

## Psychology of Brexit No. 3

"Leaver Brands Delisted by Tesco" shown in the picture above.

Over the years of making contact with customers, I have noticed that Otto Rank's thoughts about the fundamental directions of motivation are very useful in understanding what drives us and what lies beneath.

Rank proposed a creative tension between life's two great desires: to merge or to separate. We can observe these playing out in early years and then throughout our lives thereafter. In adult life and consumer behaviour the merge/separate dimension is most usefully thought of as Progression and Regression, where progression is the drive to individuate, to evolve, to progress, while its opposite, regression is driven by merging with tradition, earlier patterns, familiar people, places or things. Regression is comfort, safety, familiarity, while progression is more risky, exciting, adventurous.

All of us do both, but tend to see ourselves as primarily favouring one or the other. In recent years, individualism and autonomy have been key drivers in our communities and progression has tended to receive more approval and endorsement.

The model, having two pulls in opposite directions, required a third factor to account for motivations concerned with correcting or repairing errors of judgment along the Progression > Regression continuum.

Rank and others have christened that third core motivation as Reparation: the desire to repair, adjust, mend, fix or alter inappropriate judgments in the other two.

The influence of these forces are exemplified and played out brilliantly in the Brexit phenomenon.

It wasn't long before the world reacted to the Regressive drive beneath Brexit, because although superficially Brexit looks like a progressive, individuating movement, this is quickly repudiated by the regressive nature of Leavers' demands: getting our country back suggest reverting to a former state that was better which we must regain...the 'good old days'.

The markets, sensing this regressive drive, have responded by devaluing the pound by 20%. If the Brexiteers continue with this stance, insisting that they hold all the cards and will not reveal them, in Bulldog Britain style, the markets will unsurprisingly view this as hubris and delusion and devalue the pound further.

In a beautiful illustration of 'what goes around comes around' a set of brands were de-listed by Tesco yesterday. All of them classic Leaver brands in Campaign's view:

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