Introduction

A. Aim of this paper

This essay is designed to explore the relationship between myths and a discipline, by taking the case of IR. Since the word ‘myth’ has been widely used when some ‘critical’ IR scholars denounce ahistorical misuse or misperception of the disciplinary history prevailing among most of other IR ‘mainstream’ scholars. Be it as 1648, 1919 or 1958 and so-called ‘Great Debates’, IR has embraced such myths when it tries to explain its own historical development. The book by Brian Schmidt, The Discourse of Anarchy (Schmidt 1998) was groundbreaking both for illuminating the ‘reality’ of the disciplinary history of IR by applying his ‘critical internal discursive approach’ to the genesis of IR, which was influenced by Professor Gunnell (Gunnell 1998), and for pointing out two tendencies of many of IR ahistorical scholars: presentism and contextualism (Schmidt 2013). In this book and other following works, Schmidt has been successful in breaking up a myth, especially as of 1919 and the first Great Debate (Schmidt ed. 2012).

Our project is also tackling one of those myths in IR and we owe it enormously to his works and ideas. Recently, we can find many myth-busting academic works in books and journals in IR. This seems to mean that IR scholars have eventually become at least sensitive for myths in their discipline. However, even we cannot underestimate the importance of pointing out ‘A is a myth and the reality is not A but B.’, such act is only a springboard for further investigation. While unveiling the reality, we have to move forward to an analysis for the relationship between myths and IR in general. Such reflection also might lead us to contemplate about more general relationship between an academic discipline and myths that exist in a given discipline. This paper is going to deal with this aspect and to suggest four speculations as the point of departure for the next step.

B. On Our Project

The theme of our project is ‘Deconstruction of “Westphalian Conception of History”: Meta-Disciplinary Approach’. What we are dealing with is the myth of 1648. The main contention of the myth of 1648 is that ‘The Peace of Westphalia’ was the exact starting point or ‘birthday’ of the western sovereign state system and it allows us to affirm that modern international relations had started at 1648. However, we are not directly seeking to break that spell, because there already has been many works focusing on this myth, mostly trying to destroy it. Main purpose of our project is, as far as my understanding goes, not aims at submitting one more busting. Rather, What we are now contemplating is what we should do after proving that it is a myth. To put it differently, we are curious about how we see...
this world, its history, and IR differently and what needs to be done after abandoning such myths. Do we have to write completely new modern history or new IR relied on such new understanding, or nothing has to be changed?

C. Key Questions

To contemplate about the relationship between myths and IR, we need to step back and locate it in a bigger picture; that is, we need to remind that to put it more generally or metaphysically, we are trying to puzzle out the relationship between a discipline and myths that prevail in a given discipline. When seeing it from such bird’s-eye-view, key questions would be as follows: Why there (almost always) exist myths in a discipline? What is the role of such myths? If myths have both good and bad functions, what are they? How those myths affect a discipline in what ways and why? Why most scholars in a discipline don’t seem to care about the existence of myths even if they understand it’s a myth? How one can dismiss, destroy or dismantle such myths in what way? Is it really sufficed only to depict reality? What is the best way to achieving it and by what procedure and process are required? And then, if we abandon such myths and instead rely on a proved new reality, how should the discipline itself be altered? Does it need to change completely or only to install a few patches is enough? This paper will touch not all but some of those questions.

To be sure, we cannot answer those fundamental questions by examining all disciplines. Instead, we can use IR as one case and pick up some points that can be used for explaining such relations in general. If we succeed in doing so from the example of IR, we might be able to draw some useful insights from such general point of view.

D. Four Speculations

Here, I am going to suggest four speculations on the relationship between myths and a discipline, in the case of IR, mainly on the myth of 1648. Section I reviews the present situation of myth-busting and presents the ‘complex interdependence’ between myth-holders and myth-breakers, which means that pointing out ‘that is a myth’ is in some sense harmless for the myth-holders and rather, in some respect, the situation that the myth is keeping intact while all those critics keep on trying to destroy it might be beneficial for both. Section II examines the less noticed and rarely analyzed aspects of its relationship: the ‘structure and process’ of its distribution or diffusion. The case of the proliferation of the word ‘soft power’ would be helpful as a clue to understand this aspect. Section III is on my proposal for the amendment of the range and scope of a myth, which derive mainly from my past works. Section IV is somewhat challenging or controversial reflection that we might have to move away from the word ‘myth’ itself, if we truly wish to accomplish demystifying.

I. ‘Complex Interdependence’ between myth-followers and myth-busters

A. It’s been already broken

We have to admit from the start, that many scholars had already and almost reached to the point of breaking the Westphalian myth. One commonly agreed point is that sovereign state system as we know it was not born in 1648 or that ‘the Peace of Westphalia’ was not treated as such at that time and regarding it as a genesis was invented well after 1648.

Undoubtedly, one of the most influential myth-busting achievement is Benno Teschke’s The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics, and the Making of Modern International Relations (Teschke 2003). In this book, based on his political Marxism approach, he noticed the making of ‘property relations’ in early modern era and proved that modern state system emerged not in 1648 but from the late 17th century England with the process of making capitalism and modern-state.

In sum, the overwhelmingly dynastic nature of the Westphalian order set it apart from its modern successor. Its distinguishing properties were bound up with the persistence of non-capitalist property relations that blocked the development of modern sov-
Myths in a Discipline: IR and “the Peace of Westphalia” (A. Shibasaki)

ereignty. IR’s failure to correctly theorize and periodize 1648 thus rests on its conflation of absolutist and modern sovereignty. Consequently, demystifying Westphalia requires retheorizing absolutist sovereignty. (Teschke 2003:245)

Then he showed that sovereign states at the time of Westphalia were far from authentically ‘modern’ ones and asserts that it became truly ‘modern’ after realizing two changes: from absolutism to capitalism, and from dynasty sovereign state to parliament sovereign state. “The decisive shift towards modern international relations is not marked by the Peace of Westphalia, but comes with the rise of the first modern state: post-revolutionary England” (Teschke 2003:249). And modern state system were materialized in the ‘longue durée’ after 1688, especially from the French Revolution to the end of World War I.

Another influential work, which is popular in Japan but might not be shared worldwide is the work by Professor Akashi, scholar of the history of international law. His thick book, Acta Pacis Westphalicae: Mythos et Veritas (The Peace of Westphalia: Myth and Truth) was upgraded version of his previous academic journals (Akashi 2009).

He defines the word ‘myth’ as follows:

One evaluation which was understood among almost all scholars in the field as the ‘common’ understanding, sometimes circulate as truth without any (re)examination. We call this common understanding as <myth>. (Akashi 2009:3, tr. by Shibasaki)

Based on this definition, he defines the Westphalian myth as “the understanding that for the present scholar of international law, modern international law starts at the Peace of Westphalia, 1648” or “the Peace of Westphalia first set the modern interstate relations”(Akashi 2009:4, 537, tr. by Shibasaki). He scrutinized the contents of the treaty itself and the history of its evaluation in the disciplinary history of both German legal system and history of international law. Consequently, he concludes that it was in Histoire des progrès du droit des gens en Europe (1841), written by Henry Wheaton that decisively contributed to mystifying 1648.

Following this argument, ‘Westphalian Myth’ was invented in the middle of 19th century and the decisive moment is the publication of the book by Wheaton and the intellectual background for supporting the myth had been already cultivated in 18th century. To put it differently, compared to its importance in the history of the constitution of the empire, from just after the signing the treaty to 18th century, it was shared common sense that the treaty had no special significance to international law or interstate relations in Europe. This understanding proves to be correct, if we read carefully the whole part of the treaty. ‘Myth’ was incorrect and the myth was an imaginary fiction made in the era when coexistence system of modern sovereign state was established after vanishing the Holy Roman Empire. (Akashi 2009: 510, tr. by Shibasaki)

If we add up to other works by other IR scholars, it would be enough for us to come to conclude that the myth has been already broken at least as a historical fact (Carvalho, Hobson and Leira 2010, Osiander 2001, Ruggie 1993). However, there is no shared answer when was the date of birth?, both in terms of the ‘real history’ of international relations and in terms of the moment of demythicization. As for the former, Teschke suggested one alternative. But much of other scholars don’t support this. As for the latter, the opinions are varied. Akashi asserts it was in the middle of 19th century from the point of international law. Osiander speculates that it was from 1948 just after the publication of the paper by Leo Gross. However, there is no common understanding on the exact date of emerging the myth.

B. The spectre is still haunting

Even with all those myth-breaking works, the myth of 1648 is still working. Most of textbooks and references in academic works still persist to the story. Many of those works even don’t cite any kinds of myth-busting works and continue to repeat ‘orthodox’ interpretation. We still can easily find
such references as follows:

When the Thirty Years’ War was brought to a close in 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia recognized a new, modern state system. A self-regulating balance of power system began to prevail among the states. (Jackson 2013: 37)

The Treaty of Westphalia established essential elements of international law regarding sovereignty and is considered so important that it is said to mark the beginning of the modern international system (Waltz 1979). (Bueno de Mesquita 2013: 317)

The Peace Treaties of Westphalia and Osnabruck (1648) established the legal basis of modern statehood and by implication the fundamental rules or constitution of modern world politics...in the course of the subsequent four centuries it has formed the normative structure of the modern world order. (McGrew 2011: 231)

Most International Relations scholars would agree that the modern international system dates from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Peace of Westphalia marked off the mediaeval from the modern period in international relations. Following the Peace, growing numbers of independent states – initially in Europe then, via colonization, in the rest of the world – became the key components of international relations. (Haynes, Hough, Malik and Pettiford 2011:23)

Furthermore, some scholars explicitly try to prove the firmness of the myth by citing such myth-busting works. Iwao Takayama proposed one of such examples with his unique way of justification (Takayama 2010). In his short essay, he compares the discussion of Krasner and Osiander and concludes that there is no reason to dismiss the myth. In order to defend his position, he deploys a concept, ‘symbolic monument’ approach.

‘Symbolic monument’ is a mark posted by historians in order to confirm the significance of one historical event. For example, if we write that event A symbolize the beginning (or end) of event B, we give A the role of symbolic monument in relation to B. Needless to say, B did not suddenly began (or ended) by A. Even though the beginning (or ending) process starts far before A and that process still continues after A, and even there would be another elements needed to consider besides A, historians concentrate their focus on A, if they judge the value of A as the pivotal event for the purpose of certifying its beginning (or end). (Takayama 2010: 54, tr. by Shibasaki)

From this perspective, he turned down the proposal by Krasner and Osiander. He asserted that we need to have some symbolic monuments in order to ‘make’ history and as long as we still have not found another stringent monument, the ‘orthodox’ view should never be altered. Among other busters, he also cites Teschke’s work. He approves Teschke’s insight on the conflation of two sovereignties but lastly evaluates that the myth still remains intact in terms of its role as a symbolic monument.

In a world of natural science or mathematics, if some part of the academic truth proves to be false, then the fact affects the whole structure of the discipline. We can easily take examples like the paradigm shift from the geocentric theory to the heliocentric theory. However in IR and probably in social science, the same phenomenon does not always happen. After all those myth busting works, the symbolic monument of 1648 is still alive and well. Even the realization of the existence of mythbusting doesn’t inevitably bring to change their mind. It is true that IR is not natural science, but it seems still strange.

C. ‘Endless recurrence’ of ‘complex interdependence’

As we have seen in this section, what we are observing now is the situation that, on the one hand, there is some myth busting discourse, which, at least for them, implies that the myth has almost expired, but on the other hand, for the most of other IR scholars, it is still working. It seems to be no vital debate between them. Busters keep on busting and believers keep on believing.

Someday, the myth would be amended if myth-breakers keep on cumulating those works. Howev-
er, until now, the situation doesn’t seem to change. Mainstream scholars sometimes give some respect to those busting works, but this doesn’t inevitably mean that all myths would be re-writed or deleted immediately, like dealing with some erratum or misprint.

Though it is not pleasant way of describing and this might be an oversimplification of the present state, but this unchangeable, static situation has some benefit for both busters and believers. For the busters, the bigger or firmer the myth is, the more significant or valuable their works become. As long as it is a myth, the worth of their busting work continues to be promised. For the believers, the more unbreakable the myth is, even though the attack has been taken, the more meaningful for them to keep it. As long as it is a myth, the reason for them to hold it becomes more legitimate.

If this portrait is roughly correct, we can describe this situation as some kind of ‘complex interdependence’ (Keohane & Nye 1977) between them. Believer and busters are depending on each other in the sense that they would not engaging in a serious battle to decide who is the winner. This is reciprocal for them. Both can be justified to keep on breaking myths and persisting myths simultaneously. This situation would be comfortable for both in terms of producing academic works and receiving good evaluation as a scholar, the situation would continue endlessly. If this metaphor of complex interdependence would be true, busting and believing reference would repeating forever without deciding which is right, just like Martin Wight depicts the nature of international relations as ‘endless recurrence’ (Wight 1991).

D. Then, what’s next?

How can we avoid this cul-de-sac? One of the promising ways is not to do only myth busting. Instead, we have to try to understand the whole picture of this myth making and unbroken situation in IR. In order to do so, we need at first to clarify the structure and process of myth making and its dissemination, which is going to be discussed in the next section.

It seems to me that myth-busters tend to take somewhat individualistic approach, which means that in their belief, the act of the individual scholar would someday incrementally cumulate to the tipping point and change the situation. I myself admit that this is all we can do as an individual, but at the same time we have to grasp what kind of structure we are in, in order to make individual act in an academic field more effective. Just like the revolutionaries or protesters or civil society activists who are trying to change the world against repressive regimes or authorities, we have to be more strategic if we really want to challenge those myths.

II. Structure and Process of myths-diffusion

A. Following the linkage: textbooks, citations

In the previous section, we confirmed how a myth has been challenged and conquered/not conquered and found out that the first mission we have to face is to depict how a myth started to prevail and how it is still prevailing. This exploration is also useful to find out how to prevail ‘what is real’ in a discipline instead of only grieving how hardheaded mainstream or orthodox IR scholars are. The problem is not the ability of individual but the structure that made most of them think so.

The first important task for this purpose is to follow the linkage of the transmission of the myth. This means to track back the linkage from easily found references to the myth in the textbooks like cited above, to the original citation or reference. However, strangely, there has been indication both for citing those references and for speculating the origin but there is no trial for connecting them and figure out the whole structure and process of the diffusion.

For example, Carvalho, Hobson and Leira adequately cite those references from the textbooks but they are not trying to thread out to the origin. On the other hand, Osiander did remarkably offer an attractive insight that the origin might be the paper by Leo Gross (Gross 1948) but he did not show the connection between the origin and the present day references to the myth, let alone for describing the
whole structure and process. As far as my knowledge goes untill now, after checking several recent textbooks including cited above for its references and citations, there is almost no tight connection to Leo Gross (may be I am wrong, because the search is now on the way). All I have found is that citations of those recent textbooks are quite different among others (from Wedgewood to Waltz). It seems extraordinary difficult to track down the whole process, but we have to try to do it.

B. Circulation of ‘global rumors’ or global retweeting: the case of ‘soft power’

How do we try to depict such linkage in order to construct the structure and process of myth making? One of my past researches on the proliferation of the word ‘soft power’ would give us some clues. (Shibasaki 2007a, 2007b, 2009a)

My research on ‘soft power’ starts from the completely opposite direction: from original formation of the word by Joseph S. Nye and to the spread of worldwide use/misuse of ‘soft power.’ My starting point is that most of us know that the word was devised by Nye but almost nobody exactly knows how Nye started to use the word in what meaning, and how the meaning in the usage of Nye changes and why. As for the worldwide reference of soft power, most of them swallow up the definitions offered in each articles of Nye, without considering precisely what it really means or in what process Nye himself developed his definitions and why. In fact, Nye himself changed his definitions sometimes subtly, and sometimes significantly because by doing that he tries to respond the change of the context in world politics and American foreign policy.

The word ‘soft power’ thus began to proliferate during 90s, 00s and now so widely, from the name of the racing horse (in Japan) to the military force (in Canada) (Shibasaki 2007a). People who want to use the word don’t care about the original meaning / definitions, far less Nye’s internal change of the definitions. They use the word because it is attractive and for the sake of their benefit, for using ‘soft power’ to describe the things once called by other name is good for them because the word sounds more attractive and persuasive to others. The very word ‘soft power’ itself dose has strong ‘soft power’ in the world communication. Sometimes they cite one of the definitions by Nye, but they are not true to the original definitions. They add some other meanings and alter some part of the meaning and/or definitions freely and use it, expecting to accept their wish, hoping to realize what they want.

I deploy the word ‘global rumors’ or global retweeting for depicting this phenomenon. This phenomenon made possible for two reasons. One is the intellectual hegemony of ‘mainstream’ American IR and IR scholars. If one unknown non-western scholars like living in the Far East first used the word, this would never happen. What is crucial most is not the attraction of the word but who said that. The second reason is the impact of globalization and the revolution of technology.

The case of ‘soft power’ shows how the notion would proliferate in this world, without checking the original meaning or strictly following the original context. Of course, the case of 1648 myth has some in common with soft power case but some are quite different. One of the obvious differences is that we can effortlessly trace the origin in the case of ‘soft power’ and though it takes much time, we can easily see the global linkage.

C. A Matter of Subjectivity: why people trust such myths

One of the findings in this section is that in this globalized world, we tend to adopt facts or words so easily without any rigid confirming the exact meaning, definition, and origin. This reminds us the notion of ‘trust’ by Anthony Giddens or ‘Weltkommunikation (world communication)’ by Nobert Boltz (Giddens 1991, Boltz 2001). Like most of other non-academic people, scholars have to spare much time only for their own, most are so narrow, academic field and inevitably have to trust knowledge made by or disseminated among other scholars. Just as we have recently seen in twitter, Facebook and other SNS, proliferation of speciously reliable knowledge or information already has been happening in the academic field.
Another important point would be a matter of subjectivity: what happens in the individual’s mind when faced with such myth from the perspective of cognitive science or psychology (Shibasaki 2013). This is intellectually challenging but I would have to omit because it is out of scope of this paper.

III. Range and Scope of the myth

A. Self, State, and International Relations: inter-referential structure of modern worldview

In this section I would like to approach this myth issue from entirely different angle. The 1648 myth is about the beginning of modern interstate system or modern sovereign state system. However, whenever it starts, it would not be the right way for us to understand that sovereign states and its system or society alone, independently or isolatedly, emerged. There is also a structure that includes the sovereign state system: that is the modern world and modern worldview. Modern international relations is one of its elements and has indispensable connection to do with other elements. I extract this structure from the study of Tomonaga Sanjyuro (1871-1951), who especially studied the historical philosophy of Immanuel Kant (Shibasaki 2009b, 2012).

Tomonaga Sanjūrō was a philosopher who studied and discussed philosophy as a way of viewing the world and human beings and who had the clear purpose of using it to construct for the nation of Japan a stable position in the modern world. His two works presented a structure of the world that comprised a continuum of the individual (Self), state (sovereignty) and international society (not an international state or a world state). He thus played an important historical role in laying the foundation for an epistemology of international relations in modern Japan, in a period just prior to the growth of academic specialization and the development of the theory of international relations within the specialized field of sociology. (Shibasaki 2012:175)

I have proposed this structure as <Self-State-International Relations>. Modern individual self, an independent and autonomous actor, having in some sense ‘sovereignty’ of its own, emerges from the time of Renaissance to the time of the French revolution. Modern sovereign states, independent and autonomous actor also emerges almost at the same time and the connection between them became more and more being bonded especially after the rise of the notion of nation-state and the principle of ethnic self-determination, from 19th century to 20th century. In this course, modern sovereign states are regarded as being consisted of modern individual self. Then, so-called international society is conceived as a society of individual and autonomous state, just like individual and autonomous self forms domestic society. However, international society would not become world state or government because of anarchy.

In brief, this was a three-tiered structure: the individual, rooted in an independent and autonomous Self, the nation-state (society), made up of such individuals, and international relations (society), constituted of these independent and autonomous nation-states and premised on non-dissolution into a world state. We can provisionally call this “Self-State-International Relations”. It is a cross-referential mechanism that specifies the modern world view and acts as a framework for asking the question, “What is international relations” in modern times. The modern epistemology of international relations has, whichever way we look at it, undeniably assumed a kind of world based on this mechanism, regardless of whether we accept it or criticise it. (Shibasaki 2012: 177)

Self and state has much in common with its independence and autonomy, and society formation. Their raison-d’être would be justified by each other (just like domestic analogy). The most important difference is that self can be integrated into one domestic society but as for state, its possibility of being as one state or government is firmly denied because of the existence of anarchy. The possibility of making a world state or government has been carefully and determinately turned down. One of the most important and significant rejections is made by Kant’s perpetual peace (Kant 1795). We found that
Kant was also aware of its <Self-State-International Relations> connection and by the denial he contributed to make this structure of the modern world unchangeable for the time being.

My intention to introduce this thought is that the myth on IR has been ignoring the fact that international relations is inextricably linked with other elements that consist of the modern world / worldview and those elements are tightly connected and reinforce its firmness by inter-referencing. The myth of 1648 is not only about on the birth of western state system but on the formation of the epistemology of <Self-State-International Relations>.

B. The Case of Japan: importing all-in-line at the same time without experiencing historical context

To be sure, the myth on modern international relations or IR, especially on its genesis and development, comes from the history of Europe and the myth shared in English speaking community mainly in US and UK. Some writers criticize its Western centrism (Hobson 2012). However, the important another aspect to think about the myth in a discipline is how non-Western world accept such myths and disciplines. Based on my past studies of modern international thought on Japan, I would like to propose some clues.

One of the most important phenomenon in the acceptance of modern science and discipline in modern Japan is that people have to import many of them all-in-line, so hastily, without much time to rearrange them in the right historical order. This way of importing western culture is well explained by the concept of antagonistic acculturation, that means in order to survive as a nation facing with other preponderant culture, they must accept that preponderant culture in order to cope with it (Hirano 2000). Masao Maruyama once described this situation as ‘European philosophy and thought was imported endlessly as parts, dissolved its historical context or detached from the premise in the field of the history of ideas’ (Maruyama 1961:14, tr. by Shibasaki). Maruyama goes on to describe this tendency as follows:

If we break down our way of thought and inspiration into several elements and trace back to those roots, we can find all those fragments like Buddhistic, Confucianstic, shamanic, and Western and so on. The problem here is they coexist disorderly and it is almost impossible for us to find out its logical relation and the right location for each. (Maruyama 1961:8, tr. by Shibasaki)

Various thought was imported in a given chronological order. However, they lost their historical structure because they coexisted atemporally with sometimes only changing its arrangement in one’s mind. (Maruyama 1961:11, tr. by Shibasaki)

Roughly three decades from the Meiji Restoration (1868), some scholars realized this atemporariness began to try to understand imported Western philosophy or thought in the ‘right’ order and context. This contextualization started around the turn of the 20th century. In this respect, Tomonaga was one of the influential ‘contextualizers’ (Holden 2002). However, since Japanese people could not identified the meaning of Thirty Year’s War or Napoleonic Wars internally as its own history, this context can be understood only literally as an artificial knowledge.

This attitude towards the Western history as other, outside of our reality might lead to stir up feelings of some non-Western IR scholars on such myths in IR. If 1648 is referred as origin of modern international state system in the textbook, it must be so, if the exact year would be 1688, we can change it without altering the structure of discipline and understanding the reality that we confront. For the Japanese people, modern international relations comes towards us in 19th century as the actual history and the history before that would be not important to understand what we should do to survive in the modern world.

Of course it is crucial for all of us to understand historical context. That is why Maruyama deplores its ‘without social context’ (Maruyama 1961:24, tr. by Shibasaki) tendency and Tomonaga wrote some seminal books on the history of European philosophy, which had great influence to the thinkers at that
time (Tomonaga 1916). However, it is also significant for us to remind that there is such a tendency at least in Japan and there might be the same one in other non-western peoples and scholars.

IV. What is a thing called ‘myth’?

A. Is ‘myth’ really a myth?

One of the most neglected questions in the debate between myth-holders and myth-busters (just referred above, we first need to ask if there are really such a debate) is: is it really a ‘myth’? It seems to me that almost all of them use the word ‘myth’ without any reservations or deeper considerations. The forgotten point is that there is almost no firm evidence for us to describe the object that we are trying to address should be called so. We can easily consent that there is an inaccurate story people believe that it’s reality in IR. However, there is still a room for reservation for adopting the word ‘myth’ to describe it most accurately.

To be sure, using the word ‘myth’ and insisting that it is not what really happened and what people believe is not real but a ‘myth’ normally sounds natural and even confortable for us. In addition, busting a myth is regarded significant in an academic world, because disenchantment (Max Weber) is one of the purposes of modern science. Even so, there is a room for doubt for the choice of words, for we might fall in the danger of reenchantment by using the words ‘myth’ partly because of its attraction. So we have to explore alternative possibility.

B. Reality, approach, and ideology

Here, I would like to introduce the distinction of three categories in social science, proposed by Kei Takeuchi, one of the most authentic scholars of economics and statistics in Japan (Takeuchi 1999). He argues that social scientists have to be careful in discerning (1) reality (2) approach (3) ideology respectively, because those are so hard to distinguish even by scholars of social science.

Reality is a social reality, what really exists. Of course there are a lot of argument what reality is in sociology or other disciplines (Berger and Luckmann 1967) but we are not going in to depth for the purpose of this paper. Approach is a form of hypothesis, presupposition, or theory; for example, individualistic approach is the one that deals with social phenomenon reducing into the act of individuals and holistic approach is, vice versa, deals with social phenomenon putting into the structure of the society. One important point is that both individualistic and holistic approach, are no more than approaches, not reality. Which should be used for analyzing a given social phenomenon depends on the benefit of each approach. If at the first time individualistic approach seems fit but later found less fruitful, we can, and should change the approach.

Ideology is a kind of Sollen, what should be. We normally express ideology with the word ‘-ism’, because it is not a reality nor approach. The right answer is always ‘-ism’ even if reality is different, or another approach is more fruitful. One strange tradition in IR is (or more or less in the other fields of social science), we use the word ‘-ism’ which is primarily suitable for depicting ideology, for the name of approach. This phenomenon reminds us that this distinction is extremely difficult for social science. This tendency also shows the nature of ‘-isms’ in IR.

C. Hypostatization of hypothesis, or making methodology into ontology?

Here we are now going back to our myths. For example, the myth of 1648 can be interpreted as the recognition that we set the birthday of modern state system as 1648 and never doubts it. If the myth is conceived as such for most of the scholars, there is a temptation to say that we don’t have to use the word ‘myth’ and instead, we can call it simply as approach, presupposition or hypothesis. And if it is only a hypothesis, and if it is only a wrong hypothesis, all we have to do is to abandon it.

However, what had been happening is not so simple. If we can confirm that they believe such hypothesis without checking what is really true, then what happened is a hypostatization of hypothesis, or making methodology into ontology. What have hap-
pened in IR is not only to put a hypothesis but also rendering it into what really happened.

D. One of demythicization: avoiding the use of the word itself?

If what we have been calling ‘myth’ is equivalent for a (hypostatization of) hypothesis, which way of saying is better for us? I can admit that there is a still a benefit to call it a myth, but keep on adopting the word might be obstacle for further analysis. If it's a myth, people will keep on believing for the very reason because it’s a myth. If it’s only a hypostatization of hypothesis, social scientists or historian obviously can find a substitute instead of using the word.

Conclusion

Before we conclude, I would like to show you about my busting experience in the academic field, for I have to confess that my first academic paper aimed at the very act of myth busting.

In the final year of my undergraduate student, I had to choose what to write for the graduation thesis. The theme I finally selected is the making process of the first Japan-America Student Conference (JASC) in 1934, which I myself participated in 1992-93 (44th and 45th). One of the most significant aims of the thesis is to overturn its official story of the genesis: JASC initiated only by students without any intervention from authorities. Their slogan is “JASC is the conference of the students, by the students, and for the students”. After reading a lot of old documents including MOFA records and making some interviews, I reached the conclusion that those students deeply relied on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public institutions and those institution played the role of mentor including financial aspect.

After several years, I refined that thesis into a short paper and submitted to an academic journal. I choose the title of the paper as: The Japan-America Student Conference in the Pre-War Period: Demystifying the “Lincoln Myth.” (Shibasaki 1999) Though some colleagues who have specialized in this area and some of the JASC OB/OGs including the originator and young participants after me welcomed the paper, the myth still remains intact and unchanged. If it is not truly what happened, but as long as it’s useful and beneficial for them (maybe including for me), the myth is still working. This case of JASC shows reason why some academic myth-busting would not acceptable for myth-supporters.

To sum up, what I would like to emphasize in this paper is that in order to dismantle myths, individual busting is fundamental but not enough and we have to see the structure and the process of myth-making in various angles and to reexamine the contents of the myth, different attitude towards myths especially that of non-Western people, and the relevance of use of the word ‘myth’. I would be glad this paper could play some role of offering some clues to this issue.

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