



INTRODUCTION

Both in the media and in the academy, recent years have witnessed energetic debates about the interrelated issues of Eurocentrism, racism, and multiculturalism. Visible in the historical polemics about Columbus, in the academic quarrels about the canon, and in the pedagogical controversies about Afrocentric schools, these debates have invoked many buzzwords: "political correctness," "identity politics," "postcoloniality."

Unthinking Eurocentrism focusses on Eurocentrism and multiculturalism in popular culture. It is written in the passionate belief that an awareness of the intellectually debilitating effects of the Eurocentric legacy is indispensable for comprehending not only contemporary media representations but even contemporary subjectivities. Endemic in present-day thought and education, Eurocentrism is naturalized as "common sense." Philosophy and literature are assumed to be **European** philosophy and literature. The "best that is thought and written" is assumed to have been thought and written by Europeans. (By Europeans, we refer not only to Europe *per se* but also to the "neo-Europeans" of the Americas, Australia, and elsewhere.) History is assumed to be European history, everything else being reduced to what historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (in 1965!) patronizingly called the "unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe."¹ Standard core courses in universities stress the history of "Western" civilization, with the more liberal universities insisting on token study of "other" civilizations. And even "Western" civilization is usually taught without reference to the central role of European colonialism within capitalist modernity. So embedded is Eurocentrism in everyday life, so pervasive, that it often goes unnoticed. The residual traces of centuries of axiomatic European domination inform the general culture, the everyday language, and the media, engendering a fictitious sense of the innate superiority of European-derived cultures and peoples.

Although neoconservatives caricature multiculturalism as calling for the violent jettisoning of European classics and of "western civilization as an area of study,"² multiculturalism is actually an assault not on Europe or Europeans but on Eurocentrism – on the procrustean forcing of cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of

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meaning, as the world's center of gravity, as ontological "reality" to the rest of the world's shadow. Eurocentric thinking attributes to the "West" an almost providential sense of historical destiny. Eurocentrism, like Renaissance perspectives in painting, envisions the world from a single privileged point. It maps the world in a cartography that centralizes and augments Europe while literally "belittling" Africa.³ The "East" is divided into "Near," "Middle," and "Far," making Europe the arbiter of spatial evaluation, just as the establishment of Greenwich Mean Time produces England as the regulating center of temporal measurement. Eurocentrism bifurcates the world into the "West and the Rest"⁴ and organizes everyday language into binaristic hierarchies implicitly flattering to Europe: *our* "nations," *their* "tribes"; *our* "religions," *their* "superstitions"; *our* "culture," *their* "folklore"; *our* "art," *their* "artifacts"; *our* "demonstrations," *their* "riots"; *our* "defense," *their* "terrorism."

Eurocentrism first emerged as a discursive rationale for colonialism, the process by which the European powers reached positions of hegemony in much of the world. Indeed, J.M. Blaut calls Eurocentrism "the colonizer's model of the world."⁵ As an ideological substratum common to colonialist, imperialist, and racist discourse, Eurocentrism is a form of vestigial thinking which permeates and structures *contemporary* practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism. Although colonialist discourse and Eurocentric discourse are intimately intertwined, the terms have a distinct emphasis. While the former explicitly justifies colonialist practices, the latter embeds, takes for granted, and "normalizes" the hierarchical power relations generated by colonialism and imperialism, without necessarily even thematizing those issues directly. Although generated by the colonizing process, Eurocentrism's links to that process are obscured in a kind of buried epistemology.

Eurocentric discourse is complex, contradictory, historically unstable. But in a kind of composite portrait, Eurocentrism as a mode of thought might be seen as engaging in a number of mutually reinforcing intellectual tendencies or operations:

1. Eurocentric discourse projects a linear historical trajectory leading from classical Greece (constructed as "pure," "Western," and "democratic") to imperial Rome and then to the metropolitan capitals of Europe and the US. It renders history as a sequence of empires: Pax Romana, Pax Hispanica, Pax Britannica, Pax Americana. In all cases, Europe, alone and unaided, is seen as the "motor" for progressive historical change: it invents class society, feudalism, capitalism, the industrial revolution.
2. Eurocentrism attributes to the "West" an inherent progress toward democratic institutions (Torquemada, Mussolini, and Hitler must be seen as aberrations within this logic of historical amnesia and selective legitimation).
3. Eurocentrism elides non-European democratic traditions, while obscuring the manipulations embedded in Western formal democracy and masking the West's part in subverting democracies abroad.

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4. Eurocentrism minimizes the West's oppressive practices by regarding them as contingent, accidental, exceptional. Colonialism, slave-trading, and imperialism are not seen as fundamental catalysts of the West's disproportionate power.
5. Eurocentrism appropriates the cultural and material production of non-Europeans while denying both their achievements and its own appropriation, thus consolidating its sense of self and glorifying its own cultural anthropophagy. The West, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett puts it, "separates forms from their performers, converts those forms into influences, brings those influences into the center, leaves the living sources on the margin, and pats itself on the back for being so cosmopolitan."⁶

In sum, Eurocentrism sanitizes Western history while patronizing and even demonizing the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements – science, progress, humanism – but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined.

As a work of adversary scholarship, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* critiques the universalization of Eurocentric norms, the idea that any race, in Aimé Césaire's words, "holds a monopoly on beauty, intelligence, and strength." Our critique of Eurocentrism is addressed not to Europeans as individuals but rather to dominant Europe's historically oppressive relation to its internal and external "others." We are in no way suggesting, obviously, that non-European people are somehow "better" than Europeans, or that Third World and minoritarian cultures are inherently superior. There is no inborn tendency among Europeans to commit genocide, as some "ice people" theorists would suggest – such theories merely invert colonialist demonizations – nor are indigenous or Third World peoples innately noble and generous. Nor do we believe in the inverted European narcissism that posits Europe as the source of all social evils in the world. Such an approach remains Eurocentric ("Europe exhibiting its own unacceptability in front of an anti-ethnocentric mirror," in Derrida's words) and also exempts Third World patriarchal elites from all responsibility.⁷ Such "victimology" reduces non-European life to a pathological response to Western penetration. It merely turns colonialist claims upside down. Rather than saying that "we" (that is, the West) have brought "them" civilization, it claims instead that everywhere "we" have brought diabolical evil, and everywhere "their" enfeebled societies have succumbed to "our" insidious influence. The vision remains Promethean, but here Prometheus has brought not fire but the Holocaust, reproducing what Barbara Christian calls the "West's outlandish claim to have invented everything, including Evil."⁸ Our focus here, in any case, is less on intentions than on institutional discourses, less on "goodness" and "badness" than on historically configured relations of power. The question, as Talal Asad puts it, is not "how far Europeans have been guilty and Third World inhabitants innocent but, rather, how far the criteria by which guilt and innocence are determined have been historically constituted."⁹

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The word "Eurocentric" sometimes provokes apoplectic reactions because it is taken as a synonym for "racist." But although Eurocentrism and racism are historically intertwined – for example, the erasure of Africa as historical subject reinforces racism against African-Americans – they are in no way equatable, for the simple reason that Eurocentrism is the "normal" consensus view of history that most First Worlders and even many Third Worlders learn at school and imbibe from the media. As a result of this normalizing operation, it is quite possible to be antiracist at both a conscious and a practical level, and still be Eurocentric. Eurocentrism is an implicit positioning rather than a conscious political stance; people do not announce themselves as Eurocentric any more than sexist men go around saying: "Hi. I'm Joe. I'm a phallocrat." This point is often misunderstood, as in David Rieff's breathless claim that "there is no business establishment any more that is committed ... to notions of European superiority."¹⁰ But corporate executives are the last people who need consciously to worry about European superiority; it is enough that they inherit the structures and perspectives bequeathed by centuries of European domination.

Rather than attacking Europe *per se*, an anti-Eurocentric multiculturalism, in our view, relativizes Europe, seeing it as a geographical fiction that flattens the cultural diversity even of Europe itself. Europe has always had its own peripheralized regions and stigmatized communities (Jews, Irish, Gypsies, Huguenots, Muslims, peasants, women, gays/lesbians). Nor do we endorse a Europhobic attitude; our own text invokes European thinkers and concepts. That we emphasize the "underside" of European history does not mean we do not recognize an "overside" of scientific, artistic, and political achievement. And since Eurocentrism is a historically situated discourse and not a genetic inheritance, Europeans can be anti-Eurocentric, just as non-Europeans can be Eurocentric. Europe has always spawned its own critics of empire. Some of the European cultural figures most revered by today's neoconservatives, ironically, themselves condemned colonialism. Samuel Johnson, the very archetype of the neoclassical conservative, wrote in 1759 that "Europeans have scarcely visited any coast but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arrogate dominion without right and practice cruelty without incentive."¹¹ Even Adam Smith, the patron saint of capitalism, wrote in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) that for the natives of the East and West Indies, all the commercial benefits resulting from the discovery of America "have been sunk and lost in the dreadful misfortunes which they have occasioned."¹² Yet when contemporary multiculturalists make the same points, they are accused of "Europe-bashing."¹³ Or the critiques are acknowledged, but then turned into a compliment to Europe, in a kind of "fallback position" for Euro-narcissism: "Yes, Europe did all those cruel things, but then, only Europe has the virtue of being self-critical."

Eurocentric thinking, in our view, is fundamentally unrepresentative of a world which has long been multicultural. At times, even multiculturalists glimpse the issues through a narrowly national and exceptionalist grid, as when well-meaning curriculum committees call for courses about the "contributions" of the world's

diverse cultures to the “development of *American* society,” unaware of the nationalistic teleology underlying such a formulation. “Multiculturedness” is not a “United Statesian” monopoly, nor is multiculturalism the “handmaiden” of US identity politics.¹⁴ Virtually all countries and regions are multicultural in a purely descriptive sense. Egypt melds Pharaonic, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, Christian/Coptic, and Mediterranean influences; India is riotously plural in language and religion; and Mexico’s “cosmic race” mingles at least three major constellations of cultures. Nor is North American multiculturalism of recent date. “America” began as polyglot and multicultural, speaking a myriad of languages: European, African, and Native American.

While the fashionability of the word multiculturalism might soon pass, the issues to which it points will not soon fade, for these contemporary quarrels are but the surface manifestations of a deeper “seismological shift” – the decolonization of global culture – whose implications we have barely begun to register. Only an awareness of the inertia of the colonialist legacy, and of the crucial role of the media in prolonging it, can clarify the deep-seated justice of the call for multiculturalism. For us, multiculturalism means seeing world history and contemporary social life from the perspective of the radical equality of peoples in status, potential, and rights. Multiculturalism decolonizes representation not only in terms of cultural artifacts – literary canons, museum exhibits, film series – but also in terms of power relations between communities.

Our purpose here is, above all, to make connections. We make connections, first, in temporal terms. While the media treat multiculturalism as a recent bandwagon phenomenon unrelated to colonialism, we ground our discussion in a longer history of multiply located oppressions. And where many literary studies of culture and empire privilege the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we trace colonialist discourse back to 1492, linking representations of “ancient history” with contemporary representations, moving from discourses about classical Greece or Africa, for example, to present-day TV commercials. We make connections, second, in spatial/geographical terms, placing debates about representation in a broader context which embraces the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Third, we make connections in disciplinary terms, forging links between usually compartmentalized fields (media studies, literary theory, reflexive and experimental ethnography, Third World feminism, postcolonial studies, the diverse ethnic and “area studies”); and fourth, in intertextual terms, envisioning the media ethnic and “area studies”); and fourth, in intertextual terms, envisioning the media as part of a broader discursive network ranging from the erudite (poems, novels, history, performance art, cultural theory) to the popular (commercial television, pop music, journalism, theme parks, tourist ads). Although progressive literary intellectuals sometimes disdain the lower reaches of popular culture, it is precisely at the popular level that Eurocentrism generates its mass base in everyday feeling. Fifth, in conceptual terms, we link issues of colonialism, imperialism, and Third World nationalism on the one hand, and of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism on the other, attempting to place often ghettoized histories and discourses in productive relation. (For example, we do not follow the

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conventional practice of delinking issues of racism from issues of anti-Semitism.)

Rather than segregating historical periods and geographical regions into neatly fenced-off areas of expertise, we explore their interconnectedness. Rather than speaking of cultural/racial groups in isolation, we speak of them "in relation," without ever suggesting that their positionings are identical. Rather than pitting a rotating chain of oppositional communities against a White European dominant (a strategy that privileges Whiteness if only as constant antagonist), we stress the horizontal and vertical links threading communities together in a conflictual network. Rather than recreating neat binarisms (Black/White, Native American/White) that ironically recenter Whiteness, while the "rest" who fit only awkwardly into such neat categories stand by as mere spectators, we try to address overlapping multiplicities of identity and affiliation.

Our larger goal is to "multiculturalize" a cultural studies field often devoid of substantive multicultural content. While many authors defend multiculturalism against neoconservative attack, the work itself is often not multicultural at all. While innumerable essays reshuffle or augment the "mantra" (Kobena Mercer's term) of race, class, gender, and sexuality, or explore dizzyingly abstract notions of "difference" and "alterity" in virtuoso flights of poststructuralist, few offer a participatory knowledge of non-European cultures. While foregrounding minoritarian "star" intellectuals, the texts largely ignore the work carried on decades or even centuries earlier by anticolonialist thinkers, along with that of non-"stars" and of non-English-speaking Third World scholars. The privileging of the Anglo-American cultural world, and the tracing of cultural studies' pedigree only to London or Birmingham, prevents dialog with Latin American, Asian, and African studies; whatever does not belong to the Anglo-Western world is peripheralized as "area studies."

The global nature of the colonizing process, and the global reach of the contemporary media, virtually oblige the cultural critic to move beyond the restrictive framework of the nation-state. But although we try to set multicultural issues in a global context, we make no claim to "cover" the globe in a lordly imperial sweep. Our call to "think globally" is not a demand that individual scholars become omniscient polymaths, but rather the designation of a collective project. Indeed, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* configures an interdisciplinary field which has been gaining momentum but has barely been named, and which we would call "multicultural media studies." Various subcurrents mingle in the larger stream of multicultural media studies: the analysis of "minority" representation; the critique of imperialist media; the work on colonial and postcolonial discourse; the theorizing of "Third World" and "Third Cinema"; the histories and analyses of African, Asian, Latin American, First World "minority," "diasporic," and "indigenous" media; the work on antiracist and multicultural media pedagogy.

Since all political struggle in the postmodern era necessarily passes through the simulacral realm of a mass culture, the media are absolutely central to any discussion of multiculturalism. The contemporary media shape identity; indeed,

constituencies. While recognizing the specificity of film/media, we also grant ourselves a "cultural studies"-style freedom to wander among diverse disciplines, texts, and discourses, ancient and contemporary, low and high. As a disciplinary hybrid, the book develops a syncretic, even cannibalistic methodology. Its overall architectonics move from past to future, from didacticism to speculation, from hegemony to resistance, and from critique to affirmation. (Within "critique," we would add, there is also "celebration," just as within "celebration" there is buried a "critique.") Our purpose is not globally to endorse, or globally condemn, any specific body of texts; the point is only to become more historically informed and artistically nuanced readers of cultural practices. *Unthinking Eurocentrism* is therefore not structured as an inexorable linear movement toward a proscriptive conclusion. The overall "argument" concerning Eurocentrism is not stated baldly and explicitly, but worked out slowly, over the course of the book. Diverse leitmotifs are woven into the various chapters, creating a kind of musical echo effect whereby the same theme emerges in different contexts. If "The Imperial Imaginary" (chapter 3) stresses the colonialist writing of history, "The Third Worldist Film" (chapter 7) stresses the "writing back" performed by the ex-colonized. Such themes as the critique of Eurocentric paradigms, the elaboration of a relational methodology, the search for alternative esthetics, and the interrogation of the diverse "posts," meanwhile, structure the text throughout. Some themes that appear first in a colonialist register – hybridity, syncretism, *mestizaje*, cannibalism, magic – later reappear in a liberatory, anticolonialist register, so that the diverse sections reverberate together thematically.

The introductory chapter of *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism," synthesizes the crucial debates concerning "Eurocentrism," "racism," the "Third" and "Fourth" Worlds, and "postcoloniality" in order to provide conceptual groundwork for subsequent discussion. Here we propose the concept of "polycentric multiculturalism" as an alternative to liberal pluralism.

The second chapter, "Formations of Colonialist Discourse," examines, in a telescoped fashion, the nature, origins, and ramifications of colonialist-Eurocentric discourse, seen as an informing intertext for present-day representations. The media, we argue, absorb and retool the same colonialist discourse that permeates such widely divergent fields as philosophy, literature, and history. Rather than surveying an impossibly long history, we focus on landmark struggles over the inscription of "Greece/Egypt," the "voyages of discovery," the dis-courses of progress and the antinomies of "the Enlightenment," emphasizing less the historical events themselves than their discursive fallout. By way of illustration, we call attention to the media texts that take positions on these debates, for example the many films about Columbus and the conquistadors.

The third chapter, "The Imperial Imaginary," explores the shadow cast by empire over the cinema as an institution whose very origins coincided with the giddy heights of imperialism. What was the role of cinema vis-à-vis the novel and print media in creating a masculinist imperial imaginary? After addressing the early imperialist productions of the US, Britain, and France, including in the

proto-cinematic form of colonial exhibitions, we examine the Hollywood western as a paradigm for Hollywood treatments of First World/Third World encounters. That the colonizing intertext of the imperial adventure film and the western subliminally structures even contemporary representations, we suggest, becomes obvious in films like the *Indiana Jones* series of the 1980s, in "colonial nostalgia" films like *Out of Africa* (1985) or *Passage to India* (1984), and even in the media coverage of the Persian Gulf war of 1991. Throughout the chapter we emphasize not only the content of these stories/histories but also their mediation through genre and through specifically cinematic and televisual means of manipulating point-of-view, focalization, identification.

The fourth chapter, "Tropes of Empire," concentrates on the tropological operations of Eurocentrism as a figurative substratum within the discourse of empire. Eurocentric discourse, we suggest, often operates through metaphors, tropes, and figures such as animalization, infantilization, and so forth. Here we focus specifically on the visual embodiments of gendered and eroticized tropes of "virgin lands" and "dark" continents, of "veiled" territories and imaginary harems, and of fantasies of rape and rescue. These embedded topoi, we argue, convey Eurocentric attitudes toward land, ecology, and non-European cultures, and exercise worldly effectivity through institutional discourses such as those of archeology and psychoanalysis.

The fifth chapter, "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle over Representation," intervenes in the debates about "realism" and "positive images," critically assessing the methodological field known as "image studies." To what extent has "stereotypes-and-distortions" analysis been useful in relation to a medium still massively associated with the real, and to what extent has it led us into theoretical blind alleys? While such work has been fundamental for identity mobilization and for the critique of the dominant media, we argue, it is also important to move from character-based approaches to more multidimensional methods that take into account such issues as institutional setting, the politics of language and casting, generic mediation, and cultural variation.

The sixth chapter, "Ethnicities-in-Relation," argues for a relational approach to media representation, one that operates at once within, between, and beyond the nation-state framework. A relational methodology, we argue, enables the excavation of a submerged racial presence even in films, such as "lily-white" Hollywood musicals, that do not thematize race *per se*. The complex relational presence of indigenous and Afro-diasporic peoples in all the Americas, we further suggest, requires a transnational approach that foregrounds the conflictual interplay of cultural communities and identities within and across borders.

The seventh chapter, "The Third Worldist Film," discusses the cinematic counter-telling of the history of colonialism and neocolonialism within Third World cinema. Here we "sample" specific films, largely from the 1960s and 1970s, in order to demonstrate a spectrum of revolutionary nationalist strategies: "Third Cinema," "aesthetics of hunger," "allegories of underdevelopment." The films discussed exemplify a two-fronted struggle to fuse revisionist historiography

with formal innovation. *Battaglia de Algeria* (Battle of Algiers, 1966) kidnaps the techniques associated with TV reportage to tell the story of Algerian independence. *Vidas Secas* (Barren Lives, 1963) embodies an "esthetic of hunger" by filming hunger in a style and production method appropriate to a Third World country. *La Hora de los Hornos* (Hour of the Furnaces, 1968) fuses formal and political avant-gardism in an incendiary fashion, while such films as *Terra em Transe* (Land in Anguish, 1967), *Xala* (1974), and *Urs bilGalil* (Wedding in Galilee, 1987) offer modernist "allegories of impotence." Reflexive films such as *Iskandariya Leh...?* (Alexandria Why...?, 1979), *Aakaler Sandhane* (In Search of Famine, 1980), and *Cabra Marcado para Morrer* (Twenty Years After, 1984), finally, focalize the specificities of the filmmaking process in the Third World.

Chapter 8, "Esthetics of Resistance," focusses on the attempts to synthesize radical politics with alternative esthetics, in a double and complementary movement embracing both form and content. The films discussed here go "beyond" many of the films discussed in the previous chapter, first in that they reject realist esthetics in favor of anthropophagic, parodic-carnavalesque, and media-jujitsu strategies; and second, in that they transcend an exclusive concern with nation, interrogating nationalist discourse also from the standpoint of class, gender, sexuality, and diasporic identity. In what we call "post-Third Worldist" films, paramodern "archaic" cultural traditions such as orality and carnival become the trampoline for modernizing or postmodernizing esthetics. Rather than proposing a monolithically correct esthetic, here we evoke a varied constellation of oppositional strategies, which taken together have the potential of revolutionizing audio-visual production and pedagogy.

The ninth and final chapter, "The Politics of Multiculturalism in the Postmodern Age," theorizes media pedagogy, reception, and spectatorship. Here we examine issues of "political correctness," cross-cultural spectatorship, inter-communal coalitions, and the politics of popular culture in the postmodern age. How does spectatorship impact on communal belonging and political affiliation in an increasingly transnational world? We develop notions of "racially resistant readings," "analogical structures of feeling," and "multicultural spectatorship." We explore, finally, the opportunities opened up by anti-Eurocentric, multi-cultural, audio-visual pedagogy.

Our title, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, has a double thrust that structures the book as a whole. On the one hand, we aim to expose the unthinking, taken-for-granted quality of Eurocentrism as an unacknowledged current, a kind of bad epistemic habit, both in mass-mediated culture and in intellectual reflection on that culture. In this sense, we want to clear Eurocentric rubble from the collective brain. On the other, we want to "unthink" Eurocentric discourse, to move beyond it toward a relational theory and practice. Rather than striving for "balance," we hope to "right the balance." Eurocentric criticism, we will argue, is not only politically retrograde but also esthetically stale, flat, and unprofitable. There are many cognitive, political, and esthetic alternatives to Eurocentrism; our hope is to define and illuminate them.

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Unthinking Eurocentrism is not a politically correct book. The very word "correctness," in our view, comes with a bad odor. On the one (right) hand, it smells of Crusoe's ledger book, of manuals of etiquette and table manners, and even of the bookkeeping of the Inquisition and the Holocaust. On the other (left) hand, it has the odor of Stalinist purism, now transferred to a largely verbal register. The phrase "political correctness" (PC) evokes not only the neoconservative caricature of socialist, feminist, gay, lesbian, and multiculturalist politics but also a real tendency within the left – whence its effectiveness. Amplifying the preexisting association of the left with moralistic self-righteousness and puritanical antisensuality, the right wing has portrayed all politicized critique as the neurotic effluvium of whiny malcontents, the product of an uptight subculture of morbid guilt-tripping. But if "political correctness" evokes a preachy, humorless austerity, the phrase "popular culture" evokes a sense of pleasure. Thus an underlying question in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* is the following: given the eclipse of revolutionary metanarratives in the postmodern era, how do we critique the dominant Eurocentric media while harnessing its undeniable pleasures? For our part, we are not interested in impeccably correct texts produced by irreproachable revolutionary subjects. Indeed, a deep quasi-religious substratum underlies the search for perfectly correct political texts. In this sense, we would worry less about incorrectness (a word suggesting a positivist updating of "sin"), stop searching for perfectly correct texts (patterned after the model of the canonical sacred word), stop looking for perfect characters (modeled on impeccable divinities and infallible popes), and assume instead imperfection and contradiction.

Congruent with our double thrust, we will deploy a double operation of critique and celebration, of dismantling and rebuilding, of critiquing Eurocentric tendencies within dominant discourse while celebrating the transgressive utopianism of multicultural texts and practices. We do not mean "utopia" in the sense of scientific "blueprint" utopias or totalizing metanarratives of progress, but rather in the sense of "critical utopias" which seek what Tom Moylan calls "seditious expression of social change" carried on in a "permanently open process of envisioning what is not yet."¹⁵ Rather than constructing a purist notion of correct texts or immaculate sites of resistance, we would propose a positively predatory attitude which seizes esthetic and pedagogic potentialities in a wide variety of cultural practices, finding in them germs of subversion that can "sprout" in an altered context. Rather than engaging in a moralistic, hectoring critique, our hope is to point to the exuberant possibilities opened up by critical and polycentric multiculturalism.

NOTES

- 1 Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), p. 9.
- 2 For Roger Kimball, multiculturalism implies: