



A Vote for Trump: Right Deed, Right Reason ... Hopefully.

Pirrone d'Elide (February 12, 2017)



Voting is a private matter; that's why there are curtains on the polling booths. So when I-ITALY Magazine asked for reflections upon my preference - and vote - for Donald Trump, I was hesitant, but agreed nonetheless to present what would be a counter opinion to many they had received.

One question puzzled me, however: why would i-Italy conduct such a survey? In my view, the election had nothing to do with Italian heritage or genes, unless we were to stretch the imagination to contrast / compare early 20th century Italian immigration experiences to the current influx of illegals and, in some cases, determined terrorists. Some sociologist might try to make that link for sure, but it seems a genuine stretch of the imagination given the widely different motivations and circumstances of the various sets of immigrants. We may even see seminars on this topic by ethnic organizations, many of which are struggling to stay relevant as the distance from that oppressive era of immigration grows, but the argument still fails on many levels and is probably just a distraction from the harsh realities of national security we face today. Still not sure what we are accomplishing, but here goes.

Voting for Trump without being a "Trump-ist"

To start, I have a personal reason for hesitating to respond to the survey, that may strike a chord with readers. For one, I am not an exhibitionist who enjoys advertising his opinions unnecessarily. Further, I am disinclined to risk having my family and me mischaracterized in any of the ways Trump voters have been painted and scored. The acrimony of my friends on the left is far more virulent against Trump than my conviction is for him. So I reply with the assurance to i-Italy's readers that this writer is neither a fascist, misogynist, anti feminist, racist, sexist, or any other such -ist.



Please set aside such damning “ists” and see if the gist of my belief is worth the ink.

On balance, I believe I voted for Donald Trump for the right reasons. Unlike some, I supported him in a manner that was not part of the ugly mire of malevolence and madness he often inspired; plainly, some voters boosted Trump for all the wrong reasons, often in a way that matched in volume and rancor his tactically harsh, even brutal campaign pronouncements. Trump was purposely outrageous at times – he actually made it hard to distill his specific positions from the muck that he microphoned at every chance on the campaign trail. Of course, Hillary’s hollering and her deeply self-anointed sense of entitlement was just as unpleasant, albeit much less vulgar and much less demeaning to the listener. It was always easy to distill her specific message – and thus it was easier to reject those frequent reminders of Washington fatigue and foreign policy failure that her infrastructurally grown candidacy – and possible presidency – augured. Her predictable, rhetorically glazed discourses made it a challenge to stay awake, let alone be inspired. Nonetheless, I did not vote against Hilary per se as many did.

The day was won for me by certain issues and by Trump’s views on them. The surprise candidate sounded a loud, often dissonant harmony of urgency, change, fresh initiative and an end to endless Beltway inertia. His arguments were simple – even simplistic in some cases – but always built on straight, common sense, even though presented distractingly with reality TV dramatic values and cast with enough clumsiness to seem genuine, all the while neither beautiful nor soothing. Like his directness, the course seemed set for substantial re-direction, possibly a mini re-valuation of values in a Capital that would remain impotent without it.

Be careful with romanticizing!

Many Americans romanticize politicians to their (the politicians’) disadvantage and, ultimately, to the country’s. We rather like to champion heroes and saints – usually a kind of mix of high achieving Ken and Barbie dolls created with some color and ethnic origin diversity – and we act shocked when our ideal candidates smell of humanity. For one, I avoid assiduously the romanticizing of leaders. Mine is a deeply personal and passionate skepticism – and by skepticism please do not take me to mean cynicism, which is a true vice often confused with skepticism. History and experience support pointed skepticism in assessing politicians – all of them. We may recall that no less a Romantic era figure than Beethoven “learned too late” when he famously rededicated his Eroica Symphony “to the memory of a great man” once his original subject, Napoleon, showed his true character by way of a self coronation. From one of the greatest of Romantic artists, the message implied is: be careful with romanticizing. Hilary tried to make her “first woman” argument a romantic cause celebre – to no avail, thankfully, given the far larger problems we face. In that same vein, Americans and others like to make hyperbolic rewards to politicians because they want so badly to believe in them – like President Obama’s embarrassingly sudden, overtly symbolic Nobel Prize.

Not a problem with Trump. Almost refreshingly, he is no savior or hero, for sure, and does not bear idealizing. He will never win the Nobel prize. Yet, he is showing himself to be a business-modeled pragmatist who is not “taken” with his living quarters, with Air Force One, or with the trappings of his new job; nor is he beholden to the infrastructural profiteers who circled and even suffocated Hilary’s candidacy. Trump, if nothing more, promised refreshingly to abjure the self serving status quo seekersfor a change....and to strive for concrete results versus any cult of idealization.

A focus on policy positions

Policy positions provide the Rosetta Stone for interpreting and then endorsing the Trump candidacy. That was not easy to stay focused upon, frankly, since some friends, including many Italian Americans, expressed sometimes boisterous adoration for Trump stylistically. They miss the tough talk and the permissible level of male boldness that many decades have seen eviscerated from public places and expunged from discourse. In our new world, the reasoning goes, many men have felt that they were left to choke on their politically incorrect cigars. Hillary projected to these same friends the further death of so many values with which we grew up, from the men’s locker room and men’s lavatory to the history and civics classrooms, as this age of “the end of history”, great books and the long developed culture of western civilization seems to reduce much learning to a series of proof texts demonstrating grievances over race, sex, economics or other real – or perceived –



injustices. Trump embodied for this somewhat silent quarter a “stand up guy” who was unafraid to speak out.

While none of this formed my motives for voting Trump, I will admit that it did feel good to have his rhetorical contrasts to bland and stifling political correctness aired more openly. And to find my friends taking part on a culture war, as if there really was a tradition to sustain.

Nonetheless, it was on the issues that Trump pledged a hard working presidency to ensure:

1. Ending or curbing taxation and crazy over regulation of businesses, especially taxation of money coming into the US;
2. Reforming immigration, not banning it, but getting it right; the flow of heroin and the flow of terrorists into the country must be slowed, then stopped;
3. Redoing trade and diplomatic deals that are irrationally anti US and anti West like the Iran deal and the TPP; these are not sound agreements; and then there are our dealings with Israel, Pakistan and North Korea where the prior administration seemed helpless.
4. Securing the “Scalia” seat for a like minded jurist, (not because the late Judge was of Italian extraction, but because he was not prone to legislating from the bench or setting himself above history and the Founding documents) ; the Court needs philosophical centering after two extremely liberal – and rather unimpressive – appointees made by President Obama. Trump published a really impressive list before the election – itself a forthright, clear act that I respected;
5. Undoing the Dodd Frank amendment, a stranglehold on the financial system- notably banks and insurers and thus the economy;
6. Establishing energy independence for real through better deals and through reasonable US resource exploitation as a foil;
7. Revisiting inner cities from a fresh angle of approach, with deep concern for the inner cities true victims of violent crime that has been only lip-serviced before.

Inter caecos regnat luscus

To be sure, Donald Trump is no where near ideal. *Inter caecos regnat luscus*, but he may just work out well, tweets and all and does deserve the chance he earned. The agenda above is ponderous and he appears ready to attack it with a great energy.

He will make mistakes, hopefully not too many. Among public officials all across the world, we have had fairly good leaders who failed as people and vice versa. We might well be given over to despair, since few today believe that the best and brightest enter politics. When and if they do, we do need to avoid romanticizing, over rewarding, fawning, literally paying and following those emerging elected officials who might evince from us even the least of lemming-like leanings. Any hero worship removes them from a sphere of moral clarity and corrupts them, in a remarkable number of cases, even criminally. The people and the processes need to move up and over to an approach that is concrete, real, direct and clear – like a Trump tweet, perhaps. Not ideal, but at least clear for starters. Our expectations need to match the possible and probable and allow for some humanity in the process.

The question posed by Ezra Pound in 1916 in his landmark poem, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly*, with its transliterated Greek, still deserves our reflection: “*tin andra, tin eroa, tina theon. What god, man or hero shall I place a tin wreath upon?*”

For now, it’s Trump, with a skeptic’s “benefit of the doubt”.



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