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A Discourse Analysis of the UK Referendum CAMPAIGN on EU Membership

The Case of Michael Gove's "The facts of Life say Leave" Speech

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Abstract

In this IEP Research Paper the author Elisabeth Weißbecker uses Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach to analyse "The Facts of Life say Leave" speech by Michael Gove in order to examine how the case for Brexit was made in the referendum campaign. Weißbecker shows that his argumentation relies on numerous misrepresentations of the EU and the delegitimisation of the opposing 'Remain' camp by ridicule, in order to convey that leaving the EU is a promising prospect while staying is a danger. Gove's argumentation benefits from a historically negative EU-discourse based on negative media coverage, politicians' EU-bashing rhetoric, a cultural distance and a disdain for supranationalism, suggesting that the referendum result can be traced throughout the UK-EU relationship.

About the author

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Introduction

"I do not love Brussels. I love Britain." If one had to guess who made this statement, one would probably not think of the most prominent person in British politics advocating for the United Kingdom (UK) to remain inside the European Union (EU): David Cameron. Yet, this is how the former prime minister expressed himself in his speech on February 19, 2016, when he was announcing the results of his renegotiation with his 27 partners. Only one day later, Michael Gove, a cabinet member and a personal friend as well as a close ally of Cameron's, issued a statement that he would be supporting the case to leave, undermining Cameron's deal by implying that what Cameron achieved in renegotiations was not good enough of a reform to support. Four months later, on June 23, 2016, the British public voted to leave the European Union in a referendum. The result seemed to have taken everyone by surprise, including the Leave camp. Even though 'Leave' gained ground in polls approaching the referendum day, the generally held belief was that common sense would prevail. On the other hand, though admittedly in hindsight, once disbelief has subsided, it seems almost as if the referendum result could be traced back throughout the entire, not so smooth EU-UK relationship, that has earned the UK1 the title of 'the awkward partner'. Interestingly, in his speech on the referendum result on June 24, Cameron said: "We should be proud of the fact that in these islands we trust the people with these big decisions." You cannot help but wonder if at some point in the writing process of the speech— when Remain was still a possible outcome— it meant to read: We should be proud of the fact that in these islands we ***can*** trust the people with these big decisions. Admittedly, the result we did get in the end made that a hard statement to make. Theresa May, Cameron's successor, has since announced to trigger Article 50 and begin official exit negotiations by the end of March 2017, strangely symbolic the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. You have to wonder if celebrations of the occasion will be quiet and pensive or all the bigger and brighter to make a point: Britain may leave, but the EU is here to stay.

Since the result, many reasons have been put forward to explain the Brexit vote: a low turnout of young voters and high turnout of elderly voters who tend to be more Eurosceptic than younger generations, an anti-establishment protest vote, years of Eurosceptic media coverage, the EU's failure to address the refugee crisis jointly and many more. Next to these partially circumstantial, partially inherited reasons it is the campaigns that merit a closer look: While the case for Britain to remain in the EU, endorsed by the government, has been dubbed 'Project Fear' for being largely based on negative consequences of leaving, the Vote Leave campaign was centred on the message that Britain could 'take back control' by voting to leave. It is notably the Leave side of the argument, that has become the object of scrutiny in newsrooms and academic writing for misrepresenting the facts.

There are many different angles to the referendum that can prompt interesting research. This paper will seek to answer the following research question: How is the case for leaving the EU made in Michael Gove's

1 The UK will be treated as one social actor in what follows, which is, of course, a simplification, given that the UK is comprised of several nations with different attitudes towards the EU, i.e. Scotland.

The Facts of Life Say Leave speech, specifically with regard to how the EU is discursively constructed? To answer this question, in a first step the discourse-historical approach will be presented, and in a second step applied to analyse the speech. The empirical analysis, will be comprised of an analysis of the discursive strategies used in the speech as well as a context analysis.

A. Theoretical Groundwork: the Discourse-Historical Approach

The theory of the following discourse analysis is based on Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA). The approach proposes a comprehensive research design, which can be altered to fit the research question's specific needs. Also, Wodak notes, that "given the funding, the time available, and other constraints, smaller studies are, of course, useful and legitimate" (Wodak 2015: 13). That said, it should be pointed out that the following representation of the discourse-historical approach does not intend to fully cover the entire research design. Rather, it intends to present the approach to the extent pertinent to answering the research question at hand.

The DHA defines a 'discourse' as "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Wodak et al 2010: 89). For a better understanding of what a discourse is, we can "conceive of 'discourse' as primarily topic-related", that is, a "discourse on x" (Wodak et al. 2010: 90), e.g. the discourse on UK membership to the EU. Furthermore, it is helpful to contrast 'discourses' from 'texts'. Texts "are parts of discourses", making "speech acts durable over time" (Wodak et al. 2010: 89f.). Moreover, Wodak et al. enlist some characteristics of discourses: Firstly, discourses are "socially constituted and socially constitutive" (2010: 89), that is to say "situational, institutional and social settings shape and affect discourses" while at the same time "discourses influence discursive as well as non-discursive social and political processes and actions" (Wodak 2001: 66). Secondly, discourses are "related to a macro-topic" (Wodak et al. 2010: 89), which "allows for many sub-topics: 'unemployment' thus covers sub-topics like 'market', 'trade unions', 'social welfare' […] and many more" (Wodak 2001: 66). Likewise, when analysing the discourse on the 'Brexit', its links to other discourses and topics should be taken into account, i.e. 'markets', 'trade', 'immigration' and many more. Thirdly and lastly, discourses are "linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different points of view". Thus, we can think of discourses as argumentative and interactive.

The DHA also takes into account "intertextual relationships" (Wodak et al. 2010: 90). The authors conceive of 'intertextuality' as links to other sources, past and present. These can be explicit in referring to the same topics, actors, events, and arguments, or can be expressed indirectly as "allusions or evocations" (Wodak et al. 2010: 90). Wodak cites European Parliament policy papers as an instance for intertextuality, since they usually enlist other policy papers and regulation pertinent to the topic at hand (Wodak 2015:6). Such intertextual references allow the reader to understand where the idea for the policy paper came from and what other papers and previous legislation it is based on. In fact, Wodak notes that sometimes it is not possible to fully understand a given text without knowledge of such intertextual links (Wodak 2015:6). In The Facts of Life Say Leave, Gove uses many intertextual links, often in explicit references to back up his own points or in footnotes in the PDF document that can be downloaded on the Vote Leave homepage. Due to space restrictions it will not be possible to examine all these intertextual links as the DHA would usually do. However, where

intertextuality is useful to the analysis of discursive strategies it will be pointed out as such and explained.

Lastly, in analysing context, the authors consider four different levels: 1) "the immediate, language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse", 2) intertextual and interdiscursive relationships, 3) "the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation'" and 4) "the broader sociopolitical and historical context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to" (Wodak et al. 2010: 93).

The analysis of Gove's The Facts of Live Say Leave speech will be centred on the examination of the following discursive strategies:

- Nomination and predication
- Argumentation
- Intensification and mitigation

In a first step, the nomination and predication strategies used in the speech will be analysed. The investigation of nomination answers the question how persons, objects and phenomena are labelled (Wodak et al. 2010: 93). Then, the analysis of predication seeks to establish "what characteristics, qualities and features" are ascribed to them. These attributions of character traits can be positive or negative in varying degrees (Wodak et al. 2010: 93f.). Therefore, the discourse analysis should uncover how the speaker attributes certain qualities to actors and objects by analyzing the nouns, verbs and adjectives they are referred to with. Other ways to determine the discursively constructed qualities include metaphors, comparisons, allusions, hyperboles, euphemisms, and several others (Wodak et al. 2010: 94). The use of nomination and predication strategies can also be employed by speakers to identify actors or objects as threats or opportunities (Wodak 2015: 11).

In a second step, an analysis of the argumentation strategies will be conducted. The analysis should explain what arguments Gove uses to make his case for a vote to leave the EU (Wodak et al. 2010: 93). By using the devices of topoi or fallacies, speakers can make claims of truth or normative rightness (Wodak et al. 2010: 94). Without going into the details of argumentation theory, a topos can be seen as the logic structure of an argument, linking a claim with a conclusion by substantiating it with warrants (Kienpointner 1992: 179). An instance for explicitly expressed topoi would be conditional or causal sentences like 'if X, then Y', or 'Y because of X' (Wodak et al. 2010: 110). Topoi can also imply how a situation or problem should be dealt with (Wodak 2015: 11). Simply put, a fallacy is an unsound warrant that does not lead to an acceptable transition from claim to conclusion (Kienpointner 1992: 249). Wodak et al. point out that it is not always possible to ascertain if something is a sound topos or a fallacy (2010:110). The DHA's argumentation analysis is largely based on Kienpointner, and Aristotle's theory of topoi. At this point, it does not seem useful to present Kienpointner's classification of argumentation schemes in detail (1992: 246) or a general enumeration of different kinds of topoi as can be found in Wodak 2015 (11). Rather the topoi needed in the analysis of Gove's speech shall be named and explained where needed. Wodak's adaptation of argumentation theory into the DHA is cursory, using only the basic structure of argumentation and topoi. Likewise, the use of argumentation theory will be primarily problem-oriented in this paper.

Finally, in a third step, the speech will be analysed for the use of linguistic expressions of intensification and mitigation. According to Wodak et al., speakers can modify the force of their utterances by using diminutives or augmentatives, hyperboles and verbs of saying, feeling, thinking and others. Other ways to intensify or mitigate the intensity of remarks are tag questions like ‚isn't it', hesitations, vague expressions or indirect speech acts, like asking questions rather than asserting a fact directly (2010: 94).

Due to the restricted scope of this paper, it shall eschew an exhaustive analysis of the speech in favour of a detailed analysis of the elements that are most important to answering the research question. Therefore, it will not be possible to investigate the nomination and predication strategies of all the social actors and phenomena mentioned in the speech, or to analyse all argumentation schemes and topoi employed. Instead, and in line with the research question, a selected few will be analysed in depth: the events of 'leaving the EU' and 'staying in the EU', as well as the social actor 'EU'. To make referencing more exact, all citations of Gove's The Facts of Life Say Leave speech refer to lines in the speech instead of page numbers. A version of the speech with the line numbering used in the analysis can be found in Annex I.

B. Empirical Discourse Analysis of Michael Gove's The Facts of Life Say Leave Speech

1. Analysis of Discursive Strategies

Before analysing the speech, it is important to define the context the speech is delivered in. With reference to the four levels of context considered in discourse-historical analyses, it is the third and fourth levels, that is, "the specific context of situation" and "the broader socio-political and historical context" (Wodak et al. 2010: 93), that seem important to bear in mind when analysing Gove's speech. Since "discursive practices are embedded in and related to" these, defining them helps realise that points of view, arguments, and words expressed by Gove follow earlier utterances and discourses about the UK-EU relationship. For example, when wondering why the government refrained from making an enthusiastic case for Remain, evoking the spirit of Europe, it seems helpful to think of the context as a more or less strict path-dependency. Speakers have to consider earlier discourses, and are themselves, as constructivism generally suggests, not perceiving the world in neutral and objective terms. Therefore, the Remain campaign was not entirely free in choosing their strategy, seeing as an emotional case for Europe might not have resonated with voters, as the notoriously long-held sceptical attitude among many British people towards the EU would suggest. Likewise, we can expect Gove's utterances to have been shaped by prior discourses. The context of situation encompasses both the referendum campaign as a whole as well as the specific situation the speech is delivered in, where Gove is speaking in front of a group of British citizens and journalists at the headquarters of the Vote Leave campaign on April 19, 2016, within the first week of official campaigning for the EU referendum. Both the campaign as a whole and the specific situation suggest that the speech is clearly persuasive in nature, its goal being to mobilise voters to vote 'Leave' in the referendum. The goal of persuasion is important to bear in mind, seeing as it is very likely to affect both the content and the discursive strategies of the speech. Given the campaign context, it seems likely for Gove to depict the EU and its actions in a more accentuated, scandalous and/or emotional manner than he would have in political everyday life. The broader socio-political and historical context shall be closely examined under part 3.2.

The analysis of nomination and predication shows that the event/phenomenon of leaving is constructed as a promise while the event/ phenomenon of staying is constructed as a danger. Gove starts the speech by contrasting the "negative and pessimistic" (2f.) case of the Remain campaign with the "positive and optimistic" (3) outlook of the Leave campaign. In fact, however, Gove's speech is only selectively "positive and optimistic", namely when he is describing Britain or the event of leaving. When it comes to describing the EU, the In campaign and the event of staying, his portrayal is negative without exception. This is, of course, in line with his overall intention to sway voters

to vote 'Leave' in the referendum. We can expect Gove to use discursive strategies to legitimise the Leave campaign and to stress the advantages leaving the EU would entail. On the other hand, we can expect him to delegitimise his opponents, the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign, and the case they are making for Britain to stay in the EU.

The EU is discursively constructed as an undemocratic organisation. At different points throughout the speech referred to as 'Europe', 'the Continent', 'the European Union', 'the EU', 'Jean-Claude Juncker and his Commission', and 'Brussels', the EU has, according to Gove, many failings: first on his list of grievances, Gove stresses time and again that the EU lacks democratic legitimacy. Accordingly, he describes it as a "federation with no democratically elected leader or Government, with policies decided by a central bureaucracy, with a mock parliament which enjoys no popular mandate for action" (39ff.). Strikingly, one would expect the election of the European Parliament to constitute a popular mandate.

Furthermore, "EU institutions are unaccountable" (182) and the EU is characterized as being "a remote and unelected bureaucracy" (451), which is "opaque" in nature (340). Moreover, Gove identifies the supposed dearth of democratic accountability as a wilful strategy, which he traces back to the EU's founding fathers: "the framers of that project - Monnet and Schumann - hoped to advance integration by getting round democracy and never submitting their full vision to the verdict of voters. That approach has characterised the behaviour of EU leaders ever since" (458ff.). The EU's allegedly undemocratic nature would in itself be a reason to vote leave. Additionally, this point is intensified by being constructed in contrast to "democratic self-government" (21ff.), which Britain could regain by leaving the EU. Gove evokes Britain's special parliamentary history (see 21ff.) as a tour de force to be proud of, which makes membership to an undemocratic organisation seem even more unfitting.

Secondly, the EU is portrayed as a deeply flawed organisation that passes bad policies and is too bureaucratic and inefficient. Accordingly, "day-to-day work" for British civil servants in the EU's "bureaucratic processology" (242, 282, 340) is "complicated and onerous" and if the UK voted to stay "that work will only grow more complex, and negotiations in the EU will only become more burdensome" (238ff.). Moreover, in a direct intertextual reference, Gove cites Manuel Barroso, describing the EU as an 'empire' for having the dimension of empires (37). He then goes on to compare the EU to "Austria-Hungary under the Habsburgs, the Russian Empire under Nicholas the Second, Rome under its later Emperors or the Ottoman Empire in its final years" (43ff.). Gove draws similarities between these empires and the EU for their undemocratic and bureaucratic nature as well as their having "peripheries which are either impoverished or agitating for secession" (39ff.). Additionally, Gove evokes each empire's period of decline and imminent collapse, which by way of analogy insinuates the EU is doomed to fail, too. He concludes this comparison by saying "it", which could either refer to the EU directly or empires in general, "is hardly a model for either economic dynamism or social progress" (46). Accordingly, Spain, Portugal and Greece serve as instances of the Eurozone's failure and detrimental austerity policy (see 49ff.) and the EU is described as the organisation "which gave us the economic disaster of the euro and turned the world's richest continent into its slowest growing" (57 f.), which is "projected to grow more slowly than other advanced economies in the years ahead" (384f.). But it is not merely the organisational structure that lacks "economic dynamism and social progress", the EU's policies are described as detrimental and retrograde, too. Thus, Gove claims "EU institutions have already repeatedly tried - and will of course continue to attempt - to fetter the tech companies that are changing the world economy" (375f.). Furthermore, the EU's trade policies are also flawed: "after years of trying [the EU] still doesn't have trade deals with the US, China or

India" (296), and to make things worse, it "maintains a punitive level of tariffs on imports from Asia and Africa and by doing so holds back developing nations" (311f.). So, not only is the EU's trade policy inefficient, it seeks to put a spoke in developing countries' wheels which makes the EU look immoral. To continue the EU's bad track record, British business is hampered by EU regulatory costs (362). Gove recognises that "some of those costs are incurred in a good cause" (365).

> "But many EU regulations - such as the Clinical Trials Directive, which has slowed down and made more expensive the testing of new cancer drugs, or absurd rules such as minimum container sizes for the sale of olive oil, are clearly not wise, light-touch and proportionate interventions in the market." (366ff.)

Gove picks up the famous theme of EU regulation being all ridiculous and solely focussed on vegetable sizes and packaging— regulations that are often called for by business and not invented by 'Brussels bureaucrats' for the heck of it. Regulation that impedes research into cancer drugs is not only retrograde, it makes the EU look evil, like they do not want sick people to get better. However, on the European Commission's Euromyths-Blog, it is pointed out that much of the criticism of EU clinical rules actually refers to the old Clinical Trials Directive, which Gove also refers to, that has been voted to be replaced by the Clinical Trials Regulation in 2014, which will enter into force in 2016 (European Commission Euromyths 2016a; European Commission DG Health and Food Safety). Also, McKee argues the Leave campaign deliberately misguides voters in their depiction of the European impact on UK science and health. He calls the Leave campaign "seriously out of touch with the scientific community" and quotes a survey that found "overwhelmingly positive" responses among over 400 researchers questioned, 93% of whom agreed "that EU membership is a major benefit to UK science and engineering" (Martin McKee 2016; CaSE/EPC 2015: 1). Gove, on the other hand, cites the scientist Andre Geim in a direct intertextual reference to his Nobel Lecture as saying, with regard to research funding, "I can offer no nice words for the EU framework programmes which … can be praised only by Europhobes for discrediting the whole idea of an effectively working Europe" (344ff.). Furthermore, Gove insinuates that the funding the EU provides for scientists and farmers is not allocated efficiently: "Indeed there's a lot of evidence the money sticks to bureaucratic fingers rather than going to the frontline" (341f.). Interestingly, in a speech that provides sources in footnotes, there is no source given to substantiate this claim.

Thirdly, the EU is depicted as being power-thirsty, always trying to transfer more powers from EU member states to the EU. Accordingly, Gove attributes to the EU predications like "grabs power" (135), has "growing and unchecked power" (196) and "uses the Single Market as a vehicle for expanding its power" (371). In this regard, Britain's vote to stay would mean to inevitably surrender more powers to the EU because they would have to participate in the measures set out in the Five Presidents' Report, which is supposedly the "official timetable for the next great transfer of powers from EU members to EU institutions" (114 f.). Also, a vote to stay would be interpreted as a vote "for 'more Europe'" by "the EU's bosses and bureaucrats" (107ff.), which shall be further examined in the analysis of the event 'leaving the EU'. As to Gove's allegations about the Five Presidents' Report (see 114-116, 183ff.), his remarks are incorrect and vastly exaggerated. He insinuates that through the report Britain ("we") "lose[s] vital fiscal freedoms", "[is] less able to guard against a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis" and "[is] less able to safeguard the integrity of the contract and property law which is crucial to attracting global investors" (186-191). In fact, however, the Five Presidents' Report repeatedly states that the proposed reforms concern Eurozone members (Five Presidents' Report 2015: 2, 4, 5, 7). While the possibility of non-Eurozone nations to participate in the reforms or to join the Euro is mentioned, these mentions are on a clearly voluntary basis (2, 5). Apart from the fact that the Five Presidents' Report has no

immediate impact on Britain, the report also offers some insights into Gove's general characterisation of the EU. While political will for further integration might be another question, the measures suggested in the Five Presidents' Report reflect what economic theory recommends for monetary unions (Baldwin et al. 2009: 314-345). Therefore, the measures suggested in the report cannot be reduced to a "power grab", seeing as the reforms have economic merit. Also, the Five Presidents' Report disproves Gove's accusation that EU institutions and politicians silently appropriate more power by "never submitting their full vision to the verdict of voters" (461f.). The report openly states that the measures seek to further "sovereignty sharing within common institutions" (Five Presidents' Report 2015: 5) and explains why that is necessary. Given that Gove's account of the Five Presidents' Report is completely false it seems surprising that the speech, in the PDF version you can download from the Vote Leave homepage, even includes a link to the Five Presidents' Report in a foot note. That would make it easy for anyone to call Gove's bluff. However, it is unlikely many voters cared to check the references or downloaded the speech in the first place. Therefore, Gove and the Vote Leave campaign can give his alleged facts fake legitimacy.

And lastly, the EU is portrayed as antagonising its members. So much so, that Gove's depiction makes it seem as if member states are the EU's victims. Accordingly, a British vote to leave would not only be "better for Europe" (428), it would be the European nations' salvation: "Britain voting to leave will be […] the democratic liberation of a whole Continent" (485f.) and Europe will have been "saved" by Britain's "example" (487f.). In terms of nomination, Gove clearly differentiates between two different social actors— the EU on the one hand, and its members and peoples on the other hand— rather than constructing them as different forms of one and the same social actor. Thus, the UK's trajectory outside the EU "might provoke both angst and even resentment among EU elites" but, at the same time, "will send a very different message to the EU's peoples" (447f.). Also, the relationship between these two distinct social actors is constructed as antagonistic rather than cooperative, with the narrative always positioning them in a member-state-vs.-EU constellation. According to Gove, "the peoples of the EU are profoundly unhappy with the European project" as "repeated referenda on the continent and in Ireland" have demonstrated (458f.). Britain leaving the EU "will liberate and strengthen those voices across the EU calling for a different future - those demanding the devolution of powers back from Brussels" (465ff.):

> "For Greeks who have had to endure dreadful austerity measures, in order to secure bailouts from Brussels, which then go to pay off bankers demanding their due, a different Europe will be a liberation. For Spanish families whose children have had to endure years of joblessness and for whom a home and children of their own is a desperately distant prospect, a different Europe will be a liberation. For Portuguese citizens who have had to endure cuts to health, welfare and public services as the price of EU policies, a different Europe will be a liberation. For Italians whose elected Government was dismissed by Brussels fiat, for Danes whose opt-out from the Maastricht Treaty has been repeatedly overridden by the European Court, for Poles whose hard-won independence has been eroded by the European Commission, a different Europe will be a liberation." (468ff.)

According to Gove's portrayal, member states and peoples have been repeatedly disappointed and harmed by the EU. Gove charges his account emotionally by giving it a human interest spin, describing the poverty of Greek people, the lack of prospects for the Spanish youth and referring to the Poles' fight for independence. Unlike 'good' political systems, that are supposed to support and enable their citizens to live their lives freely and happily, the EU is portrayed as hampering personal happiness. The EU is being made a villain with 28 member states for victims.

The depiction of the European Court of Justice can

be seen as part of the EU's depiction but merits to be mentioned separately since Gove speaks a lot of it specifically. The characteristics attributed to the EU as a whole, are ascribed to the ECJ as well. Eeckhout (2016) specifically examined and assessed Gove's depiction of the ECJ and EU law in the The Facts of Live Say Leave speech. He concludes Gove's portrayal is "less than accurate" and "misrepresents the facts".

The analysis of nomination and predication shows that the event/ process of 'leaving the EU' is constructed as a reclamation of democratic values, a recovery of control, a promise of a better future for Britain, and at the same time a liberation for Europe. Accordingly, 'leaving the EU' "would be to join the overwhelming majority of countries which choose to govern themselves" (17f.). So, not only would leaving be perfectly normal and in line with what most countries in the world do, on the contrary, "it is membership of an organisation like the European Union which is an anomaly today" (34f.). This way, Gove reassures the British public that a vote to leave would be nothing out of the ordinary and therefore nothing to be afraid of. To that effect, he says "there will be no turbulence or trauma on Independence Day" (205f.). He reinforces this point by ridiculing the In campaign's warnings of the negative consequences of a Brexit. To do so, he depicts the In campaign's case as strongly exaggerated and calls it "a fantasy, a phantom, a great, grotesque, patronising and preposterous Peter Mandelsonian conceit" (90 ff.). Secondly, Gove describes a Brexit as "a fresh start" (94) and "happy journey to a better future" (98). Once "unshackled from the past" (7), Britain's "tremendous untapped potential" (5) would be "unleashed" by "independence" (5) with "Britain's best days [lying] ahead" (4). The UK will be a "success outside the Union" (441), "will enhance [their] competitive advantage over other EU nations" (443f.), "[their] superior growth rate, and better growth prospects, will only strengthen" and "[their] attractiveness to inward investors and [their] influence on the world stage will only grow" (444ff.). Thirdly, and importantly, leaving the EU would be a recovery of control. "Control" (27, 99, 101, 150, 152, 181, 200, 201, 297, 320, 322, 338, 390, 392, 395, 405, 424-427, 442, 449) and related expressions like "we decide" (160, 162, 229), "we determine' (100, 154), "we choose" (100, 203, 313, 484), "we hold all the cards" (203), "in our hands" (210) , "on our terms" (228), "of our choosing" (228) and several more, are among the most frequently used words in the speech. This is based on an intertextual link to the Leave campaign's slogan 'Take back control'. It appeals to voters who would like specific issues, like immigration, to be controlled and, generally, reflects the disdain for supranationalism in the EU, under which Britain does not have absolute control. Last but not least, the British people's vote to leave would be "the assertion of deep democratic principle" (463). "For Britain, voting to leave will be a galvanising, liberating, empowering moment of patriotic renewal" (480f.), and "for Europe, Britain voting to leave will be the beginning of something potentially even more exciting— the democratic liberation of a whole Continent" (485ff.).

A notion that merits and necessitates individual treatment is that of 'independence'. In fact, of course, Britain does not have to become independent, it already is. Supranationalism in the EU might limit Britain's sovereignty but it does not take it away. When it comes to how Britain supposedly got under the EU's thumb in the first place, what Gove and Vote Leave fail to mention is that British governments and parliaments have consented to the treaties that transferred powers from Britain to the EU. So, neither is it fair to say the UK is not an independent state, nor is it fair to say that the powers the UK has conceded to the EU have been unjustly appropriated by the latter. From a campaign perspective, 'independence' is, of course, a powerful word. A word that is so closely intertwined with the very principle of democracy, what people does not want to be independent? Saying the UK needed to reclaim its independence not only makes 'Leave' look more desirable, it also

accentuates the negative traits given to the EU and makes EU authority seem particularly unjust or even authoritarian. At the same time, likening the referendum day "Independence Day" (206) gives it the quality of a historic moment in time and adds a deeper symbolic meaning to the vote in front of the British people. In history, many countries have had to fight and risk havoc and bloodshed to gain independence from colonial rule. The fight for independence has therefore connotations of being a noble cause, of bravery and justice. Fittingly, Gove concludes his speech saying Brexit "is a noble ambition and one I hope this country will unite behind" (492f.). Ironically, of course, many countries around the globe have celebrated independence from Britain and Scotland has striven for independence in 2014 and might do so again in the future, again, from the UK. The promises of what 'independence' would entail and represent have been covered in the previous paragraph. They are more and less concrete ideas like liberation, control, democratic renewal. Gove ridicules the question of what 'out' would look like: "as if the idea of governing ourselves is some extraordinary and novel proposition that requires a fresh a priori justification" (19f.). But it is not the concept of nationhood outside the EU that has ever been questioned or is, in fact, of any relevance to the Brexit. The point is what happens to a nation that is now a member and seeks not to be in the future— in short, it is about the specifics of the transition. And with regard to that transition there is a plethora of questions that are pertinent and need answering. For instance, when it comes to trade, Gove claims that "while [Britain] calmly take[s its] time to change the law, one thing which won't change is [its] ability to trade freely with Europe" (231f.). Before Article 50 is triggered and for the two years of exit negotiations, maybe that is. But what exactly happens afterwards? Gove opts for a free trade deal rather than continued membership of the common market. He goes on to say "there is a free trade zone stretching from Iceland to Turkey that all European nations have access to, regardless of whether they are in or out of the euro or EU" (244f.). There is a footnote linking the statement to a Commission infographic of the EU's various trade links with countries around the world. Gove's geographic description including Iceland and Turkey as well as Bosnia, Serbia, Albania and Ukraine, would mean he is referring to the European Economic Area, Customs unions and preferential trade agreements of different kinds at the same time. Unless Gove believes these agreements have somehow magically come into existence to span the European continent no strings attached, the UK will still have to negotiate with the EU— a negotiation easier than access to the common market, but a negotiation no less. That fact does not change, just because to Gove the notion of the UK not being part of something that Bosnia, Serbia, Albania and Ukraine have access to seems ridiculous— or in his words, "as credible as Jean-Claude Juncker joining UKIP" (248)— a notion that suddenly seems much more probable than he intended it to, given that he somehow seems to operate under the impression that there is automatic access to free trade on the European continent rather than it being the result of negotiations and agreements. Ironically, Knott (2016) notes that Gove cites countries as an example for Britain that all seek EU membership and think of such agreements as "a stepping stone" to membership. Even if Britain manages to secure a free trade deal with the EU under favourable conditions, such deals take years to negotiate, possibly more than the two years Britain has to secure a new arrangement with the EU, and what will Britain do in the meantime? And trade is just one aspect of a complex UK-EU relationship that needs to be dissolved and transformed, so the question of what 'out' looks like is one worthwhile asking and one in need of being answered.

In contrast to the event of 'leaving the EU', 'staying in the EU' is constructed as a danger, with membership incurring ever higher costs and the loss of more and more powers to the EU. Whereas the In campaign's case was to a major extent based on the negative consequences of a Brexit, Gove identifies staying in

the EU as "the real danger" (33). This identification is based on intertextual links to the In campaign's and government's portrayal of remaining as the safe choice while leaving would be a "leap in the dark" (Cameron 2016c). Gove refutes this depiction by stressing that a vote to remain would ***not*** be to settle "for a resting place" (102 ff.) or "for status quo" (106). On the contrary, staying "involves risks" (105), staying means to "give away more power and control to unaccountable EU institutions this year and every year" (181f.), staying will "inevitably" lead to "British taxpayers […] paying ever higher bills for years to come as the EU uses its growing and unchecked power to transfer resources to subsidise failure" (195ff.), staying puts Britain at risk to pay "even more of the bills for the euro's failure" (192), staying will be an obligation to "send about another £200 billion to Brussels over the next decade (326ff.)", and, last but not least, staying means that "immigration will continue to increase by hundreds of thousands year on year" (402ff.). To make matters worse, staying would not only oblige the UK to continue paying membership fees, those fees are "due to go up - and up - and up", and the British rebate "could be eroded, whittled away or rendered less and less significant in future negotiations" as "one of the reasons [Britain has] the rebate is fear Britain might leave. Once [Britain has] voted to stay then it will be open season on that sum" (331ff.). Gove enumerates dangers that would ensue if Britain voted to stay, with not a single positive consequence of staying, to turn around the In campaign's argument that a vote to leave would be unsafe. Gove tries to persuade voters that it is the contrary, that staying is unsafe. Even worse, according to Gove, a vote to stay would be interpreted by the EU as a call for deeper integration:

> "If we vote to stay, the EU's bosses and bureaucrats will take that as carte blanche to continue taking more power and money away from Britain. They will say we have voted for 'more Europe'. Any protests on our part will be met with a complacent shrug and a reminder that we were given our own very special negotiation and our own bespoke referendum and now we've agreed to stay and that's that. Britain has spoken, it's said 'oui' and now it had better shut up and suck it up. In truth, if we vote to stay we are hostages to their agenda." (107 ff.)

This portrayal tries to alter the British public's perception of the choice in front of them: while the In campaign and David Cameron frame the referendum as a push for reform in the EU, Gove frames the referendum as a choice between independence and complete surrender to the EU. He even goes so far as to equate a vote to stay in the EU to "voting to be a hostage, locked in the boot of a car driven by others to a place and at a pace that we have no control over" (198ff.). Gove tries to influence voters by making it seem as if Britain would become a helpless victim of the EU with no say whatsoever over its own future. By doing so, he intends to make voters feel like 'Leave' is the only acceptable choice because the alternative is utterly negative and undesirable. Voters, who are not familiar with how the EU works and who don't think critically of what the Leave campaign claims, couldn't possibly vote 'Remain' when supposedly faced with a choice between the promise of "a better future" and the danger of becoming the EU's "hostage". This dramatized account again stresses the disdain for supranationalism in the EU.

The analysis of argumentation strategies suggests that in Gove's speech, the argumentation is predominantly based on conditional sentences highlighting the advantages of leaving and the disadvantages of staying, which both lead to the conclusion 'we should vote to leave'. In the simplest form, argumentation schemata look like this: claim → warrant → conclusion (Wodak 2015: 11). Given the referendum context, we can assume that 'We should vote Leave' can be seen as the conclusion to all the claims Gove puts forward. The title of the speech alone, The Facts of Life Say Leave, suggests we can expect to find plenty of "validity claims such as truth and normative validity" (Wodak et al. 2010: 89) that lead to this conclusion. Indeed, there is a considerable number of expressions like "in fact" (17), "the truth is that" (34, 95), "the facts suggest" (37) and "it's a fact that" (39, 43, 49, 51, 53, 54,

117, 127, 139) in the speech. This alleged quality of the speech of being based on facts is meant to legitimise the Leave campaign's case in general and Gove's portrayal of the EU, as well as the depiction of the consequences of staying or leaving in particular. When it comes to the content of the argumentation analysis, EU membership is predominantly constructed as a burden and a threat leading to the conclusion that Britain should vote to leave in the referendum. This already hints at the fact that the results of the analysis of argumentation strategies are very similar to the results of the analysis of nomination and predication strategies of the events of 'leaving the EU' and 'staying in the EU' and of the social actor 'EU'. Before, in analysing the effect these strategies are meant to have on voters, expressions like Gove tries to 'persuade' or 'sway' voters were used. To be more exact now, the persuasion is based on argumentation. For instance, the topos of burdening infers that "if an institution is burdened by a specific problem, then one should act to diminish it" and the topos of threat implies that "if specific dangers or threats are identified, one should do something about them" (Wodak 2015: 11). In the Brexit context, these topoi can be put more precisely as 'if Britain is burdened by the qualities and policies of the EU, that is in short, by EU membership, then it should vote to leave the union' and 'if membership of the EU is identified as a danger or threat, then Britain should vote to leave the union'. In the analysis of nomination and predication of the EU as well as the events of leaving and staying, the EU has been shown to be depicted as possessing qualities and making policies that are detrimental to Britain, and a vote to stay has been shown to be portrayed as a danger. Therefore, to avoid redundancies, the use of these two kinds of topoi shall not be examined in detail in the following analysis of argumentation strategies, even though they are the topoi most frequently used by Gove.

Furthermore, the analysis of argumentation strategies shows that Gove uses the topos of history to infer that since Britain has been let down by the EU repeatedly in the past, British voters should expect to be let down in the future, too. Wodak's definition of the topos of history reads "because history teaches that specific actions have specific consequences, one should perform or omit a specific action in a specific situation" (2015:11). In simple terms, the topos of history could be paraphrased as 'history teaches us lessons and we should learn from them'. Accordingly, if membership of the EU has led to specific outcomes in the past, it can be expected to lead to similar outcomes in the future. Therefore, Britain should learn from negative outcomes in the past by expecting them to occur again in the future, whereby the topos warrants a transition to the conclusion 'we should vote Leave'. Of course, this topos bears resemblance to the topos of burdening. In his speech, Gove claims "if we vote to stay we also risk paying even more of the bills for the euro's failure" (192). Using the topos of history, he goes on to say "we were told in 2010 that we would not be liable for any more euro bailouts. Yet in 2015 those assurances turned out to be wrong" (192ff.). The topos of history implies on the one hand, that if there have been bailouts in the past, there can be bailouts in the future, and on the other hand, that if promises of no more bailouts were broken in the past, they can be broken again in the future. Gove then segues into his conclusion: "If we vote to stay, British taxpayers will inevitably be paying ever higher bills for years to come as the EU […] transfer[s] resources to subsidise failure" (195ff.), therefore, 'we should vote Leave'. However, saying more bailouts are "inevitable" is of course a stretch from the possibility of a repeat the topos of history would insinuate. If we understand a fallacy to be an unsound warrant that does not lead to an acceptable transition from claim to conclusion (Kienpointner 1992: 249) then it would be justifiable to take Gove's point here for a fallacy. Looking at this part of the speech outside the structure of arguments, it could be argued that all of the citations are mere claims that Gove did not appropriately substantiate. For example, the referenced situations in 2010 and in

2015 cannot exactly be taken to be proof substantiating Gove's claim, since they are based on a considerable simplification of Britain's involvement and complete ignorance of Cameron's renegotiations. Presumably — since Gove does not give any specification of what he is exactly talking of— the allusion of 2010 refers to the EU bailout for Ireland, in which the UK provided 3bn euros (see BBC 2016a). Other bailouts in 2010, strictly speaking, cannot be used to substantiate Gove's claim that the EU forces the UK to be liable for euro-bailouts, include the bilateral bailout of 3.9 bn euros the UK provided Ireland with and the first EU bailout for Greece, which "the UK has not made a contribution via the EU for" (BBC 2016a). In 2011, EU leaders did agree to exclude non-Eurozone countries from bailouts. Subsequently, a separate fund for such measures was set up that only Eurozone countries contribute to. The third Greek bailout of 2015 was partially funded through borrowing against the EU's general budget, which, indirectly, involved liabilities for the UK. These, however, would have been covered by the European Central Bank, which "meant that the UK […] [was] exempted from any risk of losing money in this emergency loan to Greece" (BBC 2016a). As for the supposed inevitability of future euro-bailouts, Cameron's renegotiated New Settlement for the UK within the EU would have become effective if the UK had voted to stay. In it, it reads: "Emergency and crisis measures designed to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area will not entail budgetary responsibility for Member States whose currency is not the euro" and if such measures were to be financed through the general budget of the EU which the UK contributes to, "appropriate mechanisms to ensure full reimbursement will be established" (EU 2016: 5). Unfortunately, once again, due to the restricted scope of this paper it is not possible to analyse in detail the use of further topoi since Gove's supposed fact-check needs quite some fact-checking itself. However, from the argumentation analysis conducted on the rest of the speech it is interesting to note that there is a general lack of sound argumentative transitions. Naturally, whenever a discourse is based on the future a large proportion of it is speculation and estimates, and even now, after the vote has been cast, many of Gove's claims cannot be either verified or falsified as there is no way of telling what kind of deal Britain will be able to strike. Judging by recent media coverage, everything seems to point to a so-called 'hard Brexit', which would make Gove's portrayals doubtable. Anyway, it is not necessary to know these things to judge how this narrative played into making the case for Leave. We can expect that a majority of voters, especially those who do not have much knowledge of the EU, cannot tell topos from fallacy. Coupled with the enduring negative tone in the British press on all matters EU, which will be discussed further at a later point, there seems to be some leeway as to what can be claimed about the EU because the public is ready to expect the worst, so to speak. Therefore, Gove can get away with inaccuracies, the amount and scale of which, of course, varies among the British public. Of course, the more negative the picture painted of EU membership and the more positive the picture painted of 'independence', the better for the Leave camp.

The analysis of mitigation strategies shows that they are employed to reassure voters that exit procedures can be safe, slow and under control. Using mitigation strategies, Gove reassures voters there will be no sudden changes or immediate consequences of Brexit: to this effect, he says, "nothing in itself changes overnight" (209f.) and he references Stuart Rose in saying "Nothing is going to happen if we come out … in the first five years, probably" and that "there will be absolutely no change" (205ff.). Therefore, Gove concludes "there will be no turbulence or trauma on Independence Day" (205f.). He stresses the legitimacy of this assessment by pointing out Stuart Rose' status as the leader of the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign, who has been, in fact, side-lined in his capacity after a number of unfortunate remarks. Furthermore, Gove is mitigating the gravity of a Brexit by breaking down

the process of leaving into little steps, making the exit look manageable and slow-paced, one step at a time. Accordingly, first, "the Prime Minister would discuss the way ahead with the Cabinet and consult Parliament before taking any significant step" (218f.). Before committing to any binding negotiations and before invoking Article 50, "preliminary, informal, conversations would take place with the EU" (220). Moreover, no one would hurry Britain as "it would not be in any nation's interest artificially to accelerate the process and no responsible government would hit the start button on a two-year legal process without preparing appropriately" (222ff.). Then, Britain would "calmly take our time to change the law" (231) and "establish full legal independence" (229), deciding "which EU-inspired rules and regulations we want to keep, which we want to repeal and which we wish to modify" (229f.). In the meantime, Britain's "ability to trade freely with Europe" would not change (232). While all of this, or maybe more appropriately nothing happens, "we hold all the cards and we can choose the path we want" (203f.), "the process and pace of change is in our hands" (210), Britain is free in choosing its way forward as "there is no arbitrary deadline which we must meet to secure our future - and indeed no arbitrary existing "model" which we have to accept in order to prosper" (210ff.), "we can set the pace" (226), and "we can change it on our terms at a time of our choosing" (228). Gove repeats these expressions of control almost religiously, stressing the words 'we' and 'our'. This is meant to convey the utter control Britain will have every step of the way, bringing the message home that voters have nothing to fear in leaving. At the same time, these pronouns contrast the post-Brexit situation to the current state of things where Britain does not have full sovereignty and some decisions can be made by others, namely within the EU.

The analysis of intensification shows that intensification strategies are used to ridicule and delegitimise the In campaign as well as to warn of the consequences of a vote to stay. Since Gove's warnings of what a vote to stay would entail have already been examined, the analysis of intensification strategies will only go into the ridiculing of the In campaign at this point. Gove describes the In campaign explicitly as "irrational" (59), as not being "rooted in reality" (87), as "a fantasy, a phantom, a great, grotesque patronising and preposterous Peter Mandelsonian conceit" (90f.), as being "as credible as Jean-Claude Juncker joining UKIP" (248), as "ridiculous" (271) and as "preposterous" (276). Implicitly, he tries to convey that the In campaign is exaggerated and ridiculous by giving a ridiculously exaggerated account of the In campaign's arguments. An example for this narration is the following paragraph:

> "Some of the In campaigners seek to imply, insinuate and sometimes just declare, that if we left the EU we would not be able to take the train or fly cheaply to European nations. If, by some miracle, we somehow managed to make it to distant Calais or exotic Boulogne we would find that - unique among developed nations - our mobile telephones would no longer work. And heaven help us if we fell ill, as citizens from a country outside the EU we would be barred from all of Europe's hospitals and left to expire unmourned in some foreign field." (61ff.)

While all of these arguments have been advanced by the In campaign, it was in a very different way and certainly put less dramatically than being "left to expire unmourned in some foreign field". In comparison, the government argued "EU membership also gives UK citizens travelling in other European countries the right to access free or cheaper public healthcare […] But there are no guarantees UK customers would keep these benefits if we left" (UK Government 2016a: 6). Not only, is this account a lot less dramatic than Gove's version, it also does not speak in absolutes or claim that the UK's loss of "these benefits" is the only possible outcome, it just states "there are no guarantees". Certainly, saying 'there is no way' or 'it is impossible British consumers will enjoy these benefits after a vote to leave' would have sent a stronger message to voters, but still the government

did not claim that. On its What-the-experts- say page, Stronger in quotes several CEOs of airlines as saying that it is thanks to the EU that airline fares are as low as they are now to give legitimacy to this assessment (see Britain Stronger in Europe 2016a). Based on a Treasury Report, though published after the delivery of Gove's speech, the government analyses and explains how not being part of the EU's Common Aviation Area could lead to higher airline fares, how the pound's depreciation will make holidays in and outside the EU more expensive as British travellers can afford less food, accommodation etc. with a weak pound and that roaming in the EU might become more expensive after a vote to leave (UK Government 2016b). The account offers data and references to back up the results and explains in simple terms how travellers will be affected by a Brexit vote. While there might be a point in criticising the In campaign for being too focussed on negative consequences and failing to make a positive case for what the EU has to offer, Gove's criticism of exaggeration and blowing facts out of proportion could not be confirmed in a general overview of Stronger In's and the government's campaign and information material. What is important though, despite this portrayal of the In campaign being incorrect, is what Gove tries to achieve using this portrayal. Depicting the In campaign as ridiculous and vastly exaggerated attempts to make it look like an illegitimate source of information, whose messages cannot be taken at face value. At the same time, if the warnings of the consequences of a Brexit are incorrect or blown out of proportion, then, once again, this tries to convey the message that a Brexit is nothing voters need to worry about or be afraid of. This point is then being stretched even further when Gove says the In campaign "imagines the people of this country are mere children, capable of being frightened into obedience by conjuring up new bogeymen every night" (91ff.). Obviously, no electorate wants their politicians to treat them like children or to talk down to them. After all, in a democracy the people is the sovereign. As a voter who takes Gove and the Leave campaign seriously, it would consequently be hard to allow themselves to be worried about the In campaign's warnings as that would mean to allow themselves to be treated like children.

Gove's sarcastic reinterpretations of the In campaign are certainly the more entertaining bits of the speech, and it seems worthwhile asking to what end he uses humour. Humouring voters certainly makes him, as a speaker, more likeable and following the campaign in general more fun. Also, making pop culture references can be expected to have a similar effect on voters, e.g. "the In campaign appears to be operating to a script written by George R.R Martin and Stephen King—Brexit would mean a combination of a Feast for Crows and Misery" (83ff.). According to Speier, if we consider politics to be a fight for power then jokes are weapons (Speier 1975: 10). He goes on to say, that jokes among peers can be seen as serving an important purpose in democracies, e.g. as a weapon in electoral campaigns, where making jokes at the expense of one's rival can be used to canvass votes (65). Therefore, the use of humour in Gove's speech is most likely on purpose, which makes it a discursive strategy. If humour in political communication is a weapon, then it is dangerously wielded by Gove since it serves to disguise the lack of substance of Gove's points. While the English Channel will not be "replaced by a sulphurous ocean of burning pitch" (96f.) as a result of Brexit, the consequences will still be serious.

2. Analysis of Context

The DHA stresses the importance of taking a historic perspective as well as insights from different academic disciplines to fully understand a given text or discourse. Therefore, the goal of the following recapitulation of the history of UK-EU relations is to uncover historic roots that can help understand the Brexit discourse and how it is shaped by the prior discourse on Europe. However, it must be pointed out that, given this objective, the account could lead to

a one-sided impression of Britain always hampering progress in the EU, which is not the case. Also, it would be incorrect to make it look like Britain was the only member state to ever be weary of further integration.

That said, the following is a deliberately selective account of UK-EU relations to better understand the Brexit vote.

From a cultural studies perspective, Britain's self-perception is not necessarily one of an integral part of Europe and culturally inherited animosity has shaped UK-EU relations. Famously, Winston Churchill spoke of the 'United States of Europe' in his 1946 Zurich speech. Importantly, though, the UK was not included in those 'United States' (Churchill 1946). "'At present, in this country, when one picks up a book by a British author with a title which refers to Modern Europe it is impossible to tell in advance whether its author will include Modern Britain within its scope or not'" (Robbins 1993: 56; here in: Spiering 2015: 27). This remark illustrates that it is far from given for British people to perceive of themselves as Europeans, as many scholars point out (Liddle 2014: 6; Novy 2013: 88; Spiering 2015: 29). Spiering notes that this perception is "a strong cultural force not easily escaped from" and that this "oppositional and synecdochic thinking is deeply ingrained" and has shaped EU-UK relations profoundly (2015: 29). When it comes to the origin of this perception, he says "next to language and race, the fact that Britain is a set of islands is another purported reason why the British are not Europeans. Popular in the past, this account of exceptionality remains in wide use today" (32). He concludes "the European Union is rejected because Britain is felt to be culturally detached from Europe. This oppositional attitude is pervasive and can be found in academic writing, the media and politics alike" (2015: 73). The following quote illustrates the difficulty often felt to embrace anything European:

> "In Britain 'Europe' is by no means a neutral term, and has not been so for a long time. It is […] the Other which over the centuries has acquired many connotations, some good but many bad […] Suppose the EEC had originally been called the G6 and the EU (at its inception) the G12. It is an interesting thought experiment. It is just possible that the British might have found it easier to embrace such a de-Europeanized set of organizations. But 'European' organizations they were, and the British [opposition] was evident right from the start." (Spiering 2015: 76)

In ***Going into Europe*** (1963), a set of publications compiling opinions from British intellectuals, writers and academics on possible UK entry of the European club, Kathleen Nott, a writer, notes:

> "I find that I dislike the prospect with an intensity surprising even to myself: and with what I call passion […] something very different from the anger or fear with which one may react to the nuclear threat, and much more like instinctive repugnance. After this come the reasons— or rationalisations." (58)

By no means, is this meant to prove that all British people feel repelled by the prospect of taking part in the European project. However, what it does show is that the attitude towards Europe is not a rational matter and that there is an underlying 'instinctive' element, which is important to note in the referendum context. Denis MacShane notes in his book on the Brexit that decades of a troubled membership to the EU "are lodged in the minds, hearts and perhaps guts of all British citizens", which is something a few weeks of campaigning could not drastically turn around (2015: 27). He goes on to say that in British politics it is not small parties on the margins of the political spectrum who take a critical stance on Europe, but the two main parties, Labour and the Tories, who have more often than not "preached against Europe" (38; 42; George 1998: 275). Coupled with the negative media coverage of European affairs, which MacShane calls "a 20-year propaganda campaign against Europe" (179), he states: "The English do not like Europe because they have been told for decades that they should not like Europe. They have transferred to the EU the old enmities they once felt for [Europe]" (35).

Britain's nickname of the 'awkward partner' can in

part be traced back to how its membership evolved historically: before the project of European integration got under way Britain's and Europe's common history involved two World Wars in the space of three decades. Unlike its later continental partners, who have suffered either occupation or defeat, Britain did not see these incidents as proof of the "failure of the nation state", which is why the need for an extra-national, European future was not as apparent to the UK as it was to continental Europe (Novy 2013: 89; MacShane 2015: 205). Coupled with its traditionally global perspective and alliance with the Commonwealth and the United States of America, attempts of European integration were met with disinterest on Britain's part (Reynolds 1993:192; Melcher 2014: 142). Not wanting to join the European Economic Community, Britain then promoted its intergovernmental counter model, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which, however, "proved a poor and inadequate substitute, both in terms of its market size and political clout" (Liddle 2014: 5). When Britain eventually was ready to join Europe, it was "not out of positive enthusiasm but because there seemed no other option" (Reynolds 1993: 232; Melcher 2014: 143), and only to have its entry vetoed twice by de Gaulle. According to MacShane, "for today's older generation of British voters the two snubs […] still rankle" (2015: 48). Not the best of times for the UK, "late-sixties Britain […] was pervaded by a sense of 'decline' […] Rebuffed by the continentals, dependent on America, shorn of empire except for headaches like Rhodesia and Ulster, with the economy in disarray — all that was left for Britain seemed to be nostalgia" (Reynolds 1993: 233). When Britain did join in 1973, it turned out to be bad timing: with its belated arrival Britain, rather than forming the organisation as a founding member, was left to negotiate the terms of accession "from a position of weakness" which "did not prove advantageous" (Reynolds 1993: 238). "Moreover, Britain joined just as the long European boom was tailing away, amid the oil crisis of 1973-4, into inflation and recession" (Reynolds 1993: 238). As a consequence, the British public did not associate the entry with an improvement of their standard of living or overall situation and hence did not develop a positive attachment to the EEC (Melcher 2014: 144; Reynolds 1993: 250). As a member, scholars refer to Britain as "an awkward partner" (George 1998: 1) and often refer to its reluctance to embrace the European cause (Novy 2013: 96; Melcher 2014: 147). The idealist dimension of European integration, or Britain's lack thereof, is also a common feature in analyses of the UK-EU rationship: Reynolds describes Britain as "lacking a sense of European identity" (1993: 251), Münch notes the British intellectuals are practical rather than idealist when discussing European questions (2008: 186), Watts speaks of "an inability to appreciate the enthusiasm and dedication of other nations to closer integration in pursuit of 'the European idea' (2000: 149) and MacShanes states "the idea or ideal of Europe has never entered into the consciousness of the British people or even its political class in the way it has across the Channel" (2015: 126).

The lack of European spirit or enthusiasm from Britain's entry and throughout its membership, as well as in the referendum campaign, seem a pertinent point in explaining its exit, given that negative stances have been consistently featured in the media and expressed by politicians. Speaking of how European matters are often distorted in the British press, MacShane notes "telling lies about Europe became official British newspaper policy" (2015: 173). However, he goes on to say that an important factor in the negative portrayal of the EU is that "they are reporting what senior politicians say. The lurid language about the EU comes from MPs. […] There is very little Nigel Farage says that has not been said by a senior Conservative at some stage since 1997" (168). While there are newspapers that offer facts-based coverage of the EU, MacShane states, exceptions to the rule of anti-European press are few in numbers and have much smaller circulations than their counter parts (179). At the same time, there is an "absence of a permanent positive culture in favour of Europe [which] is a major contributor to the growth of

Brexit tendencies" (MacShane 2015: 196). MacShane then concludes, "in Britain, most of the dominant voices on Europe blame the existence of the Union, its currency, its institutions for the problems the British people face. With no alternative vision, why should the British not consider leaving the Union to be a serious option" (2015: 135). And in many ways, such an alternative, inherently positive vision of Europe was also missing in the referendum campaigns. Earlier, it was stated that Stronger In and the government were not entirely free in choosing their approach, as an enthusiastic case for Europe might not resonate with voters. MacShane says of British governments: "With media waiting to pounce, they have preferred the us-against-them game to explaining an unpopular cause" (2015: 177) and that "in Britain, politicians are slaves to public opinion on Europe. Few are willing to challenge the constant negativity in the press" (201). Similarly, Liddle notes that while politicians can challenge and surpass the views that are generally acceptable, "'making the weather' requires a boldness in challenging assumptions and 'myths', which, particularly on Europe, few politicians have the confidence and power to do" (2014: xxxi). Likewise, David Cameron's case for the UK to remain in the EU was compromised because he made his support conditional from the start, making it depend on the outcome of renegotiations, and then, when he decided to campaign for continued EU membership, he chose words like "I do not love Brussels. I love Britain" (2016a). While that might be how he feels, it certainly does not make a strong case for the EU.

Gove picks up several themes from the discourse on Europe, which can help understand how Gove's arguments can resonate with voters. For instance, MacShane notes that there is „a pervading sense in Britain that somehow the EU is undemocratic" and that "most British […] citizens […] see their Parliament as the only acceptable source for laws and rules over their lives" (2015: 152). By describing the EU as undemocratic, Gove therefore plays on a popular sentiment. Similarly, "one of the persistent complaints of anti-Europeans is that the public has never been told that becoming part of the European Community did involve a loss of sovereignty" (MacShane 2015: 154) is reminiscent of Gove's claim that the EU has ever since tried to hide her true intentions from voters. This is only to give a few examples, which there are many more of.

When it comes to the often mentioned disdain for supranationalism in the EU, useful explanations include the lack of understanding of the European idea, the lack of acceptance of other sources of law than the Westminster parliament as well as the centralist logic of power concentrated in Westminster— except for some advances in devolution— which seems at odds with giving higher authority to an organisation in Brussels (Novy 2013: 93). Hence, abandoning its preference for intergovernmentalism was a compromise to gain market access not a sign of new convictions (Melcher 2014: 152 f.; Hesse et al. 2016).

Conclusion

With the discourse-historical approach as a theoretical basis, Michael Gove's The Facts of Life Say Leave speech has been analysed for the discursive strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, mitigation and intensification. Additionally, the context of referendum campaigning as well as the historic context of UK-EU relations have been examined. The situational and referendum-campaign context suggest that the speech is clearly persuasive in nature, its goal being to mobilise voters to vote 'Leave' in the referendum. Gove claims to offer voters a "positive and optimistic" outlook on Britain's future, while the In campaign supposedly seek to scare voters into staying in the EU. In fact, however, Gove's speech is only selectively "positive and optimistic", namely when he is describing Britain or the event of

leaving. When it comes to describing the EU, the In campaign and the event of staying, his portrayal is negative without exception. This is, of course, in line with his overall intention to sway voters to vote 'Leave' in the referendum. To do so, Gove constructs the EU discursively as an undemocratic, power-thirsty and deeply flawed organisation which antagonises its members, passes bad policies and is too bureaucratic and inefficient. The event/ process of 'leaving the EU' is constructed as a reclamation of democratic values, a recovery of control, a promise of a better future for Britain, and at the same time a liberation for Europe. The oppression of membership to the EU and the need to take back control is accentuated by dubbing the referendum day 'Independence Day', which gives the vote a symbolic quality. All of this illustrates the underlying contempt for supranationalism in the EU. In contrast to the event of 'leaving the EU', 'staying in the EU' is constructed as a danger, with membership incurring ever higher costs and the loss of more and more powers to the EU. This portrayal tries to alter the British public's perception of the choice in front of them: while the In campaign and David Cameron frame renegotiation and referendum as a push for reform in the EU, Gove frames the referendum as a choice between independence and complete surrender to the EU. To the same effect, argumentation in the speech is predominantly based on conditional sentences highlighting the advantages of leaving and the disadvantages of staying, which both lead to the conclusion 'we should vote to leave'. Gove uses topoi of burdening, threat and history, to argue that membership is detrimental to the UK, staying will be even more so and since Britain has been let down by the EU repeatedly in the past, British voters should expect to be let down in the future, too. The title of the speech as well as expressions of facticity claim to offer a fact-check of the referendum debate and to restore it to proportion. However, Gove's speech is ridden with inaccuracies, misrepresentations and vagueness regarding the specifics of what exactly is to happen after his campaign has succeeded. Nonetheless, his claims can be expected to have an impact on voters, who, on a broad basis, do not have much factual knowledge of the EU, have been exposed to consistently critical media coverage of the EU and have reservations about, if not antipathy for, the EU. Both, intensification and mitigation strategies are aimed at reversing the government's and Britain Stronger in Europe's narration: that Brexit is something the British people should be afraid of because it will have many negative consequences whose full impact cannot even be foreseen yet. Thus, Gove tries to make the In campaign's portrayal of Brexit seem exaggerated and ridiculous and replaces it with an account of a slow, manageable process that Britain can fully control. On the contrary, he uses intensification strategies to make a vote to stay look like 'the real danger'. Moreover, his use of intensification strategies is coupled with a deliberate use of humour to make himself and the Leave campaign's case appealing to voters and disguise the dearth of substance in his claims.

From a cultural studies perspective, it is important to understand that Britain does not necessarily see itself as European. Britain's nickname of the 'awkward partner' can in part be traced back to how its membership evolved historically, even though when historic events are used to explain modern developments there is always a danger of overestimating their impact, and compared with other contextual variables this one seems somewhat less convincing. On the contrary, the British discourse on Europe which, on the one hand, is characterised by critical media and politicians, and on the other hand, by a lack of positive voices on the EU, seems to offer a good insight. This lopsided account of EU matters is also reflected in the referendum campaign. In consequence, Gove can use prominent themes of the British discourse on Europe, which makes his speech resonate with voters. When it comes to the disdain for supranationalism in the EU, useful explanations include the lack of understanding of the European idea, the lack of acceptance of other sources of law than the Westminster parliament as well as the centralist logic of power concentrated in Westminster.

In conclusion, Michael Gove has made his case for UK withdrawal from the EU by delegitimising the opposing case by making their account seem ridiculous and exaggerated. On the contrary, he argues for and legitimises his own case by claiming to provide a positive vision for the UK's future. The EU and membership of it are portrayed as detrimental and utterly undesirable. While withdrawal from the EU is depicted as a promise to recover control and of a better future, continued membership is depicted as a threat. Gove uses humour to deceive voters about the seriousness of the consequences of a Brexit. He can play on a culturally inherited distance or even antipathy towards Europe, a disdain of supranationalism and ongoing criticism in the discourse on European affairs in the absence of positive voices speaking for the EU.

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Annex

The facts of life say leave: why britain and europe will be better off after we vote leave

Michael Gove MP, 19 April 2016

One of the most striking things about the debate on Britain's future relationship with Europe is that the case for staying is couched overwhelmingly in negative and pessimistic terms, while the case for leaving is positive and optimistic.

Those of us who want to Leave believe Britain's best days lie ahead, that our country has tremendous untapped potential which independence would unleash and our institutions, values and people would make an even more positive difference to the world if we're unshackled from the past.

In contrast, the In campaign want us to believe that Britain is beaten and broken, that it can't survive without the help of Jean-Claude Juncker and his Commission looking after us and if we dare to assert ourselves then all the terrors of the earth will be unleashed upon our head. It treats people like children, unfit to be trusted and easily scared by ghost stories.

Restoring a sense of proportion to the debate

Indeed, if you listen to some of those campaigning for Britain to stay in the European Union, you would think that for Britain to leave would be to boldly go where no man has gone before.

In fact, of course, it would be to join the overwhelming majority of countries which choose to govern themselves. The In campaign ask repeatedly 'what does out look like?' - as if the idea of governing ourselves is some extraordinary and novel proposition that requires a fresh a priori justification.

Democratic self-government, the form of Government we in Britain actually invented, has been a roaring success for most of the nations who've adopted it. While we enjoyed democratic self-government we developed the world's strongest economy, its most respected political institutions, its most tolerant approach towards refugees, its best publicly funded health service and its most respected public broadcaster.

Under democratic self-government countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA and New Zealand all enjoy excellent economic growth, global influence, the ability to control their own borders, to act independently either to close their borders or open them to more refugees, and strong, durable, trusted security links.

And democratic self-government has manifestly brought benefits to India, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, South Africa, South Korea and scores of other nations all making their way in the world.

Staying in the european union is the real danger

Indeed the truth is that it is membership of an organisation like the European Union which is an anomaly today.

The former President of the Commission himself, Manuel Barroso, likes to describe the EU as an 'empire … because we have the dimension of empires'. The facts suggest he has a point though not quite the one he intended.

It is a fact that the EU is a multi-national federation with no democratically elected leader or Government, with policies decided by a central bureaucracy, with a mock parliament which enjoys no popular mandate for action and with peripheries which are either impoverished or agitating for secession.

It's a fact that also describes Austria-Hungary under the Habsburgs, the Russian Empire under Nicholas the Second, Rome under its later Emperors or the Ottoman Empire in its final years.

It is hardly a model for either economic dynamism or social progress. Which is why we should not be surprised that the countries of the EU are proving neither particularly economically dynamic or socially progressive.

It's a fact that youth unemployment in Spain is 45.3%, in Portugal it is 30.0%, and in Greece it is 51.9%.

It's a fact that in Spain, Portugal and Greece eurozone austerity policies have meant cutting spending on health, welfare and public services.

It's a fact that not a single one of the world's top 20 universities is in the Eurozone.

It's a fact that euro bailouts have meant taxpayers money from across the EU has gone into paying off the bankers who got European nations into a mess in the first place.

And yet we are somehow expected to believe that if Britain left the organisation which gave us the economic disaster of the euro and turned the world's richest continent into its slowest growing, that it's this country which would be acting irrationally.

The only thing that's irrational is the picture the In campaign paints of life as an independent nation.

Some of the In campaigners seek to imply, insinuate and sometimes just declare, that if we left the EU we would not be able to take the train or fly cheaply to European nations. If, by some miracle, we somehow managed to make it to distant Calais or exotic Boulogne we would find that - unique among developed nations - our mobile telephones would no longer work. And heaven help us if we fell ill, as citizens from a country outside the EU we would be barred from all of Europe's hospitals and left to expire unmourned in some foreign field.

But the consequences wouldn't end with the Continent becoming a no-go zone. According to some In campaigners, independence also means the devastation of large areas of our national life. Our football teams would be denuded of foreign players, so Premier league matches would have to become - at best - five-a-side contests. And we'd better not schedule those fixtures for dark evenings because there'd be no electricity left for the floodlights after our energy supplies would had suffered a shock akin to the meltdown of a nuclear power plant.

The City of London would become a ghost town, our manufacturing industries would be sanctioned more punitively than even communist North Korea, decades would pass before a single British Land Rover or Mr Kipling cake could ever again be sold in France and in the meantime our farmers would have been driven from the land by poverty worse than the Potato Famine. To cap it all, an alliance of Vladimir Putin, Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump, emboldened by our weakness, would, like some geopolitical equivalent of the Penguin, Catwoman and the Joker, be liberated to spread chaos worldwide and subvert our democracy.

I sometimes think that the In campaign appears to be operating to a script written by George R.R Martin and Stephen King - Brexit would mean a combination of a Feast for Crows and Misery.

It's a deeply pessimistic view of the British people's potential and a profoundly negative vision of the future which isn't rooted in reality.

The idea that if Britain voted to leave the European Union we would instantly become some sort of hermit kingdom, a North Atlantic North Korea only without that country's fund of international good will, is a fantasy, a phantom, a great, grotesque patronising and preposterous Peter Mandelsonian conceit that imagines the people of this country are mere children, capable of being frightened into obedience by conjuring up new bogeymen every night.

Leaving means a fresh start

The truth is that the day after Britain voted to leave the European Union we would not fall off the edge of the world or find the English Channel replaced by a sulphurous ocean of burning pitch.

Quite the opposite. We would be starting a process, a happy journey to a better future. But, crucially, a journey where we would be in control, whose pace and direction we would determine for ourselves. And whose destination we could choose.

By contrast, if we stay in the EU we give up control. Because just as leaving is a process, not an event, so staying in the EU means accepting a process, not settling for a resting place.

Before I explain how the process of leaving would work for Britain and Europe, let me first say a little about the risks of staying.

Staying means being a hostage not ettling for the status quo

If we vote to stay, the EU's bosses and bureaucrats will take that as carte blanche to continue taking more power and money away from Britain.They will say we have voted for 'more Europe'. Any protests on our part will be met with a complacent shrug and a reminder that we were given our own very special negotiation and our own bespoke referendum and now we've agreed to stay and that's that. Britain has spoken, it's said "oui" and now it had better shut up and suck it up. In truth, if we vote to stay we are hostages to their agenda.

Brussels has already set out their official timetable for the next great transfer of powers from EU members to EU institutions after our referendum is safely out of the way. It's all there in the "Five Presidents' Report".

It's a fact that under the Qualified Majority Voting rules of the Lisbon Treaty, which the Conservative Party campaigned against, the Eurozone countries have a permanent and unstoppable majority allowing them to set the agenda and overrule British interests.

Worse, under the terms of the recent deal we've struck with the other EU nations we've surrendered our veto on their next leap forward.

Some might argue that we're insulated from that process because we're outside the Eurozone and we're no longer committed to the goal of "ever closer union". Wrong. The Eurozone nations can vote together to impose rules on every EU state - whether in or out of the euro. And we can't veto that.

Deleting the phrase ‘ever closer union’ offers no protection.

It’s a fact that as a phrase - or doctrine - in its own right, ‘ever closer union’ has only been cited in 0.19% of cases before the ECJ and has not been relevant to any of the ECJ’s seminal judgments that expanded its power.

The In camp cannot name a single decision of the court that would have been decided differently had the phrase never been in the Treaties. The Court has the power and freedom to interpret the Treaties as it wishes - which is always in the service of greater European integration, regardless of what our deal might say about “ever closer union”. The inclusion of the phrase has not been a driving factor in the EU’s expansion. Removing it makes no difference and will not stop the next EU power grab.

And if we try to object, the European Court of Justice - the supreme court of the EU - can force us to submit to the judgment of others regardless of what our population, our parliament or even our own judges might think is right.

It is a fact that the European Communities Act 1972, and subsequent judgments, make clear that EU law, as decided by QMV and interpreted by the ECJ, trumps the decisions of, and laws passed by, democratically-elected politicians in Britain.

Further, the European Court now has the perfect legal excuse to grab more power - the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which goes even further than the older post-war European Convention on Human Rights.

Of course, we were promised that we had a cast-iron opt-out. The Blair Government originally said the Charter would have all the force in our law of ‘The Beano’. In which case Dennis the Menace must be the single most powerful figure in European jurisprudence, because the ECJ has now informed us that our opt-out was worthless and has started making judgments applying the Charter to UK law.

The ECJ can now control how all member states apply the crucial 1951 UN convention on asylum and refugees because the Charter incorporates it in EU law. So Britain has lost control of a vital area of power and the European Court will increasingly decide how our policy must work.

The ECJ has recently used the Charter to make clear that it can determine how our intelligence services monitor suspected terrorists. How long before the ECJ starts undermining the Five Eyes intelligence sharing agreements that have been a foundation of British security since 1945 and which are the source of jealousy and suspicion in Brussels?

The ECJ recently used the Charter to make clear that the European Court - not our Parliament - will decide the issue of whether convicted felons can vote and if so how far this right should be extended.

The ECJ used the Charter to tell us that the European Court will decide whether we can deport Abu Hamza's daughter-in-law. It has even used the Charter to increase the price of insurance for women.

How long before the ECJ uses other provisions in the Charter to erode even more of our independence?

How far will the European Court go? We know it does not see itself bound by anything other than a drive to deepen integration.

It has consistently ignored and overruled any body which stands in its way. Even decisions made and agreed by every EU state have been overturned if the court thinks they impede integration.

The Court has rejected deals on human rights which the EU nations agreed at the time of the Lisbon Treaty. It has also overridden the deal that the Danes did with the EU on citizenship in 1992.

We know that it is entirely up to the European Court itself how to interpret the terms of our recent new deal - there is no appeal and nothing we can do about its decisions, just as there was nothing we could when it sank our supposed opt-out from the Charter.

Don't just take it from me. The former Attorney General - and In campaigner - Dominic Grieve said only last year: "the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg has predatory qualities to it that could be very inimical t 180 o some of our national practices".

It is clear that if we vote to stay we are voting to give away more power and control to unaccountable EU institutions this year and every year.

If we vote to stay the EU can then press ahead with the plans outlined in the "Five Presidents' Report" which I mentioned a moment ago.

Those plans include:

- The transfer of powers over tax - so we lose vital fiscal freedoms.
- The transfer of powers over the financial system - so we are less able to guard against a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis

- The transfer of powers over the heart of our legal system - so we are less able to safeguard the integrity of the contract and property law which is crucial to attracting global investors.

If we vote to stay we also risk paying even more of the bills for the euro's failure. We were told in 2010 that we would not be liable for any more euro bailouts. Yet in 2015 those assurances turned out to be wrong.

If we vote to stay, British taxpayers will inevitably be paying ever higher bills for years to come as the EU uses its growing and unchecked power to transfer resources to subsidise failure.

If we vote to stay we are not settling for the status quo - we are voting to be a hostage, locked in the boot of a car driven by others to a place and at a pace that we have no control over.

In stark contrast, if we vote to leave, we take back control.

Once we vote to leave we decide the terms of trade

The day after we vote to leave we hold all the cards and we can choose the path we want.

The leader of the In campaign, Stuart Rose, has acknowledged that there will be no turbulence or trauma on Independence Day. "Nothing is going to happen if we come out ... in the first five years, probably," he confessed, and admitted "There will be absolutely no change."

And just as it is the case that when Britain votes to leave nothing in itself changes overnight, so the process and pace of change is in our hands. There is no arbitrary deadline which we must meet to secure our future - and indeed no arbitrary existing "model" which we have to accept in order to prosper.

It has been argued that the moment Britain votes to leave a process known as "Article 50" is triggered whereby the clock starts ticking and every aspect of any new arrangement with the EU must be concluded within 2 years of that vote being recorded - or else…

But there is no requirement for that to occur - quite the opposite.

Logically, in the days after a Vote to Leave the Prime Minister would discuss the way ahead with the Cabinet and consult Parliament before taking any significant step. Preliminary, informal, conversations would take place with the EU to explore how best to proceed.

It would not be in any nation's interest artificially to accelerate the process and no responsible government would hit the start button on a two-year legal process without preparing appropriately.

Nor would it be in anyone's interest to hurry parliamentary processes. We can set the pace.

We will repeal the 1972 European Communities Act, which automatically gives EU law legal force. But we can change it on our terms at a time of our choosing.

After we establish full legal independence we can then decide which EU-inspired rules and regulations we want to keep, which we want to repeal and which we wish to modify. It is also important to realise that, while we calmly take our time to change the law, one thing which won't change is our ability to trade freely with Europe.

Britain continues in the european free trade zone

The In campaign often argues that we would find it impossible to reach a trading agreement with EU nations after we vote leave.

While there are, of course, some questions up for negotiation which will occupy our highly skilled Foreign Office civil servants, resolving them fully and properly won't be any more complicated or onerous than the day-to-day work they undertake now navigating their way through EU recitals, trialogues and framework directives.

Indeed, if we vote to stay, that work will only grow more complex, and negotiations in the EU will only become more burdensome. But if we vote to leave, the need for this bureaucratic processology will come to an end.

The core of our new arrangement with the EU is clear.

There is a free trade zone stretching from Iceland to Turkey that all European nations have access to, regardless of whether they are in or out of the euro or EU. After we vote to leave we will remain in this zone. The suggestion that Bosnia, Serbia, Albania and the Ukraine would remain part of this free trade area - and Britain would be on the outside with just Belarus - is as credible as Jean-Claude Juncker joining UKIP.

Agreeing to maintain this continental free trade zone is the simple course and emphatically in everyone's interests.

As our European friends adjust to the referendum result they will quickly calculate that it is in their own interest to maintain the current free trade arrangements they enjoy with the UK. After all they sell far more to us than we do to them. In 2015, the UK recorded a £67.7 billion deficit in the trade of goods and services with the EU, up from £58.8 billion in 2014.

German car manufacturers, who sell £16.2 billion more to us each year than we sell to them, will insist their Government maintains access to our markets. French farmers, who sell us £1.37 billion worth of wine and other beverages, £737 million more than we sell to them, will insist on maintaining access to our supermarkets. Italian designers, whose fashion houses sell the UK £1.0 billion of clothes will similarly insist on access to our consumers.

It has been suggested that, in a fit of collectively-organised and intensively-sustained international pique, all 27 nations of the EU would put every other priority aside and labour night and day for months to bury their own individual differences and harm their own individual economic interests just to punish us.

Now I accept that some in the Brussels elite will be cross at our temerity in refusing to accept their continued rule.

But the idea that the German government would damage its car manufacturers - and impoverish workers in those factories - to make a political point about Britain's choices; or the French Government would ignore its farmers - and damage 270 their welfare - to strike a pose; or the Italian Government would undermine its struggling industries just to please Brussels, is ridiculous.

And the idea that all of them - and 24 other nations - would have as their highest economic priority in the months ahead making it more difficult to sell to Britain - and the belief that they would bend all their diplomatic, political and financial muscle to that sole end - is preposterous.

Why would any of them wish to commit an act of profound economic self-harm? And if any of them did, why would the other EU nations let them?

It is sometimes claimed that we will only get free trade if we accept free movement. But the EU has free trade deals with nations that obviously do not involve free movement. You do not need free movement of people to have free trade and friendly co-operation.

Indeed, worldwide, it's been countries outside the EU's bureaucracy which have been selling more and more goods to EU nations. Over the last five years exports of goods from the United States to the EU increased faster than the exports from the UK to the EU.

Indeed the amount we sold to Europe actually declined after the EU moved to setting more and more common bureaucratic rules in the name of the so-called 'Single Market'. After joining the EEC in 1972 our trade with it did grow. And in 1993, 51.7% of our exports went to the EU.

After 1993, however, our trade with the EU flatlined then declined. Now 56.3% of our exports go to countries outside the EU. Of course increased trade isn't the property of politicians, it's testament to the endeavours and hard work of British entrepreneurs and British workers.

And it's certainly no thanks to the EU's trade negotiators.

Cutting deals on our terms - and in way which helps the poorest

The EU after years of trying still doesn't have trade deals with the US, China or India.

But if we vote to leave we can take control of our trade negotiations and seal those deals more quickly.

We can strip out the protectionism and special interests that drag down EU negotiations, and focus more energetically on reducing barriers to trade - to create more jobs for British workers, greater opportunities for British exporters, and cheaper prices for British consumers.

Instead of having to wait until every concern raised by 27 other nations is addressed during negotiations we can cut to the chase.

It's striking how successful countries outside the EU have been at negotiating trade deals. Switzerland has opened markets of $40 trillion while Canada has negotiated 10 trade deals since 2009 alone.

Critically, new deals could include enhanced arrangements for developing nations. At the moment the EU maintains a common external tariff on goods of up to 183%. That means produce from Africa or Asia's poorer nations costs far more to import than it should. By maintaining such a punitive level of tariffs on imports the EU holds developing nations back.

An independent Britain could choose to strike free trade agreements with emerging economies and lower tariffs, extending new opportunities to developing nations and in the process, allowing prices in Britain to become cheaper. Leaving the EU would thus help the poorest nations in the world to advance and it would help the poorest people in this country to make ends meet. This is just one of a number of ways in which leaving the European Union allows us to advance more progressive policies.

Strengthening our economy

Taking back control of our trade policy would strengthen our country's economic power. But that's not the only direct benefit of voting to leave.

If we left the EU we would take back control over nineteen billion pounds which we currently hand over every year - about £350 million each and every week.

Now it is true that we get some of that money back - £4.4 billion through a negotiated rebate - and £4.8 billion in money the EU spends in this country on our behalf.

But it is also vital to note that the amount we give to the EU is due to go up - and up - and up.

From £19.1 billion this year to £20.6 billion in 2020-21. Since 1975, we have already sent the staggering sum of over half a trillion pounds to Brussels. If we vote to stay we will send about another £200 billion to 330 Brussels over the next decade.

It is also important to recognise that our rebate is not a permanent and unalterable feature of our membership anchored in the treaties. It's a negotiated settlement - which has had to be re-negotiated before - and which could be eroded, whittled away or rendered less and less significant in future negotiations. One of the reasons we have the rebate is fear Britain might leave. Once we've voted to stay then it will be open season on that sum.

I also acknowledge that some of the money we send over we get back - whether in support for farmers or scientists - although we don't control exactly where it goes. And we don't know how efficiently that money is allocated to those who really need it because of the opaque nature of the EU's bureaucracy.

Indeed there's a lot of evidence the money sticks to bureaucratic fingers rather than going to the frontline.

The physicist Andre Geim, the genius who won the Nobel prize for his work on graphene, said of the EU's science funding system, 'I can offer no nice words for the EU framework programmes which ... can be praised only by Europhobes for discrediting the whole idea of an effectively working Europe.'

In any case, no-one arguing that we should Vote Leave wants us to reduce the amount we give to our farmers or our scientists. Indeed some of us believe we should give more. The only British citizens we want to deprive of European funding are our MEPs. We'd like to liberate them to flourish in the private sector.

Yet, even if we acknowledge the rebate and the sums already spent here, £10.6 billion of taxpayers money is given to the EU in a year.

That's twice the UK's science budget and twice Scotland's school budget.

Just think what we could do with this money.

It could be invested in new infrastructure, apprenticeships and science.

It could be deployed in our NHS, schools and social care.
It could pay for tax cuts, enterprise allowances and trade missions.

It could pay for fourteen Astute Class Submarines.

It could enhance this nation's security, productivity, social solidarity and competitiveness.

And the economic benefits of Leaving wouldn't end there.

We would also be able to reduce the regulatory costs imposed on British business.

The cost of EU regulation on British companies has been estimated by the independent think tank Open Europe at about £600 million every week.

Now some of those costs are incurred in a good cause.

But many EU regulations - such as the Clinical Trials Directive, which has slowed down and made more expensive the testing of new cancer drugs, or absurd rules such as minimum container sizes for the sale of olive oil, are clearly not wise, light-touch and proportionate interventions in the market.

They also show how the so-called Single Market is, as Jacques Delors promised, a vehicle for expanding the power of the EU, not a tool for expanding free trade.

If we leave the EU, we can, progressively, reduce the burden of EU regulation and help generate new jobs and industries. We can also insulate ourselves from new EU rules that other nations are planning which are designed to hold back innovation.

It is striking that EU institutions have already repeatedly tried - and will of course continue to attempt - to fetter the tech companies that are changing the world economy.

As Harvard's Professor John Gillingham has pointed out, the development of fifth generation (5G) telecoms technology and the arrival of the "internet of things" promise massive productivity gains. But the EU has tried to stand in the way of the companies driving this change.

Professor Gillingham argues that the EU's stance is 'guerrilla warfare' which is 'futile as well as self-defeating. It can only accelerate the rate of European decline.'

And the figures back him up.

The EU and its members are projected to grow more slowly than other advanced economies in the years ahead. Eurozone members are projected to grow at 1.5% while the US is projected to grow at 2.4%, China at 6.5%, New Zealand at 2.0%, Australia at 2.5% and India at 7.5%.

But it's not just freedom from EU regulation that leaving would liberate us to enjoy.

We will take back control of immigration

We could also benefit economically from control of immigration.

At the moment any EU citizen can come to the UK to settle, work, claim benefits and use the NHS. We have no proper control over whether that individual's presence here is economically beneficial, conducive to the public good or in our national interest. We cannot effectively screen new arrivals for qualifications, extremist connections or past criminality. We have given away control over how we implement the vital 1951 UN Convention on asylum to the European court. We cannot even deport convicted murderers.

Further, there are five more countries - Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey - in the queue to join the EU - and the European Commission, as we have just experienced ourselves during the recent negotiation process, regards 'free movement' as an inviolable principle of EU membership.

Yesterday's report from the Treasury is an official admission from the In campaign that if we vote to stay in the EU then immigration will continue to increase by hundreds of thousands year on year. Over 250,000 people came to Britain from Europe last year. As long as we are in the EU we cannot control our borders and cannot develop an immigration policy which is both truly humane and in our long term economic interests.

It is bad enough that we have to maintain an open door to EU nationals - from the shores of Sicily to the borders of the Ukraine - it's also the case that as the price of EU membership, we have to impose stricter limitations on individuals from other nations whom we might actively want to welcome.

Whether it's family members from Commonwealth countries, the top doctors and scientists who would enhance the operation of the NHS or the technicians and innovators who could power growth, we have to put them at the back of the queue behind any one who's granted citizenship by any other EU country.

I think we would benefit as a country if we had a more effective and humane immigration policy, allowing us to take the people who would benefit us economically, offering refuge to those genuinely in need, and saying no to others.

And my ambition is not a Utopian ideal - it's an Australian reality.

Instead of a European open-door migration policy we could - if a future Government wanted it - have an Australian points-based migration policy. We could emulate that country's admirable record of taking in genuine refugees, giving a welcome to hardworking new citizens and building a successful multi-racial society without giving into people-smugglers, illegal migration or subversion of our borders.

So leaving could mean control over new trade deals, control over how we can help developing nations, control over economic rules, control over how billions currently spent by others could be spent, control over our borders, control over who uses the NHS and control over who can make their home here.

BETTER FOR EUROPE

Leaving would also bring another significant - and under-appreciated - benefit. It would lead to the reform of the European Union.

At different points In campaigners like to argue either that Brexit would lead to EU nations using their massive muscle to punish us, or that Brexit would lead to contagion and the collapse of Europe - just as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union collapsed following secession from those unions.

Manifestly both cannot be true. An EU without the UK cannot simultaneously be a super-charged leviathan bent on revenge and a crumbling Tower of Babel riven by conflict.

But both points have a grain of truth. There will be anger amongst some in European elites. Not because the UK is destined for a bleak, impoverished future on the outside. No, quite the opposite.

What will enrage, and disorientate, EU elites is the UK's success outside the Union. Regaining control over our laws, taxes and borders and forging new trade deals while also shedding unnecessary regulation will enhance our competitive advantage over other EU nations. Our superior growth rate, and better growth prospects, will only strengthen. Our attractiveness to inward investors and our influence on the world stage will only grow.

But while this might provoke both angst and even resentment among EU elites, the UK's success will send a very different message to the EU's peoples. They will see that a different Europe is possible. It is possible to regain democratic control of your own country and currency, to trade and co-operate with other EU nations without surrendering fundamental sovereignty to a remote and unelected bureaucracy. And, by following that path, your people are richer, your influence for good greater, your future brighter.

So - yes there will be "contagion" if Britain leaves the EU. But what will be catching is democracy. There will be a new demand for more effective institutions to enable the more flexible kind of international cooperation we will need as technological and economic forces transform the world.

We know - from repeated referenda on the continent and in Ireland - that the peoples of the EU are profoundly unhappy with the European project. We also know that the framers of that project - Monnet and Schumann - hoped to advance integration by getting round democracy and never submitting their full vision to the verdict of voters.

That approach has characterised the behaviour of EU leaders ever since. But that approach could not, and will not, survive the assertion of deep democratic principle that would be the British people voting to leave.

Our vote to Leave will liberate and strengthen those voices across the EU calling for a different future - those demanding the devolution of powers back from Brussels and desperate for a progressive alternative.

For Greeks who have had to endure dreadful austerity measures, in order to secure bailouts from Brussels, which then go to pay off bankers demanding their due, a different Europe will be a liberation.

For Spanish families whose children have had to endure years of joblessness and for whom a home and children of their own is a desperately distant prospect, a different Europe will be a liberation.

For Portuguese citizens who have had to endure cuts to health, welfare and public services as the price of EU policies, a different Europe will be a liberation.

For Italians whose elected Government was dismissed by Brussels fiat, for Danes whose opt-out from the Maastricht Treaty has been repeatedly overridden by the European Court, for Poles whose hard-won independence has been eroded by the European Commission, a different Europe will be a liberation.

For Britain, voting to leave will be a galvanising, liberating, empowering moment of patriotic renewal.

We will have rejected the depressing and pessimistic vision advanced by In campaigners that Britain is too small and weak and the British people too hapless and pathetic to manage their own affairs and choose their own future.

But for Europe, Britain voting to leave will be the beginning of something potentially even more exciting - the democratic liberation of a whole Continent.

If we vote to leave we will have - in the words of a former British Prime Minister - saved our country by our exertions and Europe by our example.

We will have confirmed that we believe our best days lie ahead, that we believe our children can build a better future, that this country's instincts and institutions, its people and its principles, are capable not just of making our society freer, fairer and richer but also once more of setting an inspirational example to the world. It is a noble ambition and one I hope this country will unite behind in the weeks to come.

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