

"Trump and the West"

by Ernesto Araújo

Summary

President Donald Trump proposes a Western vision based not on capitalism and liberal democracy but rather on returning to a symbolic past, history, and culture of Western nations. Trump's vision has deep roots in a longstanding intellectual, sentimental tradition stretching from as far back as Aeschylus to Oswald Spengler; and it views nationalism as inextricably linked to the essence of what the West is. At its core is neither an economic nor a political doctrine but a yearning for God – the God who acts in history. It is not about Western expansionism, but pan-nationalism. Brazil needs to do some reflection, to determine whether it is part of this West.

Key words: Trump; West; nationalism; globalism; metapolitics; theopolitics.

In January 2017, shortly after Trump's inauguration, an American football imagery came to my mind to describe what to expect of the new President of the United States: Donald Trump is Western civilization's Hail Mary pass. It was NFL playoff season, just a few days before the grand finale – the Super Bowl – and, as it turned out, it would be the most extraordinary game in the competition's 51-year history, just like Trump's election was perhaps the most extraordinary in American history. In this confluence of unexpected developments, both in politics and in the American national sport, the Hail Mary pass seemed an apt metaphor but, at the time, I had nobody to whom to present it, and so I crave the indulgence of those who are unfamiliar with the game of the oval ball, to now invoke that metaphor, as I feel it still aptly describes some central features of the Trump administration.

A Hail Mary pass describes this kind of situation: with just a few seconds of play left, your team is losing. It has possession of the ball but is still too far down the field, at the 20- or 30-yard line, for example. There is only time for one more move to score a touchdown and win. A normal throw would yield 30 yards at most, still falling very short. In a last-ditch effort, the team then goes for the throw. The quarterback picks up the ball and holds it while his receivers, practically the rest of his team, run wildly to the opposing side's end zone. The quarterback then throws as far as he can, praying for the improbable to happen; and the ball falls into the hand of one of the receivers, who, surrounded in the end zone by the entire rival defense, miraculously scores the touchdown. In American football, nothing can be more exhilarating than that moment, when the ball begins to fly in a Hail Mary pass and nobody knows whether the prayer will work, whether the receiver will score the touchdown and pull off the impossible.

A lot of people aren't even aware that the West is playing, let alone losing.

It has become routine to mock anyone who sees the West as being under threat; or even anyone who simply tries to define the West as opposed to something else. Then there is the criticism: "That's the

Clash of Civilizations, that's obsolete, discredited; that is chauvinism, racism, xenophobia" It has become politically-incorrect – and hence unacceptable, in polite company – to talk about a Western civilization, or to invoke the international relations model Samuel Huntington advocated, which is based on different civilizations competing and in which one civilization can win while another loses. Western civilization can only be mentioned if it is to vilify its past or to deny its existence or current relevance. As for the term "West," we are accustomed to using it in the geopolitical sense alone, when referring to a group of European and North American countries that share a military alliance and a [never-to-be-questioned] adherence to market economy and representative democracy – basically a Cold War mindset which, by that definition, has made little sense ever since that global order was reconfigured.

However, if we were to open the door for a moment, if we were to stop looking at the map and instead begin to study the terrain, especially the spirit landscape, what we would find is a huge pile of words and feelings, ideas, and beliefs shaped over the course of 25 or 30 centuries (it is not that much, just 100 generations), which we could call the West, or Western Civilization; an organic, living, once-powerful entity, which is today showing serious symptoms of weakness and even dementia, giving the impression that, if left to run its natural course it might, in a few years, disappear for good.

Western countries are even relatively healthy, economically and politically speaking. In military terms, they are strong. They face no major risks to their way of life. Neither Russia nor China nor North Korea poses any real threat to European or North American democracy or freedom. Their coffers and arsenals are full; technology has handed them an opportunity to become more and more efficient. But that's not the West. The West is something deeper, and within the depth of its soul, the West is suffering – suffering from a mysterious disease like the Fisher King in the saga of the Holy Grail, and someone must find the chalice containing the blood that holds his cure.

But let's leave the Holy Grail and get back to something more mundane – football – and let's ask the question: what if Donald Trump were, today, the only Western statesman who understands the game and is willing to play it; the only one to grasp the urgency of these last few seconds of the last quarter?

Trump certainly challenges our usual way of thinking. We have to face that challenge. We must refuse to be satisfied with the caricature, with 30-second stories carried in *Jornal Nacional*, always casting him as a disconnected, arbitrary, chaotic Trump.

Just like Ronald Reagan – educated at some insignificant university in the middle of cornfields in Illinois, a mediocre sports commentator, an actor with very little talent – achieved what generations of sophisticated politicians and Ivy League aristocrats failed to do, that is, defeat communism, so too, Donald Trump – that billionaire clad in suits that are a bit too big, a corporate member of casinos and golf clubs – seems to have a worldview the depth and spread of which far surpass the perspectives of the hyper-intellectualized, cosmopolitan elites who despise him.

In Warsaw, on July 6, 2017, Trump delivered a remarkable speech defending the West – a speech no other current leader could muster the courage or ability to deliver. Its central theme was the vision of a West – viewed as a community of nations (and not as an indistinct, borderless amalgam) – that faces

an existential threat from within and will survive only if it can regain its spirit.

Entitled “Remarks by President Trump to the People of Poland,” the speech makes a clear case for Poland not just as a nation to be admired per se but as a symbol of resistance and faith, with a determination it hopes would be replicated throughout the West as a way of fighting for survival. “In the Polish people,” says Trump, “we see the soul of Europe.” Trump uses Poland to try to show Europeans what they are at heart – through Poland, urging the Europeans to join with the United States in defending their common spirit. In fact, it was not by accident that Trump chose Poland to issue his call to defend the West. In the Polish people he saw that fighting spirit, the spirit of resistance and of self-assertion in adversity, which he considers vital to the survival of the West as a whole. “You [the Polish people] may have lost your land, but you never lost your pride.” In the remarks, Poland is a standard-bearer and a symbol of the West: “In the Polish people we see the soul of Europe,” says Trump, adding: “Your nation is great because your spirit is great, and your spirit is strong.” That greatness and that strength come from the deep-rooted identity of the people, of the Polish nation: “The story of Poland is the story of a people who have never lost hope, who have never been broken, and who have never, ever forgotten who they are.” Trump, noting how spirit prevails over physical strength, invokes the Polish martyr killed by the Nazis in 1943, Catholic bishop Michael Kozal, who said, as quoted by Trump: “More horrifying than a defeat of arms is a collapse of the human spirit.”

While making no mention of him in his remarks, the president perhaps also had Jan Sobieski in mind. The Polish king had come to the rescue of a besieged Vienna that was about to fall to the Ottoman army, and, on the afternoon of September 12, 1683, he came down from the Kahlenberg in front of his cavalry, under the banner of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, to defeat Mustafa Pasha’s far superior forces, thus saving Europe from Islamic domination.

But the main Polish figure whom Trump invokes is Pope John Paul II. At a key point in the speech, Trump recalls the first mass the Polish Pope celebrated in Warsaw in 1979, when a million enthusiastic people interrupted the sermon crying out, “We Want God.” As the American president interprets it, this cry is a coming together of nationalism and faith – faith as an integral part of national sentiment, and vice versa: at that moment, says he, “the Poles reasserted their identity as a nation devoted to God,” for in that cry, “they found the words to declare that Poland would be Poland once again.” For Trump, the Poles’ cry for God, for God’s return to the center of their lives along with nationhood restored, faith, and homeland reborn together after being shattered by the Soviet-imposed materialist and “internationalist” dictatorship, that cry still echoes today as the cry of the West: “The people of Poland, the people of America, the people of Europe still cry ‘We want God!’”

The speech then transitions from that Poland, understood as a microcosm of the entire Western soul, in its history of resistance, to the West today. It is his view that the West, far from living quietly, sitting on top of the food chain of globalization as many suppose, is under grave threat, visible threats that Trump finds in “radical Islamic terrorism” (spelled out exactly like that), but also – and this may come as a surprise given the prosaic quality of this context of struggle for survival – in bureaucracy, that force which “drains the vitality and wealth of the people.” But Trump sees far more than those dangers, seeing them as more than just security or economic efficiency. For him, the real huge danger is the disappearance of Western identity itself, a loss of spirit, disappearance of “bonds of culture, faith, and

tradition that make us who we are.” Anti-West forces, “whether they come from inside or out,” if left unchecked, “will undermine our courage, sap our spirit, and weaken our will to defend ourselves and our societies.” The problem is therefore not terrorism, let alone less competitiveness, but something much more fundamental: a disappearance of the will to be who we are, as communities identified with a historic destiny and a living culture.

And what exactly is the West, which has no choice but to be, otherwise it would disappear as a civilization? Trump explains this in the next portion of his speech: The West is “a community of nations.” The West is a group, certainly, but not a shapeless mass, much less a grouping of states based on some treaty, but a set of nations – entities each defined in terms of its deep historical and cultural identity rather than as abstract legal entities – forged from unique experiences rather than from cold principles or values: a community, therefore, where peculiarities are not an accident but their own essence and part of an organic whole, and critical to the health and strength of the grouping. The removal of borders, the supranational principle, common values – nothing could be further from Trump’s concept of the West as a community of nations.

And what characterizes that community, which is based on, rather than being beyond, nationalities? Trump points, first of all, to art: “inspiring works of art that honor God”; and then innovation; the celebration of heroes, traditions, and ancient customs (which, at the start of our own culture, Camões referred to as “arms and the heroes”); the rule of law; freedom of expression; empowerment of women; family, not government and bureaucracy, at the center of life; the habit of debating and challenging, and seeking to know; and “above all ... the dignity of every human life, ... the hope of every soul to live in freedom.” Then there are “those priceless ties that bind us together as nations, as allies, and as a civilization,” what we’ve “inherited from our ancestors ... has never existed to this extent before. And that if we fail to preserve it, it will never, ever again exist.”

A long time ago, a world leader would never speak that way. Here, Trump is closer to Reagan and Churchill (who viewed themselves as great defenders of freedom and civilization against savagery and oppression). Among so many extraordinary comments, invoking the forebears is especially noteworthy. Postmodern Europe – together with the United States, which, until Obama, increasingly resembled Europe – has lately been living in a kind of historical isolation tank, living beyond history, post-history, in a state of mind (or lack thereof) in which the past is strange territory. Since the “Enlightenment,” the whole liberal and revolutionary tradition came to be a rejection of the past – its various facets a rejection of heroes, rejection of religious worship, and rejection of family (the family, that central microcosm of history, linking the individual to time just as a nation links a people to time). “Ancestors” suddenly turn up in the remarks by the president of a country that has been at the forefront of the “liberal order,” that same “order” that rejected the past, heroes, faith and family. Postmodern man has no ancestors, nor do postmodern societies heroes. By speaking about soul, Trump frontally challenges postmodern man, who has no soul – just chemical processes randomly taking place among his neurons. Trump speaks of God; and postmodern man, who killed off God a long time ago, finds nothing more offensive. And he hates to be reminded of the crime.

To many, those remarks of Trump’s might, at the very least, come across as displaying bad taste; but to others they will seem steeped in fascism. Yes, we live in a world in which talk of heroes, ancestors,

the soul and the nation, the family and God is, for much of the dominant ideology, an indication of fascist behavior. Is the problem really with Trump, or might it be with that ideology against which he rails? Stalin's, Mao Tse-Tung's, and Pol Pot's henchmen called everything fascist, too: having a book was fascist; loving one's parents or children was fascist; venerating traditional symbols was fascist. Anything that could remotely stand up to the central power of the state was fascist and sent citizens to the gulag, a reeducation camp, or a mass grave. Our postmodern "liberal" ideology embodied that kind of response. It doesn't [any longer] punish expressions of fascism with internment in gulags nor with summary executions, but with ridicule, with ostracism, with public shaming, with summary execution of people's political character if not their physical person (although the extremely physical aggressions by anti-fascist black brigades in the USA against anyone supporting Trump are already spreading viciously across the country). Trump urges us to reexamine the assumptions underlying this ideology, which we treat as gospel, as the only decent way to think.

In Trump's view, this civilization takes the political form of a "strong alliance of free, sovereign and independent nations." NATO appears as the military expression of that alliance, but Trump makes it very clear that without the spiritual alliance, this armed branch is useless. "Our defense," says he,

is not just a commitment of money, it is a compromise of will.... The defense of the West depends not only on resources but also on the will of its peoples ... We can have the largest economies and the most lethal weapons anywhere on Earth, but if we do not have strong families and strong values, then we will be weak, and we will not survive.

The cry for spiritual defense, for spiritual rearmament of the West, based on national identity, dominates the last segment of the speech. Trump emphasizes: "The fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive. Do we have confidence in our values to defend them at any cost? Do we have enough respect for our citizens to protect our borders? Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?" Trump uses the example of Poland and recounts the desperate struggle of the Polish patriots during the Warsaw Uprising against the Nazis to keep open a narrow passage between the two parts of the city, the passage across Jerusalem Avenue, the insurgents' very last hope. The present generation is called upon to continue that dramatic fight against the new enemies, never forgetting, as the heroes remind us, that "the West was saved with the blood of the patriots." In this fight, "every foot of ground, and every last inch of civilization, is worth defending with your life." (A recent book, *Décadence*, by the leftist French philosopher Michel Onfray, comes to mind here. Albeit very different from Trump's, its intellectual starting point comes to a very similar conclusion – that the West is doomed to disappear, as against Islam, because Muslims are willing to die for their civilization while Westerners are not).

Trump insists that we should not forget where this new war is taking place: "Our own fight for the West does not begin on the battlefield – it begins with our minds, our wills, and our souls." And in this fight, everything is at stake: "Our freedom, our civilization, and our survival depend on these bonds of history, culture, and memory." The note on which Trump ends his speech is akin to a commander's postscript his to soldiers going into battle: "Just as Poland could not be broken, I declare today for the world to hear that the West will never, ever be broken.... So, together, let us all fight like the Poles — for family, for freedom, for country, and for God."

This vision of the West does not mean conflict with non-Westerners. The enemy of the West is not Russia or China, nor is it an enemy state, but indeed primarily an enemy within, abandoning one's own identity; and an outside enemy, radical Islamism – which, meanwhile, plays second fiddle to the first, because Islamism only poses a threat because it finds the West spiritually weak and disconnected from itself. There is no “us-versus-them logic” here, contrary to what Trump's detractors are fond of saying. There is instead an “us seeking to reclaim ourselves” logic. Trump proposes for the West a Jungian work of sorts – accentuating the hero character, recreating the narrative of that hero's exploits and trials, a civilizational therapy the key to which lies in reconnecting with a forgotten subconscious collective overwhelmed by the blows dealt by technocratic liberalism and political correctness. More than anything else, it is a geo-psychological or psycho-political vision.

Let's not forget that, in Jungian psychology, unlike in Freudian psychology, God really and fundamentally does exist. In Jung, like in Trump, it is not about ridding oneself of illusions in an effort to maintain some mediocre mental health – like it is for Freud and many liberals – but rather about entrenching those so-called illusions and discovering that they are, in fact, the bedrock and basic reality capable of making sense of psychic life and taking it to a higher level.

The soul (anima), the God who exists in the soul (and who, therefore, exists), the archetypes, the symbolism of the self, all these Jungian characters, are found in Trump's vision of the West. The president wants to put the West into therapy to restore its lost personality: reconnecting with its own subconscious, which the West had abandoned. There is no real outside enemy: the enemy is self-neglect. The postmodern West is a West that does not want to look at itself. It has a strong impulse to question itself, and sometimes even enjoys replacing its own culture with the culture of non-Western immigrants arriving in increasing numbers. It doesn't do so because it is altruistic, nor because it has compassion or tolerance – which are just a façade: at heart the West has opened up the floodgates for millions of immigrants because it is in self-rejection, because it is suffering psychically. Trump wants to stop this self-destructive impulse from advancing.

Trump's worldview was clearly articulated as well in a speech he delivered at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly on September 19, 2017, fully consistent with and complementary to his Warsaw remarks. At the UN, Trump called for a world of sovereign and independent nations that respect one another and whose cooperation will be strong precisely to the extent that it is built on sovereignty and independence, not on a blurring of borders nor on the supranational principle.

We could say that Trump is proposing a pan-nationalism – a world in which the quest for peace and prosperity must be based on, rather than be antagonistic to, nations. He argued that the UN was established “based on the vision that diverse nations could cooperate to protect their sovereignty, preserve their security, and promote their prosperity.” He makes it quite clear that the United Nations is about ‘nations united’ – united precisely to better defend the uniqueness and personality of each one, rather than to water it down into a grand, shapeless mass. Furthermore, a common denominator that brings them together in the UN is sovereignty, security, and prosperity: Trump doesn't talk about “universal values” or anything like that, because in his vision there are no “universal values” superimposed upon the identity of each nation and civilization. Values only exist within a nation, within a culture, rooted in a nation; not in some abstract kind of multilateral ether. The defense of those values

depends precisely on health and robustness in nations, not on nationalities being watered down: “Strong, sovereign nations [let] diverse countries with different values, different cultures, and different dreams not just coexist, but work side by side on the basis of mutual respect.”

Underlying the entire speech is a direct rejection of the notion that the United Nations is or should be the embryo of a world government, or that there should be something called “global governance.”

This concept fits in perfectly with the Westernism he articulated in Warsaw. The West is a community of nations that share something beyond themselves – culture, history, and faith. Non-Western nations do not share this same culture, history and faith, so they are not part of the West; but that West does not want to be part of the rest of the world either, nor does it want to impose its heritage on the rest of the world, simply because heritage cannot be imposed because, by definition, it is impossible to share its own ancestry, its own identity.

What we have here is the opposite of imperialism or interventionism. In his address to the UN, Trump departs from every neocon idea of imposing democracy on third countries:

We are not seeking to impose our way of life on anyone.... We do not expect diverse countries to share the same cultures, traditions, or even systems of government. But we do expect all nations to uphold these two core sovereign duties: to respect the interests of their own people and the rights of every other sovereign nation.

Trump is therefore not calling for a West that goes around the world installing democracies. He is calling for nations and civilizations to respect one another. Respect must come from nations that have their own identity and are self-governing, not from a general, universal jelly governed by “values.” But Trump preaches self-respect as well (“to respect the interests of their own people”), which is basically another way of reiterating his Warsaw message: to reassess the identity of the West through its member nations. It should be noted that, for Trump, in the international arena countries are governed by “duties,” not “values.” Both in terms of the responsibility around mutual respect and self-respect, the principle of the nation as primarily a place to preserve one’s own identity, is expressly stated.

That is the backdrop against which the “America First” principle is situated. Trump declares to the General Assembly:

As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just like you, as the leaders of your countries will always, and should always, put your countries first. All responsible leaders have an obligation to serve their own citizens, and the nation-state remains the best vehicle for elevating the human condition.

This is a clear expression of what we referred to earlier as pan-nationalism – a radical anti-cosmopolitanism. Each state has the duty, not just the right, to work for its people; the state only legitimizes itself if it is national, rooted in a community, and every individual develops as a member of a national community, not as a “citizen of the world.” The state is not a necessary evil, but a precious commodity – insofar as it is not a structure for technocratic administration but the defender and the driving force behind its community history, in terms of a state being inseparable from the nation.

In New York, Trump thus complements the vision he outlined in Warsaw, where he had called for a West that respects itself and restores its own identity and traditions that are under threat by being stripped of nationality and by forgetting its heroes.

Trump doesn't view the world as an international community, certainly not in terms of how he characterizes the West as a "community." The concept of community he reserves for those nations that, together, without tossing aside each one's identity, form a civilization. Community must be grounded in deep history, in the same archetypes. Community built only on the basis of abstract values is not community. In international relations, mutual respect rules; but sentiment does not rule – it only rules within a civilization.

Nationalism – the idea of nation – is closely linked to the birth of the West. According to Aeschylus, in the heat of the battle of Salamis, the Greeks sang:

*Ô païdes hellênon îte,
eleutheroûte patrída, eleutheroûte de
païdas, gynaïkas,
theôn te patrôon édê,
thêkas te progónôn,
nun hypér pántôn agôn!
(Forward, you sons of Hellas!
Set your country free! Set
free your sons, your wives,
the tombs of your ancestors,
and the temples of your gods.
All is at stake: now fight!)*

Of course, the portrait of the battle that Aeschylus sketches here is a romanticized one – but perhaps not so much so. The Naval Battle of Salamis, in which an alliance of Greek cities defeated the Persian invaders (and saved the nascent West) occurred in 480 BC, and Aeschylus – who himself fought in the battle – as early as 472 BC wrote the play entitled "The Persians," from which the quote is taken. Salamis must have happened more or less the way he describes it.[1] The Greek cities formed the first alliance of the West against the Persian invaders, a West at the time confined to Greece, more or less along the lines described by Trump – a community of independent nations that were at one and the same time fiercely independent but viewed as a group completely different from the invader or the rest of the world; and united not by some type of geo-strategic convenience not to preserve trading routes or anything of the sort but to defend freedom, family, their cultural heritage, and their gods. United by something they decided to call "country." Eleutheroûte patrída! Set your country free! This had to be the first time the word would appear in Greek literature or in any literature.

It matters not whether that was exactly how the battle cry was – all that matters is that, eight years later, Aeschylus staged it at the amphitheater and that cry made sense to his audience, for the concept of homeland absolutely existed and the Greeks at least wanted to believe that it did. Let us set our country free! Let us set the women free, set the children free! Let us set the temples free and

preserve them; let us defend our gods and our ancestors.

Thank goodness those Greeks – our ancestors! Thank goodness they did not try to follow the path of tolerance and dialogue. Thank goodness they didn't take the military option off the table. Thank goodness they didn't give up. The West was born at Salamis. It was born in struggle. The West wasn't born out of dialogue, nor out of tolerance, but was born in defense of its own identity. It was not just physical survival or political freedom, but also the survival of its own gods, its own culture, its own history; it was for spiritual survival that the Athenian triremes and the four triremes from Naxos fought at Salamis. The Greeks may have surrendered to avoid the risk of going up against forces far superior to theirs (otherwise, they could have surrendered at Marathon or at the Thermopylae) and accepted to pay taxes to Darius or Xerxes, like so many peoples from the East had done in submitting to the Persian Empire (the Persian Empire was the globalism of that day). They could become part of a beautiful multicultural empire. They would lose political freedom; they would lose their history and culture, or their belief; but in return they would win physical survival. They might lose country, with everything it contains, with everything it is made of (women, children, temples, and tombs), but wouldn't need to risk Persian arrows and axes. But maybe they wouldn't even lose all that much: the Persians would spare their families and allow them to worship Apollo.

Strangely enough, the Greeks were not content to keep their worship and their home as something "tolerated" by a faraway emperor: they wanted their worship and their home but in addition, and most of all, their freedom, without which nothing would make sense. From a purely rational standpoint, giving the Persians freedom would not be bad business. The Greeks at Salamis weren't that rational, however. The cry sprang from their chest, *Patrída!* And it still echoes to this day. *Eleutheroúte patrída!* Set your country free! That late summer day in 480 BC, country and freedom would emerge as inseparable concepts. Country, that country given birth in Salamis, is not a concept but rather an emotion, a feeling, a set of feelings that, although they take on political form, they are in the very essence not political in nature. Trump knows that, just like Aeschylus knew it.

The West was born at Salamis, but not only in the battle itself strictly speaking but also, and most of all, in the literary transposition Aeschylus gave it. The West was thus born with a dimension of self-reflection. It was born not only as a fact, but as a literary work of a conscious history building – Greek tragedy is where myth merges with history. "The Persians" is not a recent work but quite the contrary – it is, chronologically, the first tragedy written by the first great tragic poet (strictly speaking, it was the second part of the first trilogy, whose first part, "Phineus," didn't make it to us). Country, freedom, a sense of history, myth – the cry of *eleutheroúte patrída* brings them all together in a new synthesis, in a kind of "poetry" in the etymological sense of something created, a human work. That poetry, that creation, is the West. Yes, the West is, sort of, a literary creation – which is not to say it doesn't exist; nor that it is an illusion, merely a figment of the imagination, or deception. Much to the contrary, it means that the West is an achievement of the spirit because it finds expression in certain people who make up certain communities.

Patriotism is therefore part of the very essence of the West. It was not the brainchild of philosophers; it was felt by men facing the risk of death – and let's not forget that, for those familiar with the "metaphysics of war," as Julius Evola calls it, the cry issued from the chest of a man in the heat of

battle is sacred; it does not really come from him but is inspired by the god. That cry of “Set your country free!” never arose in Babylon or Egypt – those cultures have nothing like the concept of country. The Egyptians believed they lived on sacred ground that reproduced the shape of the sky (the Nile was equivalent to the Milky Way, the pyramids at Giza to the constellation Orion, where the immortal souls of the pharaohs went, at least according to Robert Bauval’s interpretation), but in the extensive body of literature of Egypt there seems to be nothing quite like the cries of Salamis. The soldiers in the Eastern sovereign states fought for payment, for booty. They fought as hard as they could for allegiance to the king (which could be easily switched), but never for “country.” Ancient nations certainly fought for liberty, others for the survival of their family, and others still for their gods, or for the tombs of their elders; none but the Greeks, however, fought for country as all of those things together – for country as an inseparable union of freedom, family, history, and belief. None but the Greeks celebrated country and its liberation through drama.

As for ancient India, China, and Japan, the roots of nationalism in those cultures would have to be explored as well. What is for sure, however, is that in ancient times nothing in the Mediterranean nor in Central-Asia was like Salamis. It could be argued that India, China, and Japan are today a continuation of a long nationalist tradition stretching back to the very beginnings of those cultures. They all practice a deep cultural exclusivism and are less than modest in preserving and defending their gods and their ancestors’ tombs. Nevertheless, in keeping with today’s politically-correct dogmas, those cultures are never called “fascists.” Only in the West is identity called into question; only in the West is diversity preached. No one complains that China and Japan defend their eminently Sinic or Japanese character. Why would only the West have an obligation to diversity? Why would the West alone not be entitled to its identity? Because of the wars triggered, it is said, by nationalism, mainly World Wars I and II? But in World War II, Japan also fought on the wrong side, and yet was not annihilated, neither was all its earlier culture invalidated like Germany’s, for example.[2]

Rome preserved and entrenched nationalism the way Aeschylus originally said, especially between the early days of the City and the beginning of the Empire. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, declared Horatius, “sweet and honorable it is to die for country.” Virgil’s *Aeneid* is the first and greatest nationalistic epic of all time. When Rome was in its heyday, patriotism as love for its own little corner and its own local gods quickly turned into state pride, a civic religion, but was still based on something alive and kicking. Under Empire, nationalism breaks down, nation disappears, and only the state remains. But, over the centuries that Rome’s greatness was forged, nation was something sacred, symbolized by the eagle of the legions, associated with republican freedom from the very beginning. Below the eagle is inscribed the first acronym ever, SPQR – *Senatus Populus que Romanus*, the Senate, and the people, i.e., the state and society united, or, from a sociological standpoint, the elite and the plebs united under the “wings” of nation.

The word “nation” comes, in fact, from the Latin *natio*, *nationis* – the same root as the verb *nascor*, *nasci*, *natum*, to be born. The idea of nation is thus very much tied to self-perception of a community of people who share a common origin. Nation is not a choice but is, for individuals, as indelible and foundational a fact of life as their own birth. It is no coincidence that today’s globalist cultural Marxism promotes both a dilution of gender and a dilution of national sentiment: it calls for a world of “gender fluid,” cosmopolitan people with no country, denying what is for everyone a biological

fact of birth in a particular gender and in a particular historical community. Indeed, I come from that era when Marxist professors went around universities urging young people worldwide to “fight for the liberation of their historical community,” which sounded fake, but it at least still carried an echo of Aeschylus, a Leninist way of saying *eleutheroúte patrída*. No longer does Marxism espouse freedom – it is now calling for the concept of the historical community, the nation, to be destroyed; it is now advocating a world of open borders where all are immigrants, and nobody can identify with his or her people without being called a fascist. In both cases – denial of gender and denial of nationality – cultural Marxism is pursuing the same goal: to weaken the human being, to turn him into a pliable *paçoca* (crumbly Brazilian candy) that is unable to resist the power of the state; to create insecure, disconnected people, who are incapable of taking their own role in society or of having ideas other than the politically-correct buzzwords conveyed in the media.

For nearly 1,000 years, between the end of the reign of Augustus and the explosion of European creativity and self-confidence in the eleventh century, the West had no nation: the amorphous imperial mass during the long, drawn out decline of the ancient world, then collapsed into chaos – broken up into fiefdoms and micro-kingdoms. Coincidentally, that period between the autumn of Rome and the winter of the Dark Ages was not the most glorious in Western history. Europe began to re-emerge as a civilization when nations started to flourish during the High Middle Ages, the same time that Christendom became self-aware and set off to fight, to conquer again (successfully in the Iberian Peninsula, less so in the Holy Land). To use an inexcusably cheesy image, it is as if a loose pile of rocks were to start getting compressed and take the form of several planets different from one another but all part of the same system, all circling around the same sun, the Christian faith. The process was obviously imperfect, conforming to entirely different shapes and speeds.

France had begun to form much earlier, with Clovis and Charlemagne, the latter, moreover, was also the father of Germany; Spain would initially get compressed not into one, but into two great kingdoms; Portugal sprang inexplicably almost out of nowhere (why did the people of the small Portucalense county, between Douro and Minho, suddenly begin to consider themselves a nation, rather than a mere fiefdom as might be expected? Why so early on, so far removed from everything?); Italy was once again the nation that in some ways had always existed since the Punic Wars, even if it only came to be a state many centuries later; England got a sense of itself when it was conquered by a band of Norman adventurers, and so on. There are countless characters and idiosyncrasies to this history – some nations were formed through war, others through language or literature – but the course followed in all cases was the same and everything pointed in a common direction, the nation. The nation came to embody the vitality of the Western spirit.

The French Revolution all of a sudden challenged the nation. As with so many revolutions, people who wanted bread, respect, and freedom more than they loved the monarchy as a national symbol were soon betrayed by the intellectual elites, who manipulated them to get to power and immediately started to oppress them, inflicting on them misery and ideological discourse, along with Louis XVI’s head, which nobody had asked for. The most extremist among the revolutionaries wanted a world where there were no classes, no borders, no God, no family, no traditions, no nation. In school, we all learned to celebrate this dark period of history and we learned to despise the American Revolution, unaware that it could be viewed as true victory for the spirit and for freedom. But wasn’t the French Revolution the lab that

produced all those viruses of all despotic rulers, who have been a scourge to the world since then? The truth is that France only managed to shake off its homicidal, suicidal revolutionary rage when it became a nation once again, under Napoleon Bonaparte – who then went throughout Europe sowing, either by imitation or counter-reaction, the desire for nationalism, stirring it up or reviving it in Italy, in territories that would become Germany, in Russia, and even in Switzerland.

The Romantic Movement – which came about more or less around the time Napoleon got to Milan (as Stendhal believed) with his troops and quickly asserted himself as an enormous cultural counterrevolution, in every respect opposed the “ideals” of the French Revolution – had nationalism as one of its pillars. Romanticism rewrote all prior history in the light of national feeling, recreated and reorganized myths to reveal something profoundly true – the fact that the human soul is nationalistic, that the history of the West has only meaning and only embodies a destiny – unlike a simple heap of facts – in the context of national feeling.[3] In Latin America the great romantic urge invented nations that did not exist, including ours.

From that last decade of the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century all of the spiritual and political lineages emerged to challenge the world, and they do so to this day. It can be argued that any political tide we see today is descended intellectually from Babeuf and Robespierre or from Goethe and Chateaubriand.

Romanticism-based nationalism prevailed until World War I, when the cataclysm came and brought about so deep a crisis in the self-conception of the West that we are yet to recover. It arose again, at the same time, with the Bolsheviks, the great revolutionary enemy of the idea of nation. To fill the void left by the vilifying of nationalism, a new enemy, financial internationalism (symbolized by something shortly before the war, the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913) began to arise. And, during the spiritual crisis of the 1920s, a movement came on the scene and would make things even worse for the nationalists: socialism split into two streams – one that remained anti-nationalist; and another which, to gain power, in Italy and Germany took nationalism hostage, distorted and enslaved genuine national feeling for its own evil ends, the result of which was fascism and Nazism (Nazism = national-socialism, that is, nationalist socialism). Based on the Nazi-fascist experience and the fact that any real national feeling was now polluted by the socialist revolutionary movement, nationalism was virtually no longer viable in the West, or at least in Europe, also because, following World War II, the massive Marxist propaganda machinery managed to erase every bit of the essentially socialist character traits of fascism and Nazism, laying all the blame for the catastrophe on nationalism. To atone for that guilt, people decided to shut their national feeling away into the deepest dungeon, and began to replace the rich, complex fabric of their histories with a collection of nice little clichés.

In Mensagem (Message), Fernando Pessoa, the last prophet from Lazio’s last heyday, declared: “All nations are all mysteries. Each one is a whole world alone.” Pessoa composed Mensagem during the Spenglerian era of Western decline that coincided with the great disenchantment with nationalism, but his reaction was just a gracious attempt to restore or reinvent mythical nationalism (creating myths is the highest calling a human being can find, according to Pessoa himself), to reestablish the profound, multidimensional, trans-political uniqueness of nationality – of the Portuguese nationality in his case, but in the context of a pan-nationalism, quite similar to Trump’s. “All nations are all mysteries” – here, the

word “mysteries” can be read not only as an inscrutable enigma, but also as a celebration and initiation ritual, as mysterious worship, as in the mysteries of Eleusis; and in that sense every nation is a religion as well. “Each one is a whole world alone” – that is, each nation is an experience and an experience in isolation, but each preserving and expressing the sense of all of humanity. In that same poem (addressed to Dona Tareja or Teresa de Leão, the mother of Afonso Henriques and hence the mother of Portugal), the poet later on laments: “The man who was your little boy grew old.” Born in the eleventh century to Dona Tareja and living to old age in the 1930s Mensagem, that little boy is, of course, Portugal; but it is, at the same time, also the idea of the European nation, that group of Monads-Sisters who were born together, lived their lives alike, and seemed to be near the end, in the wake of the Great War. But it was not the end. Pessoa believed a nation could be reborn – his own nation as well as the nationalist principle, which he considers one and the same thing, since the idea of nation exists only because there are specific nations, and vice versa (if I understood my Plato correctly). He thus implores the mother of Portugal (who here clearly represents the virgin mother of God as well, hence Portugal, the son in her arms, and is also the Christ): “But every living thing is an everlasting infant. Where you are, with no day, in the old bosom, watchful, a baby once again!”

Historian Vítor Manuel Adrião sees Portuguese voyages as a great initiation ritual and, therefore, Brazil, the ultimate fruit of that “mystery,” has deep, sacred roots linked to the deepest mysteries of the Western soul as manifested in the Portuguese nation. Brazil, too, is the son whom that aged, but eternal, infant Portugal has become. Over the decades, however, we Brazilians abandoned our connection with the old Portuguese soul to the point that we can no longer perceive ourselves as part of that play and, imitating the Europeans, we have abandoned any sense of the sacred in reading our history. We live on the Island of the True Cross, in the Land of the Holy Cross, but aren’t interested in finding out what that original name meant, nor in knowing to what destiny that name beckons – for us, it is merely academic curiosity. Why did destiny first give us that name – Island of the True Cross, Land of the Holy Cross? Why did it so soon afterwards hide that name and changed it to the name of a tree? But perhaps it wasn’t all that much change, after all: tree, wood, cross. How have we been, or can again become, that true cross? Axis mundi of so many cultures, the Nordic Yggdrasil (the tree that connects the earth and the sky), the tree of life in the Hebrew Kabbalah, which, in the Christian Cabbala, also becomes the cross of Christ. And what about the mythical island named Brazil, which the Celts – at least since the fourteenth century as attested to on maps – believed to lie west of Ireland, but which emerged from the mists for only one day every seven years? Was it by mere coincidence that we were given the same name? Why don’t we learn anything about this? Why do we settle with knowing so little about our history? The sugar cycle, the gold cycle, the coffee cycle, the empire, the republic, the dictatorship, democracy, etc. Is that all?

Exactly 100 years ago, in late 1917, Oswald Spengler did the final editing of the first volume of his magnificent *Das Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of the West), published in 1918, followed by the second volume in 1922. *Das Untergang* was a book by an amateur. It was confusing and surprising, kaleidoscopic, non-academic, and that’s perhaps precisely why it influenced the overall culture and political thinking much more than historiography ever did. Spengler – a secondary school history teacher – talked about everything, but talked very little about the very decline of the West, hence the title of his book was enough to spark debate, which has been going on since then, about the death of our civilization and its imminent end.

Spengler's philosophy provides the undercurrent for the Western pessimism he ushered in, it must be noted; nothing in it is racist, contrary to what is so often claimed. Spengler neither vilifies nor hates other non-Western civilizations or peoples, he merely argues that every human being's life only has meaning within a particular civilization, a particular cultural community, or – we could underscore here – within a nation. In his view, it is senseless to speak in terms of "humanity," because "humanity" is a zoological concept, otherwise it is an empty word; the nature of humanity is only expressed through a wide variety of specific cultural forms – through peoples, through nations. Humanity without nations would end up being something dry and poor. As a culture, however, it is organic, as against being mechanical; it has a life cycle and hence is born, grows up, and dies. Thus, the disappearance of a civilization like the West or any other is irreparable and inevitable.

It could even be argued that when Spengler published his book, the West had just perished in the trenches of the Great War. In fact, looking back, we see World War I as bringing the West to an end, certainly in terms of its heyday. The world of 1913 was completely dominated by Europe and its culture – the rest of the planet submitting to that great empire, either as a colony or as a revenue source. The world of 1917/1918 was a fragmented, revolted world, the impregnable Eurocentric castle collapsed (overthrown by the fratricidal war the Europeans fought amongst themselves), the fire of decolonization broke out everywhere (first mental, then political), the great communist enemy emerged in Russia, and radical Islam started to arise from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. If not the end, it was certainly the beginning of the end of a wonderful political and cultural structure.

Europe as a center of civilization disappeared in World War I and the West would have died then and there were it not for the United States flying the flag of that dying West. US leadership and centrality in Western civilization became clear thereafter, becoming indisputable after World War II, although Europeans, full of intellectual snobbery, have never really admitted to this fact. From 1918, and especially from 1945, the fate of the West (the West as a destination) was in the hands of the United States. The United States had the weapons, the economic power, and the cultural vitality to give the West a survival in which the Spenglerians would have no belief. Over these past seven decades, it wasn't the Europeans but the Americans who have preserved the main pillars of the Western legacy, not just militarily and economically, not just institutionally and politically, but also in terms of spiritual life: for all intents and purposes, the Christian faith is dead in Europe but thriving in the United States (I am thinking not just about the Protestants, but also about the Catholic Church, which remains strong in America but is weak in Europe). A sense of nation was banished from Europe's cultural and social mainstream, but remained central in American life. The United States is the only place classical culture itself is celebrated and experienced as part of its own heritage, whereas in Europe it has been worn thin in the academic arena on the one hand, and in tourism, on the other.

Europeans no longer feel that they are part of the same history as their ancestors, just like they felt up to the early twentieth century. They no longer considered themselves actors in the same play that put on stage the Cretans and their minotaur, the Achaeans at the Gates of Troy, Aeneas falling to his knees upon realizing that Lazio was his promised land (*salve fati mihi debita tellus*), Salamis and Thermopylae, Alexander on a quest for immortality, Hannibal with his elephants at the gates of Rome, the legions arriving at Lusitania and marveling at the first glimpse of the majestic waves of the Atlantic Ocean, the logos of Heraclitus and the logos of St. John, St. Paul preaching the Christ-God, Constantine's

dream, the conversion of the Germans and the conversion of the Vikings, the crusade of the barons and the hermits, St. Francis with the birds on his shoulder, Percival and King Arthur, the departure of the caravels, Luther's theses, the Bastille and the Vendée, Napoleon defeated by winter, Lourdes and Fatima, Sedan and Verdun, Omaha Beach. None of this means anything to a European any longer – it's as if he had left the stage and gone to sit in the audience: "That's no longer my job."

The establishment of the European Union made all of the past null and void and sanitized it. No longer did "Europe" mean all of that human experience but instead just a bureaucratic concept and a culturally empty space governed by abstract "values." Today's Europeans may even study their history, but they do not experience it as destiny much less celebrate or understand it as "theirs"; in it they see neither meaning nor a calling.

Contemporary European historians writing about Greece and Rome, for example, or about any other subject, are interesting when read side by side with those who were writing in the 19th century, prior to the great cataclysm, before the great denationalization of the West, beginning with World War I. The 19th century historians viewed themselves within the history they were recounting; within the history in which they were participants, speaking with the passion and engagement of those who feel, who know the people they are talking about, who were close to Pericles and Godofredo de Bulhões. Those writing today offer up a history that is cold – their characters lifeless, mere sketchy images. Today's historians write history seemingly out of obligation, not driven by any sense of destiny or mystery; they lack imagination, and are unable to imagine themselves wielding spears in a Macedonian phalanx or hoisting the sails on the Santa Maria. But contemporary American historians – at least some of them, those who write for the public at large rather than for academia – resemble those nineteenth-century Europeans, for they still recount American history as flesh-and-blood history, a history capable of linking the present with the past. Americans are the last set of traditionalists in the West (to quote Professor Christian Kopff, director of the Center for Western Civilization, University of Colorado at Boulder: it would be useful to also ask, how long will the politically-correct wave in American higher education allow this center to keep that name).

The only ones still taking the history of the West seriously, the only ones who continue to be players rather than mere spectators, are the Americans – or at least some Americans. It is much easier these days to find a dyed-in-the-wool Westerner in Kansas or Idaho than in Paris or Berlin.

To understand Trump's Warsaw speech, apart from reading Spengler and Onfrey it would be useful to also read the traditionalist master René Guénon (a major influence on Steve Bannon, the former White House chief strategist who is still a key player in the movement that brought Trump to the presidency). Writing in the 1920s, Guénon believed that the modern West had completely distanced itself from "tradition" (the spiritual nucleus of all civilizations, expressing itself differently but coherently in each of them), becoming a wellspring of materialism and ignorance, whose only principle is rejection of any spirituality. A Frenchman who converted to Islam and living in Egypt, Guénon believed, however, that only Christianity, and specifically Catholicism, could perhaps restore a modicum of spirituality to the West and save it from being totally wiped out in the depths of an age of darkness: for only the Catholic Church, he felt, preserved the elements of the great tradition, albeit that these elements were latent and incomprehensible to the Church itself. Says Guénon:

being anti-modern in no wise means being anti-Western; quite the contrary, it means making an effort to save the West from its own confusion ... The West badly needs to be defended, but only to be defended from itself and from its own tendencies which, if allowed to run their course, will inevitably lead to its ruin and destruction.

It's impossible not to hear, in Trump's speech in Warsaw, echoes of Guénon.

The US defended the West against communism and believed that when communism ended, it was mission accomplished – end of story. But nothing had ended. Beginning in the 1990s, nihilism (fueled by cultural Marxism) was believed to have replaced the communist enemy. Indeed, it may be argued that Soviet communism was only one of many masks for this fundamental nihilism as a forerunner to Lenin and Stalin, before Marx, before Nietzsche, coming from the anti-Christian atheist philosophers who paved the way for the French revolution.

That enemy, nihilism, penetrated America itself, which was quickly replacing its attachment to living history with a system of “values” and cultural relativism (which, by the way, is not relativism but an anti-West absolutism). The West is indeed not based on values, nor is it based on tolerance, nor on democracy, but on Plato and Aristotle, on Caesar and Alexander, on St. Paul and St. Augustine, on Washington and Jefferson, on battles and miracles, on passions and wars, on the cross and the sword. The West has a face, a name, and blood; and ideals and values, of course. But those ideals and values are not inscribed in the European Commission's pamphlets nor in the decisions of any human rights court – they are evidenced in the scars of the past, in their heroes and martyrs (dubious heroes, certainly like any human being).

From 1945 (up to Trump), even in the USA there has been less and less reference to the West. During the Cold War era, the expression “Free World” was used a lot in contrast to the socialist bloc, and the concept of the West, which was treasured for generations, managed to survive, barely and completely, inside this cardboard box, but lost its mythical appeal. The West was simply a metaphor for a military alliance. At its core it had “values” – democracy, respect for human rights, economic freedom – but neither feelings nor a conviction about destiny.

The United States has been entering the Western decline boat, indulging in nihilism, by not identifying with itself and by deculturation, by replacing living history with abstract, absolute, unquestionable values. It was entering that boat, until Trump arrived.

The post-modern West that was the result of all meanings being deconstructed is also a politically-correct West where meanings are imposed, taboos are established, and thought is set in stone. The West was born questioning the meaning of words, but it has given up lately. If Socrates were to show up today and, using his famous approach, were to start asking “what is racism?”; “what is social justice?”; “what are human rights?”; “what is a right?”; “what is human?”; and were he to reveal how intellectually senseless and superficial these and other concepts were, he would once again be condemned to drink hemlock.

Take “diversity,” for example. It's often said that Africa's problems – civil wars, coups d'état, massacres, and instability – are as a result of the artificially-created colonial borders the independent

African countries inherited, borders that brought together several rival ethnic groups under one state. Underlying that interpretation, which is so common among well-meaning people, is the assumption that ethnic diversity within a country thus triggers the most serious conflicts. An obvious corollary is that African borders should, ideally, be redrawn along ethnic lines, avoiding diversity within the same country. However, the same well-thinking people go to extremes to promote diversity in Western countries, arguing that not only is it a moral duty but also that, given its supposed benefits, saying that the diversity provided by immigration stimulates intellectual advancement, cultural output, and the economy. Quite interesting. The only way to rationally explain this reverse sign of diversity – bad in Africa, good in the United States or in Europe – is to assume that certain people have the capacity to live with diversity while others do not. Such an explanation would, of course, be met with rejection by an outraged dominant ideology. How, then, do they explain it? They don't. They remain double-minded, the Stalinist logic, whereby 2 + 2 is sometimes 5, is sometimes 3, depending on what is politically-expedient. 'Diversity' is thus explained as a concept that is not rational, nor searchable, nor can be inquired into, but merely a slogan, a brick you throw into a window you want to break, rather than a brick to be used, along with other bricks, to construct a building of logical thinking.

The West, Western nationalism, is a symbolic system. Postmodernism had been denying man, a symbolic animal, this essential nourishment, the symbol (man shall not live by bread alone but by every word...). Man had been losing his symbolic function, unable to think except based on some stereotypical categories (oppression, justice, humanity, etc.) without ever asking himself about the essence of these concepts, without ever questioning his truth. He was losing the symbol and at the same time was losing his intellectual reasoning. All he was allowed were different mixes and remixes of outdated concepts, but no thorough examination of each of these concepts. Those who do not have symbols do not think and feel, which is why postmodernism's and cultural Marxism's political and intellectual mission is exclusively to discredit and prohibit any symbol. One effect of this campaign is to be found in how the very adjective "symbolic" has been semantically diluted and has come to mean something that is not expressive and without substance (we say, for instance, a "symbolic contribution," to mean a negligible contribution), when in fact the creation or presentation of a symbol should constitute an act of utmost civilizational importance. The symbolic is now anything but "symbolic." [4]

Were we to view culture as something organic, rather than mechanical, from a symbolic or mythic perspective in the deepest sense – as advocated by Spengler, as called for by Trump – we would see in the economic system and in liberalism clear signs of decay and cultural decline, not signs of progress. The West that Trump wants to revive and defend is based neither on capitalism nor on a denationalized, disembodied liberal democracy, detached from a historical personality, but rather on symbols. Liberal democracy, as practiced today in Europe and in America up to the Obama administration, was unable to nurture this symbolic dimension. The West as Trump sees it is, therefore, entirely different from what was called the West in the Cold War era: The West was liberal democratic capitalism; Trump's West is the deepest symbolic heritage of the nations comprising it. In this scenario, God himself is always a symbol, the supersymbol – while being at the same time real and surreal.

Evidently, that God for whom Westerners yearn or should yearn, the God of Trump (who would have ever imagined reading these words, "the God of Trump"!) is not the cosmic God-consciousness, still barely allowed into certain quarters of the dominant culture. Nothing of the sort! This is the God who

acts in history, who is at one and the same time transcendent and immanent (Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, in the opening words of "Battle Hymn of the Republic," the one in the famous refrain Glory Hallelujah, who should be carefully listened to, in order to begin to understand the American soul). Our culture today ignores this God. With all the vast wealth of Western culture and religion and the challenge they have faced since Homer and Virgil, since Heraclitus and Parmenides (assuming here that the ancient world was in many ways a type of Christianity and, more than that, "Yearned for the Son," as the Russian writer Dimitri Merejkovsky insists) our culture lacks genuine contact. How could we have become so impoverished and blinded? Western thought and history, with their inextricable faith, create a massive spiritual palace that is ours, but we choose instead to live in a shed next door, surrounded only by two or three ideas produced, combining the most primitive materialism with the shallowest humanism.

In calling for God, at Warsaw Square, Trump was attacking the very heart of post-modernism. Trump should not be read in terms of keys to international relations or political science, but in terms of a colossal struggle between faith and its absence, between a world built on faith and a world being destroyed by "values." In this struggle, we may not want to be on the same side as Trump, but we have to acknowledge that it was he who has put this forth; that he is a leader in this fight; that he is not a "billionaire ruling for billionaires" as some detractors labelled him. No such billionaire ever says "we want God."

Quite paradoxically, Trump and his call to reconnect with the mythical heritage of Western history wouldn't be possible without the Internet. If the Internet represents an explosion of globalization and uprooting for the individual, then it could also become a vehicle for ushering in the end of globalization because it allows for the individual's return to the political arena and for the return of ideas and thinking that could no longer find a place in the politically-correct official media, including the national spirit, the national principle of spontaneous organization of society. The world portrayed in the remarks is being turned into a huge "dictionary of accepted ideas," as Flaubert would say; into the Newspeak Orwell imagined. The Internet came to rip this dictionary apart, to retrieve language, and to reopen a symbolic space controlled neither by the state nor by official political forces.

It wouldn't be too absurd to argue that Trump defends multipolarism – just that this is multipolarism from a civilizational and nonpolitical standpoint, with the West as one of its poles. Trump wants to revive the West, not to expand his rule – neither is he necessarily a supporter of American exceptionalism, much less an isolationist, since he holds the United States to be part of Western civilization, a shared venture to which he invites Europeans to return. For him, transatlanticism should be based on neither trade nor defense: NATO will be merely a military expression of an alliance that only makes sense if it is a much deeper spiritual and sentimental communion. We might call Trump's foreign policy a romantic foreign policy seeking to restore heroes and a sense of destiny. He may even be ready, as he is, to use the traditional tools of persuasion and dissuasion, but the core of his politics cannot be understood as a function of the rules of the traditional geostrategic game. American exceptionalism is subsumed under Western exceptionalism, which is not supremacism but self-assertion. And it does not involve negating another. Instead, implicit in his Warsaw speech and explicit in the speech to the UNGA is the principle of mutual respect. Trump does not want to westernize other civilizations; all he wants is for Western civilization to be left in peace to restore and rediscover its vitality. The battle against Islam,

assumed in the Warsaw speech, is a defensive struggle to preserve the West's spiritual space, not an imperialist design.

Trump's foreign policy has no isolationism nor does it pull America back from its leadership role. In Warsaw, he made it clear that he intended to play a transformative role in the world. What many find confusing is that Trump takes foreign policy to another level – that of a cultural, civilizational struggle, no longer a game of geopolitics. If it remains stuck at the level of geopolitics, the West is bound to lose, because geopolitics will not be what will restore its soul. Trump's America obviously wants to lead the West in that direction, to self-restoration (self, as Jung sees it, that Selbst, whose ultimate symbol is the Christ); not whether the US is disengaged from the WTO, or from the Climate Convention, because the game is no longer being played on that level.

The question of where Russia fits into the new construct proposed by Trump, that of a geocultural struggle, is more complex – its complexity derived from the secular ambiguity of the Russian soul, torn between being or not being Western; between whether or not to be a part of the same Christendom. Some even see the United States and Russia competing to argue which of the two will rescue Europe from its postmodern, atheistic captivity. That vision accepts that Putin's Russia is a fundamentally Christian force; a return to the "Moscow is the Third Rome" myth of old, to Russia as the center of Christianity after the fall of Latin Rome and Constantinople. An alliance of the United States and Russia as the two great Christian powers will perhaps be Trump's and Putin's dream, but there are a number of stumbling blocks, however: Russia's misgivings about the future of the US, even if Trump is nice to them right now; its own longstanding geostrategic insecurity, which causes Russia to always be instinctively seeking to widen its land security perimeter; the anti-Russian interests of Washington's foreign policy establishment; the view of some of Trump's supporters who see today's Russia as an expansionist neo-communist state and Putin as a leader who has never renounced the KGB agent mentality. In any case, US-Russia relations under Trump and Putin is an equation that is yet to be settled.

Any attempt at taking a sort of differential approach to this equation (since it is certainly not linear), calls for a study of the books and pronouncements of the Russian writer Alexander Dugin, creator of the Eurasian school. After two decades of harshly criticizing American and European aim to impose on Russia a liberalism that has been demolished, he now sees great potential for convergence with Trump's America, and even for cooperation against a common enemy, globalism – understood as the anti-national, anti-traditional liberal standards in society – and against the globalized, borderless marketplace, in the economic arena.

What about Brazil? Is it part of the West?

We at Itamaraty have learned over the last few decades to avoid, at any cost, Brazil surrendering to any bloc, so as to preserve our ability to pursue an autonomous foreign policy. We want to connect with every bloc, but not to be part of any. We are therefore very suspicious of the idea of becoming integrated into a West that necessarily excludes other civilizations and would hold us prisoners to any particular bloc. But that kind of absolute non-alignment should not prevent Brazil from being aligned with itself and with the very essence of its nationality, if we are to come to the conclusion that this essence is Western.

Brazilians seem a genuinely and deeply nationalistic people, hence Brazil would not have to feel uncomfortable if it were to try to reclaim the soul of the West based on national sentiment. Let us bear in mind that Brazil is now seeking OECD membership – that is, membership in the central institution that characterizes the economic West. For Brazil to also consider itself a part of the spiritual West, so to speak, would not be absurd.

In that vein, Brazil is part of the West – whether or not it wants to be – and whether or not it feels so, this West is engaged in a colossal battle for its own survival. But to position itself on that stage, it cannot afford to see reality through the lens of politics alone. In fact, alongside politics, in the normal sense of state decision-making and everything it entails, there is a growing sense of the existence and importance of metapolitics – that is, the set of ideas, culture, philosophy, history, and symbols operating at both the rational and the emotional levels of consciousness. Furthermore, alongside foreign policy, Brazil needs an external metapolitics, if we are to be able to position ourselves and operate at that cultural-spiritual level, where, much more than in the field of trade or diplomatic-military strategy, the fate of the world is being defined. These are destinies that we need to study, not only from the vantage point of geopolitics, but also from a standpoint of theopolitics.

Trump's proclamation that "We want God" brings to mind Heidegger famously remarking near the end of his life: Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten (Only a God can save us). That "us," desperately in need of God, that "us" whom only a God can save, is nothing but the West.

Despite Europe's postwar prosperity, despite peace, and despite integration, Heidegger viewed the West of the 1960s (when he gave that *Der Spiegel* interview in which that statement is featured) as a crumbling civilization. Heidegger, by the way, was always a nationalist, and in the 1930s he felt that with Nazism the nation was being reborn, but became disillusioned later on. However, while he repudiated Nazism he never renounced nationalism, and this made him a pariah, since the dominant post-war powers made no allowance for that kind of separation.

Heidegger always went to great lengths to open up metaphysics to history, and vice versa. The absolute cannot be separated from the relative, nor from time: Sein und Zeit. For him, there is salvation in history and the spirit bears fruit only in the historical culture of a nation.

Since 1945, however, according to the prevailing liberal ideology any (Western) nationalism is ultimately associated with Nazism. In that kind of de-nationalized Western world, no human agent – only a superhuman one, only a God – could come to the rescue. Trump seems a lot more optimistic than Heidegger; but ultimately, his message conveys the same cry: now, God alone. Nur noch ein Gott. Neither development nor technology, nor social justice, nor cooperation, nor sustainability, nor human rights will save us. Only a God can save us, give us meaning – if He wants to, if we want Him to, if we find back our *Wille zum Gott* after a *Wille zur Macht*, which we also had left by the wayside. (Incidentally, who knows whether Nietzsche's "will to power" wasn't his way of saying "we want God," without giving in?; whether, deep down, that *Wille zur Macht* was more than just a visible face of the unmentionable, secret, and ever-present *Wille zum Gott* – power being one of the faces of God?). If Westerners understood (if we understood?) that they need salvation, if they at least paid attention to the game, then they would realize that their team was losing and that it's down to the last few seconds.

Only a God can still save the West, a God working through the nation, including – and perhaps, especially – the American nation. Heidegger never believed in an America as a standard-bearer for the West; he considered the United States to be a country as materialistic as the Soviet Union, incapable of the metaphysical self-perception that is vital to creating a “new beginning,” as he called it – a rebuilding of the West that would replicate in other terms the first beginning brought about by the ancient Greeks. Heidegger might perhaps have changed his mind after hearing Trump’s speech in Warsaw, and might have proclaimed: Nur noch Trump kann das Abendland retten – Only Trump can still save the West.

END

The original appeared in Portuguese as “Trump e o Ocidente,” *Cadernos de Política Exterior*, Ano III, Número 6, Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais, 2017, pp. 323-358.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (from the Portuguese-language original)

ADRIÃO, V. MI. *Mistérios Iniciáticos do Rei do Mundo*. São Paulo: Madras, 2014.

AESCHYLUS *Persae*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

EVOLA, J. *Metaphysics of War*. London: Arktos, 2001.

GUÉNON, R. *The Crisis of the Modern World*. New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001.

HEIDEGGER, M. *Ormai solo un dio ci può salvare*. *Intervista con lo “Spiegel”*. Parma: Ugo Guanda, 2000.

HEIDEGGER, M. *Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus*. (Gesamtausgabe, V. 48). Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986.

JUNG, C.G. *Aion – Researches into the Phenomenology of Self*. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1959.

MÉREJKOVSKY, D. *Atlantide-Europe – Le mystère de l’Occident*. Lausanne: L’Âge d’Homme, 1995.

NIETZSCHE, F. *The Will to Power*. New York: Vintage, 1968.

ONFRAY, M. *Décadence – Vie et Mort du judéo-christianisme*. Paris: Flammarion, 2017.

PESSOA, F. *Obra poética*. Rio de Janeiro: Aguilar, 1984.

SPENGLER, O. *Das Untergang des Abendlandes*. Munique: Beck, 2001.

VIRGILE. *Énéide*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1986.

Notes

[1]. Much later on, Heroditus went so far as to list the number of triremes each city provided, and it is rather fascinating that, thanks to him, we know today that, alongside the 180 ships from Athens and 40 from Corinth there were four from Naxos, five from Troezen, and one from Croton.

[2]. Interestingly, this understandable post-war disparaging and refuting of German nationalism, because of Nazism, gradually spread to other European nationalisms and to American patriotism, and oddly enough, even to the nationalisms of countries whose soldiers, for love of country, fought against Nazi-fascism. In whatever collective memory we have today, it's as if the Second War had been waged, not between some nations on one side and other nations on the other, as actually happened, but between the principle of the nation on the one hand and the denying of that principle on the other, with the ultimate victor being the negating and consequent dismantling of nationalism for the losing side.

[3]. In fact, Romanticism also gave us the word "feeling" and also rewrote all of the past to discover feeling, to reveal feeling where, up to that time, nobody had seen it.

[4]. Mythos, the word for "myth," was similarly corrupted. It originally meant a foundational narrative that creates meaning for life and communication with the highest levels of existence, but today simply means an invention, a lie.