

Linda Fagerlie

# Infected by British Imperial Nostalgia?

Bachelor's thesis in English Cultural studies

Supervisor: Astrid Rasch

May 2024



Linda Fagerlie

# **Infected by British Imperial Nostalgia?**

Bachelor's thesis in English Cultural studies

Supervisor: Astrid Rasch

May 2024

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Language and Literature



Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology



# *Infected by British Empire Nostalgia?*

## **Abstract**

In the aftermath of the referendum on UK's membership of the European Union, there have been extensive debates and accusations in the media that the "leave-result" was caused by Imperial Nostalgia. This thesis will scrutinize some of the speeches by pro-Brexiteers held during the campaign, this means in the run-up of the referendum that took place on 23 June 2016. The accusations to which I will compare the arguments of the speeches were found in newspapers and magazines in Britain as well as abroad in the months following the referendum. Similar articles, columns and editorials appeared in large quantities, however, I decided to select six of them. Imperial Nostalgia sounds like a disease and carries an aspect of negativity. Speeches held by Leave campaigners or Brexiteers, as they were commonly and often named, were then analysed to find evidence that the accusers were right.

## **Sammendrag**

I kjølvannet av folkeavstemningen som førte til Brexit har det vært uttallige debatter og beskyldninger i media om at utfallet var et resultat av nostalgi for det britiske imperiet. Denne oppgaven vil granske noen av talene som ble holdt av «Brexiteers» i løpet av kampanjen, samt innlegg i sosiale media, det vil si på oppløpet til folkeavstemningen som ble avholdt 23. juni 2016. Beskyldningene som jeg vil sammenligne argumentene i disse talene med ble funnet i avis- og magasinartikler i og utenfor Storbritannia i månedene etter Brexit. Tilsvarende artikler, spalter og lederartikler dukket opp i hopetall, og jeg bestemte meg for å velge ut 6 av disse. Nostalgi for imperiet kan høres ut som en sykdom og fremkaller negativitet. Taler som ble holdt av de som ville ut av EU, eller «Brexiteers», som de ofte ble kalt, ble deretter analysert for å se om det fantes bevis på at anklagerne hadde rett.

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Imperial Nostalgia and Memory Politics</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology and theory</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Analysis of online newspaper- and magazine articles</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Analysis of speeches by members of the Leave Campaign</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Empire as part of the Brexit debate and summary analysis</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>22</b>

## Introduction

Britain's imperial past and its memory, very often appearing a negative context, has been part of countless public discussions for decades, and one of its zeniths materialized in the run-up of the Brexit referendum and its aftermath in 2016. I have studied a selection of articles where these accusations have been uttered. It is reason to believe that campaigners for leaving the EU contributed largely to the public discussion about Empire – also as part of a compound - that has been present on various media platforms the past years. In this paper I regard this period to have its point of departure in 2013, around David Cameron's announcement that he would hold a referendum on the question whether Britain should leave the EU or remain. However, the Euroscepticism, often becoming part of the same discussion, has been present for longer. It has been useful for me to read Tóra Djurhuus' study "The Legacy of the Past In Brexit Britain", where she among other ideas mentions Daniel Hannan, who was also part of the official Leave campaign, reminding us that he in 2012 "took the initial steps to establish what came to be the official Leave campaign".<sup>1</sup> Discussions and opinions about Brexit are still found in newspapers, nearly 8 years after the referendum, which took place on 23 June 2016. As late as 26 May 2024 we can read in The Guardian an article named "Farewell, Michael Gove: from Brexit to levelling up, you sowed the seeds for this Conservative crisis".<sup>2</sup>

One of the recurring and hotly debated themes is related to Empire Nostalgia. How was the idea of imperial nostalgia used as an accusation against the Leave side, and to what extent did official Leave rhetoric provide just cause for such accusations? This paper seeks to examine and present an answer to this this by looking at accusations made in a selection of newspaper- and magazine articles in the UK and abroad publicised after the referendum, and by searching for evidence in speeches and interviews given, as well as columns and editorials written by prominent members of the Leave campaign, made prior to 23 June 2016, i.e. during the final months of the campaign. Robert Saunders' framework in his "Global Britain

---

<sup>1</sup> Tóra Djurhuus. The Legacy of the Past in Brexit Britain – A study of the influence of the cultural memory of empire on British Euroscepticism. Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, March 2022, 4

<sup>2</sup> [Farewell, Michael Gove: from Brexit to levelling up, you sowed the seeds for this Conservative crisis | John Harris | The Guardian](#)

and the Myth of Imperial Nostalgia” will be used in my analysis, e.g. by referring to one of the flaws that he mentions when writing about Brexit’s Imperial Nostalgia claims, namely that it was being polemical in character.<sup>3</sup> The imperial nostalgia concept is widely used in academic journals beyond newspapers and media articles, and I will include some of these as support and offer my comments to them in my analysis. The debate that is seen as the focal point in my thesis has led to further public discussions in Britain, claiming that racism is part of Britain’s imperial legacy, and it will be natural for me to also make a minor note of this, all the way since accusations of racism and xenophobia emerged as a reaction to the Leave campaign’s arguments about retaining border controls and controlling immigration. The media-created protests of the Brexit win became very popular, and this debate could become vital because criticising the empire is nothing new. It is an ancient discourse of an ancient regime. I have been curious to understand why memory of the empire plays such an important role in this contemporary debate and have looked at some theory and scholarly literature within memory studies to substantiate answers to my research question. Moreover, as the debate encompasses claims and accusations to such an extent, I want to make a comment on the fact that there is a certain amount of shame related to being nostalgic for empire, which could explain why the prominent members of the Leave campaign seem to have attempted to use some kind of a neutral language, or what Djurhuus reminds us: “[t]hat the Brexiteers themselves did indeed access the memory of empire, albeit in coded form”.<sup>4</sup>

I started my research for a confirmation and legitimization of the accusations, however, was surprised to see that the speeches were not entirely composed of a vocabulary that would confirm this. The news articles with the empire nostalgia accusations were at hand to me before I studied the speeches themselves, while attending a course that focussed on memory politics after Empire, and then again Brexit in particular. The logic behind my surprise could be found in my belief that the academic authorship behind the accusations was to be trusted, while we could look to Thackeray and Toyne to see why this was not the case; “It is actually the casual disregard of Empire, then, rather than its conscious or systematic evocation, that forms the key to the ‘post- imperial’ in much Brexit rhetoric. At the time of the referendum, it was this that helped the Leave campaign(s) to deploy a language of

---

<sup>3</sup> Robert Saunders (2020): Brexit and Empire: ‘Global Britain’ and the Myth of Imperial Nostalgia, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, DOI: 10.1080/03086534.2020.1848403 To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2020.1848403>, 2

<sup>4</sup> Djurhuus, 2



abstract British ‘greatness’ which could appeal to younger audiences as well as older, more nostalgic ones”.<sup>5</sup>

Two of the slogans used among the leave campaigners were “we want our country back” and “take back control”. Also geographically speaking, Britain may seem exceptional and different from other European countries, still surrounded by the ocean, although Europe can be reached via the tunnel between the island and France. One additional vital message from the campaigners, as we can read in Gurinder K. Bhambra’s article “Brexit, Empire and Decolonization”, is “reclaiming our national sovereignty”.<sup>6</sup> With the history of Britain as part of an enormous Empire, and not a nation state, memory of all this was easily brought into debates and comparisons and rhetoric. Djurhuus says that while “the Empire largely disappeared from British Eurosceptic discourse for four decades”, “references to the British Empire were common in the debate on Europe in the early 1960s and during the 1975 referendum”.<sup>7</sup> I will look more closely to this when trying to understand how Empire again became a part of the Brexit discussion, as a measure to answer my research question.

## Imperial Nostalgia and Memory Politics

Before proceeding, I prefer to offer some definitions of concepts that will be subject to recurrence in my thesis. Nostalgia means to long for something that used to be before. According to Britannica it means “pleasure and sadness that is caused by remembering something from the past and wishing that you could experience it again”.<sup>8</sup> If we look to Dennis Walder, he offers this explanation that the word is of relatively recent origin, and “is derived from a Greek neologism, combining *nostos*, or home, and *algos*, signifying pain or longing. Its early meaning was primarily pathological, as defined by the seventeenth century Swiss doctor, Johannes Hofer, to describe an epidemic of longing among displaced Swiss students and soldiers”.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the discourse in this paper, the longing would then be

---

<sup>5</sup> David Thackeray and Richard Toye, ‘Debating Empire 2.0,’ in *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain* (UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 3

<sup>6</sup> Gurinder K. Bhambra, [Brexit, Empire, and Decolonization | History Workshop](#)

<sup>7</sup> Djurhuus, 96

<sup>8</sup> [Nostalgia Definition & Meaning | Britannica Dictionary](#)

<sup>9</sup> Walder, Dennis. “Writing, representation, and postcolonial nostalgia.” *Textual Practice*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2009, pp. 935–946, 939

for the Empire that Britain used to be a part of, for better or for worse. Scholars are offering alternative definitions and variations of nostalgia, also imperial nostalgia. Patricia M. E. Lorcin suggests a differentializing between imperial nostalgia and colonial nostalgia, and I find this quite interesting because we could then respond to the commentators and accusers of Brexit Imperial Nostalgia and come to terms with these as not necessarily being negatively connotated with slavery, racism, and other atrocities associated with the Legacy of Empire. According to Lorcin, “Imperial Nostalgia is related to a decline of international stature associated with the power politics of economic and political hegemony”.<sup>10</sup> Further, and in contrast, she says; “colonial nostalgia is associated with the loss of sociocultural standing or in short, the colonial lifestyle”.<sup>11</sup> If we stick to this definition, and agree with Lorcin at this point, we may accept the Leavers’ longing for the political and economic past, re-routing the discourse away from personal and private “glory”, shame, and behaviour. My study must also be seen in elucidation of memory politics. The concepts “collective memory”, “contested memory” and “cultural memory” may all be applied in a discussion about empire and politics, in this case Brexit. Media and journalism are present in my text, and as Nicole Maurantonio argues in her article “The Politics of Memory”, journalism is one of the “dominant sites for memory study in communication scholarship”.<sup>12</sup> This she says in connection with asking “Whose memory do we study and how?”. Although this is not my main question in this study, the past clearly seems to evoke a tremendous volume of memories, discussed in the present, by those who did not experience those historic events in “the first place”. Memory alone, as argued by Davis and Starn (1989), quoted in Maurantonio, is “polymorphic” and “thereby interpreted variously, depending on the context within which it is used”.<sup>13</sup>

## Methodology and theory

This thesis focuses mainly on the period starting approximately four months before the Brexit referendum and the next twelve months after. For the first part of my analysis, I chose six primary sources consisting of a selection of newspaper and magazine articles with

---

<sup>10</sup> Patricia M.E. Lorcin. *The Nostalgias for Empire History and Theory*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (JUNE 2018), pp. 269-285 Published by: Wiley for Wesleyan University Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2665076>, 2

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 2

<sup>12</sup> Maurantonio, Nicole. "The Politics of Memory." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, edited by Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 5

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 3

distinct accusations of Brexit being a result of Empire Nostalgia. These were published from June 2016 until March 2017. The material was partly found by searching the internet using the entry “empire nostalgia” and partly collected from a course at NTNU named ENG2455 – History and Politics, during the autumn semester of 2022. The material is not exclusively from British sources. Each extract has been carefully analysed, and I will say something about the author, his or her main argument and the specific “derogative” reference to the British Empire and Nostalgia for the past. Where appropriate I have left my own comments and referred to existing scholarly literature.

Part two with primary sources are speeches with links to original sources found on the web site called [www.voteleavetakecontrol.org](http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org). I decided to choose speeches given by politicians fronting the leave campaign, starting from February 2016 continuing until June 2016. The claims arisen about the Empire Nostalgia have been addressed to “Leavers”, which goes for 52% of the voters, however, the Leavers in this paper are restricted to prominent members of the Vote Leave /Brexiters: Boris Johnson, Michal Gove, Gisela Stuart, Priti Patel, Iain Duncan Smith, and Nigel Farage. This is all written material or transcript speeches. As the holders of these speeches and subjects of interviews are those who were the ones most often attacked by “remain-campaigners”, I expected to find proof within this selected material and explanations to why, and hence evidence, that commentators could argue this way. The speech-analyses are somewhat shorter than those of the newspaper- and magazine articles. A summarizing chapter will follow the analyses.

The outcome of my analysis and conclusion would perhaps have turned in different direction if I used other primary sources. The idea started with my interest in searching to find an answer to why there is so much negativity related to the British Empire and Britain’s Imperial Past. This is a vast study field, and had to be narrowed, of course. Support in secondary literature has been included gradually while writing, although some of the contributors were familiar to me already, especially Robert Saunders, Astrid Rasch, Craig Calhoun and Nicole Maurantonio. Reading Tóra Djurhuus in the final stage of my writing was very interesting and assisted me in conceptualizing my findings. Some theory on memory politics will be included and referred to in my thesis, when related to the topic of empire, nostalgia, and history, and I have searched to bring to the surface the reason why “empire nostalgia” came to be such a bad thing. Theories and arguments will be extracted from further secondary sources.

## Analysis of online newspaper- and magazine articles

The following six articles were analysed in the light of their criticism and accusations towards the Brexit vote being a result of Imperial Nostalgia

### **Zócalo, 28 June 2016 – “Brexit Succeeded by Playing to Britons’ Imperial Nostalgia”<sup>14</sup>**

The author of this article is the British Philippa Levine, and she teaches history at the University of Texas/Austin. In the headline of her essay Levine claims that Leave voters have been influenced by Imperial Nostalgia, something which led to the result of Brexit. Further, I hold that her main argument is that Britain’s cry to become Great once more is nothing new. Levine takes us back to 1973 when Britain was granted membership with the EU. At the time, she says, repeating arguments in other existing research, entering the EEC/EU in the 1970s was some kind of empire-related-campaign as well, as Britain was denied membership twice on the grounds of “its principal ties being more imperial than European”. She refers to the 1975 referendum when “Britons saw Europe as offering, in effect, a realistic alternative to what they understood to be a loss of power, economic prowess and British dignity”. We also see this discussion with Saunders, who simply says that: “The charge that critics of European integration were nostalgic for empire has a long pedigree”.<sup>15</sup> He refers to a lament in the *Daily Mail* that “Britain had forfeited the leadership of Europe .... Because she continued to regard herself as an Imperial and oceanic power”<sup>16</sup> Further, we read in Saunders, “Tony Benn in 1975, leading the Labour Leave campaign in 1975, was mocked in *The Sun* as “the last British imperialist rampant, still inhabiting a world in which the poor countries sell us their food and raw materials on the cheap and gratefully purchase our manufactured goods”.<sup>17</sup> This is interesting because, according to Djurhuus, “references to the imperial past in British Eurosceptic arguments disappeared following the 1975 referendum, only to be resurrected – in a completely different and reimagined form – in the immediate years leading up to the Brexit referendum “. <sup>18</sup> According to Levine, many of those who voted “Yes” may not have studied the consequences of leaving the EU, rather they acted in a wave steered by

---

<sup>14</sup> [Brexit Succeeded by Playing to Britons’ Imperial Nostalgia | Essay | Zócalo Public Square \(zocalopublicsquare.org\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> Saunders, 6

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 6

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 6

<sup>18</sup> Djurhuus

sentiments of nostalgia or as explained with the notation ‘good past/bad present’, further outlined by Fred Davis, who holds that “In other words, regardless of how nostalgia draws on the past in reconstructed ways, it is nonetheless a feeling that occurs in the present.”<sup>19</sup> This is a helpful concept of memory when examining British Euroscepticism at this particular point in time. This is supported by Calhoun, who says that “For most people, voting for Brexit was expressive more than instrumental action. A Brexit vote expressed frustration, rage, resentment, and insult – as well as hope that a vanishing way of life could be saved, and a proud national identity celebrated”.<sup>20</sup> Further, “But this is not an adequate account of their motivation, all the more since many did not expect for the “leave” vote to succeed”.<sup>21</sup>

Levine’s argument seems to be influenced by fellow academics drawing lines to the Vote Leave campaign discourse about taking control of borders, which is one of the distinct statements from politicians campaigning for voting “leave” in the referendum. Out of this discourse she draws racism into the debate, about which she explains is “rapidly re-emerging in an impossibly divided Britain”. Levine’s language consists of vocabulary that is easily recognizable with Britain’s imperial history and national pride; patriotic, imperialism, white skin, nationalism, “ruled the waves” and glory days. These utterances, however, do not prove that she quotes directly from any campaigners’ speech. For example, she says: “the Leave campaign emphasized what Britain might once again become, if freed from what they described as the yoke imposed by the EU. (You could practically hear the strains of “Rule Britannia!” in the background). I agree with Djurhuus that “when looking for future visions of post-Brexit Britain, both politicians and the media were able to rummage through history to find a form of language that was very much suggestive of Britain’s past imperial achievements, yet without explicitly referencing the British Empire itself”.<sup>22</sup>

However, there is one specific evidence of the Leave Campaign’s arguments in the debate which may support her, namely the infamous poster used by UKIP – The UK Independence Party – pointing to what Britain may experience if not controlling the borders, showing long lines of migrants wanting to enter the country. We know that this picture originally was taken on the Croatia-Slovenia border in 2015.

---

<sup>19</sup> Fred Davis. *Yearning for Yesterday. A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 13, quoted in Djurhuus, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Craig Calhoun. 2017. «Populism, Nationalism and Brexit». *I Brexit: Sociological Responses*, redigert av William Outhwaite. S.57-76, 58

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 58

<sup>22</sup> Djurhuus, 3

***The New York Times*, 12 July 2016 - “England’s Last Grasp of Empire”.<sup>23</sup>**

As per today, Ben Judah is listed as Political Adviser to the Shadow Foreign Minister of the Labour party, he is also an author and has been a contributor to several news magazines, among others *The New York Times*. In this article he is playing with notorious historic events and his argumentation is evidently polemic in character, using grand words for attention. It is interesting to relate this to the arguments of Robert Saunders, and especially the one he brings up when presenting the flaws regarding the Brexit’s Imperial Nostalgia claims, being polemical in character.<sup>24</sup> This is also mentioned in my introduction. It could be comprehensible that commentators and opponents of Brexit would use their voice to attack Leavers, and I will come back to what Saunders has suggested in this connection. Further Judah writes about greatness and argues that Brexit will do for England the opposite of what they fantasize about, namely revived greatness and “taking back control”. Judah claims that Brexit will make Scotland’s withdrawal from its union with England inevitable, and places in doubt the status of Northern Ireland. Britain’s seat on the United Nations Security Council is being turned into a “rotten borough”. He draws Winston Churchill into the discussion, by saying that it was the one who created this seat with the Council. He talks about Great Powers/and little England. Judah further notes that the reason to leave is “not sovereignty but *rejection of ethnic change*”. He refers to the anti-immigration aspect, saying that for many voters the idea of identity was important, not austerity. I read this as his opinion that the nationality and exceptionalist idea prevails the economic aspect. We should also note that Judah employs “plebiscite” instead of “referendum” (where the first is defined to be a negative one).<sup>25</sup>

Twice in his article Judah refers to Turkey and Turks. The first reference is related to his reporting from a tour he had in Britain to cover Brexit; “in Grantham, Margaret Thatcher’s hometown, I was told Britain would *collapse with these millions of Turks*” (my italic) and further down; “A majority of those I met thought a tide of immigration from the European Union was imminent – thanks, they believed, to *impending Turkish membership*” (my italic). Judah, as we see with several other commentators in the media, uses arguments

---

<sup>23</sup> [Opinion | England’s Last Gasp of Empire - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/12/opinion/englands-last-grasp-of-empire.html)

<sup>24</sup> Saunders, 2

<sup>25</sup> [ESRC-ref or pleb.pdf \(strath.ac.uk\)](https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/centres-and-groups/strath-centre-for-international-law-and-justice/working-papers/2016/2016-01-pleb.pdf)

that can hardly be legitimized by the language used by politicians and other proponents of Brexit.

***The Guardian*, 24 August 2016 - “Colonial nostalgia is back in fashion, blinding us to the horrors of empire”.<sup>26</sup>**

Kehinde Andrews is a British academic and author, a Professor of Black Studies in the School of Social Sciences at Birmingham City University. This article was written after Great Britain’s success at the Rio Olympics in the summer of 2016. This success made a Conservative MP (Heather Wheeler) tweet in – according to Andrews - “postcolonial melancholia” that “Empire Goes for Gold”. The concept *Postcolonial melancholia* is taken from the academic Paul Gilroy, he says. This clearly fuelled the discussion in the media of what was the driving force behind the Leave campaign and hence the reason for victory of the Leavers. Andrews uses a language that is commonly recognized as referring to the days of glory of the previous British Empire and sentiments emerging post-colonially. See my comment to Lorcin in the paragraph on Levine. His vocabulary includes “British imperial pomp”, “Britannia ruled the waves”, “British nationalism”, “former glories” and “national pride”. What I found exceptional with Andrew’s article is that it also refers to other aspects of the British society and that Colonial or Imperial Nostalgia is “not just confined to the Brexiters”, hence the hint to “back in fashion”.

As other critics have done in newspapers and social media platforms after the referendum, Andrews also “draws” on accusations and statements that the members of the Leave campaign have only implicitly uttered. Kehinde Andrews finds the opportunity to mention other domains of society where postcolonial or imperial nostalgia can be observed, and where challenges are visible, e.g. racism and reactions to this that seem to have been awakened post-Brexit, also as connotations to slavery. There is, I would say, one ironic comment to anti-slavery/abolition of the slavery as a.o. prompted by David Cameron. Andrews writes in another, previous article in *The Guardian* about Cameron’s trip to Jamaica in October 2015, and here he mentions Cameron’s claim during a campaign against Scottish independence where he also evoked the idea of the nation being progressive when he claimed

---

<sup>26</sup> [Colonial nostalgia is back in fashion, blinding us to the horrors of empire | Kehinde Andrews | The Guardian](#)

that Britain was a country that was worth saving because, among other things, it “abolished slavery”.<sup>27</sup>

***The Guardian, 28 January 2017 - “The big white men of Brexit are a throwback to Britain’s imperial past”.***<sup>28</sup>

Ian Jack, writer, and editor, in his article reports from a recent visit by Boris Johnson to Kolkata, hosted by West Bengal’s chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Jack presents a picture of a proud white man travelling out to meet “old friends”. These old friends will appreciate all hallmarks of imperial Britain and old names such as Eton, Balliol, Oxford and further on, which means old institutions that are still testimonials of Britain’s greatness. The old institution of the Bengal Club is mentioned, which used to be frequently visited by white “governors-generals, judges, senior army officers and chairmen of jute and shipping companies”. The building is depicted to be “grand as the grandest seafront hotel”. Further, the author describes several characteristics of the city that confirm Britain’s imperial history. At the end he refers to a society that “Boris, Nigel and the lads would seem likely to have a feeling for”. Ian Jack also manages to include a satirical comment asking why there were no memorials “to the East India Company traders who spent their nights pickled in claret”. Implicitly he says, arguably, that this is what Brexiteers have been longing for.

***Financial Times, 7 March 2017 – “Post-Brexit delusions about Empire 2.0”.***<sup>29</sup>

James Blitz is a journalist and editor who writes about Liam Fox and the Commonwealth, and a forthcoming meeting between Fox and 30 Commonwealth ministers in London. There has been scepticism in Whitehall, and Mr. Fox’s ambitions for a renewed trading relationship has been described as “Empire 2.0”. Although this annotation has allegedly come from Whitehall, commentators swiftly picked up the “Empire 2.0” description. The main argument from Blitz I would say is the following: “But any politician who thinks the UK can replace its 40-year relationship with the EU by returning to nostalgic dreams of empire needs to think again”. The Empire 2.0 discussion has been further commented by Thackeray and Toye in *Debating Empire 2.0*. I choose to mention this here

---

<sup>27</sup> [It’s Britain that needs to ‘move on’ over slavery – away from the myths | Kehinde Andrews | The Guardian](#)

<sup>28</sup> [The big white men of Brexit are a throwback to Britain’s imperial past | Ian Jack | The Guardian](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Post-Brexit delusions about Empire 2.0 \(ft.com\)](#)



because I argue that this is one evidence that commentators used this public discussion to highlight their opinion on society and other “faults”, scapegoating the agenda of the Leave campaign and Brexit in general. Blitz is very direct in calling this proposed relationship an act of “returning to nostalgic dreams of empire”. Further, he mentions that “conservative right wingers may feel nostalgic about a return to *imperial preference*.” Therefore, it is interesting to see what Thackeray and Toye say about the rhetoric on imperial nostalgia; “There are a number of reasons for expressing caution about the standard ‘imperial nostalgia’ narrative. To begin with, EU states other than Britain have struggled with their imperial pasts, without developing an anti-European pathology. Moreover – and this is indeed made clear by scholars such as GrobFitzgibbon – many post- war British politicians were simultaneously proudly imperialistic and enthusiastically European”.<sup>30</sup>

***Truthout, 6 July 2016 - “The Iraq War, Brexit and Imperial Blowback”.***<sup>31</sup>

In her article from July 2016, Nadine El-Enany, then teaching law at Birkbeck Law School, University of London, writes in a quite straight forward way about the disaster of Brexit, which is only to be understood “in the context of Britain’s imperial exploits”. In her opinion, minority groups across the UK have been made “vulnerable to racist and xenophobic hatred and violence”. She clearly entangles the discussion of racism, before, during and after the referendum. Further, El-Enany claims that “Brexit is not only nostalgia for empire — it is also the fruit of empire. Britain is reaping what it sowed”. Further she holds that “The legacies of British imperialism have never been addressed, including that of racism.” Here I will agree, but this is another discussion. However, she uses the opportunity to say that Brexit happened because of racism, and again that there has been a denial of it. It should be possible to have a discourse about this without blaming Brexit, and there are plenty of scholarly articles on the subject. One is “Racism, Crisis, Brexit” by Satnam Virdee & Brendan McGeever. In their examination of discourse of the Leave campaign they argue that there are two “inter-locking visions” which they see as contradictory. I would like to mention one here: “a deep nostalgia for empire, but one secured through an occlusion of the underside of the British imperial project: the corrosive legacies of colonialism and racism, past and present”.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Thackeray and Toye, 16

<sup>31</sup> [The Iraq War, Brexit and Imperial Blowback | Truthout](#)

<sup>32</sup> Satnam Virdee & Brendan McGeever (2018) Racism, Crisis, Brexit, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41:10, 1802-1819, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1361544, 1803

Moreover, what is primarily worth noting is their sign of positiveness when saying: “Finally, we draw this discussion of racism, crisis and Brexit to a close by outlining some resources of hope that might help us to navigate the current emergency”.<sup>33</sup>

Returning to El-Enany, hers are accusations generated in the media, by an academic. El-Enany has published several articles and commentaries on the subject. She continues by listing what Brexiteers, implicitly by wanting to protect the UK borders, will do to migrants, and she also refers to a reading of the past saying that “Britain has a long history of invading, exploiting, enslaving and murdering vast numbers of people...”. Beyond the well paraphrased “take back control” and hinting to Farage’s infamous poster depicting non-white refugees crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border in 2015 along with the slogan “Breaking Point”, her accusations are insinuations more than proof that the rhetoric among leave campaigners is confirming imperial nostalgia.

## **Analysis of speeches by members of the Leave Campaign**

I have performed an analysis of chosen speeches, columns and statements made during the leave campaign, of which the oldest one is from February 2016, and the most recent one from June 2016. They are naturally not analysed in detail, however, checked for any direct utterances or vocabulary that vindicate the accused empire nostalgia among the leave campaigners, which again could be a proof that the referendum outcome was a result of empire nostalgia.

The speeches are collected from the web site [www.voteleavetakecontrol.org](http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org).

### **20 February 2016, Michael Gove, statement in *Vote Leave*<sup>34</sup>**

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 1804

<sup>34</sup> [Statement from Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Justice, on the EU Referendum - Vote Leave \(voteleavetakecontrol.org\)](http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org)

In his statement found on Vote Leave's Homepage, Gove gives an account of his visions for Britain outside the EU and lists several arguments in favour of leaving. Among these are no clear nostalgic longings for what Britain used to be, however, as several other leave campaigners have said, he uses the slogan of the official Vote Leave campaign: "by leaving the EU we can take control". He thinks Britain will be stronger outside the EU, and that "decisions should be decided by people we can choose and who we can throw out if we want change...". There is one comment though, by which he might be "arrested" among the "imperial-nostalgia-guards", namely "we led the world in abolishing slavery". This is true but is also part of contested discussions related to British slave traders and slave owners. We could also relate this to the part of memory politics where academics discuss collective memory and *contested memory*. Some people may choose to celebrate that Britain in fact was contributing to abolishing slavery, and others may focus on all the atrocities related to the period before, during and after the abolition.

**22 February 2016, Boris Johnson, column/speech in *The Telegraph* <sup>35</sup>**

In his column Boris Johnson stresses that the vote Leave is nothing necessarily anti-European or xenophobic. Implicitly, he finds it necessary to defend previous or on-going accusations about Euroscepticism. The very idea of Euroscepticism can of course by some commentators be read as Global or pro-Imperial. Djurhuus has in her analytic elaboration said that "Eurosceptic rhetoric relies heavily on ideas of British exceptionalism to establish British identity in relation to Europe and to the European Union in particular". <sup>36</sup> From my point of view this is what accusers and the remain-campaign see in the neutralized or coded language with the Brexiters. Johnson mentions "loss of sovereignty", "immigration" and "we used to run the biggest empire the world has ever seen". These expressions can consequently be influenced by a sense of past "greatness", but he also explains that what he means by "loss of sovereignty" is the "inability of people to kick out, at elections, the men and women who control their lives". No doubt, Johnson points to Britain's former merits when visualizing the future outside the EU. Still, his main arguing circles around what Britain may manage on their own, and the flaws of the EU, for example that "EU filtrates just about every area of

---

<sup>35</sup> [Boris Johnson backs Brexit as he hails 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' to vote to leave EU \(telegraph.co.uk\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/ukpol/eu-referendum/2016/02/22/Boris-Johnson-backs-Brexit-as-he-hails-once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity-to-vote-to-leave-EU-telegraph.co.uk)

<sup>36</sup> Djurhuus p. 26.

public policy”, and he also mentions some “ludicrous” rules of EU, like “the rule that you can’t recycle a teabag”.

**1 March 2016, Gisela Stuart, column/essay in *Prospect* <sup>37</sup>**

Stuart, a MP from the Labour party at the time, refers to some activities of David Cameron, commenting on his agenda for calling the referendum. This is most of all a critic aimed at Cameron, wanting to “placate Eurosceptics within this party and to keep UKIP at bay”. She obviously disagrees with Cameron when he says that Brexit will harm Britain’s “international standing”. UK, in her opinion, can and must do better without the EU. Rules and government should be executed from Britain, and among other achievements at home she mentions the minimum wage, increased parental leave and workers’ rights. Her article leaves no further association with empire nostalgia, rather a combat towards the EU, not to be mistaken with Europe. She, as do Gove and Johnson, emphasizes that this is a once-in-a-generation chance.

**18 April 2016, Priti Patel, *Daily Mail* <sup>38</sup>, and 22 June 2016 in *The Guardian* <sup>39</sup>**

These are both two minor articles/interviews, where Patel, in her role as Employment Minister naturally speaks about migration and work. In the first listing which is a comment Patel has given in Daily Mail, she says that “uncontrolled migration is putting unsustainable pressures on our public services”, referring to, inter alia, shortage of primary school places. Again, we can recognize the campaign’s popular slogan “take back control”. In the second listing, we can see the repetitive argument about the devastating impact immigration has on schools in Britain. Patel claims that the EU is undemocratic and interferes too much in “our daily lives”. Further, the problem will only get worse, she says, with more countries waiting to join the EU, including Albania, Serbia, and Turkey. I would not necessarily recognize any reason for arguing that Patel is being nostalgic for empire. Rather, she seems to use the rhetoric aiming at voters who would support her view on immigration control.

---

<sup>37</sup> [Brexite is the left-wing choice \(prospectmagazine.co.uk\)](http://prospectmagazine.co.uk)

<sup>38</sup> [Priti Patel says migration from EU has put 'pressure' on education system | Daily Mail Online](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

<sup>39</sup> [Priti Patel warns of EU migration threat to UK class sizes | Brexit | The Guardian](http://www.theguardian.com)

### **30 April 2016, Iain Duncan Smith interview in *The Telegraph* <sup>40</sup>**

In this interview Smith is named a “Tory veteran”, and according to gov.uk. <sup>41</sup> He was the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions until March 2016, when he resigned from the cabinet in protest at the Chancellor’s plan to cut disability benefits, according to The Telegraph. He uses an emotional, colourful language and speaks of a visionally 24 June as a “glorious day”. Britain is, according to Duncan Smith, the greatest country in the world. His main argument, stating what is the cause of suffering in the UK, is largely congruent with those of other campaigners, namely the “uncontrolled mass migration”. Towards the end of the interview, I found one statement that could clearly relate to longing for Britain’s past: “It is the great dawn of Britain’s independence and the chance to be a power in the world again”.

### **20 June 2016, Nigel Farage speech in *The Independent* <sup>42</sup>**

This text is written only three days before the referendum. Still, we find much of the same wording as the previous texts above. Again, it is about “taking back control”, and the fact that the ones to be elected as MPs “would be the ones who make and decide our laws, rather than a bunch of unelected old men in Brussels....”. Further, leaving means that Britain will revitalise its democracy. Farage, as the other Leave campaigners, believes that Britain is big enough and good enough to govern its own country. He speaks about the global trade deals he wants Britain to negotiate for itself, and an independent country “free to cooperate and trade with our European neighbours while re-engaging with the wider world including our kith and kin in the Commonwealth”. Farage claims that “this decision is not about isolating ourselves in any way”. Commentators and opponents/accusers could perhaps interpret this as just the opposite, seeing this as Farage’s and the Brexiters’ way of dreaming about becoming exactly that, “isolated”. Geographically, Britain will always be regarded as separate from the European continent.

---

<sup>40</sup> [EU referendum: Iain Duncan Smith interview - Tory veteran says vote to leave on June 23 will make Britain great again \(telegraph.co.uk\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

<sup>41</sup> [The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

<sup>42</sup> [Nigel Farage: Why you should vote for Brexit this Thursday | The Independent | The Independent](http://www.the-independent.com)

## Empire as part of the Brexit debate and summary analysis

Although comments from scholarly literature have been incorporated above, I would like to add a few ideas in this chapter. Discussing Britain's imperial past in scholarly literature is nothing new, and with Brexit and other contemporary issues, the discourse also became public. Astrid Rasch suggests that the debates are “centring upon two opposing poles of celebration or lamentation”.<sup>43</sup> With my choice of newspapers and other media platforms the public debate centred around the ones “not celebrating”. Not for the balance, however, just to reveal one sample of the opposite, I found one article written by one of the celebrators of Empire, Jacob Rees-Mogg, and his defence of the British Empire in *The Spectator* some months ago (3 October 2023):<sup>44</sup>

“Our colonial experience – of course, as with anything in human life, it has its mistakes – was one of the greatest civilising, prosperity-creating forces the world has ever seen. Better and more lasting in its way than the Roman Empire”.

I think this is important because the outcome of my research might be different if looking into other media sources.

However, for this thesis, it seems clear; what the speeches, articles and columns presented by the Vote Leave campaigners have most in common, is the fear of uncontrolled immigration, and the wish to “take back control” of government and borders. As Craig Calhoun says, “Brexit was a vote against London, globalization and multiculturalism as much as a vote against Europe”.<sup>45</sup> When being frustrated about the present, patriotism and the attraction towards nationalism may be strengthened, as it appeared in contemporary Britain – by some leavers – and by some commentators interpreted as Euroscepticism and xenophobia. What is evident, these expressions are not used, with some exceptions, directly in speech by Brexiters, but commentators might freely read it as such, of course. Some theory and academics explain this very well, and Djurhuus rightfully claims about the Brexit advocates that “the language they used was one that was largely stripped of explicit references to

---

<sup>43</sup> Astrid Rasch. Exemplar empires: Battles over imperial memory in contemporary Britain. 166 in Doble, J., Liburd, L. J., & Parker, E. (2023). *British culture after empire: Race, decolonisation and migration since 1945*. Manchester University Press.

<sup>44</sup> [Jacob Rees-Mogg's defence of the British Empire | The Spectator](#)

<sup>45</sup> Calhoun, 57

empire, yet at the same time highly suggestive of past imperial achievements. Consequently, the past did provide a language that emphasised Britain's exceptional national characteristics and history, all the while omitting their imperial legacy".<sup>46</sup> I suggest that this "stripping" was executed premeditatedly. Likewise, it was the commentators' freedom of speech that allowed them to employ rhetoric blaming the Brexiters of the nostalgia for Empire. Finally, I had expected, to a greater extent, to reveal that the accusations were legitimate.

In another article and analysis by El-Enany, of which Patricia M.E. Lorcin offers her comment in "The Nostalgias for Empire", I find it interesting when Lorcin says that this analysis is "as much an indication of the angry disappointment of the remain contingent as it is evidence of imperial nostalgia..."<sup>47</sup>. One of El-Enany's statements reads as follows, quoted by Lorcin:

"This referendum has not been about Europe, but about Britain and its imperial legacy. For Brexiters, turning their back on Europe and turfing out their neighbours is a step toward salvaging the shipwreck of the British Empire. "

Summarizing my findings in the above analyses, I hold that the accusations in media evoke a higher quantity of nostalgia references than can be justified in relation to the analysed speeches and interviews. We must expect that leave-voters have been influenced by one or several members of the leave campaigns. What parts of their rhetoric have been adequately influential so that media could accuse the result of the referendum being caused by empire nostalgia? Because it is quite evident that the campaigners and Brexiters did not explicitly and expressively mention that the British people were longing to get the empire back, hence inspiring the voters and convincing them to vote for a fantasy future. As Calhoun argues, "while the campaign was not about economic policy, economic malaise helped turn the mood of the country sour".<sup>48</sup> For example, if it was hard to get your children into the school you wanted, or if it had become difficult to buy a house, immigrants were seen as explanations for all these grievances.<sup>49</sup> Arguably, the main purpose of this message from leave campaigners was to play with people's sentiments.

There are numerous reactions to Brexit, and interpretations of the referendum result, among the commentators and media representatives. The majority of these are not very

---

<sup>46</sup> Djurhuus, 20

<sup>47</sup> Lorcin, 278

<sup>48</sup> Calhoun, 58

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 59

flattering or to the advantage of the Leavers' frontmen and -women. One reading is explained and elaborated by Bill Schwarz in his chapter "Forgetfulness: England's Discontinuous Histories" of *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain*.<sup>50</sup> According to Schwarz, a spontaneous reflex occurred when the extent of the Leave vote first began to take hold of the minds of those who only a short while before had found such an idea unthinkable, namely that Brexit was a long latent nostalgia for empire. It should be emphasized that this is what Schwarz observed, but it is not his argument that this was the "dominant causal factor". It is, however, a contribution when trying to explain and understand the reactions in media and elsewhere in the public sphere in the aftermath of the referendum.

This reflex was not only spontaneous, but also contagious among commentators and members the anti-Brexit group. I hold that this was one way of putting the Leave-side of the population to shame. Robert Saunders criticizes the analysis of Brexit as imperial nostalgia although he belonged to the "remain" group. In relation to the polemic characterization of the rhetoric as we saw with Saunders earlier, other scholars have also written about the "polemical weapon" that nostalgia appears to be. Djurhuus refers to an argument by Michael Kenny, namely that in the world of politics, the concept of nostalgia most often "is described as an indication of flawed political arguments which resonate more in certain places and among certain demographics".<sup>51</sup> When Djurhuus also reminds us that "there is plenty of evidence to support the political use of nostalgia as a polemical term to discredit an opponent's argument"<sup>52</sup> we understand that accusations of the type discussed in this paper have been used by the Remain-side to express their frustration and push accusations to extremes.

The discourse in this period became, and continues to be, comprehensive among a great number of academics and people in general. The idea of an empire-critical-master narrative which needs a counter-memory is found in Astrid Rasch's essay "Keep the balance": The Politics of Remembering Empire in Post-Colonial Britain. It is interesting to note what she writes about three phenomena that characterize the extensive engagement with the imperial past, especially "the idea that there is an empire-critical master narrative against

---

<sup>50</sup> Bill Schwarz: "Forgetfulness: England's Discontinuous Histories" in Ward, Stuart, and Astrid Rasch. *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019. p. 52

<sup>51</sup> Michael Kenny, 'Back to the populist future?: understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse,' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 22, no. 3 (2017): 256,

<sup>52</sup> Djurhuus, 31



which one must present a counter-memory in order to keep the balance”.<sup>53</sup> This is not an idea that she necessarily supports, but it explains the rhetoric and different wording deployed by commentators versus that of the campaigners accused of being nostalgic for empire. The comment made by Johnson, referred to by Rasch, is also mentioned above in my paragraph about Boris Johnson’s column in The Telegraph. When Johnson says: “we used to run the biggest empire the world has ever seen”, this might be a sign of his confidence that Britain can manage to be alone, without the EU, and not necessarily longing for the past. It could also be that he and other defenders of a sovereign Britain outside the EU saw it necessary to “balance” or reconcile the public when the accusations and claims were brought to the surface immediately after the referendum result. Saunders says that “memory” is not an unmediated product of experience, rather it is constructed and given meaning in the stories told about the past.<sup>54</sup> In the speeches and articles analysed in my paper, I recognize what we can read further from Saunders, namely that the prominent Leave figures such as Boris Johnson, Liam Fox and Jacob Rees-Mogg, that these have “visioned the heroic past as *global* rather than *imperial*.”<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

As we have seen in my analysis, although only a minor selection of primary sources was employed for the purpose, the opponents of Brexit recognized and interpreted the coded language of the Leavers as being coloured by Imperial Nostalgia, claiming that this contributed to the Brexit result. Even if there is some evidence within the official Leave rhetoric that provides just cause for the accusations, these are not significant per se. The frustration and rage among members of the remain-group contributed to the rhetoric employed by the commentators. This public discussion about the imperial legacy was highly influenced by the Leave-win and accusations and opinions are still found in the media. The discussion was even more fuelled by the Black Lives Matter campaigns reaching a height in Britain in 2020 and the rage that was aroused by anti-racism at the time and in the previous years, e.g. with RMF (Rhodes Must Fall) in 2014/2015 and similar campaigns. It seems that

---

<sup>53</sup> Rasch, Astrid. “‘Keep the Balance’: The Politics of Remembering Empire in Postcolonial Britain.” *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 212-230, 2

<sup>54</sup> Saunders, 5

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 5

empire nostalgia accusations were rooted in all kinds of interpretations of the campaigners' rhetoric with any reference to the following dictionary entries; democracy, control, border, immigration, independence, power, global, Euro, laws and Commonwealth.

I hold that the vast majority of the nostalgia-related vocabulary is used more often by critics of the leave result than by the Brexiters themselves. The commentators, although they are many, have made their own conclusions and used rhetoric coloured by their own disappointment in the time after the referendum. Legacies of empire, decolonization and now also Brexit will continue to be debated in the years to come.

## Bibliography

### Books and journals

- Calhoun, Craig. 2017. «Populism, Nationalism and Brexit». I *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, redigert av William Outhwaite. S.57-76
- Fred Davis. *Yearning for Yesterday. A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 13, quoted in Djurhuus
- Djurhuus, Tóra. *The Legacy of the Past in Brexit Britain – A study of the influence of the cultural memory of empire on British Euroscepticism*. Department of English, Germanic and Romance Studies, March 2022.
- Kenny, Michael. 'Back to the populist future?: understanding nostalgia in contemporary ideological discourse,' *Journal of Political Ideologies* 22, no. 3 (2017): 256
- Lorcin, Patricia M.E. THE NOSTALGIAS FOR EMPIRE. Source: *History and Theory*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (JUNE 2018), pp. 269-285 Published by: Wiley for Wesleyan University Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26650762> Accessed: 19-05-2024
- Rasch, Astrid. ““Keep the Balance”: The Politics of Remembering Empire in Postcolonial Britain.’ *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 212-230, 2 [NTNU Open: “Keep the balance”: The Politics of Remembering Empire in Post-Colonial Britain](#)
- Rasch, Astrid. Exemplar empires: Battles over imperial memory in contemporary Britain. 166 in Doble, J., Liburd, L. J., & Parker, E. (2023). *British culture after empire: Race, decolonisation and migration since 1945*. Manchester University Press.
- Saunders, Robert. (2020): Brexit and Empire: ‘Global Britain’ and the Myth of Imperial Nostalgia, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, DOI: 10.1080/03086534.2020.1848403 To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2020.1848403>
- Schwarz, Bill: Forgetfulness: England’s Discontinuous Histories” in Ward, Stuart, and Astrid Rasch. *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019
- Virdee, Satnam & McGeever, Brendan. (2018) Racism, Crisis, Brexit, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41:10, 1802-1819, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1361544
- Walder, Dennis. “Writing, representation, and postcolonial nostalgia.” *Textual Practice*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2009, pp. 935–946
- Ward, Stuart, and Astrid Rasch. *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019.

## **Primary sources; online newspaper- and magazine articles**

[Brexit Succeeded by Playing to Britons' Imperial Nostalgia | Essay | Zócalo Public Square \(zocalopublicsquare.org\)](#)

[Opinion | England's Last Gasp of Empire - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

[Colonial nostalgia is back in fashion, blinding us to the horrors of empire | Kehinde Andrews | The Guardian](#)

[The big white men of Brexit are a throwback to Britain's imperial past | Ian Jack | The Guardian](#)

[Post-Brexit delusions about Empire 2.0 \(ft.com\)](#)

[The Iraq War, Brexit and Imperial Blowback | Truthout](#)

## **Primary sources, online speeches and interviews**

[Statement from Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Justice, on the EU Referendum - Vote Leave \(voteleavetakecontrol.org\)](#)

[Boris Johnson backs Brexit as he hails 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity' to vote to leave EU \(telegraph.co.uk\)](#)

[Brexit is the left-wing choice \(prospectmagazine.co.uk\)](#)

[Priti Patel says migration from EU has put 'pressure' on education system | Daily Mail Online](#)

[Priti Patel warns of EU migration threat to UK class sizes | Brexit | The Guardian](#)

[The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Nigel Farage: Why you should vote for Brexit this Thursday | The Independent | The Independent](#)

## **Other web pages accessed:**

[Brexit, Empire, and Decolonization | History Workshop](#)

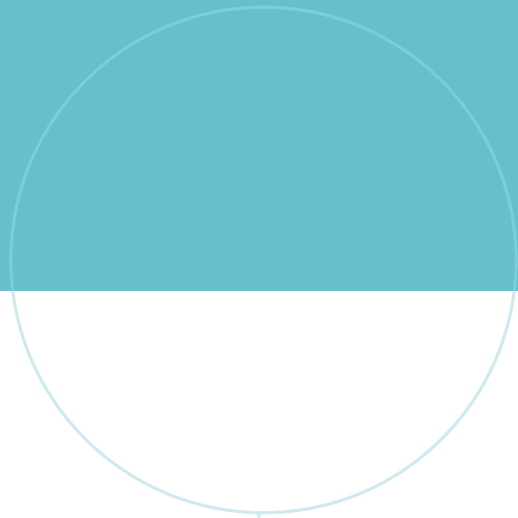
[Farewell, Michael Gove: from Brexit to levelling up, you sowed the seeds for this Conservative crisis | John Harris | The Guardian](#)

[The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Jacob Rees-Mogg's defence of the British Empire | The Spectator](#)

[Key speeches, interviews, and op-eds - Vote Leave \(voteleavetakecontrol.org\)](#)

[ESRC-ref or pleb.pdf \(strath.ac.uk\)](#)



 **NTNU**

Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology