

Fantasies really do end: the only questions are how and...

Published: January 14, 2026, 2:48 am

I [asked yesterday](#) why it seemed that people weren't listening at present. As is true of much of what I write here, the question was really aimed at myself: this blog is a stream of consciousness written more as a way to develop my own thinking than anything else. As I mused on this point yesterday three answers occurred to me.

The first is that Brexit demands closed thinking. The campaign was built on a lie that Brexit would save the UK money and release funds for the NHS. No one now pretends that is true. But the consequence is that those promoting Brexit now have, perforce, to close their ears to rational debate because they are all too well aware that what they are now doing is both irrational and harmful. It is in fact pure fantasy.

There is a time and place for fantasy; the hard politics of international relations is not one of them and yet most of the current narratives the UK is pursuing fit this description.

The difficulty with fantasy is it ends. That's fine in the case of a film, for example: we all go home refreshed and are better able to face reality. The Brexit fantasy has no such option built into it. That is not taking place in some safe space where all know that a fiction is being offered for entertainment. The Brexit fantasy is a denial of reality. Those types of fantasy are deeply troubling. They end in tears.

The second reason why no one is listening is that the UK's official opposition wants to pretend that it's fulfilling its role when only a very small number of people are really convinced this is the case. Most of its own supporters recognise that this is not true and hang on in the hope that eventually good times will return again. Another fantasy does, then, close down debate and prevent any real discussion.

The third reason is maybe the most pernicious. This is the pretence that all is well in the UK. The suggestion that growth is restored, wages are rising, the fall in the pound was actually beneficial, that the basic structure of our economy is sound despite its dominance by finance, and that the promised rebalancing offered after 2008 was not really required after all are all trotted out regularly when the truth is that we have an

economy laden with debt, producing massive inequality, that is deeply inefficient at cost to us all, that is only apparently capable of generating minimum pay jobs and where equality of opportunity has long ceased to even be a hope for many. But that cannot be acknowledged.

So there are at least three lies. It would be easy to note more: that Scotland has no chance of making it alone is another tht is regularly repeated to sustain a Unionist myth. And all the time the chance of real debate is suppressed so that the policies that might effect real, beneficial change can be ignored whikst the current madness is perpetuated.

People aren't listening right now because those in power are frightened of what might be said, It!s better to ignore the whispers in that case. But I have a message for them. The conversations will go on, whether they like it or not. And fantasies really do end. The only questions are how and when.