However, China never admitted that it lost the sovereignty of Macau to the Portuguese. Since the details of the correspondence between the Ming Court and the Portuguese about the settlement of the latter in Macau "are lost, or more likely, were never recorded,"[7] the obscurity of this earliest part of Macau's history implicates the obscurity of the problem of its sovereignty.

Since 1575, when Pope Gregory XIII established a bishopric in Macao covering China, Korea, and Japan, the Portuguese in Macao formed the *Senado da Camera* (Senate Chamber) and organized their civil life in a plutocratic manner.[8] However,

[5] Both spellings, Macao and Macau, can be used, although convention considers the former English and the latter Portuguese.

[6] Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Encountering Macau: A Portuguese City-State on the Periphery of China* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), 13-17. Scholars are not in agreement upon the exact rental. For instance, Fung has 44 pounds of silver, see: Bong Yin Fung, *Macau: A General Introduction* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1999), 7.

[7] Cathryn H. Clayton, *Sovereignty at the Edge: Macau and the Question of Chineseness*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 324 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 41.

[8] Gunn, *Encountering Macau*, 36-39.

Portugal was ambiguous on sovereign matter. Later on, during the First Opium War (1839–1842), when Great Britain asked the Portuguese to protect the British living in Macao, the Portuguese declined the request. The British criticized that "the Portuguese are making irreconcilable assertions, namely refusing admittance to British subjects by claiming that Macau was within the domains of China and, on the other hand, throwing British subjects into jail asserting Macau to be the domains of Portugal."[9]

It was after China's cession of Hong Kong to the British that Portugal started to assert its sovereignty. In 1846, João Amaral was appointed the governor of Macau. He abolished the Chinese custom office and began to tax Chinese living in Macau and subjugated them under the Portuguese judicial system. He took Taipa, an adjacent island, and stopped paying the annual rental to Beijing. Amaral was assassinated by a Chinese in 1849. Thereupon, Vicente Mesquita, Amaral's successor, led a small troop and attacked the Chinese military station in Macau. The Chinese Army failed and this resulted in the 1887 Luso-Chinese Treaty of Friendship and Trade, which gave the Portuguese the right of "perpetual occupation and government."[10] In other words, the Portuguese took advantage of the British's victory over the Qing Dynasty in the First Opium War in 1842 so as to obtain a formal recognition of the Portuguese *de facto* sovereignty over Macau.

In November 1966, the Chinese protested against the fact that the Portuguese prohibited the construction of a Chinese (pro-PRC[11]) school in Taipa. The riot climaxed on 3–5 December and

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[9] Ibid., 57-60.

[10] Zhidong Hao, *Macau: History and Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 40-42.

[11] It should be noted that Portugal established diplomatic relation with the People's Republic of China only in 1979. Moreover, the Vatican had not long before issued the *Decree against Communism* which condemned all Catholics who acted in favor of communism. This was in 1949, the year in which the PRC was established. Besides a series of condemnations had already been issued by the *Sanctum Officium* against different communist organizations, members of these organizations, and their publications (see: *AAS* 1949: 334; 1950: 195, 533, 601; 1951: 217;1955: 455, 558). Thus it was not surprising that Portugal, as a Catholic country, was against any agenda that was related to the Communist Party. More important, in March 1966, the pro-RC (Republic of China, i.e. Taiwan) community in Macau planned to kill Ho Yin with bombs, since Ho was one of the leaders of the pro-PRC community, see: Gunn, *Encountering Macau*, 155. Ho survived the attack as the bombs did not directly hit him.

resulted in five deaths and hundreds injured. After a one-month secret discussion with the Chinese authority in Shekki (a place in mainland China) the Governor signed an apology on 29 January. It is the so-called "12-3 incident."[12] It led to a two-year anarchic period.[13] More important, "in the following months and years, a Chinese 'shadow government' arose in Macau with strong ties to the Chinese Communist Party, thus giving Beijing even greater control over Macau…"[14] De facto, Portugal had "lost" Macau long before the handover in 1999.[15] Thus, Cathryn Clayton,[16] among other historians, considers Macau to have truly been a Portuguese colony for only eighty years, viz. 1887–1967.

Clayton also points out that Macau, in her pre-postcolonial period, has demonstrated the ambivalence[17] of colonialism. First, unlike in other colonial cases, in the 1990s there were no local forces fighting against Portuguese rule, the Portuguese were not struggling to maintain their rule, and there was no objection to Beijing's claim of its final sovereignty.[18] Second, Portugal and the People's Republic of China signed a secret document in 1979, the year in which the two nations establish diplomatic relations.

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[12] Gunn, *Encountering Macau*, 155-56; Hao, *Macau*, 43-44.

[13] "For two years after the incident, Macau was without an effective government: police officers rarely ventured into the streets for fear of being attacked, the government dared not issue new decrees or policies and the machinery of the government virtually stopped functioning. Public order was maintained by the neighborhood societies and other influential social, religious and economic organizations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce." See: Richard Louis Edmonds and Herbert S. Yee, "Macau: From Portuguese autonomous territory to Chinese special administrative region," *China Quarterly* 160 (1999): 801-17 (805 n. 14).

[14] Clayton, *Sovereignty*, 48.

[15] Ibid., 47; see also: Hao, *Macau*, 44; Steve Shipp, *Macau, China: A Political History of the Portuguese Colony's Transition to Chinese Rule* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997), 89.

[16] Clayton, *Sovereignty at the Edge*, 46.

[17] Ambivalence is Bhabha alternate term for hybridity. For a discussion on this, see: Paul H. Fry, *Theory of Literature*, Open Yale Courses (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 293-4. For Bhabha's original text that Fry discusses, see: Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 144-65, (150).

[18] Clayton, *Sovereignty*, 14.

The document states that Macau was "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration." Clayton considers it to be a new category other than a colony.[19]

From the brief history described above, one easily realizes that the Portuguese-Chinese relations before 1999 did not contain clear colonizer/colonized dichotomy. More important, it is not an easy task for people born in the so-called "pre-postcolonial,"[20] viz. 1967–1999, to construct their identity in an integral manner: a Portuguese, a Chinese, or a hybrid of the two?

Macau in Culture: Hybridity Appreciated

Macau's hybridity is not only political, but also cultural.[21] A particular culture engendered by the Macanese community may illustrate this point. The term "Macanese" does not refer to people from Macau in general, but particularly to those born as a hybrid of Portuguese and Chinese. Miu Bing Cheng applies Bhabha's term "the same, *but not quite*"[22] to the Macanese.[23] Although the Macanese occupied a majority of middle to high positions in the government due to their mastery of both the Portuguese and Cantonese[24] languages before Macau's reintegration to China, the Macanese are being despised by the Chinese, and discriminated by the "pure" Portuguese.[25] However, they were able to gain social recognition through their culture. One example is the Macanese cuisine. It is influenced by Portuguese, Goan, Malay, and Chinese cooking styles. Cheng observes that "the popularity of Macanese food among Chinese people in Macau and Hong

[19] Ibid., 51.

[20] Cf. Miu Bing Cheng, *Macau: A Cultural Janus* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999), 35.

[21] For a discussion of the distinction, see: J. Pieterse, "Globalization as Hybridization," in *Global Modernities*, ed. M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), 45-68.

[22] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 86. Bhabha's italic.

[23] Cheng, *Macau*, 203. Originally, Bhabha is discussing how the colonized create ambivalence towards the colonizers in a colonial context through mimicry, See: Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 86.

[24] Cantonese (廣東話) is the language/dialect of the Canton Province.

[25] Cheng, *Macau*, 203.

Kong steadfastly speaks for the continued fluidity of cultural boundaries," and that this phenomenon "helps us reconsider the fixed model of oppressor/oppressed power of relations under Portuguese imperialism and colonialism."[26]

Macau has become a world-renown city since early 2007 when it was reported that Macau had overtaken Las Vegas to be "the world's biggest gambling center."[27] But in fact, Macau has long been called both the "Eastern Monte Carlo" and the "Eastern Vatican." When discussing this aspect of Macau, Cheng alludes to the parable of wheat and weed. The hybridity of religion and gambling in Macau comes particularly to the fore in an interesting event.

In 1989, Stanley Ho, a non-Catholic gambling operator in Macau and reportedly a man of four spouses (one wife, one concubine, and two mistresses)[28], was awarded "Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order of Saint Gregory the Great" by Pope John Paul II because of "magnanimity and humanitarian gestures of the Macau and Hong Kong Impresario towards the Catholic Church."[29] In any case, the Catholic authority and the local gambling industry do not exert rejection to each other, but benefit and recognition.

In Macao, cultural hybridity takes place not only between religion and other sectors of social life, but also within religion itself. In 2005, UNESCO inscribed the Historic Center of Macao in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Among the historic buildings in that Center are centuries old Christian churches, but also Buddhist temples which are as old as those churches.[30] In

[26] Ibid., 204-5.

[27] E.g., David Barboza, "Macao Surpasses Las Vegas as Gambling Center," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2007.

[28] Hong Kong, which is a one-hour-ferry distance from Macao, legalized monogamy only in 1971 (see Hong Kong Department of Justice, "Marriage Reform Ordinance," n.p. [cited 9 May 2015]. Therefore, Ho married his second wife in 1957, which is legally recognized as a concubine. Ho's other two wives, although are not recognized by law, but are recognized by the general public in Hong Kong and Macao.

[29] *Lusa*, Portuguese News Agency (Macau Bureau), July 7, 1989. For criticism raised by other Church officials, see: Sandy Araneta, "Sin to Stanley Ho: Don't drag Vatican into the picture," *The Philippine Star*, January 26, 2000.

[30] For the information of all the sites in the Historic Center, see: UNESCO, "Historic Centre of Macao," n.p. [cited 9 May 2015]. Online: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1110.

the promotion clips produced by the Macao Government Tourist Office,[31] the intention to emphasize the hybridity of cultures in Macao (which are highly religious) can hardly go unnoticed. In this regard, Clayton remarks that what the "interest in Macau's heritage evoked was not colonial nostalgia but a kind of colonial ambivalence: simultaneous pride in what the Portuguese had contributed to the city and chagrin at the thought of what more could have been done."[32] In this comment Clayton exposes the "colonial failures" on the Portuguese part, and one of these being the Portuguese failed to impose the Portuguese language on the local people.[33] This is one of the reasons why some consider the hybridity of Macao more an exaggeration than a sure fact.[34]

Nevertheless, in my opinion, hybridity does exist in Macao. One example says it all. On March 19, 1999, at the grand opening of the Macao Cultural Center, the bishop of Macao and the dignitary of the Buddhist community simultaneously blessed the ceremony and the building (see appendix 1). On the other hand, Katrine K. Wong, a professor at the University of Macau, also states that "Macaoness, essentially, is an ongoing hybridization of cultures and identities, a process in which peripheries often shift and permeate each other" while "each of these cultures preserves its individual autonomy."[35]

However, such a high degree of hybridity, particularly in the cultural and religious sphere, inevitably clashes with the notion of purity in Catholic Christianity, by which Macau has been called "*Cidade de Nome de Deus*"[36] (City of the Name of God). I would like to venture a possible answer to this discrepancy in dialogue with 2 Kgs 17:24-41, in which the issues of hybridity, colonialism, and religious domination are no less problematic.

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[31] Macao Government Tourist Office, "Macau World Heritage," n.p. [cited 9 May 2015]. Online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCu4rYlU5Nw.

[32] Clayton, *Sovereignty*, 208.

[33] Ibid., 272.

[34] Ibid., 273.

[35] Katrine K. Wong, "Introduction," in *Macao: Cultural Interaction and Literary Representations*, Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Asia, ed. Katrine K. Wong and C. X. George Wei (London: Routledge, 2014), xxiii-xxxvi (xxvi).

[36] This name was first granted by Pope Gregory XIII in his papal bull, *Super Specula Militantis Ecclesiae*, which established the Diocese of Macau in January 23, 1576. See: Cheng, *Macau*, 47-48.

Samaria: Hybridity (Divinely) Created

Although commentators still dispute whether 2 Kings in its present form was written by one author[37] or has undergone one or several redactions[38], scholars widely agree on the fact that Deuteronomistic theology plays an important role in how the biblical book 2 Kings recounts and interprets events.[39] The basic tenet of its theology seems to be "as the temple is the only proper place of worship, so is the worship of Yahweh alone the only right attitude in the question of gods."[40] On the contrary, if the people go against this will of YHWH, they will be punished and sent into exile.[41] However, our pericope seems to depict a picture slightly different from this basic tenet.

In the first part of 2 Kings 17, the fall of the Northern kingdom to the Assyrian emperor is narrated (vv. 1-6) and the theological reason is given (vv. 7-23). At the beginning of our pericope, the importation of "people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim" is portrayed as one event ordered by a certain "king of Assyria" whom the author renders anonymous, presumably Sargon II. What's more, according to the author, these imported peoples "took possession of Samaria" (v. 24). Hobbs points out that "the term וּיִּֽרְשֻׁ֖הָ 'they took possession' is a favorite of the Deuteronomist for the occupation of the promised land by the Israelites."[42] In other words, the author gives the impression that the northerners have been totally replaced by these imported people (בֶּֽיהָ יֵרָעֵ֥ב וְעֹרְמֹ֛שׁ תַּחַ֥ת יַגֵּ֖ב לְאָרְשִֽׁי, "And they dwelled in the

[37] See: T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings,* Word Biblical Commentary 13 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), xxiv, xxxiii.

[38] See: Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 11 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 4. More recent commentators prefer a multi-redaction model, viz. the exilic, Josianic, Hezekian, Jehu, and Solomic editions of the Deuteronomistic history, see: Marvin A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, Ky.: WJK, 2007), 4-31; also: Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, A Continental Commentary, trans. Anselm Hagedorn (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2003), 2-3.

[39] E.g., Hobbs, *2 Kings*, xxvii; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 3; Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 3; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 5.

[40] Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 1.

[41] Cf. e.g., Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 5.

[42] Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 237.

cities of Samaria in place of the Israelites," v. 24). However, history unfolded quite differently.

In Ezra 4, it is mentioned that there are people imported to "the cities of Samaria" by the Assyrian kings Esar-haddon (v. 2) and Osnappar (v. 10). More important, many biblical texts speak about the Northern territory as inhabited by the Israelites, without mentioning any replacement of the Israelites by other foreign peoples.[43] This is confirmed by the continuation of local pottery traditions that archeology has discovered.[44] It is also pointed out that the Assyrian repopulation campaign did not involve a total displacement of a people from its original land.[45] Certainly, scholars recognize the Deuteronomistic political agenda behind such an ahistorical description of the discontinuation of the northern tribes,[46] namely that "they are no longer part of us."

J. Osterhammel's definition that colonizers reject "cultural compromises with the colonized population,"[47] does not agree with the story. The Assyrian king, after being informed that his subjects' ignorance of the local religious traditions had created disasters for them, rather immediately allowed the (religious) culture of the conquered land to be revived. He ordered a priest deported from the north to be brought back to the land (2 Kgs 17:27-28). Besides, he did not forbid the imported people from developing their own religious traditions. Insofar as our pericope is concerned, it is not an exaggeration to praise this king as a responsible ruler.

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[43] E.g., 2 Chr 30:6-9; Jer 3:11-14; 5:10-13; 16:15; 23:6; 30:1-11; 31:1-40; 33:1-18; 36:2; 51:1-5; Ezra 9:9; 37:15-23.

[44] R. Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1970), 191-2.

[45] Gary N. Knoppers, "In Search of Post-exilic Israel," in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, JSOT SS 406, ed. John Day (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 150-80 (169-70).

[46] Ibid., 150-151; Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 238.

[47] Osterhammel defines colonialism as "a relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule." See: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, trans. Shelley L. Frisch (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2005), 16-17.

Surprisingly, the one who intervened in the religious affairs of these imported people is YHWH. Their ignorance of "God's claim of sovereignty to the land" (מִשְׁפַּט אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ) made him indignant and he "ordered the lions among them" (וַיְשַׁלַּח בָּהֶם אֶת־הָאֲרָיוֹת) to devour them (2 Kgs 17:26). When compared with Osterhammel's definition of colonialism, such act betrays a more colonial character. The definite article attached to the word "lions" also demands an explanation. Sweeney reminds his readers that "lion is the symbol of the tribe of Judah."[48] If this idea was in the mind of the author, one may even go so far as to argue that the deuteronomistic tradition (or the Israelites at large) was imagining itself to be a powerful re-colonizer with divine commission, despite the powerlessness of the Judean people at that time.

After the disaster of the lions, three events followed. First, the Assyrian king ordered a priest deported from the north to come back and settle in Bethel (v. 28). Second, with the priest's teaching effort the imported people began to fear YHWH in spite of the fact that they feared their own gods at the same time (vv. 29-34). Third, as my analysis below shows, God seemed to have established a covenant with the imported peoples (vv. 35-40). Many commentators take these events negatively as they interpret our pericope in the perspective of the deuteronomistic readers. We have to take a look at some of their remarks.

First of all, with regard to the priest, Fritz considers his return as a literary function "to bolster the negative judgment." He regards the need to reintroduce the Yahwist tradition a signal of its complete disappearance, which is, as we have seen, probably not the case. He also points out that this priest's connection with Bethel alludes to the "abomination of Jeroboam," viz. the golden calf worship in Bethel in 1 Kg 12:26-30.[49] However, a question immediately arises following this reading, namely, if this priest was really in connection with such an abomination, how could his arrival and teaching, in the view of the narrator, restrain God from sending the lions again?

Secondly, many commentators who follow the perspective of the deuteronomistic readers and are influenced by their Christian background, find the religious syncretism of the imported people detestable. For Cogan and Tadmor, what the imported peoples did,

[48] Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 396. See Gn 49:9.

[49] Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 356; Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 121.

i.e., "made for themselves from the whole people priests of [the] high places" (תוֹמָב יֵנַהֹכ סָתוֹצָקִמ סָהָל וּשֵׂעַיַו; v. 32), reflects clearly what Jeroboam had done,[50] viz. not choosing Levites to be priests. Thus they are condemned by the deuteronomistic author. Besides, Fritz points out that, even if the deity worshiped in these high places were YHWH, it is still detestable to the deuteronomistic author because the term "high places" is in his tradition "a synonym for unlawful worship, as its site is outside Jerusalem."[51] Fritz also reminds us that the Sepharvites' cultic practice of burning their children (v. 31) has been condemned by the deuteronomistic author in 2 Kgs 16:3.[52]

However, other commentators inform us that Anamelek refers to the Mesopotamian sun-god Anu,[53] and according to Hobbs, "human sacrifice was not normally associated with the worship of this deity," thus the deuteronomistic author purposefully misrepresented the people in the north as bad as possible.[54] Certainly, the aforementioned misrepresentation has the deuteronomistic theology as its foundation, as Würthwein comments: "Dieser darstellung geht es also darum, zu zeigen, daß die gegenwärtigen Samaritaner Menschen fremder Herkunft sind, die eine Mischreligion praktizieren und sich damit gegen das erste und zweite Gebot vergehen"[55] (This presentation is, therefore, to show that the present Samaritans are people of foreign origin, who practice a mixed religion, and thereby go against the first and second commandments). Moreover, Sweeney admits that such a judgment on the imported peoples poses "a problem that requires resolution from the standpoint of the DtrH—that is, such apostasy continues 'until this day' (see vv. 34, 41; cf. v. 23)."[56]

Thirdly, commentators disagree on with whom God enters into a covenant in vv. 35-40. (1) A few scholars contend that the phrase "until this day" in v. 34 is a "*Wiederaufnahme*"[57] (Resumption).

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[50] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 212; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 396. Cf. 1 Kgs 12:31; 13:33.

[51] Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 356.

[52] Ibid., 355.

[53] Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 239; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 212.

[54] Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 239.

[55] Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1. Kon. 17—2. Kon. 25*, ATD 11/2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 400.

[56] Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 391.

[57] "The literary technique whereby an interrupted story is taken up and continued by repeating a key word or phrase." Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 213.

For them the author takes up again the topic of the fall of the northern kingdom and reiterates the theological reason why it fell. Hence, God did not enter into a new covenant here. At the same time, a majority of commentators simply consider this phrase "a comment confirming existing conditions at the time of writing."[58] This reading leads to two solutions to the disagreement. (2) On the one hand, some commentators propose that vv. 35-40 originally followed v. 23 immediately. Thus they consider vv. 24-34 as later interpolation and vv. 35-40 as part of the deuteronomistic commentary on the fall of Samaria which would consist of vv. 7-23 and vv. 35-40.[59] (3) On the other hand, some others accept the tenor that in view of the narrator YHWH indeed entered into a covenant with the imported peoples.[60]

We need to take a closer look at these three positions. First, for Cogan and Tadmor, one of the reasons why they accept the *Wiederaufnahme* solution is the unlikelihood that "any postexilic writer would speak of the foreigners as 'sons of Jacob,' bound by the covenant obligation of the *torah* (vv. 34, 35, 37)."[61] However, based on the use of וּשְׁרִיָּו in v. 25, the author indeed mentions that the king replaced the northern tribes with the imported peoples. Besides, it seems to me that the position of Cogan and Tadmor is colored by their perception of the deuteronomistic tradition.

Second, it is difficult to see an immediate connection of v. 23 and v. 35. Verses 7-23 contain a recapitulation of how YHWH liberated Israel in the exodus, the Israelite kings' building of the high places, and the fall of Samaria. Unlike vv. 35-40, there is no direct speech in this section. More important, in my opinion, the narrative would flow quite awkwardly if the concluding statement of v. 23 were immediately followed by "YHWH made a covenant with them" (תֹּרְכִּיו הָוהְי תֶּתַא תיִרְכָּו) (v. 35), unless substantial changes are made to the present form of these two verses.

The third position, to which I subscribe, is that the LORD did attempt to make a covenant with the imported peoples. But I depart from its supporters at certain points. Fritz believes that the necessity of the exodus-rooted identity "makes clear that the new

[58] E.g., Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 227; Cohn, *2 Kings*, 122; Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 357; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 392.

[59] Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 227; Cohn, *2 Kings*, 122; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 392.

[60] Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 357; Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 485.

[61] Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 214.

peoples 'cannot even be true worshippers of Yahweh' [because] the worship of Yahweh is inseparable from its [Israel's] history."[62] One can only accept this position if one also accepts that YHWH is hypocritical because in this explanation he would invite someone into a covenant with the intention of excluding them from that covenant at the very beginning. As for Brueggemann, the condition for the imported peoples to join in this covenant is that they consider themselves "an Exodus people" and appropriate the Exodus narrative.[63] To this I want to add a further syntactical argument. As my syntactic analysis in apprendix II shows, vv. 33-39 should be considered as the background information recording previous religious events. It is against this background that the residents of Samaria are criticized by the historian(s). Although v. 35a' begins with a narrative past,תֹּרְכִיוּ , it clearly is not a continuation of the narrative series of events which ends in v. 32b." For it seems implausible that God made another covenant with the Samarians (vv. 35-39) after their self-ordination (v. 32). Therefore, if the reference to the conclusion of the covenant is used by the historian(s) as an argument against the religious practices of the Samarians, who were at the time composed of other gentiles, I consider it possible that the gentiles are considered by the historian(s) as incorporated into the covenant.

However, if this covenant secures the imported peoples a peaceful stay in the land, why did not their "not listening" (v. 40) result in God's driving them out from the land? After all, given Brueggemann's position, this listening implies a renunciation of their own identity and a forced acceptance of a foreign one. This is, by modern standard, colonial and unjust.

For a postcolonial reader, the imported peoples' action after making a covenant with YHWH is inspiring. They responded by means of religious syncretism (vv. 32, 33, 41), which is a kind of ambivalence towards the priest's effort to promote the fear of YHWH and YHWH's covenant. In Bhabha's theory, such is the resistance that the colonized are able to exert when confronted with colonial powers. According to him:

> Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity

[62] Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 357, with a quotation from Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 401.

[63] Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 485.

> effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that tum the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.[64]

In other words, the imported peoples act and become like the Israelites, in order to conform to the colonial demand to be like them, but at the same time, they act differently from the Israelites, in order to retain their own identity. For this reason, Bhabha writes earlier in the same article: "It is this ambivalence that makes the boundaries of colonial 'positionality' – the division of self/other – and the question of colonial power the differentiation of colonizer/colonized – different from both the Hegelian master/slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of Otherness."[65] In a word, such hybridity is created by YHWH, the divine colonizer, himself.

Conclusion: Hybridity to be Welcomed

Some commentators might reject our postcolonial interpretation by arguing that "2 Kgs 17 must be read in anticipation of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and Judah in the present form of the work,"[66] namely, constraining the meaning of a text in its historical past and the intention of its author. However, since biblical readers in Macao are not anticipating the destruction of their city in the foreseeable future, a solely historical reading of the 2 Kgs 17 is irrelevant to them and therefore meaningless. Moreover, since the formalist literary criticism, it has long been held that the authorial intention does not rule out interpretations that contradicts it.[67] As presented in the previous section, this paper brings to the fore the difficulties that the authorial readings entail and how our reading can resolve or avoid such difficulties.

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[64] Bhabha, "Signs,"154.

[65] Ibid., 150.

[66] Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 391.

[67] Cf. William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3-20; repr. in *The Critical Tradition : Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, (3rd ed.; ed. David H. Richter; Boston: Badford, 2007), 811-818 (814 n. 11).

The interpretation of 2 Kgs 17:24-41 presented in this paper clearly conforms to the third method which biblical studies work with in postcolonial studies, viz. to scrutinize "the biblical text for its own colonial entanglements."[68] Moreover, by working with the notion of hybridization, which is a poststructuralist concept,[69] this paper is also close to a postmodern interpretation.[70]

As Sugirtharajah points out, postcolonial biblical criticism works on two presuppositions. It sees "various religions as ultimately derived from one and the same source" and it holds that "all religious traditions are interdependent and not a single one religion contains all the truth."[71] I anticipate that these presuppositions are capital sins to some "traditional" Christians. However, these presuppositions are not far from what Vatican II teaches: "[the Catholic Church] regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."[72] After all, I believe if the "Samaritans" two-and-a-half-century long settlement in Samaria and the prosperity of Macao are a sign of the blessing of YHWH, then, He creates hybridity and rewards those celebrate it.

Chin Hei (Andrew) Leong
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Collegium Veteranorum
Sint-Michielsstraat 4 box 3100
BE-3000 Leuven, Belgium
Email: andrewhleong@gmail.com

[68] Bradley L. Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies and the Hebrew Bible," *Currents in Biblical Research* 7 (2009): 217-244 (220).

[69] For how Bhabha's hybridization betrays poststructuralist character vis-à-vis Said as a structuralist, see: Fry, *Theory*, 193. It can also be seen in an earlier quote in this paper that Bhabha rejects the Hegelian binary division.

[70] For the generation of postmodern reading out of a poststructural, i.e., anti-binary, reading, see: Ibid., 199.

[71] R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 192.

[72] Second Vatican Council, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: *Nostra Aetate*," 2 [cited 9 May 2015]. Online: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.