

BREXIT – THE *SOFT* WAY OR THE *HARD* VARIANT

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**Abstract.** The present article is designed as a new part/continuation of the study dedicated to the issue (in volumes coordinated by Dan Dungaciu, Ruxandra Iordache for the Publishing House of the Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu”, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2016 and Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017) in/through “*Europastorm*”: *Brexit – The Crisis of a Europe in Crisis*.

In the key of reinterpreted analogies/parables – *from the hunting dog, to the [optimistic and/or pessimistic] frogs before the storm* – the study will identify, analyse and comment on both the optimistic devices and the pessimistic alternatives which irrigate either the *hard variant* or the *soft way*. Extrapolated by the very permutant assertion of its *optimistic-pessimistic effects*, on the metamorphic background of the event – *Brexit can take/embody various forms* – its *spectrum* summing up as defining points/values both *soft* and *hard* attributes seen as modes of action and decision that do not lose sight of the initial imprint, be it *pessimistic* or *optimistic*. The options will be related to what we will consider – even in this particular context – as *Apollonian rationality* and *Dionysian intuition*, subsuming them to the effects of the *philosophical-political disillusionment* of *Brexit*.

**Keywords:** *Brexit; Hard and Soft Option; Pessimistic and Optimistic Choice; Post-Brexit*

*The Frogs before the Storm*

Hermann Keyserling<sup>1</sup> opts for a *bookish-critical* formula and technique of *spectral analysis* applied to Europe, and uses a type of analogy with suggestive force – “the Englishman resembles the hunting dog” – designed on the basis of a series of correspondences (beyond the moment of its actual perspective – the international post-war phenomenon) that need to be filtered and updated in the

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<sup>1</sup> Keyserling, Hermann, *Analiza spectrală a Europei – Spectral Analysis of Europe*, European Publishing House Institute, Jassy, 1993.

context of current European dynamics. They give a new meaning to the correspondence register of formal similarity, by modifying elements under the incidence of an influence-by-reporting effect. The psyche thus uncovered displays the role of the unconscious, the power of instinctual intuition, the manifestation of an “extroverted sensitivity”, “turning from the inside to the outside” (looking towards the *exit!* we note), of an “exception that confirms the rule”<sup>2</sup>. We are talking about attributes of the *hunting dog* (the analogy allowing us to glimpse, in anticipation, a *temperamental* path, a psychology of the *exit*) acting necessarily and in synchronicity with the field of attention, valuing the primacy of action and the importance of reaction, the process of following and rewriting the rules of the game by ignoring restraint and control, exhibiting a prompt, spontaneous and unhesitating attitude. The ideal image of the *zoon politikon* is equated by Keyserling with the hypostasis of one who “acts in political affairs as surely as the hunting dog tracking the partridge”<sup>3</sup>. From this we deduce a certain premonition of contact with the outside world, a relationship that influences and transforms, on temporal coordinates – “in new circumstances, the Englishman no longer wants the old” – the relation to self and external realities, through dynamized impulses of self-awareness, through an empiricism that facilitates the early detection of the *saeculum*’s crises, by “unsentimental” abandonment of the part liable to functional incapacity; and, last but not least, by a conversion to a “current new adaptation”<sup>4</sup>. Innocence and candour, attached to the conventions of power, certify two of Keyserling’s evaluations: “England can break as many treaties as it wants”<sup>5</sup> and “the Englishman knows how to give up at the right moment, in such a natural and honest way that the problem of change of direction is brought to the consciousness of others as little as that of guilt (...)”<sup>6</sup>.

In the very laboratory of the *exit* campaign, Dominic Cummings proposes, close to Keyserling’s psychologically imprinted formula, a Tolstoian analogy (“Oblonsky and the frogs before the thunderstorm: fashion, delusions of the educated, and the Single Market”, 2017), an appeal that he operates and capitalizes on by using a model of interpretation imbued with literary valences: in depressingly harmless political debates, fuelling irrational and hysteroid dysfunctions (of the same functional-psychological order!), exacerbating a set of cognitive biases, adding impulse to restricted group thinking and reducing precision by generalization and abstraction, Oblonski is presented as a typical character-type, the very standard of an analogy with illustrative role. Cummings anticipates a possible portrait sketch, which suggests the choice of a seemingly dilettante character, devoid of seriousness, whom he defines as a man of action, brighter than many others belonging to the same circle, and whom he places next to Karenin, as a reconfirmation that politics uses too many such standard characters, (today) most of them being

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

attached to the European institutional model and interested in joining (at any cost) the eurozone. The problem that is inexplicably omitted, Cummings believes, is precisely the reference to a *manifestly-extroverted sensitivity* (in Keyserling's terms), inherent in the perpetuation of research about the way political options can immediately affect us (*how does this affect me?*) and triggering the release of emotional waves from the management of hermetic and self-censored networks, with an eroded political centre incapable of quantifying and reacting to the demands of adaptation (or recognizing, in a Keyserlingian way, the demands of a "current new adaptation"). The *Remainer* elite is culpable for the perpetuation of complex systems based on the logic of mending errors *on the go/or from within*, precisely avoiding the obligation of a substantive review "of how quickly errors can be adapted and how they can serve as lessons to be learned". This perspective accredits the surplus of initiative of centralized systems, which in turn are unable to continuously adapt and oppose the direction of innovation of decentralized systems, without understanding and without providing solutions to the challenges facing small businesses and the lower middle classes. Cummings' verdict is sharp: as the self-perception of originality is amplified, conformity and imprisonment within reduced parameters increase. As the degree of vulnerability to operations and campaigns of influence increases, the error of losing sight of the essential and the real stake, through ignorance and ignoring, by missing the meaning and direction of politics, also increases. In summary, the above diagnoses are eloquently captured and anticipated by Tolstoy in two passages of expressive force. The first uses Cummings's political arguments, necessary for supporting the reflection launched by the very attitude of Stepan Arkadici, who defied general guidelines and opinions (they came to him of their own accord!) at the level of his skill (knowledge), the factual reality of having opinions being similar to the common habit of wearing a hat. The preference for one type of political orientation over another is not the product of a rational estimate, but the expression of synchronism with one's personal lifestyle. Oblonski's option for the Liberal Party is justified precisely by referring to a personal filter: the defective course of the economy – Stepan Arkadici was also indebted, lacking sufficient material resources; marriage, as an outdated institution, had to be restructured – deprived of joy in his family life, Stepan Arkadici indulged in another state of affairs; the implication of understanding religion as a formula for unleashing the human barbarian side<sup>7</sup>.

In the spirit of (re)interpreted analogies, Cummings considers – definitively breaking away from the Keyserlingian theory of the foxhound/hunting dog – that the Tolstoian fragment, anchored in the debate about Turkish atrocities and the emergence of pan-Slavism, accurately outlines the profile of the pseudo-intellectual whose argument proves that the "national feeling" is a harmful and stagnant act: "Yes, the newspapers say the same thing," said the prince. "That's right. They croak in a choir, like frogs before the storm. You can't hear anything because of

<sup>7</sup> Lev Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, Polirom Publishing House, Jassy, 2007, pp. 12-13.

them”<sup>8</sup>. It is necessary to specify, in this approach, three essential findings: the first is that Cummings denounced, by *the frog analogy*, the current British conformity expressing an absence of imaginative resources (an aspect that Keyserling underlined by comparing the British citizen with a fantasy man!), restricted to ideas and perspectives lacking mobility, unable to impose a fast pace, subsumed to the single formula of “a possible sensible approach”, deprived of predictability and any correct assessment of probability; the second concerns the perception of a background noise – *croaking* (Keyserling denounced the “honest deafness of England”!) defined by Cummings as a disturbing and amplified noise – maintained by a media diverted from posing questions or taking position about the way the European Union is run, its problems, evolution and crises (not given any space and/or time in serious political debates, considered tiring in pertinent arguments about what is lost and what is gained), on the debt and demographics of the euro area, on the implications of the *Report of the Five Presidents*, aimed at strengthening Europe’s economic and monetary union; the third concerns the very imminence of a *European storm*, a false weather warning disguised by displaying a set of dangers ready to occur (the effects of abandoning the common market, the manifestations of extremist racism) and maintained by a “warm fog” of Oblonskian ignorance of central problems and the nature of trade and exchange relations, by omitting any real information regarding the mechanisms of institutional function, by not knowing the rules of the common market, by not understanding history, nature, the dynamics of law implementation systems or the register of complex interaction between law – economy – the *business domain* and history <sup>9</sup>.

### *The Soft Way and the Hard Version of Brexit*

In the spirit of (re) interpreted and (re) contextualized analogies, Churchill’s parable of the two frogs anticipates (other) two psyches that, in turn, direct two variants of reaction: a *pessimistic* frog, discouraged from the beginning and incapable to find (or at least imagine) a solution; and an *optimistic* frog, fighting and thus, through courage and firmness, able to find solutions for a situation without an (apparent) *exit*. The parable requires to be updated and revised not only from the perspective of different attitudes/temperaments or the option to give up/let go vs. the option to mobilize/to do something; but especially in terms of the details that compose it: frogs are greedy, they cannot resist the temptation to indulge in a sip of fresh milk, being driven instinctively by the uncensored inclination which Keyserling calls *the primacy of the unconscious*; the source of attraction is *inside*, hard to reach and issuing a warning – the stable with high windows and the milk bucket with steep walls; the belief that any optimistic action, involving non-renunciation, continuous struggle and sustained agitation has a result not only in nuancing chances of survival, but also in producing

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 873.

<sup>9</sup> Dominic Cummings, *On the referendum # 21: Branching histories of the 2016 referendum and ‘the frogs before the storm’*, 9 January 2017, <https://dominiccummings.com/2017/01/09/on-the-referendum-21-branching-histories-of-the-2016-referendum-and-the-frogs-before-the-storm-2/>, accessed on 30 January 2019.

surprising consequences – “in the morning [*the frog* – we note] found itself on a thick slab of butter, formed during the night, due to its struggles”<sup>10</sup>. The Churchill parable is re-delivered by the British Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, in the version of pursuing an optimistic attitude and reaction about the probability of concluding an agreement on *Brexit* to its last consequences, without foreseeing, however, accelerated progress and fixed calendars and, in this sense, reaffirming a constant attitude that does not exclude sustained labour (*optimistic struggles*). The Minister retaliates against the objections, via Paris, and explains the UK’s policy of gaining benefits as a result of *Brexit*, noting that Britain’s attitude is dependent on disinterested optimism, in the idea that “we do not seek (...) to have *both the butter and the money on the butter*” – we note (“London, optimistic about a Brexit deal”, November 8, 2018).

The opinion of British voters on the completion of the stages of *Brexit* expresses a balanced reaction that maintains a moderate optimism, on par with a dose of pessimism (see, in this regard, the survey presented by BBC News on 15 October 2018, in response to the question *Brexit: Are you optimistic or pessimistic?*). Although the sentiment is one of a ten-year decline in the economy, most voters – as seen in the Report *Britain’s Brexit hopes, fears and expectations* (The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Centre for Social Research, 2018) – are optimistic about the long-term implications of *Brexit*, to the detriment of pessimism for its immediate consequences, reaffirming the feeling that, following *Brexit*, the UK will gain (at some point) increased control over its own economy. One in two voters said immigration issues would be exacerbated post-*Brexit*, while just over half of voters remained optimistic about finding solutions. If immigration is not considered a vital post-*Brexit* issue, the optimization of public services is among the top three post-*Brexit* priorities. Regarding the situation of statistics for low-income people, most of those interviewed resonated with the common perception of an insignificant, even non-existent effect *Brexit* would have on the fluctuation (increase/decrease) in their number (with a slight advantage for those who estimate that the standard of living of low-income people would decrease post-*Brexit*). A similar perception, in the sense of a fundamental lack of change, occurs in the case of the health system. The *Leave* voters were considered more optimistic than those in the *Remainer* camp (the sample took into consideration not only political choices, but also age and occupational environment); with a significant and perceptible difference in opinions about the economy, increasing or reducing/controlling immigration and the problem of low-income people being noted between the two groups<sup>11</sup>.

Not coincidentally, in the specified context, that of quantifying a state of affairs inside optimism-pessimism parameters, the evaluations thus obtained have an equally balanced guidance.

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Maisky, Gabriel Gorodetsky, *The Maisky Diaries: Red Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s, 1932-1943*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2015, pp. 354.

<sup>11</sup> John Curtice, Muslihah Albakri, Allison Dunatchik, Neil Smith, *Britain’s Brexit hopes, fears and expectations*, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Center for Social Research, 2018.

On the one hand, we have a device with optimistic operation. In this sense, Andrew Marr proposes, through *An optimist's guide to Brexit*<sup>12</sup>, the acceptance of *Brexit* as an inevitable phenomenon/reality, subsequently contrasting it with the perspective of Louis Williams<sup>13</sup>, an optimism generated and maintained by *the great unknown* that envelops the completion of *Brexit* steps, anchored either in *anywhere-s* or in *somewhere-s*, as a dichotomy/responsible cleavage for the division that made *Brexit* possible. Andrew Marr considers the *Referendum on exit* both “the greatest democratic rebellion in modern British history,” and (retaining superlative proportions), “the greatest defeat for the cognitive-type elites who have dominated politics since the 1960s”. What prevails, says Marr, is precisely the active idea of *understanding* and the mandatory recourse to *duty*, both terms being included in the set of “adjective extensions” attached to *Brexit* – *hard*, *soft*, *clean* or *dirty*. In the footsteps of David Goodhart<sup>14</sup>, Andrew Marr identifies and locates, in the area of a new *tribal division* (reminiscent of Maffesoli and, later, of Bauman in theorizing *neotribes*, but especially *residual sets/rudimentary tribes* of interest in the present context, precisely through their definition as formations focused on a single issue, interested in a single subject, inviting and encouraging action!), on the one hand, the resistance of the liberal Europhile foundation adapted to immigration and globalization; and, on the other hand, the position-taking of those located far from the metropolis, uncomfortable and inconvenienced, left *behind* or left *out*. D. Goodhart uses the metaphor of locating and identifying a percentage of (approximately) 20-25% of the population, *within* the space-option of those “anywheres” (defining optimists who see the world positively from anywhere they look, with dominant cultural and societal positions, meritorious products of the education system with rising careers and portable identities, whose optimism is recharged precisely from the successes obtained), more than half belonging to those “somewheres”, grouped individuals in precise geographical identities, disturbed and perturbed by rapid changes, with a marginal economic, social or cultural position. Marr’s assessment is sharp: “The link between cultural conservatism and hostility to the European Union seems to be strong: for example, support for the death penalty is the most reliable predictor of anti-Brussels vote, counting more than income, geographical argument or anything else. All these lead to the possibility that the liberal elites will have to recognize or even submit to views authoritatively expressed by the numerous and poor”<sup>15</sup>.

There is also a functional pessimistic alternative. *Bloomberg's pessimistic guide to 2017*, relying on (probable) prophetic desires – a yet unfulfilled prophecy, at the time of writing – provided, in the series of pessimistic scenarios for 2017,

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Marr, “An optimist's guide to Brexit”, in *New Statesman*, 22 December 2016, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/12/optimists-guide-brexit>, accessed on 10 February 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Williams, *An Optimist's Brexit: A Millennial's Vision*, CTC Publishing, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd., 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Marr, “Anywheres vs. Somewheres: the split that made Brexit inevitable”, in *New StatesmanAmerica*, 17 March 2017, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/03/anywheres-vs-somewheres-split-made-brexit-inevitable>, accessed on 7 February 2019.



the replacement of Prime Minister Theresa May with a counterpart, a follower of tough and firm policy, determined to complete negotiations on Britain's exit from the European Union. Pessimism is recharged, however, with additional nuances associating *Brexit* with a *painful* approach, used as a moralizing lesson and given as an example by the European Union; instead, British optimism is nothing more than a "bluff game" (R. Fico), and the agreement becomes *harmful* for both parties and at the same time *useless*, similar to an *erroneous* message requiring to be corrected by another Referendum (T. Blair) – or to a suffocated program, stuck or (by a pessimistic overreaction) even *dead*. This state of affairs is not unpredictable, taking into account the results of statistical evaluations (*Brexit Policy Panel* – October 2018 and *Statista* – November 2018) which certify the supremacy of a characteristic pessimism about *Brexit*-among experts (sample of 100 experts on the issues of *Brexit* working in the field of social sciences), with a percentage of 42% anticipating a *Brexit* without agreement and with over 70% validating a decrease in foreign investment (outside the Union), due to *Brexit*.

Extrapolated by the very permutant assertion of *optimistic-pessimistic effects*, on the metamorphic background of the event – *Brexit can take/embody various forms – its spectrum* (not to miss Keyserling's *spectral analysis*!) adds as defining points/values the *hard* and *soft* attributes, both ways of action and decision that do not lose sight of the original imprint; *pessimistic* on the one hand, and *optimistic* on the other.

*The hard variant* advocates a *difficult exit, pessimistic* to the end, without compromise; not only an *exit* from the European Union, but also a withdrawal from the single market and the Customs Union (although both constructs also include states outside the Union), by the formula for drawing up a free trade agreement (different from that already existing between the Union, Canada or Norway), which, ideally (*optimistic*, this time!), should cover both goods and services. In the same *hard* register, the United Kingdom would no longer be in the situation of accepting the free movement of nationals in the European space, nor would it be perceived as a subject of the European Court of Justice (after the transitional period it would become subject to independent arbitration), with the likelihood of no longer having to contribute to the Union budget, and in the impossibility of concluding free trade agreements with the Member States or with other countries until after signing the Leave Accord (see "What is hard Brexit?", *The UK in a Changing Europe*). Considering (seriously and plausibly) the hard variant, the European Union accredits, with justified fears, the prospect of a *hard Brexit*, a situation that would definitively exclude the possibility of reaching an agreement. *Surprise* is the declarative keyword most frequently attached (Margaritis Schinas) to the concept of a *hard Brexit*: *surprise* of European Commission on the possibility of a *hard Brexit* and *surprise* of Great Britain in terms of preparing the Union for such a variant, even if there are possible concessions from the Union, but also nuanced arguments amplifying pressures upon Great Britain to start the final stage. Recorded in the second phase of the negotiations, the debate relies on the relationship between the Member States of the Union and their *post-Brexit* reporting by presenting three negotiation files

completed with an apparent consensus: the costs of *Brexit* – the rights of EU citizens in/from Great Britain and the situation of the Ireland-Northern Ireland border.

*The soft way* foreshadows the maintenance of the United Kingdom as a country aligned with the European Union, with special access to the single market and the acceptance of a compromise on immigration agreements. *The soft way* would have the effect of minimizing impact and effects in the sphere of trade and in the field of business, mainly by preserving the British position within the Customs Union. We will agree, as a formula, on the concept of *soft way* which manages to highlight the preservation context of elements of connection/communication, and to mark the itinerary started and deployed in a certain direction; a European direction already known to Great Britain, which would remain subject to some of the rules of the Community Bloc, losing, however, any recognized authority and prestige in initiating and/or deciding to amend them while creating, in addition, difficulties in concluding its own trade agreements (“What do hard Brexit and soft Brexit mean and what is the difference between them? “, *News The essential daily briefing*).

The theme is recharged evaluatively through political decision (of balancing the camps) and Theresa May’s proposal (consisting in finalizing an “agreement as broad as possible”, extended to as many sectors of activity as possible, with greater cooperation than any free trade agreement would enforce) to take control of the country’s borders and laws (“British norms will remain at least as high as those of the EU”), through a *hard* variant (*hard* solutions for “harsh realities”), but without excluding the intermediate path of a transitional period which would involve assuming any obligations arising from the European rules and regulations in force. It requires a double set of questionnaires about *how hard* or *how soft* is *Brexit* expected to be, but also the possibility of correlating the two formulas (most often included in the complex issue of Northern Ireland and the complete withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Customs Union and the single market, leaving it with a *hard border* in Ireland or a border crossing the Irish Sea; but the outlook is recalculated, with Theresa May reaffirming the need to find a solution for a negotiation without a *hard border*).

The 2018 – *The Year of Brexit Decisions* Retrospective prepared by Barbara Wesel for *Deutsche Welle* has the merit of interrogating precisely the synthesis of a *and hard and soft* formula, able to trace the course of a relatively “smooth and ordered” process whose phases dispute, however, the way of imposing a variant to the detriment of any other course of action. Barbara Wesel inventories the two phases, both calendars (January-March and April-October, respectively), but also their journey meanings – the first, explicitly called – transition, the second unnamed, but accredited [here] as a phase of intensifications and plus-impulses, followed by the inert interval of undecided problems. The transition marks a timely path – “continuing the status quo until the end of 2020, beyond the deadline for Brexit”, as a transitional extension in *soft* manner which will, on the one hand, reaffirm the status of the United Kingdom as Member State of the Union; and, on the other hand, withdraw its right to vote within the European



institutions, keeping it in the neutral zone as a concessional but also controlled option – the negotiation of trade agreements, but without the right to apply them. The British Cabinet supports the same formula of *optimism or pessimism*, of *hard or soft – exit to the end* (from the common market, the Customs Union, by renouncing communitary legislature) and *re-entering* the international arena as a (commercial) competitor of the Union vs. a *weighted exit*, by complying with European regulations. Phase II relies on an intensification and increase in the frequency of negotiations, by weighing the European offer for reaching a simple trade agreement – according to the “Canada plus” formula, with a customs exemption for goods and a ban on market access in the case of the provision of services [the British *hard* version proposes an intensified formula (also a keyword for the new Brexit Minister, Dominic Raab) of “Canada plus, plus, plus, plus”, through access to goods *plus* services, *plus* financial market, *plus* British rules, with force similar to European rules]. Undecided, B. Wesel proposes a doubling ideology and politics with economic problems (rising inflation, currency depreciation, economic decline), justifying the absence of precise determinations (from London), by maintaining the appropriate context for an open end.

Reporting *Brexit* to a triple action option, with an insinuating-metaphorical coloristic palette – *A red, white and blue Brexit* –, Tony Connelly appreciates that Theresa May’s remarks belong to a visible rhetoric of *hard Brexit* received from Dublin and subsumed to imperatives of change, a situation created by the amalgam of “ingredients” that sum up the exit from the Customs Union (an area where the signals of “tectonic displacement” are still felt), from the single market, as well as an exit from under the jurisdiction of the European Court Justice and Immigration Control. The Tory Party’s *Soft Brexit* would be nothing more than a joke (*British humour?* – we note), counterbalanced by the position of Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson in favour of an *open Brexit* option prioritizing access to the single market, conditioned by the restriction of immigration. The Irish Commission official points to the significance of the double option for Ireland, both variants being independent, not constrained by an antagonistic relationship but, on the contrary, belonging to an open variant – the British option not to consider anything other than the *hard* type of *Brexit* and the possibility of finding a solution within the Union, no matter what it looks like.

If the *hard* or *soft* benchmarks seem to be integrated into a program capable of using both, what remains debatable to the end is the political orientation highlighting three irreconcilable components – the followers of *hard Brexit*, the pragmatists and the *soft* pro-Europeans. The directions issued foresee a tri-phased radical solution (an *exit* without agreement and without transition), a pragmatic approach (supporting the agreement with the Union and, implicitly, Theresa May’s policy), and a decision resumed by a Referendum on-the-Referendum (*The People’s Vote* campaign to convince voters about the inevitability of *Brexit*, based on the need for another vote for final ratification of a different agreement). Giving an explicit vote against the Executive, the Conservative “Black Block” launches, as the only suitable solution, the Procrustean, adapted *hard Brexit*, the Brexit-WTO formula, by extrapolating the rules of the World Trade Organization.

Although recognized as opposite terminals, the *hard variant* and *soft way* are integrated into a pragmatic philosophical vision, illustrating the *essence – appearance* ratio, a philosophical and political limiting pretext to question *Brexit* as a ponderous, serious variant – “Leave means Leave” – as a personalized-mimicked version – “Brexit in Name Only” (*sic!*) – or as a reversible proposal – “regrexit”.

### *Hard vs. Soft Brexit*

The film *Brexit: The Uncivil War* (2019, directed by Toby Haynes, produced by Baffin Media, Channel 4 Television Corporation, House Productions) places *Brexit*, through Dominic Cummings’ monologue, inside the commentary that allows it to *address exactly the questions that must be addressed*, the phenomenon of synthesis of intergenerational inequalities (at the historical level), but also the mechanism of conception where *Apollonian rationality overlaps Dionysian intuition*. In fact, the doublet is structurally recomposed, consisting of the *lucid, rational, optimistic – balanced* dimension vs. the variant maintained by *the uncertainty of form, the lack of balance and the prevalence of instincts over reason*. The debates/negotiations unite senses and meanings under the antagonistic generic term of *unity – division*, but also articulate two plans, deduced from the context thus maintained – *plan A* and *plan B*. The proposed variants foresee, for the European space, a *Brexit* in the shadow of elections for the European Parliament, but also a counteracting of the possible schismatic-European scenarios (stipulated on the agenda of the Sibiu Summit), maintaining the ongoing formula of *the rule of either/or: either forcing the exit, or agonizing over an extension of negotiations, or a reaffirmation of Britain’s stay in Europe*. Although an “epic” – exhausting approach, *Brexit* brings to mind the European indecision/crisis (the impossibility of a consensus between France and Germany on monetary policy; Italy’s offensive position on the issue of migrants; the impossibility of reaching a West-East balance, taking into account the structure of the post-*Brexit* budget, testing its unitary response (a Europe “exceptionally united” on the issue of *Brexit*, reaffirming its common response capacity, but confirming (even from the Eurosceptic governments – Poland, Hungary, Italy) the rejection of any similar scenario of a contaminating *exit*, denied precisely by the opportunity to invest all political-European energies in the future foundation of an *optimistic-positive* European agenda. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair established, as an essential benchmark, the role of the Union in the *Brexit* issue (or “stalemate”), insisting on finding and applying solutions by reforming, tempering and/or changing immigration policies, considering that a prolonged *Brexit* process would jeopardize the very “unity of Great Britain” (consisting in the peace agreement with Northern Ireland, or the intensification of pro-independence aspirations in Scotland). The response of the European leaders is a sharp one – to reject the agreement – opting not only for the variant of a *hard Brexit* but also for its implementation, with *much harsher* results/consequences for the British, transmitting the effects felt by them to the European space. The debate on *Brexit* in the European Parliament (January 2019) reaffirms the need – as far as ratification

can be achieved – to implement the *Brexit* program through cooperation (Melania Ciot), which involves: denouncing the *backstop* of the British Prime Minister (conceptually explained by Michel Barnier as a non-dogmatic orientation, realistic protection mechanism), of compromise-after-compromise (Nigel Farage); the call for a new Referendum capable of providing solutions to London's chaos and a return to "the roots" (Molly Scott Cato); clarification of political issues and political struggles for which "Brexit has become an existential problem" (Guy Verhofstadt); a return to generosity as a sign of balanced assertion of power and strengthening long-term relationships (Ashley Fox); reaffirming fears without renouncing a dose of *optimism* (Roberto Gualtieri); moderation through dialogue, on the one hand, of a *hard Brexit* rejecting anything/everything and, on the other hand, of the refusal of the *Remainer* camp to take into account any proposal except a new Referendum (Elmar Brok); prioritary interest in granting rights to European citizens in the United Kingdom (Antonio Tajani); maintaining (through a "natural optimism") England's decision to withdraw from the EU as "the best possible solution" (Jean Claude Juncker).

Although a relevant element/node on the agenda and in the program of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, *Brexit* has a condensed series of proposals, reduced to three direct references: the first has, as a reaffirmed objective, the orderly withdrawal, a "smooth transition" and strengthening the unity of the European Union-27 by cooperating to fulfil the institutionally-determined procedures (especially by implementing the post-March 29, 2019 Agreement), with an interest in "strengthening a comprehensive partnership"<sup>16</sup>; the second considers the approach of close coordination between the Council and Eurogroup<sup>17</sup>; the third acknowledges not only the possible effects of *Brexit* belonging to Euroscepticism and the migration crisis, but proposes, as its main objective, a reduction of the distance between the European project and the ordinary citizen through active participation and volunteering, through guidance and firm progress towards negotiations for the European Solidarity Corpus<sup>18</sup>.

The Document *Communication from the Commission to The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Central Bank, The European Economic and Social Committee, The Committee of The Regions and The European Investment Bank. Preparing for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 30 March 2019*<sup>19</sup> does not exclude the possibility of a transitional period (in which Union rules, the *acquis communautaire*, including international agreements would also apply to the United Kingdom, even if it no longer participates in the governance or decision-making of the

<sup>16</sup> Programul Președinției României la Consiliul Uniunii Europene – Program of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union, 1 January – 30 June 2019, [https://www.romania2019.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ro\\_program\\_ropres2019.pdf](https://www.romania2019.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ro_program_ropres2019.pdf), accessed on 5 February 2019, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Central Bank, The European Economic and Social Committee, The Committee of The Regions and The European Investment Bank. Preparing for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 30 March 2019*, Brussels, 19.7, COM (2018) 556 final, 2018.

European institutions, bodies, offices or agencies<sup>20</sup>), but carefully sets out two scenarios that require further study and have different consequences. Thus, by ratifying and entering into force of the Agreement before 30 March 2019, Union law ceases to apply to the United Kingdom within the period stipulated in the Agreement, 1 January 2021, after a transitional period of 21 months; in the “no deal” or “cliff-edge” scenario, the absence of a consensus or the non-ratification of the withdrawal agreement in due time entails the invalidation of a transitional period, with European legislation no longer applying to the United Kingdom. With the necessary mention according to which, even if the transition period existed and was negotiated successfully, the status of Great Britain would be that of *third country*, without having the same rights and without benefiting from the same advantages as a Member State. The consequences of the eventuality of the second scenario and of *third country* status would imply: the lack of a specific framework/arrangement for European citizens in the United Kingdom or for British citizens in the Union; enforcement of regulations and tariffs at the border with the United Kingdom, through controls on customs, sanitary and phytosanitary standards and verification of compliance with Union rules (with repercussions on transport); trade relations regulated by the general provisions of public international law, including the rules of the World Trade Organization (disadvantage compared to the current level of market integration); a ban on entities in the United Kingdom from being eligible for and receiving European grants or from participating in Union procurement procedures<sup>21</sup>.

*Apollonian rationality* and *Dionysian intuition* become, in accordance with the provisions of the European document presented, syntagma surpassed by the conceptual doublet of *training* and *contingency*, terms invested with the effect of “disengagement from a relationship which was built in forty years”, with multiple and profound repercussions, notified on all levels (including and mainly in the economic-legal one). *Preparation* is equivalent to an attempt to mitigate the impact of upcoming changes by immediately intensifying their implementation and by correctly evaluating possible results, relevant not only for the named context – of an “ordered” *exit* – but also of the repercussions this may have on all 27 Member States of the Union and their nationals: “Preparation means examining all possible scenarios and assessing all associated risks, planning a response and responding to possible outcomes”<sup>22</sup>. *Contingency* – as emergency planning – requires reporting and implementing the set of measures needed to mitigate the effect of an *exit* without agreement and with no transition period, an *optimistic* response to the most *pessimistic* scenario, by timing and involvement of the Member States, through extended responsibilities in their respective areas of competence<sup>23</sup>. In themselves, the mentioned concepts define theoretical frameworks describing practical measures intended to articulate a given answer to the double variant of *hard* vs. *soft Brexit*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp 5-6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6-7.

If the report seems truncated in the sense that the option *exit* is reduced to the variant *either...or*, the intermediate paths that are inserted (under the sign of *nuances*!) In the middle space of these fixed decision terminals imply the activation of a *reserve plan/plan B*, impossible to disregard given, on the one hand, the categorical vote for the rejection of the agreement and, on the other hand, the failure of the Labour motion of censure regarding the Government's conservative policy. The doublet requires to be finalized in accordance with Manfred Weber's repeated call to the British "to finally specify what they want", as any postponement could mean either an extension until the European elections or a new/other Referendum), but betrays the inability to find a solution, through a complication and augmentation of the phenomenon, a blocked angle of looking at things (a similar perspective, in an absolutely *pessimistic* approach, to the problems that are seen in the European debate space, mimicking agreement to mitigate the effects of *Brexit* or even to block the approach). Thus, the very meaning of *Apollonian rationality* is invalidated by accrediting as possible a variant (*Dionysian intuition*), most often qualified as obsessive and opaque, in fact irrational/unrealistic, respecting the freedom of movement of persons, of goods, services and capital to the detriment of control over their own borders. This should be correlated with the effort to find domestic policy solutions, *intuited* in/by the Prime Minister's attempt to obtain a majority through a coalition with the Centre-Right Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland, adding *Brexit* to the sum of concessions within the alliance and the configuration of a fragile majority.

Apparently, the points of the letter activating Article 50 (*Brexit public correspondence – sic!* – between the British government and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, of March 27, 2017) seemed to value a *rational approach*, by overbidding the verbs *we know*, *we understand* and *we ensure*, all rounded factionally (as constructive spirit based on cooperation, respect, minimization of uncertainties, promotion of common values) by a "deep and special partnership" oriented towards outclassing and giving up the primacy of *intuitions* (through a rationally undertaken task which, according to the British Prime Minister, "should not overtake us"). *Intuitions* on the fate of *Brexit* and the European *post-Brexit* physiognomy foresee a confusing and unpredictable course, with increasing uncertainties, sensitive accents and inflammations regarding the position taken and the resulting reactions. *Intuitively*, the *post-Brexit context* emphasizes the unique perspective of "ally and competitor" for Great Britain, recognizing in *Brexit* a "country project" carried out by/in the intelligentsia's laboratory, with detrimental implications both for Great Britain and Europe<sup>24</sup>, with "red lines" permanently redrawn and with the aspect defined by Michel Barnier "as devoid of dogmatism", becoming a priority of *intuitions*, to the detriment of *rationality*. Inventory of losses on both sides – for the United Kingdom (negative effects felt by British companies; rising costs; negative values of the

<sup>24</sup> Iuliu Winkler, "Din culisele Brexitului: Ce este în spatele discursului public și cum ar putea arăta noua UE 27 – Behind the scenes of Brexit: What is behind the public discourse and how the new EU 27 might look like", *Ziare.com*, 1 May 2018, <http://www.ziare.com/europa/marea-britanie/din-culisele-brexitului-ce-este-in-spatele-discursului-public-si-cum-ar-putea-arata-noua-ue-27-1511780>, accessed on 1 February 2019.



financial industry; exodus of the intellectual labour force; diminishing diplomatic potential) and for the European Union (weakening security policy; disinterest for involvement in strengthening institutional and political culture; budget cuts; lack of a reform promoter and the absence of a regulatory and supervisory program applied to the financial industry; diminishing the level of expertise in fundamental areas, etc.) reaffirms in the *rational* plan (strategic, economic and political) that “Brexit must be as soft as possible”<sup>25</sup>. Under the evaluated conditions (created by a *scenario* more *pessimistic* than the idealists<sup>26</sup> could ever imagine), there is a tendency to intensify the “fragmentation currents”, as an indication of the *storm in Europe*, deduced from a risky synonymy for the European project: variability = fragmentation<sup>27</sup>. William Drozdiak<sup>28</sup> (2017) extrapolates the meaning of *storm* to a general phenomenon that dominates a *fractured continent* through the multifaceted crises that control various areas/fronts of a divided Europe (from Berlin – new epicentre of power; London – realm of *exit* epicentre; Paris – in search of lost glory, to the Babel-like cacophony of Brussels, to the overbidding of the centre – Madrid, to the eternal city in sharp decline – Rome, or to the troubled neighbours – Moscow, Ankara, Tunis). The signs of the *storm* are quantified in/by the dangerous agglomeration of *cumulonimbus*, predictors of political turmoil, economic insecurity and responsible for social volatility.

*Provisional Conclusions on a Provisional Destiny:  
the Philosophical-Political Deconstruction of Brexit*

The Brothers Grimm story – *The Princess and the Frog* – can be read in the same sense of (re)interpreted analogies, as a score capable of delivering a double interpretation to the *hard variant* and the *soft way* attached to *Brexit*: on the one hand, a *hard* action mode (“The young princess became very upset and (...) grabbing the frog, she hurled it with all her might against the wall”), not restricted only to breaking the spell, but able to return to the peaceful, calm state of *before the storm* – “Now you are at peace, and so am I”; on the other hand, a *soft* release of the grips that held the faithful Heinrich “heart tightly bound (...) so as not to die of too much crying, when you were a poor frog and lay under a heavy spell”. The evaluative philosophical-political perspectives of *Brexit* respect Heinrich’s appeal for freeing himself from the burden of the spell, through a double formula: an *exit* from the imprisonment of the phenomenon, operating a classical semantic synchrony with the concepts conveyed (via Hegel, Rousseau, Nietzsche), and extracting – from *the old* – the meanings of *the new*, operable as

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Dăianu, “Brexit *doare* strategic, economic, politic – Brexit *hurts* strategically, economic, politically”, *Ziare.com*, 19 February 2018, <http://www.ziare.com/brexit/marea-britanie/brexit-doare-strategic-economic-politic-1502354>, accessed on 14 February 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Cristian Preda, *Între Grexit și Brexit. Cronica politică a celor mai recente crize europene – Between Grexit and Brexit. Political Chronicle of the Most Recent European Crises*, Adenium Publishing House, Jassy, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Dăianu, *quoted article*.

<sup>28</sup> William Drozdiak, *Fractured Continent: Europe’s Crises and the Fate of the West*, Norton & Company, 2017.

a reinterpreted philosophical-political foundation of *Brexit*; and an unleashing of the phenomenon/process through a position, an evaluation and a debate that confirm that *Apollonian rationality* and *Dionysian intuition* are required to be preserved at parity when applied to *Brexit*.

In the idea of referring to the *hard* concepts of classical political philosophy, *Brexit* can be attached, in a Hegelian manner, to the research/approach of the way in which major political events can shape, decisively and in new potential-positive ways, the future of a given society; a perspective that inventories, using Hegelian interpretive formulas, not only the framework and founding principles of the European Union, but also the dynamics of its subsequent political development found in the physiognomy of *Brexit*<sup>29</sup>. The functioning primacy of *Brexit* uses the very reason of the Conservatives to respect the will and option expressed by participants in the Referendum, against Labour and Liberals, an undecided political turn to the end (initially a way of solving disputes between factions of the Conservative Party, David Cameron imagined it as a winning-moderate and moderating solution for the positions of idealistic pro-Europeans and radical anti-Europeans) considered inspired, positive, or, on the contrary, useless and hurried<sup>30</sup>. The philosophical-Hegelian substance, that according to which, dialectically, the particular (self) purpose contains the meaning of a higher order projection, is confirmed by a result that exceeds the initial purpose<sup>31</sup>.

Andrew Glencross considers the philosophy of *Brexit* a result of disappointment maintained by the imperfect alloy of political inequality and post-democracy, the solution of the Referendum being in itself a definite attempt to validate the importance of the people's opinion in managing European problems. "Rousseau's revenge" ("The English people think they are free, but they are greatly mistaken; they are only free when they elect Members of Parliament; as soon as they have been elected, the people becomes nothing") becomes the syntagma-pretext for investigation of European issues and, at the same time, for the problematization of representative democracy, with all that Rousseau-ist preoccupation with the fundamental inequality of those who govern and those who are governed presupposes. But, according to Andrew Glencross, the challenge facing the foundation of post-*Brexit* British policy is to maintain faith in the representativeness of government and the sovereignty of the people. Rousseau's tension is felt precisely in the relationship/rapport between the people and the leaders to whom it entrusted power<sup>32</sup>.

Assimilating *Brexit* to a classic kind of politicism and appealing to the concept of *misarchism*, Joe Humphreys<sup>33</sup> insists on the way Nietzsche explains the rejection of the political, economic or social elite of both Britain and the

<sup>29</sup> Emanuel Copilaş, "Hegel and the political philosophy of Brexit", in *PolSci*, vol. 17, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Sorin Bocancea coord., *Europa după Brexit – Europe after Brexit*, Adenium Publishing House, Jassy, 2016, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> Emanuel Copilaş, *art. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> Sorin Bocancea, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-72.

<sup>33</sup> Joe Humphreys, "How Friedrich Nietzsche helps to explain Brexit", *The Irish Times*, 4 December 2016, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/how-friedrich-nietzsche-helps-to-explain-brexit-1.2885320>, accessed on 27 February 2019.

European Union, as well as the defining option of *Brexit*. Resonating with the solution suggested by the current state of the phenomenon, anticipated by Nietzsche, the image of a united continental Europe (without Great Britain) is materialized by applying a Europe-Great Britain understanding formula, mainly by valuing the latter as an essential European trading partner.

The gathering of philosophical views on *Brexit* (“Philosophers on Brexit”) allowed *Daily Nous* to relaunch a debate on this generous topic of reporting without accommodation, by perpetuating a *modus vivendi* regardless of the disagreement expressed, regarding a set of moral-substantial issues – Helen De Cruz, “Being Friends with a Brexiter?”) that guarantees (the primacy of a concluding passage of the phenomenon/experiment – see, in this regard, Rebecca Bamford, “Pursuing the European Experiment while Addressing Disenfranchisement and Discrimination”) consideration of a category of philosophical-reactive concepts (the pertinence of Nietzsche’s ideas for the re-evaluation of a unified Europe, calling for a way to counter narrow nationalisms and reaffirm Britain as an active part of the development of European culture; thus re-irrigating itself with updated values of the Nietzschean construct of a *European good*, recognizing its chance to transgress borders and achieve new/other syntheses). Rebecca Bamford examines the democratic mechanism of the Referendum (to restore democracy for the citizen, especially the disadvantaged and the vulnerable), but insists on the perverse and pervertible role – roulette – of the majority decision (without denying its functioning in the spirit of democracy): the *Leave* option was stated by 36% of eligible voters, with 70%-72% actually voting. Conceptually, Rebecca Bamford insists on the way of *listening to the other*, amending (in the context of *Brexit*) the reductive reaction to a simple and simplified majority, to whose opinion the general-democratic will relates. At parity, however, according to R. Bamford, the protest reasons of the camp *Leave* need to be *listened to*, as well as the objections of the *Remain* group, extracting, from their conjugate signals a desire to reform the European Union, the need to strengthen peaceful coexistence, sustained commitment harmonized with securing and reducing disadvantages and discrepancies.

Against the background of empirical evidence on how political options work and are exercised (voters with inaccurate information favour protectionism and oppose immigration; informed voters are in favour of free trade, but also of reducing restrictions on immigration policy), Jason Brennan (“Brexit: A Bad Choice for a Referendum”) amends the Referendum as an inopportune idea, displaying through vote only certain sentiments (anger and resentment – a mark of intergenerational injustice – Mark O’Neill) but not issuing calculated options, values and beliefs of the common good. For Sophie Grace Chappell (“Political Deliberation under Conditions of Deception: the Case of Brexit”) political deliberation must be detached from the analogy of “benevolent paternalism” (Plato), by replanting it in the soil of modern democracy, delimited from counter-factuality, prefabrication, deformation, false promises, by strict review and verification of the central message and by fair judgment of voters. The requirement needing to be reformed at European level is precisely the

perpetuation of the installed distance *between* camps – *between* “movers” and “stayers” – and *between* citizens and the European space (Lisa Maria Herzog, “Saving an EU Worth Saving?”), by giving up operating, conceptually-practically, with the preposition *between*, a lexical instrument of movement or positioning in a space-interval that *separates*. From a distance, the decision of Great Britain is to contemplate the European space *from outside*, balancing the palpable-European set of benefits with the option to take control of indistinct perspectives and directions (Kristina Meshelski, “No Way Out “). *The natural need* to revalue the nation seems imperative (nothing more than “contingent historical artifact”, without denying, however, the evidence that self-identification with the nation leads to progress), through plus-identification with *Brexit* – by amending precisely the realization of the European project of cosmopolitan solidarity. Thus, the need to correct the consumerist model of reporting to political identity is reaffirmed, part of an imaginary of the *brand*, of unlimited elections, of the public display of choices/slogans as determinative modulations of the self, of equivalating “the resolution of stratified-political identities with brand/camp loyalties”. Whether the model is a functional economic, cultural or social one, political consumerism is a false and artificial construct. “We do not have unlimited individual choices about our political affiliations” and “practical aspects of geography and economics inextricably direct and involve personal identifications” are the arguments offered by Regini Rini (“The Tragedy of Political Identity”) in an evaluation of *Brexit* by terms establishing identification – “the citizen who first identifies with Great Britain” vs. “The citizen who first identifies with Europe”. The hierarchy and the primacy signalled, the privilege of one identity to the detriment of the other erodes and weakens the very spirit of democracy. *Brexit* can be identified with a transformative experience at the epistemic and political level (Eric Schliesser, “Brexit: A Political Transformative Experience”) by: revealing the collective choice (Referendum); the sum of modifying effects (exit policy, change of the nature of citizenship); the series of unpredictable consequences (re-discussing the position of the European Union and Great Britain; imploding the peace process in Northern Ireland; changing economic patterns or other types of political coalitions); the totality of collective results with transformative effect and their modifying relation to the identity and status of citizens.

The comments-reactions on the issued philosophical-political orientations accredit *Brexit* as a nodal point of maximum interest in the debates of the European political agora. These interpretations, in turn, summarize a series of amendments and insights targeting: the need to balance opinions, putting in the forefront *listening* – with equal parity – to both sides, ideological openness, correct inventory of reality and law, an approach that involves *also* the opinions of one’s opponents, as only from the act of fair proportionality of opinions can correct conclusions be drawn; quantification of the philosophical-political arguments available to each camp (their lack in the discourse of the *Leave* camp, concerned not with philosophical arguments but with the display of *practical* reasons of *exit*); formulating simple answers to questions about – *whose*

*culture?, which immigrants?, what are the methods and ways in which the cultural model is threatened?* – by studying the status of non-British inhabitants and the issue of blurring/loss of identity. But, moreover, the stated reaction that persists in the case of the studied philosophical-political perspectives is the specification of the field/analysis in the correct evaluation and maintenance of a fruitful debate on finding solutions (there are comments that amend the lack of an extensive philosophical analysis, the restriction to schematic reflections, eluding from the debate the *new*, philosophically generous literature – Habermas – or a lack of in-depth study of the classical model – Plato’s *Republic*).

The mechanism of *philosophical-political deconstruction of Brexit*, as it is displayed in/through the debates and comments raised (see Justin Weinberg’s response, June 28, 2016), confirms an approach arranged on four levels: first, equivalent to the act of distinguishing the sensitive difference between/from *taking a position* and *biased posture*, with the latter constituting an epistemic-worrying formula; the second refers precisely to the vocation and prerogative of the philosopher, who can offer a pertinent argument, regardless of the position he occupies; the third proposes a careful rereading of the signs of the times, by correlating the introductory context with the economic-cultural arguments of *exit*, without excluding the post-Referendum nuances; the fourth emphasizes the abandonment of lamentable tone and tonality, in favour of arguing a pertinent point of view. They demonstrate, in an *optimistic* note, that any *hard* or *soft* reporting to *Brexit* can only be – at this moment – a provisional approach, applied to a still ... temporary phenomenon, if not as existence/validation, certainly as a finality definitivation.

### *Post-conclusions*

Structured in/on stages of conclusion, finalization/ordering (through the Parliamentary validation of the modified form of the agreement negotiated by Theresa May, revised in the light of the victory won in the elections by Boris Johnson’s Conservatives), *Brexit* becomes a type of reality whose implementation is decided by the affirmative-adverbial meaning of “nonetheless”. The current form indicates, with regard to the decision taken, a short-term way of draw(ing) conclusions, in the absence of any alternative or additional conditioning, or any optional variant (continuation/postponement). The “rule of the three withouts” is unanimously confirmed and accepted, the European part (through Michel Barnier) stating, in turn, that “now things are clear”.

In stages, the formulation of conclusions regarding *Brexit* proposes as *deadline* the day of January 31, 2020; the end of January will specify both the “need to complete the process” (Jean-Claude Juncker) and the “endeavour to finally reach *Brexit*” (Boris Johnson). The Conclusions of the *European Council Meeting (Article 50)* of 13 December 2019 on *Brexit*, reaffirm the importance of coherent negotiations, coordination and dialogue, unity and transparency, giving a key role and place to the orderly withdrawal project, a document of accelerated ratification and effective application which includes future relations in the



balanced construction of rights and obligations and provides the appropriate framework for equitable competition.

The rule “*nonetheless, without a doubt, undoubtedly*” has a differentiated reporting context. On the one hand, the British flank accredits the new agreement with *excellent values*, found in/by: accepting the adjustment effect of the business environment; payment of 39 billion pounds, estimated as the cost of *Brexit*; guaranteeing the rights of both European and British citizens by both the European Union and the United Kingdom; exclusion of *backstop*; compliance of Northern Ireland with the rules of the European single market, as part of the British Customs Territories and future trade agreements. On the other hand, the European Union summarizes the proposed provisions in a possible formulation of a post-conclusion, even *intermediate* and, implicitly, reduced to areas of common-essential interest-movement of goods and establishment of financial services, components both of the process of finalizing the trade treaty, as well as of the necessary agreements on transport, research, education, energy, climate, defence, nuclear cooperation, the legal field, etc.

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