

The Language of Brexit

by Friedrich Hansen (October 2017)



The Conversation, Arnold Lakhovsky, 1935

The change of vocabulary is a key to history. Therefore, the strangulation of language with speech codes such as PC is not trivial and it merits a closer look. We might be able to uncover sensibilities of the English people related to custom, constitutional and casuistic law based on precedent. The “Writing on the Wall” of Europe’s demise was first noticed by European parliament member, Nigel Farage of UKIP, and it continues to inspire anti-globalist sentiments worldwide. For instance, his presence was felt in the victory of Roy Moore in the recent Senate race in Alabama. Farage’s rhetoric is nailing down the difference between the way elites talk as opposed to the way they think and act, i.e., issues of

authentic being. Put differently this is about reclaiming political particularism, everyone's "love of the little platoon, we belong to in society", of which Edmund Burke spoke (Paras 75-99, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790), this "first principle of public affection" which the global elites keep mocking as populism, combining traditional values like family, nation and transcendent values.

The liberal elite is infatuated with the fictional world of pop (primacy of possibilities) based on fantasy which is thriving on the Web, mainstream media, and the realms of music, film, and gender studies. As a result, all of us are consuming far more images these days than we are words and ideas. And yet images are static, highly stereotyped, perfectionistic and the default medium of emotion while words are dynamic, flexible, and hierarchic and the medium of the intellect. This alone explains the drying up of creative work in the arts and sciences and instead the sexing up of everything. For images by themselves pander to pride, facile status, complacency, or to envy, sameness and mirror thinking, whereas words alone are capable of reaching into transcendence and can elicit change. From there we can understand why more traditional British sensibilities came to the fore from under the high gloss finish of elite talk emanating from Europe's smug chattering classes.

The voice of the middle class and more specifically of the country-side reflecting authentic English pragmatic thinking has almost vanished. Yet still the British seem to be far less ideological and irrational about climate change than the post-Nazi Germans as is suggested by their different attitude toward nuclear energy. On a number of issues, the clash of cultures stirred up by Brexit is reflecting the choice of "process" over Angst-driven *fait accompli*, or British fondness

for lively debate versus German quietism and conformism. An abyss of cultural diversity has opened recently with many people harking back to Victorian values, with echoes back to formative 17th century civil war. That vibrant period saw the rise of British Israelis, which later culminated in an English New Jerusalem celebrated by Hubert Parry, William Blake and Edward Elgar. It all began in Amsterdam with Menasse ben Israel, who married Rahel Abrabanel, a scion of one of the oldest and most distinguished Jewish-Iberian families. Menasse's book *Hope of Israel* of 1650 argued for the readmission of the Jews to England as a way of hastening the coming of the Messiah—a response to Oliver Cromwell's call for a Jewish return to England. Cromwell foresaw the important role of Jewish "merchant princes" for English commerce. In Amsterdam, Menasse founded the largest Hebrew printing press in Europe, was the teacher of Baruch de Spinoza and close friend of Rembrandt van Rijn.



Farage divining EU disaster: The Writing on the Wall (Rembrandt, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1636)

Yet, it is the development of the tradition of English common

law that more than anything embodies British identity—embodied in several curious London “Inns” of old-fashioned lawyer associations.