

## **IRREPLACEABLE: AN INTERVIEW WITH RENAUD CAMUS**

**Benjamin Braddock. 17 May 2022**

**RENAUD CAMUS ON THE GREAT REPLACEMENT, MASS MURDERERS, FRENCH ELECTIONS, GLOBALIZATION, AND MORE**

Renaud Camus is a French writer, political theorist and intellectual. Born in 1946 in Chamalières, Auvergne, after being politically active as a Socialist in the '60s and '70s and establishing himself as an influential novelist especially in the gay community (mostly thanks to his 1979 autobiographical novel *Tricks*), Camus went on to publish several works of political philosophy. He holds a bachelor's degree in French literature at the Sorbonne and a Master in philosophy at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, as well as two Masters in political science and history of law. He has also taught French literature in the US.

To most in the West however, Camus is known for coining the term “The Great Replacement” in his 2011 work *Le Grand Remplacement*. The book was never translated into English, but the term has since been the subject of intense controversy and frequent references in Western media. Most recently, it has resurfaced in public discourse thanks initially to a *New York Times*’ special and subsequently a media campaign against mainstream Republicans (and the Right more in general), following the mass shooting at Buffalo, New York, on Saturday, May 14.

In an effort to reach a deeper understanding of Mr. Camus’ work beyond the Western media’s superficial depiction of it, we decided to reach out for an exclusive interview. What follows, is a written exchange between Renaud Camus and Benjamin Braddock.

— The Editors

## Mr. Camus, what is “replacism”?

As much as the Great Replacement is not a theory at all, but just a sad fact, a “chrononym”, a name for an epoch after its most important phenomenon, *replacism*, or more exactly *global replacism*, is indeed a theory, mainly developed in my most recent book [La Dépossession](#), *Dispossession*. It rests on the observation that *replacement*, the substitution of something else to everything, the replacement of everything by something else, is the central gesture of modern societies, at least since Taylorism and Fordism, and probably since the First Industrial Revolution. Even before Henry Ford, William Morris has very aptly described what he has called “the age of makeshift”. *Makeshift* is very close to the Heideggerian *Machenschaft*. *Machenschaft* in its turn is very close to the French *machination*, which has the advantage of designating both a conspiracy, a plan, a project, and the fact of *becoming a machine*, of relying upon machines for ruling or rather for *managing* the world, which is a very different matter. Neither the Great Replacement nor global replacism are conspiracy theories — the phrase is infinitely too limited for what they are —, but global replacism is indeed a theory of the *machination*, of the *Makeshift*, of the *Machenschaft*, of the substitution of machines (and computers) to men and women, that is of the dehumanisation of humanity : a process of which the main and most sombre chapters are the diverse totalitarianisms of the XXth and XXIst centuries, nazism, soviet communism, and, more recently, what I call *davocracy*, the management of the human park (in the words of Peter Sloterdijk) by Davos, bankers, international finance, multinational companies, pension funds, hedge funds, Big Five, all kind of more or less *private* powers, which very often are stronger, richer and more powerful than many states, and tend to replace them in the numerized administration of the world. Dispossession is amongst other things a privatisation of the world.

Henry Ford, much admired and much imitated by both Hitler and Stalin, had the brilliant idea of making clients out of his workers, consumers out of his producers. Post-fordism and global replacism go one step further, and, out of the producer-consumer, they make a product : man, woman, humanity and post-humanity — the most precious of all goods, the consumer. The number one requirement of davocratic replacism, where *replacement* is the rule, is the general exchangeability of the product ; and, if the product is the human species, as indeed it is for the Industries of Man, that product has to become incessantly more similar to itself, more homogeneous, more *the same*. It has to liquefy (to borrow Zygmunt Bauman’s precious concept) before liquidation. Hence the urgency of the absurd dogma of the inexistence of the races, which has become the main point and the modern form of antiracism, at least in Europe, and which, of course was

made possible, for antiracists, only by taking the word *race* exclusively in the incredibly narrow, purely biological and pseudo-scientific meaning to which it had been limited before by the worst kind of racists. And now that the races have been successfully taken care of and suppressed, at least conceptually, it is very obvious that the current requirement of global replacism is the inexistence of the sexes. Its supreme aim is what I call *MHI*, la Matière Humaine Indifférenciée, *Undifferentiated Human Matter* (UHM): the main product of the Industries of Man and the principal demand, as much as the principal result, of Great Replacement.

**When ‘The Great Replacement’ is spoken of in English-language media it is invariably described as a “conspiracy theory” undertaken by some shadowy cabal in which mass immigration is the result of a deliberate plot to destroy western civilization. When I read your book *Le Grand Remplacement* however, I find instead a sober work of political economy that advances a critique of materialist globalism as an impersonal force stripping people of their cultural, spiritual, and ethnic attributes and turning them into fungible units of homogenous labor. Why do you think there’s such a radical difference between your work and the way it is perceived?**

I think I inadvertently answered part of this, your second question, while answering the first. As to why there is such a colossal difference between my books and their image, between my thought and the thoughts currently attributed to me, the answer is very simple, although twofold.

The first point is that practically no one has read me, and certainly not the diverse mass murderers whom the general press is only too pleased to associate with by name : it has been established by two Court sentences, one New-Zelandese and one French, that the Christchurch killer has nowhere mentioned me and probably does not even know my name. He wrote a brochure called *The Great Replacement* because that phrase is now everywhere in the world, probably for the simple reason that it aptly describes what is happening in many countries. That brochure sustains views that are very different from mine and on many points completely opposite to them. The El Paso killer, when he speaks of *The Great Replacement*, refers to Brenton Tarrant’s brochure and not to my book which is not even translated into English. And now the Buffalo killer has published a manifesto which mentions neither the words Great Replacement nor, indeed, my name. There is one absolute proof that mass murderers have not read me and are not influenced by me : it is their mass murder. I am perfectly non-violent, and if I am adverse to Great Replacement it is notably because , amongst other things, everywhere it brings violence with it, including daily murders, rapes and

slaughtering in France. The central concept of my political reflexion is *in-nocence*, *non-nocence*: “nocence“, nuisance, harm, violence, being what *in-nocence* is the contrary of (and not the other way round). There are two social or professional categories of whom one can rest assured their members have never read me: they are mass murderers and journalists.

The second point to explain the huge difference between what I say and what is received is that what I say is exactly what must *not* at any price be mentioned in global replacist davocracy. It is essential to understand that lying, and a very active form of negationism toward the truth, is consubstantial to global replacism. Replacement is the epitome of fakeness. Everything is replaced by something which is not it, but must look like it. Replacement is substitution, double, duplica, counterfeit, ersatz, makeshift, anything which looks like the real thing but is not. Falsity is the very reality of global replacism. I have coined the concept of *faussel*, or *fauxel*, in “English” *falseal*, or *fakeal*, for this false real, this inverted real, this real false. Writers are replaced by intellectuals, intellectuals by journalists, journalists by TV-show hosts, marble by chipstone, stone by concrete or plaster, wood by plaster or *plastic*, the signature material of global replacism, which spoils even the depths of the oceans. Venice is replaced by Venice in Las Vegas, Las Vegas by a fake Las Vegas in the deserts of Spain, Paris by a mock Paris next to Peking, cheaper to reach and certainly, these days, much safer to visit. It is the entire world which is replaced by its imitation for mass tourism, playing to be itself for visitors by looking more so than it is, and indeed being less so in the process. Along with dehumanisation takes place a deep de-realisation. It is my only and discrete slight disagreement, purely “philosophical”, with the so-called “Identitarians” : identity is not Being, it is the soft and tender beginning of the mourning of Being. One should pay attention to the double meaning of the word identity. If something is *identical* to something else, it obviously is *not* that something else. French fighters of World War I, the “Poilus” in their trenches, were not Identitarians, they would not even have understood the word: they were just French. I am not Identitarian, I’m just French, and very much European.

Of course the ardent centre of the *faussel*, of the *falseal*, of the false real, in the France and the Europe of the precipitate change of people and civilization, of the Great Replacement, of the *genocide by substitution* (in the phrase of the black French communist poet and mayor pf Fort-de-France, in the French Antilles, Aimé Césaire), is precisely that, the most important phenomenon of the epoch, its central tragedy, the Great Replacement. It is what at any price and at any cost for liberty — and, indeed, for liberty of expression — must *not* be mentioned. Ethnic substitution is an evidence which is immediately obvious for anyone spends three

minutes in a street of Western Europe, and everybody is supposed to play, and does, as if it was not happening. It is as if people were having a polite conversation in a drawing room with an enormous crocodile in the middle of the room and everybody, while passing tea-cups or drinks over it, was pretending it was not there or it was some kind of arty *table basse*, supporting art books. Whoever mentions it is doomed, damned, bound to the status of living dead, which doesn't preclude judiciary pursuits, police harassment, condemnations and financial penalties, defamations, exclusion from the medias, practical impossibility of professional activities, dismissal from all publishers, systematical closing of accounts on social networks. I spent last afternoon at the gendarmerie for yet another attack from the leagues of denouncement and repression — it will probably end up in courts, as usual, and I will probably be condemned one more, since the judges belong to the same team as the informers.

**Emmanuel Macron was just re-elected as President of France. After five turbulent years which saw continued mass protests against his government and warnings of civil war from the French military, Le Pen only managed to capture 41% of the vote in the run-off, a marginal improvement from her 2017 result. What does this mean for the future of France and where does the French Right go from here?**

I do not care much for the future of the Right, which has betrayed the country and the people just as much as the Left and the present “Centre”. Elections do not mean much since opinion is manipulated more than ever in history, by school and university teachings, by the so-called “new means of communication”, by the collapse of general culture and the progress of mass hebetude, and by the mainstream or maingutter Press, which is entirely devoted to global replacism and belongs to it, is its property, literally. In such conditions, it is difficult to take electoral results seriously. The future of France, and of Europe for that matter, at least *occidental* Europe, looks very gloomy indeed, if not tragical. Great Replacement will be over when there will be no foreigners left in France, or in Europe : when they will have all become “French”, or “Europeans”. Genocide by substitution is the crime against humanity of the XXIst century.

**France is one of the only countries I'm aware of where the youth lean considerably more to the Right than the elderly. For both Le Pen and Zemmour, Millennials and Zoomers were their strongest demographic. What do you make of this phenomenon?**

If what you say is right it is certainly good news, even though, personally, I don't care very much for Right or Left. When a country is handed over to foreign peoples and foreign forces, occupied, colonised, daily humiliated in every way and its indigenous people daily attacked, robbed, raped, slaughtered, Left or Right is not the most urgent issues : resistance is, revolt, liberation, decolonisation and the departure of the occupying colonisers. There are indeed a growing number of youths which are infuriated and dispaired by the present state of their country but there are also, unfortunately, an alarming mass of young and not so young people which are stultified by permanent propaganda and mass deculturation and who are ardently serving davocratic power while sincerely believing they are fighting capitalism, or what they call *fascism*, in their amusing old-fashioned idiolect. The best allies and instruments of global replacism and of the Industries of Man, the producers of UHM, those best allies are not the old values of the Right, which have long been abandoned by it anyway, but the so-called progressive values of the Left, specially equality and antiracism, which make people so much easier to exchange and so much easier to replace ; so much easier to liquefy and so much easier to liquidate. Publicity, which is the natural literature of global replacism, its epic poetry as well as its common law, and which clearly tells and shows what money wants, is very obvious on that point: mix you must (and disappear).

The most active form of negationism to-day is the denial of Great Replacement. Holocaust deniers were never more than a few thousands and, fortunately, never seriously got out of their caves and molehills in the open world. Genocide by substitution deniers, to the contrary, are heads of State, Prime Ministers, bankers, stars of talk-shows, journalists, judges. The Negationnist-Genocidal Block is the conglomerate of all people, judges, journalists, experts, ministers, party leaders, who promote and defend the Great Replacement while pretending it does not exist. True, with time, the Block is becoming less and less negationist : first because the denial of the change of people and civilisation is becoming almost impossible, so obvious it is ; second because the replacers are very proud of their accomplishments and prone to brag about it. Bragging and denial are rivals. But as the block is becoming less negationist it is becoming more genocidal.

**I was surprised to see Le Pen say late in the campaign that regional languages like Breton should not be taught in schools. Do you also see a danger of replacism within nationalist movements?**

Oh, replacism is everywhere, even in each of us, and of course is not always a bad thing: if it was, it would not be so successful. If your heart or kidney stops doing what it has to do, you will be very glad to get an artificial one. I am no expert about nationalist movements, not being a nationalist myself. But Mrs Le Pen is by now almost entirely replacist. She thinks Islam is perfectly compatible with the Republic, which is the worst thing one ever said against the Republic. She is also convinced that in France all French citizens are French, which is of course a complete illusion — if they were French they would not call the French “the French”...

**French intellectuals have taken the topic of national decline and turned it into a great literary genre. There is yourself, Houellebecq, Raspail, Zemmour and others. Great Britain, Canada, and the United States have experienced even greater national declines but have not produced much work on the topic, at least as it relates to demographics. Why is it that this subject is so thoroughly dominated by Frenchmen?**

Literature has been for centuries the specific mean of expression of French culture and French spirit. France was par excellence a *literary* society. It is not anymore, and this post-literary status is very much part of the spectacular decline you rightly allude to. Still, we might have some “beaux restes”, few and far between, and, by a complete circle and reversal of the spiral of meaning, literature, or what is left of it, has received in inheritance the care of the real, or what is left of it : the ultimate responsibility of naming and showing reality. By *literature* we use to mean mostly *fiction*, the two words were sometimes almost synonymous. But fiction has moved towards science, specially the so-called *human sciences*, which are certainly what has produced the most fiction, not to say has been lying the most, in the last half-century. Demography, sociology and statistics have been the most efficacious and servile instruments of mass negationism, and that not only as far as genocide by substitution was concerned, but in regard of the scarcely less dramatic collapse of the educationary system as well, or on the subject of public safety. There is a hundred times more reality in any novel by Michel Houellebecq than in a thousand run-of-the-mill sociological essays, all the more so if it is full of figures. After Nietzsche so-called “mort de Dieu”, Science has succeeded Religion as the supreme arbiter of truth, and it has been more misleading and

accommodating towards specific class or race interests than its predecessor. Never in the past had Science been requested to tell whether or not there were the Hundred Years War, the Great Pest, the French Revolution, the Great War, the Great Depression or the German Occupation. But if Science now says (which it does not anymore, fortunately) that there is no Great Replacement, people will believe it as if it was God's words, even though there is no longer anyone of their sort in their street or their town and even while they are themselves being replaced.

**Which do you think is the greater threat to Western European countries: the masses of immigrants themselves, the political and economic interests that encourages them to come in, or the apathy of a society that gives in to a hyperbolic egalitarianism that swallows them whole?**

This is a most excellent question, to which I find it impossible to answer, except by saying that the three threats you very adequately circumscribed are not only *equals*, but each the conditions and the result of the other two. When Christians were in the Roman arenas, it was of little use, for the rare disapproving witnesses, to incriminate the lions and their butchery behaviour. Great Replacement, as I have said a hundred of times, would not be possible without what I have called "Little Replacement", *Le Petit Remplacement* (it is the title of a fat collection of six essays) : the substitution of cultural industries to culture, of entertainment to the Corpus, of popular and mass culture to high culture, which amounts more or less to the disparition of culture just as Great Replacement amounts to the disparition of indigeneous peoples, cultures, and civilizations. Hebetude is the condition of the successful and peaceful process of genocide by substitution. A specific feature of the present colonisation of Europe is its *triangular* structure, very similar to the triangular structure of the old Transatlantic slavery: the people who accomplish it are *not* the forces or the mechanisms which most want and promote it. Colonizers are not the colonisators. Colonialists are nor the colonizers. In global replacement there are the replacists, who want and organise the replacement, the replacers, who accomplish it, and the replacees, who are its victims. The masses of immigrants are obviously the most pressing threat (they are more than a *threat*, since they are already in place, and more often than not citizens). We can resist certain of their specific actions, but to castigate them on principles would be just as absurd as to castigate the lions in the circus. And to castigate the machines, the mechanisms of global replacism and the Machination, it would be essential not to be machines ourselves, or computers. But it is indeed global replacism, or davocracy, which is the archenemy.

**How can Western Europeans overcome their innate pathological altruism and lack of in-group preference?**

These exaggerated altruism and lack of in-group preference are indeed pathological, but I am not sure they are innate. It seems to me they are entirely created, modern, and a result of recent history. This is a thesis I have developed in the short essay *The Second Career of Adolf Hitler*, and also in the pretended children tale allegedly rediscovered from Hans-Christian Andersen, *Ørop*: how Europe has withdrawn from history after the traumatism of Second World War, and how Hitler dead is even more efficient, as an inverted figure, as a ghost, as the terminus ad quem of every sentence and every thought, than he was living. Europe has not always suffered from a pathological altruism and has for centuries shown signs of the contrary character, often in a somewhat exaggerated manner. It should now settle for a reasonable middle, just as the pendulum of colonisation and counter-colonisation should now settle in the middle, that is the Mediterranean, and put an end of all colonisations, North-South or South-North. But it obviously cannot do so without getting free, first, of totalitarian replacism and davocracy.

**You have spoken of the evils of factory farming, particularly as it relates to animal cruelty. How does this fit into your larger theory of replacism?**

Oh, it fits very well and is even an essential part of it. Global replacism is the Machination and industrialisation of man, how could it not be the machination and industrialisation of animal ? Culture and agriculture are the last two human activities which, mostly during the XXth century, have become industries. And just as cultural industries proceed to the general replacement of traditional culture, poetry, literature, tragedy, drama, history, philosophy, classical music and so on, by entertainment, show-business, talk-shows, pop music, etc., industrial agriculture alike proceeds to the replacement of animals by animal products, themselves more and more replaced by vegetable or chemical products. Man as consumer having become a product, it would have been very surprising that animals, and not only pets, would not follow suit. And with products the sole concern is to get ever more of them, to sell them to ever more consumers-products, or to sellers of consumers-products, of consumers as products.

**COVID-19 restrictions were very strict in France and Germany, but extraordinarily mild in Denmark and Sweden. These countries are all similar in the sense that they are technocratic liberal democracies, but their responses to the pandemic could hardly be more different. What do you think accounts for the divergence?**

I am no specialist on those matters. I had not realised that governmental reaction to the pandemic had been that different in France and Sweden, in Germany and Denmark. It had seemed to me that the different countries have tried this and that, not without a certain disorder and some panic to have to face in urgency certain dramatic situations. As for Sweden, for instance, it could probably afford more liberal or laxist policies because it is considerably less populated and dense in population. The demographic growth and overpopulation are certainly the main causes, along with replacement and exchange of populations, of the spectacular multiplication of epidemics and pandemics, since no one seem to care about it, and since the growing numbers of consumers is the first requirement of davocracy. It is more than likely that there will be more and more outbreaks of sanitary crises, which will be excellent occasions and pretexts for the anonymous and more and more abstract managers of the human park to further restrain liberties and take a even firmer hold on the planet.

**For our readers who may be interested in visiting France or learning more about French culture could you recommend a region, a novel, and a film ?**

For a region I would not be very objective if I recommended, as I do, my native Auvergne, to which I am presently remigrating. It has an insistent past of resistance, to the Romans at Gergovie with Vercingetorix, to the Germans at Mont-Mouchet with the Coulaudon brothers. It is central and mountainous and in parts almost desert, a fortress. It has lakes, forests, solitary moors and the most exquisite romanesque churches. Maybe it can resist global replacism, davocracy, the change of people and civilisation.

If one wanted to read only one French novel, it would have to be *Remembering of Things Past*, which is certainly the greatest and incidentally the longest. If one wanted to be a little more original, but not much, one would be spoilt for choice between *Jacques le Fataliste*, *Les Paysans*, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Mon Amie Nane*, *Le Journal de A. O. Barnabooth*, *Les Caves du Vatican*, *Le Mystère Frontenac*, *D'un château l'autre*, *La Route des Flandres*, *Soumission*.

Strangely enough, the Frenchest of all films doesn't take place in France, unstrangely enough it's called *La Grande Illusion*. But another masterpiece by Renoir is set in France : *Partie de Campagne*.