

## Publication by Spencer & Oppermann

### Narrative genres of Brexit: the Leave campaign and the success of romance

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#### ABSTRACT

This article argues that the Leave narrative was successful in the 2016 referendum in part because it conformed to one of the well-established narrative genres of tragedy, comedy, satire and romance. These genres are story telling conventions that orientate audiences and guide the interpretation of the story being told. Specifically, the article shows that the Leave campaign constructed a largely consistent romantic narrative, while the Remain campaign mixed narrative genres. This difference in 'genre consistency' contributed to the success of Leave and the failure of Remain in the referendum. The investigation into the role of genre consistency adds to theoretical scholarship on narrative dominance in political discourse which has so far focused on the narrator, the structure and content of the story or the audience. The analysis points to structural similarities between the romantic genre and populist narratives more generally which enables populism to tap into the power of romance.

**KEYWORDS:** Narrative genres; romance; Brexit; populism

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