UNTHINKING EUROCENTRISM

NEW WORLD BORDER

UNDISCOVERED AMERINDIANS

'Drink' Cultura

VINI,VIDI,CHINGUI

Multiculturalism and the Media

Ella Shohat / Robert Stam

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STEREOTYPE, REALISM AND
THE STRUGGLE OVER
REPRESENTATION

Much of the work on ethnic/racial and colonial representation in the media has been "corrective," devoted to demonstrating that certain films, in some respect or other, "got something wrong" on historical, biographical, or other grounds of accuracy. While these "stereotypes and distortions" analyses pose legitimate questions about social plausibility and mimetic accuracy, about negative and positive images, they are often premised on an exclusive allegiance to an esthetic of verisimilitude.[1] An obsession with "realism" casts the question as simply one of "errors" and "distortions," as if the "truth" of a community were unproblematic, transparent, and easily accessible, and "lies" about that community easily unmasked. Debates about ethnic representation often break down on precisely this question of "realism," at times leading to an impasse in which diverse spectators or critics passionately defend their version of the "real."

THE QUESTION OF REALISM

These debates about realism and accuracy are not trivial, not just a symptom of the "veristic idiocy," as a certain poststructuralism would have it. Spectators (and critics) are invested in realism because they are invested in the idea of truth, and reserve the right to confront a film with their own personal and cultural knowledge. No deconstructionist fervor should induce us to surrender the right to find certain films sociologically false or ideologically pernicious, to see *Birth of a Nation* (1915), for example, as an "objectively" racist film. That films are only representations does not prevent them from having real effects in the world; racist films can mobilize for the Ku Klux Klan, or prepare the ground for retrograde social policy. Recognizing the inevitability and the inescapability of representation does not mean, as Stuart Hall has put it, that "nothing is at stake."

The desire to reserve a right to judgment on questions of realism comes into play especially in cases where there are real-life prototypes for characters and situations, and where the film, whatever its conventional disclaimers, implicitly makes, and is received as making, historical-realist claims. (Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston*, 1989, dodges the problem through a generic "end run" by labeling itself as a "meditation" on Langston Hughes.) The veterans of the 1960s

Plate 33 History whitewashed in *Mississippi Burning*

civil rights struggle are surely in a position to critique *Mississippi Burning* (1988) for turning the movement's historical enemy – the racist FBI which harassed and sabotaged the movement – into the film's heroes, while turning the historical heroes – the thousands of African-Americans who marched and braved beatings and imprisonment and sometimes death – into the supporting cast, passive victim-observers waiting for official White rescue.[2] This struggle over meaning matters because *Mississippi Burning* might induce audiences unfamiliar with the facts into a fundamental misreading of American history, idealizing the FBI and regarding African-Americans as mute witnesses of history rather than its makers.[3] Thus although there is no absolute truth, no truth apart from representation and dissemination, there are still contingent, qualified, perspectival truths in which communities are invested.

Poststructuralist theory reminds us that we live and dwell within language and representation, and have no direct access to the "real." But the constructed, coded nature of artistic discourse hardly precludes all reference to a common social life. Filmic fictions inevitably bring into play real-life assumptions not only about space and time but also about social and cultural relationships. Films which represent marginalized cultures in a realistic mode, even when they do not claim to represent specific historical incidents, still implicitly make factual claims. Thus critics are right to draw attention to the complacent ignorance of Hollywood portrayals of Native Americans, to the cultural flattening which erases the geographical and cultural differences between Great Plains tribes and those from

other regions, which have Indians of the northeast wearing Plains Indians clothing and living in Hopi dwellings, all collapsed into a single stereotypical figure, the "instant Indian" with "wig, war bonnet, breechclout, moccasins, phony bead-work."[4]

Many oppressed groups have used "progressive realism" to unmask and combat hegemonic representations, countering the objectifying discourses of patriarchy and colonialism with a vision of themselves and their reality "from within." But this laudable intention is not always unproblematic. "Reality" is not self-evidently given and "truth" is not immediately "seizable" by the camera. We must distinguish, furthermore, between realism as a goal – Brecht's "laying bare the causal network" – and realism as a style or constellation of strategies aimed at producing an illusionistic "reality effect." Realism as a goal is quite compatable with a style which is reflexive and deconstructive, as is eloquently demonstrated by many of the alternative films discussed in this book.

In his work, Mikhail Bakhtin reformulates the notion of artistic representation in such a way as to avoid both a naive faith in "truth" and "reality" and the equally naive notion that the ubiquity of language and representation signifies the end of struggle and the "end of history." Human consciousness and artistic practice, Bakhtin argues, do not come into contact with the "real" directly but rather through the medium of the surrounding ideological world. Literature, and by extension cinema, do not so much refer to or call up the world as represent its languages and discourses. Rather than directly reflecting the real, or even refracting the real, artistic discourse constitutes a refraction of a refraction; that is, a mediated version of an already textualized and "discursivized" socioideo-logical world. This formulation transcends a naive referential verism without falling into a "hermeneutic nihilism" whereby all texts become nothing more than a meaningless play of signification. Bakhtin rejects naive formulations of realism, in other words, without abandoning the notion that artistic representations are at the same time thoroughly and irrevocably social, precisely because the discourses that art represents are *themselves* social and historical. Indeed, for Bakhtin art is incontrovertibly social, not because it represents the real but because it constitutes a historically situated "utterance" – a complex of signs addressed by one socially constituted subject or subjects to other socially constituted subjects, all of whom are deeply immersed in historical circumstance and social contingency.

The issue, then, is less one of fidelity to a preexisting truth or reality than one of a specific orchestration of ideological discourses and communitarian per-spectives. While on one level film is mimesis, representation, it is also utterance, an act of contextualized interlocution between socially situated producers and receivers. It is not enough to say that art is constructed. We have to ask: Constructed for whom? And in conjunction with which ideologies and dis-courses? In this sense, art is a representation not so much in a mimetic as a political sense, as a delegation of voice.[5] Within this perspective, it makes more sense to say of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1984) not that it is untrue to "reality," but that it relays the colonialist discourse of official White South Africa. The racist

discourse of the film posits a Manichean binarism contrasting happy and noble but impotent Bantustan "Bushmen," living in splendid isolation, with dangerous but incompetent mulatto-led revolutionaries. Yet the film camouflages its racism by a superficial critique of White technological civilization. A discursive approach to *First Blood (Rambo)* (1983), similarly, would not argue that it "distorts" reality, but rather that it "really" represents a rightist and racist discourse designed to flatter and nourish the masculinist fantasies of omnipotence characteristic of an empire in crisis. By the same token, representations can be convincingly verisimilar, yet Eurocentric, or conversely, fantastically "inaccurate," yet anti-Eurocentric. The analysis of a film like *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), sociologically flawed from a mimetic perspective – given its focus on wealthy Asians rather than more typically working-class Asians in London – alters considerably when regarded as a constellation of discursive strategies, as a provocative symbolic inversion of conventional expectations of a miserabilist account of Asian victimization.

That something vital is at stake in these debates becomes obvious in those instances when entire communities passionately protest the representations that are made of them in the name of their own experiential sense of truth. Hollywood stereotypes have not gone unremarked by the communities they portrayed. Native Americans, very early on, vocally protested misrepresentations of their culture and history.[6] A 1911 issue of *Moving Picture World* (August 3) reports a Native American delegation to President Taft protesting erroneous representations and even asking for a Congressional investigation. In the same vein, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) protested *Birth of a Nation*, Chicanos protested the *bandido* films, Mexicans protested *Viva Villa!* (1934), Brazilians protested *Rio's Road to Hell* (1931), Cubans protested *Cuban Love Song* (1931), and Latin Americans generally protested the caricaturing of their culture. The Mexican government threatened to block distribution of Hollywood films in Mexico if the US film industry did not stop exporting films caricaturing Mexico, Mexican Americans, and the Mexican revolution. More recently, Turks protested *Midnight Express* (1978), Puerto Ricans protested *Fort Apache the Bronx* (1981), Africans protested *Out of Africa* (1985) and Asian-Americans protested *The Year of the Dragon* (1985). Native Americans so vigorously protested the TV series *Mystic Warrior*, based on Ruth Beebe Hill's Ayn Rand-inflected pseudo-Indian saga *Hanta Yo* (1979), that the film version could not be made in the US. One American Indian Movement pamphlet distributed during protests offered ironic guidelines on "How to Make an Indian Movie":

How to make an Indian Movie. Buy 40 Indians. Totally humiliate and degrade an entire Indian nation. Make sure all Indians are savage, cruel and ignorant ... Import a Greek to be an Indian princess. Introduce a white man to become an "Indian" hero. Make the white man compassionate, brave and understanding ... Pocket the profits in Hollywood.

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Critical spectators can thus exert pressure on distribution and exhibition, and even affect subsequent productions. While such pressure does not guarantee sympathetic representations, it does at least mean that aggressively hurtful portrayals will not go unchallenged.

Although total realism is a theoretical impossibility, then, spectators themselves come equipped with a "sense of the real" rooted in their own experience, on the basis of which they can accept, question, or even subvert a film's representations. In this sense, the cultural preparation of a particular audience can generate counter-pressure to a racist or prejudicial discourse. Latin American audiences laughed Hollywood's know-nothing portrayals of them off the screen, finding it impossible to take such misinformed images seriously. The Spanish-language version of *Dracula*, for example, made concurrently with the 1931 Bela Lugosi film, mingled Cuban, Argentine, Chilean, Mexican, and peninsular Spanish in a linguistic hodge-podge that struck Latin American audiences as ludicrous. At the same time, spectators may look beyond caricatural representations to see the oppressed performing self. African-Americans were not likely to take Step'n Fetchit as a typical, synecdochic sample of Black behavior or attitudes; Black audiences knew he was acting, and understood the circumstances that led him to play subservient roles. In the same vein, in a kind of double consciousness, spectators may enjoy what they know to be misrepresentations; Baghdadi spectators could enjoy *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940), for example, because they took it as an escapist fantasy, as a Western embroidery of an already fantastic tale from *A Thousand and One Nights*, with no relation to the "real" historical Baghdad.

THE BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION

The hair-trigger sensitivity about racial stereotypes derives partly from what has been labeled the "burden of representation." The connotations of "representation" are at once religious, esthetic, political, and semiotic. On a religious level, the Judeo-Islamic censure of "graven images" and the preference for abstract representations such as the arabesque cast theological suspicion on directly figurative representation and thus on the very ontology of the mimetic arts.[7] Representation also has an esthetic dimension, in that art too is a form of representation, in Platonic or Aristotelian terms, a mimesis. Representation is theatrical too, and in many languages "to represent" means "to enact" or play a role. The narrative and mimetic arts, to the extent that they represent ethos (character) and ethnos (peoples) are considered representative not only of the human figure but also of anthropomorphic vision. On another level, representation is also political, in that political rule is not usually direct but representative. Marx said of the peasantry that "they do not represent themselves; they must be represented." The contemporary definition of democracy in the West, unlike the classical Athenian concept of democracy, or that of various Native American communities, rests on the notion of "representative government," as in the

rallying cry of "No taxation without representation." Many of the political debates around race and gender in the US have revolved around the question of self-representation, seen in the pressure for more "minority" representation in political and academic institutions. What all these instances share is the semiotic principle that something is "standing for" something else, or that some person or group is speaking on behalf of some other persons or groups. On the symbolic battlegrounds of the mass media, the struggle over representation in the simulacral realm homologizes that of the political sphere, where questions of imitation and representation easily slide into issues of delegation and voice. The heated debate around which celebrity photographs, whether of Italian-Americans or of African-Americans, will adorn the wall of Sal's Pizzeria in Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) vividly exemplifies this kind of struggle within representation.

Since what Memmi calls the "mark of the plural" projects colonized people as "all the same," any negative behavior by any member of the oppressed community is instantly generalized as typical, as pointing to a perpetual backsliding toward some presumed negative essence. Representations thus become allegorical; within hegemonic discourse every subaltern performer/role is seen as synecdochically summing up a vast but putatively homogenous community. Representations of dominant groups, on the other hand, are seen not as allegorical but as "naturally" diverse, examples of the ungeneralizable variety of life itself.[8] Socially empowered groups need not be unduly concerned about "distortions and stereotypes," since even occasionally negative images form part of a wide spectrum of representations. A corrupt White politician is not seen as an "embarrassment to the race;" financial scandals are not seen as a negative reflection on White power. Yet each negative image of an underrepresented group becomes, within the hermeneutics of domination, sorely overcharged with allegorical meaning as part of what Michael Rogin calls the "surplus symbolic value" of oppressed people; the way Blacks, for example, can be made to stand for something beside themselves.[9]

This sensitivity operates on a continuum with other representations and with everyday life, where the "burden" can indeed become almost unbearable. It is this continuum that is ignored when analysts place stereotypes of so-called ethnic Americans, for example, on the same level as those of Native Americans or African-Americans. While all negative stereotypes are hurtful, they do not all exercise the same power in the world. The facile catch-all invocation of "stereotypes" elides a crucial distinction: stereotypes of some communities merely make the target group uncomfortable, but the community has the social power to combat and resist them; stereotypes of other communities participate in a continuum of prejudicial social policy and actual violence against dis-empowered people, placing the very body of the accused in jeopardy. Stereotypes of Polish-Americans and Italian-Americans, however regrettable, have not been shaped within the racial and imperial foundation of the US, and are not used to justify daily violence or structural oppression against these communities. The

media's tendency to present all Black males as potential delinquents, in contrast, has a searing impact on the actual lives of Black people. In the Stuart case in Boston, the police, at the instigation of the actual (White) murderer, interrogated and searched as many Black men as they could in a Black neighborhood, a measure unthinkable in White neighborhoods, which are rarely seen as representational sites of crime. In the same way, the 1988 Bush campaign's "allegorical" deployment of the "Black buck" figure of Willie Horton to trigger the sexual and racial phobias of White voters, dramatically sharpened the burden of representation carried by millions of Black men, and indirectly by Black women.

The sensitivity around stereotypes and distortions largely arises, then, from the powerlessness of historically marginalized groups to control their own representation. A full understanding of media representation therefore requires a comprehensive analysis of the institutions that generate and distribute mass-mediated texts as well as of the audience that receives them. Whose stories are told? By whom? How are they manufactured, disseminated, received? What are the structural mechanisms of the film and media industry? Who controls production, distribution, exhibition? In the US, in 1942, the NAACP made a compact with the Hollywood studios to integrate Blacks into the ranks of studio technicians, yet very few have become directors, scriptwriters, or cinematographers. Minority directors of *all* racial groups constitute less than 3 per cent of the membership of the almost 4,000-member Directors' Guild of America.[10] An agreement between several film unions and the US Justice Department in 1970 required that minorities be integrated into the industry's general labor pools, but the agreement's good intentions were undercut by growing unemployment throughout the industry and by a seniority system that favored older (therefore White male) members. The most recent report on Hollywood employment practices released by the NAACP reveals that Blacks are underrepresented in "each and every aspect" of the entertainment industry. The 1991 study, entitled "Out of Focus – Out of Synch," claims that Blacks are unable to make final decisions in the motion picture process. Despite the success of people like Oprah Winfrey, Bill Cosby, and Arsenio Hall, only a handful of African-Americans hold executive positions within film studios and television networks. Although Blacks purchase a disproportionate share of domestic movie tickets, nepotism, cronyism, and racial discrimination combine to bar Blacks and Black-owned businesses from the industry.[11] Spike Lee speaks of a "glass ceiling" restricting how much money will be spent on Black-made films, based on the assumption that Blacks cannot be trusted with large sums of money.[12] And Blacks are not the only disadvantaged group in this respect. While producers assume that Italian-American directors should direct films about Italian Americans, for example, they choose Anglos to direct films about Latinos.[13]

Furthermore, in that the Hollywood system favors big-budget blockbusters, it is not only classist but also Eurocentric, in effect if not in explicit intention; to be a player in this game one needs to have economic power. Third World

filmmakers are asked, in practice, to worship an unreachable standard of cinematic "civility." Moreover, many Third World countries themselves reinforce hegemony by discriminating against their own cultural productions. (Brazilian TV, for example, systematically favors American films.) In the news and information fields, similarly, it is First World institutions (CNN, AP, and the rest) that provide the filter for the world's news. Distribution advantages too tend to lie with the First World countries. Hollywood films often arrive in the Third World "preadvertised," in that much of the media hype revolving around big-budget productions reaches the Third World through journalistic articles and TV even before these films are released locally. American popular music also buttresses the dissemination of Hollywood films, with movies such as *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Purple Rain* (1984), *Truth or Dare* (1991), and *The Bodyguard* (1992) all arriving preadvertised by airtime, given that their music has been played on multinational-dominated radio and TV. Even the Oscar ceremonies constitute a powerful form of advertising; the audience is global, yet the product promoted is almost always American, the "rest of the world" usually being corraled into the restricted category of "foreign film."

The "Third World," then, is doubly weakened by cinematic neocolonialism. Brazilian filmmaker/poet Arnaldo Jabor has denounced this situation in an incendiary poem entitled "Jack Valenti's Brazilian Agenda":

> Jack Valenti,
> with Republican grin, star-spangled tie,
> diamond smile and the pale semblance of the perfect
> executive
> hints of Dick Tracy, George Wallace, Westmoreland, Liberace,
> Billy Graham, and so many other robots of infinite guffaw,
> at exactly this moment
> with his portfolio of indestructible designs
> and the audacity that our Foreign Debt has lately given
> international executives,
> Jack Valenti will descend from his astral airplane
> into the land of promised and overdue payments

Jabor inventories the psychic deformations caused by Hollywood:

> ... under Valenti's non-Brazilian shoes
> the red carpets of hospitality will roll
> and no one will see the cinematic crimes in the air
> nor the remains of our poor dead minds,
> no one will see the wounds
> since there will be no corpse
> no coroner to discover the bruises in our soul
> purple wounds, pink wounds, rainbow wounds
> stardust in our eyes, the tatooed people we have become

> of Hollywood's thousand and one adventures
> invisible victims of a thousand dazzling fairy wounds
> Eastmancolor burns
> seven-colored napalm
> kodak-yellow of our hunger

For Jabor, even dominant narrative conventions form part of an imperial mindset:

> ... In a few hours,
> Valenti will take from his portfolio of indestructible designs
> the most sacred values of the imperial Occident:
> logic, symmetry, continuity,
> beginning, middle, end,
> the happy end, the "individual" and
> the sinister American vision of goodness.[14]

Jabor's poem assumes a situation in which Hollywood films, with easy access to Third World distribution circuits, display tantalizingly opulent production values virtually impossible for the Third World to emulate and often inappropriate to its concerns. The astronomical budget of one First World blockbuster may be the equivalent of decades of production for a Third World country. As such films bludgeon audiences with their maximum-impact Dolby Sound thrill-a-minute style, they create what one might call a "Spielberg effect" of seduction and intimidation for Third World filmmakers and spectators. At the same time, economic neocolonialism and technological dependency raise filmmaking costs in the Third World itself, where imported film, cameras, and accessories often cost two or three times as much as in the "First World." Even well-established Third World filmmakers are likely to find their work blocked by First World-dominated channels of distribution, and when US distributors buy their films it is often at derisory prices. Major Arab filmmakers – the Egyptian Youssef Chahine, for example – have rarely enjoyed commercial openings in the US. Even radical directors remain dependent on multinational companies for their equipment and film stock. And the film stocks themselves may be said to discriminate against darker-complected people: they are sensitive to particular skin tones and must be "stopped down" or specially lit for others. In *A Diary of a Young Soul Rebel*, Isaac Julien attributes the difficulty in lighting dark and light skin in the same frame to the fact that film technology favors lighter skin tones.[15] The celluloid itself is racially inscribed.

The Eurocentrism of audiences can also inflect cinematic production. Here the dominant audience, whose ideological assumptions must be respected if a film is to be successful, or even made at all, exerts a kind of indirect hegemony. "Universal" becomes a codeword for palatable to the Western spectator as the "spoiled child" of the apparatus. A number of big-budget anti-apartheid films – *Cry Freedom* (1987), *A World Apart* (1988), and *A Dry White Season* (1989) – betray traces of "representational adjustments" as the values of a radical liberation

struggle are watered down for a predominantly liberal American audience. In these films, Rob Nixon argues, the challenge of bridging cultural difference becomes "overlaid with problems of profound ideological incompatibility." As a result, the story of Steve Biko in *Cry Freedom* gives way to a story of the "friendship that rocked the world." The radical discourse of the Black Consciousness movement is replaced with a "palatable liberal discourse of moral decency and human rights." Nixon contrasts the experience of *Cry Freedom* with the more radical *Mapantsula* (1989), a film that, simply to be made, had to disguise itself as an "apolitical gangster movie." In *Mapantsula*, moralistic concerns do not shoulder aside strategic institutional questions. The film's refusal to observe the "mass market conventions of translating a radical South African narrative into a white-mediated, liberal idiom" resulted in its failure to draw a major distributor.[16]

The production processes of individual films, their means of production and relations of production, bring up questions concerning the filmmaking apparatus and the participation of "minorities" within that apparatus. It seems noteworthy, for example, that in multiethnic but White-dominated societies such as South Africa, Brazil, and the US, Blacks have tended to participate in the filmmaking process mainly as performers rather than as producers, directors, and script-writers. In South Africa, Whites finance, script, direct, and produce films with all-Black casts. In the US in the 1920s, all-White filmmaking crews shot all-Black musicals like *Hearts in Dixie* (1929) and *Hallelujah* (1929). Blacks appeared in these films, just as women still frequently do in Hollywood, as images in spectacles whose social thrust is primarily shaped by others: "Black souls as White man's artifact" (Fanon). And since commercial films are designed to make profits, we must also ask to whom these profits go. J. Uys, the director of *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, paid his star actor N!Xau only 2,000 Rand for *Gods I* and 5,000 Rand for *Gods II*.[17] Similarly, it was not blacks who profited from the American blaxploitation films of the early 1970s; these films were financed, produced, and packaged by the same Whites who received the lion's share of the profits. The thousands of Black Brazilians who played at an out-of-season carnival, with virtually no pay, for the benefit of Marcel Camus' French cameras, never saw any of the millions of dollars that *Black Orpheus* (1959) made around the world.[18]

To a certain extent, a film inevitably mirrors its own processes of production as well as larger social processes. At times, minoritarian filmmakers directing films about police harassment have themselves been harassed by police. During the making of Haile Gerima's *Bush Mama* (1975), a film partly about police repression in the inner cities, the crew members themselves became police targets; Black men with cameras, the police assumed, like Black men with guns, could be up to no good.[19] In other cases, we find a contradiction between a film's overt politics and its politics of production. The presumably anticolonial film *Gandhi* (1982), dedicated to the patron saint of non-violent struggle, deployed a differential pay scale that favored European technicians and performers. In

Hearts of Darkness (1989), the documentary about the production of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Francis Ford Coppola speaks of the low cost of Filipino labor. In this sense he inherits the same privileges accorded the corporate manager who relocates to the Third World to take advantage of local cheap labor.

Victor Masayesva's *Imagining Indians* (1992) explores the commodification inflicted on Native American culture when it is filtered through a Eurocentric industry, even when those doing the filtering are "sympathetic to the Indian." More precisely, the film examines the problematic negotiations between the Hopi and the producers of *Dark Wind*, a film shot on Hopi land (not yet released at the time of writing). Combining interviews with native extras on Hollywood films, excerpts from the films discussed, sequences showing sacred sites, and a staged story of a native woman's encounter with a condescending White dentist, the film shows the tribal elders raising objections to the project but ultimately going along with it, in a process that recalls the treaty negotations between indigenous nations and the US government. At times, native resistance has been more aggressive. When Werner Herzog tried to film *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) with Aguaruna Indians, the newly formed Aguaruna Council objected, refusing to be represented in the way Herzog planned, and even surrounded Herzog's camp and forced the crew to move downriver.[20]

The importance of the participation of colonized or formerly colonized people in the process of production becomes obvious when we compare Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Battaglia di Algeria* (Battle of Algiers, 1966) to his later *Burn* (1970). In the former film, a relatively low-budget ($800,000) Italian-Algerian co-production, Algerian non-professional actors represent themselves in a staged reconstruction of the Algerian war of independence. The Algerians were intimately involved in every aspect of the production, with actors often playing their own historical roles at the very sites where the events took place. They collaborated closely with screenwriter Franco Solanas, who rewrote the scenario numerous times in response to their critiques and observations. As a result, the Algerians exist as socially complex people, and as agents of national struggle. Pontecorvo's multimillion dollar *Burn*, on the other hand, involved no such collaboration. An Italo-French co-production, the film casts Marlon Brando as a British colonial agent against Evaristo Marques, a non-professional actor of peasant background. By pitting one of the First World's most charismatic actors against a completely inexperienced Third World non-professional chosen only for his physiognomy, Pontecorvo, while on one level subverting the star system, on another disastrously tips the scales of spectatorial fascination in favor of the colonizer, in a film whose didactic intention, ironically, was to support anticolonial struggle. The lack of Caribbean participation in the film's production leads to a one-dimensional portrayal of the colonized, seen as shadowy figures devoid of cultural definition.

THE RACIAL POLITICS OF CASTING

lm and theater casting, as an immediate form of representation, constitutes a
d of delegation of voice with political overtones. Here too Europeans and
ro-Americans have played the dominant role, relegating non-Europeans to
pporting roles and the status of extras. Within Hollywood cinema, Euro-
nericans have historically enjoyed the unilateral prerogative of acting in
ackface," "redface," "brownface," and "yellowface," while the reverse has
ely been the case. From the nineteenth-century vaudeville stage through such
ures as Al Jolson in *Hi Lo Broadway* (1933), Fred Astaire in *Swing Time*
36), Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland in *Babes in Arms* (1939), and Bing
osby in *Dixie* (1943), the tradition of blackface recital furnished one of the most
pular of American pop-cultural forms. Even Black minstrel performers like
rt Williams, as the film *Ethnic Notions* (1987) points out, were obliged to carry
mark of caricature on their own bodies; burnt cork literalized, as it were, the
pe of Blackness.

Political considerations in racial casting were quite overt in the silent period.
The Birth of a Nation subservient Negroes were played by actual Blacks, while
gressive, threatening Blacks were played largely by Whites in blackface. But
er protests by the NAACP, Hollywood cautiously began to cast black actors in
all roles. Nevertheless, even in the sound period, White actresses were called
to play the "tragic mulattas" of such films as *Pinky* (1949), *Imitation of Life*
59), and even of the Cassavetes underground film *Shadows* (1959). Mean-
ile, real-life "mulattas" were cast for Black female roles – for example Lena
rne in *Cabin in the Sky* (1943) – although they could easily have "passed" for
ite roles. In other words, it is not the literal color of the actor that mattered in
ting. Given the "blood" definition of "Black" versus "White" in Euro-
erican racist discourse, one drop of "Black blood" was sufficient to disqualify
actress like Horne from representing White women.

African-Americans were not the only "people of color" to be played by Euro-
ericans; the same law of unilateral privilege functioned in relation to other
ups. Rock Hudson, Joey Bishop, Boris Karloff, Tom Mix, Elvis Presley, Anne
ncroft, Cyd Charisse, Loretta Young, Mary Pickford, Dame Judith Anderson
Douglas Fairbanks Jr are among the many Euro-American actors who have
ented Native American roles, while Paul Muni, Charlton Heston, Marlon
o, and Natalie Wood are among those who have played Latino characters.
e as *Windwalker* (1973), the most important Indian roles were not played
tive Americans. Dominant cinema is fond of turning "dark" or Third World
s into substitutable others, interchangeable units who can "stand in" for one
er. Thus the Mexican Dolores del Rio played a South Seas Samoan in *Bird*
adise* (1932), while the Indian Sabu played a wide range of Arab-oriental
Lupe Velez, actually Mexican, portrayed Chinese, "Eskimos" (Inuit),
ese, Malayans, and American-Indian women, while Omar Sharif, an
an, played Che Guevara.[21] This asymmetry in representational power has

generated intense resentment among minoritarian communities, for whom the casting of a non-member of the "minority" group is a triple insult, implying (a) you are unworthy of self-represention; (b) no one from your community is capable of representing you; and (c) we, the producers of the film, care little about your offended sensibilities, for we have the power and there is nothing you can do about it.

These practices have implications even on the brute material level of literal self-representation, that is, the need for work. The racist idea that a film, to be economically viable, must use a "universal" (i.e. white) star, reveals the intrication of economics and racism. That people of color have historically been limited to racially designated roles, while Whites are ideologically seen as "beyond" ethnicity, has had disastrous consequences for "minority" artists. In Hollywood, this situation is only now changing, with star actors like Larry Fishburne, Wesley Snipes, and Denzel Washington winning roles originally earmarked for White actors. At the same time, even "affirmative action" casting can serve racist purposes, as when the role of the White judge in the novel *Bonfire of the Vanities* (1990) was given to Morgan Freeman in the Brian de Palma film, but only as a defense mechanism to ward off accusations of racism.

Nor does chromatically literal self-representation guarantee non-Eurocentric representation. The system can simply "use" the performer to enact the dominant set of codes; even, at times, over the performer's objection. Josephine Baker's star status did not enable her to alter the ending of *Princess Tam Tam* (1935) to have her North African (Berber) character marry the French aristocrat instead of the North African servant, or to marry the working-class Frenchman played by Jean Gabin in *Zou Zou* (1934). Instead, Zou Zou ends up alone, performing as a caged bird pining for the Caribbean. Despite her protests, Baker's roles were circumscribed by the codes that forbade her screen access to White men as legitimate marriage partners. Their excessive performance styles allowed actresses like Josephine Baker and Carmen Miranda to undercut and parody stereotypical roles, but could not gain them substantive power. Even the expressive performance of the politically aware Paul Robeson was enlisted, despite the actor's protests, in the encomium to European colonialism in Africa that is *Sanders of the River* (1935). In recent years Hollywood has made gestures toward "correct" casting; African-American, Native American, and Latino/a performers have been allowed to "represent" their communities. But this "realistic" casting is hardly sufficient if narrative structure and cinematic strategies remain Eurocentric. An epidermically correct face does not guarantee community self-representation, any more than Clarence Thomas's black skin guarantees his representation of African-American legal interests.

A number of film and theater directors have sought alternative approaches to literally self-representative casting. Orson Welles staged all-Black versions of Shakespeare plays, most notably his "Voodoo Macbeth" in Harlem in 1936. Peter Brook, similarly, cast a rainbow of multicultural performers in his filmic adaptation of the Hindu epic *The Mahabaratha* (1990). Glauber Rocha deliber-

ately confused linguistic and thespian self-representations in his *Der Leone Have Sept Cabecas* (1970), whose very title subverts the linguistic positioning of the spectator by mingling five of the languages of Africa's colonizers. Rocha's Brechtian fable animates emblematic figures representing the diverse colonizing nations, suggesting imperial homologies among them by having an Italian-accented speaker play the role of the American, a Frenchman play the German and so forth.

Such antiliteral strategies provoke an irreverent question: what is wrong with non-originary casting? Doesn't acting always involve a ludic play with identity? Should we applaud Blacks playing Hamlet but not Laurence Olivier playing Othello? And have not Euro-American and European performers often ethnically substituted for one another (for example, Greta Garbo and Cyd Charisse as Russians in *Ninotchka*, 1939, and *Silk Stockings*, 1957)? Casting, we would argue, has to be seen in contingent terms, in relation to the role, the political and esthetic intention, and to the historical moment. We cannot equate a gigantic charade whereby a whole foreign country is represented by players not from that country and is imagined as speaking a language not its own (a frequent Hollywood practice), with cases where non-literal casting forms part of an alternative esthetic. The casting of Blacks to play Hamlet, for example, militates against a traditional discrimination that denied Blacks any role, literally and metaphor-ically, in both the performing arts and in politics, while the casting of Laurence Olivier as Othello prolongs a venerable history of deliberately bypassing Black talent. We see the possibilities of epidermically incorrect casting in *Seeing Double* (1989), a San Francisco Mime Troupe play about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where an ethnically diverse cast takes on shifting roles in such a way as to posit analogical links between communities. An African-American actor plays both a Palestinian-American and a Jewish-American, for example, thus hinting at a common history of exclusion binding Blacks, Jews, and Arabs.

THE LINGUISTICS OF DOMINATION

The same issues of self-representation arise in relation to language. As potent symbols of collective identity, languages are the foci of deep loyalties existing at the razor's edge of national and cultural difference. Although languages as abstract entities do not exist in hierarchies of value, languages as lived operate within hierarchies of power. Inscribed within the play of power, language becomes caught up in the cultural hierarchies typical of Eurocentrism. English, especially, has often served as the linguistic vehicle for the projection of Anglo-American power, technology, and finance. Hollywood films, for their part, betray a linguistic hubris bred of empire. Hollywood proposed to tell not only its own stories but also those of other nations, and not only to Americans but also to the other nations themselves, and always in English. In Cecil B. de Mille epics, both the ancient Egyptians and the Israelites, not to mention God, speak English. By ventriloquizing the world, Hollywood indirectly diminished the possibilities of

Sioux against FBI repression in the 1970s, meanwhile, is focalized through a hybrid character whose sense of identity is radically transformed during the course of the film. The FBI agent (Val Kilmer), on the reservation to investigate a murder, at first denies the Native American side of his identity – he has a Sioux grandfather – then evolves into a fighter on behalf of Native Americans. Parallel to his discovery of the identity of the murderers goes a discovery of his own suppressed identity. The spectator accustomed to liberal point-of-view conventions is surprised to find that the "norms of the text" evolve dramatically during the course of the film. Whereas Hanna in *Hanna K.* merely learns more about the world, without fundamentally altering her structure of thought, the FBI agent in *Thunderheart* presumably undergoes a fundamental change in orientation. Affected by what he learns on the reservation, illuminated by visions, he switches cultural/political allegiance, bringing the spectator with him.[49]

CINEMATIC AND CULTURAL MEDIATIONS

A privileging of social portrayal, plot and character often leads to a slighting of the specifically cinematic dimensions of the films; often the analyses might as easily have been of novels or plays. A throughgoing analysis has to pay attention to "mediations": narrative structure, genre conventions, cinematic style. Eurocentric discourse in film may be relayed not by characters or plot but by lighting, framing, *mise-en-scène*, music. Some basic issues of mediation have to do with the *rapports de force*, the balance of power as it were, between foreground and background. In the visual arts, space has traditionally been deployed to express the dynamics of authority and prestige. In pre-perspectival medieval painting, for example, size was correlated with social status: nobles were large, peasants small. The cinema translates such correlations of social power into registers of foreground and background, on screen and off screen, speech and silence. To speak of the "image" of a social group, we have to ask precise questions about images. How much space do they occupy in the shot? Are they seen in close-ups or only in distant long shots? How often do they appear compared with the Euro-American characters and for how long? Are they active, desiring characters or decorative props? Do the eyeline matches identify us with one gaze rather than another? Whose looks are reciprocated, whose ignored? How do character positionings communicate social distance or differences in status? Who is front and center? How do body language, posture, and facial expression communicate social hierarchies, arrogance, servility, resentment, pride? Which community is sentimentalized? Is there an esthetic segregation whereby one group is haloed and the other villainized? Are subtle hierarchies conveyed by temporality and subjectivization? What homologies inform artistic and ethnic/political representation?

A critical analysis must also be alive to the contradictions between different registers. For Ed Guerrero, Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* (1991) rhetorically condemns interracial love, yet "spreads the fever" by making it cinematically

appealing in terms of lighting and *mise-en-scène*.[50] Ethic/ethnic perspectives are transmitted not only through character and plot but also through sound and music. As a multitrack audio-visual medium, the cinema manipulates not only point-of-view but also what Michel Chion calls "point-of-hearing" (*point-d'écoute*).[51] In colonial adventure films, the environment and the "natives" are heard as if through the ears of the colonizers. When we as spectators accompany the settlers' gaze over landscapes from which emerge the sounds of native drums, the drum sounds are usually presented as libidinous or threatening. In many Hollywood films, African polyrhythms become aural signifiers of encircling savagery, acoustic shorthand for the racial paranoia implicit in the phrase "the natives are restless." What is seen within Native American, African, or Arab cultures as spiritual and musical expression becomes in the western or adventure film a stenographic index of danger, a motive for fear and loathing. In *Drums along the Mohawk* (1939), the "bad" Indian drums are foiled by the "good" martial Euro-American drums which evoke the beneficent law and order of White Christian patriarchy. Colonialist films associate the colonized with hysterical screams, non-articulate cries, the yelping of animal-like creatures; the sounds themselves place beast and native on the same level, not just neighbors but species-equals.

Music, both diegetic and non-diegetic, is crucial for spectatorial identification. Lubricating the spectatorial psyche and oiling the wheels of narrative continuity, music "conducts" our emotional responses, regulates our sympathies, extracts our tears, excites our glands, relaxes our pulses, and triggers our fears, in conjunction with the image and in the service of the larger purposes of the film. In whose favor do these processes operate? What is the emotional tonality of the music, and with what character or group does it lead us to identify? Is the music that of the people portrayed? In films set in Africa, such as *Out of Africa* (1985) and *Ashanti* (1979), the choice of European symphonic music tells us that their emotional "heart" is in the West. In *The Wild Geese* (1978), classicizing music consistently lends dignity to the White mercenary side. The Roy Budd score waxes martial and heroic when we are meant to identify with the Whites' aggressivity, and sentimental when we are meant to sympathize with their more tender side. The Borodin air commonly called "This Is My Beloved," associated in the film with the mercenary played by Richard Harris, musically "blesses" his demise with a tragic eulogy.

Alternative films deploy sound and music quite differently. A number of African and Afro-diasporic films, such as *Faces of Women* (1985), *Barravento* (1962), and *Pagador de Promessas* (The Given Word, 1962), deploy drum ouvertures in ways that affirm African cultural values. The French film *Noir et Blanc en Couleur* (Black and White in Color, 1976) employs music satirically by having the African colonized carry their colonial masters on their backs, but satirize them through the songs they sing: "My master is so fat, how can I carry him? ... Yes, and mine has stinky feet ..." Films by African and Afro-diasporic directors like Sembene, Cisse, and Faye not only use African music but celebrate it. Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* (1990) deploys an African "talking drum"

to drive home, if only subliminally, the Afrocentric thrust of a film dedicated to the diasporic culture of the Gullah people.

Another key mediation has to do with genre. A film like Preston Sturges' *Sullivan's Travels* (1942) raises the question of what one might call the "generic coefficient" of racism. In this summa of cinematic genres, Blacks play very distinct roles, each correlated with a specific generic discourse. In the slapstick land-yacht sequences, the Black waiter conforms to the prototype of the happy-go-lucky servant/buffoon; he is sadistically "painted" with whiteface pancake batter, and excluded from the charmed circle of White sociality. In the documentary-inflected sequences showing masses of unemployed, meanwhile, Blacks are present but voiceless, very much in the left-communist tradition of class reductionism; they appear as anonymous victims of economic hard times, with no racial specificity to their oppression. The most remarkable sequence, a homage to the "all-Black musical" tradition, has a Black preacher and his congregation welcome the largely White prison-inmates to the screening of an animated cartoon. Here, in the tradition of films like *Hallelujah* (1929), the Black community is portrayed as the vibrant scene of expressive religiosity. But the film complicates conventional representation: first, by desegregating the genre; second, by having Blacks exercise charity toward Whites, characterized by the preacher as "neighbors less fortunate than ourselves." The preacher exhorts the congregation not to act "high-toned," for "we is all equal in the sight of God." When congregation and prisoners sing "Let My People Go," the music, the images, and the editing forge a triadic link between three oppressed groups: Blacks, the prisoners, and the Biblical Israelites in the times of the Pharaoh, here assimilated to the cruel warden. The Sturges who directs the "Black musical" sequence radically complicates the Sturges who directs the slapstick sequence; racial attitudes are generically mediated.

The critique-of-stereotypes approach is implicitly premised on the desirability of "rounded" three-dimensional characters within a realist-dramatic esthetic. Given the cinema's history of one-dimensional portrayals, the hope for more complex and "realistic" representations is completely understandable, but should not preclude more experimental, anti-illusionistic alternatives. Realistic "positive" portrayals are not the only way to fight racism or to advance a liberatory perspective. Within a Brechtian esthetic, for example, (non-racial) stereotypes can serve to generalize meaning and demystify established power, at the same time that the characters are never purely positive or negative but rather are the sites of contradiction. Parody of the kind theorized by Bakhtin, similarly, favors decidedly negative, even grotesque images to convey a deep critique of societal structures. At times, critics have mistakenly applied the criteria appropriate to one genre or esthetic to another. A search for positive images in shows like *In Living Color*, for example, would be misguided, for that show belongs to a carnivalesque genre favoring anarchic bad taste and calculated exaggeration, as in the parody of *West Side Story* where the Black woman sings to her Jewish orthodox lover: "Menahem, Menahem, I just met

a man named Menahem." (The show is of course open to other forms of critique.) Satirical or parodic films may be less concerned with constructing positive images than with challenging the stereotypical expectations an audience may bring to them. The performance piece in which Coco Fusco/Guillermo Gomez Peña exhibit themselves as "authentic aborigines" to mock the Western penchant for exhibiting non-Europeans in zoos, museums, and freak shows, prods the art world audience into awareness of its own complicity. The question, in such cases, lies not in the valence of the image but rather in the drift of the satire.

What one might call the generic defense against accusations of racism – "It's only a comedy!," "Whites are equally lampooned!," "All the characters are caricatures!," "But it's a parody!" – is highly ambiguous, since it all depends on the modalities and the objects of the lampoon, parody, and so forth. The classic Euro-Israeli film on Asian and African Jews, *Sallah Shabbati* (1964), for example, portrays a Sephardi protagonist, but from a decidedly unSephardi perspective. As a naif, Sallah on one level exemplifies the perennial tradition of the uninitiated outsider figure deployed as an instrument of social and cultural critique or distanciation. But in contrast with other naif figures such as Candide, Schweik, or Said Abi al Nakhs al Mutasha'il (in Emil Habibi's *Pesoptimist*), who are used as narrative devices to strip bare the received wisdom and introduce a fresh perspective, Sallah's naiveté functions less to attack Euro-Israeli stereotypes about Sephardi Jews than to mock Sallah himself and what he supposedly represents – the "oriental," or "black," qualities of Sephardim. In other words, unlike Jaroslav Hašek, who exploits the constructed naiveté of his character to attack European militarism rather than using it as a satire of Schweik's backwardness, the director, Kishon, molds Sallah in conformity with socially derived stereotypes in a mockery of the Sephardi "minority" (in fact the majority) itself. The grotesque character of Sallah was not designed, and was not received by Euro-Israeli critics, as a satire of an individual but rather as a summation of the Sephardi "essence." And within the Manichean splitting of affectivity typical of colonialist discourse, we find the positive – Sephardim are warm, sincere, direct, shrewd – and negative poles – they are lazy, irrational, unpredictable, primitive, illiterate, sexist. Accordingly, Sallah (and the film) speaks in the first-person plural "we," while the Ashkenazi characters address him in the second-person plural, "you all." Kishon's anti-Establishment satire places on the same level the members of the Establishment and those outside it and distant from real power. Social satire is not, then, an immediate guarantor of multiculturalism. It can be retrograde, perpetuating racist views, rather than deploying satire as a community-based critique of Eurocentric representations.[52]

The analysis-of-stereotypes approach, in its eagerness to apply an *a priori* grid, often ignores issues of cultural specificity. The stereotypes of North American Blacks, for example, are only partly congruent with those of other multiracial New World societies like Brazil. Both countries offer the figure of the noble, devoted slave: in the US the Uncle Tom, in Brazil the *Pai João* (Father John). Both also offer the female counterpart, the devoted woman slave or servant: in the US the "mammy," in Brazil the *mãe preta* (Black mother), both products of a

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plantation slavery where the children of the master were nursed at the Black mammy's breast. With other stereotypes, however, the cross-cultural analogies become more complicated. Certain characters in Brazilian films (Tonio in *Bahia de Todos os Santos*, 1960; Jorge in *Compasso de Espera*, Making Time, 1973) at first glance recall the tragic mulatto figure common in North American cinema and literature, yet the context is radically different. First, the Brazilian racial spectrum is not binary (Black or White) but nuances its shades across a wide variety of racial descriptive terms. Although color varies widely in both countries, the social construction of race and color is distinct, despite the fact that the current "Latinization" of American culture hints at a kind of convergence. Second, Brazil, while in many ways oppressive to Blacks, has never been a rigidly segregated society; thus no figure exactly corresponds to the North American "tragic mulatto," schizophrenically torn between two radically separate social worlds. The "passing" notion so crucial to American films such as *Pinky* and *Imitation of Life* had little resonance in Brazil, where it is often said that all Brazilians have a "foot in the kitchen"; in other words, that they all have a Black ancestor somewhere in the family. This point is comically demonstrated in the film *Tenda dos Milagres* (Tent of Miracles, 1977), when Pedro Arcanjo reveals his racist adversary Nilo Argilo, the rabid critic of "mongrelization," to be himself part Black. The mulatto figure can be seen as dangerous only in an apartheid system and not in a system dominated by an official, albeit hypocritical, integrationist ideology like Brazil's. In Brazil, the figure of the mulatto became surrounded with a different set of prejudicial connotations, such as that of the mulatto as "uppity" or pretentious. On the other hand, this constellation of associations is not entirely foreign to the US; Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, for example, repeatedly pinpoints mixed-race mulattos as ambitious and dangerous to the system.

The Brazilian film *Macunaíma* (1969), by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, illustrates some of the pitfalls both of a misdirected search for "positive images" and of a culturally misinformed reading. An adaptation and updating of the modernist novel of the same name by Mario de Andrade (1928), *Macunaíma* transforms the ultimate negative stereotype – cannibalism – into a positive artistic resource. Fusing the discourse of fellow modernist Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagical movement with the theme of cannibalism that runs through the novel, the director turns cannibalism into the springboard for a critique of both repressive military rule and the predatory capitalist model of Brazil's shortlived "economic miracle." The cannibalist theme is treated in all its variations: people so hungry they eat themselves; an ogre who offers Macunaíma a piece of his leg; the urban guerilla who devours him sexually; the cannibal-giant-capitalist Pietro Pietra with his anthropophagous soup; the capitalist's wife who wants to eat him alive; and finally the man-eating siren who lures him to his death. We see the rich devouring the poor, and the poor devouring each other. The left, meanwhile, while being devoured by the right, purifies itself by eating itself, a practice which the director calls the "cannibalism of the weak."[53]

Given *Macunaíma*'s raucously Rabelaisian esthetic, it would be misguided to

look for "positive images," or even for conventional realism. Virtually all the film's characters are two-dimensional grotesques rather than rounded three-dimensional characters, and the grotesquerie is democratically distributed among all the races, while the most archly grotesque characters are the Italian-Brazilian industrialist cannibal and his ghoulish spouse. The case of *Macunaíma* provides an object lesson in the cultural differentiation of spectatorship. In Brazil, a number of factors militate against a reading of the film as racist. First, Brazilians of all races tend to see Macunaíma as representing a spoof on their "national personality" rather than on some racial "other," seeing both the Black and White Macunaímas as a national rather than as a racial archetype. Second, Brazilians would likely be aware of the novel's status as a national classic (never accused of being racist) by a Brazilian of mixed race. Third, Brazilians are less prone to allegorize their own films racially. Since the whole issue of racial portrayal is somewhat less "touchy" in Brazil – an ambiguous fact in itself – the films are not made to bear such a strong "burden of representation." Fourth, North American viewers are less likely to be aware of the associations surrounding the figure of Grande Otelo for Brazilians, who will probably see his role in the film as just one more role in a variegated career, not as emblematic of Blackness. (At the same time, the tendency in the 1940s and 1950s to cast Grande Otelo in comically desexualized roles did reflect a flight from portrayals of mature Black characters.) Fifth, the misunderstanding also derives from a difference between filmic and literary cinematic representation, between verbal suggestiveness and iconic specificity. In the novel, Macunaíma is transformed into a *principe lindo* (a comely prince); there is no racial specification. The film, in contrast, must choose actors to play roles, and actors come with racial characteristics. Thus the fable-like evocativeness of "comely prince" gives way to the physical presence of the Euro-Brazilian actor Paulo José, chosen more for his thespian talents than for his Whiteness, but leading in other contexts to racialized misreadings. The director might be accused, then, not so much of racism as of insensitivity; first, for appearing to posit a link between Blackness/ugliness (a link with very painful historical/intertextual resonances), and second, for failing to imagine the ways that his film might be read in non-Brazilian contexts. At the same time the metaphor of the multiracial Brazilian "family," common to both novel and film, should not be seen as entirely innocent; first because the national ideology of mixed race glossed over racial hierarchies, and second because that metaphor has historically relegated Black Brazilians to the status of "poor cousins" or "adopted children." But such a critique should begin only *after* the film has been understood within Brazilian cultural norms, and not as the application of an *a priori* schema.

THE ORCHESTRATION OF DISCOURSES

One methodological alternative to the mimetic "stereotypes-and-distortions" approach, we would argue, is to speak less of "images" than of "voices" and "discourses." The very term "image studies" symptomatically elides the oral and the "voiced." A predilection for aural and musical metaphors – voices, intonation, accent, polyphony – reflects a shift in attention, as George Yudice suggests, from the predominantly visual logical space of modernity (perspective, empirical evidence, domination of the gaze) to a "postmodern" space of the vocal (oral ethnography, a people's history, slave narratives), as a way of restoring voice to the voiceless.[54] The concept of voice suggests a metaphor of seepage across boundaries that, like sound in the cinema, remodels spatiality itself, while the visual organization of space, with its limits and boundaries and border police, forms a metaphor of exclusions and hierarchical arrangements. It is not our purpose merely to reverse existing hierarchies – to replace the demogoguery of the visual with a new demogoguery of the auditory – but to suggest that voice (and sound) and image be considered together, dialectically and diacritically. A more nuanced discussion of race and ethnicity in the cinema would emphasize less a one-to-one mimetic adequacy to sociological or historical truth than the interplay of voices, discourses, perspectives, including those operative within the image itself. The task of the critic would be to call attention to the cultural voices at play, not only those heard in aural "close-up" but also those distorted or drowned out by the text. The analytic work would be analogous to that of a "mixer" in a sound studio, whose responsibility it is to perform a series of compensatory operations, to heighten the treble, deepen the bass, amplify the instrumentation, to "bring out" the voices that remain latent or displaced.

Formulating the issue as one of voices and discourses helps us get past the "lure" of the visual, to look beyond the epidermic surface of the text. The question, quite literally, is less of the color of the face in the image than of the actual or figurative social voice or discourse speaking "through" the image.[55] Less important than a film's "accuracy" is that it relays the voices and the perspectives – we emphasize the plural – of the community or communities in question. While the word "image" evokes the issue of mimetic realism, "voice" evokes a realism of delegation and interlocution, a situated utterance of "speaking from" and "speaking to." If an identification with a community voice/discourse occurs, the question of "positive" images falls back into its rightful place as a subordinate issue. We might look at Spike Lee's films, for example, not in terms of mimetic "accuracy" – such as the lament that *Do the Right Thing* portrays an inner city untouched by drugs – but rather in terms of voices/discourses. We can regret the absence of a feminist voice in the film, but we can also note its repeated stagings of wars of community rhetorics. The symbolic battle of the boomboxes featuring African-American and Latino music, for example, evokes larger tensions between cultural and musical voices. And the final quotations from Martin Luther King and Malcolm X leave it to the spectator to synthesize two complementary

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modalities of resistance, one saying: "Freedom, as you promised," the other saying: "Freedom, by any means necessary!"

It might be objected that an analysis of textual "voices" would ultimately run into the same theoretical problems as an analysis centered on "images." Why should it be any easier to determine an "authentic voice" than to determine an "authentic image?" The point, we would argue, is to abandon the language of "authenticity" with its implicit standard of appeal to verisimilitude as a kind of "gold standard," in favor of a language of "discourses" with its implicit reference to community affiliation and to intertextuality. Reformulating the question as one of "voices" and "discourses" disputes the hegemony of the visual and of the image-track by calling attention to its complication with sound, voice, dialog, language. A voice, we might add, is not exactly congruent with a discourse, for while discourse is institutional, transpersonal, unauthored, voice is personalized, having authorial accent and intonation, and constitutes a specific interplay of discourses (whether individual or communal). The notion of voice is open to plurality; a voice is never merely a voice; it also relays a discourse, since even an individual voice is itself a discursive sum, a polyphony of voices. What Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia," after all, is just another name for the socially generated contradictions that constitute the subject, like the media, as the site of conflicting discourses and competing voices. A discursive approach also avoids the moralistic and essentialist traps embedded in a "negative-stereotypes" and "positive-images" analysis. Characters are not seen as unitary essences, as actor-character amalgams too easily fantasized as flesh-and-blood entities existing somewhere "behind" the diegesis, but rather as fictive-discursive constructs. Thus the whole issue is placed on a socioideological rather than on an individual-moralistic plane. Finally, the privileging of the discursive allows us to compare a film's discourses not with an inaccessible "real" but with other socially circulated cognate discourses forming part of a continuum – journalism, novels, network news, television shows, political speeches, scholarly essays, and popular songs.[56]

A discursive analysis would also alert us to the dangers of the "pseudo-polyphonic" discourse that marginalizes and disempowers certain voices, then pretends to dialog with a puppet-like entity already maneuvered into crucial compromises. The film or TV commercial in which every eighth face is Black, for example, has more to do with the demographics of market research and the bad conscience of liberalism than with substantive polyphony, since the Black voice, in such instances, is usually shorn of its soul, deprived of its color and intonation. Polyphony does not consist in the mere appearance of a representative of a given group but rather in the fostering of a textual setting where that group's voice can be heard with its full force and resonance. The question is not of pluralism but of multivocality, an approach that would strive to cultivate and even heighten cultural difference while abolishing socially-generated inequalities.

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NOTES

1 Steve Neale points out that stereotypes are judged simultaneously in relation to an empirical "real" (accuracy) and an ideological "ideal" (positive image). See Neale, "The Same Old Story: Stereotypes and Difference," *Screen Education*, Nos 32–3 (Autumn/Winter 1979–80).

2 For more on FBI harassment of civil rights activists, see Kenneth O'Reilly, *"Racial Matters": The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

3 Pam Sporn, a New York City educator, had her high-school students go to the south and video-interview civil rights veterans about their memories of the civil rights struggle and their reactions to *Mississippi Burning*.

4 See Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet, "The Entertaining Anachronism: Indians in American Film," in Randall M. Miller, ed., *The Kaleidoscopic Lens: How Hollywood Views Ethnic Groups* (Englewood, NJ: Jerome S. Ozer, 1980).

5 Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julien, in a similar spirit, distinguish between "representation as a practice of depicting" and "representation as a practice of delegation." See Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julien, "Introduction: De Margin and De Centre," *Screen*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1988), pp. 2–10.

6 An article in *Moving Picture World* (July 10, 1911), entitled "Indians Grieve over Picture Shows," reports on protests by Native Americans from southern California concerning Hollywood's portrayal of them as warriors when in fact they were peaceful farmers.

7 Religious tensions sometimes inflect cinematic representation. A German film company plan in 1925 to produce *The Prophet*, with Muhammad as the main character, shocked the Islamic University Al Azhar, since Islam prohibits representation of the Prophet. Protests prevented the film from being made. Moustapha Aaqad's *The Message* (Kuwait, Morocco, Libya, 1976), in contrast, tells the story within Islamic norms, respecting the prohibition of graven images of the Prophet, representation of God and holy figures. The film traces the life of the Prophet from his first revelations in AD 610 to his death in 632, in a style which rivals Hollywood Biblical epics. Yet the Prophet is never seen on the screen; when other characters speak to him they address the camera. The script was approved by scholars from the Al Azhar University in Cairo.

8 Judith Williamson makes a similar point in her essay in *Screen*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1988), pp. 106–12.

9 See Michael Rogin, "Blackface, White Noise: The Jewish Jazz Singer Finds his Voice," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1992), pp. 417–44.

10 Michael Dempsey and Udayan Gupta, "Hollywood's Color Problem," *American Film* (April 1982).

11 See *New York Times* (Sept. 24, 1991).

12 See interview with Spike Lee, "Our Film Is Only a Starting Point," *Cineaste*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (March 1993).

13 See Gary M. Stern, "Why the Dearth of Latino Directors?," *Cineaste*, Vol. XIX, Nos 2–3 (1992).

14 Translation by Robert Stam and Randal Johnson. A full English version of the poem can be found in Randal Johnson and Robert Stam, *Brazilian Cinema* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982; republished Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987; rev. edn, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

15 See Isaac Julien and Colin MacCabe, *A Diary of a Young Soul Rebel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

16 See Rob Nixon, "Cry White Season: Apartheid, Liberalism, and the American Screen," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, No. 90, Vol. 3 (Summer 1991).

17 Reported in *Vrye Weekblod* (Nov. 17, 1989), cited in Keyan Tomaselli, "Myths, Racism and Opportunism: Film and TV Representations of the San," in Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton, eds, *Film as Ethnography* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1992), p. 213.

18 The White Brazilian musicians who worked on *Black Orpheus* were also exploited. The French producer Sacha Gordine refused songs already written for the source play in order to be able to copyright the songs in French, with a contract that gave him 50 per cent of the profits on highly popular songs, while the composer and lyricist (Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes) got only 10 per cent. See Rui Castro, *Chega de Saudade* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992).

19 See Clyde Taylor, "Decolonizing the Image," in Peter Steven, ed., *Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics and Counter Cinema* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1985), p. 168.

20 See Jean Franco, "High-Tech Primitivism: the Representation of Tribal Societies in Feature Films," in John King, Ana Lopez, and Manuel Alvarado, eds, *Mediating Two Worlds* (London: BFI, 1993).

21 Clear social hierarchies also inform the practice of substitutional casting. The evolution of casting in Israeli cinema, for example, reflects changing strategies of representation. The heroic-nationalist films of the 1950s and 1960s, which focussed on the Israeli-Arab conflict, typically featured heroic Euro-Israeli Sabras, played by European Jews (Ashkenazis), fighting villainous Arabs, while Sephardi Arab-Jewish actors and characters were limited to the "degraded" roles of Muslim Arabs. In most recent political films, in contrast, Israeli-Palestinian actors and non-professionals play the Palestinian roles. Such casting allows for a modicum of "self-representation." And at times the Palestinian actors have actually forced radicalization of certain scenes. In some films Palestinian actors have even been cast as Israeli military officers (for example, Makram Houri in *The Smile of the Lamb* (1986) and in the Palestinian-Belgium film *Wedding in Galilee*, 1987). For more on the ideology of casting in Israeli cinema, see Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).

22 See Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Moving the Center: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (London: James Currey, 1993), p. 33.

23 See David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 104.

24 Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1990), pp. xxii, 177.

25 For more on language and power, see Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "Cinema after Babel: Language, Difference, Power," *Screen*, Vol. 26, Nos 3–4 (May–August 1985).

26 See Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1992), p. 237.

27 Ibid., p. 238.

28 For a thorough discussion of *Dances with Wolves* from a Native American point of view, see Edward Castillo's essay in *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Summer 1991).

29 See Christian Metz, "The Imaginary Signifier," in *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

30 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 34.

31 Donald Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks* (New York: Continuum, 1989), p. 36.

32 See Arthur G. Pettit, *Images of the Mexican American in Fiction and Film* (College Station: Texas A and M University Press, 1980), p. 24.

33 Critics have also performed extended analyses of specific films from within this perspective. Charles Ramirez Berg analyzes *Bordertown* (1935), the first Hollywood sound film to deal with Mexican-American assimilation and the film which laid down the pattern for the Chicano social problem film. Among the narrative and ideological features Berg isolates are:

1. stereotypical inversion (that is, upgrading of Chicanos coupled with the denigration of the Anglos, portrayed as oversexed blondes (Marie), materialistic socialites (Dale), and inflexible authority figures (the judge));
2. undiminished stereotyping of other marginalized groups (for example Chinese-Americans);
3. the assimilationist idealization of the Chicana mama as the "font of genuine ethnic values";
4. the absent father (Anglo families are complete and ideal; Chicano families are fragmented and disfunctional); and
5. the absent non-material Chicana (implying the inferiority of Chicanas to Anglo women).

See Charles Ramirez Berg, "*Bordertown*, the Assimilation Narrative and the Chicano Social Problem Film," in Chon Noriega, ed., *Chicanos and Film* (New York: Garland, 1991).

34 Quoted in *Prisoners of Image: Ethnic and Gender Stereotypes*, (New York: Alternative Museum, 1989).

35 See David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 88–9.

36 Herman Gray, "Television and the New Black Man: Black Male Images in Prime-Time Situation Comedy," *Media, Culture and Society*, No. 8 (1986), p. 239.

37 See Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis, *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences and the Myth of the American Dream* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992), p. 137.

38 For a critique of Eurocentric language concerning African religions, see John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1969).

39 See also Alfredo Bosi's brilliant analysis of the confrontation between Catholicism and the Tupi-Guarani religion in his *Dialetica da Colonização* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992).

40 For positive portrayals of African religions, we must look to African (*A Deusa Negra*, 1979), Brazilian (*A Força de Xango*: The Force of Xango, 1977) and Cuban (*Patakin*, 1980) features, and to documentaries such as Angela Fontanez's *The Orixa Tradition*, Lil Fenn's *Honoring the Ancestors*, Maya Deren's *The Divine Horsemen*, and Gloria Rolando's *Oggun* (1991).

41 The 1993 Supreme Court decision allowing the animal sacrifices associated with Santeria was in this sense a landmark affirmation of religious rights.

42 Toni Morrison, ed., *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), p. xv.

43 See Jan Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 207.

44 Ibid., p. 106.

45 On *The Cosby Show*, see John D.H. Downing, "*The Cosby Show* and American Racial Discourse," in Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun A. van Dijk, eds, *Discourse and Discrimination* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988); Gray, "Television and the New Black Man," in Todd Gitlin, ed., *Watching Television* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), pp. 223–42; Mark Crispin Miller, "Deride and Conquer," in Gitlin, ed., *Watching Television*; and Mike Budd and Clay Steinman, "White Racism and the

Cosby Show," *Jump Cut*, No. 37 (July 1992).

46 See Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

47 See Chidananda das Gupta, "The Politics of Portrayal," *Cinemaya*, Nos 17–18 (Autumn–Winter 1992–3).

48 For more on liberalism in *Hanna K.*, see Richard Porton and Ella Shohat, "The Trouble with Hanna," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Winter 1984–5).

49 Antonio Prieto-Stanbaugh points out a kind of homology between the protagonist, who sympathizes with the Sioux but ultimately leaves the reservation, and the filmmaker Michael Apted and screenwriter John Fusco, who sympathized with the Sioux and, in the case of Fusco, even lived on the reservation, but who ultimately returned to fame and fortune in the White world (unpublished student paper for a course at New York University).

50 See Ed Guerrero, "Fever in the Racial Jungle," in Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins, eds, *Film Theory Goes to the Movies* (London: Routledge, 1993).

51 Michel Chion, *Le Son au Cinéma* (Paris: Cahiers, 1985).

52 For more on the fissures between the ethnic-racial and the national in Israeli cultural practices, see Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*.

53 See Johnson and Stam, *Brazilian Cinema*, pp. 82–3.

54 See George Yudice, "Bakhtin and the Subject of Postmodernism," unpublished paper.

55 Two of Clyde Taylor's defining traits of New Black Cinema – the link to the Afro-American oral tradition, and the strong articulation of Black musicality – are aural in nature, and both are indispensable in Black Cinema's search for what Taylor himself calls "its voice." See Clyde Taylor, "Les Grands Axes et les Sources Africaines du Nouveau Cinema Noir," *CinemAction*, No. 46 (1988).

56 James Naremore's analysis of *Cabin in the Sky* deploys this kind of discursive analyis with great precision and subtlety. Naremore sees the film as situated uneasily among "four conflicting discourses about blackness and entertainment in America": a vestigial "folkloric" discourse about rural Blacks; NAACP critique of Hollywood imagery; the collaboration between mass entertainment and government; and the "posh Africanism of high-toned Broadway musicals." See James Naremore, *The Films of Vincent Minnelli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
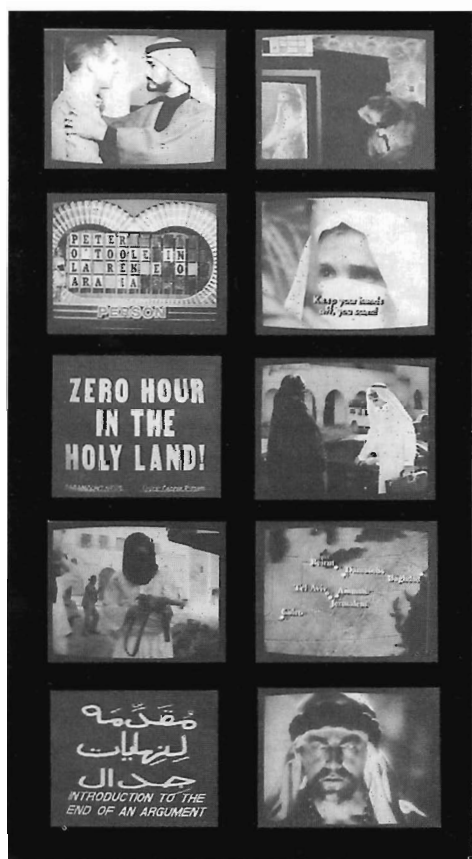
MEDIA JUJITSU

The Brazilian "anthropophagic" movement, as we saw earlier, called for an art which would devour European techniques the better to struggle against European domination. And if we substitute "dominant" and "alternative," or "mass" and "popular," for "Europe" and "Brazilian," we begin to glimpse the global contemporary relevance of its critique. By appropriating an existing discourse for its own ends, anthropophagy *assumes* the force of the dominant discourse only to deploy that force, through a kind of artistic jujitsu, *against* domination. Such an "excorporation" steals elements of the dominant culture and redeploys them in the interests of oppositional praxis. Indeed, from Rocha's "esthetic of hunger" to the Tropicalist "esthetics of garbage," from Claire Johnston's feminist "counter-cinema" to Henry Louis Gates Jr's "signifying-monkey" esthetic and Paul Leduc's "salamander" (as opposed to dinosaur) esthetic, from Jean Rouch's *ciné-transe* and Teshome Gabriel's "nomadic esthetics" to Kobena Mercer's "diaspora esthetics," from Deleuze/Guattari's "minor" esthetic to Espinosa's *ciné imperfecto* and Ishmael Reed's neo-hoodoo esthetic, many alternative esthetics have in common the twin anthropophagic notions of revalorizing what had been seen as negative and of turning tactical weakness into strategic strength. (Even "magic realism" inverts the view of magic as irrational superstition.)

Don Featherstone's *Babakiueria* (1988) illustrates what we mean by "media jujitsu" by ironically reversing Euro-Australian discourses and policies toward Aborigines. The film begins with the Aboriginal "discovery" of a White-inhabited Australia. Since the first White "natives" they see are enjoying a picnic barbecue, the invading Aborigines, in a parodic example of colonial misrecognition, name the continent "Babakiueria." Framed as Aboriginal TV reportage, *Babakiueria* has an Aboriginal woman reporter initiate the spectator into the "strange culture" of Whites. Mingling the discourses of anthropology and social welfare, she introduces us to a "typical White family," residing in a "typical White house" in a "typical White ghetto" and practicing "typical White rituals": a father who works and a mother who stays home, children who study their culture (in a class on the A-bomb) and an ethos of "strong family ties" (they call their grandmother three times a year). We are introduced to their religious practice of "making donations to prayer tokens" while they "watch trained horses run in a circle." We are told of the White "predilection for violence" (evidenced in documentary clips of soccer brawls) and for pollution and garbage. Seen through an Aboriginal grid, Euro-Australian customs are estranged and colonial practices (the denial of self-representation, forced adoptions, and relocation programs) formerly applied to Aborigines are now applied to Whites. The "Minister of White Affairs" insists that all the citizens of Babakiueria join in the bicentennial celebrations of the "discovery." White political opposition is dismissed as the work of outside agitators and is brutally repressed by the police. The report's final claim that White violence is abating coincides with a tossed brick coming through the window. In *Babakiueria*, Euro-Australian representations of Aborigines boomerang against their perpetrators.

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We also find a martial-art esthetic in Philippine director Kidlat Tahimik's *Mababangong Bangungot* (Perfumed Nightmare, 1977). Like Artur Omar's *Triste Tropico*, the film conducts an ironic odyssey in the form of a reflexive pseudo-documentary memoir which mocks the positing of the First World as the ideal ego of the neocolonized world, all in an improvisational style reminiscent of the "esthetic of garbage." The film tells the story of a young Filipino taxi-driver, head of his local "Werner von Braun" fan club and honorary Grand Marshal of the club's Miss Universe contest. Apart from being the film's (dubiously reliable) narrator, Tahimik himself appears as the main character, who exhibits at the outset all the pathological symptoms of neocolonial dependency: he systematically prefers the foreign to the local – steel to bamboo, rockets to jeepneys, English to Tagalog. Even his inner voice has become confounded with that of Voice of America broadcasts. The protagonist's secret dream is to fly beyond the "nets" of provincial "backwardness" into the soaring flight of modernity as incarnated in the tumescent missiles of Werner von Braun. Taken to Paris by an American bubble-gum magnate, the protagonist glimpses the squalid underside of European modernity in the form of razed housing and urban blight. After having his protagonist uncritically embrace American patriotism, Tahimik casts doubt on such ideals. From being an admirer of the rationalist West, the character begins to dabble with the Filipino mysticism incarnated by his friend Kaya, a striking visionary figure with a contorted face and a giant butterfly tattoo on his chest. Kaya expresses skepticism about the "ghost of progress," recommending instead the "quiet strength of bamboo." In the end, the film plays off Filipino mysticism against rationalist modernity, and artisanal, low-budget improvisational poetic cinema against industrialized, big-budget prosaic commercial cinema, without leaving any doubt about the film's corrosive attitude toward Europe's "superiority." At the same time, as Fredric Jameson suggests, the film proposes jeepney-style bricolage as an alternative model of esthetic production, one outside assembly-line alienation, with a "kind of Brechtian delight with the bad new things that anybody can hammer together for their pleasure ... another jeepney, an omnibus and omnipurpose object that ferries its way back and forth between First and Third Worlds with dignified hilarity."[75]

Contemporary video and computer technologies facilitate media jujitsu. Instead of an "esthetic of hunger," video-makers can deploy a kind of cybernetic minimalism, achieving maximum beauty and effect for minimum expense. Video switchers allow the screen to be split, divided horizontally or vertically with wipes and inserts. Keys, chroma-keys, mattes and fader bars, along with computer graphics, multiply audio-visual possibilities for fracture, rupture, polyphony. An electronic "quilting" can weave together sounds and images in ways that break with linear character-centered narrative. In such texts, multiple images can be "hung" on the screen like so many paintings in a gallery, obliging spectators to choose which image to contemplate, without losing themselves in any single image. All the conventional decorum of dominant narrative cinema – eyeline matches, position matches, the 30° rule, cutaway shots – is superseded by proliferating polysemy. The

Plates 55, 56, 57
Media jujitsu:
Babakiueria (top),
Slaying the Dragon
(right), and
Introduction to the
End of an Argument
(left)

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spatial co-presence of multiple images within the rectangle of the screen establishes syntagamic possibilities denied to single-image cinema. The centered perspective inherited from Renaissance humanism is relativized, the multiplicity of perspectives rendering identification with any one perspective difficult. Spectators have to decide what the juxtaposed images have in common, or how they conflict; they have to make real the syntheses latent in the audio-visual material. The capacity for palimpsestic overlays of images and sounds facilitated by electronics and cybernetics opens the doors to a renovated, multichannel, polyphonic esthetic. Meaning can be generated not through the drive and thrust of individual desire as encapsulated by a linear narrative, but rather through the interweaving of mutually relativizing layers of sound, image, and language.

A number of texts perform media jujitsu by coercing Hollywood films and commercial TV into comic self-indictment, deploying the power of the dominant media against their own Eurocentric premises. The ludicrous catalog of media Arabs (assassins, terrorists, fanatics), drawn from cartoons, newscasts, fiction films, and even game shows, in Elia Suleiman and Jayce Salloum's *Muqaddima Li Nihayat Jidal* (An Introduction to the End of an Argument, 1990) hilariously deconstructs mass-media orientalism. Set against more critical materials, the sheer repetition of the caricatural images makes the stereotypes fall of their own weight. The performances of Spiderwoman Theater, a group of three Native American (Cuna/Rappahanock) sisters, as documented in *Sun, Moon and Feather* (1989), carnivalize Hollywood stereotypes by having two of the sisters mimic and sing along with Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald performing "Indian Love Call" in such a way as to break open the Eurocentric frame and "re-Indianize" Hollywood caricatures. Carlos Anzaldua's tape *It's a Dictatorship, Eat!* (1983) weaves clips from commercials, news, and fiction films, along with mock-reportage scenes, into a critique of the symbiotic complicities between Reaganite policies and an acquiescent media. Sherry Millner and Ernest Larsen's *The Desert Bush* (1991) combines pop culture images and artifacts – *Lawrence of Arabia*, war movies, toys, George Bush speeches, *Thousand and One Nights*-style intertitles – to critique the media's Persian Gulf war. In *From Hollywood to Hanoi* (1993), Tiana Thi Thanh Nga performs jujitsu by absorbing clips of her own orientalized performances in commercial films (as B-movie karate queen, as oriental sexpot) into her own guerilla filmmaking portrayal of her odyssey from reflex anticommunist – as a child she was told that Ho Chi Minh would devour her if she did not eat her vegetables – into diasporic struggler for reconciliation between Vietnam and the US.

It might be objected that jujitsu tactics place one in a perpetually reactive or parasitic posture of merely deconstructing or reversing the dominant. We would argue, however, that these films are not merely defensive. Rather, they express an alternative sensibility and shape an innovative esthetic. By defamiliarizing and accentuating preexisting materials, they rechannel energies in new directions, generating a space of negotiation outside of the binaries of domination and subordination, in ways that convey specific cultural and even autobiographical

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inflections. We are not suggesting, in any case, that jujitsu should ever be the only alternative strategy. We would argue for multiple strategies, for infiltrating the dominant, transforming the dominant, kidnapping the dominant, creating alternatives to the dominant, even ignoring the dominant. In a context of marginalization, however, jujitsu becomes crucial. Since anti-Eurocentric discourse has historically been placed in a defensive position, it is virtually obliged to turn the hegemonic discourse against itself. All systems of domination, we assume, are "leaky"; the point is to turn such leaks into a flood. Instead of waiting passively for the culture industry to deliver its blockbusters, therefore, instead of waiting for the next Madonna music video with its possibly recuperable subversions, instead of letting the industry do our politics for us, teachers and critics might create and support popular culture along a wider spectrum which would include the kinds of films and videos discussed here: critical First World mass-media texts, Third World films and video, rap music video, the politicized avant-garde, didactic documentaries, the camcorder militancy of media activists, the self-mocking minimalism of public access cable such as "Paper Tiger" or "Deep Dish."[76]

In their respect for difference and plurality, and in their self-consciousness about their own status as simulacra, and as texts that engage with a contemporary, mass-mediated sensibility without losing their sense of activism, the best of the jujitsu films constitute examples of what Hal Foster has called "resistance postmodernism." Jorge Furtado's *Isle of Flowers* (1990) brings Brazil's "garbage esthetic" into a self-consciously postmodern esthetic. Described by its author as a "letter to a Martian who knows nothing of the earth and its social systems," Furtado's fifteen-minute short uses Monty Python-style animation, archival footage, and parodic/reflexive documentary techniques to indict the distribution of wealth and food around the world. The "isle of flowers" of the title is a Brazilian garbage dump where the famished poor are allowed ten minutes to scrounge for food. But this denunciatory material is woven into an ironic treatise about pigs, tomatoes, racism, and the Holocaust (archival footage shows Jews being thrown, garbage-like, into death camp piles). Furtado invokes the old carnival motif of pigs and sausage, but with a political twist; here the pigs eat better than people. We are given a social examination of garbage; the truth of a society is in its detritus. Rather than having the margins invade the center, as in carnival, here the center creates the margins, or, better, there are no margins; the urban bourgeois family is linked to the rural poor via the sausage and the tomato within a web of global relationality. The title of another Brazilian "garbage" film, Eduardo Coutinho's documentary *Boca de Lixo* (The Scavengers, 1993), is triply allusive: literally translated as "mouth of garbage," the title also evokes "red-light district" and "garbage cinema." The film centers on poor Brazilians who live and survive thanks to a garbage dump outside of Rio. But rather than take a miserabilist approach, Countinho shows us people who are inventive, ironic, and critical (they tell the director what not to film and what interpretative mistakes to avoid). Instead of the suspect pleasures of a condescending "sympathy," the middle-class spectator is confronted by vibrant people who dare to dream and to talk back.

But one need not look so far for examples of resistant postmodernism. Popular music, which now almost invariably comes accompanied by visuals, offers countless examples. Unlike classical music, which requires a distanced and contemplative attitude, popular music encourages movement and tries to abolish the separation between performer and spectator within a kinetic, energizing, percussive style. In the 1980s, Robert Mugge's *Black Wax* featured Gil Scott Heron satirizing Ronald Reagan in such media-conscious songs as "B-Movie." The rap videos of Ziggy Marley, the Jungle Brothers, Public Enemy, Queen Latifa, KRSOne, and Arrested Development, similarly, show awareness of the media-saturated nature of the contemporary imaginary, yet do not fall into cynical nihilism. Marley's "Bold Our Story" offers a crash-course in Afro-literacy (complete with a reading list). Queen Latifah's "Ladies First" dishes out Afro-feminism, while Public Enemy's rap video "Burn, Hollywood, Burn" satirizes the stereotypical images proffered by Hollywood. "Can't Truss It" invokes the historical continuities, in a postmodern age supposedly indifferent to history, between the racialized terror of slavery and contemporary police brutality. Such work, as Manthia Diawara points out, has helped create a vibrant Black public sphere, disdainful of integration yet attracting, paradoxically, a host of White admirers and imitators.[77] And in Brazil pop musician intellectuals like Chico Buarque de Holanda, with his samba allegories, Gilberto Gil, with his musical essays on the politics of syncretism (such as "From Bob Dylan to Bob Marley"), and Caetano Veloso, in songs like "Something is Out of Order in the New World Order," provide a model of pleasurable, danceable political/artistic praxis.[78] For decades at the cutting edge of political and esthetic innovation (and of reflexion on the cultural moment and on their own practice), these artists are actively engaged in the political issues of their time. "Popular" in both the box-office sense and the Bakhtinian carnivalesque sense, they are community-based intellectuals. Brazilian musical groups like Olodum and Ile Aiye, meanwhile, not only make their own music videos but also create community schools for practical and anti-Eurocentric education, while constructing "carnival factories" to provide jobs. Their audio-visual-musical texts demonstrate art's capacity to give pleasurable form to social desire, to open new grooves, to mobilize a sense of possibility, to shake the body-politic, to appeal to deeply rooted but socially frustrated aspirations for new forms of work and festivity and community, crystallizing desire in a popular and mass-mediated form.

NOTES

1. Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press and BFI, 1992), p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 186.
3. We have in mind both Jameson's "Third World allegory" essay ("Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text*, No. 15, Fall 1986) and his *Geopolitical Aesthetic*.

65 Quoted in Brian V. Street, *The Savage in Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 99.

66 Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, *The History of Man and Quadrupeds*, trans. William Smellie (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1812), p. 422. Quoted in Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), p. 105.

67 George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (London: Dent, 1978), p. 44.

68 Stuart Hall, "What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture," in Dent, ed., *Black Popular Culture*, p. 27.

69 Kobena Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics," *New Formations*, No. 3 (Winter 1987).

70 The lyrics are cited in Spike Lee (with Lisa Jones), *Uplift the Race: The Construction of School Daze* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

71 Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics."

72 Not surprisingly, the film has been screened in museums and churches, and even for social workers and hairstylists, as a provocative contemplation of the intersection of fashion, politics, and identity.

73 The association is especially ironic given the colonial legacy of slavery and servitude, in which Black men (janitors) and women (maids) were obliged to clean up the "mess" created by White Europeans.

74 *Nice Coloured Girls*' juxtaposition of ethnographic diaries/writings and Aboriginal images is hardly coincidental, since the first photographic and cinematographic representations of Aborigines reflected the culture-bound ethnography of White settlers (Walter Baldwin Spencer's 1901 footage of the Arrente tribe performing a kangaroo dance and rain ceremony marks the historical beginning of ethnographic filmmaking about the Aboriginies.) See Karl C. Heider, *Ethnographic Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 191.

75 Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 211. Filipina critic Felicidad C. Lim argues that Jameson ignores the actual conditions obtaining in the Saroo jeepney factory, a privately owned monopoly aided by the Marcos regime and the site of alienated labor rather than a "utopic cooperative." Lim, unpublished paper, 1993.

76 We would like here to call attention to the Media Alternatives Project (MAP), established in 1990 to introduce multicultural perspectives into American history teaching thorugh the use of independent film/video. See B. Abrash and C. Egan, eds, *Mediating History: The Map Guide to Independent Video* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

77 Manthia Diawara, "Black Studies, Cultural Studies: Performative Acts," *Afterimage*, Vol. 20, No. 3, October 1992).

78 For more on Brazilian popular music, see Charles Perrone, *Masters of Contemporary Brazilian Song: MPB 1965–1985* (Austin: University of Texas, 1989) and Robert Stam, *Subversive Pleasures*.