PART THREE

LIBERAL THOUGHT AND ITS AMBIVALENCES
In plurality, multiplicity, a being merely exchanges itself for itself or for one of its many avatars. It produces metastases; it does not metamorphose.\(^1\)

In his interpretations of September 11, Baudrillard gives a rather pessimistic outlook on the twenty-first century. He analyzes how the globalization of markets, networks, and information transformed the normative idea of universalism into a pervasive, indifferent culture devoid of any specific content. This transition, following his argument, would bring with it a process of “constant homogenization” as well as of “endless fragmentation” that dissolves all former cultural, ethnic, and religious entities. With regard to the “West,” Baudrillard’s analysis sheds light on the underlying paradox of what is called “Western identity.” During the Cold War, the “West” defined itself by universalistic values such as democracy, human rights, and free markets. The moment these values became dominant on a global level, the “West” lost this basis of its particular identity. From this perspective, Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* appears to be a desperate effort to de-universalize Western universalism in order to re-essentialize Western identity.

With regard to the non-Western world, Baudrillard sees resistance and hatred arising. However, according to him, this hatred was “not based on the fact that the West stole everything from them and never gave anything back. Rather, it is based on the fact that they received everything, but were never allowed to give anything back. This hatred,” Baudrillard concludes, “is not caused by dispossess or exploitation,

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