

How not to be too mistaken about Trump?

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Kindly translated by Clara Soudan

Trump's tragic election presents us with the opportunity of clarifying the broader political context. Brexit was no anomaly. We better acknowledge it and prepare ourselves for what is about to follow. Each of the great nations which initiated the global market is withdrawing from the project one after the other. The prolongation of this voluntary demission is terribly clear: first Great Britain becoming Little Britain; six months later the United States, which aspire to restore the greatness of the Fifties. What next? If we learn from the lessons of the past, it is, unfortunately, most likely France's turn, before Germany's. The small nations have already precipitated themselves backwards: Poland, Hungary and even the Netherlands, pioneer nation of the global empire. The United Europe, prodigious montage invented after the war in order to overcome old sovereignties, suddenly take the opposite course. This sounds like a real "Get Out! Run!". Stay inside boundaries, no matter how small, provided they are hermetic. Each of the countries that contributed to this universal horizon of conquest and emancipation is going to withdraw from the institutions that were invented two centuries ago. Becoming the empire of the setting sun, the Occident deserves its name...

Brilliant. So we are warned and potentially also slightly less surprised. Finally, the incapacity to foresee is the main lesson of this cataclysm: how could we be so wrong? All the polls, the newspapers, all the commentators, the whole intelligentsia. It is as if we lacked any of the sensors that would have allowed us to communicate with those whom we could not even designate properly: the "uneducated white males", those "left behind by the globalization" – we even tried the "the deplorable ones". This is undoubtedly a kind of people to which we failed to give any form or voice. I am back from six weeks on the American campuses, I have not heard even one slightly disturbing, slightly realistic analysis about these "other people", just as invisible, inaudible, beyond understanding as the Barbarians standing at the doors of Athens. We, the "intelligence", we live in a bubble. Let's say an archipelago amidst a sea of discontentment.

The true tragedy is that these others too live in a bubble, a bubble from the past which the ecological mutation shall not disturb, which no science, no study, no fact shall shake. Proof of this is that they swallowed all the lies along with this call for the restauration of an ancient order without any fact-checker ever blunting their enthusiasm. Of course Trump will deceive but what a pleasure to let oneself be misled. We should not count on them to endorse the role of the good, well-grounded people full of common sense. Their ideals are even more ethereal than ours.

We thus find ourselves with countries split in two, each part becoming incapable of grasping its reality as well as the other's. The former, say the globalized, still believe in the ever-expansion of a horizon of emancipation and modernity (often confused with the reign of finance), spreading until it covers the entire planet. The latter have decided to withdraw on the Aventine Hill while daydreaming about the return of the old world. So two utopias; that of the future against that of the past. Which the confrontation Trump – Clinton illustrated rather well. Two bubbles of unrealism. For now, the utopia of the past triumphs. Nothing indicates things would have durably improved if the utopia of the future had triumphed.

Something indeed happened in the last two decades that explains this frenzy of disconnections. If the horizon of the globe cannot attract the masses anymore, it is because everybody understood more or less clearly that there is no planet, by that I mean no real, material life corresponding to these visions of a promised land. Just a year ago, the COP21 served as solemn declaration of such impossibility: the global is too broad for the earth. Beyond these limits our tickets are not valid. As for the return to the terroirs of the old countries, we should not count on it either. They all disappeared. They are too small for the new earth to fit in anyway. The ecological mutation went by. No wonder both parties surpassed themselves in unrealism.

The question is now whether the tragedy of the 8.11, following after the Brexit one, can help us avoid what happens next. Can we get away from both utopias, that of the global just as well as that of the return to an old soil? For this we should attempt to land on a slightly more solid, realist and durable earth. For the moment unfortunately the ecological crisis is the elephant in the room and we act as if nothing was happening, as if the choice was either to bravely keep going forward to the future, or to hold on to the past. Trump and his followers even chose to deny the very existence of such crisis.

And yet as far as I know, no one has clearly explained that the globalization was over and that we, as a matter of urgency, should repatriate to a land that resembles no more the protective boundaries of the nation-states than the infinite horizon of globalization. The conflict between utopias of the past and the future should not concern us anymore. What matters is how to pair two types of migrants: those who see themselves forced by the ecological mutation to change worlds by crossing frontiers, and those who see themselves forced to change worlds without actually having moved – and whom frontiers do not protect anymore. If we fail to give form to this earth and to reassure those migrating to it, never shall it have enough power of attraction to counterbalance the opposite forces of those still dreaming about the ancient Globe or the ancient Nation. In this case, one thing is certain: in 2017, France is the next to give up.