

# THE LANDING



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FASCISTS WITHOUT FASCISM



that had built its constituent groups and collectives — is now part of each day's possibility. The airports are an offset image of the Ferguson rebellion, the Standing Rock encampment, the Jungle at Calais.

These terminals are among the most dizzying spaces that modernity presents — militarized malls, at once lush and severe. Fill them with tens of thousands of people, blockading all their pathways, and they become even more vertiginous. But they are also legal hyperspaces, borders internal to the state, an enclosed outside. The federal guards there are not encumbered by the niceties of *habeas corpus*. Citizen or not, they can detain you until the end of capitalism, confiscate and search every possession without warrant. Every airport is already in fascism, but these spaces not only represent the extra-legal powers of state, but also its limits. The state's edges are everywhere: at Standing Rock, in Ferguson, in Calais. As the state endeavors to assert its strength where capital is weak, these edges proliferate; its borders web the land. Its despotism is greatest at these borders for the simple reason that this is where some force beyond its power makes itself felt. As Nipsey Hussle raps, in the anthem of the hour: *You build walls? We gon' proly dig holes*. Everyone now.

## I.

We can imagine a person slowly becoming aware that he is the subject of catastrophe. The form of consciousness might be likened to someone peering out the window of a plane. They have been aboard for a long time, years, decades. From cruising altitude the landscape below scrolls past evenly, somewhat abstracted. The stabilizing mechanisms of eye and brain smooth the scene. Perhaps they are somewhere above the upper midwest. Their knowledge of the miseries that have seized flyover country hovers at the periphery of a becalmed boredom. Steady hum of the jet engines, sense of stillness. Borne by prevailing winds the first balloonists detected no wind whatsoever. So this flight. Though the passengers will never travel faster than this they scarcely feel any motion at all.

It is only coming in for a landing that the shaking begins. Structural shaking. Gradient wind at the boundary layer. The ground just below — say it is the terrain around Detroit Metropolitan airport — rushes past at inhuman velocity. It too seems to shake. The eye can't keep up, can't smooth things out, can't register passing objects before they're gone. Everything happens too quickly. A prelude to disaster? Disaster itself? The signs and portents come too swiftly to discern, replaced as rapidly as they appeared. Panic seizes the passenger. It *feels* like a sudden event, unsuspected, unforeseeable, begun from nothing, the world coming apart.

So the presidential election of 2016 seemed to those on the plane: the crossing of some threshold wherein political life seemed to acquire an unprecedented and terrifying velocity at the last moment, bringing to a sudden end what now seemed, to those who could afford retrospection, like an era of calm — or at least an era of relative decency, competence, and above all the centrist rationality of the long two-party compact.

Perhaps the political class and its courtiers, possessors of the liberal worldview, thought this compact could be preserved for another four or eight or twenty years. They could not

imagine it was time to come in for a landing. Surely the managerial teams and techniques could persevere just a bit longer? And yet it is clear that we had been descending at this deadly velocity all along, things ceaselessly shaking apart. This disaster movie ambience is none other than history in flight, the U.S. era and accompanying organization of the planet that has been ending for more than forty years, a turbulence that has seized the world unevenly but now seems finally to be everywhere, impossible to stabilize. This then is the riddle of Trump: the way in which he appears as a catastrophic break with history precisely because he is that history's avatar, gathering it into himself so that *what has happened* is obscured by *what is happening*, singular, condensed, personal — anything but the consequence of an enduring trajectory.

The results of the election surprised us, without a doubt. This even as the right/left spectrum that had oriented us for more than two centuries fell into collapse: Hollande in France finally destroying the labor protections which had stood off the assaults of the right; SYRIZA discovering its socialist fate was to ignore heroically a national referendum against, so as to become an instrument of the European banking sector; the Brexit vote unfolding across a series of oppositions between classes, races, south and north, city and country, but with Labor and Tory providing no explanatory power whatsoever. Nonetheless we thought the long disaster would appear elsewhere and otherwise. But what surprised us the most was how many people still seemed to believe that the current interregnum, the long non-recovery, could last indefinitely. That the shaking would never begin, that the bomb was all fuse and no powder. This delusion finally proved deadly for the liberal panders. In the infinite effusion of campaign blather, the only moment of truth on offer belonged to Trump, hidden in the cargo of his slogan *Make America Great Again*. We all understood, instantly, that this meant make America white again, male again, straight again, cis again, and so on. In the wake of the racist hatred of Obama and the anxiety provoked by the rise of a national movement opposed to the police privilege of shooting black kids, crude xenophobia seemed a timely play. Trump did so without shame. The shamelessness was part of the appeal. But these appeals were not truths; they

like one state's national guard carrying out orders another will not, the overriding of one branch by another, the spurning of electoral legitimacy, while at the level of daily life opportunities will open for dual-power organizations to step into the breach: workplace and neighborhood assemblies, rapid response networks for dealing with attacks and crises of all sorts, land and resource reclamation projects. As fissures within the state begin to yawn, these projects will become all the more vital. They need to be coordinated, of course, otherwise they are likely to be redundant or, worse, act at cross-purposes. But they certainly need not be centralized under a single organizing body; the value of dual-power institutions is that they are flexible and, given such flexibility, can permit the emergence of these productive divisions and subsequent reorganization around new projects. If we conceive of civil war and breakdown of the state as the upper limit of what's possible in the next few years, then such institutions are indeed the way forward, as they will become indispensable as rallying points in such scenarios.

In imagining this, or in trying to reconstruct such ideas from other times and places, we are trying to think of what is possible now. Trump is, among other things, a sign of what is impossible, both in his own intolerability and his role as registration of a long failure. Alongside dual power, a dual thought: this can't endure, there is no way back. This is what it means to think from the wreckage. The plane has crash-landed in the shuddering present. It will not magically reassemble itself like film running backward, that most comforting version of the uncanny, and take wing in reverse, easing itself tail-first back into the open sky. It has come down in the least metaphorical sense. We find ourselves at the airport. We find ourselves at the airport on January 26, 2017, in city after city, assembling against a specific Executive Order. It is perhaps adequate measure to note simply that a sentence unimaginable five years ago appears now as a simple fact: *liberals blockade a series of airports across the nation*. Not just liberals, of course, but still. For many it is political life beyond the polling place, often promised, rarely lived. This kind of massing — inevitable for all its contingent occasion, vast for all its instant coalescence, spontaneous for all the mutual coordination and aid

and pipelines alike, of sexual assault and border walls equally. But this unification is weak, as we've said, because it in no way overcome the divisions internal to these movements. As such, the larger split provides an axial consistency to the splits within each particular social movement, allow each of them to see more clearly that their potential accomplice is not the less militant side of their own struggle but the more militant side of another. But these movements cannot really unify; their formally shared position on the militant side of the split does not equate to shared content, to some identity of ends. Their divisions do not line up cleanly with each other or with the broader social division.

Contrary to those who worry over any disunity, however, such slippages are in truth a necessity. They are the engine of duration, as they prevent the possibility of an early foreclosure of struggle which appears inevitably as the subordination of everyone to the common denominator of the popular front. The fraught interaction of these movements allows for new and newly intense dynamics of antagonism along previously invisible faultlines. In our reading of history, the path from movement to insurrection does not follow a straight line, does not occur through the simple aggregation and unification of existing groups, but instead involves centripetal, unifying forces as well as centrifugal, polarizing ones. The forces that unify on one level often divide on another. Divisions are, in other words, what allow for the possibility of success, not what obstruct it.

This is by no means to argue that people can do nothing to draw themselves together, to find accomplices and comrades, strategize about and prepare for future. But such organizations should remain flexible, open to forces that they might transform them, lest they become a mechanism for funneling people into previously prevailing and defunct political forms. In many of the futures we can see from here, the state will be both turbocharged and weak; its oppressive mechanisms will churn in higher gears without being highly functional, as jurisdictional and factional disputes proliferate. Civil war, as it approaches — and we are closer than most imagine — will not look much like two color-coded armies clashing on a plain, but

were the open carry version of Southern Strategy. The truth was in admitting to the great congregation, as no candidate from either party had done previously in any significant way, that our best was behind us. We were not great, we were the wreckage of greatness. We had a greatness once, which was indexed punctually to the success of the great industries on which the nation rose. When the profit rate tumbled downhill, it took greatness with it. Things got worse for a lot of people. This has been ongoing. In 2008, it was Obama who promised something different, first under the rubric of humanistic progress — the first black president! — and then formalistic “change” as such. The Republican party, contrarily, stood for continuity, conservatism, a steady hand, no surprises for its constituency, traditional values, and the like. The 2016 election is unique in the reversal of this ideological polarity; while Republicans have previously run as outsiders, never before have they seized the thematic of change as their own. Clinton found herself as the mouthpiece of continuity and conservatism, the steady-handed technocrat who would preserve America's greatness as needed, here a coup, there a trade deal, everywhere a drone strike. The problem is that, in our era, what passes for the status quo is pure contradiction: it is things staying the same by getting worse. Such was the best promise Clinton could make.

Trump, however, was as forthright as a presidential candidate could be about the long crisis of hegemony unraveling. This far more than his boorishness was intolerable to many in his own party, as well as to the Democrats who might have owned this historical truth years ago. Trump blasts away the same to reveal the worse all at once, to announce the terrible century to come. It is Trump and his cabinet of horrors who have become the party of change, of the new. There is no avoiding it now.

In the preceding decades it must have been eerie to encounter the hysterical disavowal of what was each year a more obvious fact, year after year, election after election. The not-said, the unsayable. This must have felt particularly uncanny in the counties where the decline was a daily brutality, where industrial employment had given way not to tech or the service

industries but to opioid addiction and, for the first time in national history, declining life expectancy. To imagine Trump's victory, engineered via electoral college mechanics whose gyres and gimbals pivoted on the very voters whose lives had been annihilated by those decades, as separate from these developments would be an absurdity.

But this in and of itself does not imply that Trump could deliver the change he promised, particularly the change that these counties imagined. For if the catastrophe of Trump is not an inexplicable and sudden event but the outcome of a long transformation driven by underlying dynamics that are relatively immune to executive policy, a new executive is in the most limited position to reverse its course. Making the worst of a bad situation, however, might be more within reach.

## II.

For the passengers on the plane, the interregnum between election and ascension would be filled with anxiety, regret, and a generation's supply of left-shaming. Liberal grief, as we have learned, will brook no reason nor reflection. Each explanation of what had happened was less plausible than the last, devolving into insipid oppositions of race and class in particular that suggested we had lost intellectual ground since the supposedly less sophisticated days of the fifties, or thirties, or the Red Hot Summer of 1919. Elsewhere a few energetic marches against the outcome came and went, in Oakland and elsewhere turning riotous. People began to get organized. Everywhere, however, there seemed to be a problem of measure, a readiness to believe in a metamorphosis of all social relations without any sense of how to determine whether this was the case or how to describe it. Beneath the noise, though, the right question was being asked: the question of Trump more broadly, concerning how to recognize the moment in which a tendency, a long drift, becomes a phase shift — the dialectical leap from quantity to quality which dramatizes historical change.

false unifications that bedeviled their predecessor movements. Within Black Lives Matter, divisions between a college-educated and largely middle class activist layer and the thoroughly proletarian kids whose riots started the movement; at Standing Rock, divisions between pacifist elders astride the moral high ground and the more confrontational factions who derive from the militants of the 60s and 70s. There is perhaps no clearer example of this division, historically, than that found within western feminist movements, each wave featuring a faction oriented toward formal equalities and inclusion within capitalist society and another faction committed to something like abolition. In the present moment of antipatriarchal politics, impelled by Trump's overweening misogyny, this split again presents itself in the gap between the large and pacific Woman's March the day after the inauguration and the avowedly anticapitalist International Woman's Strike planned for March 8th. Though the former has endorsed the latter, the divisions remain.

These are the internal splits which have persisted as something like an invariant within social movements; if they are historical artefact, its persistence spans the long history of liberal democracy. Trump represents the possibility of a weak unification of these movements. Things come to feel so dire — as we've seen, the production of this direness is central to Trumpism — that the factions within any social movement might be drawn to unite around his expedient eviction. The most pitiful and dangerous replacements will be offered as solutions, 'ound which all will be pushed to rally. Once this is done, the militant factions will be systematically destroyed. The structural shaking, meanwhile, will continue.

But there is another set of possibilities. As we've seen, the splits internal to these movements are cut across by a split extending the length of western liberalism, between those who have yielded already to the logic of Anything But Trump, and those for whom the catastrophe retains its aura of possibility — between those who want a new president and those who want no presidents at all. In one sense, Trump's unification of recent movements is possible in so far as he names an enemy common to them. He is the president of police murder

of corporate subsidy. If he cannot rally Google and Apple and Facebook to his cause, he will have a very hard time.

## IV.

In the 20th century, radicals were often made accomplices to their own extermination through participation in popular fronts with liberal and opportunist lefts. What we see on the horizon is the uncomfortable prospect of radicals fighting alongside Google management, import-export capitalists, mainstream journalists, liberal politicians, and rogue factions of the CIA. Here, the theme of this essay returns: more than anything, liberal opponents of the regime want things to stay the same. Or rather, their desire is counterfactual: *they want things to have stayed the same*. They are partisans of the return to normalcy, the return to the normal that itself bred Trump and his ilk and will, if not destroyed, produce more of the same.

If things get bad enough, these people will give up on their political etiquette and accept the use of force, but if they do so they will wreck the world for a return to the bleak certitudes of the Obama years, and they will betray everyone who wants more. They will gladly endorse a military coup if it means Hillary for Prez, particularly if they can somehow disavow their violence as they have the ceaseless violence of the years before Trump's onset. The question for radicals — which at this point need not mean the wild-eyed, the militant, but simply those shorn of the fatal fantasy of return — is how to act in the same field as such groups without subordinating oneself to them, how to betray them before they betray you. One cannot maintain separation from them but one must remain separate. One must stand alongside and apart, within and outside.

The last few years have been dominated by social movements such as Black Lives Matter and NoDAPL which, in particularizing the tactics and rhetorics of movements such as Occupy, managed to focus and radicalize them. And yet, these movements suffer the same scissions and founder upon the same

Meanwhile it was autumn and then winter. Amidst all of this resentment and dread, there was only the most limited sense of what might happen next, what Trump would or could do. It was common enough to believe that institutional inertia would limit his lunatic bellicosity. Clintonites and Sandernistas alike offered secret prayers to the “deep state” — a phrase ten million experts had acquired rather recently, during the tragic collapse of the Arab Spring. The deep state, perhaps reasonably, functions in this imaginary like Freud's death drive, an absolute and prior compulsion to return things to a previous and less volatile condition. To bring the good parent back into the room. So went the prayers of November, December. In short, it was not yet too late for the fantasy of stability, of things-as-they-were. This as much as anything spoke the unsayable complicity of the center. In truth the imaginary was simply that *structure itself* could hold things together, the political-economic system's very systematicity. Such a hope exists uncomfortably alongside ideas like structural racism or structural violence, deadly social phenomena which are necessarily a part of what is devoutly wished for through the invocation of the deep state. Only by supposing the term designates some specific entity can this unpleasant truth be repressed. No matter. If a cringing fealty to the very bureaucratic domination so regularly decried at dinner parties provided solace, if obeisance to an unelected security apparatus were what it took to hold off the shaking, so be it.

The first weeks after the inauguration have been an assault designed to produce this sort of desperate reaction. Nothing that would improve the living conditions of the Rust Belt. Instead, a show of something like imperial madness directed against Muslims, immigrants, the poor, blacks, women, political protesters. The Executive Orders in particular have endeavored to terrify and disorient, to contrive the experience of an unprecedented break while mobilizing machinery continued from Obama. They are absolute and immediate. A week bears a year of travesties. Agitated to exhaustion, a population remains nonetheless on bewildered alert. The anxious buzz of activism, of being ceaselessly summoned to attend to some political crisis — an affect once proper to a self-selected band of spectacular summit-hoppers imagined by the

conventional voter as freaks pursuing an alien lifestyle — now comes to permeate all quarters. It proves strange to schedule a date for the movies on Friday night without appending, “...if there are no emergencies.” We must march now for this, now that; must gather swiftly at Planned Parenthood or outside the latest white nationalist pep rally. Anything could happen next. Except that it can’t. This is not to join in those obscene prayers to the deep state. Just to note that all the players, the president, the state, capital, the gathering mass of antagonists, operate within constraints. The limits are historical. They mediate the present moment even while they appear as an absolute immediacy. To offer another analogy, one might consider a financial crisis: seeming to the casual viewer or submissive economist to appear from nowhere, laying waste to the landscape overnight, lacking origin or warning, it is in fact years and years of material devastation gathering, coiling itself in the corners of what we had been calling daily life, before detonating *as if* it were a singular event. Canetti described Christianity as a single act of lamentation spread across millennia. The Age of Trump is this very thing, inverted: decades of social disaster compressed into a single season. This disaster supplies him both with his power and his shackles.

In the counties around Detroit Metropolitan airport, white flight and black unemployment are well-known tales. Lesser-known, perhaps, is the dramatic influx of laborers from the Arab world that began more than a century ago and took off with the auto industry in the 1920s until *Al Jadid* called Detroit the “Arab Capital of North America.” In Dearborn, home of Ford’s River Rouge plant, almost half the population is of Arab descent. As the borders close against the very countries that have populated the region even as affluent whites have slipped away, it will be in part because Trump believes his power lies in the erection of walls, cell walls for racialized exclusion at home, border walls to exclude immigrants from abroad — believes in the construction of Prison America behind the ramparts of Fortress America, believes that harassing and deporting the Arabs of Dearborn and Flint will somehow bring the factories back. This will not be the fate of Michigan, the Rust Belt, anywhere else. The meaning of Trump cannot be understood without a sober survey of its source in transformations of real

to the nationalist project: Muslim ban and border wall, steroid injections for the police forces. This is no doubt done in order to galvanize the most virulent members of his base, a bit of red meat for the red-blooded Americans scowling under their MAGA hats, but some large part is also pantomime. Many of the Executive Orders were statements of intention rather than actions, designed to show his commitment to the proto-fascist project without requiring him to put much weight behind it. They simulate absolute authority, as if he were already the kind of leader capable of remaking the country by fiat. But he’s not, at least not yet. And so his administration remains a sort of simulacrum of fascism; Trump is a Mussolini without his Italy. To become a true fascist, he will need loyal people at all levels of the government, as well as extra-governmental forces capable of doing the dirtiest work but also forcing the hand of bureaucrats and judges too loyal to the letter of the law. It is hard to see how he can garner such devotion except by giving people something more than empty rhetoric, fear-mongering, and fake news about fake news. He will actually have to put people to work and build infrastructure and increase their living standards, and to do this, he will have to tell the most rapacious billionaires to get with the program. We now have some measure of both the challenges he might face in such attempts as well as the forces that might assist him. That there were a number of Customs officers willing to enforce his racist ban despite explicit interdiction from the courts is no doubt worrying; these people are the kernel of a force capable of remaking government service in absolutist directions. But for every one of these officers, there were just as many officials that were unwilling to carry out such orders, or who were openly opposed to them, often for practical more than ethical or political reasons. Trump as yet has no machine, no party institution, capable of making sure his commands are realized without obstruction. Furthermore, we’ve already seen capital begin to hold his actions at arm’s length, particularly Silicon Valley capital (a fraction of the ruling class highly likely to reject most protectionism, given its global domination of markets and its dependence on planetary supply chains). Resistance from such a powerful sector will be a strong and perhaps insuperable impediment to Trump, though it’s always possible many companies could be won over by various forms



which there is. Labor costs have a long way to fall before it's cheaper to manufacture here, and if firms do invest, it will likely be in totally robotic factories. In other words, Trump's economic proposals seem, at first pass, as if he plans to make America great by employing the very same methods that have accompanied four decades of decline.

It's always possible that he will change course, and break with such orthodoxy, economic and otherwise. The situation is dire and we can expect experimentation. Trump assembled an administration that seems split between those who offer a more radical extension of the status quo and those who seem committed to breaking not only with economic orthodoxy but with democratic governance in general. On the one hand: the CEOs of oil companies and fast food empires who would continue in the ruts of the long declension, cutting taxes, deregulating, privatizing, and union-busting. On the other: true counter-revolutionaries like Steve Bannon who would raise tariffs, destroy trade relations, and attempt an economic isolationism of the sort that can only hurt the bottom line of multinational companies like Exxon and Carl's Jr, not to mention financial firms whose entire trade is in hot money. We might think of the former as hyper-neoliberals; the second are close enough to the project of historical fascism to deserve the name.

But this alliance between billionaire CEOs and the second-rate generals' junta-in-waiting can hold only for so long without one side dictating terms to the other. Trump probably knows that if the Koch-bred austerians and privatizers are allowed to have their way, we'll never see growth or jobs; as yet he is unable or unwilling to act without them. The question, then, is whether this will be a brief moment of crony capitalism, the billionaires enriching themselves, stuffing their pockets with loot, and then blowing up the crime scene behind them, as so often happens in the global south — or whether we will really see a reorganization of capitalism along new and newly fascistic lines.

In his first few weeks, Trump has backgrounded the mainstream aspects of his plan and led by showcasing his commitment

conditions since at least the late sixties when the descent began. Perfectly false in every regard, he is the real of the long crisis writ large. Writ large is his thing. Has any name been writ larger in recent memories, hovering over a series of hideously exemplary real estate ventures?

Here it is worth restating that this confusion is made by design. It suits Trump well, this shock-and-awe approach that allows him to appear for a moment infinitely potent, unconstrained by the pettiness of reality. But it suits the jetliner's passengers equally well. They too are compelled to treat Trump as magical errancy, as *event*, as a present without history. For only in this claim does the fantasy of restoration appear as plausible. Only by pitting the unnumbered exceptionalism of Trump against the irrevocable exceptionalism of America can they propose that the remedy is some return to a status quo only they believe exists, and only a few of them at that; for the rest it is calculation. They will assure us that we have no choice, in this moment wherein long fissures have opened into a break, other than to do whatever it takes to revert to how it was before, resuture ourselves to the center, elect Clinton in some surrogate form as part of a great do-over. They too belong to the death drive. Or it is the most cynical utopianism one could imagine. More practically, it cannot be done. Restoration is less possible than civilizational collapse or communism. Just because the catastrophe is explicable, has a real basis, does not mean that it is not catastrophe. That plane was coming down. We are all of us standing in the debris.

### III.

Trump is the truth of the long crisis, of the recent and not-so-recent past. But he may also be the truth of class society's near and not-so-near future, if it is to have any. It is possible that Trump represents an exploratory mission by the global ruling class, surveying the landscape of senescent capitalism and determining the precise brutalities appropriate to it. Furthermore, he takes over where the emancipatory movements launching from 2008 tried themselves to bring some

frail new thing into the world, tried to elaborate modes of struggle after the death of the worker's movement — he takes up where they were were stymied, knocked off course, rendered harmless. From Nigel Farage to Beppe Grillo, the global right-populist class of 2016 is an injured reaction to these emancipatory movements but also an attempt to racialize and nationalize their promises: a cop-loving riposte to the ontological insult of Black Lives Matter, for example, but also an attempt to hijack the populism of Tahrir and Syntagma and Occupy. After SYRIZA and Bernie and Podemos have had their chance to prop up the corpse of these movements, the field is open for right populism, for white populism.

In this regard, Trump is monstrous precisely because he is the mirror image of the weakness of these movements, the success of their failure. He lost the popular vote by the largest margin ever; he comes in with the lowest approval rating since such polls began; a pulsating cloud of lawsuits and scandals surrounds him. And yet he lays claim, potentially, to the greatest consolidation of right-wing power since the 1920s, surrounding himself with generals and CEOs and signaling at every turn that his coalition of spraytan, diet pills, and Viagra can be the social strength that neo-Nazi nerds and failed school shooters so desire.

Trump draws strength, in particular, from the weakness of a politics predicated on scandal and hypocrisy: a politics that mobilizes outraged social media denizens in order to leverage shame and guilt. Troll-in-chief, he feeds off the outrage he provokes, using self-engineered scandal to inoculate himself against the debilitating effects of other scandals. Lies, corruption, rape: none of it affects him, and this should serve as the death knell of a politics that imagines facebook call-outs and Twitter shaming as the royal road to social power. In the war between alt-right trolls and pious internet leftists, the trolls win hands down. Right-wing populists and white nationalists do not hear critique and they can't be shamed.

Naked force, not persuasion, is the order of the day, and this is why left liberals are so dangerous and so supremely out of touch. They are still hoping for that final scandal that will

prove their enemy *unreasonable*; they still believe that one must manage one's image, appear the civil party, engage in discourse, persuade with moral argument. If this fails, they will not hesitate to raise the stakes with a good satire. This is why they are so quick to imagine every riot funded by Breitbart and every election hacked by Russia, why they are willing to turn over to the cops someone who makes opposition to Trump *look bad*. They were okay with Obama's drone strikes and deportation campaigns in so far as the aura of mild reasonableness swathed these brutalities. But they are the only ones who care how it looks anymore. They failed and will fail again, probably, because they are not about anything; they have nothing *positive* to offer. In the face of white revanchism, they can offer only table manners.

If it's true that liberals are now conservatives in the literal sense of the term, it's also true that Trump's programmatic vision, an America made great again through racialized economic nationalism, preserves in its heart the very conservatism it pretends to expel. The means with which Trump and his coalition would remake American capitalism are the technocratic tools of his predecessors, Reagan and the Bushes, Obama and the Clintons. His infrastructure project is not a return to the government-funded building projects of the New Deal, but instead imagines that roads, bridges, internet bandwidth, and power plants will magically appear as the result of tax breaks and deregulation, something that challenges reigning macroeconomic orthodoxy not one iota. Why it would succeed now, having failed under more propitious conditions back when it was called "supply side economics," remains unexplained, necessarily so. Similarly, his plan to bring manufacturing jobs to the US imagines that lowering the tax rate, deregulating industry, and smashing unions is all that it will take to encourage the repatriation of capital and spur investment. This is the very assumption that Bush and Obama made in response to the economic crisis of 2008: if you bail the banks out they will begin lending again and, with lending, capitalists will invest and said investment will create jobs. But builders won't build and corporations won't invest if the roads go nowhere and the plants can't make things people need — in other words, no one will build capacity if there's already massive overcapacity,