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“ ‘America the Nightmare. Soon on your screen. Frightful Release Expected in 2017’: French Views of the 2016 Presidential Elections in the US

François Vergniolle de Chantal

Can the near-constant ridicule “The Donald” attracts in France be seen as a new low in a long series of French anti-Americanism? If we are witnessing another wave of anti-American sentiment in the making what will it take with it? Considering that the last anti-American groundswell in France occurred during the Bush administration (2001-2009), was 2016 a replay of 2004 or 2000? The French media, particularly comedians jumped at the opportunity to describe the Republican candidate as an overbearing redneck whose wealth is the result of sordid deals and worker exploitation. On national and cable television, *Les Guignols de l’info*, a popular, satirical, daily puppet-show, had, for years, featured a puppet that looked like Sylvester Stallone – “Monsieur Sylvestre” – and acted on behalf of the “World Company,” an entity representing globalization and dedicated to a brutal cynicism that crushed workers to increase the wealth of a few white men.¹ The day after the American election, *Les Guignols de l’Info* featured a Hollywood blockbuster-like show describing the Trump family – nicknamed the “Trumpch” for the occasion – on a trip to France. The off-voice enthusiastically says that “their American Dream is also French” (“leur rêve américain est aussi en France”) since the Trumpch’ meet Marine and Jean-Marie Le Pen and the whole party gets along just fine. Hence the tagline: “Le cauchemar *America*. Bientôt en France. Sortie redoutée en 2017” (America the Nightmare. Soon on your screen. Frightful Release Expected in 2017).² Considering the generally high ratings the show has had since its

premiere in 1988, it is a fitting illustration of common *clichés* widely shared in France. Along the same lines, a recent issue of *VSD*, a popular weekly magazine, featured the angry face of Donald Trump with the title “Dingo à la Maison Blanche.”³ “Dingo” is the French name for the Walt Disney cartoon character “Goofy,” but taken out of the context of animated film, the French version of the name is much harsher than its English equivalent, since it conveys craziness (*dingue*) unleavened by the silliness of goofy.

But do these media examples suggest the return of French anti-Americanism? Or does the objection start and end with Trump? How widespread is this disapproval? Has it become typically French? On the surface, the 2016 presidential cycle in the US would certainly rank pretty high on a list of anti-American moments in France. Indeed, the way the campaign unfolded confirmed prejudices shared by many French people, starting of course with the controversial personality of Donald Trump, but also generated amazement at the gigantic sums of private money spent on campaign, bewilderment at the US system of primaries with caucuses in some states, state wide voting according to different rules in other states, delegates and super delegates; and then, after the actual election, incomprehension in the face of the Electoral College system. I would argue however that the gallic anti-Trump prejudice expressed in 2015-16 mirrored those seen worldwide and were shared by a great many Americans, as illustrated by *Saturday Night Live*'s satirical criticism of Trump and the coverage of the election and Trump by many other media outlets. As for the possibility of another wave of French anti-American, I argue that such an interpretation over steps the available evidence.

In order to assess the nature of French perceptions of the US during the 2015-16 presidential election it is first necessary to explore the long tradition of anti-Americanism in France. French perceptions of America act as a distorting mirror through which the New World is appraised. As German journalist Josef Joffe hinted in 2008, to Europeans, America

is not simply a country or a political entity, but a canvas on which they can project their fondest dreams as well as their fiercest nightmares.⁴ Although his hypothesis was largely supported by European reactions to the 2016 elections cycle, it only partly accounts for the ups and downs of French views of the US as it fails to account for French domestic politics. In fact, the “cultural invariant” that would make up the core of a long-standing and deep-seated French anti-Americanism has loomed larger at times than others and is not universally shared. The importance of anti-Americanism has differed depending on by whom and when they are held. For instance, late 18th century analysis (by intellectuals and political actors such as Turgot, La Rochefoucauld, Talleyrand) and the mid-20th century Communist views of the United States typify different forms of anti-Americanism, whose bases diverged. Undoubtedly, anti-Americanism is a multi-faceted phenomenon shaped by a multiplicity of micro- or macro- characteristics. These entangled factors (from countless individual stories to grand geopolitical changes) make it even harder to clearly parse out the influence of various opinion-makers (such as the media, officials, public intellectuals). Thus this chapter will not consider anti-Americanism as a permanent collective characteristic, but rather as a barometer of French public discourse. The question for me becomes: what do French reactions to the 2016 American cycle say about the state of social and political trends in France? This analysis of French politics will then tell us if this is a significant new wave anti-Americanism or if perspectives on the 2016 elections reflect an ongoing pattern in France.

Beyond the gross ridiculing of the new US President looms a larger problem, which is the rise of right-wing populism throughout Western democracies. France is no exception to this worldwide trend. The 2016 American elections can be understood as bridge between the June 2016 Brexit vote in the UK and Spring 2017 French presidential elections. Political timing is crucial here, since it is primarily this sequence of events that gives meaning to the French perception of the 2016 cycle in the U.S, rather than a new wave of existing hostility to

the United States. “The Donald” phenomenon became a potential harbinger of what could await people on this side of the Atlantic, thus confirming that for the French, to judge America is also to judge France. In order to substantiate this claim, I will first discuss the main components of the anti-American tradition in France. Over the course of two centuries a layering process has created a repertoire of arguments at hand for use by public and political actors. This repertoire did not surface in 2016 since the forward looking, positive “Obama effect” of a vigorous member of a formerly scorned minority earning a second mandate, still lingered in French national consciousness. French perceptions of the 2016 American elections need to be discussed against that backdrop that, but also in the context of rising fears about what the consequences of a successful populism, retrograde in racial terms, might be. . Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front in France, benefited directly from election. Taking a wider view, such fears do not appear to be uniquely French, but rather, echo elsewhere in Europe. The conclusion will thus reflect on the idea of a “normalized” French views of US politics after the 2016 election.

The American Canvas of French Perceptions

Certainly the most predictable evocation of a common heritage that officials from both the US and France make during shared commemorative ceremonies is the fact that the two countries have never gone to war against each other. The “sister Republics” born out of Enlightenment revolutions have, it would seem, an affinity that prevents major military confrontations. Paradoxically, this elusive affinity has never prevented bursts of “francophobia” in the US or anti-Americanism in France.

Anti-Americanism is as old as the United States itself. In its mildest form, it is merely criticism of some American policies (Bush’s invasion of Iraq in 2003) or social characteristics

(race issues, social inequalities, police brutality etc.). At the other extreme, it takes the shape of a rhetorical clash of civilizations, the utter rejection of anything and everything “American,” to the point of denying that there is such a thing as American culture or American democracy.⁵ These perceptions have been intensified by virtue of the United States’ unique standing. Everything the US does or fails to do is exposed to the world’s critical gaze.. Anti-Americanism today can thus be read as a new form of “anti-imperialism” since the *Pax Americana* is the closest thing to an empire in our times. French perceptions are a case in point as they illustrate these three facets of anti-Americanism.

The traditional French perception of the US started with the *philosophes* in the 18th century. At the time the debate among intellectual elites was shaped by two opposing perceptions, the first being an optimistic assessment of this new country as the embodiment of Enlightenment values and a new hope for mankind. Turgot for example, Louis XVI’s Minister of Finance between 1774 and 1776, regarded the newly independent nation as an example that could help Europeans improve their own political and social situations.⁶ After the French Revolution, many revolutionaries described France and the US as “sister-Republics,” sharing the same commitments to equality and freedom.⁷ But French perceptions of the United States were much less positive when Talleyrand and Buffon described America. Buffon, a pioneering naturalist, was also a leading proponent of the “degeneracy thesis” popularized in 1768 by a Dutch priest who wrote in French and worked at the court of Fredrick the Great, Cornelius de Pauw.⁸ According to this view, meant first and foremost to please the interests of de Pauw’s royal patron, the American climate was so toxic that every living creature that set foot there would begin to weaken. Realizing that Fredrick the Great wanted to discourage German emigration to North America, de Pauw argued that, in the United States, plants, animals, and humans had degenerated to the point of having a shrunken appearance.⁹ After a few months, for example, a European dog would bark in a weaker tone. Indians’ lack of

body hair, understood as a marker of “virility,” likewise testified to the detrimental effects of their hostile natural environment. Buffon went on to argue that the Americas were lacking in large and powerful creatures because of the marsh odors and dense forests of the American continent. These remarks so incensed Thomas Jefferson that he spent his whole Parisian stay (1785-1789) trying to debunk those biological and environmental prejudices. Even though these ideas disappeared by the early 19th century, the intellectual consensus among many French luminaries according to which everything in America was small and degenerate lasted for some fifty years. Another trope that emerged at the time was a rejection of the crass materialism of vain and greedy Americans. Talleyrand, who worked at the highest levels of successive French governments, most commonly as foreign minister or in some other diplomatic capacity, from the 1780s all the way to the 1820s, spent two years in Philadelphia (1794-1796) to escape the *Terreur* returning to France with a very low opinion of the US. He famously quipped “Thirty-two religions and only one dish to eat and it is not even good,” thus emphasized what he saw as the vulgarity of a country inhabited by a mediocre people. Unlike the “degeneracy thesis,” this latter perception became so entrenched in France by the late 18th century that historian Philippe Roger writes matter of factly, “a universally negative image of America was firmly anchored in cultivated people’s minds” and even found its way into Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (1835 & 1840), a travelogue that is otherwise so perceptive and alert to the nuances of American political and material conditions¹⁰. One last remark should be made about the ideological contours of this nascent anti-Americanism. There was no direct link between conservatism and anti-Americanism on the one hand, and Americanophilia and republicanism on the other. The categories were so blurred that examples of pro- and anti- Americanism could be found on both sides of the political spectrum. This is an age-long characteristic that is very likely to remain since anti-Americanism in France has never become a partisan phenomenon.

The next factor to consider is the lack of mass economic emigration from France to the United States. Unlike the British Isles, Germany, or Italy, France never experienced the demographic overflow that characterized many European countries in the 19th century. The Napoleonic wars bled the nation so much that it lost its historical demographic advantage over its European neighbors. This largely accounts for the difficulties France later faced when it came to populating its colonial empire but it also reduced to a trickle French economic emigration to the New World.¹¹ This had far-reaching consequences as far as shaping French views on the US is concerned. Indeed, individual immigration/emigration narratives and experiences, back home, became part of millions of family stories and memories everywhere on the continent, except in France where the proverbial “American Uncle” remained a largely empty expression,. Thus members of the French intelligentsia could reproduce cynical, fanciful or realistic assessments of the so-called “land of opportunity” to support arguments about issues unconnected to questions of prosperity in the United States. This also means that the public discourse on America was largely the province of the French intellectual elites and never became part of the French mainstream.

From the *philosophes* and later Tocqueville all the way to contemporary French scholars and public intellectuals, America remains, largely, an intellectual construct.¹² Over the course of the 19th century, Tocqueville remained the dominant voice, as illustrated by the seventeen editions in French and eight editions in English translation of his 1835 *opus* before 1888. Tocqueville gave philosophical and political substance to the “Sister Republics” a cliché inherited from the Revolution. Indeed, a close reading of his *Democracy in America* (1835 & 1840) and *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856), provides insight into the reverse relation between civil society and the state in France and the US, which creates so many barriers to understanding between the two countries. According to Tocqueville in both texts, civil society, understood here as the set of institutions and groups standing between the

individual and the State, in the US is perceived as fundamentally egalitarian Reality is certainly very different, but such a reading implies that the State is some sort of a foreign or outside agent whose interventions break apart a social order that could exist without its heavy hand. In France however, the configuration is reversed. A fundamentally unequal civil society inherited from the Middle Ages requires strong state action in order to create a fairer social order that provides opportunity to a greater number of citizens. In the French case, the State is thus a positive and emancipating actor that builds a Republican order; in the American case, the republican order is first and foremost a social characteristic, so that State intervention is perceived as potentially detrimental. This distinct relationship between the State and civil society accounts for a great many differences of perception between two countries that both cherish the same ideal of equality (as illustrated by their common Republican traditions), but rely on different means to achieve it. The “Sister Republics” framework thus works inversely; There exists systematic opposition between the universalistic claims of the two republics born out of late-18th century Enlightenment revolutions.

A century later, after the power relationship between Europe and the US shifted in favor of the United States, intellectual discourse in France began to denounce American power and its adverse consequences for Europe. The interwar period (1920s-1930s) saw a flurry of publications about the the United States on the international stage. For instance, *Le cancer américain* (1931) by Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu denounced American hegemony and the *américanisation*, a negative term first coined by Charles Baudelaire, that came with it. In that book, the spread of American values is likened to the proliferation of cancerous cells. In *Les scènes de la vie future* (1930), Georges Duhamel describes the United States as a beehive where people are weighed down with individual worries and professional obligations. Written upon Duhamel’s return from a short stay in the US, the novel operates like a long jeremiad pitting, in a fashion already classical by then, materialism vs idealism,

artificiality vs humankind, utilitarianism vs. selflessness, manufacturing vs. art etc, There is clearly an Orwellian sensibility at play in the way Duhamel considers this new civilization in which uniformity seems to be the norm.¹³ In *Voyage jusqu'au bout de la nuit* in 1932 (in English: "Journey to the End of the Night") Louis-Ferdinand Céline has his main character, Bardamu, talk about Americans as a bunch of ants busy with tiny and fake preoccupations, thus reminding the reader of the Nietzschean last man and of Tocqueville's "soft despotism" in the second volume of *Democracy in America*.¹⁴ Like anti-Semitism, to which it was often linked, anti-Americanism between the two World Wars was a convenient shorthand for expressing first and foremost cultural insecurity.¹⁵

The last layer of intellectuals' contributions to French perceptions of America emerged out of the Cold War. Indeed, French anti-Americanism surged anew in the wake of World War II. The USSR was widely credited with defeating Nazi Germany, especially considering the toll taken by the war. The French Communist Party gathered the support of some 25-30% of the population in the aftermath of the exclusion of Communist ministers from government in May 1947 under US pressure.¹⁶ The abrupt ending of Communist participation seemed undemocratic to many. The Communist party orchestrated national campaigns to denounce France's "new occupation." These campaigns took many shapes, but were primarily political (against the Atlantic Alliance, NATO, and American soldiers in France) and cultural (against American movies and American ways). They were all the more influential and conspicuous since many intellectuals supported communism. They decisively contributed to the perception that the United States was a reactionary nation that privileged big business and was out to crush traditional French culture, including the French language itself.¹⁷ The "witch-hunt" against communists and communist sympathizers that was given free rein in the US during this period, as well as the Rosenberg trial in 1951, provided intellectuals with additional opportunities to denounce attacks on individual freedoms, while confirming their prejudices

about the United States. From their perspective, a new form of *Résistance* was necessary in the fight against a new American imperialism.

The core of French anti-Americanism is indeed deep-rooted, but, as Philippe Roger argues, it also hinges upon the presumed exotic nature of America, to the extent that it is loosely, if at all, attached to American reality. French anti-Americanism is thus primarily a *récit*, a tale, or a fable, with certain recurring themes, fears and hopes.¹⁸ Starting out as a distaste for the New World, it has since moved back and forth between the cultural and the political, with sedimentary evidence of earlier versions never quite lost from sight.¹⁹ All of these elements make up a repertoire of arguments and perceptions that have been combined and re-combined since the 18th century. They've been reinvigorated and endowed with new meanings over subsequent decades. As Jacques Rupnik and Denis Lacorne emphasized in their introduction to the book *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism* in 1990, the countless different groups making up French society each have their "own" image of America, which frequently changes in the light of circumstances or political events. However, it sometimes happens that this multitude of contradictory perceptions coalesces into a major trend of opinion and for a while, the attitudes of the country as a whole are either exaggeratedly favorable or excessively unfavorable to the United States.²⁰

The Rollercoaster of Atlantic Relations since 2001

The end of the Cold War opened a new chapter in French perceptions of the US. The so-called "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s had already positively impacted France and led to a rediscovery of American values. According to the polls taken on the eve of the November 1984 US elections, 44% of the French were self-confessed pro-Americans in contrast to only 15% who declared themselves anti-American.²¹ The French intellectual scene also shifted

profoundly in that decade in so far as a generation of Marxist intellectuals (Sartre died in 1980) was gradually replaced by a new generation of “liberals” (in the philosophical sense) from both the Right (Raymond Aron, Jean-François Revel, Alain Finkielkraut) and the Left (André Glucksman, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Bernard Kouchner). The collapse of Communism and the USSR favored the French reassessment of the US, which departed from earlier perceptions, as the previously prominent “clash of civilizations” debate waned. Concrete policy debates have become the substance of French perceptions of the US, thus relegating grand theories on irreconcilable cultural and social differences to the backburner. It could even be argued that the end of the Cold War was also the end of a policy alignment between the two countries.. This is what I would call a “normalization” process of French views of the US. Despite the ups and downs of relations between the two countries, the “normalization” process of French views that started in the late 1980s has remained visible until now.

The American-led Iraq invasion (2003) produced a level of tension between the two countries that had not been seen since the late 1940s. Foreign policy became the catalyst for a new round of misunderstandings. France was the leader of a group of countries that opposed US policy under George W. Bush, in particular because France decided not to back the invasion of Iraq. The near-unanimous public support for President Jacques Chirac’s critical stance exemplified an overwhelming shift in public opinion. The political Left, Right and far-Right seemed to have come to the same conclusion. On March 28 2003, when the second Gulf War began, 78% of the French public polled opposed the American intervention, demonstrating mass support for Chirac’s foreign policy. More unexpectedly and perhaps more worryingly, one French person in four (and nearly two-thirds of French Muslims) felt themselves “on the Iraqi side” and, according to the same survey, “deep down”, 33% of the respondents “did not wish the United States to win” (among them, 72% of French Muslims).²² On this point, it is worth noting that French opinion coincided with widespread popular

European opposition to the war. Roughly four fifths of the French were against US intervention in Iraq and remained so to the end of the war, even when a coalition victory appeared imminent.²³ Four-fifths of Germans condemned the intervention and considered it unjustified., Ninety percent of the Spanish declared that they were opposed to the war, and this percentage remained high throughout the conflict, despite the fact that their government had unequivocally sided with the United States. Three-quarters of Italians considered the war unjustified even though in that country, just as in Spain, the government had backed the United States. In Poland, where the government also favored intervention, two-thirds of those polled were against their country taking part in the war. The same held true for 90% of the Swiss and 80% of the Danish. In the UK, on the eve of hostilities, 62% disapproved of the way Prime Minister Tony Blair was “handling the situation in Iraq.”²⁴ Naturally, this opposition to the war in Iraq was marked by a serious deterioration of the image of the US in European public opinion.

The election of President Sarkozy in 2007 American-French did little to mend the political fallout between the two countries that had emerged between 2001 and 2003 and the gap between Europe and the US continued to widen over Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, the War on Terror, and various international negotiations (free-trade, global warming). Apprehensions about the US as an “arm-twisting bully nation” appeared at the level of government and the public.

The clash between the two sides of the Atlantic was so fierce that the period was characterized by a new debate on the diverging cultural identities of Europe and America, blurring the political contours of the debate with hazy cultural categories.²⁵ Popularizers of all political stripes were not the only ones concerned. These developments led many pundits to declare that the indictment of Bush’s policies illustrated a widening cultural gap on both sides of the Atlantic. According to that line of thought, the end of the Cold War had ended the

artificial unity between Western Europe and North America, thus exposing the differences between the Old and New Worlds that had been muted for the sake of fighting communism. The Western World would thus be two-faced. As historian Tony Judt emphasizes, in many crucial respects, Europe and the United States were actually less alike in 2005 than they were fifty years before. From religion to inequalities, the American and European “ways of life” have grown ever more distinct.²⁶

Western Europe and the US would slowly, but surely drift apart. The 2003 Iraq war had merely been the catalyst for deeper changes. Gérard Grunberg thus concluded his analysis of French and European public opinion in 2002 and 2003 by emphasizing that Europeans are no longer certain that they defend the same causes and have the same objectives as Americans.²⁷ In France, just as in many other European countries (albeit with variations), many began to fear that the American model of society was being forced upon them. In short, Bush’s heavy-handed tactics led to a new European awareness; many realized that they did not share in American foreign policy goals.

Europe-wide anti-Americanism was short-lived however. It was erased by the pro-American excitement that seized Western Europe in 2008. This was the case in France as in other parts of Europe, thus confirming that negative French perceptions of the US were on the wane. A 2009 TNS-Sofres poll for *Le Figaro* conducted in late May showed that 46% of the French had positive feelings about the US (“plutôt de la sympathie”) and 86% favored President Obama.²⁸ The Obama effect on French public perceptions cannot be underestimated. It impacted the French political stage so much that Obama was almost instantly turned into a pro-American argument by political leaders of all stripes. Pundits, commentators and talking-heads quickly gave an additional historic dimension to the historic election of the first Black President in the US

In a context where French racial minorities feel that the social promises and expressed values of the *République Française* are empty, Obama's election became a symbol of inclusion. Where is the French Obama? How can France identify and support a new generation of leaders from ethnic and racial minorities? In his essay on French reactions to Obama's election in 2008, Ruchi Anand correctly emphasized that the national mood had turned into some sort of *Obamania*.²⁹ As he puts it, France has not been this strongly behind America, or behind an idea of America, since the Kennedy administration. Of course, this enthusiasm initially had everything to do with the end of the Bush administration. There was a second reason. In the eyes of the French, the US reestablished itself as an example of democratic inclusion. France is home to one of the largest communities of African immigrants and their descendants in Europe. The election of the first Black President in the United States resonated profoundly. In the French *banlieues*, where racial minorities (typically Muslims from North Africa and Blacks) live in low-rent housing projects and are trapped in a cycle of cumulative poverty, the Obama victory was seen as a hugely positive signal, especially in the wake of 2005 and 2007 urban riots.³⁰ While the prospects of a French Black President are non-existent, Obama's victories nonetheless opened up new questions regarding equal opportunity for the millions of African and Arab French citizens. To that extent, Obama was the most potent weapon of public diplomacy that the US has ever used. His election instantly dwarfed each and every communication tool that the Bush administration had deployed to convey its good intentions toward Islam and Arab culture. It also pushed France to reconsider its stance on affirmative action and turning the French ideal of equality for its alienated minorities into reality. Obama's election thus acted as a catalyst that spurred French national debate and instantly superseded Anti-American prejudices.

From Donald Trump to Marine Le Pen?

As in 2008, the 2016 election cycle raised French interest in US presidential politics, albeit for different reasons. Though it has become common for Europeans to follow American elections with great zeal, both the primaries and the general election attracted exceptional media coverage in France. All French television and radio networks offered special programming on election day, via correspondents in Washington D.C. and New York City. Major newspapers such as *Le Monde* or *Le Figaro* produced countless special reports, sending reporters across the United States to unravel the “Trump phenomenon.” The motivation for this extensive coverage was the social and economic change that France itself was experiencing. The French media sought to understand and explain the very unique nature of the 2016 American electorate, especially the part played by lower middle-class Whites.³¹

Media coverage of the American election hovered between bewilderment and fear. What made the candidates in this election particularly compelling was the way in which they fed a French fascination with America that as I have discussed have historically swung from admiration to disdain.³² The French media approved of the candidates’ diversity and the variety of perspectives they advocated and thus emphasized these aspects. For all its traditional flaws (the complexities of caucuses and primaries, the Electoral College, the uncontrolled flow of private money, and the role of religion), in the eyes of the French the American system seemed very open. The Clinton candidacy, which offered the possibility of the first female president attracted attention, but that novelty was largely eclipsed by Bernie Sanders’ momentum, which hinted at a country capable of political renewal. France provided a stark contrast. For many years there has been little to no variety in the candidates in presidential elections, an issue which was highlighted when former Finance Minister Emmanuel Macron decided to leave the Hollande government in August 2016 and announced he would run in the next presidential election. An outsider in the French political landscape,

he decided to launch his own political party, “En Marche” (Forward), independent of existing parties, especially the Socialist Party, where his own political formation had taken place. Macron deliberately modeled his April 2016 political ad, which predated his leaving the government, on those of Bernie Sanders, the Vermont senator who sought the Democratic nomination and billed himself as a socialist — hardly a dirty word in France, where a Socialist government has been in power since 2012.³³ In this way Macron presented himself as “the French Bernie Sanders” despite the striking difference in their ages and despite his rejection of the socialism that Sanders embraced.³⁴

Manifestations of disdain for the American election also abounded in France. As Donald Trump became the Republican front-runner, his explosion onto the political scene shocked the French, just as it did many Americans. It allowed for some ill-disguised delight on the part of some French commentators, who clearly reveled in Mr. Trump’s vulgar, boastful, and insular remarks that confirmed the “ugly American” stereotype. Trump’s vulgarity and French commentators exploitation of it played to a traditional, if shallow, anti-Americanism. Trump’s provocative statements, such as when he said that people could have protected themselves better during the November 2015 attacks in Paris if they had had guns, added fuel to this fire.³⁵ Advocating guns as a way of fighting against such a traumatic terrorist attack does not, for many, make you sound like the responsible leader who ought to be running for the presidency. His statements about banning Muslims from entering the US were similarly provocative. In France, such comments conjured up attitudes from earlier periods when people had claimed that Americans were stupid and lacked culture.

Both major French political parties, the Socialist Party and Les Républicains, along with the Green Party (Les Verts) organized primaries in 2016. In this context many in France watched the hurly-burly of the American experience with a mix of envy and worry. The

American Primary season, during which candidates court the votes of the most extreme party loyalists, is often one of the most distorted moments in the American presidential election cycle. The particularities were magnified under increased attention by the French media to the three French parties that adopted similar direct primary systems to designate their candidates.³⁶ Not only did curiosity abound, but the media coverage was also more nuanced vis-à-vis the innovative direct selection of candidates by the people that Americans have been practicing since the early 20th century.³⁷ This engendered an unusual level of interest in American politics and detailed descriptions, which was a far cry from past manifestations of anti-Americanism. In the past, gallic prejudices have been only loosely related to an accurate knowledge of American social and political intricacies. For instance, the typical media reaction to American Primaries has been, until this cycle, outrage after some outlandish statement on abortion or gun rights made by a Republican candidate, followed by a sense of bewilderment that Democratic candidates calling for more governmental regulations and social fairness did not appeal to mainstream voters. Indeed, the ideological and social biases that shape the US primaries and caucuses have usually been lost on a French audience. But in 2016 these very same trends—the necessity of appealing to the extremes of your own party state by state—became part and parcel of the national debate. Still, the French perception remained fragmentary and concentrated on the personalities without conveying a full picture of the process. American primaries are much more open than their French equivalent in terms of who can become a candidate. The French media y paid a great deal of attention to the insurgent campaigns on both the Democratic and Republican sides.³⁸ Both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump stood out, as they were able to channel the anger and frustration shared by young and blue-collar voters who felt betrayed by the system and fear an uncertain future, a mood often attributed to supporters of the French far-right National Front.³⁹

The coverage of the Democratic primary race largely centered on the Bernie Sanders' campaign.⁴⁰ Many on the Left, from Arnaud de Montebourg and Benoît Hamon in the Socialist Party to Jean-Luc Mélenchon, candidate of "La France Insoumise" (*France unsubmitive*), a movement backed by the Communist Party, hailed Senator Sanders as a credible voice for radical change, something they would welcome at home. Macron too attempted to capture this promise of change through his early Sanders-like political ad. The impact of the Bernie Sanders campaign was so strong among some Leftists that many French Socialists tried to position themselves as the same type of insurgent candidate, thus prompting *Politico* to run an article entitled "The Battle to be France's Bernie Sanders."⁴¹ For her part, Hillary Clinton received more positive and intensive coverage in French media than in 2008 when she was virtually shut out of the race, in the view of the French media anyway, by enthusiasm for Obama. The French were now becoming excited about the possibility for a woman to become US President. Nevertheless, her political baggage, especially her status as part of a powerful political dynasty, was frequently mentioned by the media. She was constantly connected to her husband's presidency rather than being seen as a former Senator and Secretary of State. The French media regularly emphasized her family ties, even though her husband was a distant figure in her campaign. Thus, she appeared as a fixture on the American political stage rather than a new and fascinating character.⁴²

On the Republican side, analysts focused on Donald Trump trying to understand how his candidacy might influence other Republicans ahead of his expected withdrawal for lack of support.⁴³ As in the US, his eventual nomination came as a shock to the overwhelming majority of French and European observers. What is worth noting here is that behind this early interest was an implicit comparison with the unfolding of the French conservative party's own primary. The former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who became UMP's leader in 2014 (Union pour un mouvement populaire) and changed its name to "the Republican

Party” (Les Républicains) in 2015, was trying to run again after his 2012 defeat. The French media’s interest in Donald Trump’s candidacy was thus in part motivated by interest in how a dark horse candidate might derail Sarkozy’s plan. But by the Fall of 2016 his candidacy was dead in the water. After 4.3 million voters participated in the Republican Primary, he got a paltry 20.7%, thus lagging behind Alain Juppé, who stood for centrist voters and got 28.6%, and François Fillon, his former Prime Minister, who came in first with 44.1% of the vote. Sarkozy’s failure however had nothing to do with an insurgent candidate depriving him of victory, which was more than unlikely because of the legal and political requirements to become a candidate in France.⁴⁴ Two traditional candidates who had been on the political stage for a long time beat Sarkozy. François Fillon with his crushing 44.1% emphasized old-fashioned morality and public virtue, hardly the qualities of a brash insurgent. He also represented a powerful faction within the party establishment and stood for a constituency (mainly the Catholic and wealthy middle-class living outside Paris) that turned out in great numbers.

During the American general election, the overwhelming majority of the French electorate supported the Democratic candidate. Support for the Republican candidate, who consistently remained low in French polls never rose. In October of 2016 *Le Parisien*, a national daily with a wide circulation in the Paris region, reported that 2/3 of the respondents to a poll declared that they had a very high level of interest in the American election and support for the Democratic candidate. 86% of respondents wanted Hillary Clinton to win the election, compared to 11% who said the same about Donald Trump. Amongst “mainstream” voters (those supporting either the centre-right or the center-left), expressed support for Trump was close to non-existent. Even within the supporters of the far-right *Front National*, support for Trump was limited to 39% of respondents, whereas 56% declared themselves in favor of Hillary Clinton.⁴⁵ The same poll asked for words that respondents

associated with each candidate. Donald Trump was described as “aggressive” by 82%, “racist” by 80%, “a demagogue” by 55% and “dangerous” by 78%. “Honest” and “congenial” were only invoked by 10% and 12% of respondents. Trump’s performance in the three televised debates, and Donald Trump’s language in his rallies and media appearances, shocked many French observers. Endorsements by extremist groups—including the Ku Klux Klan — also tainted the Republican candidate’s international image.⁴⁶ Trump’s anti-Muslim and anti-migration rhetoric bewildered citizens of a country where the national debate has been focused on issues of integration of its own Muslims, which account for up to 7.5% of the French population, nearly ten times more than the United States where 0.8% of the population is Muslim.

Meanwhile, one major French politician rejoiced at Donald Trump’s rise: Marine Le Pen, leader of the *Front National* (FN), a party founded by her now 88-year old father Jean-Marie, which has promoted nationalist, even nativist, ideology since its creation forty years ago. Early in the morning on November 9, she tweeted: “Congratulations to the new US President, Donald Trump and to the American people, free!” (Félicitations au président des Etats-Unis, Donald Trump et au peuple américain, libre!). Like Donald Trump, Le Pen offered an anti-establishment platform to a public critical of globalization.⁴⁷ Even though Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen have never actually met, unlike Nigel Farage the Brexit agitator who has met Donald Trump, the comparison between their platforms is unmistakable. In both cases, economic protectionism is central to their program and the FN’s longstanding rhetoric—Le Pen senior declared “Les Français d’abord” (the French first)— closely mirrors Trump’s call to “Make America Great Again.” Trump’s win boosted Le Pen’s own chances. Her appeal may have also increased when the campaign of François Fillon, the conservative candidate, imploded when it was revealed that he had provided his wife and two children with salaries paid for with taxpayers’ money for fictitious roles.⁴⁸

There was clearly a link between the upsurge in support for Trump and the increase of French voters support for the National Front and its candidate. Even though she was eventually defeated by the centrist Emmanuel Macron in a landslide (66.1 to 33.9%), Le Pen nonetheless garnered the support of 10.6 million people, the highest score ever for a National Front candidate. But perhaps what matters more is the way she campaigned. Marine Le Pen campaigned *sotto voce* since it seemed she had little to do in order to qualify for the first round of the presidential election, except wait for her adversaries to be embroiled in yet more scandals. She mimicked many of the political gestures of “The Donald,” for instance declaring that with her election to the Presidency, “the people would unpack their luggage at the Palace Elysée” (avec moi, celui qui déballera ses cartons à l’Elysée, ce sera le peuple).⁴⁹ She brushed aside official inquiries into her party’s financial troubles—some National Front staffers officially working for the European Parliament are suspected of actually working exclusively for the National Front – and her call to denounce the anti-democratic behavior of judges as well as their supposed hostility echoed Donald Trump’s criticisms of the American Judiciary.⁵⁰ Both combined disaffection with a sense of dispossession that linked economic and job security issues with a wider cultural insecurity and nurtured a hostile attitude towards newcomers and foreigners. In Marine Le Pen’s case, voters came from both the traditional Right and the formerly communist Left.⁵¹

This suggests that France was sensitive to the Trump effect. Here was a brash celebrity from New York who appeals to the working class with claims to battle the status quo and whose money largely originated in the building industry. In France, too, there was widespread suspicion, especially in “la France d’en-bas” (literally “France from below”) of the “elites,” including journalists, who rate even lower than politicians in opinion polls, and highly placed civil servants who seem to move through a revolving door from politics to large companies and the world of finance. A major issue for the less educated in France is what jobs and

acquired benefits they might keep as the digital economy becomes dominant. It may be economic, the fear of “falling” or “déclinisme,” but whatever the name, it is widespread. It may be based on tensions about identity. Some believe that Mexican immigrants bring language issue as states adapt bilingual policies. The few but conspicuous Muslim immigrants to the United States are viewed as a threat. In France, which has the largest percentage of Muslims of all EU countries except Bulgaria and Cyprus, the prospect of another wave of Muslim newcomers combined with an immediate terrorist threat has tipped public opinion against immigration.⁵² Gilles Paris, the correspondent for *Le Monde* in Washington DC, was correct in drawing parallels between the French and American contexts. As he put it in a March 2017 article, “you can be elected President (...) without any of the prerequisites for the job (...) no electoral or government experience (...) “[or by] denouncing the media and traditional counter-powers by wielding “fake news” and “alternate facts.”⁵³ According to Paris, the 2016 US presidential race held many valuable lessons for France in so far as many leaders, singularly on the far-right, would take solace in the Trump phenomenon.

In conclusion, French perceptions of the 2016 presidential cycle in the US offer an additional illustration of the growing similarities between the political configurations of both countries. Traditional Gallic anti-Americanism seem to have lost its long-standing “civilization” dimension, even though it remains a fact that anti-Americanism in Europe has always had a distinctively French tinge. It is often in Paris that European ambivalence about America has taken its most acute polemical form.⁵⁴ But policy issues whether foreign or domestic have increasingly dominated these debates. So much so that it has become harder to identify criticisms that are specifically French. To that extent, it has become possible to identify a “normalization” in the way the French perceive developments in American politics. This trend has been dominant since the end of the Cold War, even though future bursts of anti-Americanism cannot be ruled out for good, especially considering France’s past on that

count. But in 2016, the similar political configurations of the two countries was striking. French perceptions of the US election were conditioned by the imminent French presidential elections of 2017, thus leading analysts to focus on the insurgent nature of the campaigns during the 2016 presidential cycle in the US. Reading the tea leaves of American politics was then primarily an exercise in prophecy for the French punditry. But in the end, does it really matter what the French (or the Europeans) think of the US presidential election except to the French? Considering the increasing gap in power and visibility between Western Europe and the US, many American journalists and analysts might tend to downplay Europe's opinion as they did during the Bush years (2000-2008). I would beg to differ by highlighting that a core of nationalist parties in France, Greece, the Netherlands, Britain, and Denmark now feel confident enough to proudly echo views held by Trump and his supporters. They reflect what has become a fairly mainstream view about politics and political elites. In that sense, perhaps trans-Atlantic misunderstandings are not as acute as they once were; Western democracies all seem to be contaminated by the same plague. Populism and extremism have become part of the political culture of defiance on both sides of the Atlantic. If the symptoms are the same, one can hope that a common cure can be found.

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¹ The show was nearly terminated in 2015 due to increasingly lower ratings. But the new version, also available on *DailyMotion*, seems to have recovered largely thanks to new characters, including Donald Trump! The “World Company” is a fixture of the show. All its puppets share the same face and have the same uncouth voice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osHu1kfqWwg> (with English subtitles). The musical score is often based on *Brazil* the 1985 movie by Terry Gilliam.

² The segment is available here : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV6mx5elFSs&t=317s> (in French).

³ *VSD*, February 23rd 2017. This weekly paper, created in the late 1970s, still benefits from a huge visibility. It had a circulation of 101551 in 2016: <http://www.acpm.fr/Chiffres/Diffusion/La-Press-Payante/Presse-Magazine>.

⁴ Josef Joffe, « A Canvas, Not a Country : How Europe Sees America », p.597-626 in *Understanding America*, Peter H. Schuck and James Q. Wilson, ed., New York, Public Affairs, 2008.

⁵ Tony Judt, “A New Master Narrative? Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Americanism”, p.2 in *With Us or Against Us. Studies in Global Anti-Americanism*, Tony Judt and Denis Lacorne, ed., London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

⁶ Letter from Monsieur Turgot to Richard Price, March 22nd 1778. Extract available in its English version here: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Defense_of_the_Constitutions_of_Government_of_the_United_States_of_America/Extract

⁷ Denis Lacorne, *L'invention de la république. Le modèle américain*, Paris, Hachette, 2nd ed. 2008. Patrice Higuonnet wrote in 1988 a study of this notion : *Sister Republics. The Origins of French and American Republicanism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

⁸ The book was actually divided in two volumes, the first being published in 1768 and the second one year later. Written in French, it was entitled *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Espèce Humaine. Avec une Dissertation sur l'Amérique & les Américains*.

⁹ Denis Lacorne, « Anti-Americanism and Americanophobia : A French Perspective », p.48 in *With Us or Against Us*, T. Judt and D. Lacorne, ed., *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Philippe Roger, *The American Enemy : The History of French Anti-Americanism*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005 (2002 for the French version). The quotes and analyses from Turgot, Buffon and Tayllerand are from pages 41, 52 and 37. For another take, James Ceaser, *Reconstructing America. The Symbol of America in Modern Thought*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997.

¹¹ There were around 15,000 French immigrants in what became the US before 1790. From 1790-1840 there were around 46,000 French (from France) representing a little under 10% of all immigrants. From 1840-1850 there were 77,000 French (from France) representing around 5% of all immigrants for that time. From 1850-1930 there was little immigration from France itself to the US, but there was a large movement of 900,000 French Canadian from Quebec to the US. In the 2010 census 8,7 million Americans claim French ancestry or 2,6% of all Americans, the vast majority being French Canadian. Early in the US history, the French were thus a large immigrant group, though never a major one. When immigration really took off in the 1840's, there was always a trickle of French and French Canadians, but it was simply

dwarfed by the huge numbers of other groups like the Irish and Germans. The historical data is available here: <https://www.census.gov/en.html>

¹² Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik, Marie-France Toinet, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism. A Century of French Perceptions*, London, MacMillan, 1990 (French version, 1986). See especially the chapters by Pascal Ory, Michel Winock, Diana Pinto and Marie-Christine Granjeon.

¹³ For more on the reception of this book, see Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, « De l'anti-américanisme en France vers 1930 : la réception des Scènes de la vie future », *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 2001, vol.1, n°48, p.120-137.

¹⁴ The full quote from Book 4, Chapter 6 is the following: “After having thus taken each individual one by one into its powerful hands, and having molded him as it pleases, the sovereign power extends its arms over the entire society; it covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated, minute, and uniform rules, which the most original minds and the most vigorous souls cannot break through to go beyond the crowd; it does not break wills, but it softens them, bends them and directs them; it rarely forces action, but it constantly opposes your acting; it does not destroy, it prevents birth; it does not tyrannize, it hinders, it represses, it enervates, it extinguishes, it stupefies, and finally it reduces each nation to being nothing more than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd. I have always believed that this sort of servitude, regulated, mild and peaceful, of which I have just done the portrait, could be combined better than we imagine with some of the external forms of liberty, and that it would not be impossible for it to be established in the very shadow of the sovereignty of the people”.

¹⁵ T. Judt, “A New Master Narrative? Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Americanism”, p.19 in D. Lacorne, T. Judt, ed., *With Us or Against Us*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ For the November 1946 elections, the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) gathered 28,6% of the vote, thus becoming the first political party in France. In 1936, it merely scored 15,3%.

¹⁷ The latter being also taken up by some conservative intellectuals, for instance François Mauriac. They also tended to think that a resounding “No” to this new “anti-culture” and “anti-humanism” embodied by the US was the only solution to preserve French culture.

¹⁸ P. Roger, *The American Enemy*, *op. cit.* See also T. Judt, “A New Master Narrative? Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Americanism”, p.20 in D. Lacorne, T. Judt, ed., *With Us or Against Us*, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ D. Lacorne, J. Rupnik, M.-F. Toinet, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism*, *op. cit.*, p.2.

²¹ Quoted in *Ibid*, 79.

²² These figures are taken from D. Lacorne, « Anti-Americanism and Americanophobia : A French Perspective », p.39 in D. Lacorne, T. Judt, M.-F. Toinet, ed., *With Us or Against Us*, *op. cit.*

²³ Gérard Grunberg, “Anti-Americanism in French and European Public Opinion”, p.59-60 in *ibidem*.

²⁴ The UK was the only European country in which, once the intervention was launched, a sense of patriotism and the concern to support the troops in the field brought about a shift in public opinion toward increasing support for government policy. These remarks are made by G. Grunberg, “Anti-Americanism in French and European Public Opinion”, p.59-60 in *ibid.*

²⁵ John Gray, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, 1992. On the French side, a new literary genre of books about the “murky side of America” regularly has high sales figures: ranging from Thierry Mayssian’s 2002 *11 Septembre 2001: L’Effroyable imposture*

[translated as “9/11: The Big Lie” but literally meaning “The Horrifying Fraud”] to *L’Imposture américaine. Splendeur et misère de l’Oncle Sam* (2009) by Jean-Philippe Immarigeon, including Emmanuel Todd’s 2004 *Après l’empire. Essai sur la décomposition du système américain* [translated as “After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order” but literally meaning “The Decomposition of the American System”], the genre shows no sign of abating with Trump in the White House, as illustrated, among many others, by *Ça Trump énormément*, a variation on a 1976 popular movie title *Un éléphant ça trompe énormément* by Yves Robert that deftly emphasizes Trump’s multi-faceted duplicity. Indeed, “Trump” sounds like the French verb *tromper*, which connotes deception, lying, manipulation, breach of trust, evasion, infidelity, etc. Characteristically presented with real or feigned regret (“We are not anti-American, but...”), such works foreground American shortcomings, identifying the US as a bull in the global(ized) china shop wreaking havoc.

²⁶ T. Judt, “A New Master Narrative? Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Americanism”, p.27 in D. Lacorne, T. Judt, ed., *With Us or Against Us*, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Gérard Grunberg, “Anti-Americanism in French and European Public Opinion”, p.73 in *ibid.*

²⁸ The poll is available here : <http://www.lefigaro.fr/assets/pdf/France%20USA-info.pdf>

²⁹ Matthias Maass, ed., *The World Views of the US Presidential Election: 2008*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p.88.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p.89. On the 2005 and 2007 riots in France : Matthew Moran, *The Republic and the Riots. Exploring Urban Violence in French Suburbs, 2005-2007*, Berlin, Peter Lang, 2012.

³¹ Philippe Le Corre, « Watching US Elections, French Observers See Own Political Trends », November 7th, 2016, Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/11/07/watching-the-u-s-election-french-observers-see-own-political-trends/>

³² Celestine Bohlen, « French watch US Cast of Political Characters With Fascination », *New York Times*, February 8th 2016. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/09/world/europe/france-us-elections.html>.

³³ More precisely, Macron's team took up images from Sander's political ads in the US, which was uncovered the next day by a daily entertainment news show *Le petit journal* on *Canal+*. The original Macron ad is available here (in French) : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tThcWv1eYg>.

³⁴ The first major candidate to do so in a national American contest since 1912.

³⁵ <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/14/politics/paris-terror-attacks-donald-trump-guns/>

³⁶ Marc Boni, « Primaires américaines : les politiques français à la recherche de bons présages, » *Le Figaro*, February 2, 2016.

³⁷ In 2016, each and every voter could participate in all primaries, providing (s)he would pay a mere 1 (Socialists) or 2 Euros (*Les Républicains*) for each round. *Les Républicains* also asked voters to sign a general statement of values.

³⁸ « Présidentielle américaine : le triomphe des outsiders », *Le Monde*, February 10, 2016. See also : Steven Ekovich, « Les Etats-Unis vivent en même temps une fronde et une jacquerie », *LeMonde.fr*, February 26, 2016 ; And : « La charge des anti-système », *LeMonde.fr*, February 2, 2016.

³⁹ C. Bohlen, « French watch US Cast of Political Characters With Fascination », *art. cit.*

⁴⁰ « Bernie Sanders. Un Américain tombé dans le chaudron de la gauche », *LeMonde.fr*, March 11, 2016.

⁴¹ Nicholas Vinocur, « The Battle to be France's Bernie Sanders », *Politico*, August 25th, 2016. Available at: <http://www.politico.eu/article/the-battle-to-be-frances-bernie-sanders/>.

⁴² Laure Mandeville, « La résistible ascension d’Hillary Clinton », *Le Figaro*, 1^{er} octobre 2015. See also : Frédéric Autran, « Sanders v. Clinton : discours sur l’état de désunion », *Libération*, June 7, 2016.

⁴³ Maurin Picard, « Donald Trump prospère sur le champ de ruines du Parti républicain », *Le Figaro*, February 11, 2016. See also : Frédéric Autran, « Trump : du cauchemar à la réalité », *Libération*, 22 février 2016. Finally : « Trump, la boue de démolition des républicains », *LeMonde.fr*, March 13, 2016.

⁴⁴ Each candidate had to be officially endorsed by at least 250 elected officials, among which 20 members of the National Assembly, and 2500 party members. There was also a geographical requirement in so far as elected officials had to come from at least 30 different *départements* (there are 101 such administrative divisions in France, including those overseas) and no less than 10% should come from the same *département*. As for party members, they had to come from at least 15 different *départements*.

⁴⁵ Marine Le Pen however, the leader of the Party, declared that she would vote for Donald Trump if she were an American citizen and she went on a private visit in January 2017 to the Trump tower with her companion, refusing to see it as a political gesture but accepting cameras... *Le Parisien*, Jannick Alimi, “Présidentielle américaine: les Français plébiscitent Hillary Clinton”, October 1st 2016, <http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/les-francais-votent-clinton-02-10-2016-6167881.php>

⁴⁶ Peter Holley, « KKK’s Official Newspaper Supports Donald Trump for President », *Washington Post*, November 2nd, 2016: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/11/01/the-kkks-official-newspaper-has-endorsed-donald-trump-for-president/?utm_term=.d49c7e34549a

⁴⁷ Sylvie Kauffman, « Marine Trump et Donald Le Pen », *Le Monde*, March 6, 2017.

⁴⁸ This was revealed by the satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* on January 25th 2017.

⁴⁹ Marc Boni, *Lefigaro.fr*, 11 mars 2017.

⁵⁰ The European Parliament, who was alerted to the situation in January 2015 by Martin Schultz, a German Socialist MP now in the run for the German election of the Fall of 2017, estimates the amount to reach 339000 Euros, paid to two staffers between 2010 and 2016. Even the conservative candidate, François Fillon has relied on this rhetoric to escape his own judicial troubles: he thus called for a national demonstration of support when he was officially charged with embezzlement of public money for the benefit of his family. The Trocadéro demonstration took place on March the 5th and gathered some 200000 people according to Fillon's campaign (on-site journalists described the demonstration as much smaller and suggested between 30-35000 people).

⁵¹ François Godement, "The Trump Factor in the French Election", *Yale Global Online*, February 7th 2017: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/trump-factor-french-election>. See also: Benoît Hopquin, "Petit Blanc", *Le Monde*, February 28, 2017.

⁵² See for instance a 2016 Pew study on the Muslim population in Europe: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>. This study shows that 7.5% of the French population is Muslim, thus placing France third after Cyprus (25.3%) and Bulgaria (13,7%). In raw numbers though, France is second (with 4.71 million Muslims) behind Germany (4.76 million Muslims). A leading French consulting an polling firm, IPSOS, published a study on French views of immigration in the summer of 2016 that showed 57% of respondents declaring that there were too many immigrants in France; barely 11% had a positive view of immigration. The main results are available here (in French): <http://www.ipsos.fr/decrypter-societe/2016-08-22-immigration-et-refugies-france-pays-d-accueil-ou-pays-en-repli>

⁵³ Gilles Paris, « Leçons américaines pour l'élection française », *Le Monde*, March 14, 2017.

⁵⁴ T. Judt, "A New Master Narrative? Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Americanism", p.20
in D. Lacorne, T. Judt, ed., *With Us or Against Us*, *op. cit.*