

5. Anti-Americanism and the Movement against Globalization

EARLIER CHAPTERS have traced the cultural and ideological character of anti-Americanism: how it acts like an obsession or prejudice, impervious to facts, and how it derives from deep-seated European anxieties about the “new world” and the promise it bears for democracy and capitalism. In addition, chapter 4 has shown how anti-Americanism burgeoned in the context of the Iraq war, the experience of which was colored by the memories of twentieth-century totalitarianism. In this chapter, we turn to a different inflection of anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism is certainly not the same as the movement against globalization; indeed there are American opponents of globalization—as free trade—who are hardly anti-American in their cultural and political views. Nonetheless, there is a large overlap between antiglobalization and anti-Americanism, which this chapter explores.

In standard usage, the term “globalization” refers to the economic process of increased international trade and investment associated with a long-term decline in the cost of transportation and communication. The accelerated mobility of both capital and labor ensues, generating the flow of goods, services, and people across

national-political boundaries. This international character of economic activity is hardly new; there is a long prehistory to international trade and long-distance migration. The spread of economic relations across the borders of states has been under way for centuries.

However, objective measurements are just one side of the story; subjective experience is another. Whether one sees globalization as a long-term feature of economic life or as a largely recent phenomenon, it is clear that the public discussion of globalization and, more precisely, the protest movement against globalization emerged suddenly during the 1990s, and this antiglobalization movement continues to resonate in many quarters around the world. (There is some irony in the fact that antiglobalization spread rapidly and with ease across international borders, exemplifying a certain cultural globalization: there is nothing more globalized than the opposition to globalization.) Given the articulation of antiglobalization sentiment in diverse contexts, it is not surprising that political motivations and sentiments are not uniform or homogenous. Hostility to globalization is driven by distinct interests and arguments in different locations: opposing McDonald's franchises in France is not necessarily cut from the same cloth as opposing free trade in developing countries. Nonetheless, there is a shared idiom of protest against globalization that characterizes a subculture from Berlin to Berkeley. At its center is an economic claim. Although most professional economists see free trade and antiprotectionism as preconditions for the production of wealth and overcoming poverty, the critics of globalization typically re-

ject this neoliberalism and call in various, if often vague, ways for regimes of increased protectionism and regulation. On one level, the critique of globalization is therefore about the appeal for increased political intervention in economic processes.

Indeed, the critique of globalization has become the predominant form of anticapitalism in the post-Communist era. Antiglobalization is not only about a protest against transnational processes; it is also about a positive advocacy for expanded political restrictions on the economy. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite states marked the conclusion of a history of an economic idea, the ideal of the planned economy associated with Communism since 1917; the remaining power of Communist parties in China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba clearly has nothing more than a residual character. Communism certainly no longer projects a world-revolutionary project, as was once the case in the heyday of Russian prominence. Yet while the Communist critique of capitalism has essentially ceased to command any serious attention, the critiques of globalization have taken its place, continuing the attack on the market economy, typically with no reflection on the historical failure of the communist enterprise. It is therefore more than a coincidence that antiglobalization became a popular ideology only once the bipolar world of the cold war came to a definitive end: it has filled the space that Communism vacated.

Antiglobalization, as post-Communist anticapitalism, restages the antagonism between political and economics actors (i.e., between the state and the market,

reflecting alternative orientations toward geographic space). The components of globalization, especially more cost-efficient transportation and communication, involve capabilities to reduce the relative importance of spatial location. The global economy is therefore marked by the heightened mobility of goods, information, wealth, and labor. In contrast, political power is classically sedentary. It has traditionally been exercised through particular political units (i.e., states), which are defined in territorial terms. This spatiality of political power is not only a modern phenomenon; on the contrary, it reflects the nature of power and force in the human condition altogether. However, the priority of territorial identity took on an amplified importance in the modern age with its emphasis on the nation-state and the derivation of sovereignty from the people as defined in residential terms. Democracy derives its legitimacy from the will of the people inhabiting an area ruled by the state. This spatialization of political power stands at odds with the transgressive mobility associated with trade, in particular, and globalization more broadly. The critique of globalization therefore involves an effort to reassert the primacy of territory over exchange and of the state over economy. The formula is surely not the same as the erstwhile communist model of the nationalization of private property, but it does imply homologous efforts to maintain and strengthen regimes of regulation, as opposed to deregulation, and therefore to restrict aspects of free trade. Antiglobalization advocates the reassertion of the power of the state against the freedom of the market.

Yet this characterization of antiglobalization as the post-Communist form of anticapitalism only catches one dimension, the debate over economic policies, which is frequently overshadowed by other more subjective and affectively charged issues. In other words, the discourse of antiglobalization is arguably less the consequence of the acceleration of international trade and more the product of certain political, rather than economic, shifts. For what is at stake is not only the collapse of communism as an economic paradigm but the corollary emergence of the United States as the one political and military superpower. The rise of American power of course began much earlier, at the latest in the era of the First World War, but its significance only became fully clear with the end of the cold war and the disappearance of any credible challenge to American primacy. Antiglobalization, strictly speaking, may entail an economic protest (no matter how dubious the economics) against capitalism, but in practice, it is inseparable from hostility to the spread of American political influence as well.

In many instances, anticapitalism and anti-Americanism are indistinguishable in the discourse of antiglobalization, except that anti-Americanism typically includes hostility to American foreign policy and cultural influence that may not be directly associated with economic matters, narrowly defined. The economic critique of globalization is heuristically separable from other elements; in practice, the economic campaign against inadequate labor conditions in third world factories is closely intertwined with ecological advocacy for

the Kyoto Treaty, human-rights concerns about indigenous peoples, feminist support for women's rights, and the legalistic expansion of institutions of international governance (such as the International Criminal Court). In this diverse and multi-issue field of international protest, in which anticapitalism and anti-Americanism overlap, many ideological components play important roles.

Of particular concern is a disproportionate focus on Israel and Palestine, accorded attention far beyond that given other local conflicts (e.g., Chechnya, Kashmir, Kurdistan, or Tibet). Anticapitalism has always carried some messy intellectual baggage, including a predisposition to associate capitalism and Judaism. In the context of American support for Israel, a virulent strand of antisemitism has developed that further complicates the antiglobalization discourse. Antiglobalization, in other words, is embedded in a strange political culture that combines anti-Americanism, anticapitalism, and antisemitism, along with a generalized resistance to modernity and the free market.

In order to understand this potent mix of ideological currents, it is helpful to look at two key intellectual and literary exponents of this diffuse development. Neither the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard nor the Indian author Arundhati Roy is, strictly speaking, a leader of the antiglobalization movement (although Roy in fact is quite engaged as an activist opposing large dam-building projects in India). For our purposes here, the key is not their specific positions on particular political issues but rather the larger worldview that they convey and its

symptomatic standing for the nature of antiglobalization, as it overlaps with anti-Americanism.

JEAN BAUDRILLARD AND THE
PROTEST AGAINST UNIFORMITY

The philosophical agenda of antiglobalization involves the defense of multiplicity as against domination by a uniform power, of plurality as against singularity. The movement itself has a pluralistic appearance. Antiglobalization involves advocacy for multiple issues, each with its own legitimacy, local significance, and moral standing. Yet in fact this diversity of positions quickly succumbs to the process of homogenization: antiglobalization rapidly imposes a global logic, a uniform one-size-fits-all argument, onto the multiplicity of different claims. In other words, the protest movement ends up reproducing the same totalizing logic that it has projected onto its adversary. The result is the paranoid vision of a totalizing opponent—the notion that American power is so great that it is responsible for any mishap in the world—as well as a predisposition toward the internal repression of difference, ambiguity, and debate. The antiglobalization movement is not the Communist Party, but there is little room to deviate from the accepted “line.”

This implosion, by which antiglobalization globalizes itself, can be traced particularly clearly in the writings of the French philosopher and social theorist Jean Baudrillard, especially in his generalized account (written after the September 11 attacks) of a battle between

singularity and particularity. For Baudrillard, globalization means not only the international expansion of the market but also the spread of the universe of symbols: a merely economic protectionism is therefore hopelessly inadequate against what he designates as semiotic promiscuity. “In cultural terms, it is the promiscuity of all signs and values, in other words, pornography. Because the global diffusion of anything through the network amounts to promiscuity, there is no need for sexual obscenity.”¹ The resistance to this symbolic exchange takes on diverse, indeed antagonistic forms; in this sense, Baudrillard recognizes the internal multiplicity of antiglobalization.² Yet quickly all resistance is defined as a hostility to the same enemy, and the internal process of homogenization ensues. It becomes the conformism of the nonconformists.

It was, for Baudrillard, September 11 that concretized this inversion: a single, all-encompassing, global logic took over the vision of antiglobalization. The protest movement against uniformity succumbed to its own negative vision. Suddenly, all local strategies of terrorism, with their specific causes and goals, were seen as culminating in the same, all-defining act of terrorism. For Baudrillard, “Terrorism is an act that restores an irreducible particularity in the middle of a generalized exchange system. All particularities (species, individuals, cultures) which today challenge the establishment of global circulation directed by one single power take

1. Jean Baudrillard, *Power Inferno* (Paris: Galilée, 2002), 67.

2. Cf. *ibid.*, 72.

their revenge and their death through this terrorist transformation of the situation.”³ Not only does Baudrillard—like other European intellectuals discussed in chapter 2—thereby provide an explicit defense of terrorism. He also subsumes all local practices of resistance into the unifying logic of the one grand terrorist deed. The movement that began as the advocacy of difference against the empire of sameness ends up imposing its own sameness on all its components.

One intriguing implication of Baudrillard’s claim—that all local resistance to globalization was already inherent in the September 11 attacks—is that the allegedly extensive international expressions of solidarity in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the protestations of compassion and identification with the United States, may have been less than sincere, perhaps even only superficial and perfunctory. The discussion of public opinion data in chapter 1 corroborates this claim. One can conclude that the turn of European opinion against the United States in the subsequent year, particularly in regard to the Iraq war, had less to do with the alleged diplomatic failures of the Bush administration than with an ambiguity inherent in those initial expressions of sympathy, which were never very far from the accusation that the attacks were actually deserved. For our purposes here, however, what is more important than the slide in European public opinion is the question of how

3. Jean Baudrillard, “The Spirit of Terrorism,” trans. Kathy Ackerman, *Telos* 121 (Fall 2001), 135.

antiglobalization globalizes itself into a single logic, undermining its original multiplicity.

A single world power is cast in an apocalyptic struggle with a singularized opposition: two omnipresent agents in a Manichean paranoia. There is no longer any particularity that stands outside the all-consuming global antagonism, and consequently, no individuality either. The anxiety of the government security apparatus that terrorists may lurk anywhere is actually quite moderate when contrasted with the mentality of the protest movement, the persecution complex of the globalization-critics. They rigorously ascribe all evil to the United States and its capitalism: nothing is beyond American power, nothing beyond American control, no misfortune for which American capitalism is not guilty.

Meanwhile, the critics of globalization claim for themselves the moral superiority derived from the position of underdevelopment: their de facto celebration of backwardness is taken as the foundation for a critique of civilization. The contrast with all ideologies of progress, even including classical Marxism, is quite clear. For Marxists, backwardness only meant poverty; for the opponents of globalization, backwardness is imagined to be the guarantor of genuine intelligence and ethical judgment. Ultimately, this represents a late version of the romantic fascination with “the noble savage.” Baudrillard casts this superior primitive as a terrorist, while Roy, as we will see, ends up in the celebration of indigenous culture and hostility to the West.

For Baudrillard, antiglobalization, including terrorism, is the result of globalized modernity, not in the

obvious sense that globalization may provoke resistance among its victims but in the sense that the totalizing system itself yearns for its own destruction. Terrorism is not, he argues, the result of some exterior force that opposes modernization but “the verdict and the sentence that this society directs at itself.”⁴ This claim is fully consistent with Baudrillard’s more extreme formulation with regard to September 11 that there is “a terrorist imagination in all of us. . . . Basically, they did it, but we wanted it.”⁵ In both cases, his argument involves claiming that antiglobalization, even in its most destructive form, does not come from the outside but expresses the self-destructive desire of modernity itself. As a theoretician of antiglobalization, however, what he demonstrates in fact is the opposite: the manner in which diverse cultural positions or singularities dissolve into a generalized movement driven by the paranoid vision of an undifferentiated and inescapable market. In other words, the pathological projection is not, as Baudrillard claims, the result of modernity but rather, the characteristic perspective of the critics of globalization, who fantasize conspiracies and contamination everywhere. Capitalism becomes the pandemic against which local virtue must protect itself by resisting promiscuity. Baudrillard’s identification of this anxiety regarding semiotic contamination is useful in explaining the moment of sexual repression in antiglobalization—the reluctance to criticize the Taliban is evidence on this

4. Baudrillard, *Power Inferno*, 83.

5. Baudrillard, “The Spirit of Terrorism,” 134.

point—and betrays the repressive and xenophobic predisposition in the movement, the fear of contact with the foreign. This outcome is particularly clear in the next example.

ARUNDHATI ROY AND THE FEAR OF THE FOREIGN

Baudrillard himself typically maintains a scholarly and sociological distance from his material. Even while attacking the homogenizing power of global capitalism, in a way that is clearly directed against the United States, his anti-Americanism remains muffled and camouflaged by the conventions and forms of a generalizing and abstract social theory. His essays represent the cool end of the spectrum of the rhetorical registers of antiglobalization.

The writings of Arundhati Roy present a strikingly different model. To be sure, Roy's account resembles Baudrillard's to the extent that both elaborate a worldview that links an antidevelopmental cult of backwardness to strident antiglobalization: maintaining the local becomes a universal program. Yet Roy displays none of Baudrillard's conceptual abstraction and objective tone. Instead of scholarly distance, her critique of globalization grows shrill, and her anti-Americanism takes on an urgent ring. For this reason, the essays she has written as a public intellectual have been criticized for the lack of serious substance, and the political effect of her role in protest movements has been subject to skeptical scrutiny. Nonetheless, the character of her discourse—rather than the substance of her claims and arguments—is of

interest in this context, since it illuminates some features of the affect and projections associated with anti-globalization. Why does anti-Americanism as antiglobalization sometimes sound fanatic?

Roy earned international acclaim with her novel *The God of Small Things*, which won the Booker Prize in 1997. (A critic of globalization, she nonetheless belongs to the growing group of celebrity authors who address a global readership and who are not easily categorized in traditional national-literary terms.) Building on her literary success, she launched herself on a second career as a political activist, writing polemical essays against India's big dam-building projects and the nuclear bomb ("The Cost of Living," 1999), and against the globalization of the energy industry (*Power Politics*, 2001). Critics on the left have questioned the integrity of her positions, suggesting that it is more her celebrity status than her engagement that is at stake; critics on the right have properly queried her consistent antiwesternism.⁶ Yet aside from the ambiguities of her political position, her writing is noteworthy insofar as the style itself testifies to underlying predispositions: her own and, hypothetically, those of the movement against globalization more broadly. By looking closely at Roy's writings, we can inquire into the character of antiglobalization.

Roy's public discourse tends to replace reasoned ar-

6. Ramachandra Guha, "The Arun Shourie of the Left," *The Hindu* Nov. 26, 2000; Ian Buruma, "The Anti-American," *The New Republic Online*, March 17, 2003, <http://www.tnr.com>.

gument with affective performance. Indeed she frequently makes emotional responses her topic, rather than the phenomena that elicit those responses. She simultaneously flaunts an exaggerated affect of her own. Thus, for example, in the midst of an otherwise expository essay, she breaks out into the cry “. . . hear the thrumming, the deadly drumbeat of burgeoning anger. Please. Please, stop the war now.”⁷ In this case she is referring to the Afghanistan war and the erroneous expectation that it would elicit enormous resistance, leading to a disastrous outcome comparable to that of the Soviet invasion. Yet the issue here is not that she was wrong in this particular instance (as she may be in others). What is remarkable is her stylistic readiness to shift out of a modicum of rational debate into an overwrought language of direct address, threat, and exaggeration. She allows her writing to become so emotional, however, because her analysis is itself focused on questions of affective response: she is less concerned with facts or political processes than with sentiments and psychological predispositions. Her ultimate topic is subjectivity, and she addresses it in a subjective manner. Thus we find her dwelling on the “prevailing paranoia,” and the “raging emotions [that] are being let loose into the world.”⁸ It follows then that she characterizes the U.S. population not in terms of any imaginable analysis of political interests or traditions—its attitudes are not

7. Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2001), 140.

8. *Ibid.*, 139.

taken that seriously—or in terms of political parties or competing candidates but solely as the victim of an emotional manipulation. Political slogans “are cynically doled out by government spokesmen like a daily dose of vitamins or anti-depressants. Regular medication ensures that mainland America continues to remain the enigma it has always been—a curiously insular people, administered by a pathologically meddling promiscuous government.”⁹ This fear of promiscuity, already identified in Baudrillard’s account, will recur in our reading of Roy. The discourse of antiglobalization seems to be carried by the imagery of contamination. For now, suffice it to note this congruence of hypersubjectivism and anti-Americanism. The enormous threat that she imagines America to pose is not substantiated in political terms, where it might be debated; it is turned instead into emotion and affect.

As with other critics of U.S. foreign policy, Roy refuses to ask whether there might be some rationality in the U.S. political consensus. Instead, she resorts to the thesis of a totally manipulated public, driven by emotion and devoid of reason. Emotion trumps argument, but this verdict that she directs at the American public is in fact an appropriate characterization of her own speech. Hence the relative absence of any economic theory (which might have been expected in the discussion of major economic phenomena) and the curious confusion of categories in the political discussion: she can never quite explain if she is arguing for more state reg-

9. *Ibid.*, 144.

ulation of the economy or for less state bureaucracy in order to diminish corruption. She rarely gets to this point of clarification, and her refusal to develop rational argument drives a further prominent feature of her essayistic prose: the stylistic preference for rhetorical questions, indeed, frequently the string of rhetorical questions—a gesture that allows her to pretend that she possesses a simple answer, which others ought to know already, while absolving her of an obligation to divulge the presumed answer and defend it with argument. This series of questions therefore amounts to a rhetoric of arrogance, the goal of which is presumably to counterfeit a logical high ground, but the result is the constant demonstration of the limits of her thinking. Even positively predisposed and well-meaning readers can only be disappointed by her constant refusal to follow through on a line of argument.

Her writing displays a marked preference for blanket dismissiveness and innuendo. References to the free press or the free market are placed in quotation marks, to indicate denigration, without ever elaborating on the problem suggested: an easy way to convey a hostile stance without accepting the responsibility of explaining why she thinks a free press and a free market are not desirable institutions. Similarly, she has a propensity to indicate the policies she opposes by personalizing them, associating them with typically unnamed figures whom she briefly describes in derogatory ways, a strategy designed to establish a cozy relationship of prejudice with her reader. As discussed in chapter 3, she conjures up at one point “a marrowy American panelist” at a con-

ference; no other panelist is described, nor is any member of another nation given this sort of physical presence.¹⁰ In a separate passage, another American is described as “rolling his R’s in his North American way,” as if having an accent were the crime.¹¹ More important than her claims regarding the policies she opposes—and these claims never even rise to the level of coherent argument—is this strategy to personalize and demean her opponent rhetorically: as if the pronunciation or the body type alone were sufficient grounds to reject the stance associated with anonymous American individuals. Her rhetorical success, however, lies precisely in her propagandistic ability to establish this anti-American bond with her readers: not based on policy debate but through hostile caricatures of accent and physical appearance.

This direction of animosity toward individuals because of physical appearance, accent, and nationality is an expression of the strategy of stereotyping and racialization that pervades Roy’s prose in multiple ways. In some cases, it is quite pronounced and polemical. Thus, for example, in her attack on the Indian development of nuclear weapons, she deftly redirects the reader’s anger away from India or the Indian government that developed the weapon and toward the presumed real culprit: the white race. “[Nuclear weapons] are purveyors of madness. They are the ultimate colonizer. Whiter than any white man that ever lived. The very heart of

10. *Ibid.*, 41.

11. *Ibid.*, 36.

whiteness.”¹² The Indian nuclear arsenal is, apparently, not the fault of the Indian government but of the westerners who invented the weapons. Indeed she not only insists that it was the West, (i.e., the United States) that initiated the nuclear arms race, but she also goes on to make nuclear weaponry identical with a racial enemy: it is the opponent’s corporeal difference that elicits hatred. Hence her explicit condemnation of the West: “These are people whose histories are spongy with the blood of others. . . . They have plundered nations, snuffed out civilizations, exterminated entire populations.”¹³ One looks in vain for nuance in the judgment; instead one finds the blanket condemnation of the white West (as if the West were solely white) as a whole, which stands as a universal and ineluctable threat.

The only alternative, for Roy, seems to lie in the idealized self-sufficiency of the village past.¹⁴ Absolute identity, without foreign presence, without external exchange, and without modernization, amounts to the antiglobal utopia, and it stands in contrast to the infinite threats associated with the outside world. This infinite menace, exuded by the all-powerful West, takes the form of the all-destructive bomb and assaults mind and body in what is ultimately the expression of a paranoid worldview: unlimited danger is always everywhere. The only possible safety is in a retreat to the absolute origin of undifferentiation.

12. Arundhati Roy, *The Cost of Living* (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 101.

13. *Ibid.*, 112.

14. *Ibid.*, 53.

This worldview, the search for an absolute self-identity and the rejection of outside forces as always only destructive, finds its fullest expression in Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*. Although the book does touch on some political matters—Indian Communism, the labor movement, the relationship to colonialism—it is not primarily a tendentious or explicitly engaged novel; it therefore stands at odds with Roy's polemical essays, which are very much directed toward a political public sphere. In particular, it would be difficult to say that *The God of Small Things* takes an explicit position on globalization, except perhaps in the peripheral denigration of tourism; this, however, is only a minor part of the novel. Nonetheless, as a whole it is in fact driven by a logic that corroborates the antiglobalization of Roy's engagement elsewhere and that therefore can serve as a further indication of the tendencies and pressures at stake in the critique of globalization. On multiple levels, one finds the constant celebration of indigenous nativist substance and the corollary denunciation of all that is foreign. The strident antiwesternism and the hatred of whiteness evidenced in her essays are very much compatible with the substance of the novel.

In terms of aesthetic culture, two key events structure the work: the fictional family's visit to a cinema to see *The Sound of Music* and a performance of traditional Indian kathakali dance. The former scene turns into a site of depravity—not the film itself, but the foyer of the theater where the young boy is molested. Roy depicts modernity, at least the modernity of Western cinema, as the site of perversion. In contrast, kathakali

is presented as the opposite of tourism, the source of a cultural authenticity that opposes the forms of the Western culture industry. Roy conveys an aesthetic program of familiarity and community—precisely the antipode to cinematic suspense: “It didn’t matter that the story had begun, because kathakali discovered long ago that the secret of the Great Stories is that they *have* no secrets. The Great Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again.”¹⁵ The organic communalism of traditional dance performance is mobilized as an alternative to touristic commercialism and to the degradation of entertainment cinema. The move is reminiscent of other celebrations of oral cultures in literary criticism, in particular, the literary critic Walter Benjamin’s suggested opposition between story-telling and novel-writing.¹⁶ Yet while Benjamin emphasized the moment of community as an alternative to a lonely and isolated individuality, Roy pushes the model in another direction, toward the assertion of the positive value of familiarity. Her point is not community, or—more bluntly—collectivized communalism, as for Benjamin, but the maintenance of a pure homogeneity. Her cultural program is a return: to that which is not foreign, to family and the familiar, a return ultimately to native soil and native blood. Her critique of globalization turns into the fear of the foreign.

15. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New York: Harper, 1998), 218.

16. Cf. Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968), 83–110.

As a whole, the plot of the novel therefore necessarily involves a return to the native village. In terms of the family structure that organizes the fiction, the erotic relations between Indians and Western foreigners all end in failure. *The God of Small Things* might easily, and appropriately, be read as a denunciation of miscegenation. The novel suggests that the whiteness that Roy otherwise condemns is incompatible with the Indian body. This sexualized xenophobia draws attention to how a typically left-wing antiglobalization sentiment can overlap with a sometimes right-wing hostility to immigration, since both are concerned with the integrity of borders. In Roy's novel, Rahel's brief marriage to an American is particularly insipid and short-lived, while Chacko's marriage to an Englishwoman ends in divorce, and their only child drowns. In a moment of particular cruelty, the novel concludes with a sexualized humiliation of the bereaved mother. Other encounters with the West are similarly degraded, including a dalliance between the aunt and a Catholic priest. Throughout the novel, moreover, tourism corrupts: the son of a Communist figure, bearing the name "Lenin," fears that this nomenclature may offend Western foreigners and therefore masquerades as "Levin." The Jewish name is associated with the West and represents a humorously diminutive contrast to the threatening revolutionary reference "Lenin." The antisemitism of this labeling lies in the suggestion of inferiority, the presentation of the Jewish name as meek in contrast to the heroic "Lenin." Meanwhile the Anglophilia of the central family remains the novel's major problem. Apparently, for Roy,

nothing good ever came of study abroad or foreign spouses.

Although foreignness is the problem, the solution lies in the search for an absolute local identity: this is the cultural program that mirrors antiglobalization. The colonial mentality of yearning for Britain gives way to a new feeling of being at home in India. Yet for Roy, this goes far beyond decolonization. That search for identity leads to the novel's culmination in the incestuous love of the two twins, Rahel and Esta—a desire for endogamy as Roy's extreme expression of the fear of globalization. Promiscuity (Baudrillard's problem too, as we have seen) evidently includes any marrying outside of the native culture. In contrast, the love affair with Indian culture, staged particularly in the kathakali dance, betrays a narcissism that culminates in self-love, the corollary to which is the hatred of the other. Hence, the contempt for the outside world, the disdain for Anglophilia, and the requirement that the novel kill off the half-breed child of the mixed marriage. No family ties between England and India are allowed to survive as the children of mixed relations die off. Hence also the historical frame that is placed analytically around the novel's investigation. The problem, so the narrator asserts, began long before the plot itself: “. . . it actually began thousands of years ago. Long before the Marxists came. Before the British took Malabar, before the Dutch Ascendency” and so forth. Indeed the claim is made that it preceded all such imperialism and “that it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And

how much.”¹⁷ To be sure, the chronology does not erase the imperialist legacy for Roy, but an original sin precedes all such occupations. The “laws of love” pertain to prohibitions of love across castes—the affair between the protagonist Ammu, and the untouchable Velutha—but also the taboo against incest. The latter is at the core of the logic: the anthropological mandate to exogamy generates a pressure to disrupt original identity, and the resistance to that pressure turns into the paranoid fear of the exterior and of foreignness. Hostility to the outside is the indirect expression of erotic attraction to the other, which has to be suppressed. Roy’s novel has the advantage of making clear the psychological and cultural forces at operation in the mentality of antiglobalization and its proximity to xenophobia.

THEODOR ADORNO: ON THE
INAPPROPRIATENESS OF ANTI-AMERICANISM

Baudrillard and Roy seem to present different accounts of antiglobalization. For Baudrillard, it is a matter of opposition to the force of total uniformity; for Roy, a nationalistic resentment against foreignness. Yet these are ultimately just two sides of the same coin, linked moreover to a generalized resentment against modernization, development, and capitalism. Anti-Americanism is the result. In order to sort through some of these issues, it is helpful to turn to an older tradition, the “Critical Theory” of the Frankfurt School, especially the writ-

17. Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 33.

ings of the German philosopher Theodor Adorno. Classical Critical Theory was nothing if not an inquiry into the genealogy of fanaticism as a political and social-psychological phenomenon, both with regard to the virulence of fascist movements in the 1930s and to aspects of student movements in the 1960s. For all the obvious differences, there were deep similarities, particularly in the overlap of anti-Americanism and hostility to modernization.

Before approaching Adorno's cultural judgments, it is important to point out some undeniable limitations of Critical Theory, especially with regard to globalization and other objective social and economic processes. The Frankfurt School inherited many of Marxism's failings, especially an underdeveloped interest in the institutional relationship of the state to the market; descriptions of social processes were based primarily on ideological claims and the political program, rather than on empirical observation or genuine data. In particular, the question of the relationship between the political and economic sectors of modern society was treated with enormous oversimplification. For classical Marxism, there was ultimately no separate political or public sphere, since state action was treated as always mirroring ruling class economic interest: hence the predisposition to propose deterministic accounts of society and an inability to address questions of practice, at least in mainstream Marxism. If one assumes that everything is only economics, there is little room for independent political considerations.

However, this reductionist treatment of politics as

merely economics in disguise took on a new color during the second third of the twentieth century, marked as it was by various examples of massive state intervention in the economy. It is tempting to venture the claim that the expansive state of the era of National Socialism and Stalinism was a serendipitous topic for Critical Theory's Marxism, since in those instances, the opportunity to distinguish between market and state was in fact minimal. The older Marxist vice of treating the political sphere as the direct function of economics suddenly turned into a virtue in an era in which state intervention in the economy had expanded enormously. In this context of extensive state regulation (in totalitarian regimes, of course, much more than in Western, democratic welfare states, but there as well), the question of the distinction between state and market became less pronounced. Just as classical nineteenth-century Marxism had had little to say about the state or the specificity of politics, early twentieth-century Critical Theory had even less to say about the specificity of economics. In any case, this intellectual history clearly demonstrates the limits of the pertinence of Critical Theory to the objective economic discussion of globalization, be it with regard to the empirical processes of political economy or the policy questions associated with regulation and deregulation.

However, while Critical Theory has little to contribute to empirical social-scientific analysis or economic policy (but of course neither do the competing models of cultural theory, neo-Marxism and post-structuralism, at the beginning of the twenty-first century), it

is nonetheless useful in the interrogation of the overlapping fields of antiglobalization and anti-Americanism. Our terrain of inquiry therefore shifts from the primary question of globalization as the economic consequence of the international market in goods and services to another set of issues: the cultural consequences of globalization and, in particular, the emergence of the prominent and complex discourse of antiglobalization.

Why has antiglobalization taken the place of Communist anticapitalism? If globalization in fact produces so much wealth, why does it elicit so much opposition? Or more pointedly: how and why does antiglobalization inherit the hostility to modernization that has motivated earlier protest movements? Such a rejection is often associated with stereotypical anti-Americanism and frequently with antisemitism as well. Approaching the globalization debate as a cultural rather than an economic matter invites an analysis parallel to the cultural criticism of Nazism carried out by Critical Theory. The framework of this essay is too narrow to reconstruct the full range of the Frankfurt School's accounts of fascism and antisemitism, or even their sparse comments on the state and economy. Still it is illuminating to contrast some of Adorno's more pointed analyses, especially in the volume *Stichworte* (Catchwords),¹⁸ with the paradigmatic critiques of globalization exemplified by the

18. Theodor W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). This volume includes translations of the two separate German volumes named in the subtitle.

writings of Baudrillard and Roy. What does Critical Theory suggest with regard to the particular psychology of antiglobalization? The question is pertinent because the discontent with modernity that Critical Theory identified in fascism and antisemitism has reappeared today in the movement against globalization.

Published in 1969, *Stichworte* was the last volume of Adorno's work that he was able to oversee before his death, and it includes some of the seminal analyses on the intersection of politics and culture. At the center of the volume are three essays that define his legacy with regard to our current concerns: the standing of national identity, the relationship of Germany and Europe to the United States, and the question of postfascist culture. Frankfurt School thinking revolves particularly around the last point: a judgment on the possibilities of culture and politics in the wake of National Socialism and the Holocaust. The essay "Education after Auschwitz" puts forward both a fragmentary social psychology of the mentality that supported the Nazi regime and a program for a pedagogy against cruelty. Although classical and orthodox Marxism, from which Critical Theory diverged, emphasized claims about the so-called developmental laws of capitalism and Lenin's theory of revolution, Adorno was concerned with the failure of revolutionary projects, the paradoxical motivation of populations to support fascism, and their attraction to opting against freedom. How can we explain the attraction exercised by brutality, domination, and tyrannical authority? His answers are in many ways framed by his own historical context, the experience of the Hitler re-

gime, the growing knowledge of the terror of Stalinism, and his encounter with the mass-cultural democracy of the United States of the 1940s. Yet what remains particularly compelling is his criticism of underlying processes of forced collectivism and his corollary identification of the antidote in an insistence on autonomous individuality. Adorno's dialectic of individuality and collectivism, forged in the statist and Fordist era of the midcentury, takes on a renewed urgency in the context of late twentieth-century debates between neoliberalism and antiglobal anticapitalism.

Consider Adorno's diagnosis of the capacity of individuals to participate in the persecution of others. Formulated with direct reference to the Holocaust, his explanation does not involve assertions of long-standing prejudice, tragic flaws in German culture, or the sort of allegedly atavistic ethnic hatred with which journalists glossed the wars in the Balkans. Instead, he describes a modern social psychology. The overarching integration of society, a forced conformism like the Nazi *Gleichschaltung*, the consolidation of institutional power under Hitler, undermines the vitality of local institutions and individual personalities. Free space for free people dwindles away. "The pressure exerted by the prevailing universal on everything particular, upon the individual people and the individual institutions, has a tendency to destroy the particular and the individual together with their power of resistance. With the loss of their identity and power of resistance, people also forget those qualities by virtue of which they are able to pit themselves against what at some moment might lure them again to

commit atrocity. Perhaps they are hardly able to offer resistance when the established authorities once again give them the order, so long as it is in the name of some ideal in which they half or not at all believe.”¹⁹ The collectivization of society (i.e., the massive expansion of the state into previously unregulated spheres of social life) weakens local identity structures, which then become ever more susceptible to a renewed participation in brutality: it becomes all the more likely that one will just follow orders. In other words, a general, nearly inescapable so-called rationalization of society is the precondition for unreasonable and irrational behavior. The more everything falls under some central control, the more civilization declines. For Adorno, the civilizing ability of society depends above all on the particularity of individuals rather than on the framing institutions of social control. Human accomplishments result from individual integrity, not from normative regulation. However, as the collectivizing state subverts the integrity of individuals—for Adorno a historical process, the inexorable inevitability of which he surely overstated in a way that, in retrospect, seems typical for mid-twentieth-century critics of a conformist modernity—individuals lose the power to resist invitations to take part in cruelty. Understanding how to promote such a resistance is, for Adorno, the *sine qua non* of any “education after Auschwitz.” The real alternative to totalitarianism is individual integrity.

For our purposes, it is important to determine how

19. *Ibid.*, 193–194.

Adorno's insistence on individualism as the vehicle for resistance to conformism can be mapped onto the terrain of globalization and antiglobalization. The alternative to conformism (the consequence of an expansive state) is not some better conformism but rather the opposite: a strengthened individuality and the consistent rejection of all collectivisms. "I think the most important way to confront the danger of a recurrence [of Auschwitz] is to work against the brute predominance of all collectives, to intensify the resistance to it by concentrating on the problem of collectivization. That is not as abstract as it sounds in view of the passion with which especially young and progressively minded people desire to integrate themselves into something or other."²⁰ Protest movements, in other words, may just reproduce the conformism against which they seemed to be opposed. For Adorno, the solution does not lie in the assertion of a minority group identity against a majority identity, or even in the evocation of a collective solidarity with a suffering group. Collectivized solidarity, on the contrary, is—owing to its collectivism—antithetical to human compassion, which depends instead on the possibility of individual sensibility. The best way to work against a repetition of Auschwitz is to oppose collectivist mentalities and the structures, be they political, cultural, or psychological, that support them.

Adorno's Critical Theory is significant for contemporary discussions in two distinct ways. First, it entails the critique of a blind activism. Even admirable ideals

20. *Ibid.*, 197.

can be discredited by their flawed pursuit; the ends do not justify the means. His criticism of the West German student movement of the 1960s remains relevant to aspects of the antiglobalization movement and its propensity to engage in street violence and vandalism, as became clear in the riots in Seattle and Genoa. Second, with regard to the problem of a homogenizing collectivism, Adorno's vision tilts very much toward the defense of the individual against the state—and is hence objectively neoliberal, no matter how anachronistic that term may be for the analysis of Adorno in his historical context. The logic of Adorno's critique of totalitarianism implies the desideratum of a smaller state, not expanded regulation: more individualistic entrepreneurs, fewer regulatory agencies. This however suggests that his thinking is orthogonal to the central motif of antiglobalization, the appeal for greater regulation of the market, be it in the form of "local" protectionism or through international bureaucracies and agreements. In the end, the defense of autonomy and particularity means that Adorno's implied economic theory—despite his Marxist background—is closer to Hayek than to Stiglitz.

Adorno's defense of individualism against collectivism pervades the following two essays in *Stichworte*, which should be read in relation to each other: "On the Question: What Is German" and "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America." The two texts convey Adorno's complex relations to both German and American culture, marked by the characteristic ambivalence of affection for and critique of each. The two essays, read together, explore the antinomies of modern

culture, the philosophical humanities that define Adorno's German world, and the empirical social science of the United States. As is well known, Adorno remained deeply critical of that empiricism, and he was always more at home in the world of German speculative thought than in modern quantitative social science. His unexpectedly warm account of his American experience is, therefore, even more striking. His evaluation of America pertains to the globalization discussion to the extent that the latter is largely about the United States and an anti-Americanism that Adorno, for all his high-culture mandarinism, never endorsed. In other words, Adorno had all the European high-cultural biases that might have made him an elitist anti-American; instead, however, he expressed approval for American culture and denounced the German anti-Americanism of the 1960s.

Yet even more important than deciphering his particular judgment on the United States or Europe is identifying the underlying rationale. Anglo-American individualism, he suggests, generated a greater capacity to resist fascism than was ever the case in continental Europe. Continental Europe, in contrast, remained deeply defined by a culture of authoritarianism. (He does not distinguish much within Europe, unfortunately; nonetheless, the distinction between European culture on the one hand, and the Anglo-American world on the other, repeats the polarity we could observe in Brecht's wartime reflections discussed in chapter 3.) Hence his analyses of the German predisposition to dismiss or even denounce American culture as too superficial, commer-

cial, or insignificant. He reaches back to the notorious case of the Germanophile Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who left his native England to marry into the Wagner family. (Adorno's move to explore German nationalism by examining a British expatriate exemplifies Critical Theory's program of de-essentializing national identity: the most voluble German was not really German at all.) Chamberlain's hostile judgment on Anglo-American culture, characteristically racialized in the form of antisemitism, is—for Adorno, the Marxist—the effect not of a genuinely different social model, not of an authentic distinction between two national traditions, but rather of a relative underdevelopment within the fundamentally identical process of economic modernization. Germans, or a Germanophile like Chamberlain, could celebrate continental Europe against the commercialism of England only because the continental economy was relatively, if only minimally, backward. It would soon catch up, but in the meantime the apparent distinction in the degree of commercialism could be misunderstood to indicate profound cultural distinctions. The result of this economic backwardness was the antimodernist and antisemitic populist discourse of German cultural superiority over Anglo-American commercialism.

Adorno rejects that European ideology, especially its reductionist account of a merely venal Anglo-American world. On the contrary, he associates American advanced capitalism emphatically with an aspiration to freedom that, so he claims, takes on a practical character in real-world efforts to promote freedom, in contrast to

the merely philosophical freedom of continental philosophy: “Following a tradition of hostility to civilization that is older than Spengler, one feels superior to the other continent because it has produced nothing but refrigerators and automobiles while Germany produced the culture of the spirit. . . . In America, however, in the omnipresent for-other all the way to *keep smiling*, there also flourishes sympathy, compassion, and commiseration with the lot of the weaker. The energetic will to establish a free society—rather than only apprehensively thinking of freedom and, even in thought, degrading it into voluntary submission—does not forfeit its goodness because the societal system imposes limits on its realization. In Germany, arrogance toward America is inappropriate.”²¹ The impropriety of that arrogance is not primarily about the history of the Second World War or the notion of some obligatory gratitude for the American defense of West Germany during the cold war. For Adorno, the issue is rather the difference between the American culture of freedom, on the one hand, and the German, or more broadly European, regime of regulatory statism, on the other. Adorno’s politics are consistent on this point. This is why he has long been rejected by the German Left for his anticollectivism and by the German nationalist Right for his pro-Americanism. Not only his positive judgment on the United States but, more important, his philosophical admonition against collectivized identity structures help clarify the ideology of antiglobalization, just as they shed

21. Ibid., 210.

useful light on the growing difference in values between continental Europe and the United States, the end of the so-called community of values, the allegedly shared ideals that united the United States and Western Europe in the cold war transatlantic alliance.

This is not the place to try to make sense of all the tensions within Adorno's thought, especially the balancing act between his Marxist legacy and his anti-Communism. That constellation of ideas is, to say the least, complex. For our purposes here, however, it suffices to note that several of the predominant motifs in some of Adorno's work retain relevance in the face of antiglobalization: the defense of American individualism against European collectivism, the suspicion of regimes of statist regulation, a skepticism toward the conformist group identities in activist youth movements (regardless of their ideals), and a wariness of the prominent antisemitism in antimodernist protest movements. The point is certainly not that all these characteristics recur uniformly throughout the antiglobalization movement but that they recur with enough frequency to be worrisome. In this sense Adorno's analysis of fascist and postfascist antimodernism—the point at which the “authoritarian personality” recurs in the presumably antiauthoritarian protest movement—has significance for the understanding of contemporary antiglobalization and its anti-American message.

Critical Theory's historical analysis of fascism and authoritarian predispositions in the past—the antimodernism of fascism or the 1960s counterculture—is certainly not the same as the critical-theoretical consider-

ation of antiglobalization today. The differences in context are significant. Yet the understanding of historical fascism as an anticapitalist and antimodernist protest with cultural and psychological corollaries suggests parallels to the ideological texture of contemporary antiglobalization sentiment: the fear of the free market, the anxiety about mobility, the celebration of indigeness, and the totalizing fear of an external threat. Whatever the progressive pretenses of antiglobalization, its repressive potential is clear. Antiglobalization is deeply fearful of freedom and therefore becomes hostile to the institutions and symbols of freedom. The conclusion to draw from these observations is not that it is wrong or impossible to criticize aspects of the international economy. On the contrary, neither Baudrillard nor Roy appears to have given serious attention to the international economy and its consequences. What their writings nonetheless demonstrate are some of the problematic dynamics that operate in the culture of antiglobalization and that explain its turn toward anti-Americanism. Adorno's critique of anti-Americanism and his analysis of the cultural consequences of collectivism shed important light on these features of anti-globalization today.