

Dorling, D. (2019) Review of Christophe Guilluy's *Twilight of the Elites*, Prospect Magazine (commissioned but not published), submitted on December 9th 2018; posted on-line on December 28th 2019.

On December 9th 2019 Prospect Magazine produced a list* of what their 'team' thought were the "best books of 2019" in which they suggested one such book was: "*Christophe Guilluy's Twilight of the Elites (Yale), an attack on the bourgeois bohemians who erect citadels of privilege around them. Railing against the "Uberisation" of society, Guilluy is impatient with both neo-liberalism and multiculturalism, which he claims is an economic trick played on the white working classes.*" The review of his book shown below was commissioned by them over a year earlier and sent to the magazine exactly a year before they published their views and ignored the advice below. The concept 'white working class' is, of course, an oxymoron. Many of the working class in France are not white, and unlike the working class, white is 'privileged'. Prospect Magazine is "*owned and supported by the Resolution Group, as part of its not-for-profit, public interest activities.*"

* Prospect Team (2019) The best books of bold ideas in 2019 As part of Prospect's Books of the Year special, we round up the best offerings in philosophy, sociology and fresh thinking, Prospect Magazine, December 9th, <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/the-best-books-of-bold-ideas-in-2019>

Unpublished Review

Twilight of the Elites: Prosperity, the periphery and the future of France by Christophe Guilluy (Yale, £18.99), 12th February 2019

Guilluy is at his most eloquent when he explains that: '*A globalized society is a closed society in which the combined effects of class inbreeding, residential separatism, educational apartheid, and a selfish determination to accumulate wealth and property have never been so powerful*'. He may exaggerate a little when suggesting that all the owners of firms in France who have children believe their genius is hereditary and that almost none of the white elite of France will ever mix with immigrants in the banlieues. There will be more

than one black swan out there, but he is spot on in pointing out how much it matters that the elite of France do not, in general, allow their children to mix in the same neighbourhoods and schools – let alone intermarry. He describes the French elite as *'inbred'*.

Guilluy is at his least eloquent when he tries to paint London as a city of *'white flight'* (p.59). From the very first page onwards he equates inequality with multiculturalism – implying accepting diversity and difference requires accepting disparity and dispossession. It doesn't. He is denouncing those who support *'globalization, deregulation and multiculturalism'* (p.96) as if the acceptance of many cultures in one place is somehow akin to allowing those with the most money to run amok. It is not.

Some of the nuance may have been lost in the translation, but to equate France and Sweden, respectively, with the USA and UK is not a sensible geographical comparison. Guilluy condemns antifascism as anti-working class and incorrectly describes the National Front as *'a party of small and medium sized businesses'*. Entertaining in parts, offensive in others, and priced at £18.99 for just 149 rather small pages of text, this is a book aimed at the Bohemian bourgeoisie market – for those with the values of the 1960s counterculture, the materialism of the 1980s, and the third-way fantasies of the 2000s.

Danny Dorling
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