Preface

Hybridity is almost a good idea, but not quite.

—Nicholas Thomas

HYBRIDITY IS a risky notion. It comes without guarantees. Rather than a single idea or a unitary concept, hybridity is an association of ideas, concepts, and themes that at once reinforce and contradict each other. The varied and sometimes contradictory nature of its use points to the emptiness of employing hybridity as a universal description of culture. Indeed, we learn very little when we repeat glibly that every culture is hybrid or, as happens too often, when fragments of discourse or data are cobbled together and called hybridity in several registers—historical, rhetorical, existential, economic, and so on. It is therefore imperative to situate every analysis of hybridity in a specific context where the conditions that shape hybridities are addressed.

I hope that this book improves our understanding of the role of communication in the making of hybridities. Communication practices as varied as journalism (Chapter Four), media production (Chapter Five), and media reception (Chapter Six) create hybridity as a notion, an ideology, or an existential experience. Social agents with a variety of motivations and objectives muster communication processes to articulate versions of hybridity that suit their purposes. In colonial Mexico, postcolonial Lebanon, neocolonial Washington, and elsewhere, hybridity comes in different guises and with different effects.

The challenge before us is therefore not to come up with an all-purpose, final definition of hybridity, but to find a way to integrate different types of hybridity in a framework that makes the connections between these types both intelligible and usable. With that goal in mind, I have shaped this book as a reclamation of a critical and historically informed approach to international communication. After dissecting the deficiencies of the cultural imperialism thesis and its would-be substitute "cultural globalization," I propound *critical transculturalism* as a new international communication framework with issues of hybridity at its

core. The usage of the word "transculturalism," to be fully explained in the next chapter, conveys a synthetic notion of culture and a dynamic understanding of relations between cultures. As I conceive it, critical transculturalism is at once an engagement with hybridity as a discursive formation, a framework for international communication theory, and an agenda for research.

This book lends support to three general observations that underlie critical transculturalism:

1. Hybridity must be understood historically in a triple context: (a) the development of vocabularies of racial and cultural mixture from the mid–nineteenth century onward; (b) the historical basis of contemporary hybrid identities; and (c) the juncture at which the language of hybridity entered the study of international communication. The first issue is dealt with at length in Chapter Three, and at this point it suffices to remark that discourses of cultural mixture have historically served ideologies of integration and control—not pluralism and empowerment. Chapter Six tackles the second issue, namely, how local history bears upon present-day hybrid identities, which, I contend, should not be viewed as primordial, because ethnic and cultural identities have a strong relational component. The third issue, namely, the timing of the entrance of hybridity into international communication studies and its position vis-à-vis "cultural imperialism" and "cultural globalization," is worth our attention. The discourse of hybridity connects two literatures: anti–"cultural imperialism" and pro–"cultural globalization" writings. Hybridity has emerged as the conceptual linchpin of the latter literature. As this book documents, the thoroughly demonized cultural imperialism thesis is giving way to a benign vision of global cultural diversity, local cultural resistance, and cross-cultural fusion. This cultural pluralism is in my view an inadequate vision for international communication and culture because it ignores power.

2. Hybridity must be understood as a rhetorical notion. This entails comprehension of (a) uses of hybridity in mainstream public discourse, a task that Chapter Four addresses; and (b) the analysis of the advent of hybridity in international communication studies for its rhetorical aspects. If, conceptually, hybridity is invoked in writings unsympathetic to critical approaches to international communication, rhetorically, hybridity facilitates a broader negation

of power in public treatments of intercultural relations. Hybridity, then, may be better understood, following Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek's research on whiteness (1995), as a strategic rhetoric. Whiteness, the two U.S.-based rhetorical scholars wrote, "garners its representational power through its ability to be many things at once, to be universal and particular, to be a source of identity and difference" (p. 302). A similar fluidity and polyvalence imbue hybridity with persuasive power. A strategic rhetoric of hybridity frames hybridity as natural, commonplace, and desirable in intercultural relations, and therefore noncontentious. It is one aspect of globalization that represents the whole as egalitarian exchange and positive change. In this respect hybridity is a metonym for globalization.

3. The concept of hybridity must be "operationalized" in case studies. As an emergent phenomenon that eludes easy classification, hybridity poses a challenge to empirical research on media reception and to analyses of media texts. In the first case, there is tension between hybridity's challenge to fixed categories and empirical research's reliance on more-or-less stable classifications. The contrapuntal approach that I posit in Chapter One and execute empirically in Chapter Six is helpful in that regard, but we need to move beyond the merely contrapuntal in order to make hybridity empirically intelligible. As far as textual analysis is concerned, as we see in Chapter Five, intertextual excess and aesthetic eclecticism mark hybrid media texts and introduce an element of arbitrariness to their analysis. Both empirical and textual approaches to hybridity must therefore be situated in a context whose structural elements ought to be explained. The Mexican and Lebanese case studies in Chapters Five and Six substantiate the usefulness of anchoring analyses of cultural hybridity in politico-economic considerations. Nonetheless, there needs to be further methodological experimentation and development in order effectively to integrate hybridity's historical, rhetorical, structural, textual, and empirical dimensions in concrete research studies.

In formulating critical transculturalism, I propose steps toward the full integration of historical, rhetorical, and empirical aspects of hybridity in international communication theory and research. I also explore how analysis of communication processes can improve our understanding of hybridity.

Chapter One maps the connections that already exist between hybridity and communication, and sets the stage for new links to be established throughout the book. After describing the rise to prominence of the notion of hybridity in academic and popular discourses, I give a brief etymological exposé of terms used to denote cultural mixture, whose historical development is further discussed in Chapter Three. Then Chapter One turns to a review of approaches to international communication that have mentioned or engaged the notion of hybridity, and to forecast this book's contributions to this debate.

Chapter Two, "Scenarios of Global Culture," surveys various perspectives on global culture. After a critique of analytical dichotomies in the study of intercultural relations, it focuses on the connections between, on one hand, "cultural imperialism" and "active audience" theories in media research, and, on the other hand, the debate on global culture. A discussion of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) controversy ensues, in which I highlight the main issues and summarize the historical evolution of this so-called global media debate from its early focus on nation-states to the later shift to transnational corporations and finally the emergence of human rights and public sphere perspectives. I then describe critiques of the cultural imperialism approach and offer my own take on them by way of a comparative analysis of the fields of American studies and international communication, which leads me to revisit some core assumptions of North American mass communication research. The chapter then turns to an analysis of the shift from "cultural imperialism" to "cultural globalization" and appraises the implications of that change of direction, since this is when media scholars began using the concept of hybridity.

Chapter Three, "The Trails and Tales of Hybridity," is a multidisciplinary and comparative examination of the applications and critiques of hybridity and equivalent concepts such as syncretism, creolization, *mestizaje*, *métissage*, transculturation, and others. The chapter also surveys literary and especially postcolonial theory and its various approaches to hybridity. Beyond Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) and Homi Bhabha (1994), who are credited with taking the concept of hybridity from biology to language and culture, I introduce other writers whose discipline, language, or geographical location may have left them underappreciated in Anglophone studies of hybridity.

Afterward, I explore how hybridity can describe two levels of sociocultural transformation by way of a contrast between the "culture of

covering" among radio disc jockeys in post–World War II Italy and the breaking of the Hawaiian taboo system in the wake of Captain Cook's arrival in the Polynesian archipelago. These case studies represent two kinds of hybridity, the former superficial and historically inconsequential, the latter deeply rooted and of epochal significance. They demonstrate that hybridity is of dubious usefulness if employed as a broad conceptual umbrella without concrete historical, geographical, and conceptual grounding.

Indeed, some authors do consider hybridity to be basically useless, and their arguments are given voice in the latter section of Chapter Three. While this "antihybridity backlash" points to some weaknesses in hybridity theory, it largely consists of unconstructive criticism. A more productive corrective to some excesses of hybridity theory can be found in the debate between the African formation of *négritude* and the Caribbean movement of *Créolité*. Both négritude and Créolité are Francophone, interested in Africa and its extensions, and concerned with postcolonial racial and cultural issues. Nonetheless, there are deep differences between the two movements over the ideological implications of hybridity. The significance of the dispute between négritude and Créolité overflows the debate's initial geographical and historical boundaries, because it reflects different interpretations of the connection between hybridity and power.

In search of continuities and discontinuities among mestizaje, métissage, Créolité, creolization, and transculturation, Chapter Four, "Corporate Transculturalism," examines how hybridity is used in contemporary public discourse. Via critical discourse analysis, I examine uses of hybridity in (mostly) U.S. newspapers, magazines, and trade books. These include a series of articles on global popular culture published by the *Washington Post* in 1998; *The Global Me* (Zachary, 2000), a trade book that focuses on hybridity as a commercial asset for multinational corporations; and *Creative Destruction* (Cowen, 2002a), an economic analysis of global culture. The *Washington Post* articles invoke hybridity as a characteristic of intercultural relations and use it to describe how audiences in developing countries interact with American popular culture. Chapter Four grapples with these questions: How does public discourse use hybridity to frame global culture? Does it account for global politico-economic structures? Or does the use of hybridity in public discourse reproduce hegemonic cultural relations, consisting of what Indian-born postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999) called "hybridist post-national talk, celebrating globalization as

Americanization" (p. 361)? I find that these publications associate hybridity with assumptions about the benefits of globalization, free trade, and individual consumer freedom, in effect expressing what I call "corporate transculturalism," hence the title of the chapter.

Chapter Five explores what can be called hybrid media texts that result from industry practices such as coproduction, format adaptation, and localization. The chapter's title, "The Cultural and Political Economies of Hybrid Media Texts," reflects the importance of the politico-economic context in which hybrid media programs are created and consumed. This chapter tackles the following questions: How do the structural features of the global and national media industries shape hybrid media texts? What motivates media companies to undertake what have been called post-Fordist practices such as coproduction and adaptation? Finally, how can the concept of hybridity be effectively used to analyze these practices and the media texts they create? After brief comments on post-Fordism, MTV's localization strategy, and British television export policies, the bulk of the chapter is devoted to an intriguing case study: the 1999 production and broadcast by Mexican TV Azteca of *Tele Chobis*, a copycat version of the original British *Teletubbies*. By way of a textual and semiotic analysis of several episodes of the program, I examine the structural forces—political, economic, regulatory, and legal—that mold *Tele Chobis*'s hybridity. These include the liberalization of Mexico's economy, the current international copyright regime, and fierce competition between TV Azteca and Televisa in a changing media landscape.

Grounded in an ethnographic research project with mostly middle-class Christian Maronite Lebanese youth that began in 1993, Chapter Six, "Structure, Reception, and Identity: On Arab-Western Dialogism," examines how hybridity is constituted by young Maronites in Lebanon in relation to Arab and Western worldviews. At the heart of Chapter Six is an analysis of the links between audience interpretations of media content and the structures of media policy and ownership. This chapter's crucial function, therefore, is to examine hybridity at the empirical level. For young Maronites, identity construction takes place in everyday life practices of nomadism, mimicry, and consumption. In the process, they are attracted by hybrid—especially local—cultural texts. To probe the links between cultural reception and the structure of the Lebanese media, I analyze two "master texts"—a local television series and the lyrics of a local artist-musician-songwriter—both with dominant hybrid components and both highly popular with my respondents despite their

carrying ideologies that oppose traditional Maronite sensibilities (the two texts were not preselected; I arrived at them by way of interviews and participant observation). This lack of correspondence between audience readings, cultural texts, and media ownership raises provocative questions about theory and policy, which are briefly addressed in Chapter Six and elaborated on in Chapter Seven.

The book's conclusion, Chapter Seven, "Hybridity without Guarantees: Toward Critical Transculturalism," proposes critical transculturalism as a new international communication framework. Because of the openness of discursive formations, hybridity can be appropriated as a strategic rhetoric (Nakayama and Krizek, 1995), aiming in part to become a leading theory not only in international communication but also in the study of the cultural dimensions of globalization. I therefore argue that hybridity is the cultural logic of globalization—hence the title of this book[1]—whose comprehension requires a relational, processual, and contextual approach to hybridity from a critical perspective. This entails that we ought to begin looking at hybridities, each as a particular, localized practice, as opposed to a singular hybridity conceived as an all-inclusive sociocultural order. Hence my call for "Shifting Geertz," in reference to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, by which I mean a renewed emphasis on local knowledge where the notion of the local is reconsidered, followed by reflections on the implications of hybridity for media policy. Contra hybridity as the cultural logic of globalization, this book envisions, by way of critical transculturalism, a hybridity without guarantees.[2]

1   Cultural Hybridity and International Communication

The idea of cultural hybridization is one of those deceptively simple-seeming notions which turns out, on examination, to have lots of tricky connotations and theoretical implications.

—John Tomlinson

Hybridity is one of the emblematic notions of our era. It captures the spirit of the times with its obligatory celebration of cultural difference and fusion, and it resonates with the globalization mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformation of all cultures. At a more prosaic level, since its initial use in Latin to describe the offspring of "a tame sow and a wild boar" (Young, 1995, p. 6),[1] hybridity has proven a useful concept to describe multipurpose electronic gadgets, designer agricultural seeds, environment-friendly cars with dual combustion and electrical engines, companies that blend American and Japanese management practices, multiracial people, dual citizens, and postcolonial cultures. As one journalist put it, the "trend to blend" (Weeks, 2002, p. C2) is upon us.

I favor the term "hybridity" because it has a broader meaning that often encompasses the objects and processes captured by equivalent terms such as "creolization," "mestizaje," and "syncretism." In this preference I am not alone. For example, Argentinian-Mexican cultural critic Néstor García-Canclini (1989/1995) prefers the word "hybridity" because it "includes diverse intercultural mixtures—not only the racial ones to which *mestizaje* tends to be limited—and because it permits the inclusion of the modern forms of hybridization better than does 'syncretism,' a term that almost always refers to religious fusions or traditional symbolic environments" (p. 11). As I use it, "hybridity" refers mostly to culture but retains residual meanings related to the three interconnected realms of race, language, and ethnicity. In this regard, the link between language and race was made explicit in an 1890 entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which read: "The Aryan languages present such indications

of hybridity as would correspond with . . . racial intermixture" (cited in R. Young, 1995, p. 6), thus anticipating the usage of "creolization" in contemporary linguistics. The words "métissage" and "mestizaje," on the other hand, hark back to the Latin *misticum* and *mixticium*, from *miscere*, which means "to mix." The related word *mestif* was used in the regional French language of Old Provençal as early as the mid–twelfth century, while the first confirmed usage of the feminine *métice* can be traced to 1615. The current French usage, Métis, appeared first in 1690, and its pronunciation comes from the thirteenth-century Portuguese *mestiço* or the Spanish *mestizo*, used since 1600 (see Toumson, 1998, pp. 87–95).[2]

This rich vocabulary reflects the historical, geographical, and linguistic diversity of cases of cultural mixture, and mirrors the myriad approaches used to understand it. Indeed, "hybridity" has entered many academic arenas, ranging from traditional disciplines like literature, anthropology, and sociology to interdisciplinary venues such as postcolonial theory and performance studies. "Hybridity" is also employed in less obvious fields such as architecture, tourism, and sports, and in more popular versions in trade books about travel, business, and economics, in addition to mainstream press articles on popular culture.[3] Undoubtedly influenced by this trend, media scholars, as will be elaborated shortly, have begun to use "hybridity."[4] Interest in the topic, as this book will abundantly illustrate, is not restricted to any particular language or location. Indeed, academic journals in Egypt, France, and the United States have devoted special issues to hybridity.[5]

Despite or maybe because of what can be described as an academic stampede, hybridity is controversial. Multiple and often antithetical uses have created a dispute over its meaning, implications, and usefulness. In postcolonial studies, for example, scholars have argued heatedly about the benefits and disadvantages of using "hybridity." As "one of the most widely employed and disputed terms in post-colonial theory" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998, p. 118), "hybridity" has been characterized as a subversion of political and cultural domination (Bhabha, 1994; Joseph, 1999) or, alternatively, as a retrogressive discourse that celebrates the experience of privileged intellectuals (Friedman, 1997). Other scholars have even accused their colleagues who write positively about cultural hybridity of being complicit with structures of inequality (for example, Ahmad, 1995).[6]

A historical and comparative approach indicates that the present-day controversy over hybridity is a recent manifestation of an old preoccupation with sociocultural change. This concern is shared by scholars whose

area of research is not limited to the British colonization of America and India, which have served as the crucible for most Anglophone "postcolonial" scholarship. Indeed, a coterie of thinkers have written about cultural exchange and mixture, including Argentinian-Mexican cultural theorist Néstor García-Canclini (1989), Spanish-Colombian media scholar Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993a), Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), French historian Serge Gruzinski (1999) and French philosopher Michel Serres (1969, 1972, 1974, 1977, 1980), French Guyanese literary critic Roger Toumson (1998), Saudi sociologist and novelist Turki al-Hamad (2001), and Iranian intellectual Jalal Al-I Ahmad (1984).

These writers have recognized that cross-cultural encounters are historically pervasive. Encounters between cultures, as U.S. historian Jerry H. Bentley (1993) demonstrates in dozens of richly documented historical case studies, have been so prevalent that the self-enclosed culture is in fact a historical aberration. Hybridizing processes have helped cultural traditions recruit new adherents, but cross-cultural conversion was successful only "when favored by a powerful set of political, social, or economic incentives" (Bentley, 1993, viii). Bentley's focus on premodern times notwithstanding, his work underscores a central nexus of this book: the relationship between hybridity and power.

Hybridity, Culture, and Communication in the Global Context

In the wake of numerous writings on a concept whose definition is maddeningly elastic, whose analytical value is easily questionable, and whose ideological implications are hotly contested, writing yet another book on hybridity is not a self-evident endeavor. This book stems from my belief that the analytical potential of hybridity has not been fully exploited and that international communication analysis can improve our understanding of hybridity. This book is not merely an attempt at mapping the discursive sprawl that is hybridity from the vantage point of communication studies. Rather, the debates that have marked the relatively brief history of the field of international communication—about material and symbolic power, cultural influence and change, social agency, and so on—are serviceable in the interest of a better and more practical understanding of hybridity. Notably, I explore ways in which a communication perspective is particularly helpful in grasping some of the more nebulous aspects of hybridity.

Like the polemic over hybridity in postcolonial studies, a divide exists in international communication research between "dominance" and "pluralism" perspectives. Indeed, theories of cultural domination and resistance have been central to the field of international communication since the 1960s. Though "cultural imperialism" was the reigning thesis during the 1960s and the 1970s, numerous critics have since the 1980s alleged that it no longer reflected the complexity of intercultural relations. The unrelenting announcements that we are now in the "post-imperialist" era have come with a variety of disconnected or antithetical research approaches that have coexisted under a vaguely pluralistic umbrella, bringing back to the fore the congenital instability of international communication theory. British scholar Oliver Boyd-Barrett (1998) captured the situation well:

> [T]here has been a growing consensus in the literature ... that previous models of international communication may be abandoned in a process of linear intellectual development that has moved through theories of international communication as propaganda, through to modernization and free flow, to dependency and cultural or media imperialism, supplanted in turn by theories of the 'autonomous reader' and culminating in discourses of globalization that play upon an infinite variety of 'global' and 'local'; ... intellectual development in the field of international communication appears not to proceed on the basis of exhaustive testing but lurches from one theory, preoccupation, dimension to another with inadequate attention to accumulative construction. (p. 157)

When interdisciplinary cultural theory entered international communication debates in the 1980s, it helped write a pivotal chapter in the eclectic history of international communication. Paradoxically, it was only with the arrival of this so-called cultural turn, which occurred more than a decade after the beginning of cultural imperialism research, that "culture" in contrast to "national development" became a core subject of international communication study. (This paradox is dissected in Chapter Two.) Turning away at once from behaviorist social psychology, positivist political science, and radical political economy, many media scholars borrowed from literary and by extension film theory, in addition to cultural anthropology. This shift, which one scholar labeled "cultural pluralism" (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984), signaled a broader engagement with culture than had the structural focus of the cultural imperialism thesis, and ultimately, as I explain in the next chapter, led to the introduction of the notion of hybridity to international communication.

Since hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities, cross-cultural contact, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries, is a requisite for hybridity. The occurrence of contact typically involves movement of some sort, and in international communication contact entails the movement of cultural commodities such as media programs, or the movement of people through migration. The first is motivated by commerce or geostrategic considerations and occurs primarily through the mass media, but also through exchanges of people, ideas, and practices. The second is motivated by poverty and repression and by the promise of upward mobility and concretely happens through transportation technologies. The former is properly understood as international communication. The latter's relevance to this book is indirect and through one of its consequences, namely the development of migrant or diasporic media.

Though various media researchers have addressed cultural mixture (Boyd-Barrett, 1998; Gillespie, 1995; Kolar-Panov, 1997; P. Lee, 1991; Mattelart, 1994; T. Miller et al., 2001; Morris, 2002; Olson, 1999; Straubhaar, 1991; Tomlinson, 1999), few studies to date have offered a sustained engagement with hybridity or pose it as a central *problématique* (see Kraidy, 1999a, 2002a, 2003a, 2004; Martín-Barbero, 1993a; Naficy, 1993). Media research has to some extent mirrored the debate in postcolonial studies, addressing hybridity alternately as a sign of empowerment or as a symptom of dominance. Most of these researchers have typically analyzed hybridity within a traditional communication framework of production, text/message, and reception. The lion's share of this research has focused on media texts and the dynamics of media reception, and seldom on media production. Rarely have studies analyzed the links between production, message, and reception (Kraidy, 2003a; Martín-Barbero, 1993a; Naficy, 1993), an important endeavor whose scope this book aims to expand.

Most analyses that focus on hybridity in media texts tend to minimize the importance of structural issues. In studies of that type, hybrid texts are often explained as symptoms of cultural pluralism, not indicators of dominance. In this regard, U.S. media researcher Scott Olson (1999) argues that "American media [do] not project American values" (p. 28) and sees hybridity as a hallmark of textual "transparency . . . [that] allows [U.S. media narratives] to become stealthy, to be foreign myths that surreptitiously act like indigenous ones" (p. 6). Transparent texts have universal features that in Olson's view give U.S. television and

film a "competitive advantage" in the global marketplace, where their popularity creates "polyglot cultures, but not monoculture" (p. 28). The Belgian-born scholar Armand Mattelart agrees with Olson about the popularity of hybrid media texts, casting Brazilian television production as a "remarkable alloying of mass culture and popular cultures" (1994, p. 231) whose vibrancy has made the country's media products globally competitive. In contrast to this optimistic view, Mattelart warns against uncritical interpretations of hybrid cultural productions, because in his view hybridity reflects uneven development within societies like Brazil, where some social groups are caught in relations of "discriminatory 'interdependence'" (p. 232), a process of social segmentation that is recast in terms of market categories by marketing firms that also adapt this strategy internationally. Olson (1999), for his part, dismisses politico-economic approaches to the subject, insisting that "the media texts themselves must provide at least part of the explanation for their global popularity" (p. 11). Olson's overly textualist approach, as T. Miller and colleagues (2001) have correctly argued, underestimates the structural factors which shape global media texts that critical media researchers emphasize.

Hybrid television texts such as the ones that Olson (1999) and Mattelart (1994) (differently) interpret have existed for some time. In fact, the British scholar Jeremy Tunstall (1977) predicted a quarter century ago that regional media centers would produce "hybrid genres" (cited in Sinclair, 1992, p. 106), by which he referred to domesticated versions of successful U.S. and European television formats. Indeed, media-culture industries in regional centers such as Brazil (Oliveira, 1990), Mexico (Sánchez-Ruiz, 2001), and Hong Kong (P. Lee, 1991) have since Tunstall's prognosis increasingly indigenized Western genres. For example, Hong Kong scholar Paul Lee (1991) metaphorizes four patterns of indigenization in Hong Kong: the parrot pattern refers to a wholesale mimicry of foreign culture by local industries—both in form and content; the amoeba pattern describes a modified form but a nonchanging content, such as the adaptation of a foreign movie for local consumption; the coral pattern describes cultural products whose content is changed but whose form is untouched; finally, the butterfly pattern is a radical hybridization that makes the domestic and the foreign indistinguishable.

The boundaries between "domestic" and "foreign" cultural influences are not always clearly demarcated. Hybrid media texts reflect the existence of a variety of historical, economic, and cultural forces whose enmeshments with one another are as manifest at the local, national, and regional levels as they are visible globally. A singular focus on the

media is insufficient to comprehend these complex relations. Rather, we need to situate the media in their societal environment and disentangle various links, processes, and effects between communication practices and social, political, and economic forces. The Spanish-Colombian media scholar Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993a,b; 2000; 2002) has formalized this more productive approach in the core concept of mediations, referring to "the articulations between communication practices and social movements and the articulation of different tempos of development with the plurality of cultural matrices" (1993a, p. 187). At the heart of Martín-Barbero's approach is a critique of dualistic thinking and linear logic in cultural analysis and an emphasis on the numerous forces across time and space that impinge on contemporary cultural identities.

Acknowledging this multiplicity entails abandoning what Martín-Barbero calls "oversimplified Manichaean identifications" (1993a, p. 193) such as popular versus mass culture, cultural versus economic, and foreign versus domestic. The notion of *mestizaje(s)*, whose historical development and current application I discuss in Chapter Three, is Martín-Barbero's second central notion ("mediations" being the first). *Mestizaje* refers to "the sense of continuities in discontinuity and reconciliations between rhythms of life that are mutually exclusive" (p. 188). His use of the concept in the plural, mestizajes, reflects the wide net Martín-Barbero casts to include relations between ethnic groups, cultural beliefs and expressions, social classes, and political constituencies.[7] Despite its broad application, mestizaje for Martín-Barbero is a process and product of mixture whose materialization is best grasped in the analysis of popular culture.

Communication plays a central role in the formation of mestizajes. The significance of communication, in Martín-Barbero's view, lies in its ability to create meanings more than in its capacity to carry information or reinforce an ideology. He therefore repudiates what he describes as "ideologism" or "informationalism" in media theory (Martín-Barbero, 1993a, pp. 204–207). The former's attribution of omnipotence to the media leads to "pure communicationism without any specific communication occurring" (p. 204), and the latter's emphasis on technical efficiency means "the dissolution of political reality" (p. 207). In opposition to the mediacentric premises of these theories—the first reducing culture to its mediated ideologies, and the second reducing society to its information technologies—Martín-Barbero calls for an interdisciplinary approach more attuned to the multiplicity and complexity of contemporary societies, and the removal of the study of communication from a transmission model "into the field of culture: the conflicts which articulate

culture, the *mestizajes* which weave it together and the anachronisms which sustain it" (pp. 221–222). Chapter Three includes a historical analysis of the Latin American notion of mestizaje that has led to current-day theories of hybridity (e.g., García-Canclini, 1989/1995).

In Latin America, these manifold aspects of culture and their mutual links can be discerned in the melodrama. The *telenovela*, or Latin American television melodrama, is a hybrid text cast by Martín-Barbero (1993a) as "a new and more Latin American version of magical realism" (p. 227). The telenovela carries residues of older popular genres such as the Mexican *corridos*, the Colombian *vallenatos*, and the Brazilian *cordel*, all of which are characterized as stories that invoke a fantasy past populated by ghosts and lost loved ones. The crucial difference between the telenovela and other Latin American television genres is the telenovela's open time frame and its establishment of basic affective links with its audience that have nothing to do with production values, technical sophistication, or wealth of information. Rather, the telenovela is successful because it activates what Martín-Barbero (1993b) calls "a profound dynamic of memory and imaginaries" (p. 23). The telenovela, then, carries modern stories of upward mobility concurrently with anachronistic narratives of identity. The dynamic links between traditional and modern forms and practices create the peculiar hybrid cultures of Latin America.

While history is replete with media texts such as the telenovela that can be described as hybrid, globalization and the commercial imperative to reach large audiences with minimal investment and risk have made hybrid media forms pervasive. In the case of cultures particularly susceptible to the creation of hybrid forms such as Latin America and Hong Kong, the *longue durée* of history, including colonialism, conquest, and trade, is the scene of a protracted cultural fusion. Clearly, the many Latin American mestizajes and hybridities materialize in societal dynamics shaped by politico-economic forces, and comparable systemic factors mold other communities' hybrid identities, such as the Maronites of Lebanon (explored in Chapter Six). Even in a historically mixed setting like Hong Kong, as Paul Lee (1991) indicates, the factors that shape hybrid media forms are mostly contemporary and economic, including consumer power and the strength of local production, both of which reflect the economic status of a country and its inhabitants. As a small, wealthy, then-British colonial protectorate cum Chinese semi-autonomous region, Hong Kong has the mixture of economic wealth and cultural eclecticism that fosters hybrid media forms.

In contrast, and despite their inclusion of "local" cultural markers, the hybrid texts spawned by today's global media industry are more akin to the technologically sophisticated but historically flat processes of digital superimposition and manipulation that create slick images for international consumption. Politico-economic considerations, then, shape current-day hybrid media, an issue I address at length in Chapter Five.

Free-trade agreements, which seek to integrate markets and industries across large geographical areas, create politico-economic structures that shape media texts, among other cultural commodities. Though official rhetoric tends to focus on the supposed benefits of globalization, namely the growth of exports, and dissident rhetoric emphasizes globalization's dangers, mostly the loss of jobs, the consequences of globalization at the cultural level are not always determined by economics alone. For example, the Canadian political economist Vincent Mosco and his U.S. colleague Dan Schiller have argued that while the North American Free Trade Agreement has economically integrated Canada, Mexico, and the United States, unequal development and cultural differences have persisted. Of immediate relevance to this book is Mosco and Schiller's statement that "cultural practices do not always follow the structure of markets" (2001, p. 29). As a result, the reconstitution of cultural life through continental integration "does not portend a unitary North American monoculture" (p. 4). This recognition notwithstanding, hybrid cultural forms are not anomalies in media globalization. Rather, the pervasiveness of hybridity in some ways reflects the growing synchronization of world markets. This irony is expressed best by Oliver Boyd-Barrett (1998), for whom market forces have contributed to "an increasing hybridity of global culture, ever more complex and more commodified." Nonetheless, this global culture is "everywhere more complex and more commodified in the same sort of way" (p. 174). Indeed, in this book I share the belief that hybridity is fully compatible with globalization. However, whereas, in Boyd-Barrett's view, "media imperialism" can be rehabilitated "by incorporating some of the key concerns of 'globalization' theory, *including hybridity* and the weakening of nation-states (p. 158, emphasis added), I put forth an alternative framework that I call critical transculturalism (elaborated in Chapter Seven). Critical transculturalism shares the broad concerns of "cultural imperialism" about power and cultural change but differs in the way it poses these issues conceptually and tackles them empirically.

Though not traditionally included in international communication research, the movement of people across national and cultural

boundaries must be addressed because communication processes spawned by migration are helpful in understanding cultural hybridity. Indeed, the growing trend of migration from the developing world to the West is as much a catalyst of hybrid media forms as are globalization and trade. According to *L'Atlas du monde diplomatique*, the worldwide number of people living outside their native countries has grown from 75 million in 1965 to 120 million in 2000 (Achcar et al., 2003). While there is substantive intraregional migration, North America and western Europe are global immigration magnets: the United States accounts for twenty-five million immigrants, Germany for five, France and the United Kingdom for four each (ibid.). In these countries and elsewhere, two structural aspects make migrant media viable. First, today's migrants are mostly skilled workers (with better socioeconomic conditions than those of yesterday's manual laborers) whose higher incomes make them a target of advertisers. Second, satellite and cable technologies enable audience segmentation so that media operators can target language-specific migrant communities. These mostly commercial media play a crucial role in the formation of migrant identities. As the Indian U.S.-based anthropologist Arjun Appadurai wrote: "media and migration [are] two major, and interconnected diacritics" (1996, p. 3) because they activate the social imagination, which is especially true in the case of migrants whose relationship over distance with the native country has a significant imaginative component.

Hybridity is a central notion in several studies on diasporic media in host countries like the United States (Naficy, 1993), the United Kingdom (Gillespie, 1995), and Australia (Kolar-Panov, 1997). Some have shared media cultural studies' customary focus on reception, such as research on media consumption among Punjabi immigrants who live in Southall, a London neighborhood, that eschews analysis of cultural production and focuses on "the many private lives of Punjabis in Southall—whose trans-cultural experiences . . . constitute the material out of which new pluralist, hybrid cultural forms of expression are being wrought" (Gillespie, 1995, p. 56). This study explores the Indian community's "negotiated" integration into British culture, a process that creates a hybrid identity that draws on countries of both birth and exile. Television consumption is emphasized because viewing rituals are subverted for the benefit of the native culture, as for example when Punjabi families take advantage of British holidays to meet and celebrate the stories, eat the food, and reproduce the narratives of nationhood and identity of the native country (Gillespie, 1995).

These solid insights on migrant media consumption notwithstanding, the main contribution of diasporic media research is in my opinion its focus on production. Key in this regard is the analysis of the practices involved in producing media programs for migrant communities and how these practices lead to hybrid texts that at once appeal to people with hybrid identities and contribute to further cultural hybridization. The Iranian community in Los Angeles, with its elaborate grid of exiles, journalists, political activists, artists, and media entrepreneurs, illustrates the aforementioned processes. To understand the vibrant media scene of what has been dubbed "Tehrangeles," it is necessary to combine research on production and distribution structures with analyses of media texts (Naficy, 1993). The former describes an intricate network of local studios, producers and performers, syndication, and advertising, and the latter examines how hybridity is enacted in processes of mimicry, consisting of pictorial superimposition, ambivalent characters, and incoherent plots and narratives on Iranian television in Los Angeles.

Migrant media practices are not, however, restricted to institutions, commercial or otherwise. With the availability and relative affordability of video cameras, videocassette recorders, and even sound mixers and video-editing consoles, migrants have been known to produce media texts at home. Immigrants to Australia from the former Yugoslavia (Kolar-Panov, 1997) illustrate this phenomenon. Croatian and Macedonian communities in the West Australian city of Perth produce and consume videocassettes—be they family-album tapes of weddings and birthdays or documentary-style tapes about the Yugoslav war—as an active exercise of identity transformation. Migrants use video to create what the author calls "an iconic continuum" (p. 27) between homeland and new country. In doing so they concretize the tensions between the community and the host society that bear upon the creation of a hybrid culture based in the host society but drawing its emotive energy from the native country.

Whereas Gillsepie expands our knowledge of the role of media consumption in the formation of hybrid identities, Naficy (1993) and Kolar-Panov (1997) suggest that analysis of production processes improves our understanding of how broader communication processes shape cultural hybridity. After all, even in its most active and creative moments, media reception for the most part is a reactive process whose parameters are set largely by broader politico-economic and social structures. Though media production is also shaped by structural conditions and could be construed as "reactive" to large-scale forces, it is more proactive in that

it involves people who intentionally put their creative energy to work in order to express their existential experience of hybridity. Granted, during reception, viewers can intentionally engage favorite characters or programs and forge strong affective links with media content. However the creation of media texts entails a literally intentional activity that concretely takes shape as production labor, even when the creators are not media professionals. This is more applicable to Croatians in Perth than in the instance of Iranians in Los Angeles, since in the latter case there is a migrant media industry that is to some extent integrated in the commercial system of the host society, while in the former the production of videos is amateurish, home based, personalized, and not integrated in the Australian media sector. Nonetheless, Iranians in Los Angeles, Punjabis in London, and Croatians and Macedonians in Perth actively use media in making sense of the cultural ambivalence of migration.

In general, then, an active role in media production gives the creators of hybrid media more social power than receivers of hybrid media can claim. Chapter Five provides a case study of a hybrid media text, *Tele Chobis*, whose commercial entanglements do not in any way strengthen its viewers' sense of agency beyond addressing them as Mexicans, in contrast to the original *Teletubbies*, whose mode of address, precisely because of the program's commercial objectives, is universal.

Despite their focus on production, studies of diasporic media are of limited applicability because they are concerned with relatively exceptional situations, since migrants constitute only 2 percent of the world's population (Achcar et al., 2003) and therefore make up a small and unrepresentative proportion of media audiences worldwide. Consequently, a more broadly applicable understanding of the local experience of hybridity as a communication issue should be based on audiences that live in their country of origin. Chapter Six, "Structure, Reception, and Identity: On Arab-Western Dialogism," fulfills that objective as it empirically investigates the role of media and communication in the formation of hybridity. A full theoretical dissection of the active links between hybridity, communication, and agency is provided in the formulation in Chapter Seven of critical transculturalism.

CONTRIBUTION AND APPROACH

This book is a reclamation of a critical approach to international communication that is amenable to conceptual nuance and cultural complexity, and therefore capable of explaining the tonalities of hybridity. It

assumes that notions of media dominance and audience activity are mutually complementary rather than exclusive because politico-economic structure and sociocultural agency round each other off. Therefore, the framework I envision for hybridity maps out active links between international communication, cultural globalization, international relations, and critical theory, the latter broadly defined to include political economy, media criticism, postcolonial studies, and critical discourse analysis. This approach places the power-hybridity nexus at the core of this book.

My modus operandi is contrapuntal, an approach I adapt from Western classical music by way of Edward Said (1994), who explained that in the counterpoint, "various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work" (p. 51). A contrapuntal approach to hybridity in global media studies has four major advantages.[8] First, contrapuntal methodology helps us focus on a variety of links between institutions, texts, and experiences, at the same time keeping the open trope of hybridity as a unifying element. Second, a contrapuntal approach is well suited for understanding the relational aspects of hybridity because it stresses the formative role of exchanges between participating entities. As will become clear in the case studies in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, this methodology makes possible the integration of material forces and discursive processes. This enables a more complete analysis of global media issues that examines the connections between production, textuality, and reception in the constitution of hybridity. Third, approaching hybridity countrapuntally allows us to eschew the mediacentrism that has bedeviled much media research. Situating media processes in their broader societal context provides a more accurate picture of how a variety of material and symbolic forces shapes communication processes. Finally, a contrapuntal approach helps us move beyond bipolar models of global against local, power versus resistance, imperialism contra hybridity, and focuses instead on complex processes at play.

Approaching hybridity contrapuntally is useful in light of my conception of hybridity as a discursive formation. Foucault (1972) defined a discursive formation as a "system of dispersion" where "one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)" between "objects, types of statements, concepts, or thematic choices" (p. 38). "Discursive formation" aptly captures the various types

of hybridity analyzed in this book, each type consonant with other types in some aspects and dissonant with other types in other regards, and yet all converging on the central notion of hybridity. According to Foucault, the rules of formation refer to the "conditions to which the . . . objects, mode of statement, concept, thematic choices . . . are subjected, . . . conditions of existence, . . . coexistence, maintenance, modification and disappearance" (p. 38). With its focus on relations, processes, and exchanges, a contrapuntal approach is useful for grasping a formation like hybridity because it examines the space in which several objects and ideas related to hybridity emerge, instead of attempting to understand a unique and permanent discourse of hybridity. Throughout the book, my focus on the power-hybridity nexus anchors contrapuntal analysis in the more tangible realm of the material.

The contrapuntal outlook is the reason for my decision to use the term "transculturalism" instead of "internationalism," "transnationalism," or "imperialism." The term "transculturation" is attributed to the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1936/1986) and Cuban legal and social critic Fernando Ortiz (1940/1995), who used it to analyze racial and cultural mixtures in their countries. Its usage became common in the 1990s in interdisciplinary work on culture (Berry and Epstein, 1999; Boggs, 1991; Pratt, 1992; Varan, 1998) and even in mainstream press articles (Terry, 2000) at the same time "transnational" began replacing "international" to reflect, among other things, unofficial relations between nonstate actors (Braman and Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996; Mattelart, 1983; Miyoshi, 1993; Wilson and Dissanayake, 1996). The prefix "trans-" suggests moving through spaces and across borders, not merely between points. I use "transculturalism" to reflect my vision of culture as a synthetic, not holistic, entity. Unlike cross- or intercultural communication that tends to study contacts between individuals from different cultures that are assumed to be discrete entities, transcultural communication believes all cultures to be inherently mixed. It seeks to understand the depth, scope, and direction of various levels of hybridity at the social—not individual—level. Critical transculturalism integrates both discursive and politico-economic analysis in the study of international communication and culture. For the time being, however, it is useful, indeed necessary, to review various approaches to global culture, a task I turn to in the following chapter.