Hybridity
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4 Corporate Transculturalism

The issues and concerns of what constitute [North-South] . . . relations occur within a “reality” whose content has for the most part been defined by the representational practices of the “first world.”

—Roxanne Doty

Cross-cultural contact cashes in some cultures while others germinate.

—Tyler Cowen

Hooray for the hybrid. Hip-hip for the mongrel. Hallelujah for the global me.

—Pascal Zachary

Compelled by the historical analysis of vocabularies of cultural mixture in the previous chapter, I now turn to contemporary representations of hybridity and address the following questions: Is there continuity between mestizaje, creolization, métissage, and transculturation in their historical contexts, and current characterizations of hybridity? What issues are incorporated and, conversely, what dimensions of hybridity already discussed in this book are omitted from present-day public discourse? To attend to these questions, I examine representations of hybridity in elite print media.¹ In agreement with the first epigraph’s characterizations of representational practices in international relations, I set out to analyze how some public intellectuals (e.g., academics like Cowen and journalists like Zachary in the second and third epigraphs) use hybridity, and to explore how helpful these uses are in advancing our understanding of intercultural relations.

Understanding how much importance is given to power in intercultural relations is my primary objective as I consider how major U.S. media use the notion of hybridity. In this endeavor, critical discourse analysis is a suitable analytical approach. According to its leading proponent, Dutch scholar Teun van Dijk (1993), critical discourse analysis focuses on “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (p. 249, emphasis in original). Even as it recognizes that resistance to power plays an integral part in social relations, critical discourse
analysis gives primacy to “top-down” uses of power, focusing on “elites and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality” (p. 250). I use this methodology because its concern with social, as opposed to personal and interpersonal, uses of power is compatible with my approach to intercultural relations. Critical discourse analysis focuses on: (1) access to the means of discourse, such as the mass media; social, economic or political privilege; (2) social cognitions, defined as “[s]ocially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations” (p. 257) that connect discourse to dominance; and (3) discourse structures, which refer to how a discourse is constructed. This methodology is particularly suited for the study of how elite media use hybridity since the “discursive (re)production of power results from social cognitions of the powerful, whereas the situated discourse structures result in social cognitions” (p. 259, emphasis in original). The forthcoming analysis will briefly address issues of access; then it will identify a variety of social cognitions that constitute hybridity as an increasingly pervasive discourse.

Database searches give a measure of how widespread a notion hybridity has become. A January 28, 2004, Lexis-Nexis search of “major newspapers” using the keywords “cultural hybridity,” “cultural hybridization,” and “hybrid culture” yielded 253 documents from the New York Times, Washington Post, Christian-Science Monitor, Boston Globe, Denver Post, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Newsday, and other major dailies. A search of “magazines and journals” using the same keywords produced 66 additional documents from, among others, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, Billboard, New Statesman, American Spectator, Weekly Standard, and Foreign Affairs. Searches for “creolization,” “cultural creolization,” and “creole culture” located 375 items in major papers and 38 in magazines and journals; “transculturation,” “transculture,” and “transcultural” found 472 documents in major papers and 193 in magazines; “mixed culture,” “blended culture,” and “multiracial culture” turned up 425 hits in major papers. Finally, in what may be an indication of future usage, a Google search on January 28, 2004, using the keyword “cultural hybridity” listed around 24,100 items. Undoubtedly, the vocabulary of cultural mixture has entered the lexicon of public discourse. The following analysis of print-media uses of hybridity focuses on two distinct but related themes relevant to the topic of this book, namely the global impact of U.S. popular culture and the cultural dimensions of economic policies.
Chapter 4

Hybridity and the Global Impact of U.S. Popular Culture

My examination of newspaper and magazine uses of hybridity in their coverage of the global influence of U.S. popular culture focuses on selected representative documents drawn from publications that cover the ideological spectrum, ranging from the *Utne Reader* to *American Enterprise*, and including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Economist*, and *Fortune*. Although most newspapers and magazines found in the Lexis-Nexis search are elite media, the analysis draws heavily on an “American Popular Culture Abroad” series of five articles that appeared in the *Washington Post* on October 25–27, 1998 (Farhi and Rosenfeld, 1998; Lancaster, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1998; Trueheart, 1998; Waxman, 1998). The articles were filed from a variety of locations such as Los Angeles, Kuala Lumpur, Paris, and Tehran, and credited numerous contributors to the stories from Tehran, Nairobi, Hong Kong, Beijing, New Delhi, Mexico City, London, Paris, Jerusalem, Bogota, Warsaw, Moscow, Berlin, Tokyo, and Toronto. In addition to these global credentials, the *Washington Post* is portrayed in a 1999 *Columbia Journalism Review* study as “the bible for coverage of national government and politics” (“America’s Best,” 1999). In the words of one media scholar: “The *Washington Post* is a newspaper with the potential for a disproportionately large impact on U.S. foreign policy. By virtue of its location and widespread influence, the *Post* is obligatory reading for the American and international diplomatic community. While it certainly hasn’t dictated foreign policy, the newspaper’s editorial page has helped guide both the agenda and focus on international initiatives” (Palmer, 1995, p. 144).

As an important site of elite discourse—whether through its global fleet of correspondents, or due to its status as the newspaper of record of the U.S. capital—the *Washington Post*'s utilization of hybridity will serve as the backbone of the upcoming analysis of media usages of hybridity. Whether mentioned literally, such as in the headline “Malaysians Create Hybrid Culture with American Imports” (Rosenfeld, 1998), or evoked indirectly, hybridity is used in the articles as a general characterization of intercultural relations between the United States and developing nations. This raises several questions: How is cultural globalization depicted? What social cognitions ground the articles’ use of hybridity, and how are these cognitions formulated? Does public discourse account for power in the constitution of hybrid cultures? The analysis will find that the utilization of hybridity is based on a double negation of
(1a) the existence of cultural homogeneity and of (1b) Western cultural dominance. It will also show that the discourse of hybridity supports a double assertion of (2a) the notion of cultural counterflow into the West and (2b) globalization and free trade. Finally, print media use hybridity as a context where they assert (3) creative individualism and individual freedom.

Hybridity and the Alleged Myths of Cultural Purity and Western Cultural Dominance

Media accounts of global culture deny the notions of cultural homogeneity and Western cultural dominance by asserting the ubiquity of hybridity. “Nowhere is there more blending than in the United States,” writes a Washington Post reporter in an article titled “The Trend to Blend.” He continues: “We’ve melted the melting pot and become a pureed people. We toss races and ethnic backgrounds and ages and classes together into a combination salad” (Weeks, 2002, p. C2). The Indian author Salman Rushdie is more emphatic when he poses a series of rhetorical questions in a New York Times column on European anti-Americanism: “[D]o cultures actually exist as separate, pure, defensible entities? Is not mélange, adulteration, impurity, pick’n’mix at the heart of the idea of the modern, and hasn’t it been that way for most of this all-shook-up century? Doesn’t the idea of pure cultures, in urgent need of being kept free from alien contamination, lead us inexorably toward apartheid, toward ethnic cleansing, toward the gas chamber?” (1999). The idea that all cultures are hybrid, as Chapters Two and Three have discussed, is clearly ascendant, and even nearly consensual, in intellectual and public discourse. However, as I have already argued, asserting hybridity as a sociocultural condition at large, disconnected from its political and economic contexts and from its constitutive processes, is conceptually untenable and ethically problematical. Also, setting hybridity in a polarized opposition to ethnic cleansing as Rushdie does, similar to Duboux’s (1994) forced choice between métissage or barbarie, is rhetorically dubious and analytically limiting. Rather, our approach to hybridity should be framed by the type of hybridity put forward, the motivation for advancing it, its rhetorical topoi, and its material effects. It is therefore indicative, in the articles analyzed here, that the affirmation of hybridity as a pervasive condition at the national level is a springboard to utilize hybridity in the global realm. For example, in the aforementioned “Trend to Blend” article, the reporter moves from his discussion of hybridity in U.S. society
to generalities seemingly plucked from the academic literature: “Call it globalization, call it imperialism,” he writes, “but cultures, too, are commingling at an accelerated pace. There is a Burger King in Budapest. And Tex-Mex in Beijing” (Weeks, 2002, p. C2).

The leap from “all (national) cultures are hybrid” to “global culture is hybrid” paves the ground for the claim that “Western [often used to mean “American”] cultural dominance is inexistent.” Take for instance the Economist, that bastion of British conservatism, whose probusiness articles consistently dismiss the existence of U.S. cultural dominance. A headline from that newspaper tells readers that the “global row” over American popular culture is “muddled” (“Culture Wars,” 1998). Even if Hollywood studios reign over global screens and make approximately half their revenues overseas, readers are reminded of the customary story of Hollywood as a global cinematic mecca, drawing foreign stars like Chaplin, Murnau, and Hitchcock. The article also prompts its readers that Columbia Tri-Star and Fox, two leading studios, are not American-owned, a point also made elsewhere (for example, Huey, 1990). Conversely, and in spite of Hollywood’s global success, we are reminded of the existence of vibrant national cinemas, like the Indian music film industry. “[T]he postmodern crazy quilt called Indian film music,” according to a writer in the Utne Reader, “incorporates numerous Western sources (some of them quite corny) into a mix both global and distinctly Indian—and vastly more innovative than most American pop music” (Hermes, 1994, p. 20). Other reports, like a New York Times article titled “U.S. TV Shows Losing Potency around World” (Kapner, 2003), underscore the decreasing international prime-time presence of U.S. programs. “The shift,” the reporter writes, “counters a longstanding assumption that TV shows produced in the United States would continue to overshadow locally produced shows from Singapore to Sicily.”

**Cultural Counterflow, Free Trade, and Globalization**

While, strictly speaking, the global appeal of U.S. television may be declining, what is notable is how this decline is turned into one of several claims in favor of the notion of cultural counterflow. This rhetorical maneuver dislocates the issue of American television’s international appeal from its initial context (the media industries) and deploys it in a broader argument in favor of global trade. According to another Economist editorial, “Pokémonia v Globophobia” (1999): “The anti-globalists are . . .
wrong when they argue that conglomerates inevitably homogenize the ideas that they choose to hoover up. Some of the Pokemon have certainly had their names westernized . . . But the little monsters still teach distinctly Japanese values about the importance of team-building and performing your duties. The only way to succeed at the game is to cooperate with others—and the easiest way to fail is to neglect to care for your charges.” In a rhetoric typical of proglobalization views on culture, then, the preceding emphasizes the idea of “counterflow,” or cultural forms emanating from Japan (Pokemon) and finding broad popularity in the West. As we will see in the next pages, the Economist selectively foregrounds high-profile examples of cultural products from Japan and the United Kingdom, themselves powerful economies, to emphasize the success of non-U.S. popular culture in the United States and to deny global U.S. cultural power.

Elsewhere, the notion of counterflow turns up indirectly in reference to the widely held idea that the global marketplace dictates U.S. studio practices. In this scenario, the flow of media products from the United States is subject to a “counterflow” of foreign audience tastes. Thus one Washington Post article, “Hollywood Tailors Its Movies to Sell in Foreign Markets” (Waxman, 1998), begins: “Most Americans know that our popular culture exerts a powerful influence across the globe, shaping attitudes, trends and styles. But the inverse—a more subtle effect—is also true: The worldwide hunger for US-made entertainment helps steer our own culture, by encouraging projects that will sell overseas and discouraging those that foreign audiences are thought to spurn” (p. A1). The article thus justifies the high number of violent action films churned out by Hollywood and reveals that ingredients for global box-office success are added to films. For instance, eight weeks before the film Armageddon (about an asteroid collision with Earth) opened, “Disney decided to add not only $3 million more in explosions, but also reaction-to-the-asteroid shots from Morocco and Paris” in order “to make sure the movie had more of an international feel to it,” according to the head of Disney Studios (p. A1). An alternative interpretation could be that the film’s internationally set reaction-to-the-asteroid shots cast the United States as the sole protector of the world, since in the movie no other country participated in the attempt to destroy the asteroid. The article’s cosmopolitan surface, then, sits atop a latent paternalism.

The rhetoric of counterflow also serves as an entry point into a pro-free-trade, proglobalization argument, which oftentimes finds its expression in the dismissal of “protectionism.” In the previously
mentioned discussion of Indian film, Hermes (1994) writes that anti-Western rhetoric “frequently comes from a nation’s cultural gatekeepers, who are seeking to preserve their power and control over economic resources” (p. 20). The author further construes this misguided elite that struggles for power at the national level as an obstacle to the unfettered flow of cultural commodities. In Hermes’s view these national cadres are wrong, because “it’s a mistake to underestimate the strength and integrity of local cultures.” He proceeds: “[A]s the rich, post-national cre-olizations of the world suggest, there seems to be reason for optimism in the wake of globalism” (p. 20, my emphasis).

**Individual Creativity and Freedom in Cultural Production and Consumption**

The motor of globalism, according to the articles under analysis, is the creativity and freedom of individual creators and consumers of popular culture. For example, the *Economist* editorial I cited earlier in this chapter argues that since both *Pokémon* and *Teletubbies* are not likely to endure, “why so many protectionists assume that the craze will be dreamed up by some faceless American corporation rather than by a Japanese bug-collector or a British welfare mother is getting more mysterious by the day (“Pokémania v Globophobia,” 1999). In addition to criticizing antiglobalization discourse, this editorial shifts focus from the multinationals that control the global media and popular culture industry onto individual auteurs such as *Harry Potter* author J. K. Rowling—the “British welfare mother”—or *Pokémon* creator Satoshi Tajiri—the “Japanese bug collector” (ibid.). By displacing the issue from the social to the individual sphere, the editorial creates a hospitable space for the ideograph (see M. C. McGee, 1980) “individual creativity.” In a further example, the magazine *American Enterprise* quoted a speaker at an American Enterprise Institute conference on global popular culture who approvingly commented on the ideological underpinnings of American culture: “The core of this ideology is uniquely insistent and far-reaching individualism—a view of the individual that gives unprecedented weight to his or her choices. Private property in the economic sphere, democracy and freedom from government control in the polity, the absence of rank, and more equality in the larger society: these are the distinguishing essential American values. All reflect pervasive underlying individualism” (“The Controversy,” 1992, p. 79). The view that free individuals operating in an unfettered marketplace—and not structures
of ownership, production, distribution, and promotion—determine the success of cultural products, is also taken up by economist Tyler Cowen (2002a, b), who argues that globalization increases cultural diversity largely as a result of the creative power of individuals, and not “collectives.” This view from economics is discussed subsequently in this chapter.

There is another expression of creative individualism that focuses on individual freedom during cultural reception—and not on individual creators of culture—which in the Washington Post series “American Popular Culture Abroad” is expressed in terms of consumer desire for U.S. technology and popular culture. U.S. technology, one article (Lancaster, 1998) suggests, is a fetish of Western modernity and creativity to which foreign audiences aspire, and which disables censorship in non-Western countries, rendering governments powerless against the Western cultural tide. In Iran, the cultural arch-nemesis of the United States and charter member of the “Axis of Evil,” consumers have a “fascination with American movies” due to “Hollywood special-effects wizardry” (p. A1). In fact, “there is less to Iranian censorship than meets the eye. Despite stiff fines, satellite dishes are widely if discreetly used, and customs authorities are helpless against the flood of tapes, videocassettes and other illicit materials smuggled from abroad; one diplomat described an Iranian friend who boasted recently of having passed through the airport here with 35 CDs hidden in his clothing and bags” (ibid.). The dedication with which Iranian consumers seek U.S. cultural and media products underscores the argument that longing for Western popular culture is an irrepressible force that subverts even the most authoritarian governments, and suggests that, in the absence of cultural repression, Iranian and others would flock to U.S. popular culture.

Taken together, the notions that cultural homogeneity and Western cultural dominance are myths, that there is a cultural counterflow from the non-West to the West, that global free trade is beneficial to all participants in it, and that individual creativity and freedom explain global cultural success constitute a discourse whose central notion is hybridity. This discourse at once denies that the United States dominates global popular culture and asserts the irresistible power of U.S. popular culture on foreign audiences. It is to this apparent inconsistency—U.S. culture described as irresistible but not dominant—that the analysis now turns.

The position that Western technology and non-Western longing for U.S. popular culture sap authoritarian and protectionist actions is inconsistent with the stance that Western culture is not dominant worldwide.
The language used betrays unequal intercultural relations. The portrayal of U.S. popular culture as irresistibly attractive to foreign audiences in the *Washington Post* articles (Farhi and Rosenfeld, 1998; Lancaster, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1998; Trueheart, 1998; Waxman, 1998) is peppered with sexual language that casts U.S. popular culture as dominant in a masculinist frame. The first article's headline, “American Pop Penetrates Worldwide” (Farhi and Rosenfeld, 1998, my emphasis), sets the tone, and the article’s authors write about “the desire to appear more American” (my emphasis) among Indian youth, who adopt one imported fad after another from the United States. Another article describes how Malaysia, “like much of the developing world . . . embraces American popular culture” and proceeds with the claim that in Malaysia “as elsewhere, the love affair is fraught with turbulence and passion, ambivalence and confusion” (Rosenfeld, 1998, my emphasis). Interviews with Malaysian artists and intellectuals highlight their concerns about sexual content in cultural imports from the United States, as indicated by a renowned Malaysian cartoonist when he said that people in his native village are no longer “innocent” (ibid., my emphasis) as a result of being exposed to U.S. popular culture through television. Likewise, a Malaysian advertising executive claims that to Malaysian censors “armpits are a no-no. No bare shoulders or backs. The American influence they want to keep out is almost always sex” (ibid., my emphasis). Sexual language is also present in other articles, one characterizing McDonald restaurants in non-U.S. locations as a “pleasure zone” (Trueheart, 1998, my emphasis), the other describing “the lure of the forbidden fruit” that has “grabbed younger Iranians by the lapels” (Lancaster, 1998, my emphasis).

The gendered language of manly conquest and seduction used to describe how foreign audiences relate to U.S. popular culture undermines claims that the United States is not dominant. This inconsistency perhaps stems from the fact that, as with mestizaje, créolité, and transculturation, there is tension in the contemporary hybridity discourse between the egalitarian pluralism it ostensibly conjures up and the inequalities inherent in intercultural relations. In the case of the four 1998 articles being analyzed, the discursive structure establishes a binary relation between U.S. popular culture and an aspiring non-West. The former sets global standards of taste and is clearly the engine driving the hybridity resulting from contact, while the latter is enthralled by the former’s appeal and transformed into an eager but relatively passive and objectified hybrid. The paternalism at the heart of this relationship is
manifest in interviews with the Malaysian elite, like the Malaysian rock star dubbed “the Bob Dylan of Malaysia,” who claims that “our own people are very insecure about their music,” or the head of the Malaysian Research Center, who acknowledges: “[W]e don’t know what we want” (Rosenfeld, 1998).

According to another article, this confusion is remedied by Hollywood, which sets standards and helps foreign audiences develop more refined artistic tastes as a result of their exposure to American movies. As Sony Pictures Entertainment president John Calley is quoted saying: “[F]oreign moviegoers want to see anything that’s good. They’re like us. We have in some way Americanized much of the world; they’ve assimilated a lot of stuff” (Waxman, 1998). As a global benchmark, then, U.S. popular culture provides opportunities for audiences in developing countries to shed their allegedly unsophisticated tastes as they attempt to emulate the cultural sensibilities of American viewers.

In this discourse, the ostensible elevation of foreign audiences from immature viewership to sophisticated audiencehood sets up foreign audiences as culprits in racial conflict in the United States, as U.S. movie executives impute their propensity not to cast minority actors in major movies to the sensibilities of foreign audiences. In “Studios Say ‘Ethnic’ Films Are Not Popular Overseas,” the reporter writes that “foreign distributors, according to . . . executives and producers, are less interested in investing in films that focus on women . . . and have almost no interest in movies that have African Americans or other minority casts and themes.” The assumption that foreign audiences are racist and misogynist thus exonerates exclusionary casting practices. To its credit, the article describes the objections by minority actors in Hollywood to what they see as institutionalized racism, and mentions that independent movies with foreign funding are not subject to the same casting restrictions. Nonetheless, the reporter perfunctorily uses the euphemism “racial bias” in reference to the Hollywood studio system. The issue is expressed clearly in a quote by a Sony executive, who matter-of-factly states: “‘We’re cognizant of what does not work internationally. . . . Black baseball movies, period dramas about football, rap, inner-city films—most countries can’t relate to that. Americana seems to be desired by international markets, but there comes a point when even they will resist and say, ‘We don’t get it,’” and it’s generally in that ethnic, inner-city, sports-driven region.’ He paused. ‘We can’t give’em what they don’t want.’” The last sentence’s callous commercialism, expressed on the record by an industry leader, suggests that a notion of individual
consumer freedom tainted by racial assumptions is entrenched among movie industry executives. This “white customer as king” cliché has major implications for minority actors. Whoopi Goldberg’s film *Sister Act*, for example, was very popular abroad, writes the reporter, who nonetheless concludes that “[i]t’s a question, largely, of mathematics. In Hollywood, cold calculations are made based on the projected international box office revenues.” A “star power” list looms large over Hollywood casting routines, with Tom Cruise scoring a perfect 100, followed by Harrison Ford at 99, Mel Gibson at 98, etc. There are only two women in the top twenty positions, Jodie Foster at 94 and Julia Roberts at 92, and not a single ethnic minority is on the list (Waxman, 1998).

Does Hollywood really not cast minority actors because they are not popular with foreign audiences? Clearly, global markets are important to the U.S. media industry. However, most of the world’s media markets are populated by a majority of people who share the ethnicity of U.S. minorities and immigrant groups, with the notable exception of Europe. It is probable that African, Asian, and Latin American viewers would be drawn to films and television programs that feature actors who share their ethnicity. More importantly, cultural assumptions about race and audience tastes affect the processes by which U.S. films and television programs are globally distributed (Havens, 2002). Distributors promote programs with “universal” themes that limit the market viability of blackness, namely “settings, situations and themes associated with middle-class family life in developed capitalist societies” (ibid., p. 386). The cultural viability of blackness as a selling mechanism is couched in a universalist rhetoric of whiteness primarily because the U.S. film and television industries have historically catered to a white middle-class audience, not because of foreign audience preferences. The sweeping changes that affected the television industry in the late 1980s and the 1990s—liberalization, new networks, growth of cable and satellite television—and the subsequent birth of what screen-studies scholar Michael Curtin (1999) called the postnetwork era, changed the hues of U.S. television. The belated recognition of the purchasing power of the African American middle class and the resulting desirability of African American television characters has led to the increased presence of “ethnic” or “multicultural” programs to attract the African American middle class. However, after a growth in media roles for women and minorities between 1992 and 1997, 1998 registered a decline in women and minorities’ film and television roles (“Minority Roles,” 1999). The 1999 Screen Actors Guild (SAG) survey found that in 1998, Asian/Pacific
Americans got more parts, while African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos obtained fewer roles. Of the 56,700 acting parts covered by SAG contracts, African American roles made up 19 percent, and African American roles amounted to a total of 13.4 percent of all screen roles (ibid.). It is therefore probable that foreign audience preferences are not the only obstacle that affects minority participation in U.S. television and film.

The corporate rhetoric that uses foreign audience tastes to explain exclusionary casting decisions, in addition to the Washington Post article’s inconsistent claim that U.S. popular culture is irresistible but not dominant (Lancaster, 1998), is based on an individualistic understanding of intercultural relations. In both cases, there is emphasis on the power of consumers to affect the global circulation of U.S. popular culture. Whether driven by the love of U.S. pop music to defy Iranian customs officials by smuggling forbidden CDs, or turned away by a U.S. movie because its hero is black, foreign viewers and listeners are cast as empowered and discriminating consumers whose engagement with U.S. popular culture is a catalyst of cultural hybridity. This discourse ignores broader structural considerations and articulates consumer empowerment with an optimistic message about globalization and cultural diversity. Whereas the foregoing analysis analyzed this theme in the press, more extensive treatments of hybridity in public discourse can be found in economist Tyler Cowen’s Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World’s Cultures (2002a), and journalist G. Pascal Zachary’s The Global Me: New Cosmopolitans and the Competitive Edge: Picking Globalism’s Winners and Losers (2000). These two books articulate visions of what can be called the “cosmopolitan global economy” with the notion of hybridity at its center, which I examine next.

HYBRIDITY AND THE NEW COSMOPOLITAN GLOBAL ECONOMY

Economist Tyler Cowen (2002a) approaches global cultural exchange with what he calls a “gains of trade” model. From Cowen’s perspective, individuals are rational actors who freely engage in intercultural transactions that they expect to “make them better off, to enrich their cultural lives, and to increase their menu of choice” (p. 12). The panoply of rhetorical ideographs that supports this thesis is strikingly similar to those discussed earlier in this chapter in my analysis of hybridity in the print media. First is the claim that all or most cultures are hybrid, which
in *Creative Destruction* is unequivocal and direct: “Most Third World cultures,” Cowen writes, “are fundamentally hybrid—synthetic products of multiple global influences, including from the West” (p. 7). In his article subtitled “The Idea that Globalization Will Produce a Bland McWorld Is a Myth” (Cowen, 2002b), hybridity is expatiated as a historically deep and geographically wide condition:

For [third-world cultures], *creative destruction is nothing new*, and it is misleading to describe their cultures as “indigenous.” … The art of cultural synthesis has a long and honourable history, so to describe today’s Third World culture makers as synthesizers is hardly to denigrate them. It is rather, the contrary emphasis on monoculture that is offensive in its implicit portrayal of non-Western artists as static, tradition-bound craftworkers, unable to embrace new influences. (p. A21, my emphasis)

The foregoing statement’s accuracy, itself debatable, describes only part of non-Western cultural realities. Cowen (2002a) acknowledges that some cultures do suffer under globalization, what he describes as the “Tragedy of Cultural Loss.” However, he conveniently writes that “[w]e cannot understand freedom without tragedy” (p. 47). The triumph of freedom is reduced to financial terms, as those of us who survive cultural loss “‘cash in’” (p. 50) dying cultures, incorporating their energy and wisdom, thus becoming more hybrid.

The position that globalization does not cause homogenization is in *Creative Destruction* couched in the vocabulary of economic expertise and entails nothing less that a redefinition of diversity. Claiming that “diversity” is used as “a code word for a … particularist … anti-commercial or anti-American agenda” (Cowen, 2002a, p. 17) paves the way for an alternative formulation: “The common argument that globalization destroys diversity assumes a collectivist concept of diversity. This metric compares one society to another, or one country to another, instead of comparing one individual to another. … By comparing the collectives and the aggregates, and by emphasizing geographic space, this standard begs the question of which kind of diversity matters” (pp. 129–130).

Diversity across different societies at a given time (diversity across space), Cowen argues, has no intrinsic value, because it freezes societies in a time period and limits options for consumers, in contrast to “intertemporal diversity” (p. 135) (diversity across time), which allows us to contemplate globalization-induced cultural change as a positive development because it “increases the menu of choice” (p. 135). For example, Cowen suggests, had the French opened their borders to new ideas and products, their present-day film industry would have been
more competitive. Instead, he argues, they erected protectionist walls around their cinema industries, which motivated the creation of films that cater to bureaucrats and cultural elitists who make decisions on art subsidies, instead of addressing the popular masses whose patronage insures market viability. This system, Cowen contends, has created a vicious circle between the multiplying market failures of European films and their growing dependency on subsidies. In contrast, Cowen claims, market mechanisms explain American dominance of world cinema, as the lean and market-friendly U.S. system produces for a world of consumers, while the elitist and subsidized European cinemas produce for national critics and bureaucrats. The former thrives and enhances global diversity, the latter falter and wallow in so-called particularism. In a nutshell, according to Cowen, globalization and free trade are beneficial across the board, and those who claim otherwise are either misguided or self-serving.

A focus on individual consumers lies at the heart of market mechanisms, in Cowen’s view (2002a). “If there is any contemporary ethos that is becoming predominant on a global scale,” he writes, “it is an ideology of individualistic self-fulfillment, bred through democracy, relatively free markets, and modern commercial society” (p. 70). This atomistic view of cultural processes reaffirms the hybridity these processes spawn as an economic variable that focuses on individuals as customers and adds to an instrumentally defined diversity. Not surprisingly, Cowen recommends “a cautious embrace of multiculturalism as a guiding aesthetic principle and as a practical guide to policy” (p. 144). This version of multiculturalism is premised on individual choice, and not on Soviet-sounding “collectives.”

*Creative Destruction* (Cowen, 2002a) received a warm reception among globalization-friendly critics, who diligently repeated its main principles: there are no pure cultures; American cultural dominance is inexistant; protectionism is misguided and its practitioners elitist; free markets benefit all; individual freedom and creativity are paramount, and so on. A *Wall Street Journal* review whose title, “An Invasion without Guns,” contradicts its subtitle, “Cultural Imperialism Is a Red Herring in Today’s Global Economy” (Henderson, 2002), fully embraces Cowen’s book, rehearsing its antiprotectionist and protrade arguments. In the *Washington Times*, a reviewer hospitable to Cowen’s argument insists that diversity increases as a result of cultural globalization, which is “a more creative way to go than the misguided cultural nostalgia peddled by the anti-globalization crowd” (Sands, 2002). A reviewer calls
Cowen’s treatise “one of the most interesting books ever written on globalization” and his view of globalization “right on target” (Cantor, 2004). In the conclusion, this reviewer notes that *Creative Destruction* is “a vision of the triumph of cultural hybridity”: “In particular, [Cowen] argues for the advantages of cultural hybridity, documenting how the clash of different cultures in the course of globalization often leads—not to annihilation of one by the other—but to the emergence of a synthesis of the two, and hence a higher cultural complexity” (ibid.). An interview in the libertarian *Reason* magazine (N. Gillespie, 2003) provides Cowen with the opportunity to belabor the ubiquity of cultural hybridity:

> *Reason*: Give an example that characterizes the sort of cultural exchange and hybridization that you discuss in *Creative Destruction*.
> 
> *Cowen*: The first point to make is that *all* examples characterize it. . . . Just about anything you can find reflects a synthetic culture based on trade. It’s really not even a question of degree. Virtually *everything* is a product of multiple cultures coming from very different places, and we should be acutely aware of that when we approach debates on globalization and nationalism and cultural protectionism.

In contrast with these friendly appraisals, two dissenting reviews by intellectual heavyweights agreed in their criticism of Cowen’s *Creative Destruction* (2002a). Writing in the *New Republic*, the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz skewers Cowen for stylistic and substantive faults. The book, according to Geertz, mostly consists of “a stream of small examples and large pronouncements sewn together by insistence and reiteration” and uses one strategy throughout: “raise all objections in parodic form and then shoot them down with quips and instances.” Cowen’s narrow, economistic language, in Geertz’s view, provides a mere apology for the way things are, as opposed to a critique. In that process, homogenization is recast as “universalization,” and television “channel surfing” becomes “quality monitoring,” semantically giving the detrimental aspects of trade an attractive luster. “For the neoliberal apologist,” Geertz writes, “the real test comes in dispelling doubt as to the worth, on net, of the merely actual” (2003, p. 27). The political scientist Benjamin Barber states unequivocally what Geertz dances around: “the primary defect of [Cowen’s] overall position,” writes Barber in a *Los Angeles Times* review, “[is that it] ignores the role of power” (2003).

Picking Globalism’s Winners and Losers, leading a reviewer to call the volume “a passionate diatribe for ‘hybridity’” (Roush, 2000, p. 125). The oracular opening sets the book’s tone:

Diversity defines the health and wealth of nations in a new century. Mighty is the mongrel. The mixing of races, ethnic groups and nationalities—at home and abroad—is at a record level. The hybrid is hip. In a world of deepening connections, individuals, corporations and entire nations draw strength and personality from as near as their local neighborhood and as far away as a distant continent. The impure, the mélange, the adulterated, the blemished, the rough, the black-and-blue, the mix-and-match—these people are inheriting the earth. Mixing is the new norm. (p. ix, emphasis added)

“Mongrelization,” Zachary proceeds, is suited to current world trends. This is because “[m]oney follows the mongrel,” “[i]nnovation favors the mixed,” and “[t]he adept handling of diversity is the secret of economic competitiveness and national vitality” (2000, p. xii). In chapter 3, flamboyantly titled “Mongrelize or Die!” Zachary takes up, again, the economic benefits of hybridity. He argues that hybridity is highly profitable, and counsels that “those who wish to profit from changing economic conditions must view hybridity as their first and best option” (p. 57, emphasis mine), because hybridity plays an important role in the initial stages of the entrepreneurial process. In entrepreneurial terms, creativity is associated with innovation, which leads to economic growth. He criticizes what he sees as a prevailing assumption in economics expressed by Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, who said that “if everyone’s alike, of course you’re better off economically” (cited in Zachary, 2000, p. 59), arguing that it stems from a “mechanistic view of human behavior” (p. 59).³ Zachary (2000) also cites psychological research that finds that bicultural people are more flexible mentally, process knowledge in multiple ways, and have a greater tolerance for ambiguity. Based on these findings, Zachary depicts hybrids as misfits whose marginality and polyvalence spark creativity, expressed in “divergent thinking” (p. 58). To illustrate his argument, Zachary points to Silicon Valley, that legendary cradle of entrepreneurship and innovation. With its imported global talent, it is “a poster child for mongrelization, and the mixing of people is central to its success” (p. 64). In Zachary’s view, Silicon Valley is a microcosm of the U.S. economy:

All across the United States, hybridity pays off—big time—in higher-quality ideas, greater flexibility and tighter ties to places and peoples around the world. America offers the best example of what happens economically when an entire business class exploits hybridity. The new
economic paradigm, though still poorly understood, matches the skills and mentalities of hybrids. It turns hybrids into a signal economic weapon. Because the United States has more hybrids than anywhere else, it gets the biggest bang from them. (p. 67, my emphasis)

Thus elevated to the status of linchpin of a new economic paradigm extolled with military metaphors, hybridity is construed as a powerful engine of economic growth in the United States, a competitive advantage ignored by economists to their own and their national economies’ detriment. Zachary concludes that “in all the head scratching over how the United States achieved such a virtuous economic cycle, leaving Europe and Japan in the dust, hybridity remains the missing link” (p. 67). The primary reason for U.S. economic superiority is that U.S. companies have recognized the economic value of hybridity and have, according to Zachary, consistently “exploit[ed] hybrid ideas because of the openness of U.S. society” (p. 69), even establishing entire strategies on the culturally hybrid backgrounds of employees.4

Hybridity is thus presented as a meta-characteristic of capitalism. On the one hand, it spawns creativity and stimulates innovation, since “hybridity brings innovation; homogeneity brings stagnation” (Zachary, 2000, p. xvii). On the other hand, it calls on clever macroeconomic policies to administer all this socioeconomic ferment. Zachary’s enthusiasm for things mixed slackens when he realizes that hybridity does not thrive in all environments, but requires stability. For hybridity to fulfill its economic potential, it requires social and political stability. When these are in place, Zachary writes, “hybrid societies trump monocultures” (p. xvii), and he proposes a mathematical formula to explain his model of hybridity (p. xvii)5:

\[
\text{HYBRIDITY + SOCIAL COHESION = NATIONAL POWER}
\]

Chiding (presumably economic) analysts for ignoring the determining role hybridity plays “within rich nations and competition between them” (xviii, emphasis in original), Zachary concludes that hybridity’s potential—“national power” is presumably economic, and perhaps political, something the author leaves unexplained—can be reached only in wealthy countries.

This credo is explored further in two chapters in The Global Me, one that explains how Germany’s homogeneity has slowed it down economically, the other that is devoted to the recent Irish economic miracle, explained by Zachary (2000) in terms of hybridity. His line of thought is: For as long as Ireland, one of the most homogenous countries in
Europe, lingered in uniformity, it remained economically backward. When Ireland opened its borders to immigrants and was hybridized as a result, the Irish economy boomed and continues to do so. Zachary reminds the reader that the 1848 potato famine triggered massive Irish emigration, which continued until the 1980s. Ireland’s move out of Britain’s orbit, first declared when Ireland joined the European Union in 1972, stimulated its economy by opening export markets for Irish products. Coupled with aggressive policies to entice investors and an open-door policy to recruit droves of highly qualified foreign workers, Zachary proceeds, Ireland had by the 1990s moved from being one of Europe’s poorest countries, to being poised to join the wealthiest European nations. By the late 1990s, Ireland’s economy was growing by a “torrid” 8 percent yearly, while the country welcomed a “torrent of immigrants” (p. 160).

Ireland, the title of the chapter indicates, is a case of “hybridity by design.” As a small country, Ireland cannot assimilate all newcomers into its midst. Unlike Germany, it does not have the sheer population size and the government programs necessary to assimilate immigrants. This is what Zachary calls “small country advantage.” As a small country without assimilation policies, Ireland is, in Zachary’s view, fertile ground for thriving hyphenated identities. Furthermore, because it was once a net exporter of people, Ireland does not need strong cultural policy, because, in Zachary’s view, the vast diaspora performs the function of preserving, albeit in adapted forms, Irish traditions. As a result, “Irishness as an identity has thrived for so long outside of its territorial home that a hybrid Ireland seems both just and inevitable” (Zachary, 2000, p. 161). When this historically and staunchly Catholic and overwhelmingly white country opened its doors to foreigners, it became hybrid and achieved impressive economic growth, even if “it was no longer obvious what it meant to be Irish” (p. 164). While problems persist, such as the hostility blacks still encounter in Ireland, Zachary sees a flowering Irish cosmopolitanism as an example for other small and perhaps homogenous countries.

FROM CORPORATE MULTICULTURALISM TO CORPORATE TRANSCULTURALISM

Overall, the press received Zachary’s position well, even though his impassioned tone and unsubtle style elicited some reservations, expressed by a reviewer in Technology Review who called The Global Me “a very
long book that takes a fairly simple argument and hammers it home relentlessly” (Roush, 2000, p. 126). However, a reviewer for the Boston Globe calls Zachary’s book “a stunning example of inventive reporting . . . [that] confidently and clearly set out the dominant theme of the coming years” (Warsh, 2000, p. G1), and a writer for the online magazine Salon describes the book as “an unusual mélange—a lyrical political manifesto, a shrewd economic and business analysis and a finely-observed reportorial notebook” (Deutschman, 2000). In a more personal approach, a reviewer in the Atlantic Monthly who identifies himself as a “hybrid” concludes that Zachary’s “account of the trials of multiracial, multinational identity is so good that I’ll give it to my daughter when she starts asking the hard questions” (Pang, 2000, p. 120). The book also earned Zachary an interview on CNN International (Anderson, 2000), and speaking engagements at Washington, D.C., think tanks such as the probusiness American Enterprise Institute and the libertarian Cato Institute. Interestingly, Zachary joined none other than economist Tyler Cowen (and another guest) at a Cato Institute book forum titled “Mighty Is the Mongrel? Winning in the Global Economy” (“Mighty is,” 2000). The discussion was dominated by now familiar themes of individual freedom, unfettered markets, and cultural hybridity.

The relevance of The Global Me (Zachary, 2000) for this book stems from its use of hybridity as the core concept, around which is built what I would term corporate transculturalism, a discourse in which fluid identities and porous cultural borders are depicted as growth engines in the service of a cosmopolitan capitalism. Hybridity is thus placed at the service of a neoliberal economic order that respects no borders and harbors no prejudice toward cultural and ethnic difference that can be harnessed for growth. This constitutes a rhetorical shift from corporate multiculturalism, where difference is tolerated and incorporated into the dominant framework, to corporate transculturalism, a profit-driven strategy that actively and systematically seeks to capitalize on cultural fusion and fluid identities. Albeit draped in hip terminology and fanned by authorial ardor, this discourse rests on shaky foundations. While Zachary’s rhetoric can potentially give notions of diversity and hybridity wide exposure, four facets of this attempt to use hybridity to help corporations be more profitable bring to the fore how little this discourse advances our knowledge of cultural mixture in society. These include a reductionist understanding of hybridity, often confusing it with diversity or lapsing into bipolar equations; a functionalist recruitment of hybridity as an economic variable; the stipulation of social cohesion as a prerequisite
for hybridity; and the strategic use of examples that support Zachary’s line of reasoning (2002) while neglecting evidence countering it, even within his own examples.

Zachary’s binary logic muddles our ability to see hybridity as a fluid process. His field of vision includes the “monoculture,” a term he is obviously fond of and that he uses in reference to allegedly homogeneous cultures such as Germany and old Ireland, and hybrid cultures such as the new Ireland and the United States (Zachary, 2000). He dismisses the former and rejoices at the latter, without recognizing gradations and variations within and between these countries. German urban centers such as Berlin are surely not monocultural; that city is rather vibrant, cosmopolitan, and diverse. Not all of America marches to the hybridity tune either. Students in one Georgia high school were holding white-only graduation proms as late as April 2003. Zachary’s hybridity credo falls into the same trap that caught Edward T. Hall in the 1950s: the conflation of culture with nationality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; Kraidy, 2003a). Thus, while ostensibly using “culture,” as in “German culture” and “American culture,” Zachary is really referring to Germany or the United States as nation-states. This undermines Zachary’s point because (1) it reinscribes the nation-state as a powerful actor at a time when Zachary surreptitiously pleads for a weak state, and (2) it saps the analytical power of hybridity by placing it in a bipolar relationship with monoculture. The value of the notion of hybridity resides in its avoidance of a binary model of intercultural relations in favor of a relational approach whose vectors are located on a continuum.

Hybridity, in Zachary’s vision, is a determining variable of what he refers to as an undefined “national power.” This instrumental usage of the concept reduces cultural complexity to the algebra of economic growth. Nothing makes that point more forcefully than Zachary’s counterintuitive formula in which hybridity added to a vaguely defined “social cohesion” produces national power: hybridity becomes a countable, therefore finite, component to be added and subtracted. This additive and summative use of hybridity betrays claims, which Zachary (2000) himself revels in, of dynamism and fluidity that mark the formation of hybrid identities. From a conceptual point of view, putting hybridity in such a mathematical formula muddles the complex processes that shape hybridity. In addition to these conceptual and epistemological frailties, Zachary’s hybridity raises a political and ethical issue. His argument appropriates hybridity as a measuring device, as an ingredient in a bigger recipe whose ultimate tasters are the profit-driven multinational
corporations. This lends credence to materialist critics of hybridity who, as we have seen in Chapter Three, have argued that hybridity-speak is an endorsement of the logic and aims of global capitalism, and is therefore politically retrogressive (for instance, Ahmad, 1995).

Zachary’s vaguely articulated “social cohesion” also raises doubts about the applicability of his version of hybridity. What exactly does social cohesion entail? And doesn’t this ideograph slide inevitably into a rhetoric of national unity enforcement, one that permits hybrids to thrive only as long as they do not challenge the status quo? In Chapter Three I established that notions of cultural mixture have historically been deployed to neutralize ethnic and cultural difference that threatened prevailing power arrangements, the clearest example being the deployment of mestizaje as the ideology of nation-building in postcolonial Latin America, where it served the strategic purpose of severing ties to the Spanish Crown while consolidating the power of the descendants of the conquistadores. In the case of The Global Me (Zachary, 2000), does not the notion that the addition of hybridity and “social cohesion” equals “national power” suggest a similar rhetoric at play, one that tolerates ethnic and cultural differences to the extent that they can contribute to capitalist accumulation? I am not imputing to Zachary a pernicious intent, but these questions must be addressed if hybridity is to retain analytical value.

Finally, the case study of Ireland, which is central to Zachary’s advocacy of hybridity as a goal of macroeconomic policy, raises questions that dull the effectiveness of his claims. As much as Ireland may have been depicted in the global popular imagination as a rural, backward, and homogenous nation until the 1990s, we can dispel this cliché, especially on the issue of cultural homogeneity. While Irish history and culture lie beyond the scope and interest of this book, there exists evidence to cast a reasonable doubt on Zachary’s fervent embrace of Ireland as (in his view) a newly hybridized economic powerhouse. Ireland’s history is replete with newcomers who were assimilated into the fabric of Irish society, stretching back to the Normans eight centuries ago. In the late nineteenth century, the Irish in fact identified with people of color such as the Indians, who shared with the Irish the experience of English domination (Longley and Kiberd, 2001). Also, since the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Irish have had political and cultural exchanges with France, Spain, and Austria: “hybridity and heterogeneity,” according to a writer in the Irish Times (P. Gillespie, 2002), “characterize Ireland’s identities as well as those of other European nations” (p. 9). In fact, the
same author claims that it is only in the early twentieth century that the emerging Irish state decided on a Catholic and Gaelic identity. Besides, Zachary’s assessment of contemporary Ireland ignores recent experiences of Nigerian immigrants that indicate that racism among some Irish people, as with all national groups, is not a thing of the past (Longley and Kiberd, 2001), and glosses over the fact that a decisive proportion of immigrants to Ireland are middle- and upper-middle-class professionals. In other words, yesterday’s Ireland, like most other countries, was already hybrid; and today’s Ireland, like most other nations, despite having undergone significant changes, is no multicultural, postracist utopia.

**CORPORATE TRANSCULTURALISM AND GLOBAL POPULAR CULTURE**

Uses of hybridity by several authors (Cowen, 2002a; Farhi and Rosenfeld, 1998; Lancaster, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1998; Trueheart, 1998; Waxman, 1998; Zachary, 2000) rest on debatable assumptions. They depict hybridity as a consequence of creative reception practices by media audiences worldwide. Because of hybridity’s conceptual ambiguity, and in light of the critique of hybridity elaborated in earlier pages, it is helpful at this stage to reformulate the central questions that animate this chapter: How is hybridity characterized, and how does this representation address global politico-economic and cultural relations?

The 1998 Washington Post articles construct a monolithic hybridity that lumps together nations as disparate as Brazil, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Poland, whose unabashed enthusiasm for U.S. popular culture is held as an indication of its superiority to local fare. Worldwide consumption of U.S. popular culture has spawned in these “cultures” a hybridity overtly heralded as a renewal of identity, but latently framed as a capitulation to a seductive Otherness. This hybridity is symptomatic of non-Western governments defeated by their citizens’ desire for Western culture, and indicative of an economistic apology for casting decisions detrimental to minority actors by the U.S. film industry. At the same time, this rendition of hybridity involves an attempted semiotic closure of the meanings that global audiences give to U.S. popular culture. While global media conglomerates control production structures, program content, and distribution networks, two decades of research on audience behavior—as elaborated in Chapter Two—suggest that the processes and outcomes of cultural reception remain somewhat unpredictable. By not questioning the corporate argument that foreign
audiences dictate content and are thus endowed with a contrived agency, the *Washington Post* articles miss an opportunity to address power in intercultural relations and celebrate a nonthreatening hybridity that forecloses the cultural reception process, effectively holding sway over the entire chain of signification between media institutions, texts, and audiences.

These articles and books on what I call “the cosmopolitan global economy” (Cowen, 2002a; Zachary, 2000) are symptomatic of a tendency in mainstream public discourse to enlist hybridity as a descriptive frame in international relations. The newspaper articles focus on the international impact of U.S. popular culture and its putative role in spawning hybrid cultural forms; the books emphasize hybridity as an economic energy stream to be leveraged by transnational corporations and exploited by individual consumers. The former focus on culture via politics and economics. The latter privilege economics, via a discussion of culture and politics. Both carry progressive potential, but both squander that promise by their strategic use of hybridity. Hybridity in contemporary public discourse is a metadescription of the global order that justifies the status quo of the early twenty-first century.

In this logic, the West and its core, the United States, are surreptitiously located at the center of the world. The exchanges that spawn hybrid cultures described in the “American Popular Culture Abroad” series (Farhi and Rosenfeld, 1998; Lancaster, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1998; Trueheart, 1998; Waxman, 1998) follow a U.S.-centric model, constructing a generic hybridity where cultures as different as Poland, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Brazil are lumped together as one big hospitable audience. The articles give the impression that there are no “horizontal” exchanges between, say, Iran and Malaysia, or Brazil and Nigeria. Rather, cultural interaction is presumed to occur only between the United States and Malaysia, the United States and Brazil, the United States and Iran, and the United States and Poland. This rhetoric positions the United States at the center of worldwide cultural exchange, and all other “hybrid” cultures in various peripheral positions. In this relationship, hybridity in the developing world is in effect the result of local powerlessness in relation to the charms of American popular culture. Indeed, that the articles define hybridity as symptomatic of the impotence of local governments to control the influx of foreign culture is a clear indication that their notion of hybridity is premised on a generalized—albeit selective—local capitulation to the West, rather than on a reinvigorating cultural renewal.
But we need not be preoccupied about the fate of hybrid cultures, at least if Zachary is to be believed. *The Global Me* (2000) is more ambitious than the *Washington Post*'s series because it articulates a normative argument in favor of hybridity as a macroeconomic and microeconomic policy. To countries and corporations alike, Zachary recommends: hybridize and you will profit. Scoring alleged monocultures like Germany and praising putative transcultures like Ireland, Zachary's celebration of hybridity ultimately founders under the weight of its own contradictions. What *The Global Me* proposes, albeit obliquely, is a full liberalization of national economies and state infrastructures, while its espousal of "social stability" as a condition for hybridity's market potential to be achieved betrays the libertarian tenet that the state's only legitimate function is to maintain order.

As a journalist, Zachary puts forth a *popular* version of hybridity, whereas as an economist, Cowen, in espousing a market-based cultural hybridity (2002a), articulates an *expert* version of hybridity in which the market and its laws of supply and demand are said to guarantee consumers a "broad menu of choice." Hybrid cultural forms that are attractive to the market will survive, while those that lack commercial value will die, which is just fine because other cultural products allegedly benefit and the range of choices remains broad. The cultures that die under globalization, in Cowen's economistic lingo, are simply "cashed in." The preponderant impression one leaves this literature with is that hybridity is not only natural and inevitable, but also supremely desirable for both the market and consumers.

This type of hybridity I call corporate transculturalism. In both its popular and expert versions, corporate transculturalism emphasizes cultural fluidity as a tool to make corporations more profitable, consumers more satisfied, and the world generally a better, more connected, and more vibrant place. However, as the raging debate on the alleged benefits and dangers of globalization confirms, representations of international and intercultural relations are by definition contested. In this environment of contention, hybridity may be better understood as a strategic rhetoric (Nakayama and Krizek, 1995). Hybridity's ability to be many things at once imbues it with an aura of common sense. By advocating a power-free vision of intercultural relations supported by ideographs such as "consumer choice," "individual freedom," "free markets," and "free trade," corporate transculturalism uses hybridity strategically to highlight certain aspects of the global order and privileges a specific interpretive modality of that state of affairs, while at
the same time discarding other elements that do not fit its strategic vi-
sion. This rhetoric, as I will elaborate in Chapter Seven, compels me
to conceive of hybridity as the cultural logic of globalization, and to
propose critical transculturalism as a framework whose main concern is
human agency, not corporate profitability. An examination of the politi-
cal economy of mediated hybridity, carried out in the following chapter,
is a prerequisite to such a framework.