

Reimagining Politics After the Election of Trump

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José Ramos, Editor

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Reimagining Politics after the Election of Trump: Introduction by the Editor

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Australia

It was a future many did not want to believe was even possible. A second rate real estate billionaire with a slew of mediocre business ventures, turned bawdy reality TV star, turned political agent - openly racist, sexist and authoritarian – it couldn't be. As he mocked his political opponents (Jeb Bush as “low energy” etc.) like a schoolyard bully, the farcical nature of the gaffes (free press coverage?) told us that he would destroy his own chances through careless and inflammatory comments and actions.

Yet there was another side to this, it was also that the thought of Trump as president was too painful; we (or at least I) did not want to believe that it was even possible. While Nate Silver and friends told us we were safe and let us sleep at night, we clung to Hillary Clinton as the last bastion of decency, a glimmer of hope against a rising tide of bigotry. Never mind that she was completely wedded to the neoliberal machine. We knew the litany of contradictions. But she wouldn't deny climate change, and would follow the landmark Paris Accord. She would be a symbol of power and confidence for women – a blow against patriarchy. She would have some commitment to the disadvantaged. Yes there were contradictions, but really anything but him!

As the reality of Trump's victory broke upon us, we awoke to the dystopia we dreaded. Somehow, either intellectually, emotionally or unconsciously, we knew the rules of the game had fundamentally changed. Was it social media, the micro-second cycle of twitter, like piranha feasting on the carcass of slayed opponents? Or fake news? Was it geo-political - the Russians, Putin plus the hackers? Was it that a large part of the country was actually racist (and sexist)? Was it that fear drives people into the arms of demagogues? Disorientation verging on nausea, waking to a reality that one does not truly understand, waking to a future that one is repelled by.

It was in this context that many also began asking questions, what is really going on here? We knew the stakes had been raised. Issues like effectively addressing climate change, gender equity, public education, multi-culturalism, planned parenthood, and many other social goods had now been put in doubt. And because the stakes are raised, there is a need to come to a deeper understanding of what is really going on, which can provide insight, strategic clarity, and guide action.

This symposium was born in an effort to draw upon the strengths of futures studies and related perspectives: a critical assessment of images of the future, an understanding of macro-history and the *longue durée* (long term social change processes), the role of worldviews and narratives. In short the challenge for authors was twofold: on the one hand explain the Trump phenomenon from a long term historical perspective, revealing deeper patterns and processes, and on the other hand begin to articulate some new strategic pathways and possibilities given this new understanding.

The articles and essays that have emerged in this symposium have begun to meet this challenge. For sure, this is one small step along a much longer road, but it is a solid step.

The first article, “The City, the Country, and the New Politics of Place,” by Andrew Curry, is an exploration of the how ‘third wave’ industrialisation and the services and knowledge economy drive geographic and demographic transformations. The second article by Michael McAllum “Reconceiving the Self and the Other: Possibilities Beyond the Seduction of Popularist and Authoritarian Polarities” looks at the foundations of recent

western populist and authoritarian reactions, and the imperative to imagine narratives of a ‘next social system’.

The essay section begins with Sohail Inayatullah’s “Trump: The Beginning Or The End?”. In his essay he explores ways in which macro-history and epistemology can shed light on Trump’s election and provides short scenarios that emerge from these insights. The second essay, “Trumped: The Unsurprising Election of Donald Trump and our Unequal Opportunity--and Lack of Plausible Visions--for New Governance Design” by Jim Dator, argues Trump’s election signals a crisis in democracy and is a call to action to engage in radical governance design. In the third essay, “Donald Trump and the Birth of a Planetary Culture” I explore shifting cultural dynamics and Trump as part of a process planetization. In “A Post-Hoc Causal-Layered Analysis of American Trumpism” Tim Dolan analyses the deep narratives at work shaping the pasts and futures of US politics. In the fifth essay “Re-dynamising Local Economies in the Age of Trumpism”, Michel Bauwens and Vasilis Niaros argue that the appeal of reactionary nationalism needs to be countered by building real economic alternatives centred around social solidarity and a commons ethos. The sixth essay, “The Rule of the Jester King” by Victor MacGill, is a fairytale with four possible endings (futures).

The symposium is bookended by two vignettes. First, Michel Bauwens’ “Theses on Trump” which encapsulates critical strategic transformations, and secondly short scenarios by Michael Marien to contour the uncertainty of the Trump presidency. Finally, the symposium is capped with a conclusion by Kristin Alford. She synthesizes a strategy and policy overview that provides a sharper focus of the emerging pathways that may have some viability for longer term change.

This symposium has attempted to do two key things. First, to develop a deeper understanding of the Trump phenomenon from the point of view of futures studies (and related social change perspectives, e.g. p2p and the commons). And secondly, to develop forward-looking views that will help us to navigate a new political landscape, and to develop new pathways for action and empowerment. At the time of this writing it is still very early days, the landscape is still shifting and our understanding is emerging. Nevertheless, this symposium holds important insights and clues to our political pasts and political futures. I urge all of us who care about a future of social justice, ecological sustainability and peace to carefully read and study the papers within – and to translate these new insights and strategies into the field of action. Our futures demand it!

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The City, the Country, and the New Politics of Place

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Abstract

Much of the current discussion of the present populist moment in politics has explored issues of social values and economic inequality. In their different ways, these are relevant, but I argue here that they are symptoms of a wider set of changes in society. The prevailing political divisions identified in the Brexit referendum in the UK, the US 2016 Presidential election, and the Austrian 2016 presidential election, suggest a sharper divide between core cities and the rest than previously, which is creating a new politics of place. The roots of this lie in the economic transformations that have occurred as a result of the so-called 'third wave' of industrialisation, and the transition to economies based on services and knowledge. However, these are transformations that are incomplete. The changing nature of work, reward, and consumption that the third wave has engendered is opening up new arguments about the purpose of work. Some of these arguments would have been regarded as utopian a generation ago, but are now entering mainstream discourse. The article also proposes a schematic to understand the political changes this is creating, following the work of Ian Christie, and identifies some implications for the short-term.

Keywords: Cities, Values, Place, Work, Labour Markets, Knowledge Economy, Populism, Post-materialism, Brexit, Trump

The City, the Country, and the New Politics of Place

Those who voted to 'remain' in the Britain's 2016 Brexit referendum, and for Clinton in the US Presidential election, are marked by three social factors. They are younger, better educated, and more urban. This is not just true of the UK and the USA; similar splits are seen across Europe, for example in the Austrian Presidential election in which the independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen, a Green Party member, beat the right-wing Freedom Party's candidate Norbert Hofer.

This combination of age, education and geography represents a deep realignment of politics. As with all such deep shifts, there are several overlapping systems at play.

The first layer is about culture, and the long arrival of post-materialist values as a dominant set of social views, first heralded in the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s. The second, related, layer is about the economic dislocation caused by the reintegration of Asia, notably China, into the global economic system. Below these is a third layer, of the revitalisation of the city, in north America and Europe, over a 40-year period. And finally, there is a fourth layer, about the reconstruction of higher value economies around the production of knowledge instead of things, and the evolution of a new kind of service sector to support it.

These are all long-run changes. Most of them reach back two generations or more, to the cultural shifts of the 1960s and the economic dislocations of the 1970s. It is also complex territory, for these are complex systems. There is interplay between all four layers, and each has the potential to reinforce changes in the other layers. Through exploring these layers, some to more depth than others, this article will propose that the world of post-Trump politics is a world of a new type of political geography, and that we are on the cusp of the transition to it. My starting point in this work was looking at the electoral maps and data that showed this increasing split between the successful cities and the areas around them, and asking what social and political changes had created this world. The political maps of a half a century ago were less distinctive. The focus on economic or cultural causes in the immediate academic analysis, reviewed shortly, seemed to offer only part of the story; something more, with deeper roots, appeared to be happening.

While much of the focus of the article is on the United Kingdom and the United States, this is because each had elections in 2016 that generated data; these elections were binary (Yes or No) in the first case, and all but binary in the second (Clinton and Trump combined commanded 94% of votes cast). The available research, however, suggests that there are similar trends elsewhere (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p.4). The votes in the UK and the US for Brexit and for Trump, respectively, can be seen as a backlash, but they also have the nature of a last stand. Like all such deep transitions, this one will be messy, even ugly.

The Cultural and Economic Layers

The cultural and economic layers have been widely discussed elsewhere, although they are not completely understood. Space precludes a full review here. The most credible analyses of the available data suggest the best predictors of political attitudes on the Brexit vote and the US Presidential election are cultural attitudes. For example, an exit poll published by Lord Ashcroft (2016) immediately after the Brexit vote found that 71% of Remain voters believed that “multiculturalism was a force for good”, compared to 19% of Leave voters, with similar differences on “social liberalism,” Greens and feminism.

In the US, even before the Primary season, Matthew MacWilliams (2016) noted that Trump supporters were more likely to hold authoritarian attitudes, on the basis of a battery of poll questions.

Using data from 31 European countries and the USA, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2016) set out to test theories about the reasons for the increase in support for populist parties. Such parties, following Cas Mudde, were characterised as being anti-establishment, authoritarian, and nativist.

They argue that our current “culture wars” (their phrase) are the product of the long values shift towards post-materialist values that Inglehart has tracked for close to thirty years. In the 2016 paper, they note that “these changes are particularly alarming to the less educated and older groups in these countries” (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p.30).

They found that explanations based on cultural values were a much better fit with the data than explanations based on economic inequality, while acknowledging that the two were likely interconnected.

“[P]opulist support was strengthened by anti-immigrant attitudes, mistrust of global and national governance, support for authoritarian values, and left-right ideological self-placement” (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p.27).

The evidence, they say, “indicates that post-war birth cohorts actually did bring an intergenerational shift from Materialist to Post-materialist values, as younger cohorts gradually replaced older ones in the adult population... As post-materialists gradually became more numerous in the population, they brought new issues into politics, leading to a declining emphasis on social class and economic redistribution, and growing party polarization based around cultural issues and social identities” (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p.14).

Tibbs (2011, p.26) has argued that it “appears from the available data that the cultural turning point has been or is now being reached in most of the richer countries”. However, drawing on the systems work of Fritjof Capra (1982), Tibbs also noted (p.26) that the “declining culture is likely to resist relinquishing its dominance... rather than a smooth transition, a period of turbulence may be a reasonable expectation.”

The Economic Layer

The values analysis suggests that the economic interpretation of the rise of populism needs to be nuanced.

Certainly, the share by voting district of the Leave vote in the Brexit referendum correlated inversely with earnings (Bell, 2016), although there are always issues of causality; areas of lower earnings also tend to have fewer graduates in the population.

A richer story connects fearfulness with voting outcomes. The Ashcroft (2016) data referenced above also found that Leave voters were much more likely to believe that “for most children growing up in Britain today, life will be worse than it was for their parents.” They had lost faith in the idea of economic progress (Davies, 2016; Curry & Ballantyne, 2016).

In the United States, this is much bleaker. It was summarised concisely by Edward Luce (2016) in the Financial Times after the ‘Super Tuesday’ primaries in March 2016:

Millions of Americans are anchored to blighted neighbourhoods by negative equity, or other ties that bind. Their life expectancy is falling. Their participation in the labour market is dropping. The numbers signing up to disability benefits is rising. Opioid prescription drugs are rife. Those that are white tend to vote for Mr Trump.

The squeeze on American wages has produced a startling shrinking of the American middle class, noted recently by the International Monetary Fund (Alichi, 2016), and on the wage-earning class, as the blogger John Michael Greer (2016) has discussed: “The catastrophic impoverishment and immiseration of the American wage class is one of the most massive political facts of our time—and it’s also one of the most unmentionable.”

Its political effects have already been felt, however. Research by Autor, Dorn, Hanson and Majlesi (2016) found a causal relationship between the levels of exposure of local labor markets to increased foreign competition and increased partisan divisions in the U.S. Congress, on both left and right.

Social position also appears to matter. John Judis (2016), following Donald Warren’s analysis 40 years ago of George Wallace supporters, positioned Trump supporters as “MARS” or “Middle American radicals,” who were “distinct in the depth of their feeling that the middle class has been seriously neglected, [seeing] government as favoring both the rich and the poor simultaneously.” Similarly, Inglehart and Norris (2016) say that much of the populist vote is associated with the traditional “petty bourgeois”; those who feel they had a stake and a status in society that is now being taken away from them.

The New Economic Geography

Although “the death of distance” (Cairncross, 1997) was widely anticipated as an outcome of the digital/ICT revolution, we are in a world in which place is as important as ever. The reason, as Edward Glaeser (2011) argues, is that wealth is generated by knowledge and innovation, and these are spurred by proximity, interaction and scale. The cities that are most successful in this create thick labour markets which are geographically dense and also have the highest proportion of

graduates. (A thick labour market has more employers and more jobs, in more sectors, more densely located.) The economics of this are articulated by Enrico Moretti (2013) in his *New Geography of Jobs*. His research is specific to the American economy, but his argument is driven by economic characteristics that are not particular to the USA, and are likely to translate to other countries.

In summary, Moretti argues that larger cities that have built their value out from pools of research and innovation of multiple kinds have captured the largest share of new value since the 1970s. “Good jobs and salaries increasingly come from the production of new ideas, new knowledge and new technologies,” (Moretti, 2013, p.15) he notes.

Scale matters: “In the United States, the average wage in labour markets with more than a million workers is one-third higher than the average wage in markets of 250,000 or less. This differential has grown substantially since the 1970s” (2013, p.128).

What’s striking, though, is that these higher wages spread well beyond the knowledge workers and symbolic analysts who drive the productive value. High school leavers (leaving education at 18) working in the leading cities earn more than graduates in the others. Service workers are also better paid. Local human capital has strong external effects: it drives salary levels for everyone, for good or bad. Indeed, as Moretti observes, “the lower the skill level, the larger the salary gains from other people’s education” (2013, p.100).

There are two points worth adding.

The benefits of economic leadership extend into non-economic gains, including public health, family stability and social participation outcomes; and the knowledge industries at the heart of these metropolitan areas are much harder to delocalise or export, precisely because of their dependence on certain types of human capital. The workforce attracted to the larger cities is more female and more diverse, and this diversity translates into greater innovation, whether social, cultural or economic.

It turns out that urban density is one of the best predictors of voting attitudes. Brookings Institution analysis (Muro & Liu, 2016) caught this divide in a sharp way: The 472 counties that Clinton won in November 2016 accounted for 64% of American GDP, while the 2,584 won by Trump accounted for just 36%. To put this another way, each of the Clinton counties was almost ten times as productive as each of the Trump counties. (When Al Gore lost to Bush in 2000, the counties he won were four times as productive as those won by Bush.) They comment, “With the exceptions of the Phoenix and Fort Worth areas and a big chunk of Long Island Clinton won every large-sized county economy in the country... it appears to be “unprecedented”... for a losing presidential candidate to have represented so large a share of nation’s economic base.”

As Chris Arnade (2016) wrote of his journey across America to talk to voters, “It became simple: if I wanted to talk to a community overwhelmingly supporting Trump, I would go to a white town or neighborhood nearest the rusting factory surrounded by razor fence. If I wanted to find Clinton, or Jeb Bush, or even Rubio voters, I would go near a university, or go to the wealthier neighborhoods near tech companies, or near headquarters of global corporations.”

So what’s happening here?

The best explanation is that we are watching the mainstreaming of the knowledge economy once promised by Bell’s (1973/1999) post-industrial society and by Toffler’s (1980) Third Wave, and that its effects are profound, in ways not anticipated by digital theorists. There have, however, been plenty of clues. Thirty years ago, Scott Lash and John Urry (1987, pp.85-86) characterised the coming world of work as being shaped by three factors, which they suggest are interconnected and contradictory. The first was the migratory behaviour of capital, looking for locational advantage, the second that capital would become “spatially indifferent,” reducing its dependence on place. Both of these have been seen in the long globalising wave. The losers from this are Justin Gest’s (2016, p.7) “post traumatic” cities, “exurbs and urban communities that lost signature industries in the mid-to late-twentieth century and never really recovered.” Behind 21st century populism sits a longer economic history of ’80s deindustrialisation, as Will Davies (2016b) observed. “It is easy to focus

on the recent history of Tory-led austerity when analysing this... [b]ut consider the longer history of these regions as well. They are well-recognised as Labour's historic heartlands, sitting on coalfields and/or around ship-building cities... Thatcherism gutted them with pit-closures and monetarism, but generated no private sector jobs to fill the space. The entrepreneurial investment that neoliberals always believe is just around the corner never materialised."

The third factor Lash and Urry (1987, p.86) identified is the one that has made the difference between the cities that have succeeded and those places that have not. "[C]ertain characteristics of labour-power [would] become of heightened importance, because labour-power, unlike the physical means of production, cannot be produced capitalistically."

This is the critical distinction: while we have been looking attentively at the way in which the globalisation of the late 20th century has shifted production to Asia and Latin America, we have been blind to what's been happening on our doorsteps. As Doreen Massey (2005, p.95) notes, "While the end of cities through technology-led dispersal is confidently predicted by cyber-futurists, cities are growing as never before." Successful cities have reconstructed their local economies to become effective knowledge and service economies, precisely because the advent of ICT has freed work from its ties to specific places.

"The notion that IT will disperse work and production misses the mark completely," said Diane Coyle (1998). "If there are fewer obstacles to being in one place rather than another, economic activity will concentrate where it already is because the availability of pools of knowledge and skill is becoming more important in advanced economies. And in the most successful cities, these pools will be both wide and deep." The breadth and depth of the local labour markets becomes increasingly important in a world of working women and dual-income households, where dual jobs often limit the mobility of labour.

In his explanation of why wages are higher in innovative cities, Moretti (2013, pp.99-100) explains the dynamics of these labour markets and why they improve incomes across the board. First, when a less well-educated colleague works with a better-educated colleague, their productivity increases. Second, a better-educated workforce facilitates the adoption of new technologies. Third, when the level of human capital increases in a city, it creates "externalities": "when people interact, they learn from each other." Each of these three elements requires social exchange, even proximity.

There is an additional element to this. One of the features of the so-called knowledge economy is a shift not just from manufacturing to services, but from products to experiences. Human attributes, such as the ability to understand symbolic knowledge or complex flows, design, service, and the construction of meaning, are at the heart of high value work (Curry, Kiss, Wood, Passmore & Cook, 2014). This is true even in apparently routine sectors such as retailing and food services. What's true of businesses and cities is also true of individual workplaces. This is the Google paradox; Google, a business with all of the technological capabilities to work virtually, builds luxurious offices instead that are designed to bring its employees face to face as much as possible.

The Future of Work and Workers

Each of the last major financial crises (in the 1870s/80s and the 1930s) has produced a restructuring of the relationship between labour and capital. It seems likely that this one will too.

After the first large-scale crisis, limits were imposed on the working day, safety was improved, and restrictions were placed on the freedoms of employers to hire children, among other measures, although these disputes rolled on for decades. After the second, unions got a larger say in how plants were managed and more influence on policy. As for the third, timing helps. As the World Bank (2016) has observed, the global working age population peaked in 2012, and slowing rates of population growth mean that labour will become scarcer (Weldon, 2015).

In the new world of “third wave work,” where the social persona and the employee persona are constantly blurred, it seems at least possible that the line may be about the limits of work and its entailed emotional labour, and perhaps of rights not to work. This is worth a fuller discussion here.

Taking a long view, our contemporary relationship with work is still essentially a construct of the industrial revolution, and is no more than 200 years old, less in most countries. The disciplines of industrial labour had to be learned (Thompson, 1968; Wood, 2002), and were resisted (Mason, 2015, pp.181-185). In the 1940s and 1950s, the post-war settlement effectively constructed a new bargain with the workforce. Workers were afforded alienating work in the factory or the office that nonetheless paid well, and which also enabled them to buy consumer goods (cars and washing machines) that transformed their lives materially (Harvey, 2014, pp.270-276). Beynon’s (1973) masterly study of British Ford workers, which described the way workers managed these constraints, especially the power relationships in the workplace, was written at almost the last moment when it was possible to observe this world.

The deal fell apart with the industrial crisis of the 1970s, with declining growth from the late 1960s, and a squeeze on profits, alongside “a revolution of rising expectations” (Streeck, 2014, pp. 25-27). Some places—Gest’s post-traumatic cities—never recovered from this. The moment of failure, and of the marginalised workers it created, is captured well in the culture of the times, by, for example Bruce Springsteen’s (1980, 1982, 1984) records of the early ‘80s, or in the UK, Boys From The Blackstuff (Bleasdale, 1982). George Packer (2013) has described the world of those whose economies did not reinvent themselves.

In other places, economies were reconstructed around knowledge and service. In their later book, Lash and Urry (1994, pp.199-202) describe the main ways in which the labour characteristics of knowledge and services workers differ from those who worked in manufacturing, processing, or administration roles.

They identify a number of factors. Labour costs in these industries, they write, especially services, represents a high proportion of the total. They are design intensive, so supplies of adequate labour in the local area are critical. Labour is “implicated” (their phrase) in the services delivery, which is “the intended outcome of a necessarily social process” (p.200). Further, “the social composition of the producers... is often part of what is ‘sold’ to customers” (p. 200), and in turn this means that emotional labour, the ability to perform emotional work (Frayne, 2015, p.53), becomes an integral part of the product or service.

The crucial difference, as Hardt and Negri (Mason, 2015, p.210) argued in their book Declaration, is that “[t]he center of gravity of capitalist production no longer resides in the factory but has drifted outside its walls. Society has become a factory... With this shift, the primary engagement between capitalist and worker also changes.” Or, put more starkly by Cederström and Fleming (2012, p.14), “Life itself is now the most lucrative kind of capital being put to work, from the hipster marketing firm to the call center sweatshop.”

Lash and Urry’s observation that “this poses particular difficulties for management” is crystallised in the film Office Space (Judge, 1999), when the waitress, Joanna, is admonished by her manager for not wearing enough ‘flair’ on her uniform.

Stan: ...I’m counting and I only see fifteen pieces. Let me ask you a question, Joanna.

Joanna: Umm-hmm.

Stan: What do you think of a person who only does the bare minimum?

Joanna: Huh. What do I think? Um, you know what, Stan, if you want me to wear thirty-seven pieces of flair, like your uh, pretty boy over there, Brian, why don’t you just make the minimum thirty-seven pieces of flair?

As Mark Fisher (2009, p.35) noted, this scene is “a handy illustration of the way in which

‘creativity’ and ‘self-expression’ have become intrinsic to labor in Control societies; which... now makes affective, as well as productive demands, on workers.”

The employment expectation, then, is very different. Knowledge and service work involves bringing the social self to work (Frayne, 2015, pp.52-54; Myerscough, 2013). But the work is less well-paid, in real terms, than it was in the ‘50s and ‘60s, often more short-term or precarious, and there is little to buy that has the same transformative power for our lives. Perhaps it is not surprising that depression and poor mental health is one of the defining characteristics of the age (James, 2008). For these reasons, a new politics of work has the feel of an authentic Millennial politics. If the spirit of the 2000s was, “Why go on strike if you can wreck the firm with surly service?” (Henley Centre, 2001) that of the 2010s is “Work for free or for a full price but never cheap” (Curry et al., 2014, p.6).

It is a commonplace that capitalism resolves its contradictions by creating new ones. Nonetheless, it is hard to see a new form of capitalism emerging from the present configuration. This should not be regarded as a revolutionary assertion, in either sense of the phrase. Streeck (2016, p.65) suggests that it will instead decay slowly as a result of its five contemporary “disorders” (“stagnation, oligarchic redistribution, the plundering of the public domain, corruption, and global anarchy”). While this is not an attractive prospect, it does suggest is that projects that challenge the way in which our ideas of work are constructed are likely to fall on more welcoming terrain. These discussions are heightened by the widespread sense of technological dread surrounding the possibility that artificial intelligence, in particular, may create a permanent reduction in working numbers (Frey & Osborne, 2013; Brynjolffson & McAfee, 2014).

This may account for a wave of such ‘utopian’ ideas about work. The most developed proposals are by Srnicek and Williams (2015, pp.107-127), who advocate a set of “post-work imaginaries”, even demands, about future work. They propose four such imaginaries: full automation; a four-day week; universal basic income; and the erosion of the work ethic. Proposals to reduce the working week have a long heritage, going back at least to Keynes (1931), who anticipated that in 2031 his grandchildren would work 15-hour weeks, reflecting the received wisdom of the time. In practice, over recent years productivity gains have translated directly into a shortening working week in France, Germany and the UK. (In the UK, the correlation is exact: average hours stop falling at the time of the economic crisis, when productivity also stalls.) The New Economics Foundation, whose work often represents a sign that an emerging issue is reaching the edge of the mainstream, has also published on reducing working time (Coote and Franklin, eds, 2013). Frayne (2016, p.221-223), meanwhile, advocates a new “politics of time.”

The Universal Basic Income, similarly, is now in the mainstream discourse. Curry (2015) suggested that this might be a “predetermined element,” drawing on some indicative scenarios he created on the future of work.

If the “robots” hypothesis is right, we’ll need a basic income to make the economy work (markets need people who can afford to buy products). If the market power argument is right, then basic income keeps employers honest, by ensuring they have to pay good enough wages, in good enough conditions, to attract and keep their workers. One interesting side effect is that it would mean that our fundamental notions of the value of paid work could be about to shift, for the first time since the Industrial Revolution.

This runs deeper than a series of technical proposals. Holloway (2010, p.262) urged his readers to “stop making capitalism.” Frayne’s (2016, p.215) research involved talking to “idlers” and “anti-workers.” He concludes that “what they strove for was a more authentic sense of autonomy.” Aaron Bastani (2015) has articulated a demand for what he calls fully automated luxury communism.

If we embraced work-saving technologies rather than feared them, and organised our society around their potential, it could mean being able to live a good life with a ten-hour working week... robots and computers doing the hard graft could mean respite from the over-worked fatigue that's hijacked our world. You look after your nan a lot more, spend more time in bed with your partner and ride a driverless tesla motorcycle while listening to a music that you don't pay for and has no adverts.

Running through all of these discourses is the spirit of the French sociologist Andre Gorz, whose research challenged notions of work as wage labour.

In the meantime in actual labour markets, young people, especially those with some power in the labour market, look increasingly for work with “purpose,” often located in businesses with non-traditional governance structures, such as B-corps, social enterprises, community interest companies, and co-operatives and other non-profits.

If there is one group of workers for whom these new forms of labour are least satisfactory, it is the “precariat,” characterised by Guy Standing (2011, pp.10-12) as experiencing job insecurity, insecure social income, and lacking a work-based identity. Mason (2015) makes a connection between precarious workers and their location in the city, “To the younger precarious workforce it is instead urban proximity that matters; they tend to cluster into city centres, accepting massively reduced living space as a trade-off for physical closeness to the network of contacts needed to find partners, sporadic work, and entertainment. Their struggles... tend to focus on physical space” (p.209).

Despite the pessimism that pervades much of the current writing on this new precarious urban working class, if urban success requires good quality local labour markets, such labour markets create the opportunity for labour to make demands of employers and of urban administrations. For lower paid workers with little direct labour market leverage, this is often framed around rights. Voting data from the Brexit referendum and the US Presidential election suggests that where the urban poor voted, they voted for Remain or Clinton. This urban working class has a very different composition in the 21st century; it is more likely to be female and of ethnic origin, and to have moved for work. Such people are less impressed by the use by populists of immigration as a placeholder for unwelcome cultural change.

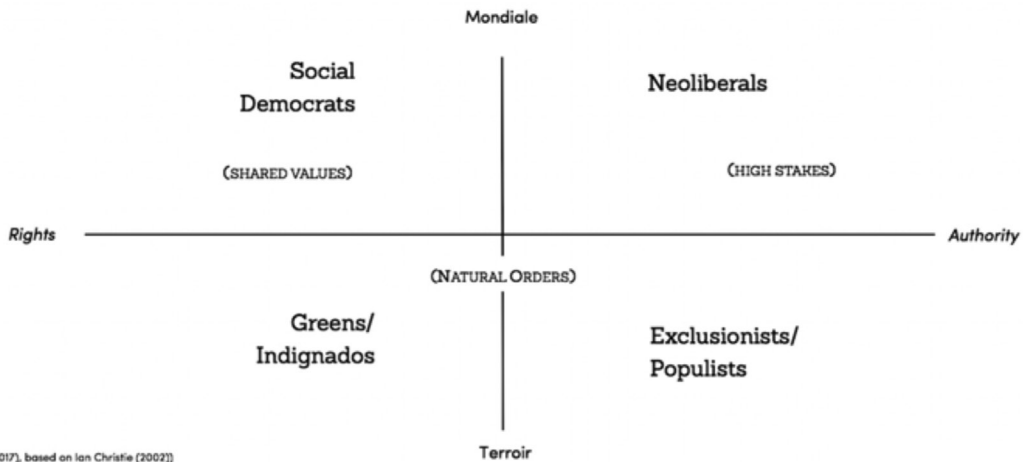
As should be clear from the economic discussion earlier in the paper, their political interests lie in the policies that generate and keep value in the city. It is not coincidence that cities such as London and Seattle have been at the forefront of living wage campaigns, or that they have been centres for new forms of trade union organising.

One implication of this is that we will continue to see worker activism around platform businesses that are strongly place-dependent, such as Uber and Deliveroo, and that much of this will be driven by rights-based interpretations of proper employer practice. At the same time the idea of “the right to meaningful work” (Llorente, 2005, p.105) seems to travel in the same direction as “the right to the city” (Harvey, 2008, p.23). The first is about a commitment to self-development through work, and a say in decisions affecting one’s work; the second about “the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves” (Harvey, 2008, p.23).

Some Notes on the Future of Politics

All of this is re-shaping politics in a fundamental fashion, at least as long as the system dynamic of “success to the successful” continues to drive the process of accumulation in core cities, at the expense of suburbs, towns and countryside. One of the biggest problems is that the political systems that emerged in the first part of the 20th century, and which dominated the long post-war boom, have now cracked apart, but new systems have not yet taken their place. The process of adaptation, though, has evolved faster in places with more proportional electoral systems.

On the left, the traditional social democratic parties of the centre-left have been disabled by the collapse of the post-war boom and the steady decline of the labour movement. There are good reasons for this. As Hilary Wainwright (2015) summarised, “the world of a mixed economy, where the profits of a productive capitalist sector could be taxed and redistributed to provide universal welfare, social security and a public infrastructure for the benefit of all, no longer exists.” The collapse of that world shunted all of our mainstream parties towards neoliberal views of the world, some more whole-heartedly than others. While neoliberalism is a contested term, we can follow Will Davies’ (2014) work in characterising it as form of politics in which state actors follow a “modernising” agenda that broadens the scope of markets, using the rhetoric of “competition” to target institutions that lie outside of the market, and to marketise or abolish them. Both conservative and centre-left parties adopted versions of neoliberal policies in the 1990s and beyond, as seen in the rise of the concept of “New public management” (Larbi, 1999).



(Andrew Curry (2017), based on Ian Christie (2002))

Figure 1. The changing political landscape

In a paper published in *Open Democracy*, Ian Christie (2002) described three political scenarios: a squeezed “shared values” world of social democracy; a “high stakes” neoliberal world which produced losers as well as winners; and the emergence, or perhaps re-emergence, of parties based on what he called “natural orders.” Christie characterised the natural orders groups as spanning “both left and right in the traditional classification of political alignments: it contains protests by local and national interests against the homogenising, top-down capitalist forces that are shaping the values, tempo, environments and organisation of modern societies. What links all of them is the non-Enlightenment view that there are natural limits or imperatives that science, progress and secular rational humanism cannot ignore.”

Building on this work a decade and a half later, it is necessary to pull apart the “natural orders” parties of right and left. Both are based on place, but while the populist versions are based on authority, the left versions (for example: Greens, Podemos, the Momentum element in the British Labour Party, the early Syriza, and so on) are constructed around notions of rights. This can even be thought of as a literal construction, of the right to the city, mentioned above, and of the occupations of public space that marked the *indignados*, *nuit debout* and the Occupy movement. It is worth noting that every political debate about migration has at its heart a person and a place, a place where they are either permitted or excluded.

In other words, the whole centre of political gravity is in the process of moving from the top of the chart, where labour (top left) contested with capital (top right) the share of an expanding global

economy, to the bottom of the chart, where the division is about differences in place and values. The current arguments in the British Labour Party, for example, are between those looking back to versions of the party above the line, and new activists who look at a “natural orders” version of the party. Some of the most successful parties in the bottom left quadrant have combined progressive politics with a nationalist agenda, such as the Scottish Nationalists or Together for Yes in Catalunya.

In short, then, we are moving to a new form of political alignment based on geography rather than social class. The expression of this political alignment is about forms of identity, but its base is in the realignment of the productive economy around the city. This is where the money is, and because of the strong age cohort effects associated with the emerging post-materialist values, this is also where the energy is.

Implications

What are the implications of this for a future politics? The transition from a crisis is always ugly: it's become a crisis because previously accepted economic and political arrangements have broken down, and the social agreements that underpinned them are now contested. Nonetheless, it is possible to see some emerging themes.

1. Demographics coupled with a deep shift in values suggest that in the medium term politics will be fought out over identity issues. Sara Robinson (2016) made the case that the Sanders presidential campaign, which attracted disproportionate support from younger people, was probably four years too early. In the UK, given the age profiles of Remain and Leave voters, the 2016 referendum probably represented the last chance that Leavers had of winning such a referendum (Curry, 2016). While American and British politics currently feature radical campaigns staffed by young people and led by figures with their political roots in the 1970s it is only a matter of time before a Millennial political leader breaks through who is able to link this younger base with the language of a 21st century politics.
2. Existing political parties with an older base will continue to manipulate the electoral system, legally and less legally, to delay the moment when they are overtaken by demographics. In the UK, existing and proposed changes to voter registration have the effect of making it harder for younger and poorer people to vote (Thomas, 2015). In the U.S., gerrymandering of electoral boundaries will continue, along with anti-democratic practices designed to suppress voting (Berman, 2016). So will policies designed to benefit older citizens, who are more likely to vote, at the expense of younger ones. But how long for? As the Millennials and Centennials take their political moment, such studied inter-generational discrimination will be harder to maintain and harder to justify.
3. Some parts of some governments will try to shore up the neoliberal agenda, but they will have decreasing success. By “neoliberal agenda,” I mean political attempts to benefit corporations by the continuing marketisation and financialisation of public assets and public services. The evidence for this change is, for example, in the abandonment of TTIP and TPP by both mainstream American political candidates, including Clinton, who had served in an Administration that had promoted both. The activist/clicktivist campaigns against Monsanto and other corporate rule-making are also relevant. Indeed, the EU's political survival might depend on it moving away from the Lisbon agenda, since its emphasis on “competitiveness” and growth, with related pro-business behaviour, is one of the features that drains political support and permits populist and nativist politicians within its borders to flourish.

4. What happens over time to the declining number of voters in the “cultural backlash” group? This is a political question. It is possible to think that the populist moment is likely to peak a decade after the crisis (Funke et al., 2016). Some policies supported by urban progressives should also appeal to younger voters outside of the urban core: obvious steps include improving the quality of labour markets, reducing financialisation, increasing mobility, and increasing trust in governance. Ageing will change the balance around cultural expectations as well. But without some acknowledgement by political actors and institutions of their interests, there is likely to be greater confrontation and political violence (Turchin, 2013).
5. Alliances of cities will bypass national governments to promote more progressive agendas that are more aligned with the values both of their citizens and their business leaders. The C40 group of cities is an early example of this. At the same time, these alliances are likely to broaden beyond the current group of “global cities,” and for this reason. There are many signs that the largest cities in the richer world have reached their peak; housing costs are too high for young people to settle, and rents discourage diversity and cultural experimentation and renewal. But the likely beneficiaries are cities with decent local labour markets that have not peaked; in the UK, for example, this might include Bristol, Manchester, or Leeds. Indeed, expect to see this become a standard urban development strategy. The effect, though, will be to make these urban alliances broader and deeper.

Conclusion

Much of the contemporary discourse on the future of politics and the future of work is dismal in its tone and its projections of social outcomes. I have argued in this paper that this is because it pays insufficient attention to the role of place in shaping value at a national, metropolitan and household level. The notion of the “death of distance,” in short, is over-represented in the literature, and the discussion of the nature of the way in which value is created, and the implications of this for both politics and political economy, is under-represented.

It ought to be a commonplace among futurists that the large structural shift towards knowledge- and service-led economies would have second order effects, yet there appears to have been relatively little analysis of this, and this is clearly an area that is in need of further research. In particular, we need to connect ideas of place to economic value, to the sociological consequences for work, and the political effects this is creating.

From a futures perspective, while crises are dangerous moments, they are dangerous precisely because they open up the possibility of a number of radically open futures. Since a financial crisis is a sign of a fundamental systemic failure, its aftermath permits the emergence of radical ideas, even utopian ones. To borrow a phrase: the cracks are where the light gets in.

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Reconceiving the Self and the Other: Possibilities Beyond the Seduction of Popularist and Authoritarian Polarities

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Abstract

This article asserts that the recent attraction towards popularist and authoritarian solutions, that give voice to the fear of the other are merely the product of a system doing what it is designed to do. Given this context, it argues that dialectic thinking is insufficient as the basis for dialogue; that the conflation of certainty with security is illusory and that these multiple manifestations are symptomatic of systemic disintegration. Hence it postulates that it is necessary to imagine narratives of a 'next social system', that draw on the wisdom of all knowledge ecologies, in order to change the dynamics of anticipation and aspiration in a reconstituted pluriverse.

Keywords: Post normal Politics, Analectics, Postcapitalism, Sociology of Emergences, Macrohistory

Introduction

While significant schism in the social fabric is a constant feature of many societies, its recent reappearance in western societies, together with manifestations of the 'authoritarian option', has potentially severe, and more than likely chaotic, consequences to the conceptions of 'normality' upon which most western social arrangements are premised. A recent US study found that the fundamental support for this option came not from "an affirmative desire for authoritarianism, but rather as a response to experiencing certain kinds of threats" (Taub, 2016, p.19). This psychological activation was more likely if the threats were of an unknown but physical nature (e.g. the rise of terrorism), or they were characterised as threats to the status quo, such as a visible reduction in living standards (Taub, 2016, p.34). If one assumes that the current 'western' socio-economic system is disintegrating because it is only doing what it is designed to do, then one can assume the nature and diversity of threat will only increase, thus activating even further extreme responses. The question then is how to cast future focused conversations in this environment of 'polarity driven opinionation' (what the Greeks call *doxa*), and whether they close down, or open up, possibility and probability.

This article contends that if futures conversations are situated within the comfort of conventional western-centric, epistemic approaches they are likely to result in the mischaracterisation of the disconnect between the emerging context and the experienced present, and thus generate a set of options that does little to resolve the issues of system dysfunction and the reactions they activate. Indeed, they might exacerbate them. It therefore asserts that the focus should be deliberately and explicitly biased towards transitions, transformations and emergences that are constituted both beyond and post the current system, without being completely defined by the system it is intending to replace, and in so doing, create narratives that reduce the deliberate characterisation of the other as a source of threat and fear. While noting that the ubiquitous dissemination of networking technologies removes many of the obstacles to an understanding of the ‘unknown other’, and that there is also a significant body of futures work concentrated on both limits and the imperative for transformation (Toffler, 1970; Henderson 1996; Dator, 2014), this article argues that the need to contest—indeed reject—particular expressions of identity (sometimes known as worldviews), and certain mythologies, is critical to contextualising transformational openness. This includes the obsession with dialectic thinking; the adoption of false certainties induced by hubris and an over-reliance on widely shared but unsubstantiated assumptions; the use of frameworks and tools that are do not question the primacy of Enlightenment driven socio-economic systems; and the assertion of human dominance in the Anthropocene.

In illustrating the seductions and illusions of this authoritarian, doxical driven and existential wasteland, it is posited that the current civilisation is dying, and thus the quest is to find alternatives ‘beyond the abyss’ that divides the present system from a next, which will redefine what it means to be human in the 21st century. While this article concentrates on the insufficiencies noted above, it attempts to do so to both reflect on the current dilemma, and to assert that ‘post abyss’ mythologies must be constituted in a new ‘epistemic commons’ that allows wisdoms from multiple knowledge systems to collide with each other. As these narratives and mythologies are constituted within an ethos that is mindful of the existential relationship humans have with the planet (an unconditional environmental existentialism), the expectation is that what will emerge is a diversity of possibilities within the two conditions described above. These in turn will reimagine institutional and social arrangements in ways that are reflective and accommodating of constitutions of time, form, shape and state that not only make visible the structural inequities in the contemporary status quo, but also make available viable diversities as a counterpoint to the psychological overinvestment in monocultures and monoforms (e.g. nation states) that exists now.

It is recognised that there is a certain discomfort, almost a harshness, in the contemplation of system transformation suggested here, for it is hard to leave behind that which is known, and that has, from time to time, served at least part of the human family well. Yet this might be the only escape from endless variations on the authoritarian theme. Thus as Margaret Wheatley (2006) once remarked:

Into the dark centre (that smoking caldera) we will be asked to throw most of what we have treasured, most of the techniques and tools that have made us feel competent. We know what we must do. And when we finally step forward to do it, when we have made our sacrificial offerings to the gods of understanding, then the ruptures will cease (p.47)

These ideas therefore should be seen as a contribution to sense making of the narratives of escape. It is one that accepts there is a certain paradox inherent in it, as ideas, forms and knowledge integral to the current system are used (certainly in this article) to assert why transformation away from those same ideas is necessary. Alternatively, this apparent paradox might merely illustrate that it is almost impossible to escape from the episteme and social system that one is born into. It is also important to note that it does not assert that there is nothing useful in the western episteme that can

contribute to the future, nor does it claim a right, or only, way forward. What it does assert though is that the need for system transformation has both time and existential dimensions; dimensions that demand the search for dynamic praxis, unimpeded by reasonable, or sometimes cynical, and never ending litigation of the imperative. Implicit in this praxis is the requirement for social acceleration past limits, and in emergences that are premised on the epistemological west reconceiving itself as an epistemological north, in order to contribute to “an ecology of knowledges (that) challenges universal and abstract hierarchies and the powers that through them have been naturalised by history” (Santos, 2013, p.190).

This ecology of knowledges will manifest itself in part in what De Sousa Santos has defined as a ‘sociology of emergences’:

This consists of replacing the emptiness of the future (according to linear time) with a future of plural and concrete possibilities, utopian and realist at one and the same time and constructed in the present by means of activities of care (Santos, 2013, p.183).

As such it informs narrative and praxis beyond the assertions of authoritarians; assertions that prey upon the fear of the unknown and the uncertain (the building of a wall between Mexico and the US to keep out immigrants, for instance).

The Enthrallment of Dialectic Thinking

The critical task ahead cannot be limited to generating alternatives. Indeed it requires an alternative thinking of alternatives. A new postabyssal thinking is thus called for.

(Santos 2013 loc. 1064)

Constituting debates in terms of opposites, or poles, is a way of thinking that is commonplace in our globalised, capitalist societies. Sometimes it is done with statistics; sometimes through almost unthinkable distortion. Assertions that the UK would save some £20 bn. were central to the Brexit Leave Campaign, whereas the UK National Audit Office estimated the real figure was more like £5.7 bn.: a recent example of the dialectical contest by statistics. Likewise, an example of distortion through dialectic reasoning can be seen in the preparedness by the Trump campaign to back (or perhaps even create?) a fiction that implicated Hilary Clinton in supporting a paedophile ring, based in a pizza shop she had never been to (and that was later the scene of a shooting by a gunman who believed the fable). This manipulation of what is asserted as true has been a defining feature of recent aforementioned debates in Europe, the USA and across Asia. However, without exploring the nuances and justifications of particular cases, at a systems level these dialectical contests for ‘truth’ where “what is real is rational and what is rational is real” (Hegel, 1820, p.7) have two serious flaws.

The first, and perhaps the most topical, is that in a networked and interconnected world, dialogue designed through dialectic polarity can only produce ‘truth’ possibilities that are either at the end of a spectrum, or somewhere in between. If what is accepted ‘falls somewhere in between’, this is often described as ‘the triumph of reason and sense making’; a balance that often gives little consideration to the validity of the spectrum that defined the ‘reasonable outcome’ in the first place.

Recently the fragility of this construction was exposed when network technology platforms were (and still are) used to disseminate both convenient fictions and/or disinformation into user defined ‘social knowledge’ ecosystems. These disseminations were designed to completely alter perceptions of truth and reality, both by those that created them and those that consumed them. As these complications and confoundments built upon each other, what emerged were not just biased or slanted interpretations but distortions of such consequence, that as James Warren (2016) noted:

[This disinformation] is an assault on the very principle of truth itself: a way to upend the very principles by which mankind has long operated. You could say without exaggeration that fake news is actually an attempt to reverse the Enlightenment (p.1).

In Warren's opinion, this is a world of mirrors, where what constitutes knowledge is indistinguishable from opinion, and any sense of intellectual integrity is not only swept aside, but openly derided by those purveyors of fakery who often conceal their real agenda from those they are seeking to influence.

But Warren's concern exposes a second and deeper mythological flaw; namely, it presupposes that the logic systems and the rationalism of the (Western) Enlightenment are the only way to constitute reality. While as an argument it is almost certainly preferable to the doxa of disinformation pundits, even a brief survey of other epistemologies reveals that:

[I]rrationality is not the only alternative to what is currently considered rational, that chaos is not the only alternative to order and that the concern about what might be less true must be balanced by a concern about what is [asserted to be] more than true" (Santos, 2013, p.9).

This allows the possibility of 'other than dialectic thinking': what the Greeks called *analectics* (literal meaning - beyond) might have value. It asserts that there are epistemes and praxis "beyond the horizon of what is already experienced and contemplated" (Dussel and Mendiata, 2003, p.142). Furthermore it links back to the original intent of the 'western' enlightenment (there have been other enlightenments), which was to open up the future; to go beyond the abyss that confronts contemporary humanity. However, any contemplation of this 'other' as part of the common global narrative requires an acceptance, by those who have been bought up inside the western condition, to allow that the analytical and the empirical are only two of many ways of understanding and that the sense of certainty they purport to offer may prove to also be a fabrication.

The Illusion of Certainty

Uncertainty is pervasive, [it is] written into the script of life.

The temporality of human existence prevents the achievement of absolute certainty.

(Nowotny, 2015, p.1)

While many of those who think about the human condition would scarcely pause to question the obviousness of the above quotation, the reality is that the lived experience of western societies, and those who have been colonised in other parts of the planet by its technologies and economic models, owe much to "the systemic attempt to reduce existential insecurity" that lies at the centre of its *raison d'être* (Nowotny, 2005, p.7). In fact, so successful has been the acceptance of this 'universal norm', we who benefit have come to expect that certainty is a necessary societal condition, and that the inability to guarantee the same is a failure of leadership and governance, or both. This sociology of 'certainty' has become an un-interrogated *de facto* social licence for both institutional framing, and also, at least in spirit if not in substance, economic exchange systems (consumer guarantees for example). It has insinuated itself into all the dominant narratives of economic growth, progress, scientific mastery and the supremacy of modernity. In the process it denies not just the complexity, chaos, contradiction and uncertainty that is demonstrably evident in those systems, but also

the built in ignorance to certain problems we face [because] the answers can only be discovered in the future (known unknowns) [as well as] the ignorance we have and promote because we are incapable or unwilling to look in certain directions (thanks

largely to the established disciplinary structures) or think beyond the dominant paradigms (unknown unknowns) (Sardar, 2015, p.28).

This inattention to ignorance, its significance to social systems, and the maintenance of an illusion of normality premised on simplicity, order, efficiency and certainty, induces a political longing for security that is often conflated with certainty. As the recent Trump campaign demonstrated, it can sometimes, with the use of a particular cunning, translate into a societal tendency towards blind obedience, and hence is the ultimate food source for authoritarianism (Nowotny, 2015, p.20), even if the promises upon which that obedience is based is blatantly broken. Representations, or possible futures, often archaisms, are routinely proposed to address these longings for “the familiar and the orderly and the secure...[to deny its replacement] with something that feels scary because it is different and destabilising, but also because it upends their own place in society” (Taub, 2016, p.9). However, in the longer term, these proposals become the ultimate illusion. What is advocated are ‘closed futures’ that reduce the capacity to aspire and bind the collective to solutions that are either manifestly unworkable or suboptimal (Appadurai, 2013, p.185). As populations invest their hope in the authoritarian promise, and almost always find it cruelly denied (as has been the case in Venezuela recently), what occurs conceptually is a decline in *asabiya* (almost literally – ‘the sinew that binds’) or social cohesion, thus further fragmenting the capacity of the system to sustain itself. In contrast, a rejection of that option requires an embrace of the uncertain that, even with its attendant fears, lets in the unexpected (Nowotny, 2015, p.36). This opens up previously unthinkable and unspeakable ‘beyond’ spaces to allow recombinations of existing and new elements to reorganise, or cohere, into previously unseen patterns; patterns that may provide exciting possibility, and paradoxically, a different kind of certainty that, independent of the whims of external parties, would otherwise never be considered. It is worth re-emphasising that this ‘opening up’ cannot occur inside a dialectic model.

The Seduction of System Primacy

It is as difficult to imagine the end of capitalism as it is to imagine that capitalism has no end.

(Santos, 2013, loc. 672)

While humans exist in multiple systems, our capacity for non-genetic adaptation is determined by our abilities to use symbolic language in a variety of forms; by the ability to transmit collective learning through those forms, and by the way that we use those to shape our engagement with technologies (Christian, 2003; Spengler, 1932). These systems manifest themselves as cultures (or perhaps civilisations) that are both finite and bounded, and for the most part defined by other social systems that either exist, have existed, or could exist. This finitude allows for the potential that humanity might organise in ways other than nation states; that it could conduct beneficial exchanges beyond capitalism and socialism (another polarity) and that there are valid ways of understanding beyond the analytical and the empirical. There are a few scholars who have contemplated the possibilities inherent in this contention in order to understand evident (nomothetic) patterns in these systems, and their potential application to the present condition and the limits of it (Galtung & Inayatullah, 1987).

One of these scholars the macrohistorian, Arnold Toynbee, argues that the rise of the authoritarian and the populist occurs when the creative minority, who have previously committed themselves to addressing challenges to the social system, withdraw their support, and in the process alienate themselves from the bulk of the population (the proletariat) involved in that system. In such situations, Toynbee argues certain kinds of ‘creative personalities’, who may have been at one time been part of the minority, aspire to leadership in this time of withdrawal, and they are

“called upon to play the part of a conqueror who replies to a challenge with a victorious response; in a disintegrating civilisation [they] are called upon to play the part of saviour” (Toynbee, 1947, 1, p.153). Toynbee goes on to assert that these saviours may respond through the sword; act as the controller of a time machine (either forwards or backwards to particular futures); assume the role of unquestioned philosopher-kings and sometimes project themselves as ‘God incarnate in man’ (Toynbee, 1947, pp.533-547). While many may question Toynbee’s assertion of civilisation as the unit of social system analysis, this pithy assessment of leadership responses in times of system disintegration seems particularly perceptive and useful when applied to events of the last decade.

Under Toynbee’s analysis, it can be argued that the creative minority who supported the Second Industrial Revolution, as (Rifkin 2011) has defined it, have been unable or unwilling to resolve critical issues inherent in contemporary socio-economic fabric. Where they have tried to do so they have been seduced into the left-right dichotomy and have defined themselves within the political polarities of their time. Thus there are inadequate responses to increasing economic disparity that arises through either capitalist or socialist ideology; to the putting of national self-interest above the global good, and to assumptions of entitlement and exclusion based on accidents of geography. As this plays into the undermining of the status quo with the attendant desire for authoritarianism, a small group has been able to concentrate wealth and power at both national and transnational scales. This latter cohort, not cynically manipulates the system for its own benefit, it also seeks to actively destroy any activity that would suggest otherwise. Furthermore, it has also reimagined the entire industrial military complex and the insurance industry to extract profits from the many injustices it has created, either directly or indirectly. This has been described as ‘disaster capitalism’ (Klein 2007), which profits from catastrophe and bets on disaster through sophisticated financial instruments (Appadurai, 2013, p.295).

The question then remains: how might a creative minority react in the contemporary condition? One option is for those that define themselves in this manner to continue to act on the existing system in ways that reduce or moderate its excesses and over reach. This might be characterised as ‘the descent option’, and it has the benefit of creating space and time for other options to emerge. A second option is for some of the same to develop a manifesto for change that is so extensive that, if it were to occur, the system “would lose all its essential characteristics and become unidentifiable. Such a change means the cessation of the existence of the system; when a system becomes unidentifiable and loses its sameness it disappears” (Sorokin, 1957, p.654). A third option—which may conflate with the second—is for the creative minority to reorganise in a global commons; one that takes as its starting ethos the imperative to transform. Such a commons would create communities of diverse interest that would look to harness the energy and non-authoritarian dissatisfaction that was present in parts of the Bernie Sanders campaign in the USA, and in parts of the ‘UK Stay’ campaign. One might expect that as groups aggregate in this transformist commons of “Other Voices”, they would begin to imagine coherent options and look to turn them into reality.

Thus one might conclude that recent expressions of popularism and authoritarianism are expected manifestations of a system in the process of disintegration, and that there seem to be few options for any kind of response that will remedy that situation. If that circumstance has a significant probability to it, then uncertainty reigns, and the imperative for dialogues and narratives of ‘the beyond’ are not only vital, but they are in spaces where a disillusioned creative minority can now refocus their energies.

The Hubris of Anthropocentric Dominance

Humanity can survive and adapt to the new world of the Anthropocene, if we accept human limits and transience as fundamental truths and work to nurture the variety and richness of our collective cultural heritage

(Scranton, 2015, loc.200).

While assertions of system disintegration, together with the need to embrace analectics and uncertainty, might be debated by some, the multifaceted existential threats created through the unfettered exploitation of planetary resources, cannot. While popularists and authoritarians may deny some parts of the chain of evidence, particularly climate modification, few deny similar evidence of ocean acidification, increasing desertification, the loss of fresh groundwater, urban air pollution and reductions in biodiversity. The modifications that they have caused are now not just climatic but, as Crutzen and Steffen (2003) have argued, these modifications have altered the geological structure of the planet itself, hence the use of the term Anthropocene to denote a new geological era. This description is not one to be proud of. It is a statement that records with shame our collective hubris and arrogance.

Few popularists and authoritarians accept the need for humans to substantially modify their behaviour to address these astounding consequences. If they do acknowledge it at all, they assert that technology can solve whatever problems confront us, and provide from now on every human need that nature cannot. They have encouraged senses of identity where the maintenance of the status quo is also a pathway to existential threat. Herein lies the hubris and the enormous risks that go with it. This hubris is not just a failure to acknowledge that humans have, as Naomi Klein recently remarked, created a socio-economic system that is at war with the planet, except that Nature doesn't play by our rules (Klein, 2014, p.21). It is also a denial of such existential consequence that it might be appropriately described as intergenerational genocide, or perhaps more appropriately, ecocide. What is even more concerning is that in most of the planetary dialogue, while few are astounded, even outraged, by the outright deniers, there is a widely shared complicity, backed with little evidence, that humans can have everything that they have now, and at the same time 'restore the safe operating spaces for humanity' (Rockstrom et al., 2009).

While clearly such ideas are anathema to the popularists and authoritarians, the key threat these forces pose in this time of environmental emergency is not their cynical opposition per se, but the distraction and future eating that arises from their occupation of political and economic spaces. By 'distraction' I mean the sidelining of efforts to come to terms with the threat of environmental existentialism, as people of good will preoccupy themselves with the short term issues at hand. By 'future eating' I am suggesting that the time span of these 'saviour' experiments, which have an anthropocentric arrogance as part of their ethos, not only eats into the time for adjustment and adaptation, it also facilitates systems crossing thresholds, after which they are forever altered.

The dangers of dialectic thinking, the quest for certainty and the assumption of the socio-economic system's primacy are all reflected in the argument for anthropocentric dominance. The ongoing deterioration of multiple systems and the senselessness of treating them in isolation, rather than together (for that's what our discipline-centric mindsets encourage us to do), reveal levels of ignorance that would be comical if the consequences were not so dire. It is also important to note that, given many of the systems are either close to thresholds or have crossed over them, the time is over to contemplate that state, or what might be done in some kind of careful scientifically neutral academic manner, as this can misrepresent the emergency that confronts us all. The environmental theorist Roy Scranton argues that so severe is the threat that we humans need to learn to let the current civilisation die. At an individual level, be we foot soldiers, worker ants or mere bystanders, this means "letting go of our predispositions and fear. [At a societal level] it means letting go of

this particular way of life and its ideas of identity, freedom, success and progress” (Scranton, 2015, loc.200).

Narratives of Imagination, Anticipation and Aspiration

The narratives of the next system will make space and time intelligible in new ways. They will help us reconceive our identities, provide meaningful frameworks for seeing things differently and reconstitute realities freed from the mechanistic assumptions that now constrain the existence of the many in the favour of the few.

(McAllum)

Central to this article on systemic limits and the case for the reconception of the self and the other has been the assertion that narratives constituted inside the existing system cannot develop the viable alternatives required for the planet and the contemporary socio-economic condition, unless such alternatives require the dismantling of the system itself. Nor can they, for the most part, resolve the issues (jobs, growth, certainty) that the popularists and authoritarians falsely assert they can. If this premise is accepted then new narratives are required that begin to frame a culture of ‘beyond the system’ without using the system as the basis to always define what those narratives mean. These must address in particular our need to imagine, to anticipate and to aspire, and it is there power that will lie in the creation of new symbolic language as the basis for change.

Imaginative narratives of the post-now are not new, but the advent of networking technologies that can enable quite different constitutions of time, form and space are. These will provide the basis for “a global analogical (philosophical) project in a transmodern pluriverse” (Dussel, 2009, p.514), and the further evolution of symbolic language that is reflective of new production and peer to peer ecologies, of possibilities released from the shackles of commodified time and of localised civics unaffected by the corrosion of external globalised interests. It will require a new capacity to aspire; “a navigational capacity through which poor people can effectively change the terms of recognition within which they are generally trapped”(Appadurai, 2013, p.290), together with a shared anticipation to share future risks more equitably, including those dystopias generated in the contemporary system, and so enable communities to transition past the politics of blame.

Taken together these narratives can develop into a new sociology of emergences and knowledge systems that emancipate humanity from its present dysfunctional state, through different kinds of collective learning and novel ways to apply technologies that are already available. They allow the pooling of the true richness of human experience, and in so doing, make those who, for so long, supported the contemporary status quo wonder why they, for so long, tolerated the sterile and often unhappy conditions that are the legacy of the fossil age.

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Trump: The Beginning Or The End?

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In the heady times of the late 1960s and early 1970s, many were certain that by 2020, the world would be dramatically different.

In *Changing Images of Man*, the landmark study by Oliver Markley and Willis Harmon (1982), they noticed a marked shift in the image of what it meant to be human. This image, they argued, was leading, with reality soon or eventually to catch up. Wrote Markley and Harmon, “When images ‘lead’ social development they are anticipatory, and provide direction for social change. When images are in this relation to society, they exert what Polak (1973) has termed a ‘magnetic pull’ toward the future (Polak, 1973). By their attractiveness and meaning they reinforce each movement which takes the society toward them, and thus they influence the social decisions which will bring them to realization” (Markley et al., 1982). The emerging image of the future, they argued was focused on: ecology and sustainability; gender equity and partnership; spirituality; a transformed post-material economic system that was focused on persons, nature, purpose as well as prosperity, a quadruple bottom line if you will. As well, as humans went to the space, they saw the Earth without national boundaries, without religious boundaries - environment became primary (Connor, 2009). Imagine, John Lennon suggested, “there’s no countries ... no religion too ... no possession.” (Lennon, n.d). We were to move from materialistic man focused on work and the factory to the self-realized human, living for the greater good.

Demographer Paul Ray shared this perspective, arguing that the data was supporting, the rise of new demographic group, which he called the cultural creatives.

There has been a third force growing in society, unnoticed in the bitter rhetoric about declining values. The appearance of the “cultural creatives” is about healing the old splits: between inner and outer, spiritual and material, individual and society. The possibility of a new culture centers on reintegration of what has been fragmented by modernism: self-integration and authenticity; integration with community and connection with others around the globe, not just at home; connection with nature and learning to integrate ecology and economy; and a synthesis of diverse views and traditions, including the philosophies of East and West (Hurley, 1999, p.6).

For Ray and others, this new demographic group is neither traditional (rural, patriarchy, church based) nor modernist (individual autonomy plus financial gain). This group supports the changing image of what it means to be human identified by Markley and Harmon decades ago. They have moved from 4% of the population to possibly, as Tibbs argues, to over 50% in the mid 2020s (Tibbs, 2011). While the desired values/futures of environment, social inclusion, spirituality, and corporate social responsibility are critical, the most important explanatory variable was gender. In the words of Ray, “the cultural creatives phenomenon... to a very large extent, is about women’s values and concerns coming forth into the public domain for the first time in history (Ray, 2002). The recent global women’s march is certainly an indicator of this demographic shift (Sloban, 2017).

The broader argument made by these thinkers (and many others, such as Hazel Henderson (Waghorn, 2013), Riane Eisler (Eisler, 2007), Roar Bjornes (Bjornes & Hargreaves, 2016) and others associated with the

New Age Movement is that leading sectors of society imagine and wish to create a world based on: (1) Ecological sustainability, moving from man over nature to humans with nature; (2) Gender cooperation and partnership, moving away from patriarchy; (3). Glocal governance (global and local simultaneously) moving away from the nation-state as defining; (4). Social inclusion, continuing the long progress of human and nature rights; and (5) Spiritual practice and inclusion i.e. moving away from religion as exclusion.

But alongside this changing image, there has been realist politics. While some commentators such as Boulding (Morrison, 2005) and Milojevic (2005) have imagined a gentler world, cold and hot wars have continued. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan created yet another proxy war with the USA funding Afghani and Pakistani freedom fighters. The “marriage” of Reagan and General Zia led to the birth of the Taliban and the sibling Al-Qaeda. This process allowed extremists to flourish and destroy secular and progressive society in Pakistan. Eventually, through the war in Iraq, another sibling was created - Daesh. And with the weaponization of refugees through the “evil” genius of Putin and Assad - creating conditions to force them out of Syria - the proxy war has now entered Europe. The response from Europe has been tempered, but still the rise of the right - with May in England, Orban in Hungary, and others, such as Marie Le Pen and Geert Wilders in Holland - creates the possibility of the disintegration of the European Union. The future no longer looks so rosy.

And then steps in Trump

How to read him and the oncoming futures? Certainly, if anyone is happy about the current state of affairs, then we should remember Samuel Huntington and Osama Bin Laden. One imagined a clash of civilization and the other laboured to create the clash - their vision is now our reality. Indeed, we are in the middle of - in evolutionary terms (to paraphrase the late Dr. Chaudry Inayatullah) not a clash of civilizations, but a lack of civilization.

Was the Trump victory because the cultural creatives did not vote? Was it his ability to suggest to the unemployed that if they voted for him, they too could become wealthy and famous? Was it his ability to champion of the great wall before the forces of social inclusion - the demographic shift in the USA - could empower (Cohn & Caumont, 2016)? i.e. to hold up the last white male standing? Was it his ability to speak in a world of alternative facts? (Rutenberg, 2017). Was it the framing of Clinton as the crooked, untrustworthy female - the witch - and the FBI as the collective saviour? Causation is certainly complex. We explore the emergence and futures of Trump and populism through the lenses of epistemology and macrohistory.

Epistemology

Reading number one is epistemological.

In the pre-modern, words were ontologically real, i.e. they did not describe reality, they were reality, and thus the religious become deeply upset when their text is attacked because they feel they are attacked - the body of the collective is harmed.

In contrast, in the modern, words describe reality, and thus we seek to find reality based on evidence and counter-evidence. Words and reality have rules. Following those rules leads to greater efficacy. Facts still matter even if they change over long periods of time (or new theories reinterpret the data). Poststructuralists and many others sought to challenge not facts per se but the context of facts, that the facts discovered were based on already decided paradigms (paraphrasing, Heidegger), that they were historical and contextual. And thus the need not to dismiss facts, but as critical theorist Michael Shapiro, using Foucault has argued, the need to focus on the price or the costs of reality claims (Shapiro, 1992). Each reality claim leads to a particular future.

The Causal layered analysis approach has argued that facts are real, but contextualized by systems nested in worldviews and deep narratives (Inayatullah & Milojevic, 2015). Social change works by maximizing the ability to work at many levels. It is facts plus narrative. Trump et al, seeing an opening within the world of the multiple, have decided not to negotiate reality by deeper understandings of the other, but strategically focus on words that gain real power. In themselves, facts are not real, only power over others is. Thus the recent debate over the numbers attending his inauguration. Instead of accepting the low numbers, they claim that the inauguration was the largest in history, in any nation. The Trump team offers alternative facts. They throw out the baby with the bath water, using poor epistemology to leave an ontological future in disarray.

Moving to deep structure, the grand thinker Pitirim Sorokin (Sorokin, 1957) spoke of this. While ideational systems focus on meaning/purpose based on spiritual knowledge claims, sensate systems focus on fidelity to the empirical, and mixed systems used both, there was a fourth alternative. In this alternative, no one agrees on anything since facts are no longer relevant, everyone lives in their own self-referential or worse (tribal reality). However, Sorokin brilliantly concludes, this fourth alternative has only one implication- the end of society, since we cannot agree on anything. Disintegration ensues.

And thus, in that chaos, there is a will to power. Concluding this section, it is Trump's ability to bend reality - as he learned on Reality Television - that makes him the President of the USA. Power becomes primary. Any reason to gain it suffices, since he himself holds the greatest good.

Macrohistory

Reading number two is macrohistorical. Macrohistorians such as Ibn Khaldun, Pitirim Sorokin, P.R. Sarkar and Johan Galtung suggest we do not become easily swayed by current events. There are deeper patterns at play.

The Decline

For Khaldun the deeper pattern is the decline. While he wrote in the 14th century, we can easily use his analysis to to understand the futures of the USA, the decline of Pax Americana, just as the Soviet Union qua communism disappeared so will the USA. This does not mean that the United States will not have economic and military power, but that legitimacy will decline, the image of the future will no longer be of the American male as central in the global imagination of hierarchy and power. Moreover, attempts to make America great again will only worsen the decline since the external world has changed and the narrative is no longer functional. Once the cyclical decline has set in, a certain inevitability results. As Johan Galtung has argued, the contradictions are too many and too strong (for example, between the financial and the real economy; between the USA and the rest of the world (Galtung, 2009). The narrative of American exceptionalism, of "frontier:, of endless growth ensures that the Titanic cannot change its course. And when there are moments of grandeur, Khaldun appropriately responds.

Unity has often disappeared (when the empire has grown senile) and pomp has taken the place it occupied in the souls of men... At the end of an empire, there often also appears some (show of) power that gives the impression that the senility of the dynasty has been made to disappear. It lights up brilliantly just before it is extinguished, like a burning wick the flame of which leaps up brilliantly a moment before it goes out, giving the impression it is just starting to burn, when in fact it is going out." (Ibn Khaldun, 1958, Galtung & Inayatullah, 1997, p.267).

Thus, one macrohistorical explanation of Trump is that he is the predictable indicator of late decline, the Spenglerian decline of the West. For Spengler, the indicator of decline is that “money emerges victorious over ... values “ (Etzioni & Etzioni-Halevy, 1964, 22). At the beginning, democracy is controlled by the intellect, soon however, money buys votes. Money and democracy and destroyed from within. And in Spengler’s words: “Through money, democracy becomes its own destroyer, after money has destroyed intellect.” (Etzioni & Etzioni-Halevy, 1964, 23). An indicator of this is Trump’s cabinet, the richest in USA history, with seven of the picks worth 11 billion US\$ (Goldman, 2016).

The Pendulum Shift

While Khaldun and Spengler, offer the cyclical, Sorokin takes us to the pendulum. His brilliant insight is the systems or coherent social realities move back and forth between the two poles of the pendulum. In contrast, are those who see the future as linear, a continuation of more of the same, but better. Within the framework of the linear, the evidence collected suggests that the rise will continue. However, Sorokin posits that this is not the case since anytime we focus on a particular dimension of reality, other aspects become disowned, until there is a marked pendulum shift, for example, between centralization and decentralization; belief systems focused on truth or many truths; or uni-culturalism and multiculturalism. Sorokin posits that the pendulum is the norm. And thus from the current sensate (materialistic, individualistic, growth oriented) we see the return to the Idealistic, as evidenced by the earlier Markley and Harmon study as well as the extensive literature pointing to a global transition to a different type of world - green, gender partnership, glocal governance (Inayatullah, 2017 and Inayatullah, 2012). however, this emerging idealistic future denies the realist: the world of power, of money, of pleasure - of sensate reality. While Sorokin has argued that the most likely long term 100 year future is a grand shift from the sensate to the idealistic, the rise of Trump could be seen as mini-reversal back i.e. Obama went too far towards inclusion within the US narrative of the survival of the fittest, and thus Trump is a logical pendulum swing.

In any case, for Sorokin these moves back and forth are the norm, not linear movements in any particular direction. Rather, we see moves toward more human rights and dignity (progressive and idealistic) and then a pendulum return to racist descriptions of which group is above and which by nature below i.e in the colloquial language of today: the revenge of the white male.

Thus, while in the short run Trump is the reversal to Obama (and multiculturalism), in the longer term, Trump could be seen as the last of the sensate leaders, as he is fully sensate, totally embodying sensate civilization (reality tv, alternative facts, sexist, hierarchy based, external appearance oriented) - the last swing to the extreme before the pendulum shift to an idealistic future or the possible integration of sensate and idealistic.

But why would it swing away from the sensate given how much sensate civilization can offer?

For Sorokin, writing generations ago:

When any socio-cultural system enters the stage of its disintegration, the following four symptoms of the disintegration appear and grow in it: first, the inner self-contradictions of an irreconcilable dualism in such a culture; second, its formlessness - a chaotic syncretism of undigested elements taken from different cultures; third, a quantitative colossalism - mere growing at the cost of qualitative refinement; and fourth, a progressive exhaustion of its creativeness in the field of great and perennial values. In addition to all the other signs of disintegration, these four symptoms of disintegration have already emerged and are rampant in this contemporary sensate culture of ours.

Our culture in its present sensate phase is full of irreconcilable contradictions. It proclaims equality of all human beings; and it practices an enormous number of intellectual, moral, mental, economic, political, and other equalities. It proclaims “the equality of opportunity” in theory; in practice it provides practically none. It proclaims “democracy of the people, for the people, and by the people”; in practice it tends to be more and more an oligarchy or a plutocracy or a dictatorship of this or that faction. It stimulates an expansion of wishes and wants, and it inhibits their satisfaction.

It proclaims social security and a decent minimum of living conditions for everyone, even as it is progressively destroying security for all and showing itself incapable of eliminating unemployment or of giving decent conditions to anyone. It strives to achieve the maximum of happiness for the maximum number of human beings, but it increasingly fails in that purpose. It advertises the elimination of racial, class, religious, and other group hatreds, while in fact it increasingly seethes with group antagonism of every kind: racial, national, state, religious, class and others. The unprecedented explosion of internal disturbances and wars of the twentieth century is an incontrovertible evidence of that failure. It condemns egotists of all kinds and boasts of the socialization and humanization of everything and everybody; in reality, it displays endless, unbridled greed, cruelty, egotism, and avarice of individuals as well as of groups, beginning with innumerable lobbying and pressure groups and ending throughout economic, political, occupational, religious, state, family, and other groups (Sorokin, 1941, p.3).

What he noticed in the 1940s has not disappeared, indeed, it has become increasingly accentuated. But wouldn't it continue if it is meeting the needs of the many. It is here we turn to the Indian macrohistorian P. R. Sarkar. He argues that the system - more and more - is unable to meet the needs of the many.

Sarkar and History Transformed

Sarkar offers an alternative approach, but with the same conclusion. For him, there are four classes of power, four epistemes or ways of knowing the world. The worker, the warrior, the intellectual and the capitalist. Currently, and generally, while there is some variation amongst collectivities throughout the world, we are at the end of the capitalist era. Capitalists generally rule using the skills of the intellectuals - for strategy - and the warriors, to keep discipline, extracting labour from workers. However, as they are unable to discipline themselves, to stop themselves, the capitalist continue to accumulate wealth until all “become their boot lickers.” (Sarkar, 1984). Thus that eight males have the same wealth as 50% of the world population comes as no surprise (Mullany, 2017). It is clearly an indicator, for Sarkar, that mobility of money has slowed down. Money is not moving, but rather accumulating in a few sites (Sarkar, 1987).

Thus, the dramatic concentration and immobility of money is seen as the end of the capitalist era. That a capitalist himself ascends to the presidency, to power, illustrates that there is longer any need to hide the power of capital. Disguise is not needed. Indeed, it becomes the only desired image of the future. A particular worldview totally dominates - ideas, honor, and work disappear, what matters is the accumulation and its display. All wish to become like Trump - he is aspirational. And yet has many have pointed out, all cannot become like Trump - the contradictions are too great, and thus, Trump signifies the end of the end of the Pax Americana, indeed, perhaps, the end of the capitalist era. For Sarkar, whether through Artificial intelligence ending work, peer to peer ending inefficiencies and the middle man, the sharing economy creating vast new wealth through enhanced efficiencies and sharing of power or through workers destroying in violent revolutions, the edifice of capitalism, the current era will end, sooner than later.

Even if this too far or too dramatic a pronouncement - there are always alternative futures, counter-revolutions (the new technological revolutions could create a new Artificial-intelligence led capitalism and concentration of wealth and power), clearly as pointed out Trump signifies the end of an era. In an excellent article on California as the future, the argument made by Tim Rutten is that it is not the vision of Trump that is the future, but his opposite, the state of California. California is the future of the USA and possibly the world in that: (1). No single 'race' dominates; (2) It is bi-lingual; (3). Its economy works, it now the sixth largest economy in the world; (4) International trade leads to more jobs with the weak not thrown away; (5). And there is significant investment in new technologies such as solar, the sharing economy, i.e., innovation that creates new wealth (Rutten, 2016). And California is preparing to challenge the Trump agenda (Daniels, 2017).

The Linear?

But can't the cyclical or the pendulum be denied through the linear, through progress? Hasn't this been the brilliance of the rise of the West. Certainly, but (1) progress qua linear means more and more rights for more people and Trump denies progress qua social inclusion by excluding females, migrants, and beginning trade wars thus hurting the growing Asian middle class. (2) Isn't progress about merit? Yes, but Trump denies merit instead offers positions to relatives, to family, to those closest to him. He evokes not the linear rise of the West but the feudalism of kinship. (3) Isn't progress about science and technology. Yes, but Trump dismisses science and technology, particularly climate change science and medical science. Thus, the exact tools needed to ensure that the cycle or the pendulum are transcended, are denied, rubbished. The linear jump thus becomes nearly impossible.

Four Futures

What then for the future? What are the possibilities? Based on the above analysis, four futures appear possible.

Scenario 1 - Macrohistory and structure.

The future is clear. Trump is the indicator of the end of American hegemony and perhaps the end of the Capitalist system. This does not mean that the sky is clear; rather, hegemonic transitions are brutal (Wallerstein, 2004). The end of a five hundred economic system only accentuates the dramatic turbulence ahead. Thus, we began with the notion that Markley, and Harmon et al were horribly wrong about the world of 2020. But by using macrohistory, we conclude with the opposite. They were perfectly correct. The end is not near, the end is here. This creates the second scenario.

Scenario 2 - Agency, first.

Structure becomes so because of human agency. For our macrohistorians, patterns become real through evolution, through our behavior, our practice.. Cultural creatives not only challenge Trump et al through demonstrations, they create the new framework toward a different type of world. A far gentler economic system with far greater equity. Advances in artificial intelligence coupled with universal basic income ensure a soft landing, and it is not so much the end of capitalism but certainly the end of the factory. Efforts to mitigate climate change and other international crisis lead to greater global governance. Global skies allow movement with strong regulation to ensure safety, fairness, and prosperity for all.

Scenario 3 - A Mini-shift.

We are not part of a grand shift, but these are mini-pendulum swings and mini-declines. The polarization we are witnessing now is merely superficial. The slow, protracted nature of democratic governance ensures leaders like Trump can talk as much as they wish, but the system of checks and balances ensures that they can only move forward in slow steps. The plane does not take off the ground, there is no real turbulence. Just as Obama led to Trump; Trump leads to Elizabeth Warren or another similar leader to the American presidency. Brexit disappears in importance, and the Western world continues slowly as the threat from terrorism recedes (ageing begins to occur in the Middle East and North Africa, thus reducing the number of young, unemployed, angry men) (Inayatullah 2016). Asia continues to economically rise, indeed, takes-off.

And as with all good scenario work, we do not know the fourth, that is the outlier; hard to imagine from the terms of the present. But lurking, changing how we travel.

What should we do then, given the map ahead. Let us conclude by returning to epistemology and macrohistory.

For Foucauldians, the task is always the same - ensure power has no place to hide. We should not treat any reality as given; rather we see it as constructed. We challenge categories, ensuring that the price of any truth claim is investigated.

From Ibn Khaldun, in the decline, it is crucial to identify the Bedouins (1958). They are outside the system, challenging political and normative power. Understanding them, and aligning with them is wise. In the current system, are these the cultural creatives, the forces of holism that Markely, Ray et al have identified? Or?

From Sorokin, once one can understand the pendulum, one is not, remembering Gramsci, excited by rubbish. Short and long term strategy means not being swayed the politics of the immediate, and to use the swings of the pendulum wisely.

From Sarkar, the task is multifold. First, in times of great change, spiritual practice (as defined as inclusion, meditation, and social service) is a must as this keeps the mind balanced. Second, the goal is not to focus on particular capitalists, but to help create a transition to a new global economic system - for him this is PROUT - a new framework focused on gender cooperation, neo-humanism (humanism plus the rights of nature and technology), a maxi-mini balanced economy, and global governance (Sarkar, 1987; Inayatullah, 2017). The transition while local is ultimately global - new institutions of global governance. Trump is one of many indicators taking us to a different future.

That women are leading the challenge to Trump in the USA fortifies the argument made earlier by Markey, Harmon, Anderson, Tibbs, and Sarkar (Slobon, 2017; Women March, n.d.). The future can be different.

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Endnotes

1. In private conversation.

Trumped: The Unsurprising Election of Donald Trump and Our Unequal Opportunity--and Lack of Plausible Visions--for New Governance Design

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At this point of writing, it is not possible to be certain how the values and behaviors that Donald Trump espoused and embodied during the 2016 election campaign and initial appointments of his administration will be manifested in what the US federal government does or does not do over the subsequent months and years. But if Trump does what he frequently said he would do, and if Congress and the Courts support it, the results may so thoroughly destroy governing forms, processes, and mores of the last 50—and perhaps 200 plus—years that those of us who have yearned for a chance to create new forms of governance will have an opportunity unequalled since 1789.

Our situation, however, may be roughly similar to that facing citizens in communist countries after the collapse of communism in the early 1990s, especially the fact that we seem to be as unprepared to proffer, much less create, new forms of viable and preferable governments now as they were then.

True, some of us, inspired by Prof. Fred Riggs and his Committee for Viable Constitutionalism, vainly attempted to prevent the successors to the Soviet Bloc from adopting American-style presidentialist governments because, as Riggs showed, all countries with divided governments like that of the United States eventually ended up as military dictatorships—except, so far, the US. But the only alternative structure of governance we had to offer at the time was parliamentary which Riggs' research showed was far less likely to succumb to deadlock between the legislative and executive branches, and thus less likely to provoke a military coup (Riggs, 1986, 1994, 1997).

Unfortunately, all of the formerly-communists governments adopted a version of the presidentialist form, featuring a strong president vs. a comparatively weak legislature, with restricted courts and an elite bureaucracy, so that almost all are now military dictatorships.

It May be Our Turn Next

The only form of government most of us have to offer now as potentially superior to either parliamentary or presidentialist is electronic direct democracy, but few of us find it in our hearts to support that with the enthusiasm we once did—given, in part, the success of the populist Donald Trump and people like him gaining power worldwide.

On the other hand, it behooves those of us interested in new governance design to pay close attention to Trump's use of social media not only during his campaign but especially while he is president. While no technology is neutral, we should not assume that evolving communication technologies are only instruments of the devil now—any more than we were justified in believing, once upon a time, that they inevitably led to continuously-progressive interactive citizen participation in all aspects of governance.

Nonetheless if Trump is able to implement the political and economic policies he touted during the election as fully as his rhetoric proclaimed he would, the resulting social, political, economic, and environmental chaos will require some very creative and heroic governance designs. Whether we are capable of producing any that are viable or not is another question.

How did this Extraordinary Opportunity for Governance Design Come About?

Hillary Clinton won the popular vote but lost the election not because a majority of Americans rejected her policy proposals, but because of multiple structural features enshrined in the US Constitution that grossly over-represent rural areas whose experiences and preferences differ significantly from those of the majority of voters, especially those who live in urban areas. Thus, in spite of Trump's victory, we should not assume that most voters specifically rejected the old policies of the Democrats, much less that they either understood or favored Trump's alternatives. Many Trump voters said they really did not believe Trump meant what he said, but loved the audacious, militant fervor of it.

Compared to any president or presidential candidate since Richard Nixon, Trump presented himself as exuberantly narrow-minded, ultra-nationalistic, ignorant, intolerant, and politically-incorrect on every dimension—ethnicity, class, gender, sexual preference, disability, identity, educational attainment.... He publically relished what he called the “locker room talk” of sexual innuendo and bravado.

Nonetheless, according to most sources, many people who voted for Trump insist they are not bigots. They say that they voted for Obama twice; that they only wanted fundamental change that Clinton would not provide but that Trump spectacularly said he would; that even though the policies of Trump clearly will further grossly exacerbate income inequality, reverse the slight but important gains made in America's health care, and drastically erode America's international power and prestige—that is, that even though Trump's professed policies, if implemented, would be against their own most basic self-interest in income and security—they voted for him in order to get real change—for a change—they say.

Such claims are not credible, in my opinion. There were two other options on the ballot who could have brought substantial change without accompanying chaos—Gary Johnson of the Libertarian Party and Jill Stein of the Green Party, neither of whom portrayed themselves as flaming racists, bigots, and narcissistic psychopaths.

Of course, there may be some people who are so fully Republican that they would vote for a mossy stump if one were nominated by their Party. But the only credible policy reason most people voted for Trump is because they either share or uncomplainingly accept his racists, sexist, chauvinistic, simplistic, and/or psychotic outbursts. If it was really “change” they wanted—if what they wanted was simply to “shake up the establishment” or “skewer the elite”—and were otherwise nice, tolerant Americans who didn't like Clinton, then they would have supported Stein or Gill, and not voted for Trump. To vote for Trump can only mean you are either a bigot who actively shares Trump's bigotry, or simply don't care that a vote for Trump will further it.

It seems that Trump turned out many people to vote who had never voted before, and who either were not polled or refused to reveal their true intentions before the election. Trump was probably able to do this because he was the first major presidential candidate in recent times to use reality TV experiences to articulate, celebrate, and unleash the discontent of millions of Americans via racist, misogynistic, and populist rhetoric and gestures that spoke to and inspired them.

In addition, in terms of policy, Clinton was unappealing to many loyal Democratic voters. Just as her husband before her, she is a globalizing neoliberal hawk, and ran as one. She appeared

unconcerned with the impact of structural unemployment domestically and eager to seek military solutions internationally. Why should any blue collar worker or young Millennial vote for her from a policy point of view? The ideals that Bernie Sanders enunciated resonated much more deeply with them, though it is likely that he would have proven even less able to defeat Trump. Enough Americans may be aroused by a titillating trash-talking bigot to elect him, but I doubt enough would vote for a old “socialist”, however grandfatherly he might be, or how much they may actually like his policies.

I, and many others, voted for Clinton because she was a woman, wasn’t Trump, and had, we thought, a chance to win.

I should also add that had Clinton somehow won, we might well be facing a situation at least as dire as that which we face with her defeat. Trump repeatedly said he was prepared to contest her election as rigged. If that failed, Republican opposition to her and her policies would almost certainly be even more total than they had been against Obama. Either way, the resulting intensified stalemate could very well bring on the civil unrest and military coup that Riggs warned us about thirty years ago.

To the extent one can divine actual policy positions from Trump’s words and behavior, they at least spoke to the anxieties of blue collar white families, in addition to legitimizing their racists, sexist and other identity fears. However if he really believes that abundant, well-paid blue collar jobs vanished because of outsourcing, immigrants, and global trade policies, and that he can enact policies to restore those jobs, then I believe he is profoundly mistaken. A key reason for permanent job loss is automation and artificial intelligence. He cannot restore good old jobs by fiat, in my opinion. Very different policies aimed at peacefully and fairly heading towards full unemployment seem more realistic and humane to me. So if and when his policies fail to achieve what his voters expected, what might happen? Trump will almost certainly blame the failure on Others, not himself, and so might well be re-elected just as Bush was in spite of the disaster of the Iraq invasion. On the other hand, tensions might well rise to an intolerable boiling point.

Trump’s election was possible not because the views of so many Americans changed. To the contrary, those views have underlain American politics all my life. I grew up in the unreconstructed South and daily witnessed actions based on similar sentiments all around me. The once-Solid South of my youth (solidly racist and Democratic, that is) vanished and became Republican with Nixon’s Southern Strategy onward. I will never forget the shock I felt when Newt Gingrich (who I knew from our association with Alvin Toffler’s advocacy of Anticipatory Democracy) was first elected as a Republican Representative from Georgia. “A Republican from Georgia” was not a thought that had ever entered my head, except during the postbellum Reconstruction period. Yet it was Representative Gingrich who was primarily responsible for articulating in 1980 the plan that eventually did indeed “Turn the Republican Party into the Majority Party for the rest of my life”, as he prophesized (By chance, Clem Bezold and myself happened to visit Gingrich in his office the day before he presented his plan to newly-elected President Reagan in the White House. He practiced his presentation on us, and we were stunned by its audacity. But he proved himself to be the better futurist than either of us, both transforming the Republican Party and becoming Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1994).

No, the sentiments Trump aroused have always been there, and in both/all political parties. What was new in 2016 was the existence of a Republican candidate who knew how to express them so well, and did so with gusto, to the horror of the dwindling Establishment wing of the party. No matter how badly Trump’s policies may actually work out, the US (and much of the western world) will not soon reject the underlying sentiments since they are so deeply entrained from decades of reinforcement, unless they are thoroughly discredited by their total failure and the ultimate social implosion.

For one historical example among many I could provide, the following is a relevant excerpt of a

talk I gave in 2003 to a group of mortgage bankers in Hawaii, and published as (Dator, 2004).

...the continued dominance of neoliberal globalization is by no means guaranteed--nothing about the policies and pronouncements of the Bush W administration suggests a continuation of either process (neither neoliberalism nor globalization).

Dubya has been populist in rhetoric, protectionist in economic policy, imperialist in foreign and military affairs, and authoritarian in civil rights. None of that is in accordance with neoliberal philosophies. If W runs and wins again, as he may, then neoliberal globalization is probably over--or at least postponed for the foreseeable future.

If W does not run and win, and if a Democrat does, then one possible future is the return of neoliberal/globalization. Neoliberal/globalization is generally supported by the mainstream of the Democratic Party. There is great opposition to neoliberal/globalization in the US, but not from the Democrats. Most opposition is within the Republican Party itself--the Religious Right, the Patriots, Militia, and Minutemen, and throughout much of Middle America which fears continued loss of jobs overseas and wants only to Buy America. It is only the East Coast Bankers and their corporate fellow travelers--you perhaps--within the Republican Party who truly favor neoliberal/globalization.

There is of course considerable opposition to neoliberal/globalization in the dwindling labor union portion of the Democratic Party, but they are indeed too few to matter alone. The few remaining progressives within the Democratic Party support globalization over narrow nationalism, as well as the truly free-market aspects of neoliberalism, though guided by public policy. Unlike populists, progressives are not afraid of bigness per se, and the globe is truly big.

Those people who are opposed to globalization and neoliberalism for environmental reasons, or out of concern for the plight of the poor, once were Democrats but now are either Greens or nothing. Nothing, since they find no support for their concerns within the Democratic Party, and know that Greens can never win in our rigged two party-system. So they have abandoned all hope of working within the system, and are content with hugging trees, blowing up SUVs, or text-messaging droll Bush and Schwarzenegger jokes to one another while eating homemade tofu-burgers.

The Neocons within the Republican Party who currently rule the US are certainly not in favor of neoliberal globalization. Instead they have taken us very well down the road to creating the New American Global Empire they envisioned and had been working on for many years (through the Project for a New American Century among other platforms) during the time the neoliberal Democrats such as Clinton temporarily were in control. While 9/11 made it possible for the Neocons more easily and quickly to make more of the dramatic policy changes they had long desired, the terrorist attacks of that day were certainly not the cause of the policy changes. Many of the policies were already well under way from the moment W took office, well before the 9/11 attacks. Almost all of W's advisors-- Gen. Powell being the most prominent exception--were chosen by Vice President Cheney (who was in charge of the presidential transition team) from the list of people who had signed the New American Century manifesto in June 1997 and/or the document called Rebuilding America's Defenses, in September 2000, thus demonstrating their long-standing commitment to creating the New American Empire during W's reign. Thus, the New American Global Empire presents the US and the world with an entirely new and largely unanticipated future--a major challenge for you and all members of the larger economic community--since Neocons wish to project complete and unilateral military control of the world according to certain narrowly-defined American interests

while at the same time cutting taxes, raising public debt, and thus paring down all governments—federal, state, and local—to, well, to absolutely nothing—not even defense or justice, both of which (like all government functions) can and should be done on the cheapest, private, contractual basis, perhaps overseas in India where wages are low, skills are high, and loyalty to the American Empire assured, according to the Neocon ideology.

Since our entire global economy floats on a vast and rising flood of debt, private as well as corporate and public, it is not clear to me how the New American Empire will function in the absence of any responsible public sector at all, which is what the Neocons desire.

Thus, the time may be ripe for a major restructuring of the American political party system. (End of excerpt of my 2003 talk/paper)

I don't need to remind you that in spite of the needless killing and chaos brought on by his outrageous invasion of Iraq, a majority of American voters saw fit to re-elect W. What finally brought down W and his dreams of an American global empire, and enabled the victory of Obama, was the anticipated near-total collapse of the global economy in 2007—and the fact that the Constitution limits a president to two terms of office. Otherwise, America might well have segued directly from W to a contract of no-trump, no-spades, with deuces wild. Moreover, we will never know what an Obama presidency might have been like since the Tea Partyish Republicans who controlled Congress and the Supreme Court, on the one hand, and the Clinton Establishmentarians who favored economic globalization, on the other, squelched whatever policies for liberal Hope he might actually have wanted to implement.

So whatever might have been, the Obama years continued the neoliberal global agenda that some Americans said they intend to finally get rid of by voting for Trump, but which Trump may or may not in fact try to end. At present, it does appear he wants to create (in place of global neoliberalism) a nationalistic, unilateral American Empire similar to what W initially intended to create before 9/11 diverted him. But who knows what Trump really wants other than unbridled power and adoration?

Indeed, one of the strangest—if not unique—aspects of the appeal of Trump is that it is wholly without any kind of a philosophical—much less ideological—basis, save for that in the minds of a few Libertarians. In spite of several books by and about Trump, there is no *Das Kapital* or *Mein Kampf* among them. His publications are all simply variations on *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Moreover, while his appeal is manifest as superstar adoration of the exercise of raw power, it does not even have the defining features of a Cult of the Personality typical of authoritarian regimes. In spite of winning the election, Trump remains quite unpopular, even among many of the people who voted for him. This may change once he has the instruments of power and persuasion fully in his hands, but so far, these are yet other curious facets of Trump's conquest.

I must add that the US situation I have been discussing is simply our variation of pressures towards populist neo-nationalism that have been building in almost every part of the world for many years—in Brexit, France, Russia, India, Japan, the Philippines, and elsewhere—which will be vastly encouraged by Trump's victory. Thus it is not just America that urgently needs new plausible designs for governance. It is a global need.

It is highly unlikely that radically new forms of governance, based on the best communication and other technologies, and informed by the best social and biological science available, can be implemented until current systems collapse and are discredited. But the men who created new governments in Europe and America at the end of the 18th Century were prepared with plausible, tested ideas about new governance design, ready to be put into service when the opportunity for new forms emerged.

We must follow their example and prepare ourselves now through rigorous research, testing, and widespread discussion to implement new forms and processes of governance when the chance comes to us. In the meantime, our thanks to Trump and his supporters, and their counterparts worldwide, for making the opportunity imminent.

Now it is our duty to prepare for the auspicious moment.

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Donald Trump and the Birth of a Planetary Culture

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Journal of Future Studies

Australia

Introduction

The election of Donald Trump provides a window into our changing world. His genius as a cultural phenomenon is that he allows us to see where we have come from and also to clarify where we want to go. To be sure, his election was not guaranteed. Trump's campaign was marred by scandals of his own making. Yet he was helped by 6 years of committed gerrymandering of political boundaries by the republicans¹. Russian hackers, with the help of Wikileaks, compromised Clinton's credibility with swing voters. FBI chief Comey further undermined Clinton at the crucial time. The mainstream media gave Trump free coverage and then fake news aided by Facebook worked in his favor. And an over-confident Clinton campaign was lackadaisical and poorly run (Robb, 2016). If any one of these factors had gone the other way, we could have seen a Clinton presidency, and Trump would have been a historical footnote. His unconventional campaign, use of Twitter, and salesman-like meme hacking would have been seen as novel but not substantial.

As it stands, the popular candidate Clinton (who won approximately 3 million more votes than Trump) is not the elected president, and Trump's election, which seemingly came out of nowhere, now needs to be understood.

This essay analyzes Trump from the point of view of cultural politics, and in particular sees Trump as a transition milestone from empire to pluralist-planetary culture. The essay draws upon the cultural theory and perspective of William Irwin Thompson (1984), and employs elements of Inayatullah's (2008) Six Pillars methodology, through a movement across four dimensions, the used future, the dominant vision, the disowned future and the integrated future.

The used future is Trump's return to the 1950s, a type of social psychosis where he and his followers retreat into nostalgia and amputate themselves off from science and the reality of a dramatically changing world, i.e. the rise of East Asia, digitalization, climate change, etc. The dominant vision that has been guiding the country is neoliberal empire and what Trump and his supporters are reacting to, for good reasons: West coast style capitalist led multi-culturalism challenging the maintenance of mainstream white culture, and global capitalism eviscerating the working base of heartland USA. The disowned future is neoliberalism's shadow, what it denies: tradition, de-militarization, economic stability, social fabric, a moral base. Finally, drawing upon Thompson's argument that the emergent planetary culture is one where all oppositional polarities in the global system need to be held as a diverse ecology, an integration between the dominant neoliberal vision and its disowned future is explored and elaborated.

Trump's Used future

A used future, according to Inayatullah (2008, p.5), is an "image of the future unconsciously borrowed from someone else." In the case of Trump, it is a longing for a past that is gone, and a desire to recreate

that past. That image is of a United States which is culturally homogenous, with white culture and white people as dominant. In this essay I refer to this as “ethno-nationalism”. There are also strong elements of patriarchy, with a strong father authoritarianism driven by fear² and derision toward strong and confident women (though he will accept meek and compliant women). The ethno-nationalism he embodies is toward a USA that has a dominant white core with strong domestic industry and is protected from contamination from outsiders through walls, immigration bans and trade barriers.

Understanding what is at play here requires a segue into a discussion on empire. Thompson contrasts two archetypal forms of empire. In the Persian model of empire, the empire is the territory of the subjected. This is to say that as an empire expands, the power of the mobilizing ethnic group driving the empire expands (whether it be Persian, Han, or Anglo-English), while the power of the subjected diminishes. By contrast, in the Roman model of empire, subjects of lands conquered could become citizens. In one instance, large portions of the state of Gaul (today’s France) were granted Roman citizenship through a single law (the *Lex Roscia*). In its history, with various stops and starts, the US has mostly followed the Roman model. Thus Thompson writes:

American [US] empire sought to absorb civilizations into its multicultural identity. With the Marshall Plan, and the Post War Bretton Woods dollar economy, it first absorbed Western Europe. Now it is trying to show that Islamic Civilization can also become American. The Ummah and the oil barrel can both live in peace in a new expanded “us”.... This multi-cultural America is what Trump wishes to eliminate in his nativistic movement of a return to White Protestant America... Paradoxically, Trump’s vision is isomorphic to the Han Chinese vision of empire and identity in which China seeks to shut out the incursions of the world wide web. (Thompson, 2016).

The modern nation state in its European manifestation constructed a sense of belonging around a dominant ethnicity. This cultural core was both constructed as per an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) and was also organic and evolutionary in its development, as per the linguistic and sociological similarities that people within the geography shared. States like England and France required the construction of national languages through standardization or consolidation. Later states (such as Italy and Germany) were formed from many small kingdoms with linguistic similarities. The constructed and organic nature of ethnicity was wedded to the development of the nation state, ethno-nationalism was born.

The founding of the US, differed in history and conditions. There were immigrants from across Europe, with different languages and cultural backgrounds. The framers of the constitution drew upon a Roman model of statehood and citizenship. The Faustian bargain of political incorporation is the need for a liberalist cultural policy³. Over time the idea of “Whiteness” and Christian White American emerged as an assimilatory category, a consolidation of 20th century American values. Thus a fundamental tension has existed at the heart of the US project. On one hand the expression of a dominant and consolidated ethno-nationalism more reminiscent of European nations, versus a Roman imperial model of political incorporation that does not require cultural conformity.

Thus, liberalism in the US is of an imperial tone, and more likely to express a rupture from cultural foundations (e.g. from European Protestant Christianity to multicultural LGBT rights). While liberalism in Europe is of an ethno-nationalist tone, everyone has rights but also needs to play by the tacitly agreed upon cultural rules (e.g. in France take off your hijab and no burkinis unless you are a Catholic nun, in which case it is fine⁴).

Trump’s vision is a used future because it recycles the nativist ethno-nationalism of the yellow peril, fear of Mexicans and multi-culturalism - rejecting Martin Luther King, the planetary imaginaire of Star Trek, the women’s rights movement and the Imperial (pluralist) legacy of the US republic. In place of this is a Fortress America where fearful white men can regain some pride and

privilege sheltered from a world they feel is slipping from their grasp. Or as Thompson argues:

The coasts express a planetary cultural awareness, but the heartland – from Montana down to Texas, the Midwest and the Deep South – express nativist values. It is ironic that this nativism has found its leader with an elderly man showing the signs of the onset of senile dementia who is a billionaire and a New Yorker... Trump's new nativistic movement has emerged because it is really about multi-culturalism versus White Protestant America. (Thompson, 2016).

The Dominant Vision, Neoliberalism

Thompson's distinction between Persian versus Roman models of empire helps us to rethink the dominant vision of the last 35 years, neoliberalism. The liberalism that was the basis for the civil rights movement, women's rights movement, queer and lesbian movements from the 50s to the 70s, was eclipsed by a new liberalism - neoliberalism. This began as an economic prescription (e.g. the Washington Consensus) in the 80s and 90s, then morphed into militarized neoliberal globalization (Ramos, 2010) and shock doctrine (Klein, 2007) from the turn of the century to the present. In these three movements can be seen core processes challenging the constructed white ethno-nationalism of America. Social movements from the 50s to 70s challenged the christian white cultural norm (from Jazz to Blaxploitation, spiritual counter culture to queer rights). Reagan neoliberalism began the evisceration of the white industrial working class and the immigration of talented or rich non-whites. Militarized globalization incorporated diaspora communities from nations participating in globalization, or which were disciplined for not participating properly (Iraq). All three processes drove multi-culturalism, challenged the normative stability of a white America, and paved the way for cultural hybridity. Neoliberal empire thus drives the creation of hybridity from the foment of its cosmopolitan incorporations - pluralism is built in just as nativism is.

Its most advanced stage is West (and East) Coast cosmopolitan capitalism. In California we see tech giants vacuuming up global talent in an innovation accelerator that drives global economic disruption. People are color blind, globally minded, science driven and hyper capitalist. California and the west coast more generally represents the triumph of neoliberal empire. If you can code for Facebook, Apple or Google you may become a citizen of the republic. If no-one knew any better in the 1970s, Facebook' workspace today would have easily been mistaken for the Star Ship Enterprise. Yet, if the west coast tech economy had to rely on the white American heartland for its brains and talent, it would be a shipwreck. This is an uncomfortable truth for white America. These contradictions between ethno-nationalism and neoliberal empire are at the heart of Trump's heartland popularity.

Obama was elected as president in 2008 by a coalition that cut across ethnic and identity boundaries. A rainbow coalition of white women, gays and lesbians, blacks, latinos and left-liberals elected him and made him an icon of multicultural power. Because Obama himself was a prismatic reflection of multicultural empire, he connected with people across the themes he embodied. This infuriated the Republican party and many whites around the country. It was not that his policies were Democratic policies, actually has policies abroad and at home could have easily been construed as Republican ones. It was that he was not white, he was a colored man that represented a new political construction that did not substantively require white men. Trump led the charge in the birther movement, trying to prove that Obama was born abroad. Given the reverence that is ordinarily reserved for the president and his office, the disrespect of Obama by republicans was unprecedented, who spent a good part of his presidency trying to make his life hell. Obama, by virtue of being Commander in Chief, was a direct threat and contradiction to latent sentiments

of White Supremacy and ethno-nationalism. Yet Obama, in his hybridity, was but a loyal child of Empire.

A Personal Digression

Growing up in California, my own personal reflections factor into my analysis. My best friend in school was named Ken Nakamura, and I was practically part of their family growing up. His mom was of Irish-Spanish background. His father, a Japanese American originally from Hiroshima, experienced life in a US internment camp during World War Two. Among many other things, they used to take me to Hawaiian (fire) dancing festivals. My other good friends were Hungarian (Leslie), Guatemalan (Ivan), German-American (Danny), Caucasian-Jewish (Sean) and many others from many other backgrounds.

While my parents, following in the footsteps of the civil rights movement, taught me to be proud of being “Mexican-American”, articulating this to a wider circle was complicated. First, many of my Mexican-American peers would completely deny being Mexican-American, referring to themselves as either Spanish or American. There was a cringe association with either being Mexican or indigenous or both. Secondly, when referring to yourself as Mexican-American to whites, there would be confusion or aversion to the term. “But aren’t you American?” they might ask. Identifying as American was an expression of solidarity and belonging, while Mexican-American was some strange hybrid notion that didn’t register well in the white American cultural frame I grew up in (possible betrayal). I even had a friend who got slightly upset that I referred to myself as Mexican-American, as he wanted me to identify as white, “you consider yourself white, no?” . I tried to explain to him that a) my parents came from Mexico, b) I grew up speaking Spanish and eating Menudo, and 3) Mexicans in the US were segregated till the 1940s and heavily discriminated against until the 1970s, and have a distinct history and historical memory. He understood intellectually but I could tell he was disappointed.

The reason for divulging this is to paint a picture of the tension between the US as a multicultural empire and also the latent strains of ethno-nationalism. Yes whites were on the top of the pecking order. Non-whites suffered a subtle loss of esteem. Whites were also sometimes uncomfortable with hybridity. Yet empire’s production of culture continued to generate new combinations of multicultural community and new hybridities. Both participating in some white American cultural foundations and at the same time transforming it beyond what it is. Mexican-American as an identity prefigured America’s new hybridity – I was at once indigenous, Mexican and also a citizen of empire – an “American”.

The Disowned Future, Shadow of Neoliberal Empire

The shadow of neoliberal empire, what neoliberalism disowns and pushes away, sowed the seeds for the rise of Trump and the white American ethno-nationalist backlash. Yet it also holds the secret to transforming the crisis, and building a pluralist-planetary culture.

The Disowned Future of Neoliberal Empire

The US working class
De-militarization
Traditional morality
“Essence” or “how things are”
Ecological integrity

First and foremost neoliberal empire disowned the interests of the US working class. First through economic globalization driven de-industrialization in the 80s and 90s, but also through a series of financialization led crises (the Global Economic Crisis of 2008 just being the most severe) that devastated livelihoods and generated new levels of precarity. Obama chose to appoint economic advisors from Wall Street that rescued the banks, but that made few improvements for main street USA, and with few structural changes to the financial regulation system. This disowned future continues through the rise of automation and artificial intelligence, which is expected to wipe out yet more jobs (Halal et al., 2016). Meanwhile most large US corporations offshore their profits to avoid paying US taxes, further limiting the government's ability to reinvest in social transition (Chew, 2016).

The second disowned future is de-militarization (hence global peace). After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the US had a historic opportunity to scale back its military budget and operations globally. Instead it continued down the path of military over extension, increasing its budget and the intensity of its operations (Johnson, 2004). The US - Reagan with General Zia - helped create the mujahideen, but then experienced blowback through 9/11. This was followed by ill conceived and failed interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of a policy off de-escalation, the US military industrial complex has fed off the perception of enemies, increasing its size and number of interventions, further fueling hostility.

The third aspect of the disowned future is a traditional morality. According to Thompson liberalism creates its counter force, reactionaries, which attempt to roll back change and re-establish traditional or conservative cultural arrangements (Thompson, 1985, p.51). Because liberalism is an affirmation of human liberty, its trajectory is to rupture from any cultural arrangement which does not accept its positive freedom. Gays and lesbians will be free from discrimination. Discrimination based on color of skin will end. For sure, liberalism has its own moral philosophy, but as it systematically demolishes laws and practices that are antithetical to it, it drives a counter movement of people seeking the continuity of traditional morality (whether or not this morality can withstand a philosophical examination of ethics).

The fourth disownment, more abstract, is "essence" or "how things are". Neoliberal empire entails a radical re-patterning, through the steady entrenchment of multi-culturalism as the norm. This gradually de-centers the culture from constructed ethno-nationalist origins (whiteness) and drives the creation of hybrid culture. First whites eat Chinese food, later they have Chinese friends, and finally they marry Chinese people and finally create hybrid offspring.

For the cultural purists there is nowhere to hide, there is no way out. In neoliberal empire everyone miscegenates identities, e.g. the hipster mishmash, losing a core essence from the culture they came from, becoming algorithmically re-patterned by silicon valley dating apps. Thus cults of purity, the enemy of hybrid empire, (ISIS, North Korea), become the USA's antithesis, its enemy. But the cosmopolitan hybridity of empire will also create the purists within, hence the birther movement and the emotional need to have a white man in the white house. Whether or not one can point to and find an essence, Trump and his supporters will try and create it.

The shadow of neoliberalism is a large one, a dark globalism. Tax havens, disruptive economic globalization, cultural disintegration, an overstretched military, endless disruption – indeed "future shock". And there are many new truths that are far too inconvenient for many in white heartland America. Climate change tells them they need to collaborate internationally and stop driving their fossil fuel cars so much. Migration shifts and demographic changes in the US tell them they will no longer be a majority. Corporate influence in Washington tells them their system has been captured. Science tells them there is no such thing as race, they are not "white people". Global economic change tells them the US is slipping in stature. Failed military interventions tell them they cannot get the enemy. The success formula for a large group of once powerful people is being actively negated.

This has led to social psychosis – a condition where a whole population of people have checked out of consensual reality (as constructed through mainstream news and science). They have begun to create a world of their own, through fake news and alternative facts. The swan song of White Supremacy is its senility. And they have found their demagogue to help them shape this new world of fantasy.

Toward a Pluralist Planetary Culture

The approach in this essay follows Inayatullah's (2008) futures concept that the dominant self and its vision must work with its shadow, and through this dialogic engagement transformation can happen. The dominant vision has been neoliberalism. It has spawned a high tech revolution, a multi-cultural and hybrid America and myriad intricate connections around the world. Yet its shadows are like a great banquet of specters, feasting on the souls of a thousand repressed spirits. For Greens its shadow is runaway growth and environmental crisis. For the left its shadow is the ruthless disruption of working people's economic and social security. For the Christian right its shadow is the loss of a moral code. And for still others there are other shadows, other disownments. In this way, visions for pluralist planetization cannot be constructed by denying the shadow. Writes Thompson:

The EU bullied Greece and the neoliberals – who define culture only in terms of a theory of markets of rational self-interested individuals – enforced economic austerity rather than Keynesian public investments. Yes, there is an element of anti-immigration among the working classes, but that is because the corporate managers dump cheap labor into their communities to break up labor unions, and then retreat behind their gated communities to avoid the social consequences. Planetization and Nativism are entwined forces. (Thompson, 2016)

To conclude this essay, the integration of the dominant vision and the disowned future is considered next through some experimental ideas.

The inside view

The view from within the US may require a new relationship to culture that can transcend the culture wars. Purists may need to begin to see the God in the hybrids, coastal elites and urban liberals. Likewise, hybrids, coastal elites and urban liberals perhaps need to be less condescending, and less convinced that they are the evolutionary edge of history. Perhaps they are at the cutting edge but the metaphor of the knife is perfect - it cuts both ways. Before Kurtzweil's singularity was the original singularity that rendered all of us living star dust of an equal age.

Yet this may be too optimistic. Fundamentalists are not inclined to accept compromises or to see their enemies as projections of the self. Urban cosmopolitans may not want to share power with those they consider under-educated. Another path may be to construct a new federalism. The existing federalism requires a constant culture war waged through political arenas that determines how people can live as a whole nation. What if a neo-federalism allowed states with their voting constituencies to determine unique paths? California could have its Star Trek-like low to hi-tech cosmopolitanism and teach evolutionary quantum spirituality in its schools, while Oklahoma could focus on traditional modes of production and teach the Old Testament. As in an open space conference, people would vote with their feet. The US would shift from its culture wars where each group tried to set the template for the whole nation to an ecology of cultures. But the cosmopolitans and cultural purists would have their own heartlands and homelands.

Economically, the shadow of neo-liberalism's hyper innovation and financialized profit maximization needs to square with people's needs for economic security. This requires that the

relentless pace of innovation that constantly disrupts people's stability, livelihoods and culture be counterbalanced by real social support, life long educational opportunities, community, to allow transitional processes. Economic creative destruction needs a counter weight in enduring protection. This could be through the model of a Partner State (Orsi, 2009; Bauwens, 2012) where the state facilitates development through a universal basic income, cosmo-localized production (Ramos 2016) and the design global manufacture local model (Kostakis et al., 2015), peer to peer support and sharing economy systems. This would entail a shift from capital concentrated disruptive innovation to distributed and socialized transformative innovation.

The outside view

From the outside view, the export of American economic developmentalism has created as many if not more problems than it solved, from the negative impact of structural adjustment programs to a myriad of dependency relationships. What were disowned were the diverse needs for the world's myriad cultures that required support without heavy handed imposition of a one size fits all and often structurally violent integration into a US led global economy. Better is less arrogant and self assured American economic evangelism and a more humble approach that uses US expertise depending on diverse needs.

An outside view also favors a reduction in the geopolitical power of the US. If shadows include US exceptionalism, military adventurism / over-extension, and a century of clandestine CIA interventions, US geo-political power would need to be reconceived in a planetary cultural context. It might include using US muscle to collaboratively enforce intelligent global agreements on addressing climate change, shutting down tax haven, and curtailing the power of organized crime. It would also entail a dramatic scaling back of US overseas military operations and a more globally transparent approach to pursuing US interests. If Johan Galtung is right, and the US is on the cusp of an economic collapse (Galtung, 2009), such a realignment will have its window of opportunity. The US needs to be enfolded into a collaborative and binding system of planetary stewardship. As Thompson argues: "some form of compensatory cantonization will need to be part of the process of planetization" (Thompson, 2016).

The Road Ahead

A new planetary culture and worldview needs to be created, typified by our understanding that we are co-journeymen on a single planet and hence are co-responsible for protecting and nurturing a shared commons. There is no longer a "somewhere" else to put our trash, or even the pollution of our bad behavior, such as the economic exploitation of people, because we all have to live with their effects in the end. In the words of William Irwin Thompson:

If we make such things as Agent Orange or plutonium, they are simply not going to go away, for there is no way in which to put them. If we force animals into concentration camps in feed lots, we will become sick from the antibiotics with which we inject them; if we force nature into mono-crop agribusiness, we will become sprayed by our own pesticides; if we move into genetic engineering, we'll have genetic pollution; if we develop genetic engineering into evolutionary engineering, we will have evolutionary pollution. Industrial civilization never seems to learn, from DDT or thalidomide, plutonium or dioxin; catastrophe is not an accidental by-product of an otherwise good system of progress and control; catastrophe is an ecology's response to being treated in an industrial manner.... Precisely because pollution cannot go away, we must generate only those kinds of pollution we can live with. Precisely because enemies won't go away, for the fundamentalists' process of inciting hate only creates enemies without end, we have no choice but to love

our enemies. The enantiomorphic polity of the future must have capitalists and socialists, Israelis and Palestinians, Bahais and Shiites, evengelicals and Episcopalians. (Thompson, 1985, pp.140-141)

If we are able to create and nurture planetary culture, then we will be able to solve our global challenges collaboratively, establish respect for diversity as the norm, supercharge scientific, artistic and humanist collaboration across borders, and care for the poor and marginalized of the planet. If we continue to practice empire with its shadow, or worse, fall into ethno-nationalist fortresses, we will struggle to address our global challenges, and cut ourselves off from the higher possibilities of our humanness.

When a new being is brought into the Earth, this can also entails violent convulsions and agony. The challenge being faced is the backlash of ethno-nationalism, which seeks to retreat into a fantasy kingdom where the privileges and security of a select group can be guarded, and which wants to enforce a narrow spectrum of acceptable norms. Donald Trump is part of this convulsion. The opportunity we have is to transform the pathologies of neoliberal globalization that are driving reactionary ethno-nationalism, so that we can create a planetary culture in which everyone feels secure, privileged (in a transformed sense), and which allows an ecology of diverse cultures and ethnic groups and emergent identities to not only co-exist but to use their differences as a transformational resource.

While we need difference and diversity, people practicing their cultures, a return to ethno-nationalism is neither a viable path for the US nor for humanity. We have experienced enough war, dis-integration and exploitation through the delusions of “race” (or related exclusivities) to know this. Even for nations with strong ethnic constructions which insist on cultural assimilation, the contradictions and the costs are high. Yet empire, with its incorporative and pluralistic logic itself has its shadow, loyalty to the state and the creation of hierarchies – hence exploitation of peripheries by the core. The current turn toward ethno-nationalism is a direct result of empire’s shadow, the core of the empire (the neoliberal elite) preying on the fortunes of the periphery within empire (heartland USA). There is, however, a third path, the construction of diverse trans-national / global forms of power that are capable of enacting mutualized systems for the planetary common good. As global citizens, our challenge is to participate fully in addressing the global issues we all have a stake in, to practice governance of our shared commons. To address Trumpian ethno-nationalism, we need to create an ethos for the planetary commons – and develop the systems, cultures and narratives that allow all people to thrive within our Earth community.

Notes

1. http://www.salon.com/2016/06/05/the_gop_screwed_themselves_the_brilliant_gerrymander_that_gave_republicans_the_congress_and_created_donald_trump/
2. See: <http://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump-authoritarianism>
3. For example the prevalence of Germans and German speakers, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language_in_the_United_States
4. For an example of this see: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-08-25/burkiniban-twitter-shares-photos-of-nuns-on-beaches-in-protest/7783464>

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A Post-Hoc Causal-Layered Analysis of American Trumpism

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What's Rationality Got to Do with It?

All of us who are concerned for peace and triumph of reason and justice must be keenly aware how small an influence reason and honest good will exert upon events in the political field.

- Albert Einstein

"All your dreams will come true."

- Donald Trump

This piece is comprised of a causal layered analysis to accommodate elements of world-view and myth/metaphor specific to the United States and more universal themes. This is post-hoc causal layered analysis that acknowledges rationalization after-the-fact as a human need to construct justifying narratives of decisions that were not at all rational (Kahneman & Tversky, 1986; Sen, 1986; Quattrone & Tversky, 1988; Jost, Hennes, & Lavine, H., 2013). The emerging consensus on the 2016 presidential election was that rational choice was overridden by feelings of injustice and internalized resentment by a heretofore quiescent and passive working class who preferred pursuing a "golden age" expressed and amplified by Mr. Trump. The political forecasters were of a class expert at surfing the waves of social and political change while a significant number of Trump voters were long caught in the wash. With changing demographics, erosion of faith in institutions of all sorts and the ambiguous futures of work as we know it is small wonder then that many wanted to return to what they perceived as the terra firma of "Great America". (Taylor, 2016).

A Causal Layered Analysis of Trumpism

1. Litany

Mainstream news media had, for the better part of the 2016 presidential campaign treated Trump's candidacy as a novel curiosity. From the very outset the outrageousness of his comments on illegal immigration in general and Mexican illegal immigration in particular as a threat to the nation, were widely covered. His rhetorical style was so bombastic and so shocking that media coverage got his message of America in decline and his prescriptions the only possible remedy out at almost no cost to his campaign. He was especially astute at establishing a "dishonest media" narrative early that had the effect of obliging many news organizations, to give time to his campaign surrogates who would constantly repeat that narrative, casting any fact-checking into doubt as media bias. Many of his mass rallies were covered in their entirety with little or no commentary until they were completed when many viewers would tune out. His full-throated condemnation of the Affordable

Care Act, much hated by conservatives, aligned him with rank and file Republican Party stalwarts, especially its “Tea Party” Wing of populist activists. (Libby, 2013) Meanwhile he savaged his Republican primary opponents as establishment politicians who will only give voters more of the same, often insulting them with near schoolboy taunts. Yet this behavior was received as a kind of breath of fresh air among Republican primary voters. He shocked the political world, winning primary after primary in state after state, finally securing his party nomination. He would now give full attention to portraying his Democratic Party opponent, Hillary Clinton as “crooked” and inept in her handling State Department emails through her private server, leaving some classified information open to hacking. His many unsubstantiated charges against her would resonate with his voters who seemed unmoved by facts. (D’Antonio, 2016) His voters saw him as a change agent and would mobilize on his behalf.

With all national and key battleground state polls giving Hillary Clinton a comfortable lead, the election was viewed as being preordained. Yet, Trump would win with breakthrough wins in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin with margins of less than 50,000. Under the Constitution’s prescribed Electoral College formula, Trump won the electoral vote overriding the nearly 3 million popular vote majority that Clinton held. Donald J. Trump would thus become the 45th president of the United States.

2. Social Causes

The ideological spectrum in Western liberal democracies has been narrow, focused between liberal and conservative; both invested in the political institutions as developed from a constitutional core. However, from the early 1980s and the emergence of extreme income inequality and lessened social mobility, faith in governing and corporate institutions declined. This led to intensified disaffection manifesting in the Tea Party movement in 2009. This right-wing movement was considerably more potent than its leftist analog “Occupy”. The constant narrative of government serving only elites and the undeserving, minority urban poor resonated in rural America. This message was carried for decades over AM talk radio, a medium that covered wide swaths of those spaces between cities. Hard-right commentators on, but not limited to FOX News continued this narrative of injustice. Online sites run by right wing and Christian fundamentalist ideologues would amplify this perception of assault on traditional values. The ultra-right would eventually come to capture numerous local and state government elected offices leading to a tipping point. Moderate conservatives would be purged. Straying from a limited government, anti-immigrant, anti-abortion and traditional values agenda became politically hazardous for Republicans in all offices and at all levels of government.

The figures below illustrate the massive swing away from the traditional ideological spectrum and out to the anti-institutional margins, particularly to the reactionary side. Figure 1 depicts the conventional ideological map where the vast majority of voters resided in the upper right-hand quadrant bounded by “Liberal” and “Conservative”.

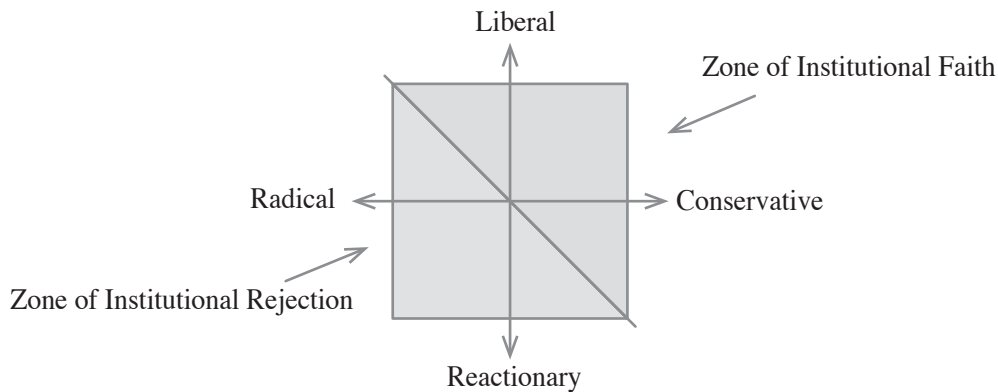


Figure 1. The Ideological Dialectic on the Dimension of Faith in Existing Institutions

Figure 2. below shows the swing among Trump voters to a reactionary ideological territory shown in the dark triangle

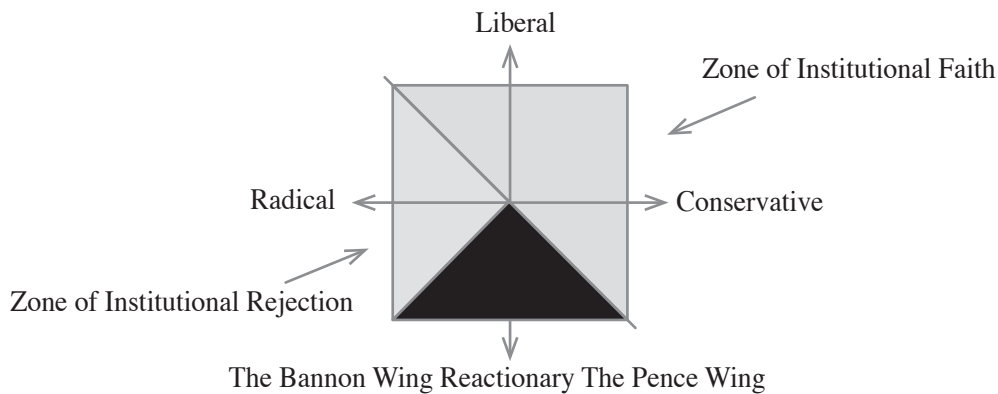


Figure 2. The Post-Election Trump Alliance

3. World View

“The American Creed” encapsulates the primary values ascribed to most United States citizens as unique among nations. Two of these values held in broad consensus among Americans are quite familiar, those being “freedom” and “equality”. The third and fourth lesser known, but significant values are “success” and “pragmatism” which are often bundled as means (pragmatism) to an end (success).

“Freedom” was associated with free-enterprise capitalism and deregulation of business activities, long a mantra among mainstream “country club” Republicans who have been a pillar of the party since its inception. Trump, a businessman, would naturally embrace this rhetoric and find a natural constituency among Republicans for it. This conflation of freedom with deregulation was persuasive, even when objectively speaking, lack regulation has consistently led to tainted foods and medicines, labor injustices and workplace safety, environmental degradation and economic crises from the Great Depression of the 1930s, the savings and loan deregulation of the early 1980s, the “dot com” bubble of the 1990s, energy deregulation in the 2000s, and the housing market meltdown of 2008. However, politics is again, to emphasize, the manipulation of symbols. The spice that Trump added to this was a frontal assault on social justice was to reframe it as “political correctness”, often mocking what would otherwise be basic civil discourse. Making fun of a disabled reporter, racist comments, sexist insults about rivals even in his own party, and bragging about sexual groping were tolerated in the name of freedom from being censored by political correctness.

Projecting the value of equality should have been the most problematic for Trump, a privileged billionaire who never engaged in any meaningful public service in his life. This was handled in one of the most sublime symbols of any campaign anywhere. The adoption of what would become the iconic “Make America Great Again” baseball cap. This headwear was standard issue for working class males everywhere in the nation and became his most successful campaign sales item. It was a symbol of blue-collar solidarity, a group that vehemently held a chip on the shoulder attitude to urban college-educated elites, that, “you’re no better than me”.

Trump’s relationship with success is the personification of a type that can be characterized in the common description of “knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing.” Trump beat his success like a drum throughout his campaign, cleverly obscuring the fact that, in the metaphor of baseball, he was born on third base and thought he’d hit a triple. He rhetorically conflated his alleged success as proof he could make America a success. This was in the face of several well-documented failed business schemes that included a bundle of unremarkable real estate courses that he called “Trump University” which promised success for those who enrolled in it. There was the more spectacular failure of his Atlantic City Casinos that lost, according to tax records, nearly a billion dollars. When these tax records came to light indicating he was able to legally parley those losses into possibly not paying federal income taxes for 10 years, he still brazened that disclosure out by calling it “smart”. That voters were apparently undeterred by his frequently sketchy business dealings, it only seems to confirm an applied principle of political behavior that people vote their aspirations and not their realities. It was if, by voting for him, they were buying a lottery ticket.

Finally comes pragmatism. Americans like what works, often measured by the metric of success, and will turn a blind eye towards how something was made to work. Americans first embraced the “taming of the West narrative” with little thought to the near extermination of native peoples this success brought. Slavery was long justified in the American South because it worked. That Gilded Age Industrialists were able to build their fortunes on the backs of cheap immigrant and child labor seems not to have much diminished their standing as figures of admiration. Once sold on “Make America Great Again”, little consideration was made as to just how this would happen, even in light of a patently impractical signature policy of building a wall on the U.S. southern border with Mexico, and even more astoundingly, getting Mexico to pay for it. Trump’s penchant for bullying those beneath him into compliance has, so far, apparently resonated with his followers who seem to believe that the U.S. can do the same in its international dealings and with what they see as domestic impediments to their preferred past.

4. Myth/Metaphor: American and Universal

The Anglo-American foundation myth has always, glossed over the Spanish settlement of American territories and the explicitly commercial venture that was the English settlement of Jamestown, Virginia favoring the Puritan narrative of “New Eden” in their establishing the Plymouth colony. This narrative saw this new land as God’s gift to the righteous and industrious souls who worked it. This was a persistent myth that would undergird an American civic religion, later according its Constitution scriptural status. George Washington was the father, and later, Abraham Lincoln was Jesus, sacrificing himself to remove the original sin of slavery. Slavery would persist by other means, from the Civil War until at least World War II, but that process was suppressed within the authorized American narrative (Blackmon, 2009).

After the Civil War, industrialists and banks had virtual free rein, which is why the American presidents between Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt are largely unknown. Eventually came the “Gilded Age” or “The Age of the Robber Barons”, depending upon one’s attitude towards those times. Enter Frank Baum, a feminist, virulently racist and politically active writer and author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1904¹). While Baum denied it, his Wizard of Oz series were seen as political allegories. The predatory Eastern Banks (Wicked Witch of the East) and monopolistic

railroads (Wicked Witch of the West) exploited the common people. Ill-educated farmers (the scarecrow) and oppressed workers (the tin man) would be led by common everyman (Dorothy) to petition the president (the wizard). Dorothy wore silver (“free silver movement”) slippers (not ruby which was a Hollywood device to show off one of their first color movies). To round out Baum’s imagined political alliance was the figure of William Jennings Bryant, a roaring populist orator but disappointingly ran for President as a Democrat (a cowardly lion). For these naïve bumpkins the president was a wizard. They marched to Washington, D.C. (Emerald City) via “yellow brick road” (gold standard). Glenda the good witch (a connected lobbyist) got them access to the President/Wizard. He would negotiate a deal to have them earn favor by defeating the remaining rival witch. He knew that if they failed he wouldn’t have to deliver and his fingerprints wouldn’t be on the attempt. Against all odds they succeeded. He’d then be revealed to be literally using smoke and mirrors to maintain the aura of magic, mystery and authority that underlies all apparatuses of social control as described in the chapter “The Grand Inquisitor” (Dostoyevsky, 2013). The wizard ended up satisfying his constituency by delivering symbolic tokens to them (a heart-shaped watch for emotion, a diploma for intellect, a medal for courage). In the end it was the wizard’s powers of persuasion and his skilled use of symbols that maintained his legitimacy.¹

The Wizard of Oz myth essentially reveals the timelessness of the grievance to movement to cooption process. “We won’t get fooled again”, but then we always are as aspirations override realities among credit card debt strapped Americans.

At its deepest level two world-views are in fundamental conflict in American political culture best expressed in the Old Testament vs. New Testament. One can read the Old Testament as the story of a people apart and maintaining their identities over millennia. They were the first nationalists. It is a chronicle of faith and persistence as a people. It also justified the displacement, and slaughter of others not anointed by God. It is particularly focused on land promised by God as reward for their fidelity to his commandments. The consequences that issued from straying from the covenant were vivid. God’s wrath would rain fire and brimstone, bring about plagues and natural disasters upon all who strayed from his laws. God’s anger would be visited also to the unbelievers, and the enemies of their faith who competed for their land. The faith of the Hebrews would be tested from Abraham to Job as icons of pure unquestioning belief beyond rational calculation.

Nation as a people united by religious faith persists even in post-Enlightenment America where the founders’ wisdom separating church and state has dimmed. In parts where people indeed “cling to their guns and religion” the American foundation myth of Winthrop’s “New Jerusalem” persists (Dunn, 2015). These are where people’s first names are often of Old Testament origin. In their worldview America was founded on Judeo-Christian values and pre-ordained by God that is still a core belief of the blue-collar White-Anglo-Saxon Protestant. America was seen as their promised land where the sweat of one’s labor would bear abundance. It is worth noting that Old Testament passages are often held in near equal esteem to the New Testament among many American fundamentalists.

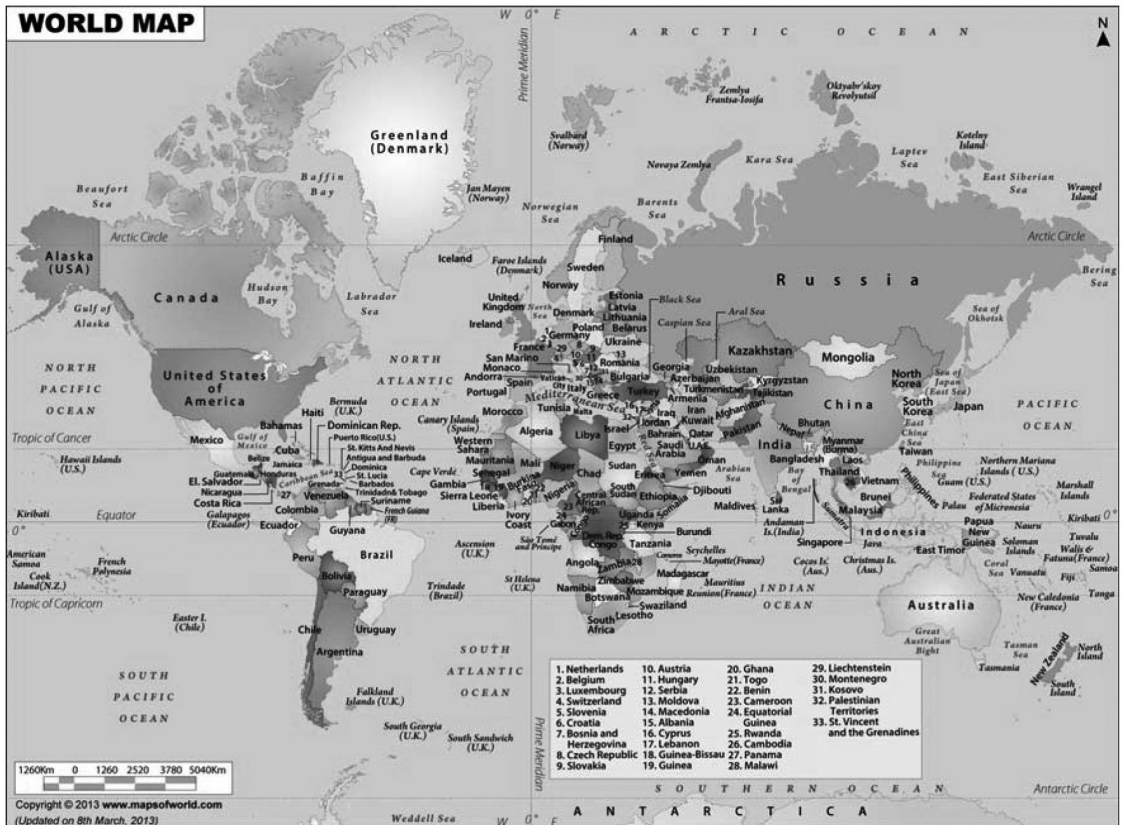


Figure 3. The Trumpian World View as a Map

Of course most Trump supporters are not comprised of Christian fundamentalists. Mr. Trump himself is highly secular in his habits, and hardly a model of Christian piety, but he espouses a world-view that conforms to an Old Testament sentiment. His closest political advisors include White nationalist Steve Bannon, but son-in-law Jared Kushner, who is an observant ultra-Orthodox Jew. This also aligns with his apparent affinity for Vladimir Putin, himself a Russian nationalist. As suggested in figure 3, this view is that of a political map projecting the world as flat with northern and southern latitudes distorted to make North America and Northern Eurasia look much larger than they actually are. In Mr. Trump's world-view, size matters.

The New Testament world-view departs from the Old Testament in its universalism and relative accommodation to different views. This is evidenced in how its core books, the Gospels, are written from four perspectives. The post-Gospel books include what are essentially memoranda from Paul managing churches proliferating throughout the Roman world. Christianity became marked by inclusiveness of believers over the exclusivity of the Judaism of that time. This is seen in the different orders of priests and nuns in the Western Church and the wide variety of flavors found in the Eastern Church. Of course Christian sectarianism manifested intra-faith slaughter, but as metaphor, it is aggressively universal. It is a cosmology that aligns with other great faiths, transcending identification with nation as people apart. Christianity would thrive on conquest and frequent forced conversion, and religious divisions still profoundly drive historical process, yet the metaphor of a universal Christendom persists. The nation-state system that carries that seed of a universal world system functions on bonds over divisions, seeing as absurd the idea of border walls. The world as jigsaw puzzle rendered in figure 3 is now supplanted by the world as holistic system

shown in figure 4 below:

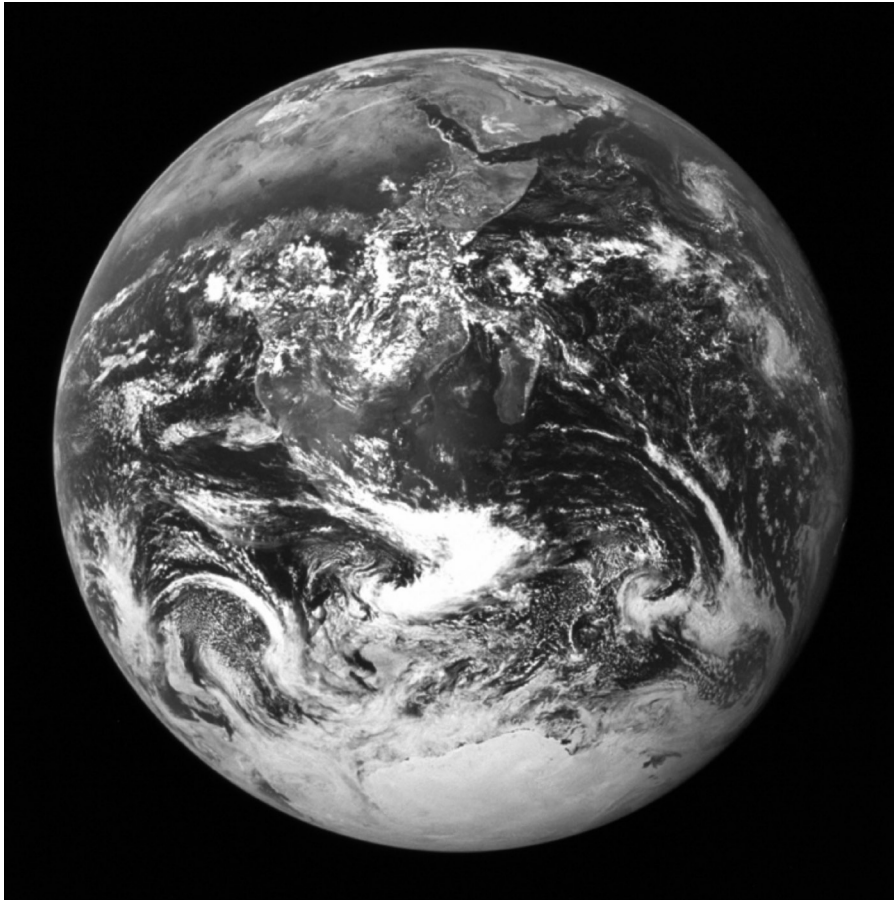


Figure 4. Earth as Seen from Space

This Revolution Will Break Your Heart

We, as futurists, are not in the business of prediction. This should go without saying but is noted here for the benefit of non-futurists who might be reading this. We, however, are not immune from proffering forecasts of hope. We can hope that the many episodes of more and more extreme hyper partisanship witnessed over the past few years will have reached a climax, though there is no indication of any downward inflection in that trend. The business of political prognostication has taken a significant hit with the climatic events of the Brexit vote and Trump. That noted, the post-Enlightenment project of human betterment through rational guidance should not be abandoned especially since this Trump episode may not be novel. America endured Andrew Jackson, an Amerindian exterminator. The nation was once so polarized that it experienced a literal civil war. The populist movement, a reaction produced by the wrenching transition from an agrarian to industrial economy at the cusp of the 19th and 20th centuries, diminished to obscurity over time. Labor movements, women's suffrage, wars, assassinations, riots, civil rights, impeachments, LGBT rights, terrorist attacks, have all been treated as apocalyptic in the moment, and yet peoples emerge from these events with a coherent normalizing post-hoc narrative. As referenced by Lewis 2016 in, *The Undoing Project*, we invent new normals all the time.

This is by no means suggests a call for complacency or wait-and-see passivity to this administration. Scholars and practitioners in our field in particular have a responsibility to future generations. Those of us involved in long-term policy analysis must continue to speak truth to power. Action researchers, artists, writers, and performers must also be “Toto”, the little dog in the *Wizard of Oz* who initiated the whole tale by being naughty and the one who pulled back the curtain to reveal the wizard for who he was.

We can reasonably expect this revolution to go the way of others; from euphoria, to faction, to incompetence to counter revolution and at least partial restoration that this author describes as “the return of the king”. But again, this pattern should be managed and understood as requiring struggle. Ultimately we get the futures we deserve.

Note

1. For readers not familiar with the 1939 classic movie *The Wizard of Oz* which retains elements of the allegory described above, two key scenes revealing the Wizard as a fraud and yet still capable of manipulating through the distribution of tokens can be viewed via these YouTube links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZR64EF3OpA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky7DMCHQJZY>

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Re-dynamising Local Economies in the Age of Trumpism

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The Rise of Trumpism

Mark Blyth (2016) has given a good analysis of the rise of Trumpism in the context of the crisis of neoliberalism which has negatively affected a layer of the western middle classes and ‘white working classes’. However, like most analysts, he identifies the problem without believing there is a solution at hand. In this article, we argue that there is a political and policy response, which would be able to reconquer the disaffected populations in the Western countries, to a progressive agenda. This answer lies in adopting the commons as a new paradigm to conceive of policy solutions. To explain our approach, we add the analysis of both Kojin Karatani and Karl Polanyi to the insights of Mark Blyth.

Kojin Karatani (2014), in his book ‘The Structure of World History’, has argued that any political and economic system is not just one modality, but an integration of modalities. In the case of capitalism, though ‘capital’ dominates, two other modalities are just as essential for the survival and organization of the system as a whole: the state and the nation. When capital becomes too dominant in the ‘capital-state-nation’ system, the nation, the locus of what remains of community and reciprocity dynamics, revolts and mobilizes, and, if successful, it forces the state to discipline capital. The reason that the present system is so strong, therefore, is that these three act in concert, and whenever one is endangered, the two other sub-systems mobilize to its rescue.

Adding as a second layer of insights, Karl Polanyi’s analysis in ‘The Great Transformation’, aids us in understanding why this ‘three in one systemic balance’ is now dysfunctional. According to Polanyi (1944), the history of capitalism moves back and forth between free market periods, which are phases of economic liberalization, and regulatory periods, roughly changing every thirty years. This is the swing between periods with embedded markets and periods with dis-embedded markets. In some periods, the market forces are dominant (e.g. the ‘Smithian’ capitalism of the 19th century) and, thus, actively subvert the order of society and dislocate it, putting many people in danger in terms of material (and ‘psychic’) security. Eventually, society reacts through mobilizations and utilizing the power that is conquered in the state apparatus, and forces the market back into a more ‘social’ order.

It could be argued, at first sight, that we are currently in the midst of a Polanyian backlash. Blyth’s article (2016), shows how both the right-wing and the left-wing populists broadly identify the same problem, offering of course different solutions. What they have in common is the desire to strengthen the power of the nation-state in order to reform the system.

But what if the nation-state has become a broken instrument to restore the balance in the system? Indeed, Polanyi's pendulum is now broken (Bauwens & Kostakis, 2018). Capital has become transnational in its operations and control mechanisms, but regulations are still decided at a state level. Therefore, globalized and financial neoliberalism has fundamentally weakened the capacity of the nation-state to discipline its activities. Faced with a powerful transnational capitalism, the various nation-state systems have proven pretty powerless to effect any change. This is one of the explanations for the deep distrust that people are feeling towards the current political system, which simply fails to deliver towards any social demand.

Trumpism and Brexit could be seen as reactions against the effects of neoliberalism and its destruction of the middle class. In the United States and the United Kingdom, working class voters rejected the corporate globalization that has created poverty and insecurity (Norberg-Hodge & Read, 2016), and led to an increasing alienation of workers (Archibald, 2009). In the meantime, consumers gain access to cheaper products, the wages of workers fall due to competition with foreign labor, and the investor class benefits significantly while the wage class loses ground (Heinberg, 2016).

Towards New Value Regimes

The crisis of the capitalist trinity has reached a systemic level that cannot be solved by simply re-arranging the three modalities in the existing logic. A more fundamental re-alignment of these modalities is necessary. This is what we have called a transition in regimes of value. Historically, Karatani's book (2014) has identified the value transitions from the civilizations based of the early nomadic bands, where 'pooling' i.e. the commons, was the dominant modality, to the more complex tribal federations, where reciprocity-systems became dominant, to the state-based imperial systems, and finally, the transition towards capitalism. We argue that the current conjuncture, particularly in the context of the spread of global digital networks such as the internet, is creating a new alignment of forces that can already be seen in the prefigurative communities of commons-based peer production. In another study (Bauwens & Niaros, 2017), we have attempted to characterize the logic of this value regime by examining the revolution in accounting practices, through open and contributory accounting systems. At the core of this new value practice lies a re-arrangement of the modes of allocation:

- Value creation is based on the mutualization of productive knowledge through knowledge commons, which creates open and global productive communities;
- New 'generative' or 'ethical' market coalitions are emerging to create livelihoods; and
- New governance institutions are emerging to maintain the cooperative infrastructure.

If we expand this development from the micro-scale, to the level of society and the macro-economy, this new alignment means that instead of 'capital-state-nation', we have 'commons - (generative) market - (partner) state'. This means that instead of returning to the nation-state, with the aim of re-disciplining capital, we need to imperatively focus on the creation of institutions that operate at the global level.

This article focuses on the economic and industrial benefits of this new model. To face the historic danger of a shift of western workers to the radical right, we argue for an alternative plan that can create massive programs of productive work for disintegrating communities, with jobs that are compatible with the need for a social-ecological transition.

Re-Localizing work and Re-Dynamising Local Economies

Today, there is an exponential increase in the number of civic and cooperative initiatives in the western world (De Moor, 2013), that operate outside of the state and corporate world, and focus on the creation of commons, i.e. a shared resource, co-governed by its user community according to the rules and norms of that community. Through these citizen-driven initiatives, local and global projects are attempting to move from extractive models that are destroying the environment and undermining society, to generative models that create added value to the shared resource base that citizens are co-constructing.

The key question in connection to Trumpism is whether these models carry within themselves the seeds of an industrial policy that could offer solutions to these sectors of the population that are attracted to nationalist protectionism. To answer this question, we describe what the new model of commons-based peer production (Benkler, 2006) offers at the level of the organization of global production.

Based on the conjunction of the digital commons (e.g. open knowledge, software and design) with desktop manufacturing and automation technologies (e.g. from 3D printing and CNC machines to low-tech tools and crafts), new sustainable models of production could emerge. Such an example is the 'Design Global, Manufacture Local' (DGML) model, which describes the processes where design is developed, shared and improved as a global digital commons, whereas the actual customized manufacturing takes place locally (Kostakis et al., 2015; Kostakis et al., in press).

Through DGML it is, at least technically, possible to re-imagine production away from neoliberal globalization. While the latter is based on huge expenditures of fossil fuels in global supply chains and proprietary knowledge, through DGML, actual physical production can be done locally, thus producing huge savings in thermo-dynamic expenditures.

The ecological benefits of this model could be summarized as follows:

- Overcomes planned obsolescence (open design communities do not design for planned obsolescence);
- Reduces transportation costs through re-localized production (and thus the consumption of declining material and energy resources); and
- Creates the possibilities for a much more rapid and efficient adoption of an open source circular economy, which is much harder to achieve under scenarios of proprietary intellectual property.

Brian Holmes has described what these ideas would culturally mean for the disaffected populations that have been voting for Trumpist parties (Bauwens, 2016):

The advantage of these relatively inexpensive machine tools is that they allow small groups of workers to autonomously carry out sophisticated projects, fulfilling the cultural demand for dignity of labor without oppressive management by suits. If people learn to use them in a local capitalist factory producing quality goods for decent wages, then during periods of unemployment or early retirement they could also use them in a commons-based economy, to help rebuild a resilient community. In this way the value of one's own labor would be reinforced along a pathway that leads outside of current managerial capitalism.

How many jobs could be created this way? Nobody can give an honest answer to this. However, the experience of the French rural Community Land Trust project called Terre des Liens¹ (TdL), which provides low-rent land to ecological farmers, hints to what would be possible. Indeed, they calculated that their model of 100% organic food would need 12% of workers in the rural areas,

as compared to 2% today, which is a six-fold increase in employment only in agriculture. Just as interestingly, it has proposed using a ‘circular finance’ model, where public authorities re-invest part of their gains. The case of TdL can demonstrate huge savings to the Water Authorities in terms of providing back clean water that quantifiably and dramatically diminishes the cost of water purification.

The task of circular finance would therefore be to find out systematically where such virtuous loops could be created, so that a transition to generative models would fund itself through the savings it produces. This model of financing is of particular interest in a period dominated by austerity policy, as civic and labor forces can argue that such job creation is in fact not spending extra budget but actually eliminating expenditures, which can be re-invested elsewhere. A massive mutualization of physical infrastructures is the way to achieve this.

What would be the vehicles for such a transition? One of the structural elements is the use of the existing networks of ‘open source third places’, i.e. associative and cooperatively-run makerspaces, where the prototypes for such new manufacturing and production could be piloted. The most ambitious program to date is the Fab City² coalition, in which 16 cities have pledged to relocate 50% of their food and industrial production within the city and its bioregion. Across the world, informal or formal ‘citizen empowerment networks’, like the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation³, have proposed local policies and experiments. We can envisage city-coalitions, with public-commons partnerships around the basic provisioning systems, creating ‘sustainability empowerment platforms’ where the contributory actors can propose policies that can be supported by public authorities.

In the current context of social and political instability, with the right-wing populism that drives on the despair of blue-collar workers (Ramos, 2014), this alternative model could be the basis of progressive political programs that would re-create local blue-collar jobs, without resorting to measures related to national protectionism.

However, major impediments are the (post-)Keynesian and market-state duopoly convictions of the progressive forces themselves. As Michal Kalecki (1943) has pointed out, long-term Keynesian policies cannot work in the classic capitalist framework, which means that any proposal for deficit spending cannot be sufficient on its own. The political requirement therefore is a political breakthrough of progressive political forces, to an understanding of the key role of the commons, in any transformation or betterment of the current systemic crisis. In other words, we believe that progressive forces should align, no longer just behind the Polanyian ‘double movement’ strategy of re-embedding the market back under state regulation, but as actors of the reconfiguration towards a commons-based economy and society.

Conclusions

The aforementioned analysis leads us to the following conclusions.

To begin with, progressive coalitions at the city and nation-state level should first of all develop policies that increase the capacity for the autonomy of citizens and the new economic forces aligned around the commons. These pro-commons policies should be focused not only on local autonomy but on the creation of transnational and translocal capacities, interlinking the efforts of citizens and ethical and generative entrepreneurs to the global networks that are currently in development. Such progressive coalitions should focus on post-capitalist construction first and foremost.

Additionally, a revived left should offer large numbers of people productive roles in an economy that can actually build the alternative energy technologies, urban food-production systems and housing infrastructures that are needed to face the ravages of environmental decay and climate change. Rather than doing this according to an ideological prescription, the yet-to-be-created new mainstream left should create economic opportunities that will allow people to fulfill their desires for autonomy and a sense of self-worth.

Last, the only way to achieve systemic change at the planetary level is to build counter-power, i.e. alternative global governance. The transnational capitalist class must feel that its power is curtailed, not just by nation-states which may organize themselves internationally, but by transnational forces representing the global commoners and their livelihood organizations.

Notes

1. <http://www.accesstoland.eu/-Terre-de-liens->
2. <http://fab.city/>
3. <http://www.cookcountymission.com/>

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The Rule of the Jester King

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Abstract

The current events witnessed with the election of Donald Trump are so bizarre and extraordinary that framing the narrative as a fairy story with magic spells, evil wizards, and demon hordes seems to encapsulate those events more than any analysis of fact. This paper is set in the Great Kingdom of Cemaria and chronicles the rise of the Jester king to power using Inayatullah's futures triangle. Posed as dreams of the royal fortune teller four scenarios are then developed ranging from the end of life on earth through to the establishment of a whole new paradigm of humanely based organisation.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Fairy Story, Futures Triangle, Scenarios, Archetype

Introduction

Being tasked with exploring the implications of a trump presidency is no mean feat. Almost daily there is a new twist that takes "reality" further and further into the realms of surreal absurdity. Nothing is what it seems. It feels more real to take the story out of "reality" as we know it. This paper, therefore uses a fairy story format (MacGill, 1995). Countries and personalities that appear in the story are anagrams, but maps help identify the nations. The format also uses Inayatullah's futures triangle (Inayatullah, 2008), which includes the weight of the past, the push of the present and the pull of the future to set the scene, then it uses Dator's scenarios of steady state, continued growth, collapse and preferred futures (Dator, 1979) to explore a set of plausible futures.

The author lives in New Zealand, which has an impact on how these international events are perceived. There is a distance that can be maintained, because the events seem beguilingly so far away, however, the indirect impact could well be greater than any domestic issues for many decades.

Sarkar's stages of the social cycle (Inayatullah, 2002) blend well with the archetypal images that present themselves in the following fairy story. Sarkar proposes that history moves through cycles where the age of the worker, warrior, intellectual/priests and then merchants unfold. He suggests that a sadvipra leadership helps to keep the four elements of society in balance rather than the cycle being unbalanced and dominated by one of the aspects as observed in current events, where the power of the merchants is out of control (Bauwens, 2016). This ideal sadvipra leadership, which maintains a dynamic balance over time then becomes the foundation for generating preferred futures.

The Great Kingdom of Cemaria (Weight of history)

The Great Kingdom of Cemaria was the most powerful kingdom of all the lands (see Figure 1). Old King Maabo (see Table 1) had always been popular amongst the people of Cemaria, but he was always worried that other kingdoms like Hanci or Suasri might become more powerful. Alliances were made with other kingdoms like Siluaarta and the joint kingdoms of Ropue to maintain the Cemarians' power. The old king also sent his knights into many other kingdoms, and would even make war, to make sure they always had food for the horses and other animals as they did not have enough animal feed for their own horses and animals in their own land.

Table 1. *Amagrams used in the text not mentioned in maps*

Old King Maabo	Obama
Queen Tolcnin	Clinton
Duke Resdans	Sanders
Duke Cepen	Pence
The Labnicrepu Lords	Republican elites
Lecunra dragons	Nuclear weapons
The demon hordes of Mitecal	Climate change

Merchant families from the kingdom of Cemaria had used an old wizard from the dark mountains to the west to cast a spell on all the people. They fell into a trance and obeyed any notice that was posted on village walls. The people worked harder and harder, but became poorer and poorer because the fruits of their labours were stolen by the merchant families. The merchant families sent envoys to all the other kingdoms making trade deals that greatly increased their wealth, but it meant that millions of people throughout all the kingdoms lived in dire poverty (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Korten, 2010).

The old wizard was also the guardian of the demon hordes of Metical and when the spell was cast putting the people in their trance an error was made, allowing the demon horde to escape. The demons ranged abroad creating increasingly disastrous storms, floods, heatwaves, and earthquakes everywhere they went (Ison, 2010; Klein, 2014; Lovelock, 2009). The more the people were entranced, the more powerful the demons grew.

Cemaria, Suasri, Hanci and several other kingdoms had learned how to control Lecunra dragons that could wreak unimaginable havoc on any land in which they were set loose. There was also an evil ogre roaming many lands casting spells that brought new diseases. In the past they had been stopped before they spread too far, but people in all kingdoms were afraid that with increased trade and contact between the kingdoms, new diseases could spread far more quickly in future.



Figure 1. *The kingdoms of the world*

The Rise of the Jester King (Push of the present)

Everyone had expected the old Queen Tolcnin to take the throne after the old king died. Duke Resdans had also wanted to become king, but the people did not like him. At the king's court, the court jester with bushy blond hair and large long tie had been a friend of the merchants for many years and had become very wealthy.

One day the court jester had been singing songs, juggling and doing acrobatics before King Maabo. One of the king's advisors called the king away to discuss important matters of state. As a joke the jester hopped up on the throne, put on the crown, clutched the king's orb and sceptre and shouted, "I will make Cemaria great again". To his surprise everyone responded by shouting, "All hail to the jester king". The Labnicrepu Lords, also known as the POG, who did not like the old king shouted as loud as any others. The king's soldiers brought all the old king's advisors before the jester king. "Off with their heads", the jester king shouted and they were led away. He then invited all his merchant family friends to come and be advisors.

The jester king instructed his craftsmen to build a great wall to the south and demanded that the King of Xecomi provide the workers for the wall. Whenever people laughed at the jester king, he would get angry and send his magical tweeting-birds to tell everyone of his annoyance.

The jester liked the idea of being the king. He sent messengers to all the lands to tell them he was the new king. The king of Waitan sent a messenger to congratulate the jester king, but this angered the Emperor of Hanci, who did not like the King of Waitan. The kingdom of Suasri had long been an adversary of the kingdom of Cemaria, but the jester king sent friendly messengers to the king of Suasri and his merchant friends. Rumours abounded that the King of Suasri had helped the jester to become king. The other kings and emperors became nervous about what else the jester king might do and started talking amongst themselves.

The Dreams of the Royal Fortune Teller (Pull of the future)

The royal fortune teller came into to the court and addressed the jester king and courtiers.

"I see dark clouds ahead for the kingdom and Cemaria and all the lands", declared the royal fortune teller. There will be enormous changes throughout the many lands. She spoke of magicians, who had been devising spells that people could use to talk to people at great distance, to find their way when they were lost, to make their horses run faster, make moving images and much more. They were working on spells that would enable horses to pull coaches with no driver and mechanical creatures to do many new tasks. Many difficult or dangerous tasks would be done by mechanical creatures (Inayatullah & McNally, 1988), but many people would find they could not continue in their crafts because they were now done by machine.

She warned that the storms and other disasters brought by the demon hordes of Metical would get much worse and repeated the warning of the magicians saying the future of all the kingdoms might be under threat if the merchant families were not stopped.

The rise of the jester king had caused great conflict within the people of Cemaria, because many still wanted the old queen. Many old rivalries reappeared. The jester king had to find a way to bring the nation together again, but the more he tried, the more the people were divided. The division in the land of Cemaria worried the people of all the other lands.

The royal fortune teller then said she had been unable to tell the future, but she had dreamed four dreams of what might be, to help the jester king decide what to do to avoid some of the dark clouds looming. The dreams were not clear and separate as they had been in the past, but they tended to flow together (see Figure 4).

Keeping on with the Old Spell (Steady state scenario) (Dator, 1979)

In the first dream, the jester king and the merchant families called the old wizard from his cave to cast a new spell that sent the people into an even deeper trance. People kept buying the goods of the merchant families and ignored the worsening storms and floods. The wars over the animal feed continued. The jester king kept making strange decisions, but court officials managed to block the worst decisions and calm the concerns of other kingdoms. The Lecunra dragons remained in their lairs. The old wizard grew increasingly concerned that his spells, which had to become more and more powerful might fail, so the first dream would turn into the third.

Cemaria is Never Made Great Again (Continued growth scenario)

The second dream showed the conflict within the kingdom of Cemaria growing worse and worse (see Figure 2). The Republic of Falcinroia, a small state within the kingdom of Cemaria to the west wanted the old queen to rule, so they took a proclamation to the jester king declaring that from that time on they and other coastal lands to the north would leave Cemaria and become the kingdom of Falconiria. Some eastern states around the city of Kron Yew then also broke off to become the kingdom of Kron Yew. Salaaka to the north joined the kingdom of Dacana.



Figure 2. The Great Kingdom of Cemaria

Cemaria was never great again. The District of Bulimoca remained the capital city where the king and court resided. The other kingdoms shunned Cemaria because of the erratic decisions of the jester king. They feared being drawn into a war not of their making. Though ravaged by the demon hordes of Metical, the kingdoms of Suasri and Hanci grew in strength. The problems within the joint kingdoms of Ropue meant they were unable to be great again.

The people of the Tediun Mikgond had decided to leave the kingdoms of Ropue and other kingdoms in Ropue became afraid that other kingdoms would choose to leave as well (See Figure 3). Tensions were high and dictators ruled in many of their lands. The bankers throughout many of the kingdoms of Ropue ran out of gold. A disagreement between the Kingdoms of the Tediun Mikgond and Pinas over a large rock at Braglita exacerbated old wounds and resulted in 12 years of war that drew in many kingdoms. The millions who had fled war in their own lands continued to flood into the kingdoms of Ropue further raising tension. The kingdoms, once so powerful, lay in ruins.



Figure 3. The Kingdoms of Ropue

Storms, floods and earthquakes caused by the Metical demon horde struck in all the kingdoms. In a bid to show its strength with dwindling power, a disagreement between Cemaria and Hanci over islands in the South Hanci Seas resulted in the Lecunra dragons being released. The kingdom of Suasri took advantage of the situation and became great, but they had their own merchant families who continued in the same way as the merchant families of Cemaria. This dream could turn into the destruction of the third dream.

The End of Days (Collapse Scenario)

The third dream was the darkest dream. The jester king is forceably taken from the throne, but his successor Duke Cepen is weak and civil war breaks out in Cemaria with widespread rioting and clashes between rival groups. Armed militias roam the land looting and pillaging all across the kingdom. The king's knights were ordered to try and maintain peace. The demon hordes of Mitecal ranged freely unleashing their storms, tornadoes, floods leave millions homeless, many fleeing to Dacana to the north and Xecomi to the south. Resistance is greatest in Falconiria and the lands of the western coast and around Kron Yew, but isolated cities like Gochaci and Rednev also rebelled. The Great General of the army of Cemaria seized power sending his knights throughout the land to rule with an iron fist. The pressures on natural resources meant animal feed, water and many other critical resources became scarce and wars arose all around the globe as kingdoms struggle to take control of those resources remaining. Cemaria lost its place of power, never to see it return. The joint kingdoms of Ropue similarly descended into war as they were unable to resolve their differences. Dictators arose in many kingdoms, who then fought amongst themselves.

Other kingdoms were also struck by the power of the demon hordes of Metical and the Lecunra

dragons were released a number of times after conflict over the influence of Cemaria in the Ruikena region to the south of Suasri. The joint kingdoms of Ropue were drawn into the conflict resulting in death and destructions. The evil breath of the Lecunra dragons drifted into the lands of the Hanci killing thousands, so the Lecunra dragons flew again bringing destruction to both Cemaria and Hanci. The days of great darkness long predicted by many fortune tellers began. Wars raged between many other nations as they were invaded by kingdoms without access to the resources they needed to survive.

In the southern seas of the Ficacip Ocean, the kingdom of Siluaarta had not fared well. Drought became far worse than ever before. Temperatures soared so the wide spread lands that were already precarious for supporting life, became totally unliveable. Water became very scarce (Flannery, 2011). The kingdom of Siluaatra had previously strongly supported Cemaria, so when Cemaria lost power, so did they. Siluaarta had never liked having people trying to come by boat to live there, but now the numbers were so overwhelming they could not be stopped. Now there were no resources to keep them when they arrived. As the dream ends it could continue into a general collapse and descent into darkness and even the end of all life, or with lower populations, return to the second dream with unending pain and suffering, or turn into the fourth dream.

The Magic Fairy Brings in a New Age (Preferred Scenario)

The final dream showed a future, where a magical fairy flew over the kingdom of Cemaria sprinkling the dusk of illumination as she went. Soon after, the Labnicrepu Lords grew wary of the poor decisions of the jester king and all the court officials managed to block the bad decisions. The people of Cemaria grew angry that the jester king had made life worse for them and grew angry at the merchant families. They stopped buying their goods and the merchant families lost power. The demon hordes were brought under control. The storms and other disasters subsided as the land settled back into health. For some, the third dream melds here after a collapse to create a better future in this fourth dream.

The league of small kingdoms including Dwesen, Zen Wesland, Dallhon, Dalecin, Pragnesio and Waitan as small agile adaptive kingdoms found it easier to establish innovative ways of coming together. By collaborating, using the new inventions of the magicians, listening to the voice of the people and organising themselves in more humane ways, the people gained more power. They found alternative ways of organising the merchants, the banks, and the king's advisors from before that focused on building well-being for all people and everyone lived happily ever after (Bauwens, 2005; Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006; Gorenflo, 2015; Rifkin, 2011).

Silence fell over the court of the jester king. He pondered the royal fortune teller's words for a while, then he stood and ...

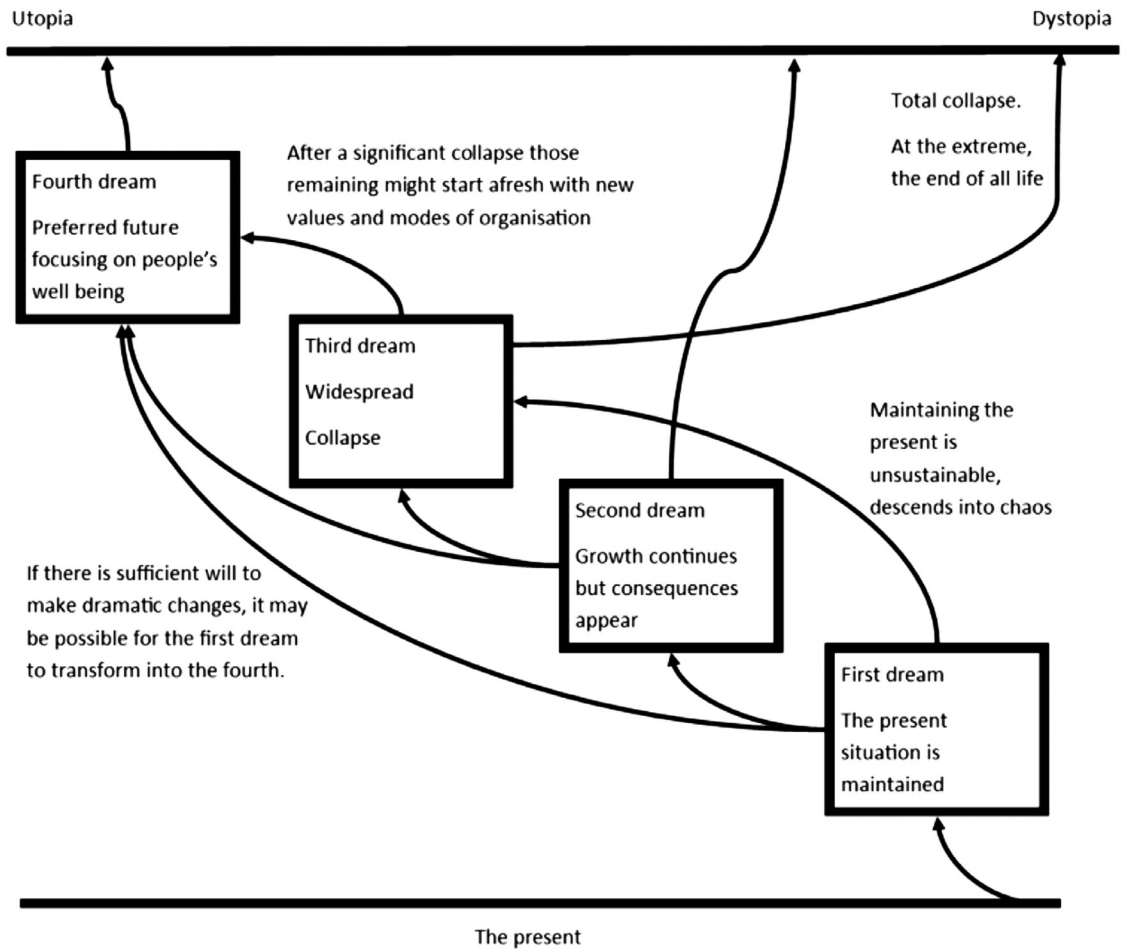


Figure 4. The four dreams and how they are linked together

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Theses on Trump: Personal reflections in the form of 10 axioms

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1. The victory and support for Trump reflects the crisis of neoliberal globalization and the underlying dynamics of capitalism, i.e. both the environmental externalities such as peak resources (not contrary to current oil glut, but a paradoxical part of it, see Bio-Physical Triggers of Political Violence),¹ and climate change; and the social externalities, essentially the impoverishment of the western working and middle classes.
2. Hence a struggle between the pro-neoliberal forces who want to maintain the benefits of Empire at the cost of both the internal population and the nationally bound industries, and those of the forces that backed Trump, and accept that they can no longer dominate Empire and are ready to endanger the latter to save the USA. Other right-populist forces have broadly similar designs for their own national realities. Hence the support for Trump from the more nationally oriented business leaders, the sectors that fear climate change costs and regulations (the energy sector). Hence, the retreat from imperial policing and responsibilities. The idea is to retreat back to the nation-state, only accept trade which does not endanger national capital, and to repatriate the trillions that are stashed abroad through the 'imperial' multinationals. This explains the opposition to Trump from the neoliberal elite.
3. The class compromise of neoliberalism, to accept the cultural aspects of the 1968 uprising, and thus the acceptance of cultural and gender rights with the postmodern, (while actively de-industrialization at the detriment of western industrial labor), post-labor left that supported it, is no longer workable. Hence the Trump forces promise an alignment with the white working class (but also others who share certain laborist or productivist values), at the cost of Otherization. It's mobilizing and creates a convergent enemy, i.e. both the neoliberal business elite and the cultural elite. It is important to understand that just as the labor left institutions got coopted in the New Deal / Welfare state model, so did also the pro-rights left represented by identity politics, or at least large parts of it (see Boltanski book). Hence the alignment between pro-neoliberal politics and the cultural left, represented by the Clinton-Obama coalitions.
4. Since the cultural left is focused on cultural rights, they are understandably opposed to the Otherization and overt racism/genderism of the Trump coalition, and feel largely obliged to support to some degree the neoliberal regime which granted the cultural rights and reforms, but given the undermining of the neoliberal compromise, this seems like a mistake.
5. More realistically, the Sanders forces represent those sectors of the left focused on recreating a synergy between progressive labor and the cultural left, intent on creating a new coalition. Hence the moderate language used by Sanders so as to maintain the links with the parts of labor who voted Trump. However, this also means maintaining a broad orientation towards restoring the New Deal principles, support for Keynesian politics, but also crucially, the same orientation towards re-industrialization and the restoration of the nation-state.
6. Both coalitions therefore have their contradictions. For example, Trump needs the support of both labor and their unions, but also of the no-tax Republicans, meaning he has to cut the budget at the same time as he

needs trillions for infrastructural investment. He needs to retreat from Empire, but needs to pacify the defense establishment. He needs Big Oil, but at the cost of environmental disruption.

7. The Obama and Sanders coalitions have their own contradictions, being wedded to a dismantling globalization and n impossible to really restore nation-state reality.
8. The p2p/commons approach has a crucial role to play in making the Sanders coalition more realistic, by offering new strategies for re-industrialization which are not based on going back to the old models, but on going forward towards a cosmo-local model of production,² which offers solutions not just for the US workers, but for the populations of the world, and through its stress on mutualization and the commons, has solutions for the ecological and climate crisis. This requires that commoners make their own turn towards focusing not on knowledge workers only, but to all workers and the rest of the population, by offering perspectives for sustainable livelihoods. While at the same time, constructing trans-national institutions that can supplement the likely failings of both corporate neo-globalization AND neo-statist restorations.
9. However, the big issue for the commons movement and emergence is the immaturity of a lot of these potential solutions which are far from being embraced by sufficient critical masses. Thus, the commons needs as much to align with the progressive nation-state restorers, as the other way around, as such huge transitions are impossible to carry out in good conditions without the support of state institutions (what we call the Partner State approach).³ Hence, one of the strategic priorities is a dialogue between the labor left (a la Sanders and Corbyn), the cultural rights movements, and the emerging commons movement, as well as with regenerative business orientations (and sustainability coalitions). Indeed, the only interesting coalition with potential elite forces are those that fully support ecological transitions and 'fair deals' with the larger population on the fruits of labor and the commons. However, there are numerous grassroots generative and 'entre-donneurial' forces that could be aligned with the commons as its livelihood branch.
10. In the meantime, as Arthur Brock and other have suggested,⁴ we have to speed up the construction of the prefigurative commons economy, which respects the sharing of knowledge (free movements), a just distribution of the social surplus (solidarity economy), and ecologically viable production for human need (political ecology). This is the micro-coalition of the commons, which undergirds our participation in the larger social and political mobilizations which are unfolding.

This paper was originally published and taken from: https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Theses_on_Trump

Notes

1. See: https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Bio-Physical_Triggers_of_Political_Violence
2. See <https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Cosmo-Localization>
3. See https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Partner_State
4. See https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Arthur_Brock

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The Trump Scenarios

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America was deeply divided before Donald Trump ran for president, but now it is even more so. A chronically lying, nasty, and narcissistic egomaniac in the White House is a “black swan” wild card that very few imagined. But it happened here, and Trump now occupies the most powerful political position in the world. Whatever our views, we can all agree that polarization is widening, and that intense controversies, many dangers to many people, and huge uncertainties lie ahead.

Where there is great uncertainty, considering a range of scenarios can illuminate some plausible futures, both good and bad, and help to plan strategies. For starters, consider these six generic scenarios, aligned along an axis of how long Trump stays in office, how long Trumpism persists in Washington, and how deeply Trump and his appointees influence global and domestic affairs for better or worse.

- 1) **Real Greatness.** It is possible that America can really be made “Great Again,” by improving infrastructure that is needed (in contrast to building “a great, great wall” on the Mexican border), tax reform without favoring the already-favored rich, affordable health care for all, better education, more decent jobs and job training, win-win trade deals, a carbon tax, reduced use of drugs, penal reform, etc. Trump has defied expectations in recent years, and may do so again with his cabinet of billionaire “achievers” (to use Newt Gingrich’s spin). Many Trump supporters fervently believe that he will make positive changes. If most Americans agree that Trump is doing far more good for America than bad, he is likely to win a second term and be in office for eight years. But given Trump’s limited grasp of reality, simplistic understanding of many issues while ignoring many others, largely inexperienced appointees, numerous gaffes, and penchant for playing only to his core supporters for their applause, this outcome seems very unlikely. Based on his first six weeks in office, there is little to suggest that Trump and associates will make America Strong Again, Wealthy Again, Proud Again, or Safe Again, or that “American Carnage” will be stopped “right now,” let alone reversed.
- 2) **Faux Greatness.** No matter what policies are pursued, it is certain that Trump will claim to be making America great again by doing what he promised (even if superficially), shaking things up (presumably for the better), creating jobs (no matter how few or how decent), and draining swamps (by downsizing agencies and regulations). Credible indicators may point strongly to the weakening of America, with the new ethical and plutocratic swamps far larger, unnecessary military build-ups, imaginary trickle-down to the poor and economically stressed, and harsh treatment of immigrants and the LGBT communities. We have already seen where Trump angrily disavows or ignores inconvenient truths and replaces them with his own alternative facts and half-truths to fit his alternative reality, while projecting his defects onto others (i.e. “Crooked Hillary,” the “very dishonest media,” etc.). If Trump and associates successfully continue their Orwellian inversion of reality (“war is peace,” “ignorance is strength”), and a sufficient portion of American voters fail to see the many cracks in Trump’s “big con” and remain convinced or at least hopeful that greatness is under way, Trumpism will still be with us for four years, possibly more.

A sobering CBS/YouGov poll in February divided the electorate into four categories regarding Trump: “Believers” who strongly support him (22%), “Conditionals” who support him if he delivers (22%), “The Curious” who might reconsider if he does a good job (21%), and “Resisters” who are strongly against him (35%). To deliver even faux progress, Trump would have to convince most of the Conditionals and convert some of the Curious. His “unity and strength” address to Congress on February 28 showed that he could stay on script and act presidential to the gullible. The instant CNN/ORC reactions poll registered 57% very positive and 21% somewhat positive, despite “numerous inaccuracies” according to The Washington Post Fact Checker and grandiose claims such as “every problem can be solved.”

To many others, however, Trump seems to be the presidential equivalent of Billy Bob Thornton’s two “Bad Santa” movies, and his February 28 address does not signify a change of behavior. Moreover, Trump has developed a strong base of disrespect: a recent round-up of February polls finds that 63% of the public thinks he is not level-headed, 60% say he does not share their values, 58% feel embarrassed by Trump, 55% see him as not honest, and 55% find him lacking in good leadership skills. This base of negativity will be tough to erode.

- 3) ***Gridlock Extended.*** More likely than either of the above scenarios, there could be a mix of successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses, smart decisions and stupid ones, but none that are clearly ruinous, and no huge scandals or disasters. The battle lines will stay roughly the same between Trump supporters and opponents. With support for Trump hovering around a record-low 40% at the outset of his presidency (a bit more in some polls, and less in others), Republican gains in the 2018 mid-term election are unlikely, but losses in Congress would not be significant because many congressional districts have been gerrymandered in favor of Republicans, and the GOP-dominated Federal Election Commission regularly ignores violations and infusions of dark money. This gridlock assumes that “The Resistance” in general continues, launched by the 673 spirited Women’s Marches worldwide on January 21, but the movement does not grow much larger.
- 4) ***Gone by 2020.*** The widespread assumption that America and the world will have four years of President Trump overlooks the many possibilities that he will not be in office by 2020. He could resign in the face of determined opposition by an increasingly angered and anxious public, resistant cities and bureaucrats, and/or the courts. Or some huge and clearly evident scandal, especially involving Russia, could do him in. Hatred of Trump is such that he could be assassinated (unlikely). Or the military could stage a coup if he gets overly unhinged (very unlikely).

Much more likely, perhaps even probable, Trump could blow a fuse and be toppled by a heart attack, stroke, or other major health issue. At 70 years of age when inaugurated, he is the oldest president in US history. Moreover, he seems to have a poor diet (favoring cheeseburgers and steaks), doesn’t exercise other than walking to his golf cart, and gets insufficient sleep before and after his 3 AM tweets.

And there is a fair chance that he could be impeached for any one of many transgressions construed as High Crimes and Misdemeanors, or his numerous conflicts of interest that already violate the Emoluments clause of the Constitution. Many lawsuits against Trump are already under way or contemplated, and many pitfalls in foreign policy could make Trump far more unpopular. Once a sufficient number of Republicans in Congress sense that their reelection in 2018 is endangered, impeachment proceedings could begin. As of late February, the petition at www.impeachDonaldTrumpnow.org already had nearly a million

signees, but this is far from sufficient, yet, to cause worry in the White House.

If impeachment is successful (or the threat of probable impeachment leads to Trump's resignation so as to save face), the former Vice President and new conservative president will not be a great improvement. Mike Pence, at least, is predictable, non-inflammatory, and less authoritarian. It is problematic, though, as to whether he will be tainted and weakened by association with Trump, or whether Trump's departure opens the door to more easily enacting the hard-right agenda that Pence and the Republican majority in Congress favor.

5) **Disaster.** Many liberal critics fear the worst, especially with hot-tempered and ill-informed Trump as Commander-in-Chief, but not the tacit "Learner-in-Chief" heretofore assumed for White House occupants. Consider some possibilities:

- A further build-up of nuclear weapons and/or ballistic missiles by North Korea's Kim Jong-Un provokes Trump into a preemptive attack;
- Trump tries to "get tough" with China over trade or the South China Sea;
- To clearly stay "on top," Trump expands America's nuclear arsenal, provoking an expensive and dangerous global arms race;
- Stock markets collapse, partly due to looser regulation, and the US and global economy go into a deep dive as severe as the Great Recession of 2008—or worse;
- Trump tax cuts and unwise spending programs and public investments drive US deficits much higher, raising interest rates and aggravating income inequality;
- Trump's bellicose zero-sum "America First" positions lead to ruinous trade wars and a marked decline in foreign tourists visiting the US;
- Global warming passes a tipping point and clearly accelerates, with rising sea levels and even more droughts, floods, heat waves, severe storms and tornados making America much less safe, but Trumpies still failing to see climate change as a "threat multiplier" to national security;
- Trump awkwardly tries to wipe "out 'radical Islamic terrorism' " (both real and imagined), which attracts many more ISIS supporters, and leads to terrorists using nuclear or biological weapons;
- Terrorists or criminal groups take down the internet for an extensive period;
- Right-wing nationalist Marine Le Pen, inspired and encouraged by Trump, becomes president of France in 2017, leading to collapse of the European Union;
- Left-wing nationalist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador or "AMLO," riding on widespread dislike of Trump, becomes president of Mexico in 2018, and, at the least, an ongoing tweeting war ensues between the two leaders.

Trump will be blamed for any palpable disaster or disasters, and there are many possibilities and potential combinations. The outcome could range from human extinction or near-extinction due to nuclear winter, to deep economic depression for many years, to recoverable but very expensive calamities.

6) **One Step Backward, Two Steps Forward.** The most positive scenario for Trump critics is that the follies of Trumpism become widespread and apparent, "buyer's remorse" sets in among many "Conditional" Trump supporters and some disillusioned Believers, and the damage to America and its standing in the world is short of catastrophic, but sufficient to take many votes away from Republicans. House and perhaps the Senate would be recaptured by Democrats in 2018, and a 2020 landslide of Johnson-Goldwater or Roosevelt-Hoover proportions in 2020 leads to a Democratic president and Congress, and Democrats retaking many statehouses and governorships, thus enabling a genuine and necessary progressive era of sustainable green growth, accelerated and necessary transition to a low-

carbon economy, respect for science and evidence-based policy-making, a focus on human security and accepting climate change as a catalyst for instability, lessened inequality, humane immigration reform, and many new and decent jobs.

Appropriate new economic thought and economic renewal in the 21st century is critical, both in the US and worldwide. For example, Better Business, Better World: Report of the Business and Sustainable Development Commission (Jan 2017, 121 pages) asserts that achieving the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals would create nearly 400 million new jobs by 2030, by opening up at least \$12 trillion of 60 market opportunities in food and agriculture, sustainable and resilient cities, energy and materials, and health care. This "all-win" path, ignored by the media preoccupied with reporting on Trump, could not have been pursued under a President Hillary Clinton, who would have faced a hostile Republican Congress, even more so than Barack Obama did.

It is the path that the world is—and should be—taking, and the US can choose to be a leader or laggard, to regain global respect as a beacon of reason and constructive innovation, or continue to be seen as a contentious and costly retro outlier.

In addition to a compelling, detailed, and widely distributed vision of progress for all, so as to make this scenario more likely, progressives must assiduously question the core beliefs of Trump supporters. Is America becoming greater or weaker? Is the Washington swamp being "drained" or greatly expanded by plutocrats against the public interest? Is Trump's business acumen evident in any of his policies or is this largely a hoax? Is helping business in the short term by slashing regulations more than offset by harm to consumers, the environment, and public health? And what is Trump hiding in his tax returns, which aren't released because of the phony excuse that they are under audit and the outright lie that most Americans don't care? Ongoing and updated "Top 20" lists of Trump's lies, gross exaggerations, hypocritical positions, conflicts of interest, and unmet promises should be widely distributed in multiple formats. They won't dissuade all Trump supporters, or even most. But some Conditionals can be converted, if the correct persuasions are found, or at least lose their ardor for Trumpism so as to stay away from the polls.

These provisional scenarios, and their roughly estimated probabilities, based on the contentious first weeks of President Trump, could well deserve modification very soon. Such is the pervasive reality of uncertainty and danger that lies ahead—along with plausible opportunities for genuine progress, if we are lucky, smart, and reasonably united in opposition.

Michael Marien is an independent social scientist and Senior Principal of The Security & Sustainability Guide to more than 1,600 under-appreciated organizations pursuing essential global goals. He lives in Upstate New York near the site of the Cardiff Giant, unearthed in 1869 and heretofore seen by many as "The Great American Hoax."

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Concluding Reflections

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1. We Are All Mad Here

It is a strange new world in which we find ourselves, where down is up and what was outrageous is now merely normal. While bookshops sell out of George Orwell's 1984 with Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World* a close second, perhaps the best advice might be found in reaching for Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

"It's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then."

Society was different then. The election of Trump in spite or because of his racism, his treatment towards women, his bullying and his poor grasp of policy means we are a different people now. His election has given permission for society to behave differently and to believe differently, ignoring convention and championing alternative facts.

We can see the rules of the game have fundamentally changed (Ramos). So how might futures thinkers play a different game?

Change the Drivers of Change

The growth of cities and populations increasingly concentrated in urban centres has often been declared a key driver of future change. Yet post-Brexit, post-Trump times remind us that the power has not necessarily shifted to cities.

Acknowledging that cities are complex, specialised systems that may not be as resilient to fast technological and environmental change is one way to challenge the preferred narrative of the city planet. While cities provide benefits in terms of access to education, employment and diverse culture, the assumption that this experience will reshape worldviews towards more inclusive and less hierarchical values should be questioned. When does this assumption break down? What influences might young, educated and urban people be expected to experience that might change worldviews unexpectedly?

Critically evaluating the conditions for the re-emergence of regional centres or small-to-medium cities over megacities may create space for different and less polarising conversations. Localisation (Bauwens & Niaros) provides an alternative to major centralisation.

Rethink Work

In the rush towards transitioning to knowledge and service-led economics, the second-order effects of these transitions have not been well researched (Curry). Understanding future trajectories of employment and population would benefit from further consideration. Possibilities such as increasing polarisation of full

employment and unemployment, universal basic income, or changes to paid and unpaid work structures are poorly understood in the public domain where the future of work focus is stuck on creating new types of jobs in the wake of new technologies.

Localised economies provide a different pattern of work. Autonomy, participation co-creation of new solutions (Bauewns & Niaros) may help us to move beyond these stuck patterns of globalised automation. Rethinking how communities share resources and manage the provision of necessities like clean air, clean water, clean energy and sustainable food forces a focus on how well our current capitalist systems are meeting basic needs.

New modes for sharing resources such as peer to peer systems illuminate alternatives to democracies where wealth and power is concentrated in a few.

Prepare for New Governance

Breaking the concentration of wealth and power means we must keep imagining new futures that exist beyond the system (McAllum).

If we are to go beyond the system, it also requires us to better understand the system we are in. How might we interpret voter behaviour that's rewarded Trump and led to Brexit? In contemplating the rise of more participatory democracies, we've instead promoted popular ones.

Some of these is understandable. Gearing up for change is hard. Preparing to respond to threats of climate change and means people are being presented with difficult choices. Unsettling choices that risk economic sustenance. Leaders that step in to fan those fears have more short-term impact than long hard change. Fear and fight sells more papers, creates more views. Good journalism isn't rewarded by the business model which brings funds for views, not quality.

What is harder to understand is the sudden acceptance of previously unacceptable behaviour, especially with Trump. Tolerating the racism and misogyny by large sections of the community because he says he will make things great again, tolerating incompetence and the selection of unqualified and incompetent people to roles where they are clearly out of their depth. Leadership failing to grasp fundamental theories of economics, science and cause and effect.

Does breakdown of existing social order inevitably lead to something new or it is just a correction? While hope and optimism remain powerful motivators for creating new systems, in curtailing the power of the transnational capitalist class, it is wise to contemplate also breakdown and catastrophe.

It may only be through breakdown that radical new forms of governance are able to emerge.

If the current system is ineffective in meeting the needs of the many (Inayatullah), we need new ideas about new systems. In that event we must be prepared with new models, informed by research, testing and discussion to be able to propose plausible ideas when the time is ready (Dator). We can't assume that breakdown will occur on the voting cycle and must be prepared for that time to be sooner than we think.

Reinvent New Systems Now

The system we find ourselves in post-Trump is a system that feeds on fear. New systems need courage.

We may choose to abandon fear in favour of connection and reciprocity. Replacing the "I deserve" reward with one of service, honouring each other and country in a way that is familiar to First Nations people.

If the new systems of the late 18th century were established on the ideas of learned men (Dator), then perhaps it is time for the future to be female (Inayatullah). More women embedded in the current governance systems, selected and elected to democracies. More women resisting and persisting. More men who are prepared to do things differently. More women inventing and testing

models for new ways or working – paid and unpaid, of sharing resources and creating both wealth and value.

We must look for ways in which we can further the development of a shared planetary worldview (Ramos), reminding ourselves that we hurtle through space on a pale blue dot, our survival as species dependent on each other.

Reinvent old systems too

In making things great again, it's easy to see this as a reversal, a retreat along the linear paths of progress, but there are better models for conceiving patterns of change.

We may be on the edge of a pendulum swing, where societies sense that globalised production has gone too far, and new ways or reconceptualising our connection to place (Curry) and localised production may provide an alternative (Bauwens & Niaros). We may be on the edge of an expansion, that shifts us beyond borders to a new planetary mindset (Ramos). We may be at the turning of macro-historical cycles where disruption is inevitable, but needed for transformation (Inayatullah). Even White House strategist Steve Bannon sees he is granted permission for chaos by the patterns of the past.

These models are useful as they identify possible responses to what feels like chaos. If our realities are constructed, they can be deconstructed too. Responding to the pendulum means remembering the long-term in thinking how we respond to the immediate. Responding to cycles of change means we look for groups that challenge the status quo and seek to understand the shift. We challenge power and seek truth in helping with the transition to a new global economic system.

Locating our confusion as a period of transition may be more helpful than accepting current world politics as the new normal. But futurists should keep our minds to possibility open.

Stop Being Rational

“Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

While Dator’s law of future studies reminds us that for an idea about the future to be useful, it should at first appear to be ridiculous, it’s easier to seem ridiculous than it is to imagine the irrational.

Progressive policies are easily reversed as has been the case with carbon emissions trading schemes. Anti-discriminatory policies loosened, anti-cruelty policies erased. In rethinking systems of governance or work or place, we need to get better at imagining the illogical, the unscientific and the unsound.

“This revolution will break your heart” (Dolan) because it’s hard to understand how we could be so stupid.

The Golden Rule

Finally, for all of us trying to make sense of a world where nonsense rules and moral conventions are discarded like old skins, be brave and be compassionate. Keep inventing alternatives and creating positive engaging futures that draw us forward.

“Imagination is the only weapon in the war against reality.”

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16 Feb 2017

2. Trump, a Footnote in the Imagination of Osama Bin Laden

This symposium has straddled the boundaries of agency and structure, of what is possible, what is impossible. I would like to conclude with narrative - whose story are we living?

Often leaders think they have agency, but in reality, Trump and many others are still reacting to the global vision and strategy set up by Bin Laden.

The radical Islamist had two goals to realize his vision of an alternative world order:

1. Convince the global moderate Muslim Ummah to reject the realist and secular nation state paradigm and join him in over throwing the leaders of the nations they lived in, thereby eventually creating a global Ummah-caliphate;
2. Create fear in western nations such that the moderates disappear and a polarity emerges. As they become more fearful, they would move to the extreme right (turning on Muslims within their nations, on refugees, and on the progressives within their nations), and this would further convince the majority of Muslims that they needed a safe protected caliphate governance system.

To create this future, 9/11 in New York was the beginning, and the subsequent 16 year global war - with bombings in Madrid, London, Paris, Islamabad, Mumbai - the world has been in. However, the majority of Muslims did not join even if they did feel that they were subjects of nations that were hypocritical and unjust. The more they refused to join, the more barbaric Al-Qaeda became to the point - through the geo-political disaster of the war in Iraq, and in particular the Rumsfeld decision to fire 400,000 Iraqi soldiers - it morphed into Daesh.

This vicious cycle has more and more turned the vision rotten (i.e. every attempt to resist is met with more violence by Al-Qaeda, Daesh, and the Taliban). Every attempt to negotiate is met with claims of peace and more terror against anyone who does not fit into their cult claims. Thus, the first part of the Bin Laden strategy continues to fail. Even if they - these organizations - sprung from Islam, they have left that shore long ago, and just as they claimed others were not the true Muslims, most in the Muslim world came to realize that it was Bin Laden and his jihadist offspring that were not the true Muslims.

Strategy 2, which appeared also to have failed - creating division within and between Western nations - has now returned with a vengeance, i.e. the trap Bin Laden set for the extreme right wing - the trap of identity purity, is what Trump, Le Pen, Hanson, and even Brexit to some extent have fallen into.

There is no escape as they create security and surveillance polities with no way out. The enemy is everywhere, and they give up their core purpose (progress, civil liberties, freedom) to fight the enemy, eventually becoming what they hate.

For those of us who wish to see Bin Laden become a footnote in history, and not the narrative creator, the goal is not to restrict identity i.e. to become more white, brown, Muslim or Christian, but to move toward a broader global identity, to move toward a planetary identity, toward hybridity.

This is difficult because in fear, old neural patterns are resorted to, forcing individuals into closed worlds. The solution is to continue both the European enlightenment project (of deepening democracy) and the Eastern enlightenment project (of self-awareness and transcendence).

Counter-terrorism works best with eyes and ears and a population who are with you, not a population who are convinced you are the enemy. Prevention, better representation of “minorities” in the police, capability building are far more effective strategies than singling out any collectivity.

I hope Trump and his circles wake up. But waking up a footnote who thinks he is a disruptor is more than challenging. As with the Taliban, humour should work to de-legitimize, but it can often only madden their illness. In Pakistan the Taliban attacked the television producers who made fun of them. Likewise, Trump and his clique will attack judges and whomever he considers soft, hoping all join him in the war of civilizations. Will he do what works i.e. understand that it is not a clash of civilization but a lack of civilization, or will he help succeed in creating the Bannon-Bin Laden dystopia?

I certainly hope both are footnotes in history, and we develop global immunity to the virus they seek to spread.

This symposium has been about the context, the analysis, of understanding the illness and seeking diagnosis and eventually actions to create a healthier planet. We thank the authors for their contributions.

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