REGRESSION AND REGRET: BREXIT – REGREXIT

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Abstract. The present study is interested in the context of *political narratives* of the moment, highlighting a double appeal by reporting to *regressive* signs (*The Great Regression* and *Brexit*), or to manifestations guided by the feeling of *regret* (*Regrexit). The viability and efficiency* of these narratives – *Brexit and Regrexit* – customized in the case of Great Britain, are tested by the European specific method, consisting in the need to request (at an interval) an *updated narrative*, through accurately reporting to the reality of an option decided by a Referendum, the procedure often demanding a need for refunding already-used narratives, with the intention of affirming a "best narrative". Precisely in this sense, *Brexit* can be considered as an event responsive to both perspectives: post-Referendum, it defines the *narrative-European* vision as insufficient and proposes, with imperative notes, the launch of a *positive narrative* of Europe (not necessarily *new,* but good) and the articulation of a *firm counter-narrative* with populist and Eurosceptic guidelines; as a revaluation of *regret* on the act of voting and the outcome of the *Brexit* vote, it confirms its status of feeling that persists and develops a prolific lexicon, part of a narrative with "career prospects".

Keywords: *Brexit*; *Regrexit*; *political narratives*; *the Great Regression*; *regret*.

From politically risky narratives to the need of a new narrative for Europe

For the present subchapter we will accept as frame formulation the prospect issued by Sorin Vieru and Terente Robert[1] (*narrative/dialogue* arranged on five voices, temperamentally and ideologically different), considering that the appropriate opinion for opening this study is that of re-anchoring the analysis of political narratives in current/updated (most often, *risky*) contexts. In addition, it is necessary to review the form and formula for the analysis of political narratives (in order to minimize any risks and slippages), with respect to their structure, their stakes

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[1] Sorin Vieru, Terente Robert, *Noile riscuri ale gândirii politice* [New Risks of Political Thinking], All Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011.

and their refunding. Evaluated as a way in which *political homo narrans* applies a narrative-general structure to the political message, without rating its content and without omitting any related arguments, in equal measure by redirecting it towards an efficientization and mediation of the position/positioning of the political towards the delivery of programmes and platforms of action, narratives of the political demand to be subsumed to a double purpose; the representative instantiation, symbolically social (in Jamesonian terms[2]) – of both *the story/ narration* and *message*[3]. For Fr. Jameson, *narration* represents a formula for establishing a mechanism both reducible and formalizing, at the same time system, paradigmatic construct and historical representational framework, marked by *irreversibility*[4]: the *narration* does not produce solutions, but is the very issue under discussion, the equivalent of an act of conceptualization based on antagonistic notions. *The narration situation* involves a return to the reality of the social construct whose structure allows the transmission of the narrative, reaffirmed as a part of actual socially genuine relations, but also as a sign/signal of the effects of the corrosive-fragmentation of the new. Fr. Jameson notes that the messages of the symbolic, resulting from the coexistence of the various anticipatory formulas of modes of production, are assimilated by the *ideology of form*[5], achieving a type of reporting reduced to the equation according to which the narrative paradigm is the transmitting source of the message. We must also consider the socio-symbolic model which serves the message, the latter featuring an immediate and intrinsic ideology of its own: nothing is lost from the original message, it re-adapts to the context as the original message persists in a new form, reported to the *risk* of perpetuating itself through contradiction, of balancing through mediation, or transforming through harmonization[6]. The role of carrier and catalyst of the message is actualizing attached to the Jamesonian perspective as both socio-symbolic and psycho-social narrative identity (Shenhav[7]), a propensity of political narratives towards analytical emphasis (Hofmann; Renner; Teich[8]), or the imperative of normative reconstruction of an European narrative valuating the particular marks of the narrative-European identity (Beck; Grande[9]).

The series of conceptual instruments able to give the measure of narratives of the political is tendered by Sorin Vieru and Terente Robert,[10] with a double impact needing to be clarified in the context of this debate: the relationship established between the terms *affiliation-interest-need-conditioning*, in the sense in which the very knowledge has affiliations, with parameters, expanses claims and assertions.

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[2] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a socially symbolic act*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002.

[3] See for further discussions, the announced Special Issue (11 June 2017) of *Narrative Culture,* "Political Narratives/Narratives of the Political", Guest Editor Stefan Groth.

[4] Fredric Jameson, *quoted work,* p. 108.

[5] *Ibidem,* p. 62.

[6] *Ibidem,* p. 128.

[7] Shaul R. Shenhav, *Analyzing Social Narratives,* Routledge, New York and London, 2015.

[8] Wilhelm Hofmann, Judith Renner, Katja Teich (eds.), *Narrative Formen der Politik,* Springer, Wiesbaden, 2014.

[9] Ulrich Beck, Edgar Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007.

[10] Sorin Vieru, Terente Robert, *quoted work.*

If the favorite situation is that of affiliation conjugated with an interest in complying with requirements as a direct result of an approach of its own knowledge, narratives of politics re-potentiate their stakes in a space germinating from intersections of the conceptual, namely: either the dangerous-risky transformation of an *affiliate interest*, or the generation, by *affiliation, of an interest* with a consuming effect upon the self. The effects of *risk reduction* lie in a few particular formulas, able to become operational in certain contexts: on the one hand, in the area of association of conditioning interest with/by a set of expectation statements (contradicting expectations results in disinterest; conditioning expectations – by decreasing intensity, oscillation stability, or firmness erosion – involve the act of disaffiliation or, subsequently, a recalculation of the decision, by reaffiliation); on the other hand, the assimilation of affiliations dependent on context, by reference to the multipliable register of *needs,* in turn generating *interests* (in much lower number – as manifestations/expressions of widening or changing horizons), characterized by a susceptibility to fakes and a tendency to securitize or distort, in counterbalance with the sincerity of operant affiliation. Prospects are conditioned by their location in the framework-context of reference or by the parameters of affiliation (variable measures related to superficiality or depth, resistance to disturbance, absence/presence of fears and temptations). In fact, the prospect of *risk* cannot omit the two narratives of political thinking: affiliation limited to concern, and affiliation without a spirit of discernment, in the sense of an inability to disassociate the experiences of care from those of concern and/or nurturing[11].

Correcting the impregnation of the European area with a negative-*risky* narrative, the Document-Declaration *New Narrative for Europe*[12] repositions *the situation of narration* in the context of specific reaffirmations of responsible *interests* and *affiliations* (European citizenship/identity), the context being conducive to regained confidence in Europe, at a *risky* time (*exactly now, when there are so many stakes in the game!*) and made vulnerable by global disarticulating trends and the prevalence of populist-nationalist narratives, through a necessary message (*needed,* in the meaning of the term delivered by S. Vieru and T. Robert) for an assertion of the values of human dignity and the principles of democracy. In the abovementioned Document there are two instantiatory highlights – Europe *is a state of mind* & *Europe as a political body* – both with the decisive role of refunding an axial construct – "state of mind created and encouraged by a spiritual, philosophical, artistic and scientific legacy, driven by the lessons of history", but also "a genuine and effective political body". What one recognizes here is the Jamesonian *irreversibility* of *narration* as re-contextualization and implementation of the problem: regaining the capacity and the sensitivity needed to counter and overcome the challenges and difficulties of the present moment, and those of the future. The axis of past inspiration – present emancipation – future durability requires to be reformulated (speedily) by overcoming a way of thinking in terms

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[11] *Ibidem,* p. 29.

[12] *New Narrative for Europe,* http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/policy/new-narrative/documents/declaration _en.pdf, accessed on February 26th, 2019.

of national states, internal markets and geographical coordinates, in the triple conjunction of identity (*affiliation*, we note) – ideas (*interest*) – ideal (*purpose*), as new structural parameters of knowledge, through a state of permanent vigilance. The paradigm is that of a narrative of evolution, historically punctuated, during its post-war reconstruction, by multi-polar mobilization, interconnected after the fall of the Iron Curtain with the economic crisis of 2008 – against the backdrop of a domineering economic narrative of the clash (not of civilizations, in the Huntingtonian sense, but) of confidence in the ability of self/regulation of the market and a celebration of profitable speculations.

Finding itself on *risky* positions, the European construct opts for accelerating the transition towards consolidated political governance of financial systems, actualizing perspectives, demanding that due attention be paid to civil governance on a background of participatory democracy and sustainability. The need for a new European narrative is all the more acute as the vocation of the narrative, the habit (of Europeans) to tell each other stories faded away, perturbing our means of communicating compelling narratives. At the confluence of Renaissance and cosmopolitism, the reactive solution is that of a "New Renaissance", a society of revolutionary knowledge (architecturized on models of the 15th and 16th centuries), reduced by the abovementioned Document to an image of Europe similar to a functional body able to provide: innovative responses to problems of environment, health and development of technology; solutions for generating new and radical forms of creative imagination, by educating artistic-aesthetic sensitivity; regulatory frameworks for the recognition of the value of cultural heritage; guidelines for the development of a new cosmopolitanism in urban dynamic, creative and competitive environments, inside cultural-European cities/capitals; tangible and implementable results of perfecting the techniques and mechanisms of *soft power*. The new European narrative thus becomes a binding form/formula, reaffirming a *discerning reaffiliation* of collective commitment (by upgrading the experiences of *care*, *concern* and *disturbance*) a resistance of the project to any kind of perturbation. The solution provides a manifesto in favor of the acceptance of the European political body as a source of cultural animation and energy, with the collaboration of the European elite, by stimulating and empowering art and science but especially by countering any temptation to lock the project, through an actual narrative adapted to the innovative ideals of cultural Renaissance and cosmopolitanism.

The general lines of the narrative construct of the Document can be reported to two points: the first, delivered by Wolfgang Streeck[13] as a method of advertising (at an interval) an *updated narrative*, related to a relaxed policy marked by the Referendum, the act asserting (on a background of *failure* – of uncontrolled *risk*), the need for refunding a "better narrative", revised and adapted to the

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[13] Wolfgang Streeck, "Întoarcerea refulatului. Începutul sfârșitului pentru capitalismul neoliberal" [The return of the repressed as the beginning of the end of neoliberal capitalism], in Arjun Appadurai, Donatella della Porta, Nancy Fraser (ed.), *Marea Regresie. De ce trăim un moment istoric* [The Great Regression], Art Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017, p. 244.

frames-of-response and the situation thus generated. Precisely in this sense, *Brexit* can be defined as a *risky* event that satisfies both requirements: post-Referendum, the vision of a *new European narrative* is insufficient, the articulation of a *narrative* (not so much *new*, as) *positive* for Europe being now essential, as subsumed by European leaders (Joost van Iersel, Donald Tusk, Martin Schulz or Herman Van Rompuy) – a formula for referencing the equation *Brexit is Brexit* that imprints the need for a *firm counter-narrative,* far from populist and Eurosceptic prospects. Politically, the narrative that proposes a text for *Brexit* is problematic in itself, and not only in its substance (see, in this regard, statements made by Arlene Foster), and the event is declared to be a subverting and challenging factor for the traditional narratives of the European system (of unity, force and the capacity of collaboration with partners and member states), a type of *alternative narrative* (story-news), loaded to the limit with inflections of conspiracy (a type of *narrative* reported to opponents and political adversities) and reflexes, part of a *strategic narrative* (as tool for modeling the behavior of actors, both domestic and international, by appealing to a common heritage of the past, the binding meaning of the present and the reachces of future policy)[14].

The Referendum proposal of the *exit* program depending on locks and extensions subsequently made in the content of *Brexit* redelivers a double discontinuity of the project and underlines its lack of unity, both at the European and the British level, on the background of an European narrative already knee-deep in the rhetoric of "costs without context". Thus, *Brexit* can be considered as just a faithful expression of the dictum *Europe as a state of mind*, in the sense of an *exit* interested in recalculating and restoring (in a different context!) all processes and institutional mechanisms, mainly by resetting the European imaginary and its mental constructs. Although bounded structurally by the option *either Leave, or Remain* – it commonly misses both a connection to the existential data of a narration with visionary implications, positioning it in a reality whose challenges, costs, and opportunities have been established through an assessment that is fair and balanced; and the projection of a *purposeful narrative*, dwarfed by alternatively-diffuse narratives, scenarios and approximate projects. But, more than that, *Brexit* imposes its own risky narrative, augmented by a lack of resources (the *inspiration*) of the European narrative[15], stagnant in its projects and lacking the clarity and flow of a story, but possessing an immediately-applicable vision. The lack of European narrative strategies maintains and conveys a sense of alienation, of inability to provide any parameters of choice, with the stated result of disinheriting the European citizen, whose reality can be found neither in the delivered story nor in developing his own interests, and certainly not in a possible articulated answer given to his needs.

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[14] Emma Flaherty, Laura Roselle, "Contentious Narratives and Europe: Conspiracy Theories and Strategic Narratives surroundings RT's Brexit News Coverage", in *Journal of International Affairs*, September 17, 2018, https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/contentious-narratives-and-europe-conspiracy-theories-and-strategic-narratives-surrounding-rts, accessed on February 26th, 2019.

[15] "Brexit: how the lack of a clear narrative has divided the nation", in *The Storyteller*, https://thestorytellers.com/brexit-how-the-lack-of-a-clear-narrative-has-divided-the-nation/, accessed on February 1st, 2019.

Narratives of Regression: The Great Regression and Brexit

The narratives of regression signal a double effect felt both as a reality and as a postponed result of *Brexit*. The first ("a disaster narrative") is considering a projection of the narrative, of the imbalance between *intent* ("what we hope will happen") and *possibility* ("what is possible to happen"), and an inequality between *interest-waiting,* parts of a strategic narrative marked by the possible paths of action alternatives. There subsists a double narrative of both sides, with developed and developing sensible scenarios: for the *Leave* side, a *hard* counter-strategy in two steps, that of an appeal to the imposition of the option by Parliamentary vote and prevention of a second Referendum, therefore an action of rejection of the agreement and of intervention in force, as regards the change of government; for the progressives of the Labour Party, a counteracting scenario in which the government led by Theresa May concludes the agreement and fails to deliver it as acceptable, through a motion-of-confidence strategy with the explicit promise of *Brexit* reversal, by increasing the number of MPs who would vote with the Tory government; the whole narrative of *Remainers* opts for a strategy of the quotient pathways: the Government loses the Parliamentary vote on the agreement, and the majority of MPs decide, as unique offer, to have a second Referendum; both the Parliamentary defeat and the lack of an agreement would result in the collapse of the May government, and its replacement with a pro-EU government. Therefore, a narrative of negative consequences, doubly reflexive – on the one hand, the source of the arguments for a new corrective Referendum, and on the other hand, the tactics of the May government, extracting positive consequences from deeply negative perspective, as possibilities of regeneration leading (in the terms of a complete and advantageous agreement) towards a narrative imprinted by the redeeming myth of a Savior[16]. The second ("an un-delivered narrative") targeted political implications and the need for a clarification of values related to political guidelines, without losing sight of a register re-launched on new (vague) surfaces by juxtaposition, as dichotomies fueled by a sense of confrontations presented with pivoting finality (especially the elite-versus-elite), the dominant narrative germinated by the *Brexit* Referendum and still persistent in the European area. What seems to prevail is a "betrayal narrative", placed under the sign of the yet-possible ("it is not too late for a suitable Brexit" – Boris Johnson) mending of a wrong *Brexit* [17].

Both narratives subscribe to the *hard* or *soft* formula, as applied to *Brexit*, a *hard narrative* of an *exit pessimistic to the end*, without compromise, *leaving* not only the European Union but also the Common Market and the Customs Union but which, ideally, would relate both to general assets and to public services (by the formula of concluding a free trade agreement different from the existing one

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[16] John Weeks, "Brexit disaster narrative: whose interest does it serve", in *Open Democracy*, August 27, 2018, https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/john-weeks/brexit-disaster-narrative-whose-interest-does-it-serve, accessed on February 15th, 2019.

[17] Steve Richards, "Beware the Brexit betrayal narrative, August 18, 2018, https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/steve-richards-beware-brexit-betrayal-narrative-1-5654812, accessed on February 18th, 2019.

concluded between the European Union, Canada or Norway). In the same *hard registry*, Great Britain would not find itself in a situation of accepting the free movement of third country nationals within the European space, nor would it be perceived as subjected to the decisions of the European Court of Justice (after the transition period, this would become the subject of independent arbitration); it would probably not be forced to contribute to the Union's budget, and it would find itself in the impossibility of closing contracts of free trade with the states of the Union or with other states, until the accord of leaving the Union is signed. The *soft narrative* foreshadows the maintenance of Britain as a country aligned with the European Union, benefiting from special access to the Common Market, with the acceptance of a compromise in terms of agreeing arrangements for immigration, having the effect of minimizing the impact and effects on trade and business, relying primarily on the preservation of the British position in the framework of the Customs Union.

The report register aims at positioning *Brexit* in the manifest context of regressive signals, a concept doubled here (just through the assignation of a narrative of disaster, a lack of prefiguration and actual solutions, uncertainty) by a sub-involutivity reflex – of structural *exit* – but also with a detente of *re-entering* another form of development, even if it is marked by decrease and a crowd of opaque directions. What differs, however, when quantifying the state of regression, consists in peopling the potentiation assigned to it: if punctual-political methods of assessing and commenting *Brexit* attach the phenomenon to an augmented regression-without-effects, the narratives of political philosophy see, in its existence and course, the signs of a *Great Regression*. The presented symptomatology is exacerbated by the reversibility of the transformations of modernity – deprived of the force that delivered them as hard forms of civility, the decline of the effects of globalization and the risks of neoliberalism, as well as the absence of political solutions for controlling global interdependence[18].

The investigation, now applied to both the philosophical and the political, records a set of *regressives,* specifying the characteristics of the event labeled as a *Great Regression*. In this sense, the place, role and consequences of *Brexit* have their own narrative, extrapolated on three plans.

The first takes into account the constancy of the option as stated – "*Brexit* is, before all else, an *exit*" – in the sense of a narrative anchored in relation to two swiveling concepts – *loyalty* and *appeal*, validating it, on Hirschmanian indexations, as a form of contestation to the detriment of any supplied alternatives[19].

The second is interested in the consequences of piecing together a narrative with first-step conclusions, accepting through *Brexit* a recurrent filtering phenomenon with regard to the meaning of Europe, in the sense of *exits* even if not clearly stated (in the decisive way of Great Britain), but existing and being felt at the European level. The procedure of the Referendum remains essential, its results

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[18] Heinrich Geiselberger, *Prefață* [Preface], in Arjun Appadurai, Donatella della Porta, Nancy Fraser (coord. *Marea Regresie. De ce trăim un moment istoric* [The Great Regression], Art Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017.

[19] Arjun Appadurai, *Uzura democrației* [Democracy fatigue], in *op. cit*., pp. 23-24.

validating the traditional Labour option in the North of England, giving up any avant-garde role or belief in global, anticapitalistic and internationalist revolutions[20], a message that confirms not only the economic failure of neoliberalism, but also the *Great Regression* of its narrative, deepening its political-ideological (narrative) inequality between a Left without reaction and a Right reloaded to the extreme[21]. The comment refers, in the trenchant opinion of Robert Misik,[22] to a seemingly simple schematics – if Blairists have turned the Labour Party into a social-democratic party of the urban middle class, Jeremy Corbyn shifted it to the Left and towards the working class – a positioning complicated by the progressive, Leftist and internationalist laboratory of ideas whose product Corbyn himself is, and by the limits of a multifocal confrontation: multiculturalism and antimigration *vs*. internationalism, human rights, solidarity or protectionism *vs*. globalization, or *pro-Brexit vs*. *anti-Brexit.*

The third plan compactly resonates with the accreditation of *Brexit* as having equal value with the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential elections, as a parity reality which gives magnitude and amplitude to the Great Regression. What prevails is a picture of similarity – *Brexit* is: "the indicator of the wave of provincialism which threatens to remove once-dominant cosmopolitan feelings"; the result of attachment to the *exit* – not only of middle class workers with downward mobility, but also of the rich and educated category (Donatella della Porta); "the spectacular manifestation of political uprising alerting us about the collapse of neoliberal hegemony" (Nancy Fraser); part of a series of historical events (with priority given to Bruno Latour's *Brexit* to the detriment of Trump's victory, as reality of the second order, or the impulsive decision to withdraw from globalization, from Europe and, with inflections close to Fukuyama's prophecies, of an *exit* from History), with common ingredients (Robert Misik), augmented (in the hypostasis of "amazing things") by the postfactual era, both through isolation and through starting a new phase of system crises (Wolfgang Streeck); "the painful road which all western democracies choose to travel" [the statement refers contextually to the imperfection of voting in the elections and in the Referendum process, *we note*] (David Van Reybrouck); a sign of "epochal regression" which, beyond being spectacular, is just a "quotient result", a product of multiple circumstances (be they cyclical or secular), "a defining expression of the crisis", the weak version of the same symptomatology (Alex Cistelecan). These opinions converge on the need for a *solution narrative*, able to clarify the "historical misunderstanding that gives priority to the market in the construction of the continental political project", with an enlarged frame of sovereignty and by applying, at the European level, the procedures of *de-marketing the market* (César Rendueles).

In the economy of the reported dossier, Paul Mason customizes the analysis by appealing to a failed neoliberal narrative, whose steps follow the framework-structure of the narration: *exposition* – displaying offensive, vindictive-neoliberal (Thatcher and Reagan) instances of the regressive phenomenon, deepened by the

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[20] Ivan Krastev, *Viitoruri ale majorității* [Majoritarian futures], in *op. cit*., p. 119.
[21] Paul Mason, *Cum să depășești frica de libertate* [Overcoming the fear of freedom], in *op. cit*., pp. 144-145.
[22] Robert Misik, *Curajul de a îndrăzni* [The courage of being audacious], in *op. cit*., pp. 192-193.

prevalence of market logic to the detriment of valuing the place or the identity of class; *plot* – the failure of the narrative (and stages) of neoliberalism; *deployment of the action* – accumulation of unfulfilled promises with regard to social mobility (the '90s) and blocking access to the corporate pension system (early 2000s); *climax* – the primacy of *austerity*, on the background of a collapsing financial system and the failure of social democratic improvement projects; *outcome* – ongoing narrative battles which, by the coexistence of twin indicative factors *Trump & Brexit,* demand an advance beyond the economic criticism of neoliberalism, through the answer given by the Left to the "economic and political challenge of building a post-liberal narrative"[23].

Narratives of Regression: Regrexit

The narratives of *Brexit* recharge conceptually by/through unprecedented combinations of meaning (echoing the tone of the equally surprising phenomenon), as part of an extensive vocabulary – *regret + Brexit = Regrexit* – confirming, in fact, the same Jamesonian sense according to which *narration* does not produce solutions, but is itself the problem taken into discussion. Moreover, the extended symptomatology can be attached to the Cassandra myth/complex, as passive reaction (the curse of Apollo), that of witnessing, without the power to change, the course of (known in advance) events, without being believed and, more than that, with the regretful impossibility of sharing revealed knowledge. The Cassandra model/complex can be applied to the conceptual framework of an assessment for the positioning of regret in the key of a *theory deliberate ignorance,* accepting through regret the negative post-election emotions, in the context in which the non-validated option maintains the hope of a favorable outcome. *The theory of deliberate ignorance* validates the existence of two types/variables – K (*I want to know*) and I (I *remain ignorant*), both attached to a set of consequences with results in the subjective value of representation for the satisfaction of choice, fulfillment or actual benefit, and calls for the existence of two cumulative mechanisms: the existence of a feedback, by revealing the real outcome of the previous option; and a perpetuation of the approach-avoidance conflict, access to the implications of the result generating both favorable or unfavorable contexts, depending on the reporting sources[24].

Germinated against the background of the Referendum of 23 June 2016, *Regrexit* targets the feeling of regret with regard to the existence and outcome of the *Brexit* vote. The concept is the product of the virtual laboratory, delivered immediately post-Referendum, through *Twitter* posts, by a former lawyer-negotiator of the Government, Carl Gardner, as comments which value the option K, that of a Labour Party which has, at the announced moment, a chance to organize as centrist group of a *Regrexit* Unionist Party. Virtualizing, the concept is approached

23 Paul Mason, *quoted work*, p. 164.
24 Gerd Gigerenzer, Rocio Garcia-Retamero, "Cassandra's Regret: The Psychology of Not Wanting to Know", in *Psychological Review*, vol. 124, no. 2, 2017, p. 181.

in extended manner, generalized by the hashtag formula – # *Regrexit* – as pretext
for the development of a particular media lexicon, which does not omit the possibility
of a *Bre-entry,* as partial *re-entry* of Great Britain in the European Union.

Announced (prophesied) by Jonathan Freedland[25] as a state augmented in /by
the future, with visible – immediate signs, tinting its post-event perception of
what is likely to be lost by this choice, the post-Referendum regret maintains the
feeling of an inter-generational conflict, with the artificiality of an imaginary/
narrative tabloid, and reaffirms the primacy of (unlimited) freedom of movement.
The perspective does not omit any lucid evaluations of the economy and policy
of Great Britain, on the background of rising anxiety about the misappropriation
of cooperation in conflict. The option of 48% of voters, affirming mistrust in the
possibility of gaining the expressed vote or equated to a protest gesture becomes,
post-election, tributary to emotion and regret, most often subsumed by anxiety
about "what did I do?" (see, in this respect, the reaction of Manchester voters
interviewed by the BBC at the time of the Referendum). It is on this soil that the
conceptual roots of *Regrexit* feed, potentiated by the impossibility of quantifying
the obtained result in desired/prefigured terms or, on the contrary, harmful/
amendable by the lack of a concrete assessment of the way in which the choice
responds to the needs, interests and necessities of the voters. Without showing
any sign of diminishing the effects of Regrexit, J. Freedland anticipates its
"ascending career" by potentiating disenchantment and regret.

The option (of a sample of 20,000 voters) to correct the state of affairs by
deciding to leave passivity (not participating in the first Referendum) and to
choose (*now*) the option of remaining in the European Union, imbues Alistair
Smout's[26] text with the possibility of equating *Regrexit* with the act of engagement,
of action, by annihilation of perpetuated insecurity amid the persistence of regret.

Without being finally settled, the *Remain* or *Leave* dilemma, augmented by
the Government crisis and the impossibility of concluding an agreement with the
EU, leaves room for intentions of reviewing the exit option – *Regrexit* – through
a three-tiered ordered narrative: a failure of the *Brexit* plan as it was initially
formulated by the May Government; the deepening political crisis of Great Britain
and the assertion of a (yet unclear) intention to resort – balancing – to another/
new Referendum; the request issued to the European Union demanding a respite
for England; all these are not only momentous alternatives, but also formulas for
perpetuating a deeper indecision of remorse and a sense of uncertainty[27].

The majority of interventions devoted to the reassessment of *Regrexit* place
the concept in the sphere of generalized regret as a spectral consequence of *Brexit*,
agreeing that the narrative it launches is one of identity crises, but also of the

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[25] Jonathan Freedland, "For the 48%, this was a day of despair", in *The Guardian,* June 25, 2016, https://
www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/48-britain-regrexit-voted-remaon, accessed on March 1st,
2019.
[26] Alistair Smout, "Regrexit? British voters would now back staying in the EU, poll shows", in Thompson
Reuters, 5 November 2018, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-poll/regrexit-british-voters-would-
now-back-staying-in-the-eu-poll-shows-idUKKCN1NA2KL, accessed on March 1st, 2019.
[27] Guy Faulconbridge, "Regrexit: What is the path back from Brexit?", in *IOL*, November 16, 2018, https://
www.iol.co.za/news/world/regrexit-what-is-the-path-back-from-brexit-18151272, accessed on March 1st, 2019.

possibility of finding a way back. *Regrexit* is the consequence of *Brexit*, the draft of the agreement on the departure of Great Britain from the European Union including in itself data on the existence of *Regrexit* as a symptom of post-*Brexit* disorder.

The analysis/evaluation proposed by Sher Watts Spooner[28] has, in this sense, extra significance in terms of reporting to a set of interconnected perspectives with which the British narrative operates: the development and implementation of *Regrexit*, as a way of cutting *Brexit*; valorizing feelings with the aim of correcting "the shattered dream" and perpetuating generalizing regret; organizing a new/other Referendum, this time with another result, with an effect in interrupting an undecided and impossible to complete course. *Regrexit* is not immune to *fantas*y doses of delirium inserted into its real options – the *Leave* camp (apparently) keeping an optimistic attitude about *exit*, as a form of economic growth, being all too aware that this prospect is nothing more than the propagated mirage of a fabulation scenario from the area of the "fantastic island of the unicorn" (a shattered fantasy – "It is time to shoot the unicorns" – *sic*!); the *Remain* camp remains concerned about the adverse consequences of the *Brexit* agreement and of its *hard Brexit* version, proposing another Referendum. The *Regrexit* narrative offers alternative scenarios and possible solutions and variations in; an attempt by the Prime Minister to renegotiate some specific aspects of *Brexit* (with priority, those about Ireland and Northern Ireland), despite the reluctance of European partners loyal to the slogan *a deal's a deal*; Theresa May's sustained approach to reinforcing her position, weakened by a no-confidence vote of members of her own party; a (possible) attempt to defer the *Brexit* date, allowing more time for renegotiations; the accreditation of a new Referendum as solution, on the grounds of non-agreement of the accord and non-perfecting the premises and solutions proposed by a *hard Brexit*.

All of this reconfirms the uncertain *situation* of the *narrative,* in its turn (when compared to all the *Brexit* narratives*)* in search of its best form or shape!

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