

THE *ANIMUS DOMINANDI* IN MAN AND ITS MANIFESTATION IN POLITICAL POWER

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Abstract

The brutish and nasty predispositions of the Hobbessian state of nature were such that man had to seek to escape from the debilitating infractions associated with same. The result was the creation of the political community or what Hobbes himself characterized as the Leviathan. However in seeking to escape from the inanities of the so-called state of nature, man created a Frankenstein monster in the mould of the modern day nation-state which single-minded devotion to the realization of the national interest has resulted in the fragrant deployment of power as both an instrumentality and as an end in itself. The problem that animates this study is to interrogate the emergent paradox. Our data are from secondary sources and the research is descriptive. The study concludes that based on the problems associated with the overbearing attributes of the state, man did not quite succeed in escaping from the drawbacks of the state of nature and must begin to contrive a better alternative.

Key Words: Brutish, Hobbessian, Leviathan, Infractions, Frankenstein Monster.

Introduction

The Polis is the centre-piece of the political contrivance by man. It is at once a philosophical and physical epitomization of the political recrudescence of man away from the naked *animus dominandi* in the state of nature. This is the trajectory that would inexorably lead to the inauguration of the Commonwealth and the banishment of the short, brutish, nasty and intolerably bestial conundrum that the conflictual Contractual Theorist, Thomas Hobbes adumbrated on in his Leviathan (Hobbes:1651)

The Greeks in their somewhat romanticized form of the Polis characterized it as the best organization that is capable of allowing man or indeed his collective idiosyncrasy the ultimate manifestation of his potentials in his interest and for the good of all.

In other words, the escape from the Hobbesian state of nature into the political community or the Commonwealth was an ingenious attempt by man to solve the problem of the unstable, unpredictable and unbecoming inanities of a situation in which the war of man against each other and all against all had become the order of the day. It is instructive to note that here the bellicose predispositions of an otherwise innately infused belligerency had constituted an infamous or ignominious drawback on the match of man and his inchoate civilization. Alas the creation of the Commonwealth or the Polis had

succeeded in checkmating this Frankenstein monster that was capable of inflicting the most mortal blow to the match of progress. That was the note of optimism that had heralded the celebration of mankind resulting in the eulogies that the academia in the four corners of the globe has continued to pour on the Greeks and the philosophers of the old. That was also the misplaced hope on which mankind had anchored the apparently blissful *Eldorado* that the state as an institution had represented in the chequered odyssey of man from primitive to the modern times. This is to say that the pessimism that life in the state of nature and the volcanic disruptions that would implode within the matrix of the state had been vitiated by one magical master-stroke encapsulated in the emergence of the politically unmatched invention of the political community and an appreciative world had also responded with all the acclaim at its disposal. It is indeed on the affirmed indestructibility of this ubiquitously benevolent creation that man and the academia had built mountainous bodies of theory particularly of the liberal democratic hew. Once the efficacy of the political community and the enabling democratic credentials of same were established and its concomitant elixir as the bedrock of man's unstoppable instrumentality in the transcendental existence of the state, all kinds of novel ideas; some sublime to the extreme, got canvassed as the right path for all who desired the dividends or the spin-offs of the life in the commonwealth. Put in another way, the biblical *Armageddon* had been surmounted and the apocalyptic predictions it portended had been preempted by man. This is perhaps the most misplaced optimism of man during the last five, six or seven hundred years and beyond.

With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the Greeks and their famed philosophers had celebrated too soon. They had basked in a euphoria that would soon cajole the world into a bottomless pit of political destruction; an unexpected destruction that would not only take its toll on the world's human and material resources but would eventually accentuate the menacing harassment of a hypothetical sword of Democles on the world. Make no mistakes about it, the dynamics of the state of nature were antithetical to the activation of the possibilities inherent in man. And because that was so, it did not allow for the maximization of the potentialities of man because its precarious nature had manifestly crippled the animators of the engine room of development nay progress.

The Paradox of the Escape from the State of Nature

But with the benefit of hindsight today, it is safe to volunteer the position that if the escape from the state of nature was anything at all, it amounted to a little more than the proverbial pyrrhic victory because in actuality, in escaping from the state of nature, humanity did not know that it was escaping from the innocence of that state of affairs into an unmitigated socio-political cul-de-sac in which its ultimate annihilation would be shamelessly authored by the emergent modern day nation-state.

To be exact, this is our point of departure and must form the underlying philosophical thesis from which this short essay must unveil a new paradigm for peering into the future.

We posit that in lunging into the edifice that is the modern day nation-state with its characteristic sovereign supremacy within its territoriality, mankind escaped from the

small, innocuous and perhaps atomistic state of nature, but unwittingly created a marauding monster of untrammelled power potential that would at once cancel out the anticipated gains of the escape from the original state of nature. In a word, the unintended consequences of the negative spin-offs from what could today be described as the 1648 Mistake of Westphalia is the audacious challenge to the continued existence of the world. Hitherto, the world had existed without the menacing existence of geo-political entities that are capable of mustering enough power to effect unimaginable destructive afflictions on man and his civilization. Yes wars and conflicts had existed but never in the nature of what they are today and the injuries they are capable of inflicting. To be exact, man had not always existed in a situation in which conflicts were totally absent. Indeed wars; inter-tribal and ethno-nationalistic, religious and economically rooted had always been the accompanying feature of man and his society. However it is instructive to reckon with the fact that wars both of the ancient or even medieval orientations did not always aim at the total annihilation of populations (Paret:1986, Booth:2002). In fact the annals of the strategic thought posit that warfare whether it was anchored on the ancient or even medieval organizational hew, were demonstrably scheduled in theaters where maneuvers and a refusal to inflict what could be described as collateral damages particularly in human lives were the unwritten codes (Hart:1967). This is to say that modern wars of total annihilation with the attendant deployment of weapons of mass destructions are the creations of the post Westphalia Conference of 1648 during which the nation-states as contemporaneously constituted emerged on the world scene.

The State as the Recrudescence of the Animus in Man

Man did escape from the state of nature and its negative afflictions or so it seemed. He did by the dint of his ingenuity inaugurate a superior political organization in the Hobessian Leviathan. He did also invest a lot of hope in the ultimate goodness of the political community.

Sadly enough, man did not escape from himself. He did not. Indeed it seemed and still seems like he was incapable of escaping from himself; and if he was incapable of escaping from himself, he must have been incapable of divesting the state of the concatenations of debilitating afflictions inherent in himself. The result is that in escaping from the state of nature, man created an octopus with all the manifestations of 'self' before 'others', of self interest and of animalistic inclinations. Let us admit that this development was the result of an unparalleled mistake. This mistake if truly, it was, did not appreciate the dynamics of the phenomenon of power and particularly in its amazing but delicate mix with human inclinations. Hence man made the almost mortal mistake of creating a mega political community with the enormous potentials of inflicting itself with murderous collateral damage potentials. Let us state right away that the mistake of the escape from the Hobbesian state of nature and the eventual creation of the modern day nation-state after the 30 year internecine war among the Europeans, was that in making that move man concentrated power in the hands of the modern day state and ipso facto in the hands of greedy man himself.

Herein lies the main kernel of the Realist School in international politics. Realism as epitomized by Morgenthau (1967) conceives of the actions of the modern day nation-state as animated by the national interest. It goes on to state that statesmen in wanting to realize the national interest of their countries are invariably seeking to acquire, maintain or demonstrate power (Morgenthau:1967:36) Now listen to this; the said interest divested of any outward trappings is power. This is to say that nation-states seek power not only as an instrumentality but also as a utilitarian end in itself.

It is in power as an instrumentality and as an end in itself that Art and Waltz (2009) enter into the discourse with their concept of power as the most fungible currency of international politics. Indeed according to these scholars, power is not just the single most important element of international politics, it is the '*ultimo ratio* of same'. We note that it is in the manifestation of a very important instrument (particularly when it is in the hands of the potentates of the nation-states) in a world in which every resource of imaginable conception is relatively scarce that the problematic arises. The result is that there is a life-and-death struggle that is even worse than the struggle that man had tried to run away from in the state of nature. To be exact, the almost cyclical eruptions that mankind has witnessed in the annals of history (such as the First and Second World Wars) are the result of the *animus* that is the essential characteristic of man and with which he did infest his own creation namely, the nation state. Now man is faced with a very terrible paradox. Is he to commit political suicide and denounce the state or take a retreat into an impenetrable cocoon of the territorial nation state barring any kind of intercourse with the outside world? Indeed, is man safe within the confines of the internal dynamics of the nation state? Your guess is as good as mine! But whatever is your guess, I want to remind us of the sit-tight syndrome that had been the unfortunate lot of Africa in which totalitarian dictators have tended to dominate the African political firmament with the consequent draconian contraptions against their citizens. In most of these states, life has become something much more unsafe and unpredictable than the original state of nature. And what about the activities of terrorist and insurgent organizations that have tended to kill, rape and kidnap in orgies of violence much more injuries than those said to exist in the state of nature. And what of other violent crimes vis-à-vis life in the contemporary nation-state? The paradox that humanity faces either within or outside the nation-states is subliminal and far in excess of what was obtainable in the simple world of the state of nature. Needless to say, these are manifestations of horrendous infractions on the freedom and wellbeing of man in the society; all evidences of the failure of the taunted bid by man to escape from the inconveniences of the so-called state of nature.

The Nation-state and Power Coordinates within its Territory; Robert Dahl and New Haven in the United States of America. Power is at the epicenter of the life of the modern day nation-state. Needless to say, it is the single most important variable that moderates the interaction of these nation-states as they interact among themselves in international politics. Indeed it is through the instrumentality of power that a given nation-state is able to project, manifest and push the frontiers of its national interest. In fact, it could be said that the nation-state is selfish once it comes to the realization of the national interest. We note also that the national interest is often defined in terms of power

(Morgenthau:1967:26) To be exact, according to Morgenthau (1967:25) “International Politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim “It is indeed safe to conclude that Art and Waltz (2009:6) were alluding to the same position when they posited that “In politics force is said to be the *ultimo ratio*. In international politics, force serves not only as the *ultimo ratio*, but indeed as the first and constant one”

Our Philosophical Assumption

This is the philosophical assumption that underpins our point of departure. We posit that realism is the overwhelming dominant feature of contemporary international politics. The ever present proclivity of the nation-states to single mindedly achieve their national interests nearly always at the expense of the other contending nation-states has readily turned international politics into a mindless struggle for power with the attendant anarchic consequences.

We are deliberate in our refusal to adopt an atomistic approach in locating the particular class or classes of people that are the holders of power in all known human societies. But that task has been exhaustively deliberated upon by Dahl in his study of New Haven which is a city in the United States of America (2005). In the study under reference, Dahl tried to locate those who hold political power in a city as complex as New Haven. His findings are as informative as they are interesting. It was found that a small clique of people hold political power and that nearly always, this power was rooted in the economic realm of the society. This is to say that among those who controlled the economic fortresses of New Haven, an abiding majority also exercise an overwhelming influence and authority in the political sphere of the city. Needless to say, New Haven is a microcosm of the political behemoth that is the United States of America.

Nonetheless our thesis is that the selfish proclivity of the modern day nation-state is a recrudescence from the animus or bellicose nature of man. He had attempted to shed off the precarious nature of life in the state of nature. We posit that with the benefit of hindsight, man was unable to do so as the attempt to escape from the state of nature was vitiated by his infusing into the nation-state (which is his creation) with the same unabashed animus in himself; humanity.

We state at once that although most actions in politics but particularly international politics are said to be taken by the nation-states, such actions are in fact the direct actions of men who act on behalf of the state. Mesquita (2000:14) was alluding to this fact when he stated that “Interstate relations are motivated by leaders’ preferences for certain goals over other goals. These preferences are tempered by the power to pursue those goals and by perceptions or beliefs about the costs and benefits associated with seeking out one goal over another “ Let us hasten to add that perhaps no better statement about the action tendencies of the nation-state and the influences exertedJ on such actions by leaders

could have been made. In other words, the man or the *homosapien* is reincarnated in the nation-state in terms of both its modus operandum and modus Vivendi as it interacts with others in the contemporary world order. Needless to remind us that the nation-state as we know it today is a phenomenon created by man in his attempt to alleviate and solve the problems associated with the state of nature. Indeed according to at least one of the contractual theorist; Thomas Hobbes, it was an ingenious attempt by man to escape from the inanities of the state of nature where life was nasty, brutish, short and poor (Hobbes:1651). Our thesis is that man did not quite succeed in escaping from the drawbacks associated with life in the state of nature. Indeed we contend that in attempting to escape from life in the state of nature, man inadvertently created a kind of Frankenstein monster that has impinged not only on his freedom of action as a freewill agent but also even on the freedom of action of fellow nation-states. Indeed to put it succinctly, the greed, the avarice and the *animus* in man were all reproduced in the resultant contraption; the nation-state and this has resulted not in the banishment and or amelioration of the evils extant in the state of nature which man had tried to escape from but a reinforcement of same.

International Politics and the Games that Nations Play: Realism, Neo-realism or Complex Interdependence?

There is a welter of opinions and positions as to the structure of the contemporary international political system and the configuration of forces within it. We already mentioned the celebrated position of the realist tendency and do not wish to repeat ourselves here. Suffice it to say that for realism, politics particularly international politics is nearly always an attempt at the acquisition, maintenance, demonstration and the projection of power. This is also the trajectory followed by the neo-realist school whose position does not depart markedly from that of the realist school which could be said to be its progenitor. However when we encounter the Functionalist theory of politics, particularly at the international level, we are confronted with a different scenario. Starting with Mitrany (1943) the functionalist theory has adopted a much more optimistic perspective about the inclinations of man. The view of functionalism is that the tendency towards acrimony among nation-states would disappear as a result of cooperation first in certain functional areas. These areas which could be economic, cultural, defense, etc would in the course of time cajole or push the nation-states involved into a political union at least of the federation type. Indeed in the words of Mitrany (1943:55) “ Promissory Covenants and Charters may remain a headstone to unfulfilled good intentions, but the functional way is action itself, and therefore an inescapable test of where we stand and how far we are willing to go in building up a new international society “

Nonetheless, it is crucial to highlight the fact that the envisaged integration of the nation-states would come about as a result of the emergent advantages that would ensure from the ongoing cooperation in the said functional areas. To be exact, according to Pavenhouse and Goldstein (2008:250) “ Thus the thesis of national exclusiveness can be outflanked by the antithesis of creative work dedicated to welfare, yielding the eventual synthesis of world community. The position of the functionalist was given a robust

acceptance by Haas (1968) who did not only emphasize the essential ramifications of functionalism but indeed went ahead to amplify what he calls the “automaticity of the integration process from the cooperative effort in the functional area.

However the lofty ideals of the functional theory has come under a barrage of attacks by commentators who are of the view that the excessive optimism that prompted the functionalist to talk glibly in terms of the cooperative inclinations of the nation-states overlaying the territorial exclusiveness of national boundaries is highly misplaced. Indeed ours is not a treatise on functionalism parse but suffice it to say that scholars such as Claude, Sowell and Engle have in their studies of the European Coal and Steel Corporation, the World Health Organization and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development respectively found out that this has not been the exact outcome (Pavenhouse and Goldstein:257) Indeed the overtly misplaced optimistic position of the functionalist is as a result of a mistaken premise on the awesome power of the nation-state and the kind of loyalty it commands from its citizens. As rightly pointed out by Claude (1959;379) “There is room for doubt that functionalists have found the key which infallibly opens the doors that keep human loyalties piled up in sovereign warehouses, thereby permitting those loyalties to spill out into the receptacles of internationalism”

Functionalism and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

In any case, bringing the functionalist theory nearer to West Africa and applying it to the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, a number of observations that readily challenge the overt optimism of the functionalist readily appear on the horizon.

In the first place, the spill-over effect that would readily cajole the functional organization into the automaticity of the integrative process has not occurred more than forty years after the formation of that organization in 1975. In any case, there is nothing palpably tangible in the way of the emergence of an inchoate common Customs Union among the west African states today. Indeed the abysmal failure of ECOWAS when it is examined on all the major critical milestones of Mitrany’s Functionalism is best encapsulated in the inability of the organization in the area of a common currency. To date most of the countries in the region are still holding tenaciously to their national currencies.

In other words, a number of interlocking factors that emanate from the sovereign attributes of the modern day nation-state no doubt have conspired to vitiate the applicability of the functionalist theory. The nation-state is sovereign and accepts no other higher authority within the confines of its territoriality. Needless to say, its leaders are men who are imbued with the same selfish inclinations which in the first place had made the Hobbesian state of nature a very difficult place to live in. Note also that in a place like the West African sub-region, the debilitating effects of colonialism in terms of not only the engrossing paternalism of the former colonial lords but also the overlaying economic interest of these imperial powers are factors that are in place and these the very factors that the functionalist theory has tended to ignore.

Furthermore, the Complex Interdependent paradigm of Koehane and Nye (2012:3) does quite diminish the overarching rambunctious role of the nation-state in allowing for the realization of the ultimate hope of man in wanting to escape from the Hobbesian state of nature. The position of these authors that the abiding gains that derivable by countries engaged in interactions at the international level, would conduce to cooperation rather than conflict has not been borne out by events in the recent past. Suffice it to say that the anarchical nature of the international political system and its apparent glorification of power as the main currency of its interactions are all spill-over effects from the ingrained psychological orientations of man; the same attributes which made life in the state of nature unattractive and which he had tried to escape from.

The point to note is that man was unable to escape from the state of nature. Worst still, the contrivance which he was able to create—the nation-state—is bedeviled by his selfish inclinations. The result is that this contraption has even advanced and reinforced the very vicissitudes that are inherent in man as it has become an octopus of immense dimensions which has infested the international system with its bellicose characteristics. The unfortunate result is that with the technological breakthroughs that it has made and with these the crescendo in weapons of mass destruction that were hitherto unknown by man in the state of nature, a worst fate seems to be awaiting man and his civilization. At this stage a question could be asked as to whether there is ever a lee-way to escape from what is clearly a seeming intractable malfeasance of man from the burden of his own creation? The remaining part of this essay will attempt to proffer some answers.

The Possibility and Feasibility of a World Government; Pull Down the Strongholds of a Ravenous World Order.

Having come to terms with the obvious fact that using the bellicose nature of the modern day nation state and the danger it portends as our compass, the original intentions of man in wanting to escape from the Hobbesian state of nature was defeated. This we must reiterate is because the outcome of that escape bid; the nation-state was contaminated by the selfish virus inherent in man himself. The result is that the nation-state is bellicose and belligerent and with the acquisitive achievements in technological inventions have at its disposal enough destructive capability to inflict injuries that would readily dwarf those originally obtainable in the state nature.

A way out of this quagmire have been suggested by pacifists (Clark and Sohn:1960,) who have proposed the possibility of a world government. These pacifists have advanced reasons to hope that the possibility of a mega world government under whose auspices all the countries of the world would coalesce is a distinct proposition. The hope is that under this universal government, supranational organizations with headquarters in God-knows-where would coordinate a government that would be able to clip the wings of the modern day nation-state.

Nonetheless these pacifists' optimism have not been able to answer a number of questions that are germane to the feasibility of their proposition. In the first place, which

country of the world is going to host the headquarters of this world government? Again questions could be raised as who is going to be the pioneer Head of State or Head of Government of the taunted universal world government? Indeed what is going to be the *modus operandum* in the electoral processes that would be deployed in choosing the said pioneer Head of State? Is there going to be an interim government that is going to oversee the affairs of the world in the immediate pre-election period and what is the manner of choice of the personnel of such a contraption? In other words, is the world going to be an acephalous polity existing on its accord before the first signs of this world government emerges? What would the world government do to curtail the selfish excesses of man which in the first place is the real reason for the nasty life in the Hobbesian state of nature? In other words, is the proposed world government capable of generating a magic wand with which it is going to re-create man away from his animalistic instincts? Indeed one could go on with questions on end as to the viability of this proposition.

However a possible leeway in proposing solutions to the complex problems of man in the contemporary nation-state is first and foremost to seek ways of disarmaments. Perhaps a gradual incremental approach would be appropriate here. Indeed it has been suggested that the countries with the military industrial complexes should be made to stop arming conflicts in the world for economic gains. The countries in question are those that have arms and ammunitions factories who in order to sale such weapons stoke the fire of disagreements all around the world. Indeed as stated by EkweEkwe (2011: 130) “Britain should ban all arms sales to Africa immediately and comprehensively“. This must form the fulcrum of a new beginning. Again there is the urgent need to fundamentally alter both the financial and political architecture of the post 1945 world. The configuration of that architecture is grossly unjust particularly to the so-called third world nation-states who were not part of the making of the agreements that led to the formation of these organizations. There is therefore a need to alter the nature of the Bretton Woods financial institutions and of course the United Nations Organization. We are optimistic that genuine actions in these directions would readily reduce the pervading culture of wars and conflicts around the world.

Summary and Conclusion

The nation state as it exists today is the creation of man. It is the off- short of the Leviathan which according to Thomas Hobbes is the result of man’s attempt to escape from the state of nature. Man did succeed in creating the commonwealth or the political community. However the result of his creation; the nation-state is bedeviled by the same selfish instincts which made life in the state of nature unbearable. Worst still the problem that the modern day nation-state is capable of unleashing on man is much more problematic when compared to that in the state of nature. Therefore man did not quite succeed in escaping from the inanities of the state of nature. This is because in wanting to escape from the state of nature, he ought to have tried to escape from himself first. In that way he would have first been able to purge himself of all his bestial instincts. Unfortunately, that did not happen with the regrettable result that the emergent nation-

state became infested with the original belligerent nature of man which it has magnified to poison the nature of the interactive process in contemporary politics both at home and abroad. The way forward is to go back to the immediate post World War two period to effect a new beginning in the architectural configurations that govern international politics and that do exert an overwhelming influence on internal politics within the nation-states.

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