

Getting our country back. The UK press on the eve of the EU referendum. The discourse of ellipsis over immigration and the challenging of the British collective memory over Europe.

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**Abstract (edited).**

This paper investigates a critical discourse analysis the author has conducted of UK mainstream newspaper coverage on the eve of the EU referendum. Immigration became a key issue in the closing days. The paper will explore the possibility that the discourse moved from persuasion to prejudice and xenophobia.

The paper will also argue that in the age of populist *post-truth politics*, some of the newspapers also employed such emotive rhetoric, designed to influence and compel the audience to draw certain conclusions – to get *their country back*. In so doing, it is argued some of the UK media also pose a serious threat to democracy and journalism – rather than holding those in power to account and maintaining high journalistic standards.

The notion that that some of the UK media played on public perceptions and a collective memory that has created, propagated and embedded many myths about the EU for decades, is explored. The possibility this swayed many – despite limited or a lack of substantiation, is explored, a *discourse of ellipsis*, if you will.

## Introduction.

This paper will seek to demonstrate how the use language in Britain's EU referendum did shift from that of persuasion to that of overt prejudice and xenophobia. This paper will also seek to demonstrate how some of the British newspapers replaced the truth and objective facts with pro-Brexit emotive rhetoric, typical of the post-truth politics of the age. This proved more influential.

The Oxford English dictionary joint US-UK word of the year in 2016, was *Post-Truth*. An adjective relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. Generally applied to politics, specifically the US election and the EU referendum. Taking place in a time when the truth has become an irrelevant concept. That truth is an irrelevant concept, as Trump, Johnson and Grillo before them, circumvent the need to communicate via the mainstream media but *shout* on Twitter or on a blog is one thing. That some newspapers also *shout*, facing the contradiction of soaring internet audiences but plummeting print sales and a shrinking newsroom, is quite another. Clickbait. Returning to a more established concept, rhetoric, in classical oratory, is the art of influencing the thought and conduct of an audience.

The word *shout* will be used in this paper, as a shorthand for the post-truth rhetoric prevalent amongst some populist politicians and indeed some newspapers, keen to sell and tell the people what they want to hear, so they can *get their country back*. As AC Grayling argues: "The whole post-truth phenomenon is about 'My opinion is worth more than the facts.' It's about how I feel about things. It's terribly narcissistic. It's been empowered by the fact that you can publish your opinion. You used to need a pot of paint and a balaclava to publish your opinion, if you couldn't get a publisher. But all you need now is an I-phone. Everyone can publish their opinion – and if you disagree with me, it's an attack on me and not my ideas. The fact that you can muscle your way on to the front row and be noticed becomes a kind of celebrity."

The use of language, as used by some of the newspaper on the eve of the EU referendum, may have posed a threat to democracy – as will be explored in subsequent analysis. But in pandering to people's emotional responses – rather than seriously holding politicians to account, as many arguably did, they are feeding the celebrity notion of journalism. Many of those training to be journalists, via social media, have something to say, know what they like to here, but don't see the importance of the facts. If other journalists encourage them to think this way now – well.

*Truthiness* was a word popularised by Stephen Colbert, describing statements people feel are *intuitively true* – regardless of whether they are backed up by facts. It was blogger David Roberts who coined the phrase *Post-Truth Politics*, suggesting voters were more likely to choose a party aligned with their identity and values, and consciously seek out evidence to support its proposals, rather than assess the facts and *then* choose a party.

Grayling argued: "The world changed after 2008." Politics since the financial crash has been shaped by a "toxic" growth in income inequality. As well as the gap between rich and poor, he says a deep sense of grievance has grown among middle-income families, who have faced a long stagnation in earnings. With a groundswell of economic resentment, he says, it is not difficult to "inflare" emotions over issues such as immigration and to cast doubt on mainstream

politicians. Columnist Andrew Pierce in his speech at my university, when questioned on the corrosiveness of the *Enemies of the People* Daily Mail front page, retorted. "It sells."

The argument goes that to confront the *populist politicians* feeding off the emotions of the aggrieved, journalists should not just write in the same vein (as will be analysed) but to avoid the scenario of allowing them to *shout* in the media or compile articles of them *shouting* on both sides – or indeed do some *shouting* of your own – journalists need to confront the politicians and the public. For reasons of brevity, it is not proposed to unpack the notion of populist here.

BuzzFeed's editor-in-chief of news, Ben Smith recognized early on that reporting on Trump necessitated relinquishing typical assumptions about political coverage. "The structure of political reporting is to tacitly assume that candidates typically tell the truth about basic things, and that lies and open appeals to bigotry are disqualifying," he says. "Trump violated all these rules without—in the eyes of the Republican primary voters who mattered—disqualifying himself." In December of 2015, Smith declared that BuzzFeed staff could call Donald Trump both a *liar* and a *racist*. "He's out there saying things that are false, and running an overtly anti-Muslim campaign," he wrote in a memo.

The BBC allowed the sides campaigning for Remain and Leave to *shout* at each other, in the main – and referred the audience to their fact-checking site.

The prime minister, Theresa May and her foreign secretary are arguably already populist politicians – albeit in the mainstream still, yet responding to UKIP, to their right flank.

"when it comes to Europe, Johnson's career was all but built on willful distortion. All those comedy stories of meddling EU bureaucrats – directives demanding square strawberries and smaller condoms – were inserted into the public domain by the Telegraph's Brussels correspondent in the 1990s, one Boris Johnson. As a former colleague, Sarah Helm, has recalled: 'Johnson's half-truths created a new reality ... correspondents witnessed Johnson shaping the narrative that morphed into our present-day populist Euroscepticism.' " (Freedland, 2016)

A pervasive Euroscepticism stands at the centre of how many Britons understand themselves (Gifford, 2015). The argumentation analysed, is sometimes linked to lack of or misinformation. Nevertheless readers are led to certain conclusions, despite paucity of substantiation. A minority of Britons responded to the perceived threat posed by immigrants (Lyons, 2016, BBC, July, 2016, Siddique, 2016, Weaver, 2016). This phenomenon is described in this paper as the *discourse of ellipsis*. The discursive construction is sometimes incomplete – and so it is argued, the audience is called to collective action, across the spectrum, responding to persuasion, from hesitantly voting for Brexit, through to committing crime. Keith and Lundberg (2008: 5) argue: "Whether active or passive; specific or general; in the political, social, intellectual, or other spheres; persuasion is the key to co-ordinated action. Persuasion is the glue that holds the people to a common purpose and therefore facilitates collective action." On June 23, 2016, that action was to vote to *get the country back*. For a minority, collective action meant verbal abuse, beatings and in one instance, the killing of a Pole (Quinn, 2016b).

Gramsci (1978: 419) wrote about the philosophy of common sense: "the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed." Some believed what they wished to believe and some common myths, explored later, were accepted. Gramsci (1978:423) argued: "common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth, is a nonsense." Persuasive and emotive language

regarding immigration was widely used by certain papers and unsubstantiated discursively constructed *truths* and *lies* (often referred to as such) were presented to readers.

The paper will therefore argue that there is a *discourse of ellipsis*. This is the notion the public were led to the precipice by emotive, persuasive and prejudicial discourse, to *get their country back*. Sometimes there were some supporting facts – often none.

Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 265) argue democratic legitimacy has to be the result of discourse: “performed under the condition of largely egalitarian reciprocity and located within the different public spheres of fields of political action, of a free, open and *rational* formation of public opinion about political problems and questions of shared interest.” The paper argues such democratic legitimacy was lost. Rather an irrational, emotive Euroscepticism was formulated in some of the London-based UK press. Instead (Ibid: 266): “how is it possible that in post-war Europe, such explicit discrimination against certain groups of ‘foreigners’... migrants, Jews, Roma... is still encountered and even helps to win votes, is politically functionalised to create scapegoats and out-groups, and is acceptable and tolerated?” Fifteen years since this book’s publication, it is not just that such press discourse is still happening – but as will be explored, is directed not at minority groups, but *all* EU migrants.

Richardson (2007: 171) argues:

“Racist rhetoric not only reflects the extent to which such views have ‘become part of what is seen as ‘normal’ by the dominant group’... but also is (re)productive and transposable, modifying, material power relations in other fields... Such rhetoric should be met head-on and confronted without equivocation.”

Diamanti and Bordignon (2005) found that *immigration* was the argument most utilised by Eurosceptic parties, finding a correlation between fear of immigrants and falling support for EU integration. They also found a rise in xenophobia, alongside increasing distrust of institutions to respond. Ipsos-Mori (2014) asked in 14 countries, what percentage of the population did people think were immigrants. In the UK, people thought 24 per cent. It was actually 13 per cent. Immigration was the key focus in UK newspaper coverage just before the referendum (Deacon, 2016). The issue of *free movement* of labour is an integral part of being an EU member – but one that has become an issue for Britain since 2004 (Springford, 2013). The UK was one of just three EU countries not to impose transitional restrictions, as eight further former Warsaw pact nations, joined. Migration from these eight was much larger than envisaged. There are around 1.1million people from these countries in the UK. However, studies have found little evidence that the large arrival after 2004 increased unemployment among Britons or reduced Briton’s average wages (Springford, 2013).

The notion that EU migrants in the UK are *benefit tourists* is misplaced. David Cameron, ahead of the referendum, failed to renegotiate EU free movement rules on benefits. In terms of EU immigrant ‘benefit tourism’: 0.2 per cent claim unemployment benefit but have never worked in the UK; 0.4 per cent are on unemployment benefit six months after arriving in the UK, rising to 0.8 per cent after a year (Springford, 2013).

Some 2.1 per cent of EU migrants claim child benefit and 1 per cent, tax credits. A *fifth* of British nationals are claiming both. The western Europeans and subsequent 2004 eastern European influx are better educated than the average Briton. More have finished secondary education and university degrees (Springford, 2013, Sumption and Somerville, 2009). The British labour market has ‘hollowed out.’ Most new jobs are created at the top end and conversely in low-skilled work (Springford, 2013). Springford’s research (2013) shows that EU immigrants are net *contributors* to the treasury. The post-2004 employment rate is higher than that of British nationals, with 88 per cent in work, as opposed to 77 for UK citizens.

If Britain leaves the EU and joins the European Economic Area, it will have to sign up to *free movement*, in order to maintain full access to the single market (Springford 2013, Ashworth Hayes, April, 2016, BBC, June, 2016). Springford (2013: 9) noted UK politicians were facing a hostile public “fed misleading stories on immigration by a hostile press.” Ashworth-Hayes (April, 2016) argues: “Eurosceptics have no basis for saying that Britain could quit the EU, dispense with free movement and maintain full access to the single market.”

Ashworth Hayes (April, 2016) makes clear that no country has thus far succeeded in controlling *free movement* and remaining in the single market. Switzerland tried and failed (BBC, June, 2016, Ashworth Hayes, April, 2016, Sodha, 2015). When the UK joined the then EEC in 1973, in the 1957 Treaty of Rome signed, it clearly stipulated in article 1c “an internal market characterized by the abolition, as between Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital.” The preamble also referred to “*ever-closer union* among the peoples of Europe.”

As Sodha (2015) explains, free movement, post-war, was designed to allow people to move from countries with unemployment, to ones that were suffering labour shortages, boosting European growth and helping to prevent war, by getting people to mix across borders. Leave campaigner, Bavarian-born, Gisela Stuart admitted, the principle had succeeded (Sodha, 2015). Stuart, a Labour MP confirmed that the founding fathers of post-war Europe: “wanted it to be a construct that also had a political integration and for that you needed people to move because the minute people cross boundaries and borders, you had deeper integration...both a social as well as economic aim.” (Sodha, 2015)

### Methodology.

Wodak and Reisigl (2001) note, persuasion can be double-edged. This is clearly apparent in German verbs *überzeugen* and *überreden* (Kopperschmidt, 1989: 116-21), which can both be translated into English as to *persuade*. In addition *überzeugen* can be translated as to *convince*. The notion of bringing about a rational, universal change, with such conditions that anyone should agree, essentially power-free communication, is expressed by *überzeugen*. Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 70) argue that such communication can be deemed to be critical, though mostly counterfactual. Conversely *überreden* denotes a particular, restricted consent, under conditions of *suspended rationality*. Here, forms of non-argumentative compulsion, such as emotionalisation, suggestion and brainwashing, can compel approval by repressing the ability of rational and logical judgement and conclusion. Wodak and Reisigl (2001:71) argue that there are violations of the rules in persuasive, manipulative, discursive legitimization of say ethnicist and nationalist discrimination,

This paper focuses on the key editorials by newspapers persuading readers to vote one way or another. The London-based national newspapers selected, were: The Sun, The Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph on the centre-right (arguing for leave) and The Mirror and The Guardian on the centre-left (arguing for remain). Economic news exceeded coverage of immigration, but the gap closed in the last days of the campaign (Deacon, 2016).

The dominance of Conservative party figureheads on both sides was apparent. The Guardian gave prime minister, David Cameron, a platform for his remain position on their news front, and the Daily Telegraph did likewise for leading leave campaigner, Michael Gove. This also reflected the polarisation Deacon (2016) noted, with Remain newspapers emphasising Remain campaigners and arguments and Leave newspapers the polar opposite.

On initial viewing Deacon (2016) found in aggregate terms, 60 to 40 in favour of leave. However, when worked out by circulation, it rises to 80 to 20 for leave. This vindicates the focus on the largest circulation newspapers in the study: the largest selling tabloid (The Sun); its direct centre-left rival (The Mirror); the second largest selling paper, dominating the middle-market (The Daily Mail); the largest selling broadsheet (The Daily Telegraph) and the only centre-left broadsheet, The Guardian.

Mautner's (2008: 42) theories and methods on newspaper discourse were employed. Argumentation theory (Wodak and Reisigl 2001) and conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Musolff 2004) were normally used for commentaries alone.

The argumentative device (Mautner, 2008: 43) of *rapport between author and reader*, achieved, for instance, by the use of rhetorical questions such as: *does anyone believe it?* This is the supposedly unifying force of *common sense*. This discursive strategy is built on a commonality of interest between author and reader. *Rapport* relates to the potential role of the newspaper itself as a political actor.

Persuasion, Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 69–70) argue, is a means of intentionally influencing a person so they adopt, fix or change perception. In argumentation theory, *topoi* can be described as parts of argumentation which belong to obligatory, either explicit or inferrable premises. They are content-related warrants or conclusion rules, connecting the argument with the conclusion and justifying the transition from the former to the latter (Kienpointner, 1992: 194).

Political metaphors typically argue to prove a contested issue and thus also legitimize a certain course of action. Musolff (2004: 32) advances a similar position. There should be a valid justification for using a particular premise to arrive at a certain conclusion. Musolff (2004: 33–4) argues this unconscious conceptual framework is 'argumentation-by-metaphor'.

### **Complaints about political campaigning and newspaper coverage.**

The Leave and indeed Remain campaigns received the first complaints in May, 2016, from the cross-party House of Commons Treasury Committee. It condemned misleading information (Sparrow, 2016) in a report. Andrew Tyrie, the Conservative committee chair, commented: "The arms race of ever more lurid claims and counter-claims made by both the leave and remain sides is not just confusing the public – it is impoverishing political debate." The committee was scathing of the Leave campaign's flagship assertion that exiting the EU would save £350m a week.

InFacts made complaints to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), labelling them the *Hateful Eight* and the (Dixon and Lythgoe, June, 2016) *Sinful Six* (including Sun articles). Dixon and Lythgoe, May, 2016, argued: "The Telegraph, Mail and Express have published a string of stories on migration, terrorism, crime and control of our borders, that contain factual inaccuracies and/or distortions.... This comes on top of years of hostile EU coverage that have planted many myths in the minds of the electorate."

In its key editorial (Guardian, June 20, 2016) arguing for a Remain vote, and analysed later, wrote: "The backdrop has been the most unrelenting, unbalanced and sometimes xenophobic press assault in history."

### The Common Market. Challenging the notion of what Britain signed up to.

In order to fully comprehend the debate raging in newspapers, regarding *immigration*, it is necessary to re-affirm the presentation of the *project* as having been misrepresented to the British public at the outset. Several pieces analysed *start* with a *reasoned* discussion regarding economics. But Europe is much more than the economic co-operation commonly portrayed in Britain. The EU always was simultaneously a political concern, which – as we establish subsequently – facilitated free movement of people and trade.

The Daily Mail flagged up its comment on the front page of the newspaper, which then appeared inside. The unequivocal headline on June 22 read: *If you believe in Britain vote leave.*

From the very outset, the Daily Mail prepares to convince. The writer presents “the most striking *fact*”, namely that the Remainers “Have *failed* to articulate a single positive reason for staying in the EU.” (line 2) This is Wodak and Reisigl’s (2001: 70) notion of *überreden*: an attempt to compel approval by the reader, by repressing the ability of rational and logical judgment and conclusion. There is no attempt to justify, or indeed offer the reader an alternative reality (lines 1-2).

A string of evaluative words are used to re-enforce the developing argumentation and discredit those campaigning for Remain. They have:  
 “*failed* to articulate a single positive reason for staying” (line 2)  
 “*subjected* voters to a barrage of scaremongering” (line 3)  
 “*peddled*” the “*blatant untruth*” that we were “*joining nothing more threatening than a tariff-free trading zone, which would involve no sacrifice of sovereignty..*” (lines 8-10). This last point is labelled “*lies*” (line 8), with the further “*great lie*” (line 16) that the EU is a guarantor of prosperity for members. Yet there was a political dimension to joining the then EEC, Britain fully supported (Hansard, April 8, 1975, Schickler, 2016). The 1957 Treaty of Rome in its preamble, spoke clearly of “*ever closer union.*” The claim we agreed to join “*nothing more threatening than a tariff-free trading zone,*” (line 9) is incorrect, with only the no camp in 1973 presenting this position. The political and wider social implications of joining made apparent by the winning camp (Schickler, 2016). There is a complete lack of any supporting evidence for the *nothing more threatening than a tariff-free trading zone* claim. Yet the argumentation is no less effective, the *discourse of ellipsis* if you will, with the *shouting* leading the audience to such a collective belief (Keith and Lundberg, 2008: 5).

A similar economic argument starts the Telegraph editorial (2016, June 21), under the headline: *Vote leave to benefit from a world of opportunity.* This is the editorial found on the eve of the vote that presents the Telegraph’s position on a possible Brexit.

The Telegraph cleverly employs a topos of history, referring back to the editorial in the newspaper in 1973, when Britain joined the then European Economic Community. The topos refers back to the choice that then faced the British public and the thrust of a long-drawn out argument, is to insinuate, albeit not explicitly, that Britain had hoped for great things when joining the community, but that it would now be better to learn from that lesson and drive towards an *independent Britain* mentioned at a series of junctures in the piece.

“A world of opportunity is waiting for a *fully independent Britain.* This country is a leading economic power, its language is global, its laws are trusted and its reputation for fair dealing is second to none.”(lines 22-23)

The readers are reminded of Britain's greatness. It is suggested Britain's success in recent years is less to do with EU membership and more internal dynamics. The editorial taps into the collective memory of a patriotic readership, reminding readers again of Britain's greatness, through a little flag-waving (Billig, 1995). The Telegraph argues: "a global language; laws that are trusted; a reputation for fair dealing."

The notion that the EU was just about economics, but not politics, is one of the myths continuously re-enforced: "The national *sense* was that we were in a *free trading area* of independent nation states that would help our exporters, create jobs and allow everyone to get richer." (lines 41-3)

Much as with the Daily Mail piece, there is no substantiation for this *sense*. Again a *discourse of ellipsis*, with the audience reaching the same conclusion as the editorial writer, is at play.

In the seventies, political case was paramount Margaret Thatcher had said. A few years earlier, then prime minister, Edward Heath, had referred to a "united Europe" and a "European destiny" and indeed the Times editorial on the 1975 referendum day, referred to a "sense of European development as an ideal and wrote of a "European family." (Schickler, 2016)

The Telegraph piece argues the UK helped create a strong single market but everything changed with the 1992 Maastricht treaty: "Now, the political nature of the project took over. The Common Market became the European Union and its people citizens of the EU." (lines 49-50) No substantiation was offered in support of this Maastricht claim, again the *discourse of ellipsis*.

The editorial then employs an evaluative topos of threat to the national interest, (Mautner, 2008). The term, *political construct*, is already so, reinforcing the discourse of the project having *become* political, as well implying something artificial and unsustainable (hence a construct). MP Gisela Stuart had presented a very different understanding. The topos develops its *rapport with the reader* (Mautner, 2008) through this topos, arguing:

"Indeed, so fragile is this *political construct* that the departure of one of its members (UK)...threatens to trigger terminal instability. And why is that? If this were a robust democratic institution, underpinned by a thriving economy and a content and happy citizenry, then Britain's withdrawal should have no impact at all."  
(lines 72-5)

### **Challenging the notions articulated in the press, regarding Free movement and Immigration.**

In the same June 22 Daily Mail editorial, we then soon arrive at the topos of threat to the national interest, posed by immigration.

"We needn't look far for the explanation. For not only is the euro destroying livelihoods, but the madness that is the free movement of peoples has brought waves of migrants sweeping across Europe, depressing wages, putting immense strain on housing and public services, undermining our security against criminals and terrorists - and making communities fear for their traditional ways of life." (Lines 43-6)

That we need not look for explanation is to start to compel the reader (*überreden*). In the preceding section, the article argues that tensions in Europe are greater than perhaps any time since the war, with the extreme right and left on the rise across the continent (lines 40-42), as if to say, *staying in is a threat to the national interest, as posed by immigration and this situation has resulted in the resurgence of the extreme left and right (which we find unpalatable in moderate Britain)*. The persuasive force of the piece is heightened by harnessing a path-movement-journey metaphor (Musolff, 2004: 60) and the use of *common sense* to help the public fully conceptualise the threat posed by "waves of migrants sweeping across Europe". The section finishes with the



flag waving banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) for the purportedly *indigenous*, fearful for their “traditional ways of life.”

Things intensify with David Cameron accused of “deceptions” over the issue (lines 47 and 57). The first was his pledge to get migration down to less than 100,000 a year. The topos of authority is based on the following conclusion: X is right. This is because A (an authority) says that it is right (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001: 79). In this case David Cameron’s former guru, Steve Hilton, said civil servants had warned “directly and explicitly” (line 51) that it would be impossible to keep Cameron’s immigration pledge. This may be attributed, but that does not make it substantiated. Although the anonymity of civil servants is maintained, they sometimes do come forward and an ex-mandarin would surely have been in a position to confirm, on the record. The “second deception on migration – so obviously untrue that he even seems increasingly embarrassed to repeat it. This is his frankly pathetic ‘reforms’ he secured during his humiliating tour of European capitals will have any impact on numbers.” (Lines 56-8). This evaluative section is however utilized as a platform for an attack on “Brussels bureaucracy” “incapable of meaningful reform” and articulated through an un-modularized declarative “refuses to listen to the British public’s concerns” (line 61). A clear rapport with the public is developed here (Mautner, 2008) and a *common sense* understanding of how the EU is a threat to the national interest, together with the unfettered immigration it supports. There is no substantiation offered for the EU refusing to listen to the British public – and again through this *discourse of ellipsis*. Instead, accumulatively, public are again compelled to reach various conclusions, with all rational debate closed down. Hence further *shouting* and *überreden*.

Again *immigration* is utilized to add to the editorial’s persuasive power, and a further extension of the topos of threat to the national interest – with the “relentless expansion” (line 81) of the EU, with Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro set to join, hence making remaining even more ominous. This is preceded with more banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) and the blatant flag waving, articulated in: “Our ancestors shed oceans of blood to uphold and defend this country’s right to govern itself.” (Line 80) Here the topos of threat is coupled with a series of metaphorical images, all embedded in this short sentence. A life-body-health metaphor is conjured (Musolff, 2004) with Britain unable to defend its borders in a struggle metaphor that is inferred (Straehle, 1999) – in this case against the threat posed by EU expansion. The discourse continues unabated, as Cameron “desperately tried to silence talk of Turkey’s application for membership, which would give its 80 million largely Muslim population the right to free movement.” (Lines 82-3). Here, we move from conjuring fear to discriminatory and prejudicial language, otherwise why would there be mention of Muslims? We move relentlessly on, with “enraged working class communities....who...have had to cope with mass migration and have every right to feel abandoned.” (Lines 91-2) Again a rapport (Mautner, 2008) with the reader is developed, through the scapegoating of immigrants (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001), resulting in communities feeling abandoned (but persuaded to act). How and why we are being allowed to govern ourselves is not offered by evidence and a further discourse of ellipsis, leads communities to collective action.

A further intensification of persuasion is achieved through repetition (Heer and Wodak, 2008:2). The collective memory, is again exercised and again we read: “Our ancestors shed oceans of blood to uphold and defend this country’s right to govern itself..” (line 103).

The editorial reaches its crescendo (Heer and Wodak, *ibid*) and we are again reminded of what was written at the outset. The writer presents “the most striking fact”, namely that the Remainers “Have *failed* to articulate a single positive reason for staying in the EU.” Wodak and Reisigl’s (2001: 70) *überreden* re-surfaces. (lines 1-2). And then again:

“No, if the Remainers have been unable to make a positive popular case for our membership, this is because the task is virtually impossible.” (Lines 93-4) The rapport with the reader is developed, through re-articulation, rendering what is unsubstantiated and incorrect true.

We return also to *freedom of movement* and EU membership seen through the prism of *immigration*, and yet further intensification (Mautner, 2008) and repetition (Heer and Wodak, 2008), leading to further discriminatory and prejudicial argumentation. There was the “madness” of “*free movement*” (line 43) and how Turkey’s application “would give its 80 million

*largely Muslim population the right to free movement*". Why would we want to remain in a dysfunctional club "pursuing a frankly *mad* policy of *open borders* which, if not checked, will lead to violence between the ugly left and ugly right across Europe?" (Lines 104-7). The continuing topos of threat to national interest is arguing: *if free movement is not reversed (in the UK, like elsewhere in Europe) there could be violence*. There was. Again through rapport built on posing unanswered questions, the *discourse of ellipsis* leads the public to formulate a response. For a minority the common sense of *getting their country back* was true (Gramsci, 1978: 419). A few emboldened racists and xenophobes, on receiving the vindication of the Brexit vote acted. Persuasive newspaper discourse arguably presented the reader with justifications, for voting for Brexit and for some – beyond that. The correlation between the language used by the Daily Mail and the conclusions reached (*violence could follow*) – and the enactment of those conclusions, with subsequent hate crimes happening, is apparent (Lyons, 2016, BBC, July, 2016).

The article reaches its zenith, bringing all the various strands together, drawing on patriotism (Billig, 1995), the collective memory (Heer and Wodak, 2008) and the demonizing of Brussels and EU:

"If you believe in the sovereignty of this country, its monarchy, its unwritten constitution and its judicial system; if you believe in the will of the people and don't want to be ruled by faceless bureaucrats; if you are concerned about *uncontrolled immigration*; if you wish to *control the destiny of the UK*; if you want a government you can vote for and in turn vote out of office if it breaks its promises; and if you *believe in Britain*, its culture, history and freedoms, there is only one way to vote. Brexit." (Lines 118-122)

The lack of a "single positive reason for staying in the EU" at the start is untrue. But this notion of *uberreden*, compelling the reader to certain conclusions, shutting down rational debate, is maintained.

Tackling just the issue of *free movement*, as there is a relentless attempt by the Daily Mail, to create fear, around immigration. EU migrants tend to be young and skilled and with the highest employment rates of any EU country, paying in £22bn in British tax between 2001-11 ((Springford, 2013). Britons in that period took out £624bn. Recent figures suggest 1.2m Britons live in other parts of the EU. The Mail persuades over the need to control free movement (lines 43, 106) but then suggests that the EU will want to trade with us, even if we have succeeded in unshackling ourselves from free movement. There is no precedent for this, as free movement is and always has been a condition of a full free trade deal. The metaphorical 'thought' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) and where the readers are consciously led, is to believe Britain could do differently, ignoring all the facts. Would the EU want to create a precedent for Britain, where others could follow? (Ashworth-Hayes, April, 2016, BBC Reality Check, June, 2016).

"True, we cannot predict exactly what will happen if we pull out (though we can surely be confident that the EU won't want to inflict damage on itself by erecting trade barriers against the world's fifth biggest economy and a huge net buyer of its exports). But then nor can we know what the EU will do next if we vote to remain." (Lines 70-72)

The Sun, in its June 22 editorial, *Look Into His Eyes: Believe in Britain*, takes issue with Cameron's claim that he could reform the EU, making explicit to readers that it will NEVER reform (line 11). Again we have an attempt at *uberreden*, imposing the Sun's position on the reader and not offering another means of engaging or comprehending the train of events, as evidenced in the following extracts.

Much like the Mail, there is a demonising of Brussels and the notion that a *superstate* will undermine the sovereignty of Britain: "They will ignore the increasing protests of voters here and across the continent and forge ahead with their 16 long-held dream of a single EU superstate..." (Lines 15-16)

The Sun states at the outset that Cameron knew he could:

“never control immigration while in the EU. Yet he shamefully continued promising voters he could.....meanwhile mobs of illegal migrants force themselves aboard UK-bound lorries.” (lines 5-7).

Again the discourse of ellipsis is such that voters are persuaded to vote Leave, but the tone is shrill. It can be seen how some could be convinced of the need for further collective action. (Keith and Lundberg, 2008: 5)

### **Challenging the emotive rhetoric and the compelling of approval from the reader.**

The Mirror's June 22 editorial, which starts: *For the sake of our great nation's future*, avoids argumentation but declares to readers that if we want to carry on trading with the EU, we will “almost certainly have to accept freedom of movement” (line 57), citing non-EU Norway and Switzerland, as examples. The Mail utilised *argumentation* to convince and persuade readers, often based on misinformation or without substantiation. Instead the Mirror counters such attempts “we are kidding ourselves” (line 61) in thinking the UK could get preferential terms, instead “being lumbered with the worst of all worlds, having to accept EU migrants but with no say at the top table” (Lines 62-3) presenting the facts (Ashworth-Hayes, April, 2016, BBC Reality Check, June, 2016).

The Guardian (2016, June 21), dedicated it's front page news front, *Cameron: Brexiters stoking intolerance*, to an interview with then prime minister, David Cameron. What is however noticeable from the piece, is that Cameron accused the Brexiters of “stoking intolerance and division with extreme warnings on immigration” (lines 1-2). On this he was right. (Lyons, 2016, BBC, July, 2016). Cameron went on to accuse Farage of scapegoating people, after unveiling a poster of refugees fleeing to Slovenia (lines 21-3).

The Guardian editorial on June 20, is a direct challenge to some of the core notions presented in other mainstream newspapers, regarding Brexit. The newspaper is very clear in describing the focus on immigration as often of a xenophobic nature; admitting to the EU's shortcomings; challenging the inward looking approach of the Leave campaign. The piece challenges its readership at the outset, countering the rapport (Mautner, 2008) of the Mail and Telegraph, with its own: “Are we one member in a family of nations, or a country that prefers to keep itself to itself and bolt the door?” (Line 2)

The editorial picks up on how immigration became the central issue. It warned that the referendum risked: “descending into a plebiscite on whether immigrants are a good or a bad thing. To see what is at stake, just consider the dark forces that could so easily become emboldened by a narrow insistence on putting the indigenous first.” (lines 7-9). The Guardian referred to “the most unrelenting, unbalanced and sometimes xenophobic press assault in history” (Line 10). The Guardian also highlighted the contradiction between Leave campaigners professing to be pro-immigration, while “fearmongering” (line 12) over possible Turkish accession.

Much like the left-of-centre Mirror, analysed earlier, the Guardian then develops its argumentation around a topos of history that responds to the embedded collective memory, the unspoken metaphors and their coherence, in constructing a pervasive Eurosceptic world view (Gifford, 2015) and its suppositions, regarding Britain's evolution in Europe. The Guardian reminds readers that Britain was formed and shaped by Europe (line 26) and that the UK is in cultural, geographical and trading terms, a European nation (line 27). The newspaper stresses that in nearly every generation, with the exception of the last 70 years, Britons have fought and died in European wars (lines 27-8). To turn our backs on this is “unworthy of our traditions” (lines 29-30). The Guardian admits that there are flaws in the EU; that its leadership

is imperfect (line 33); but challenges preconceptions, making clear that the EU is a union of nations working together but “is not and never will be a United States of Europe” (line 32). That the Guardian has to work so hard at reminding readers of such *facts* is to reaffirm the extent to which Eurosceptic preconceptions which construct Europe as an Other to Britain, are pervasive and embedded and again reaffirms how polarised the debate was in the media (Deacon, 2016).

The Guardian argues the EU is used as the “whipping boy” (line 36) much as Wodak and Reisigl (2001: 266) articulated it, for lots of ills, such as frozen wages; job security; and hopes of a fair deal have been “undermined” (line 38) just as immigration has increased. The Guardian (much like the Mirror) makes clear that these ills are more to do with the shortcomings of the UK government, than the EU.

### Conclusions.

The Daily Mail and The Sun, constructed in the main an unsubstantiated yet no less compelling common sense argumentation around the common market, which set a context for initial discourses of ellipsis, with the public persuaded for the need for collective action – despite the lack of evidence provided. These discourses constructed an initial false economic premise for opposition to the EU – but one that created a platform for the more emotive argumentation of subsequent discourse over immigration and further persuasive calls for action with again a lack of substantiation, hence further discourses of ellipsis.

The Daily Mail and The Sun in their editorials sought to compel readers to reach various conclusions (*uberreden*), closing down rational debate through the use of extensive emotive rhetoric, short on facts.

The polarization evidenced by Deacon (2016) is manifest, with the Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph and The Sun editorials, arguing often without substantiation, but nevertheless creating a coherence and common sense for the reader – to the extent that The Guardian and Daily Mirror were in the main preoccupied with challenging the emotive rhetoric – rather than advancing more constructive arguments for Remain.

In this sense the editorials appeared to mirror the political exchanges, complained of by the Treasury (Sparrow, 2016).

Where was the (Wodak and Reisigl, 2001: 265) “rational formation of public opinion”? That we have arrived at such a polarized politicised environment, re-enforced, but not challenged by key newspapers, feeding emotive rhetoric and not challenging politicians with the facts, is indeed worrying and undermines their role in our democracy, damaging the ecology necessary to maintain equilibrium and rational discourse in both journalism and politics.

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