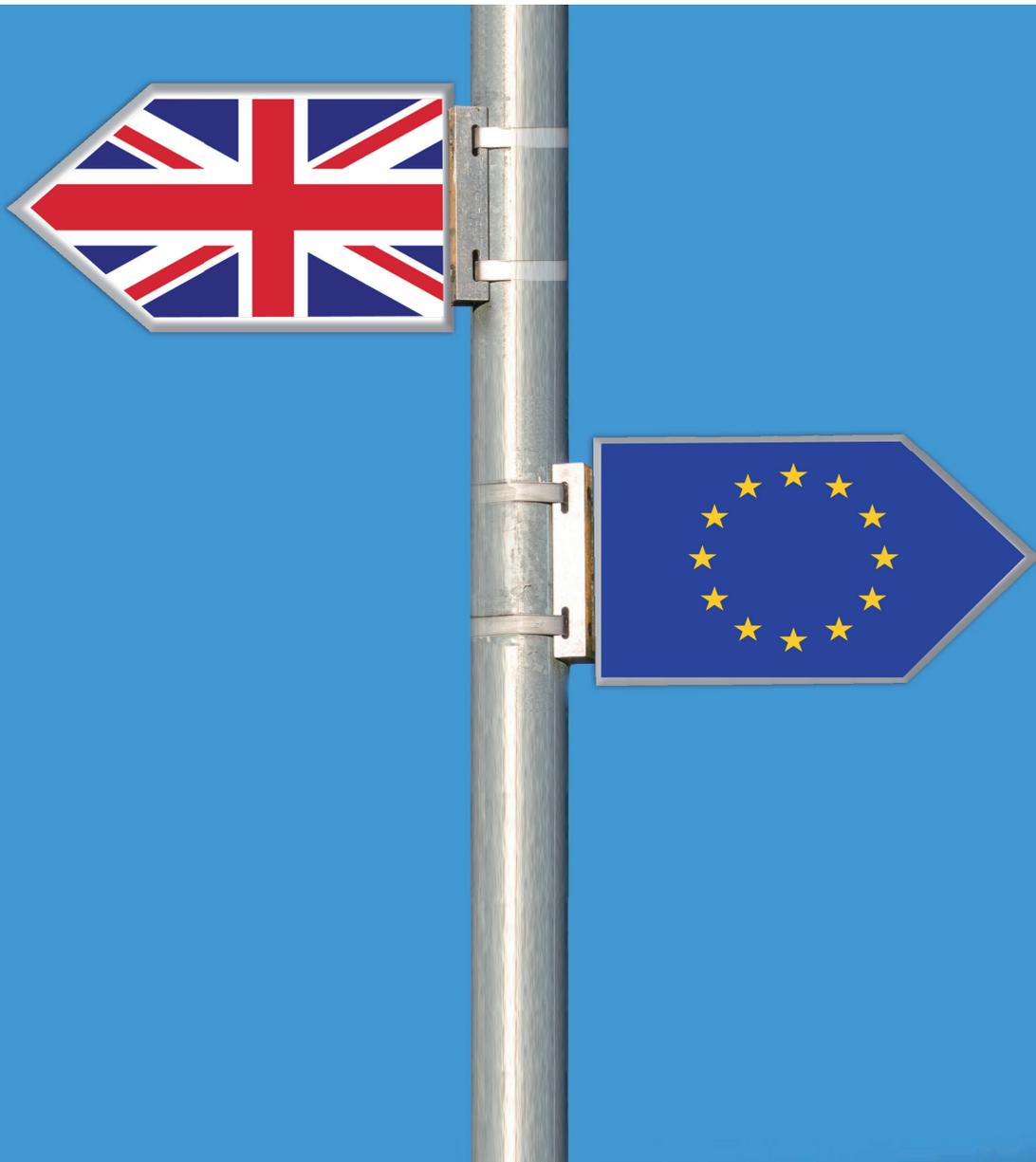


It's not just the economy, stupid!

Brexit and the Cultural Sector

Edited by Gesa Stedman and Sandra van Lente



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Statement by Sharon Dodua Otoo

Author and activist

In summer 2016 I won one of the most important literary awards in the German-speaking world. When I first learnt German in secondary school, I had no personal ties to Germany – I simply loved language-learning and travelling. Freedom of movement within the EU enabled me to form friendships, build a family and pursue a career in creative writing. I have enjoyed opportunities in my chosen home, Berlin, which would not have been available to me in London. Mine may not be a typical journey, but it is an example of what Europe as a social and cultural entity has made possible. Brexit offers very little in compensation.

Editorial: Brexit and the Cultural Sector

Gesa Stedman and Sandra van Lente

Many people involved in the arts voted against Brexit. 96% of the UK's Creative Industries Federation members were against leaving the EU. 100% of the participants in this survey and one conducted by the Arts Council England on the impact of Brexit on the cultural sector now have to face the reality of Brexit, many of whom voiced a decided fear and concern for the future of the arts in England or Britain respectively.¹ Although there is only a minority government at the time of writing and the results of the general election on 8 June 2017 may point towards a 'softer' Brexit than many had feared, the future is unclear. And it looks bleak to many artists, writers, academics, and cultural mediators. Quite apart from the more prosaic problems of a potential loss of revenue, reduction of audience numbers or fewer international exchange partners, many of our contributors worry about two aspects which have come to the fore in the context of Brexit: the stark social rift which separates the Leave and Remain camps, and the nasty rise of xenophobia and insularity in all its different shapes and forms. A xenophobia unleashed by politicians and journalists but possibly a xenophobia which was always slumbering underneath the veneer of more outward looking multiculturalism, or at least an orientation which did not play so much on the return to formulaic imperial nostalgia which we have witnessed in the run-up to the referendum, and even more markedly, in the year since the referendum. Not surprisingly, a country ripped apart by hatred provokes anxiety. Philip Jones, editor of *The Bookseller*, explained in June 2016: "We emerge from the referendum a more divided society, one more insular and, for now, directionless." (*The Bookseller*, Philip Jones, 24 June 2016)

A year on, the situation hasn't changed much – social inequality, hatred, and prejudice govern both politics and (social) media as well as everyday life in Britain. Well may children's book authors promote tolerance and diversity in the wake of the Brexit vote (*The Bookseller* 12 May 2017), in the hope that this might help to teach future generations how to overcome social and cultural rifts.

Our contributors come from a broad range of cultural and artistic practice. Our call was answered by artists, activists (often both at the same time), cultural managers, politicians and academics. We would have liked to include museums and theatres as well, but the response, for whatever reasons, was minimal. We asked everyone to choose from three different formats: short statements, interviews, or longer essays, primary works such as poems, extracts from novels, or images included. Many of the contributors come from a country other than the UK or have come to Britain as part of an Erasmus exchange. Like us, they often have a bilingual background or have profited from the opportunities that cross-border academic and cultural exchange allow.

Although our authors do not intend to be read or viewed as all-encompassing, and although they differ in respect to the focus they chose for their essays, poems, or statements, one aspect unifies their utterances: passion. Passion for the multi-faceted characteristics of culture, language, exchange, dialogue, border-crossings, passion for an outward-looking approach to both Britain, its different nations, and its neighbours close and far. A passionate fear of what Britain might lose in the process of departing from the EU. And the fear of loss does not concentrate on the loss of revenue or even on the probable obstacles to travel and artistic exchange once Brexit is in place. But the loss of ambivalence and ambiguity, the loss of conflicting opinions, texts, stances, diversity, in short: everything that culture, which is free to find its own forms of expression, is valued for.

We are grateful to all our contributors that they were willing to share, in particular at this early stage, their thoughts and feelings on Brexit's impact on cultural production and reception. We are particularly grateful to those contributors who needed to tread carefully because of their institutional or academic affiliation.

We hope that this book, which is of course very much of its time and context of production, will help to remind all of us how important both multivocality and culture in all its different guises and with all its different, and sometimes even conflicting, functions are.

Thanks to Esmé Ellis, Catherine Smith and Jürgen Schlaeger for help with the editing and production process of this book. Thanks to the KOSMOS funds of the Excellency Initiative at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for making this publication possible.

Berlin, July 2017
Gesa Stedman and Sandra van Lente
The Literary Field Kaleidoscope

Note:

1. http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Arts_culture_Sector_exit_from_EU_NOV_16.pdf (last accessed 18 June 2017). <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/23-29-may-2016/creative-industries-federation-members-survey-shows-96-want-stay-eu/> (last accessed 18 June 2017).

Kate McNaughton: I am a Child of Europe

My feelings about (and objections to) Brexit are above all of a cultural nature: I am a child of Europe, and the narrow-mindedness of one country deliberately cutting itself off from the rest of this wonderful continent is utterly baffling to me. My parents are British, but I was born and raised in Paris. I thus grew up completely bilingual and bicultural, and – luckily for me, given how the Brexit talks have been going so far – have both a French and a British passport.

Over the years, thanks to EU freedom of movement legislation and various EU programmes and funds, I have been able to study in the UK and in Denmark, live and work in Rome, do an artist's residency in Berlin, take part in a series of documentary filmmaking workshops in Italy and Latvia, work on a film shoot in Austria, and, finally, settle in Berlin, where I live now. As a result of these experiences, I now speak fluent Italian and German on top of my native English and French, and I have good friends all over the continent, from Denmark to Greece, from Lithuania to Slovenia.

I realise that mine is a privileged cosmopolitanism: not everyone can afford to go to university, let alone apply to take part in an Erasmus programme or artist's residency. And even aside from that, there is much to be criticised about the European project in its current incarnation, not least the devastating effects of the austerity imposed on Southern European countries. But still, on this continent that my grandparents saw tear itself apart just seventy years ago, there are now millions of Europeans of my generation and younger who have studied, worked or settled in a country different to the one they were born in, who speak several European languages as a matter of course, who have married and had kids with someone of a different nationality, who think nothing of hopping on a train or plane to spend a weekend in a different country – and for whom needing a visa to do so would seem simply absurd.

I love Europe, its patchwork of cultures, languages and histories; and while I can see reasons to criticise the EU on a political level, I don't understand why anyone would want out from this project, would choose to abandon it altogether rather than try to improve it from the inside.

On a more prosaic level, Brexit could have a very negative impact on my work in future. I am a writer and translator. Since I am resident in Germany, this is where I pay my taxes; but I often do translation work for clients based in France or the UK. This is easy: within the whole EU, there is legislation in place to ensure that I don't get taxed twice, and that I can exclude VAT from my invoices to clients based abroad, so that it makes absolutely no difference to me financially whether I do work for someone in Germany or, say, in the UK (save for usually minor currency exchange issues). As long as I declare all my income in Germany, where it comes from within the EU just doesn't matter.

Were Britain not to secure a similar deal upon leaving, it could lead to me losing money in taxes and tariffs on jobs I do for clients in the UK – and having to spend more time performing whatever administrative tasks would be required by the new trading regulations. I would probably stop doing translation work for UK clients, or at least take on far less than I do now.

What really worries me, though, are the consequences Brexit might have for me as a writer. I am represented by a London-based agent, and my debut novel, *How I Lose You*, is being published next year by Doubleday in the UK and Les Escales in France. These publishers pay me via my agent, meaning that they transfer whatever they owe me to the agency, which then deducts its fee, and transfers what is left to me. Again, EU legislation means that I don't lose any money in extra taxes on these amounts: I just declare them all in Germany and pay income tax on that.

In the case particularly of my deal with the French publisher, Brexit could cost me a lot of money: if tariffs were to be introduced on transactions in between Britain and the EU, my payment could have a tariff deducted from it when it was transferred from France to my agent in the UK, and I could find myself paying a tariff on the fee my agent charged me as well (as this would be a transaction between the UK and Germany). Add to this potential VAT bills on the money entering and leaving the UK, and these could be sizable deductions – bearing in mind that, since this particular publisher is in France and I live in Germany, all of these extra costs would be avoided if the publisher were to transfer the money to me directly, thus avoiding it ever leaving the EU...

The British publishing industry is lobbying hard for this not to happen, of course, and I very much hope it succeeds. Otherwise, such financial barriers would, quite simply, cut the UK off, reduce its level of trading with the EU in the publishing sector, and thus increase its isolation. As I said at the beginning of this article, it's the cultural implications of Brexit that really worry me: in the case of publishing, the barriers erected by leaving the EU will achieve nothing other than cutting the UK off from its closest neighbours, making it more inward-looking and, I fear, mean-spirited. I hope the country comes to its senses and prevents this from happening.

Johanna Zinecker: “These are the gestures of Brexit”¹

A conversation with Farah Saleh and Victoria Tischler about their collaboration on *Brexit means Brexit!*

We see two protagonists engage in a bodily and emotionally charged performance. A dance with and against each other – a combative fight, aggressive and confrontational, yet interspersed with moments of support in which the two bodies converge and depend on each other, moments of synchronicity and precarious care. The two dancers, through the course of the performance, develop a repertoire of gestures - variations on demanding, empty hands; on extended, pleading hands; on stomping crutches and feet; on clapping hands and angry stares; on physical domination and defeat; on branding with spray paint.



Candoco Dance Company, Brexit means Brexit!, Choreography by Farah Saleh, work in progress at Hysteria and Art: Traumatic Coincidences, 2017. Commissioned by PS/Y for Hysteria 2017. Photo by Manuela Barczewski.

This is the first part of *Brexit means Brexit!*, a work in progress staged at a symposium titled “Hysteria and Art: Traumatic Coincidences” earlier this year². The hardness and vulnerability of these movements is then juxtaposed with an invitation to the audience in the second part of the performance. We are invited into the performance space to engage with each other and act together – to connect. The exploration of negative emotions in this piece becomes an aesthetic strategy to search for the relations between politics and emotions, giving physical shape to feelings. In this sense, *Brexit means Brexit!* can be read as a performative gesture of affective politics, a staging of the negative emotions around Brexit as a public feeling, asking “How does Brexit feel?”³. Performing the transformative potential of negative affect it points towards the possibilities that emerge from crisis and despair. In light of the uncertainty about Brexit’s impact on the arts, which is often projected as overwhelmingly negative, this piece demonstrates that art indeed matters now, perhaps more than ever⁴.

When I attended this inaugural staging of *Brexit Means Brexit!* in January 2017 in London, it was the first art piece I had seen that consciously and overtly worked with Brexit as its material. Inviting their contribution to this publication about the current state of Brexit, Culture and the Arts, I spoke to Farah Saleh and Victoria Tischler about their motivations and future plans for this moving and important piece of post-referendum art.

Johanna Zinecker (JZ): Your piece consciously works with and reflects on the discourse and event of Brexit, foregrounding the affective dimension of the current political situation. Can you tell me about the motivation and idea behind the piece and how it came about?

Farah Saleh (FS): When Candoco approached me about choreographing a piece for them, they talked about a performance around hysteria and of possible ways of connecting it to women and history of dance. But as I always like to connect my work to the present and tackle current social and political issues, we decided to discuss the ‘hysterical’ current situation in the UK. I was also moving to the UK at that moment, so the situation was involving me personally and giving me and my family much uncertainty. I was reading and seeing videos on Brexit and I noticed the number of times Theresa May was repeating the empty phrase “Brexit means Brexit”. We decided to give our interpretation of that and reflect on the collective mental health of the nation.

Victoria Tischler (VT): For me, this idea, to make Brexit the topic of the performance, came from my own trauma in processing the result of the referendum. I felt shattered, disoriented and furiously angry. I was surprised and shocked by how much revulsion I felt towards those who voted leave and this felt deeply uncomfortable. It helped to talk to others about these feelings and when Farah and I first met we discussed it and I realised that it might be

possible to make something creative from the vote for Brexit. I knew from my psychology training that posttraumatic growth was possible. This is a relatively recent development within positive psychology, the idea that positive changes can occur after trauma e.g. a revised worldview and deeper connections to others. I am also interested in group mentalities and how leavers had stirred up tension and hatred towards 'others' i.e. 'foreigners' and asylum seekers, effectively turning people against each other and laying blame for society's ills at the door of those most vulnerable and marginalised. This group hysteria was fuelled by images of 'foreigners', often Muslim, highlighting 'differences' rather than commonalities between us. With the piece, we wanted to explore the language, images and discourse that tied people in knots – the repetition of words and gestures, emphasis of negative messages, lying and deception, these all played a role in creating hysteria, before and after the result.

JZ: It seems that this piece has deep personal meaning to you both. Can you say a little more about your personal experience of Brexit and how it impacted your work on this piece?

FS: As a Palestinian born in a refugee camp in Syria and now holding an Italian passport, I hate borders and consider myself a citizen of the world. I wasn't in the UK when the referendum took place. My husband got a job at the University of Edinburgh just one week after the vote. I was already very angry from the outcome, but when I realized that we were actually moving to the UK, I became anxious, as the status of European citizens wasn't and is still, until today, unclear. I started worrying about the future of my half-Palestinian, half-Italian child in a divided, partially racist society. I felt quite vulnerable and upset. So the piece is also an attempt to translate all of these emotions into something else, along with the dancers' and Victoria's own experiences.

VT: My father was a post WW2 refugee. I never would have been born had he and his family not been offered sanctuary in Australia. The anti-foreign fear narrative of the leave side before and after the referendum really incensed me, even if I was not surprised that people were taken in by it. I have British-Australian dual nationality, so I could and did vote. Many of my friends however were ineligible to vote, despite some living in the UK for over 20 years. I think it was helpful for me to process my anger and horror, to channel it into something of value, working on this piece. Even though I am officially British, I have never felt less British than I do now. I am European and my affinity is with Europe, not Britain. In a way, the piece captures much of the emotion of a grieving process, moving through stages of denial to acceptance, not necessarily in order. The participative elements at the end felt like moving from contemplation to action, an important step in healing after trauma, and also in bringing people together who have been divided, like we have been as leavers and remainers. Taking part in it has been moving and also therapeutic.

JZ: Farah, you worked with Candoco Dance Company for this piece. Can you tell me a little bit about how the collaboration came about and developing this piece together with Victoria?

FS: For a few years Candoco and I had the intention to collaborate and I believe Candoco felt the Hysteria project was a good way to start our collaboration. Mette Kjaergaard Praest, who commissioned Candoco for the piece, is very interested in science and art collaborations, so she also involved Victoria. Victoria and I had a few Skype conversations in autumn 2016, in which we discussed our emotions, and things we were observing, reading and watching on Brexit and later met with the dancers, Tanja Erhart and Robert Hesp in London. I then worked with the dancers in the studio to translate what we had discussed into a physical language. I involved Victoria to perform in the piece the last day of work, as I felt we needed her physical presence. From watching and reading things on Brexit, the Conservatives were always repeating that the remainers were passing through the five stages of grief and that eventually they will accept Brexit. They used psychology in their discourse and I was interested in using someone with a psychology background to counter that discourse and give hope and commands for emancipation instead.

JZ: And how was it for you Victoria, performing in this piece? You usually work in academia as a researcher and consultant for arts and health projects. Here you swapped sides...

VT: As Farah said, she invited my involvement last minute, so it was not pre-conceived in this way. I have lived on the periphery, academically, and have a transdisciplinary approach. I like to extend myself by doing things that appear uncomfortable i.e. out of my regular role. So even though I felt trepidation, I didn't hesitate to say yes. Something people may not realise is that I performed as a singer and guitarist when I lived in Australia in the late 80s, so my performative side might stem from that, and also from teaching groups of 300 medical students for many years. I guess I am an artist at heart and feel at home in this role.

JZ: In the first part of Brexit Means Brexit! we are watching a confrontational, physically and emotionally charged performance of two dancers. In contrast, the second part invites audiences to connect with each other, e.g. by looking at and speaking to each other. How do you conceive of the two parts and the role of the audience?

VT: The two-part structure is a very neat device to engage people and it evokes a sense of movement, vacillation, as well as transition. I think it is impossible for the audience not to get involved, emotionally in the first part and then

physically in the second part, where I gave them instructions. Performing in the piece was interesting for me, also in relation to the audience. It did occur to me that the audience may not move when I would tell them to, but I had absolute belief that they would, and they did. It felt like we were all together at the end. I think that's the resolution we hoped for. It was a glimmer of hope - I've been holding those tightly since the referendum result.



Candoco Dance Company, Brexit means Brexit!, Choreography by Farah Saleh, work in progress at Hysteria and Art: Traumatic Coincidences, 2017. Commissioned by PS/Y for Hysteria 2017. Photo by Manuela Barczewski.

FS: I tend to use interactivity in all of my performances. For me it's a way to bring the movements and emotions directly to the bodies of the audiences and make them feel active, rather than having them sitting passively, even though while seated, I also try to make the audience live an experience, rather than only witness things happening. For me the interactive part in this piece in particular, is an invitation to act, emancipate and work together towards social and political change.

JZ: The immediate production context of this piece, London and the artistic community, are predominantly pro EU. I suspect most of us who were in the audience share similar values. Have you explored taking this piece into leave voting areas or explicitly inviting audiences who are pro-Brexit as well as pro-remain?

VT: Wow, that would be amazing! I am up for that challenge. It is really good that the differences between communities, ages, and other demographics have been exposed by the referendum result. This gives us an opportunity to engage with other people's concerns. As someone who lived in the Midlands for 15 years I knew, unlike many of my London friends, that there is deep despair in parts of the UK e.g. ex-mining towns in Derbyshire, places like Slough which have experienced a large influx of immigrants and little inward investment or commitment to integration of newcomers. These are our neighbours, we must include them. London can be very arrogant in its worldview. It gets the lion's share of everything e.g. cultural offerings but London does not speak for the UK. The referendum result has demonstrated that. The issues raised in the piece have a wider resonance, so it would be good to take it further afield, especially outside London.

JZ: In this light, what are the future plans for staging and developing the piece further?

FS: If we get the funding, we will have three more weeks of creation period in autumn, then present the piece at the Hysteria Festival in London in later 2017 and then a tour might be organized by Candoco. While creating the piece, I also thought it could be presented to both remainers and leavers, as it will show leavers what they made remainers and others who couldn't vote, go through. But also many leavers now say they regret their vote, many have similar feeling of anger, depression and fear, because they feel others are blaming them. So they are actually feeling the emotions of *Brexit means Brexit!* themselves and may completely relate to the performance. I actually would love to present it all over in the UK but also abroad as Eurosceptic sentiment in other countries in the EU is growing and discussion about leaving the EU are opening up elsewhere.

JZ: Do you have personal visions and hopes for the future, also with regards to your work and the role of art in Brexit Britain?

VT: I hope that we develop a deeper connection with those who feel lost and left behind, with the marginalised and disenfranchised, if we realise that oppressing people has consequences. I feel a deeper connection with my friends and family since the result, and since the US election, which I also experienced as a traumatic event. I have done more than I did before to be active, rather than passive about my disquiet. I think that now more than ever we need the power of art to explicate and mobilise, to reach out to people. This could be another element of posttraumatic

growth, if it inspires great artistic expression and if it wakes people up.

FS: I hope art projects will only become more inclusive and work with people and professionals from different backgrounds and that art will go more to the streets and have direct contact with the public. Art needs to stop talking to the same people who already agree with each other. I think we need more socially and politically engaged art, which doesn't mean to drop the artistic side of course. It's how to play with the political in a highly artistic and change spurring way. I believe art can play a big role in opening the discussion on the reasons behind the vote, the current situation and on what to do next.

Notes:

1. Farah Saleh in interview with Johanna Zinecker, conducted via email May 2017.

2. *Brexit means Brexit!* is a performance by Candoco Dance Company, commissioned by Hysteria 2017. Farah Saleh and Victoria Tischler collaborated in the research and choreography of this piece. Candoco Dance Company is a London based contemporary dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers (www.candoco.co.uk). The symposium was organized by PS/Y, a London based research and curating collective who explore the connections between art, health and illness phenomena, in January 2017. It presented work in progress for the upcoming arts programme "Hysteria 2017" to be shown later this year (www.ps-y.org).

3. My use of 'public feeling' and affective politics refers to Anne Cvetkovitch's feminist notion of feeling as political and therefore public and the potential of negative affect as basis for transformation and cultural and political change as theorized in Cvetkovitch, Ann. *Depression - A Public Feeling*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2012.

4. In the aftermath of the referendum, many have called on the arts to heal social division and pointing the way forward, including famously, the former minister of culture Ed Vaizey. This demand however for arts to happily come forward often blanks out the threat to artistic development and opportunities caused by economic and other uncertainties felt so acutely by the artistic communities in this very situation.

Stefano Evangelista: Citizens of Nowhere – A new Politics of Literary Criticism after Brexit

There is no doubt that in Britain the atmosphere among foreign academics has changed since the European referendum of June 2016. European nationals especially – and there are many of us – feel a sense of uncertainty about the future which is not so much a growing frustration with the bureaucratic hurdles some of us have had, or will have, or might have, to go through, but the sense of unease at finding ourselves in a society that is turning its back on international collaboration and curiosity, which are such fundamental parts of our work. The shared European identity that we built after the Second World War – so new, so inevitably imperfect and so fragile – was meant to soften the nationalist feelings that had torn the continent apart in the past, and to create a more peaceful and prosperous future for all. Whatever the Brexiteers might say to the contrary, that project has worked: the Europe of today would be unrecognisable to someone from the 1950s or even from the 1980s. The nostalgia for an insular Britain with a stronger national identity (and fewer foreigners) to which Brexit appeals so strongly seems not just anachronistic but frankly worrying to many UK academics – the large majority of whom voted to remain – especially at a time in which Europe has a stronger moral obligation than ever to offer support and hospitality to her neighbours in Africa and the Middle East. It is the end of the academic year in Oxford, and in several of the customary gatherings and retirement dos that have taken place over the last few weeks, where someone normally says a few bland words of farewell, British colleagues have made earnest speeches about the importance to protect our academic values and the need to work together. Foreign colleagues, some of whom have been in Britain for decades, find themselves lowering their voices when they speak about Brexit in coffee shops and pubs.

One effect of Brexit is that it has given a new political resonance to what we do as students and teachers of English literature. In 2015, I embarked on an AHRC-funded project on literary cosmopolitanism in the British nineteenth century. What started as an inquiry into a chapter of intellectual history became a much more complicated and urgent task, charged with political relevance and emotions linked to the volatility of the present. In the later nineteenth century – the heyday of British imperialism – Britain's global identity was publicly scrutinised and discussed in ways that have clear parallels with what goes on today. Then as now there were those who openly embraced the opportunities offered by the increasing international mobility of people, goods and ideas, and those who attacked it. And then as now critics of a cosmopolitan British identity came from both the right and the left: some feared it would weaken national identity; others were worried that it would lead to a widening of the gap between metropolitan and provincial societies. A sure sign that the concept of the 'cosmopolitan' mattered to people around 1900 is that it started acquiring new shades of meaning. Once used in strictly political and philosophical contexts, the term cosmopolitan now crept into literary criticism, where it mostly featured in a pejorative sense, to stigmatise writers and works that were allegedly overburdened by foreign tendencies. It is also at this point that 'cosmopolitan' started to identify a particular type of fashionable lifestyle played out in cruise-ships, tourist resorts and international hotels. The standard definition of cosmopolitanism, though, and the core meaning the term has never lost, harks back to its etymological origin in the ancient Greek for 'world citizenship'. The Greek philosopher Diogenes Laertius, when asked where he was from, was famously meant to have replied that he was 'a citizen of the world'. By this he meant that his loyalties were not just with the people who were geographically closest to him, but with humanity at large, including those he did not know and would never meet.

In the period that followed the referendum in 2016, when the political tension in the air was palpable, Theresa May targeted cosmopolitanism in her speech to the Conservative Party Conference, where she declared that 'If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere.' A consequence of the referendum has been that British public discourse has become both more open to casual xenophobia and more alert to its covert rhetoric. May might have believed that cosmopolitanism was a soft target as an abstract and fluffy political ideal – she was soon to bring British political pragmatism to an all-time low with her infamous slogan 'Brexit means Brexit'. But her statement sent ripples through the British press, where the accusations against her ranged from denying Enlightenment values to espousing anti-Semitic language.

Indeed, May's attack on cosmopolitanism highlights the dangers that Brexit and its neo-nationalist mentality pose for the values of a liberal education as practised so successfully, until now at least, in UK schools and universities. In recent years philosophers working within British and American academia have revived cosmopolitanism as a useful ideology that can help us find positive solutions for the challenges of globalised modernity. Martha Nussbaum, for instance, has argued that cosmopolitanism should be seen as a regenerative ethical force in contemporary society, adding that, in order to attain its full potential, we should make our education less nation-focused, starting from primary levels and all the way up to university curricula. While Kwame Anthony Appiah has seen cosmopolitanism as inextricably linked to a liberal ideology that guarantees the defence of human diversity, by which he means cultural, national and ethnic but also religious and sexual diversity. For May to be a world citizen means to be unpatriotic, i.e. to betray the social contract with those closest to you. It is a political, ethical and social failure that must be viewed with suspicion and indeed punished. To aspire to reach out to strangers in the way that cosmopolitanism encourag-

es us to do – imaginatively if not physically – is to become a ‘citizen of nowhere’, symbolically if not actually stripped of the rights (not only the duties) that citizenship carries with it. This way of thinking, which wrongly conflates liberalism with the neo-liberal market ideology of economic globalisation, brings with it the devaluing of the type of diversity that cosmopolitanism and indeed literature, the arts and a liberal education celebrate.

The new nationalist mentality that has taken hold in Britain since the referendum pits the liberal ideology of cosmopolitanism (or world citizenship) against what it regards as the only proper and patriotic form of citizenship, rooted in local and national loyalties only. The trouble is that this is a false opposition. In the nineteenth century, commonly regarded as the age of nationalism, shrewd observers had already worked this out. The novelist George Eliot, for instance, defended British provincialism and local identities in ways that could potentially appeal to Brexit insular nostalgia. Her intellectual reach was certainly international (she read extensively in foreign literatures and translated Feuerbach and Strauss); but it is a matter of fact that almost all of her novels focus on provincial Britain. Indeed, some of her most enduring works, such as *The Mill on the Floss* and *Middlemarch*, go out of their way to impress on the reader that the narrow focus is at the heart of the author’s idea of literary realism, arguing for the importance of the local as an imaginative dimension: learning to understand those closest to us, with all their imperfections and apparently dull life stories, gives us access to a higher ethics. In her last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot explicitly considers the question of local loyalties in relation to the cosmopolitan ideal of world citizenship:

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amid the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbours, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood. At five years old, mortals are not prepared to be citizens of the world, to be stimulated by abstract nouns, to soar above preference into impartiality; and that prejudice in favour of milk with which we blindly begin, is a type of the way body and soul must get nourished at least for a time. The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one’s own homestead.

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. Barbara Hardy, London: Penguin 1967, repr. 1986 (1876), chapter 3, p. 50

What is powerful about Eliot’s passage is that she is in fact sceptical of cosmopolitanism: she defends the importance of forming strong ties with one’s local community, articulating a sense of patriotism that recycles, simply and unapologetically, a symbolism of roots and blood that harks back to nineteenth-century theories of race and inheritance. Eliot believes that no sentimental or ethical association is as powerful as that with one’s ‘native land’, where individuals develop their earliest memories and affections, and acquire the sense of being part of a wider social and ecological order. To be a citizen of the world, by contrast, is an abstract philosophical notion that bears little or no relevance to most people’s lived experience.

And yet patriotism and world citizenship are not as exclusive of each other as they might at first appear. Just as she speaks eloquently about the subtle power of familiar associations, Eliot takes us from the ‘spot’ of our native homeland to the cosmos that astronomers study at night – the most wide-scale projection of the human need to think and feel beyond the boundaries of one’s native home. Eliot glosses cosmopolitanism as ‘the future widening of knowledge’ – which is a plea for the broader reach of its liberal idealism. In fact, by the same evolutionary logic according to which a variety of foods and drinks naturally takes the place of milk in the human diet, cosmic sympathies and curiosities must follow on from the love of one’s native place in due course. To take the same analogy further, Eliot, like all true advocates of a cosmopolitan humanism, is not proposing that childhood milk should have no place in an adult diet. In other words, Eliot is not trying to subvert the notion the patriotism but rather provide a wider humanistic framework in which patriotism and love of one’s home in the most localised and parochial meaning maintain their emotional and ethical force when shorn of fractious and nationalistic elements.

Eliot’s meditation on local and world citizenship contains a reflection on her practice as a literary realist: a close knowledge of a small world is the necessary first step towards the attainment of a more universal art, capable of appealing to people everywhere and at all times. Her insight on local and world sympathies can be applied to literary criticism. When giving students the tools for a deep understanding of English texts and English literary history, they must also be encouraged to see the interconnectedness of this history with the wider world. The sense of ownership of the national tradition that comes with an education in English literature must not lead to insularity, but to a cosmopolitan patriotism that believes in the ideal of a ‘future widening of knowledge’. It is not true that the ‘nightly heavens [are] a little lot of stars belonging to one’s homestead’. While such quaint fictions may be a good introduction to a subject – as Eliot says of astronomy – the business of education is to give young adults the ability to revise sentimental, simple notions. This is what literature and astronomy have in common. And this is why for Eliot, as for all astute writers and readers of literature, women and men never become citizens of nowhere, least of all when they turn their eyes and stretch their sympathies towards the wider world.

Statement by Rajeev Balasubramanyam

Author

For centuries Britain was the greatest bully on earth, a violent abuser, a villain of legendary stature. Like all villains, its powers eventually faded and another took its place, one with more land and more muscle, a new bully in a new world. Britain was left with only one progressive option: to repent, to confess, to weep for its misdeeds and seek forgiveness, to face the world, to move forward with courage and gentleness, free from old addictions, free from guilt, free from hubris, seeking only to create something better and truer, to remain in dialogue, to remain in existence. This was the brave option.

But then came an alternative, a chance to hide from redemption and hide from the world, to spend day after day shut away in darkness licking real and imaginary wounds, flexing real and imaginary muscles, pining for that terrible past transformed by narcissistic vision into something golden and magnificent, to choose the life of a ghost, a life of phantasm and memory, a life of pure self-reference, unable to face others, unable to face the world, unable to face themselves. To leave.

Brexit was a vote for the second.

Claire Squires: Haud Oan to Europe

There is a library in Scotland far from the bustle of Edinburgh and Glasgow. From the late 17th century, some decades before the Acts of Union of 1707 brought Scotland and England together, it was willed by the local aristocrat that his family library should be made available to anyone who came to visit. And so they came, over the fields of rural Perthshire, down the river, along tracks well trod by human, horse and cart, until well into the 20th century. From the library's extant Borrowers' Ledgers we can trace the pathways that men and women, adults and children, aristocrats and farm workers, took to arrive at Innerpefferay.¹ Informed by these documents, we can imagine they'd stay a while, looking at the leather-bound books up on the shelves, their eyes running over the gold of the titles on their spines. They'd then ask the Keeper of the Books to take one or two volumes down for them. After the Keeper has completed the record of their borrowing, including details of the fine if they failed to return the book, they'd place it carefully in their bag and take it to their home.

You could track the pathways that these borrowers took on their journey from home to library and back again; each a slim thread recording a journey, this remote library providing a nexus of routes to and fro, back and forth, again and again, as individuals took advantage of Scotland's first public lending library. If you were to investigate further into the library's catalogue, you could also start to map the pathways that the books had taken to arrive in this rural location, from Edinburgh, yes, and Glasgow too. But also from down south, from London, Oxford, Cambridge. From across the Channel: Paris, and Amsterdam, and Geneva, and from across the Atlantic, New York, and Philadelphia. The library's books contain rich ideas connecting its thinking from Europe and beyond, and each of the collection's books also provides a thread: from the library back to its place of printing, to its author, and to the milieu in which it was written.

Now the library is quiet, its visitor books more active than its Borrowers' Ledgers. Tourists come from Scotland and beyond: keen bibliographers, local historians, North American and other overseas visitors with Scottish heritage, trying to find a clue that their ancestor borrowed a book from the library shelves for a few weeks. The river meanders through the landscape, picturesque bridges above it, taking us into our past, carrying us over into the future.

On Friday 24 June 2016, we awoke to find ourselves catapulted into a new and unexpected future; one voted for by the 52% of the British population who wanted leave the EU. But in Scotland the percentage was different, with 62% of those based voting to remain, and every single council, urban or rural, Central Belt, Highland or Island, voting to stay. The reasons were various: a sense of civic nationalism rendered through the vote for Scottish devolution in 1999 and before, perhaps; a conception of Scotland as a small nation existing within a much larger political unit; a populace whose political engagement with constitutional matters, multiple referenda and various local, national, UK, and European elections made it super-enfranchised, rather than seeking a continental bogeyman to blame for its ills. And perhaps, some kind of centuries-old feeling of Scotland's place in Europe, cleaving to the Enlightenment, to Scotland's place in the wider world.

And yet the referendum result saw Scotland at variance with England, and Wales, and the more substantial population of England swayed the overall verdict. The shock across the UK was seismic, but in Scotland it was particularly hard felt, as both city and island, the metropolitan and the rural, impoverished and wealthy regions, had declared that they wanted to stay.

The textile artist Jane Hunter, like many, felt this to her core. She followed the fallout on the news and on social media, distracted from her commissions by the events of the day. And then, as artists will do, she started to work on a piece that would communicate her response to the political events metaphorically. This work, 'Haud Oan' (Scots for 'Hold On'), shows the UK represented in Harris Tweed, a traditional fabric woven in the Outer Hebrides. She stitched the colours that each area of the UK had voted to remain in yellow; and to leave in blue. Northern Ireland showed a strong yellow, as did the metropolitan regions of England. But Scotland was the yellowest of all, with a set of threads leading from its landmass south-eastwards, out of the picture frame, to continental Europe. England and Wales' threads are cut, hanging downwards.²

The metaphor is clear: the threads of the geography literalising political affiliations, with Scotland hanging on by threads, hauding tight. As Jane Hunter says of the title of her work, it is 'open to your own interpretation, from initial shock and surprise, fear and unsettled feelings, to a rally cry or call for patience.' The disparity between the Scottish and English votes in the EU referendum has led to calls for a second Scottish independence referendum, although the 2017 General Election results have put these on temporary political hold. In much longer geological time, Scotland, and the rest of the UK, are long severed by a cataclysmic meltwater channel from mainland Europe. (Scotland north of the Great Glen hefted to Newfoundland, though; a complicated Palaeozoic geology that some of Jane Hunter's other artworks explore.)



@Jane Hunter

Artists' responses to the national have always been fraught: we may construct national canons, create university curricula based on Scottish Literature, collect paintings from a period in Scottish history. States are imagined, cultural entities as well as political or military ones. But artists work across national boundaries, seeking ideas, inspiration, and sometimes refuge in other countries. Ideas flow, and artistic techniques hop magpie-like across borderlines, resistant to the idea of passports, visas, or intellectual constraint. Artists' work can also be profoundly local, focused on delicate and detailed portraits of local environment; a minutiae of observation that build meaning and feeling: Amy Liptrot's recent hymning of her native Orkneys in *The Outrun* is one such written example.

And yet, now, the accidents of our geographies tie us to specific locations, to a collective will which says that the UK must leave Europe. As I write, the uncertain political situation in Westminster means it is still far from settled what the position of non-UK Europeans currently resident in the UK will be after Brexit; nor has it been answered whether UK citizens living elsewhere in Europe will be able to remain without significant levels of additional bureaucracy and cost. Universities across the UK have large staffing bases, substantial numbers of students, and high financial investment for its research from the EU. There is no doubt that universities will suffer from the UK leaving the EU. An opinion poll of academics in the lead-up to the EU referendum showed nine out of ten supporting remaining in the larger political, economic, social and cultural unit of Europe.

By October 2017 (current post-General Election results and Government-pending), the UK should be well engaged with negotiations to leave the EU. In this month, publishers will gather a short river trip distance from Mainz, where printing was developed from existing technologies (including those established for many centuries in China) by Johannes Gutenberg. The Frankfurt Book Fair is the world's largest publishing trade event, an extraordinary gathering for face-to-face meetings to make business out of culture in the age of the digital. It enables the circulation of books around Europe and the world, a much larger, substantially accelerated version of the cultural economy that brought books to Innerpeffray Library in the 1600s. And yet to ponder on that quiet, rural location of centuries ago, and the enormous wealth of learning, communication, and shared cultural worth it housed (and still houses), might enable us to pick up some of those threads again: walk the footpaths quietly; entwine our future routes once more; holding on, lending out, and taking back in again, and again.

Notes:

1. A research project focused on Innerpeffray Library is currently underway at the University of Stirling, in collaboration with the Library and the University of Dundee, and I am grateful to PhD researcher Jill Dye for knowledge. More on the project can be found at: http://www.sgsah.ac.uk/about/students/arcstudentprofiles2015-16/headline_498570_en.html.
2. Jane Hunter describes in greater detail her process of creating 'Haud Oan' on her website: <https://www.janehunterart.com/pages/haud-oan>.

Statement by Ben Bradshaw

Labour MP for Exeter

The UK's Arts and Cultural Community were strongly in favour of us staying in the EU. This was not only because of our common European history and culture and the value of cross border collaboration, fertilisation and exchange. Britain's creative industries are one of our most important and successful exports. Free movement and our membership of the Single Market and Customs Union are critical to this trading success. The recent general election result, in which Prime Minister May lost her majority, will have given Britain's cultural sector new heart. If Brexit itself is not completely off the table, then Mrs May's version of hard Brexit, certainly is. She has no parliamentary majority to deliver it. So the Government will either have to find a more palatable version of Brexit – like Norway or Sweden, or we will probably have to have another election to resolve the question.

Interview with Elena Schmitz, Literature Wales: We Have More in Common Than Divides Us

How has your work changed after the Brexit decision? How have the arts and literature in Britain in general been affected by Brexit?

The vote for Britain to leave the EU in last year's referendum has certainly come as a surprise and shock for many people working in the arts in Wales. There was and still is a lot of soul searching going on about why no one seriously expected and predicted this result, and why no-one, least of all the responsible politicians, seemed in any way prepared for what to do in the event of a leave vote. The high leave vote in areas of South Wales that have massively benefited from EU structural funds in the past was a particular surprise to many. All of this has contributed to a status of uncertainty and insecurity, further fanned by Cameron's resignation, the Labour party's leadership battles, Trump's election in the US, and most recently, the general election with Corbyn's astonishingly (and again unexpected) positive results for the Labour Party.

How has Literature Wales' work changed as a result?

Well, on some levels it hasn't – yet. So far, EU funding is still available, writers from other countries come to visit and the rights of EU citizens here remain unchanged until Britain actually leaves the EU.

However, from the National Poet Ifor ap Glyn to the Young People's Laureate Sophie McKeand, from an India-Wales exchange project with 6 international writers, to workshops in local schools with poet and activist Patrick Jones, a lot of work created recently has become more explicitly political in focus, questioning the status quo, giving voice to younger, less established writers, who often work outside the cultural establishment and come from underprivileged working class backgrounds. This was not necessarily a conscious decision, but there definitely has been a cultural shift towards less established patterns.

In the words of critic Gary Raymond from online magazine Wales Arts Review, the Wales-India project, for instance, "eschewed the middle-class, middle-England, chimeric academic literary class of British literature, for a young, working-class group of voices who live and work in communities utterly alien to most writers who command wide readerships. Our writers, both from Wales and India, do not only write about what they see, but they speak from where they are." (www.walesartsreview.org/valley-city-village-all-art-is-political)

How have your audience's, visitors' and writers' responses changed after the decision?

The country seems more divided than ever between leavers and remainers, Tory and Labour/Plaid supporters, austerity champions and those that want to see a more equal distribution of wealth. I think this is reflected in more polarized responses. On the one hand, there is a further disenfranchisement of the more marginalized people in society from the 'liberal elites'. Cultural institutions would do well to seriously consider how to be more relevant to the many, if they really want to have a meaningful impact on people's lives.

On the other hand more writers, particularly younger, emerging ones have become more vocal and outspoken and maybe there is an increased appetite for speaking up and taking a position politically. A lot of cultural institutions place an increased emphasis on engaging with European partners, writers, concepts etc., with a determined 'now more than ever' attitude. There is also a clearer emphasis on utilising culture and literature for improving health and wellbeing. The Reading Friends project for instance, is a new befriending initiative that utilises reading as a starting point for older people with dementia with the aim of reducing loneliness and isolation.

Finding new allies in partners in Wales and other UK nations has been a real priority for my work, from formalising relationships with other literature organisations such as Spread the Word, the Reading Agency and Writer's Centre Norwich, working in close partnership with institutions in Scotland to bringing together organisations in Wales for more meaningful international work (e.g. better representation at International Book Fairs).

With regards to visitors to Wales, there is a noticeable incredulity and lack of understanding of the reasons why the country voted to leave the EU.

Why do you think public and political attention has been focused on economic and political consequences (immigration, free movement etc.) rather than on cultural aspects (hate crime, rise in xenophobia, the arts sector, education, travel...)?

I'm not sure this is necessarily the case. The focus hasn't been so much on consequences as more on possible reasons or explanations for the vote itself.

Part of the problem remains that very little thought has been given to any real consequences by the pre-election Tory government who called the referendum. How exactly will Britain be affected economically? How will EU laws be replaced? Will there be any of the infamous £350m extra funding for the NHS? What will immigration restrictions look like? Who will have what rights? How will the education sector be affected? What about EU citizens? British Expats? These matters remain unanswered without any clear plan by the largest parliamentary party (who is still not even able to form a government at the moment of writing).

In absence of this, it's not surprising that the immediate reactions to Brexit have been the focus of attention. However, the long-term implications and consequences for Britain's cultural identity remain anybody's guess.

Do you think the arts sector will continue to work on the basis of international exchange of goods, plays, services, artists, art works?

I absolutely think that this will be vital. Borders do not restrict artistic expression and creative ideas need to be able to travel internationally. However, practically this might be seriously restricted. No-one can predict at the moment how much more difficult, costly and convoluted this might become if, for instance, EU artists had to apply for visas for a residency in the UK or custom taxes had to be paid to tour a UK show to France. It's this kind of stuff that the government would be very wise to seriously consider.

Do you think the arts sector will become more insular and less international as a consequence of Brexit? Will other international art sector people such as Martin Roth leave Britain or will this be staved off?

I think this is a little too early to say, and a lot of this will depend on the UK government's willingness to guarantee the rights of EU citizens already in this country. As one of the estimated three million EU residents here (see also <https://www.the3million.org.uk>), I applied for my permanent resident card a few months ago, recently succeeded in obtaining this and am now in the process of applying for UK citizenship. This was and is a fiendishly complicated, bureaucratic and costly process. It's humiliating having to go through this and many EU residents won't meet the highly demanding criteria for Permanent Residency and/or Citizenship and might inadvertently feel forced to return to their country of origin. I think a lot of us are worried about the lack of guarantees and the uncertainty of the status we might have when the UK actually leaves the EU. For me personally, I am particularly worried about access to free healthcare in future, as well as the rights to state pension, benefits etc. If there were major changes and reductions to my current rights in this respect, I would really need to think very hard if I wanted to continue living in this country and why.

Many other sectors have already seen a massive drop in EU citizens applying for jobs or leaving existing ones, most notably the health sector (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/18/nhs-eu-nurses-quit-record-numbers>), and Arts Professional has recently published a report on how essential EU workers are to the Creative Industries (<http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/eu-nationals-essential-creative-industries-survey-finds>). However, I'm not aware of any evidence yet of a mass exodus of EU workers in the arts sector or creative industries.

What do you suggest could help to overcome xenophobia, Little-England-tendencies, nostalgia for WWII/Empire etc.? What role does literature play for the future of Britain do you think?

A lot of these problems are of course deeply rooted in rising inequality; the unequal distribution of wealth, increasing poverty and all of this is made much worse by the tremendously aggressive and inflammatory red top press in the UK. Political solutions are absolutely necessary to address these issues. However, the arts have an important role to play, too. Building empathy is key to tackling some of these issues and the arts and literature in particular is more relevant than ever in this regard. Expressing emotion through poetry, presenting different views in non-fiction, portraying lives through other people's eyes in novels, translating writers from other languages, giving young people a voice through slam poetry etc. – all of this can contribute to people better understanding each other. Literature and writing fosters freethinking, unrestrained creativity and enables new worlds to be invented. Investing in arts and culture, making them relevant to people's lives and encouraging active participation in artistic creation can change people's lives. Radical organisations such as Narrative 4 demonstrate how this can be done and what can be achieved.

How do matters differ in Wales and in England?

I would cautiously say that there is definitely a less hostile attitude towards European values, languages, cultures among leave voters. The vote to leave in many impoverished parts of Wales was more an anti-establishment vote and a disenfranchised vote, rather than a vote motivated by xenophobia and disdain for European values.

Politically, there has been a real coming together of different parties here making the case for just how much

Wales depends on EU funding and how formal links to the EU are vital for the country's prosperity. There have also been increased efforts to 'welcome Europe' to Wales and emphasise the country's openness for business with Europe. Wales' friendliness as well as its distinctiveness from England has been celebrated in major international events, e.g. the hosting of the UEFA Cup final at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. The recent general election also demonstrated that Wales is still a Labour dominated country and that despite the high leave vote, people's attitudes and political allegiances haven't maybe changed quite as much, after all.

How should German or other continental partners, artists, writers, practitioners react now?

I'd would say please don't write us off and don't think we're all the same. International collaboration is more important than ever for the UK.

The reasons for voting to leave were varied and multifaceted and many leave voters absolutely value European cultures and people. Xenophobia, racism and outright hatred of anything European is not the norm and only expressed by a tiny minority of people. Also, don't forget that this vote was won by a very narrow margin and overall, more people in the UK did NOT vote leave than those that did (if you combine all remain voters with those who didn't vote but had the right to vote – and quite apart from EU citizens living here not eligible to vote). There is of course not one homogenous mass.

I think all of us would be wise to remember that we have more in common than divides us (as Jo Cox said). We're all human and we should focus on our shared humanity, common love of creativity, but learn from each other's unique languages, experiences, cultures and creative expression we have to offer. Anyone who forgets this should read Primo Levi.

What do you think/hope the arts sector in the UK will look like in 5 years' time?

Better resourced, more open and outward looking, full of inspirational people, ideas, participants. Life-changing. Radical. High hopes, I know.

I think that arts organisations that really take serious their responsibility to engage, empower and tackle issues such as lack of diversity, encourage participation etc. are leading the way. Inspirational ones are Fun Palaces, the Roundhouse, National Theatre Wales, the Enemies Project, Narrative 4. If we also reinstate and properly fund public libraries and offer adequate funding for local authority arts provision, the UK could be a better place.

Philip Ross Bullock: How to be Both

Of the many issues that face the United Kingdom as it prepares to negotiate its departure from the European Union, those of citizens' rights, trade, and security have understandably tended to dominate political debate and press coverage. By contrast, the impact of Brexit on culture and the arts has been far less extensively covered. Yet this is despite the fact that the creative industries are responsible for an ever-increasing share of the UK's GDP, provide more and more sustainable and satisfying jobs, and are far more integral to the lives of ordinary citizens throughout all the regions of the UK than the London-based financial sector (whose collapse in 2008 was surely one of the economic factors behind the result of the referendum).¹ According to figures published by the UK government in early 2016, the country's creative industries have been growing at a faster rate than all other sectors, contributing nearly £90 billion to the economy.² Subsequent data has confirmed this picture, as well as revealing that when it comes to culture, Europe is our largest export market (57.3% in 2014, as opposed to 25.3% to the USA).³ When it comes to 'soft power' and projecting a dynamic, welcoming, liberal, tolerant image of the United Kingdom throughout the world, it is culture that proves to be central – and which is faced with the same risks as every other branch of national life.

Britain's influence in the cultural field is, perhaps, something of a surprise. After all, the British have a reputation for level-headed pragmatism and unostentatious phlegmatism that runs counter to idealisation and even instrumentalisation of the arts that can be seen at the highest levels of some other European governments. State subsidies for the arts are typically lower than on the continent, and Britain has few political figures to match, say, Jack Lang, *Jacques Attali* or even *François Mitterand* when it comes to deploying culture in the service of the political ambitions of the state. Emmanuel Macron's new government continues this trend – his culture minister is Françoise Nyssen – editor of *Actes Sud*, one of France's most prestigious publishing houses, and a figure who harks back to the establishing of the country's ministry in 1959 by the writer, André Malraux. It is indicative, perhaps, that responsibility for the arts in Britain fall under the far broader, and more utilitarian remit of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and that with the exception of Chris Smith, culture minister between 1997 and 2001, few ministers have been noted for their understanding of or affinity with the country's artistic and creative elite.

Culture may have figured only modestly in the debates around Brexit, yet the arts have a potentially crucial contribution to make not just in crudely economic terms, but also in how we might go about the process of negotiating our departure from the European Union and conceptualising our future relationship with our neighbours. The tone of many statements made by leading advocates of Brexit is often polarised and stark, couched in a form of us-and-them, black-and-white language that divides the world into winners and losers in a quasi-Darwinian struggle for ownership of a finite set of resources. This is the economic logic of Donald Trump too, who seems to believe that if other countries are doing well, then America must be doing badly. Yet the arts offer a more positive model of relations between both individuals and societies, and their emphasis on creativity and collaboration offers a rather different vision of the world from those who insist so shrilly on 'taking back control'. At a session of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education held in Oxford on 11 January, Lyndall Roper, Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, described the risks posed to research and scholarship by Brexit:

In history and in the humanities generally, I am worried about research collaboration. Research collaboration is an abstract thing. What it actually means is relationships between researchers and different kinds of ideas and different research projects, and they do not happen overnight. They have to be built up very gradually, and over the past generation that is what has happened. It has led to a lot of originality, innovation and learning from people who have been formed in different intellectual contexts. My concern is that unless we are very careful – and I am sure there are positive things that we can do – that whole research ecology could be damaged.⁴

Roper's notion of ecology (which she could equally have described in terms of ecosystem) is a powerful and productive one, as it points to the interconnected nature of teaching and research, and suggests a model of decision-making and authority that has to be nurtured over time and in which each individual element plays a unique and irreplaceable role. And it is an ecology that governs the arts and creative industries too, where films, plays, exhibitions, and concerts are all the result of a complex nexus of relationships that are governed by trust and partnership. When they break down, they cannot simply be replaced immediately by something new.

It is this ecology of culture that is, then, most at risk in the present political climate. At a practical level, we already know of examples where performing artists and visiting academics have been denied visas and even entry in the United Kingdom on what often appear to be spurious grounds, although these decisions are sometimes, although not always, undone after a vigorous press campaign. Although there are cases going back to well before the referendum,⁵ it is clear that Brexit risks making things worse, given the government's insistence on limiting overall migration. Leading advocates of leaving the European Union claim that it will allow Britain to become a truly global power

(although it's clear that global usually functions as a poorly concealed synonym for a nostalgic vision of imperial power rather than a coherent vision of a truly multipolar form of internationalism), but Britain's track-record means that many artists simply refuse to subject themselves to visa rules that can seem absurd and inflexible (perhaps the most famous of these is the Italian-based Russian pianist, Grigory Sokolov, who – having been declined a visa in 2008 – has refused to visit the UK ever since).⁶

So what are artists, academics, and intellectuals to do? Protest, of course, as well as lament. But we can also find resources within our own work that might help shape contemporary political discourse and if not change the outcome of the referendum, then at least mitigate some of its most extreme consequences. And we also need to find a critical and emotional vocabulary for coming to terms with a post-Brexit world, and even for helping to fashion what comes next, even whilst we might also refuse to accept the terms in which the question was put in the first place. Here the writings of Edward Said offer a number of potential ideas, most notably his productive distinction between 'filiation' and 'affiliation'. In works such as *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) and *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994), Said teased out the implications of living between the cultures and communities into which we are born ('filiation') and those to which we aspire ('affiliation'). In an ideal world, neither would predominate – we should aim to exist between the two, drawing on our genetic heritage whilst simultaneously seeking out other ways of being. In post-referendum Britain, it seems that models of filiation have come to predominate. The rhetoric of Theresa May and her close political associates is full of references to community and belonging and imagines people who are born into settled communities to which they remain attached and which indelibly define their character and worldview. It is, moreover, a philosophy that cuts across left and right; it is as associated with Philip Blond, the author of the bible of conservative localism, *Red Tory: How Right and Left have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix it* (2010), as it is with the Anglican priest, *Guardian* columnist, and Corbynite, Giles Fraser.⁷

The converse of this if, of course, a scepticism towards those who break away from their origins or seek new ways of belonging to the world. It is a scepticism that found its more recent expression in May's dismissive reference to cosmopolitanism, made at the Conservative Party conference in October 2016: 'if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere.' This mistrust of cosmopolitan identities refuses to countenance the suggestion that community may not always be a good thing; there are plenty of people who have good reason to flee the circumstances – social, religious, cultural, ethnic, national – into which they were born. And it fails to understand that the bonds we seek out and create for ourselves may be as firm, valuable, and sustaining as the ones that birth and upbringing bequeath to us. These are the bonds brought about by learning new languages, moving abroad, building relationships with people who are not at all like us – not so that we resemble them at all, but so what we find ourselves by being always 'in between'.

Amidst all of the urgent economic and legal priorities of Brexit, we must not lose sight of the important role that culture and the arts have to play not so much in 'selling' a commodified image of British 'heritage' in terms of popular music, period drama, and the Royal Shakespeare Company, as in holding together – rather than starkly juxtaposing – the local and the rooted on the one hand, and the cosmopolitanism and curiously mobile on the other. For many Brexiteers, to be European somehow precludes being British, yet citizenship is not a finite commodity or a term in an either-or antagonistic debate about belonging and identity. Like scholarship and creativity, citizenship is actively increased as it is duplicated, challenged, and displaced.

Notes:

1. John Kampfner, 'Creative industries are key to UK economy', *Guardian*, 1 January 2017.
2. www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-almost-10-million-an-hour-to-economy
3. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/creative-industries-2016-focus-on
4. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-ttee/the-impact-of-exiting-the-european-union-on-higher-education/oral/45114.html>
5. Lyn Gardner, 'Access denied: how Fortress Britain is blocking cultural exchange', *Guardian*, 6 September 2010, 'Government faces calls to overhaul visa rules for foreign performers', *Guardian*, 21 March 2011, and Sarah Lyall, 'For artists and performers, Britain puts out an unwelcome mat', *New York Times*, 19 October 2011. See too the website www.freemuse.org for details of visa issues faced by artists globally.
6. Ciar Byrne, 'Russian pianist's concert cancelled to visa rules', *Independent*, 10 April 2008.
7. Giles Fraser, 'The parish is the perfect scale for moral community', *Guardian*, 25 May 2017.

Ali Smith: All Across the Country

Extract from *Autumn* (London: Hamish Hamilton (Penguin), 2016), pp. 59-61.

By kind permission of the author.

All across the country, there was misery and rejoicing.

All across the country, what had happened whipped about by itself as if a live electric wire had snapped off a pylon in a storm and was whipping about in the air above the trees, the roofs, the traffic.

All across the country, people felt it was the wrong thing. All across the country, people felt it was the right thing. All across the country, people felt they'd really lost. All across the country, people felt they'd really won. All across the country, people felt they'd done the right thing and other people had done the wrong thing. All across the country, people looked up Google: *what is EU?* All across the country, people looked up Google: *move to Scotland*. All across the country, people looked up Google: *Irish passport applications*. All across the country, people called each other cunts. All across the country, people felt unsafe. All across the country, people were laughing their heads off. All across the country, people felt legitimized. All across the country, people felt bereaved and shocked. All across the country, people felt righteous. All across the country, people felt sick. All across the country, people felt history at their shoulder. All across the country, people felt history meant nothing. All across the country, people felt like they counted for nothing. All across the country, people had pinned their hopes on it. All across the country, people waved flags in the rain. All across the country, people drew swastika graffiti. All across the country, people threatened other people. All across the country, people told people to leave. All across the country, the media was insane. All across the country, politicians lied. All across the country, politicians fell apart. All across the country, politicians vanished. All across the country, promises vanished. All across the country, money vanished. All across the country, social media did the job. All across the country, things got nasty. All across the country, nobody spoke about it. All across the country, nobody spoke about anything else. All across the country,

racist bile was general. All across the country,
people said it wasn't that they didn't like
immigrants. All across the country, people said it
was about control. All across the country,
everything changed overnight. All across the
country, the haves and the have nots stayed the
same. All across the country, the usual tiny per cent
of the people made their money out of the usual
huge per cent of the people. All across the country,
money money money money. All across the
country, no money no money no money no money.

All across the country, the country split in pieces.
All across the country, the countries cut adrift.

All across the country, the country was divided, a
fence here, a wall there, a line drawn here, a line
crossed there,

a line you don't cross here,
a line you better not cross there,
a line of beauty here,
a line dance there,
a line you don't even know exists here,
a line you can't afford there,
a whole new line of fire,
line of battle,
end of line,
here/there.

Jonathan Davidson: The Soul of a Man under Brexit

Nothing has changed. Everything has changed. The day after the referendum advising the UK Government that a small majority of those who had voted wished to leave the European Union (not a majority of those who could have voted or of our adult citizens and certainly not of our population as a whole) I found myself driving out of the small town of Cleobury Mortimer in north west Shropshire, as English a location as one could wish for. My partner and I were *en route* to another small town where I was to give a poetry reading. We had been driving for a couple of hours, taking the back roads through the kind of country that had maintained itself thanks to EU money. But this was Brexit country and while there was no sense of rejoicing, the posters and placards encouraging the locals to *Vote Leave* came into view with depressing regularity until I could stand it no longer. I pulled over at the next *Vote Leave* placard, ripped it from its wooden frame, tore it in two and dumped the pieces in a ditch. A passing driver honked at me in anger but didn't stop. I got back in the car and I drove on. My first tiny act of resistance. I felt better. I felt worse.

Most of those expressing an opinion in the cultural world are dismayed at the prospect of Brexit (it is still just a prospect, it may never happen). We are angry at the ease with which a handful of self-interested politicians gulled just enough of the population to legitimise the worse traits of our country. We are fearful of where the United Kingdom might drift politically once it ceases to be anchored to the continent as part of a shared social-democratic project. We are fearful for the fate of so many long-standing relationships with the rest of Europe; the love-affairs, the businesses, the study trips, the holidays, the sense of belonging. Make no mistake, there's a fair bit of self-interest in the reactions of those of us who wish to remain in the EU. And one would be a fool not to appreciate how potent was the particular combination of resentment and misinformation offered to certain groups of voters. But underpinning the wretchedness that many of us feel is a sense of being culturally diminished, both as individuals and as a nation. Ironically – and how we love irony – on the 23th June 2016 we had become Europeans because some damned fools were trying to deny us this description.

While a certain strain of Englishness (not, let's be clear, Britishness) has fantasised over the pleasures of isolation ('fog in the channel, Europe cut-off', etc.) there is an even stronger bloodline in my national character that not only desires but positively needs the culture of a Europe beyond the British Isles. A selection of fat-heads and buffoons may have brayed their contempt for all things continental, but a far greater number were quietly allowing British culture to both influence and be influenced by the seemingly endless variations of culture discoverable across the Channel. It was – it is – all so exciting; these artists and audiences, these galleries and concert halls, these novels and films. We wanted it, and we want it still, and we want it to be everlasting and confusing and even slightly dangerous, something through which we might discover a version of ourselves that was unafraid, that was curious and brave. For although my country has so often been terribly fearful of that which it could not pronounce, equally it knows that culture is the sea on which it must sail on our journey to Ithaca.

This would surprise some of my fellow citizens. Our self-mythologizing is so sophisticated that there are plenty who believe Shakespeare invented the sonnet and Jane Austen the novel. And while I won't deny that British writers have contributed enormously to European literature – and even to world literature – we are only contributors, alongside many others. And that the direct engagement with culture from other nations in whatever version of Europe was at hand was only ever the experience of a select group of people does not make it any less potent. All cultural advances are smuggled into nations hidden in the hand luggage of minorities. When Wordsworth, quoting Coleridge, said that it was necessary to create the taste by which ones work would be enjoyed he was speaking not only of getting the reading public to vary their diet but of all cultural advances. Arguably Wordsworth was made the poet of the English Lake District partly through his years in France, and Coleridge wandered the Somerset hills steeped in Germanic culture. They knew, instinctively or by observing those who had gone before them, that all cultures exist to be absorbed and that no culture flourishes in isolation.

That is what I fear. That the culture of my country, the many cultures, even and especially those that defined themselves so clearly as being British, will suffer that slight change of temperament that might be characterised as a *ticklish cough* or *bit of a temperature* and find themselves tied up at the quay and unable to venture into open waters. And of course, being British, we sneeze and sweat our way through day after day, swearing that all is well, that we want for nothing, that it is just a slight head-cold and that we will be *right as rain* and *bright as a button* and *good as new* in no time and then suddenly we're dead because it was something far worse than we could ever have allowed ourselves to imagine, and *ain't that*, as they say, *a bleedin' shame*. My extended metaphor of personal health cut with a nautical reference or two is a bit of fun, but my fear is not. If we turn away however slightly from the cultures of mainland Europe, and quite possibly from all cultures we consider not our own, then there is every chance that our gene pool will become fetid. Suddenly every painting looks like every other painting and every piece of dance is simply as we always did it. Our art becomes sickly and our culture becomes sickly and we become sickly and our souls shrivel.

These are grand, writerly words with a little bit of *end of the pier show* tub-thumping thrown in for good measure. It is, especially, the English way, we tell ourselves, to attempt to be eloquent in our cheerful melancholy while secretly assuming that we will muddle through. So be honest now, Jonathan, is any of this really worthy of fear? Is my country about to become genetically compromised? Is the state of my soul in jeopardy? The facts, my friends, are these. The intellectual journey I have been on for nearly fifty years was given purpose by the knowledge that the moments of greatest creativity were charged by the current of sharing artistic excitement. Mostly that was with the rest of Europe. And every important writer I read – and many who were not important – was informed and inspired by the great *otherness* of Europe. I need Hilde Domin and I need Stefan Zweig and I need Michel de Montaigne and I need Doris Kareva. But more importantly, I need whoever these men and women may be in the future. I need to know them or to know someone who does. Of course, the apparatchiks of Brexit will tell me that none of this is at risk. That the writers will not be stopped at the border. That the books will continue to be translated and transported. That culture will continue.

True and not true. The economics of isolation will not cause books to be burned in the environs of Dover. The Isle of Man will not become an internment camp for undesirable intellectuals. They'll be no transmitters brutalising the airwaves into white noise. No. But. The borderless world of thought, ideas and creativity will be held at bay by a neatly mowed strip of grass around the domestic edges of the United Kingdom – perfectly easy to cross but a far cry from the right to roam that we currently have. The growing post-war re-acceptance of the value of sharing culture with the rest of Europe will be replaced by the pursed lips and tightly folded arms of mistrust. The natural desire of any thinking person to know the world better will find itself curdled by an assumption that Britain knows best. And the freedom of people to carry their ideas in their bodies and to move around a good portion of the globe will not apply to the British and will not apply to Britain. This is not how the culture of a country will thrive unless all you wish to cultivate is the closely cropped mono-cultural turf of an awful English lawn.

At the poetry reading that evening, we finished by declaring that the referendum result was not in our name. A second small act of resistance. There are more to follow.

Statement by Rachel Seiffert

Author

We live in interesting times. Let us hope – for all our sakes – they do not get too much more so.

As readers, we turn to fiction for escape and consolation, but also to help us understand our times; against a backdrop of fake news and terror attacks, it is surely no coincidence that Orwell's 1984 is back on Amazon's bestseller list. As a writer, too, I approach the fictions I create as enquiries – as ways to understand. Most of my stories are rooted in past events, points of change or calamity; it is individuals suffering these I am drawn to – the impact of large events on small lives – and moments of upheaval are my stock in trade. But I am far more used to them being historical, so it is unnerving, to say the least, to see such a moment unfolding around me. The Brexit vote, and especially the nasty campaign which preceded it, have brought some uncomfortable questions to the fore – questions I am unaccustomed to asking of my own times. When power changes hands, when the mood of your country shifts, how far is too far? What if it's not just in your own country, but in others too? At what stage is this shift reflected in law? Who is the first to be singled out? Who stands up to be counted? Who sits on their hands?

Fiction distils. In all my books, I have taken characters in extremis – when confronted with family lies and silence, or at the moment in history where the Holocaust began in earnest – and imagined how they might respond. I don't see that changing now – if anything, I see the urgency of this approach. For most of us, such questions are less dramatic, more prosaic, but the principle remains the same: it is about how we respond when a principle is at stake. As writers, as readers, as citizens, this is what we should all be asking ourselves.

Aidan Moesby: It Doesn't Have to Be Like This

It doesn't have to be like this¹

Over the past 12 months I have seen the United Kingdom from within its borders and beyond its borders inside the EU. I consider myself European first and British second. My name and genetic makeup betray my Scandinavian heritage. Working recently in Sweden with a multinational cohort of artists I could not help but reflect on how things have, and may change as we edge closer to Brexit. How easy would it be for me to accept an invitation to visit from a European Organization, hop on a flight and work: No Visa, No Work Permit? I was welcomed with open hearts from my colleagues, in stark contrast to the growing intolerance of the 'Other' at home.

Working conditions for artists in Sweden, and Scandinavia in general, are good. Funding is still widely available and there is a willingness to communicate and collaborate across borders. This is a far cry from the isolationist position, which the UK politically is beginning to entrench. As a member of the Executive Committee for the Artist Union England, I hear what is affecting artists in the UK in their daily lives. This ranges from issues such as getting paid, or the widespread expectation that artists will work for free because it will look good on their CV, the effects of these precarious working practices on mental health, poverty and housing. The tentacles of austerity reach far, wide and deep, particularly within the arts. As an artist identifying as disabled, the day-to-day erosion of rights is a factor I am all too aware of.



Turning back the clock

There is a framework, which protects the citizens of 'The European Community', individually and collectively. Being a part of the 'Community', I benefit as a cultural worker from: The Free Trade Agreement, The Free Movement of People and Workers, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, workers' rights and disability and equality legislation. The EU protects the rights of its citizens – even those Pro Brexit – in a myriad of ways, and yes, I know it is not perfect, but I feel safe within that imperfection.

The alternative of post-Brexit Britain is not to have any of the benefits of protection and all of the downsides of the deregulated market. As a self-employed artist I have few rights, and most contracts are not worth the paper they are written on. There is regulation of other creative practices, actors, musicians, camera operators etc, so when contracts are offered to artists the commissioners encourage undercutting competition. Where is the solidarity amongst artists? I think this has been eroded by the me – me – me – selfie and selfish society of post-Thatcher Neo Conservatism. Those who think collectively for the common good are fewer; those who put those ideals into practice are fewer still. So the pay and conditions become further eroded. Ironically this often feeds in the gentrification agenda, which further impacts on the status of artists. Beyond the EU I can only think this will continue to get worse, throwing artists further into a relentless cycle of poverty, poor housing, poor health and therefore forced to take underpaid, unregulated work. The strength of the collective voice is vital to protect and develop improved conditions. There is strength in the collective of a unionized group and we need to further develop it, be it through the Artist Union of England or the European Union².

This isn't the future I dreamed of

The irony that 'Brexit' is a 'portmanteau', a word rooted in French, is not lost. It serves to highlight the richness of not only language but culture which living in a diverse community brings. The benefit of a culturally enriched society appears not to be appreciated, recognized or valued by the UK government. The funding in the UK decreases year-by-year and the arts are no longer compulsory on the school curriculum.

I already fear the way society is heading with its decrease in tolerance and its insular isolationist approach. I fear for the future of my friends from other countries who have chosen to live here in the UK and contribute to civic life. I fear for the lack of opportunities, for the futures that were once possible for myself and for everyone who looks and reaches outward and understands the benefits, which that can bring.

But more than fear, I am sad. I am sad and disappointed. Disappointed at the short-sighted selfishness of privileged politicians who are denying our youth the gift of 'Europe' and all which that means. I am grieving for that which has been lost and can never be regained, and know the real grief is yet to come.

What follows are 3 poems, the form of love poems to Europe, as over the course of a relationship.

Meaning and Interpretation (i)

In the darkness,
I wore your hat like sculpture,
That had nothing to say,
Except,
I love you.

Alone,
I wear your hat like a monument;
No inscription necessary.

Deluge

I've watched these weeks'
Wash away your hopes,
Diluting what remained of your joie de vivre.

I've watched my clothes on the line,
Gradually forgetting
What it was to be dry.

I've watched with different eyes,
Brooding clouds break their promises,
Whilst the earth broke into hexagrams.

I dreaded each day,
The last of your colour,
Carried away on the gutter surge.

BERLIN... IS THIS GOODBYE?

Distance shrinks everything,
Except the immediacy of separation.

Slipping into beyond sight,
Time freezes,
Expands.

Lick the last of you from my lips,
Drink in each drop you left behind.
Hope we remember our original shape,
How comfortable our silence was.

Meaning and Interpretation (ii)

Today,
I neglected to mark your absence,
Engraved in the wall,
Beneath your photograph.

I have not forgotten,
But I think I'm over you.

Notes:

1. My research-based art practice is underpinned by conversations – real, overheard, visual, imagined, or virtual. Thanks to Johanna Zinecker for sharing thoughts and engaging in conversation with me about Brexit and the public mood, its potential impact on art making, mental health and beyond. This text is a written response to our Skype conversation held in May 2017.

2. Artists' Union England is a new trade union for professional visual and applied artists and artists with a socially engaged practice. Unlike other cultural professionals, artists have had no collective voice in the form of a trade union to represent them at work and to lobby and advocate on their behalf. As an independent trade union, we aim to represent artists at strategic decision-making levels and positively influence the degree to which practice is valued and the roles artists play within society (www.artistsunionengland.org.uk).

Statement by Laura Macdougall

Literary Agent

At the 2017 London Book Fair, the word on everyone's lips was: Brexit. Given we'd rejected Europe, one could argue that our foreign counterparts had good reason to turn their noses up at us, too, and refuse to make the trip. Few of us working in the publishing industry voted Leave (or admitted they did), worried about the effects that prolonged uncertainty and a weak pound would have on consumer spending. That uncertainty also applies to what we call the "open market", where UK and US publishers can compete against each other, and raises bigger questions about territories and rights selling. Even now, a year on from the referendum, and now that Article 50 has been triggered, the main result is still that feeling of uncertainty. In the meantime, those of us working in publishing are persevering, going about our day jobs as though not much has changed. But I think we are all aware – as are all our European counterparts whom we see a few times a year at those book fairs – that it's never been more important to make the effort to go to those meetings, to collaborate, to share ideas and exciting debut novels, or cutting-edge non-fiction projects. Luckily, we're all after the same thing: a bloody good story, well told. And all we want to do is share that with as many readers as possible, worldwide.

Rachel Launay: Ensuring that the Bridge is Stronger

As of 24 June 2016 it was clear to me that our work at the British Council in Germany and throughout Europe would need to change – but how would it be different? Would our work be less important or perhaps become vital?

As the leading organisation to provide access to innovative British art, culture, education and English language to more than 100 countries across the world (including all countries in the EU), the British Council is now striving to work out its position as a bridge between the UK and Germany (and the rest of Europe) in the cultural and education sectors. We are seeking to find ways of ensuring that the incredibly deep partnerships that exist in these sectors between the UK and Germany continue to flourish, even if we need to find new pathways to achieve this. There is much we don't know at this stage because Brexit negotiations are at an early stage and the opaqueness of what a 'hard' vs 'soft' Brexit actually means has not shed much light on how one or the other will impact on the cultural sector; but through our EU-UK Series of conferences in 2017 we have established some key fundamentals, expressed as stakes in the ground by leading voices across Europe in the sector, such as the need to have continued access to funding, and maintaining ease of movement for artists, art multipliers, students, researchers and academics. The British Council is taking a lead for the sector by strongly articulating the benefits of including art, culture and education in the Brexit negotiations and making the case for the 'softer' aspects of power being at centre stage alongside trade and the economy.

And why is this so fundamentally important? Since 1959 the British Council has been present in Germany, building a friendly knowledge and understanding between the UK and Germany through its art, cultural, education and English programmes. Almost 60 years on we will continue to play an important role in connecting people and institutions, offering widespread opportunities in Germany for engaging with partners and audiences in informal, entertaining and thought-provoking ways. Through working with German partners, British artists have the opportunity to perform or exhibit their work for the first time in Germany. Similarly by taking German art multipliers to the UK to some of the biggest and best showcases, like the Edinburgh Festival¹ or the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival², we aim to kindle an interest and create connections between artists and art institutions in our two countries that result in collaboration and discovery that lead to a greater appreciation and better understanding of each other's cultures.

So from now on, in a world of Brexit and with the status of the UK changing in relation to the EU, how will the British Council move forward?

It will move forward with renewed vigour and determination to keep our Anglo-German partnerships alive and flourishing and here are some of the ways we will do this:

- we will support our partners in Germany who work with the UK, whether from the art and cultural or education sectors, to build new relationships and build upon existing ones.
- between the UK and Germany we will continue to connect students from Germany to British universities and support their discovery of another culture and language as they go to study overseas³;
- we will continue to offer the IELTS⁴ exam to make it possible to enter an English-speaking university;
- we will continue to work in science communication and support young researchers in their quest to become excellent at communicating their research in English⁵;

In a post-Brexit world the British Council will demonstrate that the sharing of cultural experiences can bring people together, whatever might be happening in the political sphere; and through bilateral and mutually beneficial art and cultural programmes will show that the UK, despite its planned exit from the EU, is still part of Europe and has much to learn from and share with its European neighbours, Germany in particular. Our crucial role will be to continue to be the bridge between the UK and Germany and although this has been our mission for almost 60 years, we are ensuring that the bridge is stronger and more resilient than it has ever been before.

Notes:

1. <https://www.eif.co.uk/2017#.WUPVtfI97IU>
2. <http://hcmf.co.uk/>
3. <https://www.britishcouncil.de/en/study-uk>
4. <https://www.britishcouncil.de/en/exam/ielts>
5. <https://www.britishcouncil.de/en/programmes/science>

Interview with Lisa Peter, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: Looking forward to Strengthening Collaborations

What are the effects of Brexit that institutions in the art and heritage industry expect?

With all the balls still very much up in the air, I suppose there are more concerns than concrete expectations about what might happen eventually. For any organisation that welcomes so many people from abroad, there is of course the worry that Brexit might have an impact on tourism. At the moment the weak pound is making a trip to the UK more affordable but should travelling to Britain become weighed down with more cumbersome border checks or even visa applications, then a short weekend trip to the UK will become less attractive, no matter how cheap the stay. At the same time the weak pound and rising inflation rates also means that UK households are starting to feel the pinch.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is working closely with the arts and heritage sector in the UK to secure the best possible outcome and to keep the nation outward-looking and international but apart from the impact on visitor numbers there is a bigger worry about what Brexit might mean for the British cultural landscape in terms of its reputation abroad. The creative industries in the UK have been the sector with the fastest growth rates in the last couple of years, leaving a whole range of other industries behind, the automotive industry included, which is astounding when you think about it. However, we cannot take our global cultural pre-eminence for granted. According to the latest British Council report on the perception of Britain amongst young people abroad, Brexit is already influencing how young people from the EU see us, and it hasn't even happened yet (*As Others See Us: Perceptions of the UK from G20 countries*, December 2016). It's already damaging our reputation, so it's hard to imagine a Brexit process that will increase interest in British culture in the long term.

In addition there is the fear that the sector might lose the expertise and talent of EU nationals who are now not sure whether they will still be welcome as a workforce in the future. As we're already seeing in the academic and health sectors, there's a strong possibility that a fair number of EU nationals will start looking for work elsewhere in the European Union because the UK isn't perceived as an attractive country to work in anymore.

But apart from these more nitty-gritty points I think the biggest worry I have is that Brexit might bring about a change in the emphasis within the sector towards the more parochial. While Brexit may take the UK out of EU, we hope that the government will recognise the importance of negotiating options for the UK to continue to contribute to programmes where we have a commonality of interest – from space projects to creative partnerships.

As an educational charity as well as a historic house and museum, will your mission change?

Absolutely not. On the contrary, we will put 'the world' in our mission "to promote the enjoyment and understanding of Shakespeare around the world" even more into the foreground than we have previously done. Shakespeare is global and truly for everyone, as the anniversary year 2016 has shown when people from all over the world commemorated the 400th anniversary of his death. Last year more than 5 million people benefitted from our work, not just in here in Stratford-upon-Avon but also digitally around the world.



©Amy Murrell

Has the atmosphere changed already? Do your international partners still feel welcome?

I hope they do. We're doing everything we can to make them feel welcome, both for our visitors to the houses and for educational groups that come to Stratford. If anything has changed already within the organisation it's actually the feeling that we have to be even more open and welcoming than before. In fact, we are operating at the limit of our capacity at the moment and we are in the process of exploring new ways to accommodate more educational visits, so we are apparently doing something right.

What has changed for us in strategic terms, however, (I'm mainly thinking of project funding and international collaborations here) is that we simply don't know what to prepare for at the moment, which makes any planning for, say, the next three-to-five years rather daunting because nobody knows what's going to happen.

What kind of difficulties do you expect when it comes to collaborations with international partners?

We naturally want to continue working with our EU partners as well as with organisations from outside of the EU to the same extent as before. We have to be prepared, however, to see restrictions to the possibilities of European funding for future projects, at least as lead organisation. Particularly for organisations outside of London the possibility to access EU funding has been a godsend in the past, and this option is now about to break away. For me as the current project lead of our first ErasmusPlus-funded transnational school project at the Trust, CultureShake, this once again makes any strategic planning of our international education work quite difficult, as we can only be the smaller, additional partner in future projects post-Brexit.

Another area that is important for the sector is the impact Brexit would have on international loans of museum objects and on touring, be that performing arts shows or exhibitions. It is true that this has been happening to non-EU countries before, so the procedures are obviously in place, but Brexit isn't exactly going to make this any easier or indeed cheaper, particularly not for small to medium-sized organisations.

How have your international partners reacted to the result of the referendum and the choice of the "hard Brexit"?

Mainly with disbelief. My project partners and I were in the middle of our application for Erasmus Plus funding when the referendum result was announced, and there was a fear that having a British partner organisation in the consortium might make a positive outcome of the application less likely. Fortunately that didn't turn out to be the case.

And how should German or other continental partners, artists, writers, practitioners react now?

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has been going strong since 1847, when the house on Henley Street was purchased at public auction - long before the EU was on the map. Quite a number of our international partnerships go almost as far back, as Shakespeare was already an international cultural phenomenon around the middle of the 19th century. We're positive that this will continue and we are looking forward to strengthening these collaborations.

We would like our partners to keep visiting, keep talking to us and working with us. Britain may leave the EU with Brexit, but we want to remain close to Europe.

How does it affect your work life and your personal life?

My work life at the moment isn't affected yet, as I still enjoy the same rights as British employees, and I am lucky enough to work in a sector and for an organisation that is proudly multicultural and employs a diverse mix of people, all of whom care deeply about Shakespeare and his legacy.

In my personal life I've got the advantage of neither sounding nor looking like a foreigner, so I have not been personally targeted with hate speech or anything of the sort. I have to say though that I have lost any sense of trust in Britain since June last year. I became a foreigner on June 23. For example, Home Secretary Amber Rudd wanted to force companies to keep a list of EU nationals to make sure British organisations weren't employing too many foreigners. What a shock to the system such a public suggestion is - even if it wasn't implemented in the end - is something I needn't explain to a German audience. So there's certainly something broken in my personal relationship to Britain now, even though there is now the chance of a more considered approach after the recent general election.

What do you suggest could help to overcome xenophobia, Little-England-tendencies, nostalgia for WWII/Empire etc.?

I think this is a task for both ends of British society, coming from the top down as well as from the bottom up.

I hear a lot of arguments about how culture can be used as soft diplomacy, how it is a soft power, and that Britain

can 'culturally survive' Brexit because culture plays such an enormous part in how Britain is perceived abroad. I personally think, however, that this is not enough. We have reached a point where politics need to find a way back to a progressive mindset and abandon the insularity and quite frankly the arrogance we have come to see in the last couple of months. Let's hope that the recent election result will trigger a conversation in the right direction.

Coming myself from a culture that has a markedly different approach to national history and memorial culture I continue to be amazed by how little the British seem to know about how their own history and about how their own political system works, so I suppose some deeper rethinking of educational policies in terms of citizenship will be necessary too.

Siobhan McAndrew, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor: Brexit, Social Divisions and a Problem for the Cultural Sector

This essay is based on a contribution to *The Sociological Review's* series on Brexit:

<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/blog/brexit-as-a-problem-for-the-sociology-of-culture.html>

"Culture is one of the things that unites us all and expresses our identity. We ignore that at our peril."

Tony Hall, Director General, BBC

"In challenging times, the diverse cultural riches of the UK provide some of our most potent assets, and play a vital role in presenting the UK as an international, outwardly focused and creative nation."

Graham Sheffield, Director Arts, British Council

The result of the referendum on British membership of the EU was greeted with shock and dismay across much of the cultural sector in the UK. One core element of the response was a sense that now, more than ever, was the time for the cultural sector to respond to the sorts of social divisions, around age, education, geography and social class, that crystallised during the campaign and its aftermath. "Brexit", a crude term that has become the shorthand for the referendum campaign, the result, and the subsequent set of international relations issues, has been present in much of the rhetoric of senior figures in the cultural sector. We opened this essay with two examples, from the BBC and British Council, both of which assert both the importance of culture to social cohesion and its international implications. There are many more. One notable response came from the National Theatre, where Rufus Norris the artistic director, commissioned a specific state of the nation response to Brexit, commenting on the crucial role played by intuitions such as the NT, and cultural activities more generally, within the national conversation: *"What does theatre mean? Of course it means entertainment and provocation and the power of story as a way of understanding who we are. But increasingly it is important also that theatre is the centre of debate for what's going on in the nation"*.

We can see then a moment of shock giving way to an assertion of the importance of culture in the context of Brexit. However, having sketched this context, the rest of this essay problematizes the relationship between the cultural sector and Brexit. For example, it is not a coincidence that these three key voices are white affluent men, speaking to the value of culture for the nation. As our reflections will illustrate, the cultural sector itself represents part of the social division that its high-profile voices aimed to ameliorate. Most crucially, the cultural sector in the UK is a very closed social system, whether we consider the social origins and class of the workforce, the social attitudes of those within the sector, or the similar patterns of taste and cultural consumption within cultural occupations. Moreover, the sense of moral purpose as to the importance of culture, whilst an important aspect of cohesion for people working in the sector, needs to be questioned given the narrow social basis of the sector itself.

This set of questions for the cultural sector is part of a wider context of social division, particularly since the financial crisis of 2007-2008. Unemployment peaked in Britain in 2012 at 8.2%, with the young, and particularly the young with low education, most heavily affected: for those aged 16-30 with no qualifications, the unemployment rate was consistently over 30 per cent between 2008 and 2014. Rates were also high for the Black British and those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background. In terms of living standards more broadly, the Resolution Foundation has found that after taking account of housing costs, which have been rising steeply, in 2016-17 typical working-age incomes were only £1,100 higher than in 2002-03. In other words, the 2008-9 recession and housing market pressure have combined so that people of working age have witnessed no real rise in income over time. The Family Resources Survey has shown that the percentage of the population privately renting increased from 12 per cent to 20 per cent between 2006 and 2016; for those aged 25 to 34, it increased from 26 to 46 per cent. These pressures coincided with a large increase in immigration, with the foreign-born population in the UK more than doubling from 3.8 million to around 8.7 million between 1993 and 2015; and increase in religious diversity in the face of more general secularisation.

Longer-run economic change has meant that the salariat has grown and working class contracted; educational expansion has also occurred, with the proportion of a cohort taking up higher education doubling from about 20 per cent for those born in 1970 to about 40 per cent for those born in 1996. In terms of ranking in the educational hierarchy, British sociologist John Goldthorpe and co-authors have demonstrated that British class inequalities have remained constant over time; inequalities have remained despite a wider political discourse that British society has become more meritocratic. Educational expansion has also reinforced generational value change, whereby members of younger social generations tend to be more socially-liberal as well as arguably more economically right-wing; indeed, the more educated also tend to be more socially-liberal and less pro-state intervention. While inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient has been flat since 1990 (and the 90:10 ratio has even been declining),

these pressures and social changes have led people to perceive that inequality is rising, and generated a growing politics of resentment. Even leaving aside the question of attitudes to immigration - arguably a manifestation of the same attitudes driving attitudes towards Brexit - the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found that being older, earning a low income and having fewer educational qualifications were all strong predictors of supporting Brexit, with education the strongest. This has led commentators to interpret the referendum result as evidencing a cultural divide as much as or more than one arising from economic hardship, setting a liberal, metropolitan world against a traditionalist, peripheral world 'left behind' by both globalisation and the values preferred by the educated.

There is obviously a connection between the way the cultural sector is organised, for example the question of who makes decisions about commissioning or casting, and the sorts of culture that people in the UK see on stage and screen, hear on radio, or visit in the gallery. In turn, this impacts on how particular social and political issues are represented. At the same time, the organisation of cultural production also impacts on various social groups' relationship to the creative occupations making culture.

In the UK, cultural production, across most occupations in the cultural sector has a rather elite basis. An academic analysis of Office for National Statistics data published in the journal *Cultural Trends* shows how those from elite social origins dominate the UK's core cultural occupations. The sector is also much better educated than the rest of the population. There are under-representations of women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals within music, performing and visual arts, as compared to the rest of the population. There is also overrepresentation of those from affluent social origins in the sector compared to those from affluent origins in the population as a whole. This situation is mirrored by the under-representation of those from 'working class' social origins. These patterns are reflected within constituent occupations, as sectors including journalism, music, publishing, film and TV, and the museums sector all have significant over-representations from those from affluent, 'middle class' social backgrounds and under-representations of those from 'working class' social origins, as well as exclusions based on gender, ethnicity, and education.

So, we know there is a question associated with *who* is making our cultural representations. There's also information about the values of people working in the sector, which are unlike most of the rest of the British population. According to data from the British Social Attitudes Survey, cultural occupations, such as visual arts, performance and music, were characterized by left wing, anti-authoritarian, and pro-welfare clusters of values. Individuals working in cultural occupations had the most pro-welfare, left wing, and anti-authoritarian responses to values questions of any occupational group in the UK. Moreover, occupational factors themselves were important, as even when controlling for a variety of demographic and social characteristics, members of cultural occupations stand out compared to the rest of the population and similar 'middle class' jobs. However, these relatively radical attitudes are not reflected in cultural workers' attitudes to inequality in their own sector: their beliefs about how fair the sector is are almost identical to people's attitudes towards fairness in society more generally, with their radical attitudes not extending to belief that their own sector is unfair.

Those working in cultural and creative occupations also have consumption patterns that differ from the general population, in particular that differ from those in 'working class' occupations. They are most likely to consume any given art form, according to longitudinal data from the DCMS's *Taking Part* survey, and are, from this same data, highly eclectic, moving across genres and art forms in their taste patterns. Again, this is an important difference to the general population, where only around 8% of the British population, according to *Taking Part* data, fit the pattern of being highly culturally engaged.

We also have information about cultural workers in the UK from an on-going research project funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council.

During 2015 we conducted a survey of cultural workers, hosted by *The Guardian* newspaper. Although this was a self-selecting web survey, we attracted almost 2500 individual responses from people working in arts and cultural occupations in the UK.

We asked respondents about their social networks, about what sorts of people they know based on the jobs they do. The results suggested our participants are least likely to know occupations associated with traditional working class jobs (and, as an aside, the bank manager), but were most likely to know people doing cultural or creative work. Whilst we must be cautious applying this across Britain's entire cultural sector, it suggests our respondents' social networks were even more socially closed than those of people working in other middle-class jobs, at least based on occupations.

Essentially, our data raise the issue that the attitudes and outlook of our cultural workers are at odds with many parts of the population characterised as being pro-Brexit. Moreover, the socially exclusive nature of cultural occupations,

and the lack of representation of certain occupations within the social circles of our respondents, raise questions as to who and what is excluded from cultural production. Whilst there is another debate as to the underlying causes of this difference, in particular engagement with higher education, there are potentially questions about what is excluded from contemporary cultural production as a result of who is producing culture. This presents a problem for those of us seeking to defend agendas that seek more diversity across cultural production and raises questions of how best to represent the range of cultural tastes and social groups that are currently not part of artistic and cultural production in the UK. We need all parts of British society to feel part of cultural production, to feel that cultural jobs are less closed off and socially exclusive. Were this the case, perhaps people would express less alienation from mainstream culture and media, which appear to be features of Britain's own version of a great cultural divide.

Claudia Zeiske: Brexit and Beyond

Brexit and Beyond

At this moment in time we do not know how Brexit will affect us. It may affect us in monetary terms – we don't know. But in any case, this is not the main thing that concerns us. More important is the human side. Some of us have European passports and have lived all our working lives in Scotland, which is till now still part of Britain. Having paid taxes here all our lives, our own future is still very much in the air. We also have a very successful internship programme, often supported through Erasmus. This year alone we had interns from Italy, Greece, Holland, France, Portugal and Germany. Our artists come from all over the world – and it has been difficult to get visas for artists from outside Europe. This might affect European artists in future too. Travel is a big issue too. For us free movement is a fundamental human right.

Another aspect is the partners we have. We work a lot with the Syrian New Scots here in Aberdeenshire – they are more isolated, since so far they have not been able to physically connect with their families in other European countries (e.g. Germany, France, Sweden) – this will only get worse. We also work with universities, who fear that their research base is very much affected by the impending changes. Companies in our town are affected due to their dependence on an Eastern European workforce.

But above all, it is a feeling of isolation. The possibility of a Scottish referendum is another unsettling fact, which might or might not turn out for the better of our future.



Deveron Projects

Deveron Projects (www.deveron-projects.com) is based in the rural market town of Huntly, Scotland. We connect artists, communities and places through creative research and engagement.

The town is the venue describes the framework in which we work and contribute to the social wellbeing of our town. We inhabit, explore, map and activate the place through artist driven projects. Huntly's small town context, its 18th Century streets and the surrounding Aberdeenshire countryside offer an abundance of possibilities to work with. We have engaged with local people and their clubs, choirs, shops, schools, churches, bars and discos here since 1995.

Whatever happens on a small scale is always connected to a larger reality. Working in our hometown with artists from around the world connects our local communities with the international sphere. The playful nature of art can defuse conflict and solve problems by giving free reign to the imagination, opening up new possibilities. ARTocracy suggests that all people have art-power, and that this type of power reaches far beyond the walls of the gallery. The term ARTocracy was coined by Nuno Sacramento and Claudia Zeiske in their 2010 book of the same title.

Interview with Steven Truxal, City, University of London: Brexit Represents a Major Step in the Wrong Direction

How has your work as Programme Director LLM International Business Law at City, University of London changed after the Brexit decision? Will your (teaching) mission change? How will this affect your students and staff? Will recruitment change and will the same people still be able to participate in your programmes?

I expect that most lawyers would agree that nothing will change until the final Brexit agreement is reached and implemented, if at all, and the law is thereby changed. With that said, it may be of interest to note that some students have begun to question whether EU Law, which is now required, will continue to be one of the foundation subjects students required successfully to complete in order to gain a UK law degree required to qualify as solicitor or barrister.

EU policy and law have directly influenced the development of areas of law I teach in the UK: commercial, consumer and aviation law. It is foreseeable that my future approach to teaching these subjects will change – again, subject to the nature and terms of the final Brexit agreement, if this ultimately is achieved.

The upset that the Brexit referendum has produced, and the lack of certainty around the negotiations, most likely already impacts on our students and staff. Non-Brits surely are thinking twice about studying in the UK; highly qualified research and teaching staff, who are very marketable elsewhere, will think twice, too.

I developed and launched an online masters degree programme in 2014, which has proved to be very successful. It should be noted that the programme's focus is international business law; there are no residency requirements.

What kind of difficulties do you expect when it comes to cooperations with international partners? Have things changed already? Do your international partners still feel welcome?

To my knowledge, we are not facing any particular difficulties – yet. We collaborate with many international institutions, both within the EU and beyond. I believe it is very important that we continue to nurture our current relationships and foster new opportunities without feeling threatened by the future, post-Brexit environment. I imagine that research collaborations, funded by national or EU institutions, will be most directly affected. The benefits of Erasmus+ for staff and student mobility are likely also to take a major hit.

How does it affect your work life and your personal life?

My work life is not much affected. To be perfectly honest, I now have new opportunities to write about possible Brexit scenarios involving aviation, and the future of UK and EU aviation relations.

From my personal perspective, I am deeply saddened by Brexit. Whilst I respect the will of the British people, I feel Brexit represents a major step in the wrong direction. Having said that, one can observe, globally, some shift towards 'regaining sovereignty' and away from liberalisation with a return to more protectionist ideologies.

Why do you think has public and political attention been focused on economic and political consequences (immigration, free movement etc.) rather than on cultural aspects (hate crime, rise in xenophobia, the arts sector, education, travel...)?

Quite bluntly, economic and political consequences are big vote winners. This, coupled with scapegoating for a seemingly difficult economic environment for many in the UK, has enabled politicians to use 'clever' rhetoric to secure their future position in office. Perhaps this is done out of self-interest, for survival, rather than done in 'civil service'.

Do you think the cultural sector will become more English and less international as a consequence of Brexit? Do you expect international people in the sector will leave Britain? (And if so, what consequences do you expect?)

I believe that if the mobility enjoyed by many to date is curtailed or removed, it follows that the cultural sector will lose some of its international character. The world is a global marketplace, in my view, so it is likely that many 'internationals' or foreigners will go where there is work – or at least where they are, or feel, welcome.

What do you suggest could help to overcome xenophobia, Little-England-tendencies, nostalgia for WWII/Empire etc.?

Some truth from time to time in the press...!

Statement by Elke Ritt

British Council, Berlin

Arts and culture foster exchange and interaction, overcome boundaries and build bridges between people, institutions and nations. As the British Council's Head of Arts in Germany, I am concerned about ensuring that high standards of mobility for artists and cultural products will be maintained after Brexit is implemented. This is not only in the interest of the UK, but for Germany, a country ever-open to fresh creative inputs from the UK, the European Union and in fact the whole world. Any potential obstacles to smooth artistic mobility – whether in or out of the UK – would deprive UK artists and cultural entrepreneurs of badly needed employment and collaboration opportunities. While other countries would surely miss the present readily available exciting, challenging, humorous and distinctive voice of UK artists. Artists often prove to be a country's best ambassadors; and it is to a major part through them, their sensitivity, and often prophetic visions of the world, that a country's voice is heard. This is particularly true for the UK, which since the turn of the century defined itself as "Creative Britain". It was this focus of the UK on creativity which made the UK appeal so much to other nations, and it is not least to this characteristic that the EU is mourning the departure of the UK. For me as cultural mediator between the UK and Germany, it will be a priority to ensure that the voice of UK artists – whether composed of words, sounds, artworks or moving images – is still being heard loudly in Germany and perhaps takes on a new guise from a more detached post-Brexit perspective.

Gregory Leadbetter: On the Cultural Impact of the UK Vote to Leave the EU

During the wretched referendum campaign on British membership of the European Union, I discovered that – in the run-up to our entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), as it was then known – a group of poets, novelists, playwrights, critics, editors and publishers put their names to a letter on the matter, published in *The Times* on 30 July 1971. They included Geoffrey Hill, Harold Pinter, John Osborne, William Empson, R.S. Thomas, Charles Tomlinson, F.R. Leavis, B.S. Johnson, F.W. Bateson, Alan Brownjohn, John Fuller, Kingsley Amis, Robert Conquest, Kevin Crossley-Holland, Adrian Mitchell – and many others beside.

These signatories, from across the entire political spectrum, were against British membership of the EEC. They pointed out that they and other British artists and intellectuals already enjoyed friendly contact and co-operation in learning and the arts across Europe, ‘without the assistance of the Treaty of Rome’. In joining the EEC, they feared that this independent artistic and cultural life would be brought under the official aegis of statist and commercial interests.

Circumstances had changed almost beyond recognition by 2016 – in ways that may or may not have transcended their concerns. As a Remain voter, however, waking to the nauseous vertigo of the referendum result on 24 June, I drew some comfort from their confidence in the free movement of words and ideas in a world that is always more than its political facades allow.

The prospect of the referendum released a peculiar energy. It made us look upon our fellow citizens with a mixture of curiosity and concern – hope and wariness. The country felt on edge – as it still does. Everything feels once more in contention. But in the immediate aftermath of the result – given the vile nature of the Leave campaign – the vote to leave the EU felt like a vote against liberal values. This is what made the vote feel so threatening to so many of us. It induced a kind of psychological trauma among many artists and intellectuals that I know.

We’re still inside that trauma. But I’m convinced that the referendum result was not the rejection of liberal values that liberals thought it was. Bigots were certainly emboldened by the result – but the result was not the endorsement for bigotry that bigots thought it was either. Both diagnoses are incorrect. The truth, as ever, is more complicated than that. Whether in or out of the EU, the danger always was – and is – that we would simply carry on in some form of complacency.

Now, the contest of ideas has been exposed. The irony is that the idea of Europe has hardly ever been more on our minds. A latent problem – in the way the UK, the EU and its member states conceive of each other – has emerged and cried out for attention. What are our ideas of ourselves, as individuals, peoples and societies?

We are still European. No one can vote that away. And European *culture* – more than its institutions alone – now matters in new ways. We need, above all, the work of the imagination, the amplification of insight, empathy and sensibility. Europe is and always has been more than the European Union (and the EEC before that). That principle has got lost in recent years, as far too many (of all factions, and in ways that are not politically innocent) have come to conflate the two terms – itself a cause of many damaging misunderstandings that obscure the real issues. Just as a people and a culture cannot and should not be reduced to equivalence with their government, so Europe is far richer, more various, and exciting than the European Union – as an abstract political form – can ever accommodate.

A more self-consciously mutual culture, beyond the superficial headline-fodder of the mass media, is what we have needed all along – and at a global, not just a European level: new unions of mind and feeling, which transcend the apparatus of state. As a species, we were going to have to do this work of psychological, intellectual and emotional co-operation anyway – but now, once again, it is made painfully obvious.

Trauma induces a healing response – and that process has, in cultural if not yet in political terms, already begun. I’m not alone in feeling this take hold as a kind of fresh determination. Arts organisations across the UK are already programming more deliberately and explicitly with a European and international perspective in mind. Generosity of spirit doesn’t wait on politicians or bureaucracy, whatever hindrance they may present. Whether in or outside the EU, to foster a liberal, enlightened and enlightening culture remains the ideal from which that spirit flows, and in which it thrives. To realise that ideal within the fabric of our lives is the work of the arts and humanities.

In publishing that letter to *The Times* in 1971, its signatories showed, if nothing else, a faith in the power of ideas and words of all languages to reach across borders in productive and transformative ways. Perhaps, after all, our best hope lies in the work of an ‘invisible college’, as envisaged by Robert Boyle and Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century: a truly international community of learning, thinking and imagining.

Perhaps the seeds of a new Europe – even the EU2 that the Cambridge jurist Philip Allott has called for – are, despite everything, already being sown.

I began the following poem on the day of the referendum result, which coincided with ongoing reports of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. In Greek myth, Europa was carried from Phoenicia to Crete by the bull Zeus. The poem was first published on the blog [New Boots and Pantisocracies](#) on 25 November 2016.

Europa

We are estranged:
a people spoken of
as if in story.
Our existence moot
even to ourselves.

Who are these figures
behind our faces
and whose faces
are these our own?

Our stars are scattered
kingcups, light spilt
like certain fate
for we the lost to find
and build our firmament.

Our beautiful are still beautiful
but cold as fresh
statues waiting
for the warmth of blood.

We hold world office,
our intent as yet unknown.

We are old: we feel
that in our bones
and in the noises
of our islands.
There are voices
on the air: do they
speak for us? Our mouths
are silent nestling crows
gaping to be fed.

Our sounds require
their dark interpreters.
Our spectres tell our young
we come from over the sea:
this movement
between, this flood
of our speech
seeking us out.

We wake to reports
of a boat capsized
beyond the horizon.
We assemble in hope
as if in sight of ourselves.

A child washes ashore
with her gift of tongues.

She is alive.

Biographies

Rajeev Balasubramanyam



Dr. Rajeev Balasubramanyam is a graduate of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and the author of *IN BEAUTIFUL DISGUISES*, *THE DREAMER*, and *STARSTRUCK*, and the winner of the Clarissa Luard Prize 2004 for the best British writer under 35. He writes regularly for *VICE*, *The New Statesman*, the *London Review of Books* and others, and his short fiction has featured most recently in *McSweeney's*, *The Paris Review*, and the *Missouri Review* who published the opening of his latest novel, *PROFESSOR CHANDRA FOLLOWS HIS BLISS*. Follow him on Twitter @Rajeevbalasu Website: www.rajeevbalasubramanyam.com, photo: Max Nathan

Ben Bradshaw



Ben Bradshaw has been MP for Exeter since 1997 when he won the seat from the Conservatives. When he was selected by Exeter Labour Party as their parliamentary candidate in 1996, Ben was working on BBC Radio 4's *World At One*, *PM* and *World This Weekend* programmes. He was a BBC correspondent in Berlin in 1989. There he reported on the momentous events of the Berlin Wall coming down, the collapse of Communism in East Germany and the subsequent re-unification of Germany. Between 2001 and 2010 Ben served as a Minister in a number of departments including Health, the Foreign Office, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and, from 2009 to 2010, as Secretary of State in the Cabinet for Culture, Media and Sport.

Dave O'Brien



Dave O'Brien is Chancellor's Fellow in Cultural and Creative Industries at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Cultural Policy* (Routledge 2014) and co-editor of *After Urban Regeneration* (2015), *Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies: Cultural Policy* (2017) and *The Routledge Companion to Global Cultural Policy* (2017).

Philip Ross Bullock



Philip Ross Bullock is Professor of Russian Literature and Music at the University of Oxford and holds degrees in Modern Languages (French, German, and Russian) from the University of Durham and Russian Literature from the University of Oxford. In 2007 he was Edward T. Cone Fellow in Music at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and he spent the academic year 2016-17 as Senior EURIAS Fellow at the Institut d'études avancées in Paris. Most recently he has co-edited a special issue of *Forum for Modern Language Studies* with Stefano Evangelista and Gesa Stedman; photo: Ch. Delory

Jonathan Davidson



Jonathan Davidson is a poet and radio dramatist with several books and pamphlets to his name and eight radio plays broadcast by BBC Radios 3 and 4. He is also a producer of poetry-theatre shows which tour the UK, in partnership with Bloodaxe Books and the Belgrade Theatre Coventry. He is Chief Executive of Writing West Midlands, the regional literature development agency for the West Midlands region of the United Kingdom (www.writingwestmidlands.org).

Sharon Dodua Otoo



Sharon Dodua Otoo typically describes herself as a “Black British mother, activist, author and editor. Black is deliberately written with a capital B.” Her first novella *the things i am thinking while smiling politely* was published in 2012 (edition assemblage) and translated into German by Mirjam Nuenning (2013). Her latest novella *Synchronicity* was illustrated by Sita Ngoumou and translated into German by Mirjam Nuenning (2014). It was published in English at the end of 2015 with the title *Synchronicity – the original story*. Sharon Dodua Otoo edits the book series Witnessed (edition assemblage). Link to her website: www.sharonotoo.com, photo: Ralf Steinberger

Stefano Evangelista



Stefano Evangelista is an Associate Professor of English and Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. He works on nineteenth-century English and comparative literature and is especially interested in Aestheticism and Decadence, the reception of the classics, and the relationship between literary and visual cultures. He is also a Fellow of the Centre for British Studies and one of the founders of the Writing 1900 research network. He is currently working on a book-length study of literary cosmopolitanism in the English 1890s, for which he was awarded an AHRC fellowship.

Rachel Launay



Rachel Launay has been Country Director, British Council Germany since 2014. She has worked for the British Council for 20 years starting her career as a trained English language teacher and teacher trainer, in South Korea and then Hong Kong and subsequently moving into management and broader cultural relations work in Lisbon, Portugal. Since then she worked in London managing large intercultural educational programmes between the UK and other EU countries and represented the British Council at the Cabinet and Foreign Office contributing to the increase in focus on soft power. Rachel has a first degree in French and German and an MA in English Language Teaching

and Applied Linguistics from Kings College London.

Photo: Lorraine Kennedy

Gregory Leadbetter



Gregory Leadbetter is a poet and critic, born in Stourbridge, England in 1975. His debut full-length poetry collection, *The Fetch*, was published by Nine Arches Press in October 2016. His pamphlet *The Body in the Well* was published by HappenStance Press in 2007. His poems have appeared in *The Poetry Review*, *Poetry London*, *The North*, *Magma*, *The Rialto*, on BBC Radio 4, and in *CAST: The Poetry Business Book of New Contemporary Poets* (Smith/Doorstop, 2014), as well as other journals and anthologies. His book of literary criticism, *Coleridge and the Daemoniac Imagination* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) won the University English Book Prize 2012, and he has published essays on

Wordsworth, Keats, Charles Lamb, and Ted Hughes. He has written radio drama for the BBC, and was awarded a Hawthornden Fellowship in 2013. He currently teaches at Birmingham City University, where he is Reader in Literature and Creative Writing. www.gregoryleadbetter.blogspot.co.uk

Sandra van Lente



Sandra van Lente is a literary scholar and has worked on the literary fields in the UK, Germany and France. She has a particular interest in bibliodiversity and wrote her PhD about cultural exchange in contemporary British novels. She works as a freelancer (texts, translations, and media design: www.sandravanlente.de) and is a member of the Women in Publishing (BücherFrauen e.V., [link](#)). Together with Gesa Stedman, Sandra runs the website The Literary Field Kaleidoscope (www.literaryfield.org). Sandra can also be found on Twitter: @svanlente.

Photo: Raphael Fischer-Dieskau

Laura Macdougall



Laura Macdougall is an agent in the book department at United Agents, based in Soho, London. Her authors include Ruth Hogan, Jim Broadbent and the Labour MP Jess Phillips. Laura was named one of *The Bookseller's* "Rising Stars" in 2017. Twitter: @L_Macdougall

Siobhan McAndrew



Siobhan McAndrew is Lecturer in Sociology with Quantitative Research Methods at the University of Bristol. She researches in the social science of religion, culture and values, with particular interests in social networks, cultural participation and civic engagement.

Kate McNaughton



Kate McNaughton is a writer, translator and filmmaker. She was born and raised in Paris by British parents. She was schooled in the French system, then studied literature at the University of Cambridge (English BA; European Literature MPhil). She has put her cultural schizophrenia to good use by working as a freelance translator since 2006, in varying combinations of English, French, German and Italian.

Photo: Amy Newiss

Aidan Moesby



Aidan Moesby is an artist, curator and writer based in Gateshead. His socially engaged practice sits at the intersection of the visual arts, well-being and increasingly, technology. He currently works on the dual crisis in climate change and Mental Health. Moesby has worked and exhibited internationally including at Dundee Contemporary Arts (2015), Australian Network for Arts and Technology (2016), Jädraås Art, Sweden (2017), The Tetley (2014) and Salisbury International Arts Festival (2016). He currently has a residency at the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed Bristol focusing on digital technology and creative practices. Since 2016 he has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Artists Union England. <http://www.aidanmoesby.co.uk/>

Lisa Peter



Lisa Peter is the International Lecturer in Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon. On top of teaching Shakespeare to learners of all ages at the Trust, Lisa co-developed the Massive Open Online Course *Exploring English: Shakespeare* together with the British Council for the anniversary year in 2016 and contributed to the BBC Learning English series *Shakespeare Speaks*. Since September 2016, she is the Trust's project lead for the Erasmus Plus funded learning project CultureShake. Lisa's background is that of a university lecturer in English literature and culture. Apart from more straightforwardly literary interests, she is fascinated by the cultural climate surrounding the genesis of art.

Elke Ritt



Dr Elke Ritt has been running the British Council's Arts programme in Germany for 30 years. She graduated from Duesseldorf University with a degree in English and Mathematics, holds a Master of Arts degree in Victorian Studies from Leicester University and obtained a PhD in Comparative Literature from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich.

Farah Saleh



Farah Saleh is a Palestinian dancer and choreographer active in Palestine, Europe and the US. Since 2010 she took part in international projects with Sareyyet Ramallah Dance Company (Palestine), the Royal Flemish Theatre and Les Ballets C de la B (Belgium), Mancopy Dance Company (Denmark/Lebanon), Siljehom/Christophersen (Norway) and Candoco Dance Company (UK). In 2016 she co-founded Sareyyet Ramallah Dance Summer School, which runs now on a yearly basis. Her dance practice evolves around research of the archive of gestures in relation to art and political change. She is currently an Associate Artist at Dance Base in Edinburgh, UK.

Website: <http://www.dancebase.co.uk/professional/farah-saleh-979>

Photo: Shareef Sarhan

Elena Schmitz



Elena Schmitz has over ten years' experience of working in the Welsh arts and literature sector and is based in Cardiff. She is Head of Programmes at Literature Wales. She leads Literature Wales' varied programmes, including high-profile projects in Arts & Health; Education; Funding Schemes; International Projects; Writer Development. She is particularly interested in collaboration, co-production, interdisciplinary work and achieving social change through arts provision. Originally from Germany, Elena arrived in the UK in 2004 as part of her MA in British Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin. She has worked for various arts organisations before joining Literature Wales, including

Wales at the Venice Biennale of Art, Wales Arts International, g39 Gallery and Chapter Arts Centre.

Rachel Seiffert



Rachel Seiffert is one of Virago's most critically acclaimed contemporary novelists. Her first book, *The Dark Room*, (2001) was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and made into the feature film *Lore*. In 2003, she was named one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists, and in 2011 she received the EM Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. *Field Study*, her collection of short stories published in 2004, received an award from PEN International. Her second novel, *Afterwards* (2007) and third novel *The Walk Home* (2014), were both longlisted for the Orange/Baileys Prize. Her books have been published in eighteen languages. Her most recent novel

has just been published: *A Boy in Winter*. Rachel Seiffert has taught creative writing in a number of schools and universities and is currently Writer in Residence at Haseltine School in SE26.

Ali Smith



Ali Smith was born in Inverness in 1962 and lives in Cambridge. She is the author of *How to be both*, *There but for the*, *Artful*, *Free Love*, *Like*, *Hotel World*, *Other stories and other stories*, *The whole story and other stories*, *The Accidental*, *Girl Meets Boy*, and *The First person and other stories*. *How to be both* won the Bailey's Prize for Women's Fiction, the Goldsmiths Prize and the Costa Novel of the Year Award and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

Claire Squires



Professor Claire Squires is the Director of the Stirling Centre for International Publishing and Communication at the University of Stirling, Scotland. Her publications include *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (2007), with Padmini Ray Murray, 'The Digital Publishing Communications Circuit' (2013), and she is one of the volume editors for the forthcoming *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 7 The Twentieth Century and Beyond*. She is a past judge for the Saltire Society Literary Awards and a current judge for the Publisher of the Year Award, and a recipient of a Scottish Book Trust New Writers Award 2015. She tweets from @stir-

publishing and @clairesquires.

Photo: Rob McDougall

Gesa Stedman



Gesa Stedman teaches British culture and literature at the Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She is currently Dean of Studies, spokesperson of the Berlin Graduate School for British Studies, and co-leads the international and interdisciplinary research networks Writing 1900 and the Berlin-Britain Research Network. Her research interests include the discourse on emotions in English literature, cultural exchange between England and France, late 19th-century and early-20th-century Anglophone travellers to Berlin, and the literary fields in the UK, France, and Germany. Together with Sandra van Lente, she runs the website The Literary Field Kaleidoscope, for which she regularly reviews contemporary literature published in the UK.

Photo: Raphael Fischer-Dieskau

Mark Taylor



Mark Taylor is lecturer in Quantitative Methods at the University of Sheffield. He is a sociologist whose work focuses on the relationship between culture and inequality, both in terms of consumption and production. Methodologically, he is interested in the analysis of survey data, and the visualisation of quantitative data.

Victoria Tischler



Victoria Tischler is Professor of Arts and Health and Head of the Dementia Care Centre at the University of West London. <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/users/victoria-tischler> She is also part of the PS/Y curating and research collective, who explore the connections between art, health and illness phenomena. <http://www.ps-y.org/>

Steven Truxal



Dr Steven Truxal is Senior Lecturer, Programme Director, LLM International Business Law (distance learning) at City, University of London. His principal areas of research are Commercial Law and Competition Law. His specialist research focuses on the issues surrounding competition and environmental regulation of air transport. Before he joined The City Law School in 2012, Dr Truxal was Dean of Studies and Visiting Professor of English Law at the Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Claudia Zeiske



Claudia Zeiske, is the Director and founding member of Deveron Projects. Claudia has a curatorial interest based on a balanced approach between artistic criticality and community involvement through developing projects with artists from across the globe. An Anthropologist (University: Berlin, London) by trade, she started her career in human rights. Since coming to Scotland she has worked for numerous art organisations, to include Duff House and set up the Artists programme at Glenfiddich distillery. Today she is concentrating on Deveron Projects in Huntly, Aberdeenshire where the town is the venue rather than a gallery or art centre. Having lived and worked in eight different countries she sees herself as a true European and Internationalist, while having set her roots firmly in Huntly, where she has been voted as Citizen of the Year in 2013. In summer 2017 she will swap her role and become the artist for a residency period. In a quest for what *home* means in our Europe, she will walk from her home base of Huntly to her home of origin near Munich.

Johanna Zinecker



Johanna Zinecker is research associate for British Culture at the Centre for British Studies, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. She has a background in arts and culture and has worked as assistant curator at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin for several years. Her main interests include visual arts and cultural production in interdisciplinary fields, the arts and processes of emancipatory knowledge production, Cultural Disability Studies as well as art and activism. She is writing her doctorate at King's College London and Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, examining artistic and curatorial practices at the interface with Mental Health in the UK. Link to her profile: <https://www.gbz.hu-berlin.de/staff/johanna-zinecker>

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