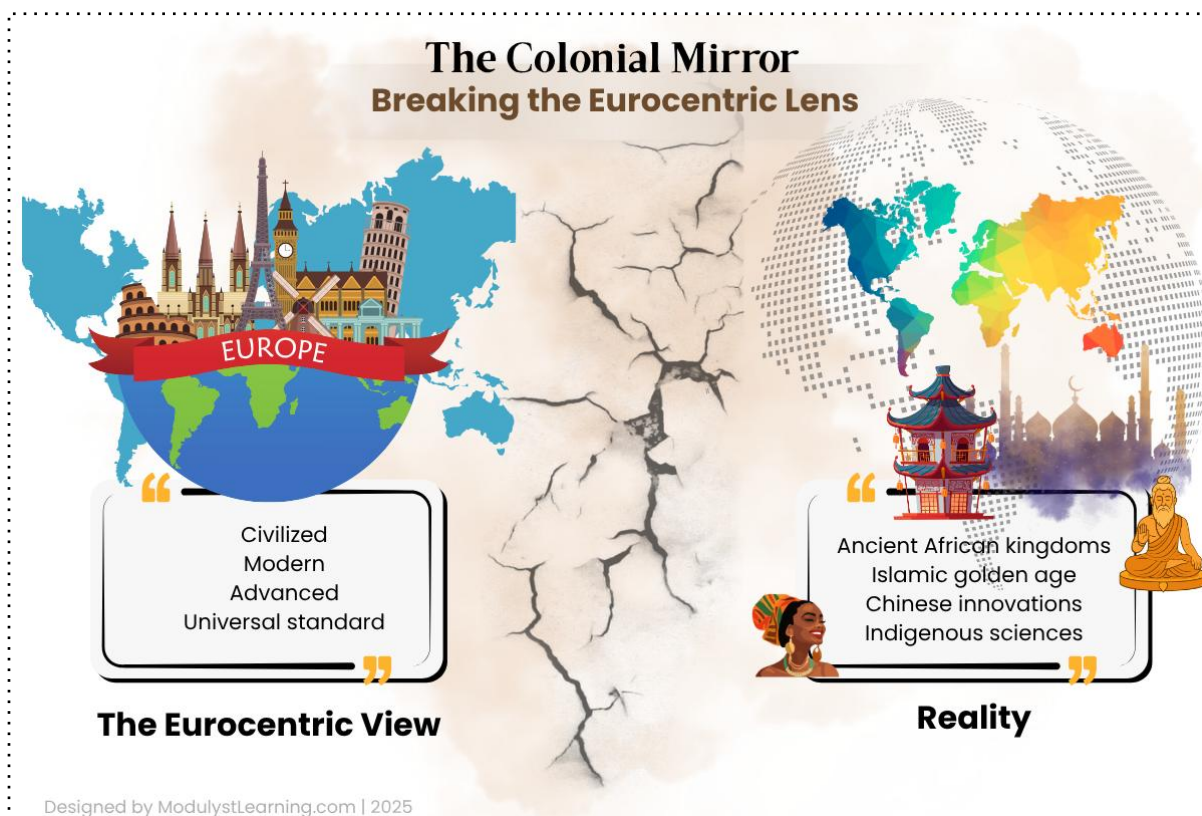


EUROCENTRISM



1. Eurocentrism is an intellectual and cultural perspective that not only views Europe as the standard for all societies but also significantly shapes global power relations. It presumes European superiority and frequently minimizes or overlooks non-European cultures, histories, and knowledge systems. The term gained prominence in postcolonial studies and global history, emphasizing how Western dominance, rooted in Eurocentrism, has shaped worldwide knowledge, history, and power relations.
2. Historical Roots of Eurocentrism –
 - The Renaissance and Enlightenment eras (15th–18th centuries) were pivotal in promoting Eurocentrism. European thinkers like Voltaire and Montesquieu depicted Europe as the birthplace of progress and reason, often at the expense of non-European civilizations, which were viewed as 'exotic,' backward, or primitive. During the Enlightenment, European values such as reason, individualism, and democracy were presented as universal human ideals, further cementing Eurocentrism.

- Colonialism and imperial expansion from the 16th to the 20th centuries, driven by Eurocentrism, saw European powers justify their rule through a civilising mission—claiming to spread European culture, religion, and governance. This Eurocentric perspective often depicted colonized peoples as having no history or civilization until Europeans 'discovered' them, thereby erasing the rich and complex histories of these cultures.
- The Industrial Revolution and modernity, such as industrial capitalism, strengthened the belief that progress equates to Westernization. They also promoted the idea that non-industrial societies were lagging behind a “universal development path” set by Europe.

3. Philosophical and Theoretical Dimensions –

- Epistemological Eurocentrism centers on defining knowledge and truth mainly through Western scientific, rationalist, and secular viewpoints, often neglecting indigenous, spiritual, and oral traditions. For instance, European historians usually date “history” based on written sources, frequently ignoring oral traditions from regions such as Africa and India.
- Historical Eurocentrism depicts world history as a straight line from ancient Greece and Rome to the Modern World, passing through the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Industrial Revolution. This view minimizes the roles of Asia, Africa, and the Americas.
- Cultural Eurocentrism holds that European art, literature, and music serve as the benchmark for global aesthetic standards. It also uses terms like “classical,” “modern,” and “primitive,” which subtly imply hierarchies that prioritize European norms.

4. Manifestations in Various Disciplines –

History often portrays Europe as the “engine of history,” and its examples, such as the 'Age of Discovery,' usually overlook indigenous civilizations. Similarly, in literature, the Canon is dominated by European authors, including figures such as Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe, who are regarded as universal geniuses, often overshadowing other significant writers such as Tagore, Confucius, and Rumi.

The geography section covers maps centered on Europe, such as the Mercator projection, which positions Europe at the center.

Economics considers Western capitalism a universal concept, exemplified by ideas such as "Development" rooted in Western industrial economies.

Sociology and Political Science see European modernity as a representation of Universal Progress. For instance, modernization theories imply that every society ought to adopt the Western trajectory.

Philosophy mainly stems from Greek rationalism, often at the expense of African, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic philosophical traditions.

5. Critiques of Eurocentrism –

Postcolonial Scholars -

- Edward Said's work on Orientalism (1978) demonstrates how Europe portrayed the "Orient" as both enigmatic and subordinate to justify domination.
- Frantz Fanon examined the effects of colonialism on the psychology and culture of the colonized.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o advocates for the decolonization of language and literature.

Global South Perspectives –

- Latin American "decolonial thinkers" such as Anibal Quijano and Walter D. Mignolo, proposed the concept of "coloniality of power," which explains how colonial structures endure beyond political independence. Meanwhile, African scholars highlight the significance of reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems and epistemologies.

Feminist Critiques

- Eurocentric feminism often neglected the intersections of gender with race, colonialism, and culture. Non-Western feminists like Chandra Mohanty and Oyeronke Oyewumi questioned these Western-centered views of emancipation.

6. Consequences of Eurocentrism –

- Distorted Worldview – Non-European perspectives are marginalized or oversimplified.
- Colonised peoples often develop a sense of cultural inferiority as they internalize Western notions of superiority.
- Policy and development biases favor Western models, which are viewed as universal standards for governance and progress.
- Intellectual Dependence – Academic institutions in the Global South often replicate Western frameworks and curricula.

7. Decolonising Knowledge and Thought –

- Rewriting Histories –
 - Focusing on viewpoints from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
 - Recognizing multilinear, rather than unilinear, pathways to modernity.
- Epistemic Pluralism –
 - Valuing indigenous, spiritual, and local knowledge systems.
 - Incorporating oral traditions, community insights, and ecological understanding into educational environments.
- Global South Solidarity –
 - Encouraging South-South collaboration in education, research, and cultural exchange.
- Educational Reform –
 - Updating curricula to incorporate non-European thinkers, histories, and contributions.

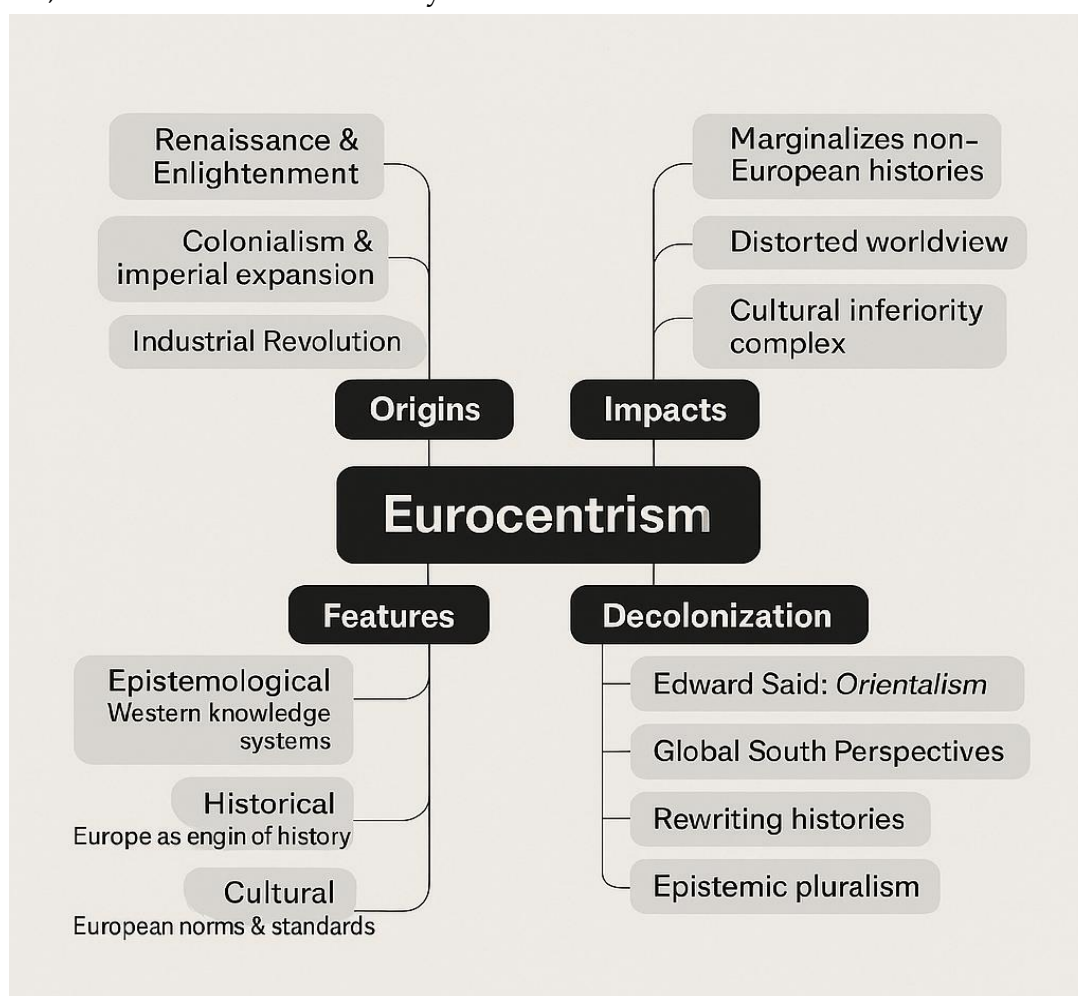
8. Examples of Anti-Eurocentric Initiatives –

- African scholars entirely authored the UNESCO “General History of Africa” Project.
- Subaltern Studies (India): Reframing colonial histories from the viewpoint of marginalized communities.

- Research networks in the Global South—Promoting decolonial and pluriversal approaches.

9. In brief –

Eurocentrism is more than just a geographic perspective; it involves issues of power, representation, and the control of knowledge. Decolonizing thinking requires understanding that no individual culture or civilization holds a monopoly on truth, progress, or the essence of humanity.



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Date of post: 20.07.2026