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The European Leviathan: monster or Civitas?

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Leviathan, as you know, appears in the Genesis 1.21 “And God created the great sea-monsters,” as being associated with the devil, or as a source of skin and food. It is present in religion and literature from this time till the Moby Dick and the Jurassic Park.

I intend to use the concept in the sense used by Hobbes, about the citizen and the civitas created by art. *“For by art is created that great Leviathan called a Commonwealth, or State (in Latin, Civitas), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which the sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body.”*

In essence, Hobbes speculates what life would be like without government, a condition which he names the state of nature. It is the *“homo hominis lupus”*, each person would have a right, or license, to everything in the world. This would lead to a "war of all against all" *“Bellum omnia erga omnes”* In such a state, people fear death, and lack both the things necessary to a comfortable way of living, and the hope of being able to obtain them. So in order to avoid it, people accede to a social contract and establish a civil society, based in the true citizen, concept still under debate in the UK.

Probably Thomas Hobbes took the title of his essay from his own life. Himself said that he was born prematurely when his mother heard of the coming invasion of the Spanish Armada. "My mother gave birth to twins: myself and fear." In fact, his life was dominated by fear - the English civil war, the republican Commonwealth of Cromwell, his books burnt at home and exile in France -. The European scene existed at that time, dominated with fear and internecine strife as the core of its common history till the end of the 2nd World War. Europe as *“Inferno and Paradise”* in the description of Fernand Braudel.

In our cloudy and turbulent times it is timely to debate the central question about the European construction again: is it a monster or a civitas? Although it is a work in progress, the question is where is it leading to? Let me try to answer to the main question following the hobbesian definition. The most usual European method of presentation is to begin describing the main shortcomings and failures of this work in progress. This means talking about populism, illiberal democracy of Brexit, Italy's referendum and a never ending crisis. If you ask a populist he will describe the EU as a threatening Leviathan of a remote bureaucracy based in Brussels that is destroying the glorious and idyllic identity of his or her cozy country.

Populism is not a virus coming from outside that infects the society. In the artificial man of the society following the hobbesian definition it looks more like the cholesterol in blood. As you know by visiting the Doctor, there is a bad cholesterol and a good one. The problem arises when the bad cholesterol prevails.

You can see the challenge in the case of President elect Trump, trying to transform the bad cholesterol of his campaign in a good one. A task more than difficult. A certain degree of populism is present usually on the political stage because politics is about the future and about the expectations. For this reason appealing to dream is part of the electoral campaigns. The problem comes when the main argument is to appeal to emotions and sometimes to overcome by passions such as hate. Goya depicted this masterly: Capricho No. 43 reads; "Fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united with her, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of their marvels".

This a fact is that the rise of populism is closely related to nationalism. Nationalism is romantic and passionate. President Mitterrand reminded that in Europe "le nationalisme c'est la guerre" in his last speech to the European Parliament in January 1995. A Parliament in which precisely are sitting since many years Jean Marie Le Pen with his hideous denying of the gas mass killings or Neil Farage like political refugees financed by the EU budget for their political work of destroying our common Civitas. They are not present in their respective Parliaments but they are effective in dismantling the common Endeavour and paralyzing the work of our common construction from within. Demagogy is part of the bad cholesterol of democracy.

Another risk linked to the rise of nationalist populisms is the defense of the so called "illiberal democracy". Adding adjectives to democracy is always risky. In fact, as we

can see in Poland and Hungary it is an involution process of building an autocracy controlling the State and eliminating the division of powers, sometimes tainted with anti-Semitism. The monsters come back?

I think I do not have to insist in this forum on the subject. My defunct wife, Sofia Gandarias depicted in her series “Kafka, the Visionary”, whose most recent exhibition was in the Bergen Belsen camp in August of this year, the process of development of the monster that led to the Holocaust.

I prefer to answer regarding whether we are doing this construction by art and our role as Union facing together the challenges in the current world stage of globalization. A Civitas.

First and foremost, the balance of the European Union since the Schuman Declaration of 9th May 1950 is positive: 66 years without brotherlywars, a record recognized with the Nobel Prize of Peace in 2012; a process initiated by 6 countries now includes 28 (there is still not notification of the Brexit by the UK), a functioning single market with a single currency and the disappearance of internal borders. The question of the social contract is very interesting: although the founding fathers had very clear ideas on how to shape the future, they preferred instead of drafting a beautiful Constitution to write a succession of treaties in an open ended process. Their aim was to overcome hates that dated from centuries putting in common values and sharing interests, step by step.

The Treaty of Maastricht, after the end of the cold war, incorporated currency and citizenship and the main features of a parliamentary democracy. A citizenship added to the national one as a European constitutional patriotism for sharing the same values.

At a rhythm of a new Treaty every 4 years, the result was the European Constitutional Treaty debated and drafted in an open Convention, which we had to sink after the Russian roulette of referenda that we are so fond of calling. We rescued the substance in the Treaty of Lisbon. After 60 years, for the first time we can say that the EU is a Civitas and not a monster. The three first articles of the Treaty enshrine the principles, the values and the objectives of our common Covenant. We were able to include, thanks to the pressure of the European Parliament, the Declaration of Fundamental Rights as a binding part of the Constitution, in spite of the opposition of the UK

Government expressed in an opting-out, followed by the Polish and too late by the Czech one.

For this reason, Chancellor Merkel of the Grosse Koalition could give by far the most dignified response to Trump's election: "Germany and America are tied by values of democracy, freedom and respect for the law and human dignity, independent of origin, skin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or political views. I offer the next President of the United States, Donald Trump, close cooperation on the basis of these values." In fact, she was speaking on behalf of a Europe able of sharing for the 1st time in History the same values in a Covenant. The outcome of the Austrian Presidential Elections confirme this Endeavour.

Now, the open question is whether we want go on together preserving and updating to the 21st Century the order created after the 2nd World War or we consider our own national interest 1st, closing frontiers with walls and protectionist barriers and discriminating the others. The experience of the 1st half of the past century shows clearly the risk of leading back to a "war of all against all"

In the case of Brexit, it is not by chance that Premier Cameron began the negotiations proposing to delete in article 1st of the Lisbon Treaty the paragraph of "creating an ever close union among the peoples of Europe". At the same time he asked British people to remain in a united Europe. People answered this conundrum expressing their rage and he had to the leave. Now we have to respect the decision of the British people. We can regret it but the point is that according to art. 50 of the Treaty: 1st. "Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements." 2nd "A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention".

There is not a written Constitution in the UK, normally referenda are consultative and the Parliament has the power since "The glorious revolution". According to the new Prime Minister May, we must wait till March in order to get the notification of the Brexit. Hard or soft ?, in any case it will be tough and painful. The position of the EU as such is clear, to regret the decision but to respect it and to proceed as quick as possible after the notification to avoid harming our common Endeavour and the weakening of the internal structure of the Union specially in the economic and monetary fields. As President Draghi has declared in the EP: "Following the outcome of the

British referendum, there will be certainly issues of sovereignty in various parts of our payments and infrastructure framework, clearing systems and so on” It is reassuring to hear the comment that the outcome of the Italian referendum is not risky because Draghi is there,

The fear of globalization is considered one of the main causes fostering the development of protest vote of the people who feel excluded, especially in the middle class and the blue collar industrial workers. It was decisive in the Brexit No vote in regions like the English Midlands, in the reject of the CETA Trade Treaty EU-Canada by the Wallon Parliament in Belgium and specially in the syndicated workers of the Middle West in the US elections. I fear that President Trump with his mighty power will not be able to stop globalization. His rejection of the Pacific TPP reminds the King Canut ordering the Sea tide to stop. The challenge is not to stop globalization but to master it, rendering it inclusive and sustainable. This requires taming the monster of uncontrolled financial globalization and a successful achievement of the Doha round in the framework of the WTO, not multiplying protectionist barriers.

A last challenge for the EU is the refugee crisis. As such, is a consequence of its geopolitical situation and its success as a haven of peace and prosperity. The usual European discourse is inwards looking and self deprecating, without looking to our geopolitical situation. Certainly, we are living a refugee crisis first because we are surrounded from Ukraine to Afghanistan till Somalia in Africa by most of the open conflicts in the world. People suffering the never ending violence have smart phones with gps. There are so many mobile phones as persons in the world. In a longer perspective, Europe is an aging welfare continent with the most dynamic demography in its neighborhood.

We will not solve the problem only closing the borders. The implementation of an active common Frontier Police, the advance in asylum and immigration policies and active co development policies are a package that the EU must elaborate and implement with decision and solidarity, along the lines of the federalism by necessity that has allowed the creation of the Monetary Union and the launching of the Economic one.

A first consequence of President Trump’s election is the decision of Germany after the lunch of President Obama with its main European partners in Nato in Berlin of

increasing its spending in defense to 2% with Spain and Italy, figure reached only by France and UK. This means a will of implementing an active policy in security and defense. For the moment being, the bulk of EU aid to the Middle East conflicts is humanitarian aid. It is important to attack the causes of disaster too.

The answer to the question whether the European Leviathan is a monster or a Civitas is open. Jean Monnet said rightly that the European construction is being made from crisis to crisis. This means that it is built from decision to decision, step by step. The problem is the paralyzing effect of populisms on the European construction. In order to give the proper answer we must fight with the same spirit of Pierre Uri, the advisor of Jean Monnet discriminated by the Vichy Régime as Jew. He was the ghostwriter of the whole draft Treaty of Rome with the checking of Hans von der Groeben, a civil servant of the Reich and later Commissioner. On the eve of the 60th Anniversary of the signature of the Treaty his advice is always relevant: “Every time I can push forward a project, I do it. I am convinced that Europe is the only design worthy of our world and our time”.