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How is “wokeness” constructed in newspaper articles about British heritage institutions move to be more diverse?

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ABSTRACT

Increasing use of the term “wokeness” in the UK has arisen from the Black Lives Matter movement that challenges anti-Black racism from police. BLM has led to the challenging of decision-making around how heritage is presented such as the toppling of the Colston statue. British heritage organisations have reinterpreted their role to orient towards a more inclusive representation of history and heritage in public spaces. However, the term ‘woke’ is used to critique moves to construct heritage more diversely and challenge changes by heritage organisations. A discursive psychological analysis was conducted on 100 UK newspaper articles covering the move by National Trust and English Heritage to be more diverse and where ‘wokeness’ was discussed as a controversy. We present three discourses: 1) heritage organisations being constructed as custodians, 2) heritage as a place of refuge, 3) organisations’ aim to be apolitical. These discussions of identity and physical space showcase both the notion that identities are specific to a physical space, and how this can be used to negotiate an aspect of British heritage that harmed global majority people. Our approach is interdisciplinary, combining discursive psychology and heritage/town planning to highlight the contested nature of interpreting history, public space and identity.

KEYWORDS

Discursive psychology;
heritage; media; wokeness;
Black Lives Matter

Introduction

This paper critically assesses the concept of “wokeness” as it applies to urban and regional planning decision making around the historic environment, and how it is represented and reacted to in the public sphere. The historic environment which we experience is vast and can include statues and monuments in a public space, historic buildings, and large country estates once owned by the landed gentry, among others. In exploring how the historic environment is managed in the UK, we focus on the National Trust (henceforth NT), a conservation charity representing England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The NT is the largest conservation charity in Europe with 5.37 million

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members (National Trust 2024). The charity cares for 250,000 hectares of farmland, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves (2024).

Heritage and history

The appreciation and management of the historic environment is the culmination of predominantly nineteenth and twentieth century discussions around authenticity and the need to preserve buildings and monuments for future generations. Influential commentators such as Ruskin (2001) and Morris (1877) considered the preservation of the built environment as representing the ideas, values and construction techniques of the past. They argued that the historic environment needed to be preserved and maintained for the benefit of everyone. Reigl (1903) who was one of the first authors to define the value of heritage and develop principles for the preservation and maintenance of the historic environment. The principles that were developed by Reigl (1903) underpinned international charters such as the Athens Charter (1933), the Venice Charter (1964), the Burra Charter (1979) and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972).

These international charters influenced the interpretation of heritage and influenced how member countries developed law, policy and guidance on the preservation of the historic environment. In the UK, the National Planning Policy Framework (as England's National Planning Policy) places "great weight" to a heritage asset's conservation on any development that causes harm to a heritage asset (MHLG 2025, 212). Heritage value for the purpose of planning decision making in England is generally interpreted as being made up of both intangible and tangible values, categorised as:

- Historic: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life;
- Evidential: derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
- Aesthetic: derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; and
- Communal: derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory (English Heritage 2008).

Smith (2006, 22) labels the Westernised subjective and manufactured concept of heritage as "Authorised Heritage Discourse" (AHD). Heritage has been categorised into a set of defined values which can be applied to "correct" interpretations of the nation's heritage. This has led to the critique of "elite heritage" (Smith, 2006, 22) where the conceptualisation of heritage is controlled by experts. When developing a list of building to be protected post-

World War 2, the government's advisors sought to list the premium examples of building types such as cathedrals, castles and grand country house estates of the aristocracy. This approach to heritage ignored the Victorian slum terraced houses where most inhabitants lived and did not deem working class residences as being of national architectural and historic interest (Smith 2006, 22). Today, the experiences of Victorian working-class people are included in the school curriculum and housing such as back-to-back terraces are preserved. Historically they were not treated as histories and sites *to* be preserved or valued in the manner that the NT would preserve a country house.

The evaluation and conservation of heritage more recently has developed to include the input of community groups and stakeholders (Avrami 2009). Cannadine (1983) highlights the previous dominance of an invented or authorised heritage discourse whereby the concept of heritage is underpinned by the protection of aristocratic country house estates and livelihoods. This is reflected in the foundations of bodies such as the NT who took on the management and ownership of grand country estates as a tax break for the wealthy owners (Cannadine 1995). The focus on aristocratic historic houses became the foundation of what Britain viewed as representative of its heritage, creating strong connections that are symbolic of representing British national culture and identity (1995). As bodies like the NT and English Heritage (henceforth EH) collectively own and manage approximately 1,000 of the nation's collection of buildings, these bodies are perceived as responsible for preserving Britain's historic identity (English Heritage 2022, National Trust 2024). Hence, the representation of Britain's heritage can be perceived to be connected to the role of bodies such as the NT and EH. Recent efforts to decolonise heritage divert from traditional conceptualisations of what historic assets are to be conserved and how they are interpreted to the public.

Heritage and wokeness

The NT has recently become embroiled in a public debate around perceptions of wokeness with a particular focus on how it presents heritage in the stories of its properties. These historical narratives include the discussion of topics such as slavery and how this discourse is presented to the public (Donnelly 2021; Quinn 2018). The NT debates as outlined in this research have direct parallels to how planning policy values heritage within decision making that involves considerations for sustainable development and the public interest. In analyzing public negotiations of "heritage" our manuscript offers three contributions. First, we show the negotiation of how to interpret the ideological meaning of a physical space is managed (e.g., an aristocratic mansion). Second, these negotiations are relevant as part of ideological concerns that impact our everyday lives plus how the use of everyday

psychological terms and expressions related to emotions, thoughts and behaviours is relied on to make these arguments. Third, our work produces an interdisciplinary approach between social psychology, in the form of a discursive psychological analysis, and town planning, in how this relates to discussions and decision making involving the historic environment.

The term “wokeness,” has entered the realm of social media and common speech relatively recently in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd; however its foundations are taken from social movements predominantly linked with Black oppression in America. The term can be traced back to a 1938 folk song by Lead Belly warning African Americans of the threats posed by a white-dominated America to “stay woke”, i.e. keep their eyes open (Cose 2020). Gray (2018) likens the woke movement as a term used by Black people as a type of conscious thought; to remind themselves of the need to be awoken to the importance of sociopolitical awareness and to continue the fight for social justice. It is an awareness that the world is not equal and that there is a continual need for the “dismantling [of] oppressive structures is a process that requires constant vigilance, un-learning, and re-learning” (Gray 2018).

The linkage between wokeness and its origins in social injustice remains intact, having now entered the mainstream and corporate world. Today the term “woke” is being used to refer to an awareness of any type of social injustice, such as sexism, homophobia, or discrimination, among others (Cammaerts 2022). Whilst more of a social movement, the corporate world has also become involved in “wokeness”, with large consumer corporations, celebrities or media influencers declaring how woke they are to aid consumerism. However, Sobande (2020, 2727) critiques these declarations as a form of “woke-washing” in the aim of consumerism, rather than social justice.

As will be discussed in this paper, recognising wokeness or becoming woke has been given negative representation linked to being left-wing, or so-called politically correct by the right-wing as a threat to British identity and its value systems (Cammaerts 2022). The concept mirrors the trope from the 1990s of “political correctness gone mad” (Bernstein 1990), as to be woke is perceived as being “too sensitive” (Duffy et al. 2022). The NT complied a report (Huxtable et al. 2020) detailing 93 of their properties that had links to slavery. This led to some consumers choosing not to engage with organisations such as the NT and instead preferring a historical narrative that is devoid of the controversial history of certain past figures (e.g., their role in the slave trade). The acknowledgement of country houses connections to the slave trade is perceived by some potential visitors to tarnish a country house’s grandeur and identity, a presentation that they connect to their British identity. The report was defended by the NT as attempting to be honest about acknowledging the history behind the properties (Huxtable et al. 2020).

Heritage and discourse

Community experience and value of the historic environment is communicated discursively to the public. Historic sites will have tour guides, written notes and more to tell the visitor why this site matters and why it is of value. If heritage, then, is discursively communicated then one can, from a discursive psychological perspective, treat it as something socially constructed and not having a fixed definition. Discursive psychology is an approach that studies in close detail how language – or, rather, discourse – is used and how it deploys psychological categories to perform them. For example, from discursive psychology’s analytic perspective the concept of heritage is not something that is ontologically separate from its mode of expression. Rather, “heritage” is spoken into being and its meaning is fluctuating and subject to negotiation, negation or affirmation.

This highlights the problems associated with an evolving concept of heritage as a discourse, there are influences of power and politics as to what is determined as official or designated heritage and whether heritage reflects the voices of the community, a stakeholder, or merely just a person in power or decision maker. An indicator of the growing power of societal values within the debate of how community interpret and value the historic environment, and what should be preserved, is highlighted in the recent Black Lives Matters social movement. This movement saw the removal of statues in public spaces that were considered to represent oppression and racism towards Black people. In Bristol, the statue of Edward Colston was a Grade II listed statue of National Significance and Importance (Historic England, Entry No. 1202137) and was placed on a plinth along Colston Avenue which it is named after. Given that Colston was involved with the trading of slaves during his life, the statue became a symbol for Black oppression and was forcibly removed by protesters of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (BBC 2020b). Such events raise questions as: what is heritage value; what are the important values of heritage that society needs to symbolise; and who gets to decide how heritage is represented in the public domain?

The discourse around the Colston Statue was not limited to Bristol or the UK but resonated around the world with similar attempts to remove public statues, such as the beheading of the Christopher Columbus Statue in Boston USA for his links to colonialism and oppression of Black people (NBC Boston 2020). Since the BLM movements, removing or vandalising statues has become symbolic of discontent with government and social justice. A recent example of this symbolism is shown in Melbourne Australia, where the statue of Captain James Cook was covered in red paint to symbolise blood and deliberately cut down from its plinth the day before Australia Day, which is a day commemorating the first landing of white settlers to Australia, often referred to as “Invasion Day” (BBC 2024).

The Vice Chancellor for Oxford University in discussing pressure to remove a Cecil Rhodes Sculpture at the University (who has links to imperialism and slavery), argues that “we need to understand this history and understand the context in which it was made and why it was that people believed then as they did,” and that “hiding our history is not the route to enlightenment” (BBC 2020a). For the discursive and rhetorical psychologist, collective memory is an action performed for present purposes (Billig and Marinho 2017; Middleton and Edwards 1990). Versions of past serve present purposes, and, as such, the renegotiation of a past is more than being more factually accurate: it is also a means of moving from one ideological position to another.

It is social movements like the BLM movement that enable us to appreciate that the buildings and spaces that are designed, retrofitted and approved for public benefit do not have a fixed meaning. Town planning for future communities needs to consider issues beyond physical structures and incorporate social injustices. Recognition is also needed that planning decisions involving the historic environment require a public discussion of what is best for the public interest. The discussion around British heritage (buildings) is a discussion on both the ideological meaning and nature of a physical space. The removal of listed statue in England requires listed building consent and a wider consultation with the community, key stakeholders to comply with planning policy that considers the public interest. This highlights that a process is in place to have broader discussions about how planners can make the public realm more equal for the benefit of the community and the common good.

These are some of the questions which resonate with the complicated nature of the debate that heritage organisations are now seeking to address in satisfying the community and the public interest. Whilst the efforts of the NT telling the entire story of a site has been labelled as being “woke” by objectors and the media such as the *Daily Mail*,¹ the NT have been placed at the centre of the debate around what is heritage and how should it be interpreted. The group Restore Trust who are on the NT’s council oppose the “woke” agenda of the NT and seek to restore it back to its “core purpose of looking after our heritage” (The Guardian 2021). Some of the stakeholders see these changes as negative and as a result are seeking to boycott organisations such as the NT.

Our research aims are as follows:

- (1) To examine how heritage organisations and their relationship to “wokeness” is discussed in British newspapers.

¹<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9400801/National-Trust-boss-insists-shes-not-woke-defends-slavery-report.html>.

- (2) To explore how these arguments about wokeness in UK newspapers relate to negotiations of history, ideology and nationhood.
- (3) How do British newspapers represent the tension between heritage organisations, so-called progressive agendas and resistances to these in relation to wokeness?
- (4) How is the ideological meaning of a physical space negotiated in relation to heritage in UK newspapers?

Methodology

This study employed a discursive psychological (henceforth DP) approach to analyze news articles that reported on the NT's initiatives to increase diversity and be more transparent about their property's links to slavery. DP focuses on how psychological issues are constructed and managed in everyday discourse (e.g., Potter and Wetherell 1987; Edwards & Potter 1992), allowing for an exploration of how diversity and related concepts (e.g., banal nationhood, reasonableness, etc.) are represented in media texts. Rather than use language as a tool to infer mental states of people, DP treats it as inherently action oriented and a site worthy of analytic attention. This means that discourse is seen as something that people use to accomplish social actions, and the focus is on what and how social actions are performed in/through discourse, rather than treat it as a mere window to the mind.

Data

Articles from national UK newspapers were sourced using the database "Nexis", using the search terms "National Trust", "woke*" and "coloni*". These search terms were chosen to capture the debate around acknowledging the contribution to historic estates from exploitative economic activity from colonisation. The authors decided not to use "slavery" as a search term as this could exclude wealth gained from places within the British Empire such as India. The period chosen was 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023 covering a peak of newspaper coverage about the NT and included the announcement of the October 2021 resignation of Tim Parker, the Chair of the organisation on 18 May 2021 (Rawlinson 2021). While our analysis primarily focused on the NT, we have not excluded other heritage organisations from the database on account of the "woke" debate applying to them also. The period chosen covers reporting of the reactions to the NT acknowledging the role of colonisation in its properties as an initial report was released in September 2020 (Huxtable et al. 2020). Coverage includes reporting on an investigation by the Charity Commission about whether the NT had complied with its charitable remit in the production of the report that was dismissed in March 2021 (Charity Commission 2021). This period also includes challenges by the

Reform Trust at a subsequent NT Annual General Meetings to change the strategic direction of the organisation (Kendall Adams 2023).

While the BLM movement developed from the injustices of the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012, further protests occurred in 2020 after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 increased public awareness of structural racism and counter protest movements (Nguyen et al. 2021). A three-year time period allowed this study to consider the ongoing debate about heritage assets in the UK and their relationship with colonisation as public awareness of this issue increased. The final sample consisted of 100 articles from a range of UK print-based versions of national newspapers (see [Appendix 1](#) for a full list) and excluded articles that were only available online. These newspapers were chosen to provide a balanced representation of different political perspectives.

Analytic procedure

A discursive psychological approach (Edwards & Potter, 1992) allows for an understanding of how the NT's diversity initiatives are constructed and contested in public discourse. We followed Goodman's (2017) eight steps for conducting psychological discourse analysis. Below we highlight the most relevant ones:

- (1) Choose suitable data source. We opted for newspaper articles due to readily accessible public discussions of the “woke” controversy in heritage institutions.
- (2) Generate database. Explained above.
- (3) Preliminary reading of the data for action orientation. Each author took one quarter of the corpus to search through individually (approximately 25 articles per author), searching for striking instances where heritage, wokeness and physical spaces were discussed together. We were specifically interested in cases where the contestation of a meaning of a physical space was represented. After this stage, all four authors met for a joint data analysis session, where the provisional structure of the analytic section was developed which, in turn, was refined throughout the writing process.
- (4) Generating results. For example, identify and explicate discursive actions.
- (5) Identifying suitable cases to support findings. Steps 3–5 overlapped considerably, in conjunction with the writing of the manuscript.

This approach was used by us to explore how place identity has been presented in online discussions to argue for limited access to public spaces and account for restrictions on ideologically “undesirable” groups (Somers et al. 2023).

Given the remit of the NT as a heritage conservation organisation, this provides an opportunity to examine how heritage is constructed, who it is conserved for and by whom. Initially, three research assistants with the second author explored the data identifying and examining examples of talk about the role of heritage organisations and diversity. Data sessions were held where the authors considered the action orientation of the identified examples and differing positions that were held by the newspapers. These examples are an accurate representation of the overall data. The data was formed of mostly examples focused upon the NT with some discussion of EH in a few places. While the focus of the research was on discourse about the NT, the authors decided to include data about EH given their similar remit in terms of conserving heritage assets that are open to the public. The authors also undertook a line by line analysis of the data individually and discussed examples as a group to identify action orientations and rhetorical strategies present. The authors explored how the organisations were constructed in relation to the presentation of their roles and aims. This part of the analysis involved identifying rhetorical strategies such as place identity to consider how heritage organisations and their assets are constructed and variation in talk about their presentation. Later stages in the analysis involved exploring the use of categories such as “woke” and the presentation of historical figures such as Winston Churchill in managing positions that challenge the actions of the NT. The authors then examined how categories were negotiated to explore how diversity and inclusion was defined and framed within the texts. A further reading considered how within the articles, heritage is constructed as banal, everyday, and whose heritage assets are being conserved for as a commodity. The extracts presented in the analysis represent key examples of each discourse as they appear across the data.

Analysis

This analysis will talk about three discourses on heritage: (1) role as a custodian of the nation’s heritage, (2) heritage as a place of refuge, (3) the aim to be apolitical. Note that this analysis will look at both the NT and EH together, although the latter features less frequently in the data. This is because both are subject to debate when it comes to discussions of Britain’s heritage and the meaning of British history today. Throughout the analysis one can observe “banal nationalist” (Billig 1995) constructions of national identity. Banal nationality, put very briefly, is the mundane discursive construction of nationhood, in a manner where this nationhood is treated in some way as obvious or natural. It forms the discursive bedrock for treating the wider political idea of a nation-state as natural by making it everyday (1995). Challenges to banal nationalism that acknowledge the exploitative history of colonialism in heritage assets are constructed as woke and disrupting the ethos of heritage conservation organisations.

Custodian of the nation's heritage

In this section we present two examples where NT is described in relation to its role as a custodian of British heritage. In the first extract we unpack a case of explaining why NT does what it does, and in the second where there is a claim that NT has failed, or rather departed, from its traditional role.

Extract 1: *The Guardian* (16 October 2021) Cream teas at dawn: inside the war for the National Trust

1 After the first world war, the aristocracy found itself
2 squeezed by high death duties and a dearth of estate
3 workers, many of whom had been killed in the trenches.
4 Historic estates risked being carved up or crumbling into
5 ruins. "The fabric of the landscape was starting to break
6 down," says Liz Green, the trust's lead curator in Wales.
7 "You read about this in novels all the time: the young heir
8 comes along, has to flog the family silver off and break
9 apart these great estates." The solution was the National
10 Trust Act of 1937, allowing estates to be given to the
11 Treasury in lieu of inheritance tax and held by the trust on
12 behalf of the nation in perpetuity. (The trust occupies an
13 unusual position, independent of government but answerable
14 to the nation; technically it doesn't "own" its assets, but
15 cares for them on Britain's behalf.) What followed was
16 effectively nationalisation on a scale of which socialists
17 might only dream, albeit in exchange for some hefty tax
18 avoidance, leaving the trust with a new coalition of
19 members: some who joined to walk the land, others interested
20 in "worshipping the aristocracy, or in pictures and
21 furniture and china", as Dawnay puts it.

Extract 1 constructs a certain type of identity for the NT, as an organisation that permitted the continued existence of large country estates. This identity of a custodian is worked up in several mundane historical descriptions, quoting significant figures, and a brief moral summary of the outcome.

We see throughout the extract a historical narrative of why the NT was developed, beginning with the consequences of the First World War, inheritance tax and a lacking labour force. The solution to this is for the aristocracy to "lease" their assets to NT, developed by the government in response to this situation (lines 9–12). The main function of this seemingly mundane factual description of the states of affairs is to reify and rhetorically strengthen the so-called "origin story" of the NT. To make something come across as factual, mere description is a form of rhetorical achievement (Edwards and Potter 1993). The question, then, is to what end this is done? The aim is to lend credibility to the role of the NT in the context of its current controversial nature. Crucially, this is a seemingly apolitical description of the nature of the NT.

The use of quotes throughout the extract is part and parcel of managing neutrality, especially common in news discourse (Clayman 1992) which might

explain why *The Guardian* article is opting for their use. Essentially, the use of quotes allows for a news organisation to voice a position that would otherwise come across as non-neutral if presented as the view of the organisation. This is particularly the case with the second quote, on lines 20–21, where a seemingly invested view of the NT, that idolises British aristocracy, might come across as too much in favour of the British class system from a newspaper known for its left-wing stance. Hence the quote being presented in a somewhat caricatured manner, emphasised by the use of the term “worship”, as a form of rhetorical preempting to forestall potential critique (Potter 1996).

Directly linked to this quote, preceding and including it on lines 15–21, is a moral summary of the description of the origins of NT. The reference to nationalisation of aristocratic estates would, on an initial reading, be readily interpreted from a socialist perspective. Hence the mention of a socialist dream (lines 16–17), but immediately followed by a mention of a significant financial motivation in letting an estate be managed by the NT. This effectively neutralises the political stance of the text, by the inclusion of both a left- and a right-wing motive for the NT. Doing so means that the appeal of the NT is not a political one – or, rather, a political appeal that is neither left nor right – which permits the mention of those potentially invested in it for aristocratic reasons. The description of the motivation of NT members is two-fold: those who enjoy its physical spaces and those who enjoy its history. All in all, this description manages a number of political opposites to present the NT as open to all and a custodian of what any political side might view as ideologically desirable matter to maintain.

Extract 2: *Daily Mail* (5 February 2021) Don't Stumble on the COVID High Wire, PM

1	Quivering with righteousness, the management (whose high
2	salaries are paid on the back of such bequests) has
3	besmirched the former Viceroy of India's reputation, while
4	ignoring his incalculable generosity. Yes, British history
5	is complex. But imposing present-day sensibilities upon the
6	long-dead owners of houses left in the trust's keeping is
7	self-destructive folly.
8	People visit these sites for their splendour, not to be
9	force-fed the fringe obsessions of the liberal-left. If
10	they stayed away, the trust would face ruin.
11	Shouldn't it grasp its job is not to pontificate piously.
12	It's to preserve our past.

Extract 2 is taken from the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper with a right-wing allegiance (Conboy 2006). The most immediate contrast with extract one is the absence of any attempt to appeal to a broad political spectrum; the *Daily Mail* piece is decidedly in against what it speaks of as a left-wing takeover in the NT. The text makes a caricature of the NT management in order to present them in an unreasonable manner.

The most obvious examples of the caricature are on lines 1 (“quivering with righteousness”), 9 (“force-fed fringe obsessions of the liberal-left”) and 11 (“pontificate piously”). The first and last examples speak to the character of the NT leadership, suggesting that they are taking a moralising, unreasonable, position. The middle example on lines 5–7 also portrays the NT management as having an ideological axe to grind (Potter 1996). The middle example refers to a particular action, suggesting that instances of “educating” NT visitors is something that the visitors are not dispositionally inclined towards. This type of description suggests that the NT management is acting in an ideological and unreasonable manner rather than acting rationally. This hints that the re-assessment of the history of British heritage is not done in the name of an accurate historical assessment, but, rather, out of a lack of reasonableness. Conventionally, when one is presenting the opposing view as absurd via caricature it is preceded by a concession (Antaki 2004). However here we see a key distinction in that the concession follows the absurdity. In Antaki’s case (2004) the examples were from interviews, in our case the data is from newspaper articles. The different format permits a different style of arguing: the author of a newspaper article is not face to face with someone they must account their views to. Because the caricature is presented in advance, the display of “fairmindedness” (Antaki 2004), which is still a crucial part in presenting one as rational even when mocking an opposing view, can follow at leisure. As long as it is included there so that the newspaper can claim fairmindedness in their arguments.

Note also the token acknowledgment on lines 4–5, done to make the article’s argument appear more reasonable by way of admitting to a complex history while, at the same time, glossing over it. In displaying reasonableness, the implication is that those critiqued in the article presented in extract 2 are, by contrast, not reasonable. In essence, the argument made in the article is that this complex history, which is what the NT managers seemingly wish to bring forth, is not the relevant matter at hand nor is it a practical decision. This is also shown on line 12 when “our past” is referred to, as this does not mention slavery links this suggests that the past is unproblematic. The use of “our” also constructs a shared, homogenous past.

National Trust as refuge

In this section we look at discussions of NT as a place of refuge. This links to our earlier work, where we demonstrated that certain physical spaces were constructed as places of refuge thus suggesting that certain physical spaces are treated as relevant to certain identities over others (Somers et al. 2023).

Extract 3: *The Times* (18 October 2021) Stately Homes are a Refuge not a Battlefield

1 In today's world of ugly retail parks, uncouth social media
 2 exchanges, culture wars and Covid-19 worries, we too long
 3 for Englishness-in-aspic: are there scones and jam still for
 4 tea? And gardens bright with lupins and flocks, and genteel
 5 custodians in Laura Ashley skirts, and gift shops selling
 6 sage-green tote bags? We do not want the trust to reflect
 7 the modern world but to be a refuge from it.
 8 So all power to Restore Trust's elbow before the AGM. For
 9 more than a century the National Trust has thrived with a
 10 winning formula of beautiful houses, interesting artefacts,
 11 glorious gardens and decent refreshments. It must aim to
 12 maintain these delights for us all, not to fight political
 13 battles that provoke, divide and take us far from the peace
 14 that Octavia Hill intended.

Extract 3 sets a contrast between beauty and ugliness, where the latter serves the former. It is the ugliness of the contemporary world (lines 1–2) that creates the need for the beauty offered by the NT. This contrast emphasises the beauty of the spaces offered by the NT and treat them as a source of comfort and refuge from “today’s world”. There may be a tone of irony (see above) to the description of the beauty of Englishness-in-aspic (lines 3–6), however the description of beauty is still rooted in Englishness and, crucially, in recognizable, arguably middle class, Englishness. The bringing of political concerns into this space is treated as compromising it, and, by extension, compromising the beauty and the Englishness of this space. Treating beauty and politics as antithetical is a means of sidestepping a particular political argument; that of a critical assessment of English heritage in our case.

The second paragraph of extract 3 (lines 8–14) takes a clearer stance in favour of Restore Trust, who campaign to maintain what they see as the moral probity of the owners of large country estates (e.g., removing references to colonialism and slavery in NT properties) (Restore Trust 2024), and does so carefully. The politics of Restore Trust are not embraced as much as the practicality of their campaign: to retain the essence of the NT, highlighted in the preceding paragraph, that is both a “winning formula” (line 10) and true to the legacy of the NT as envisioned by one of its founders – Octavia Hill. Restore Trust are constructed as somewhat “apolitical”, alongside other idyllic (non-political) organisations such as Laura Ashley. This sanitising of Restore Trust and other groups, in conjunction with the treatment of beauty as antithetical to politics, allows the advocacy of a conservative political position to be treated as a matter of practicality – “realpolitik” – and, in consequence, for one political position being advocated while another is downplayed.²

²See Potter (1996) on offensive and defensive rhetoric.

Referring to a winning formula implies public support for what the NT was doing prior to its aims of increasing awareness of slavery and colonialism. This creates a two-pronged rhetorical positioning against so-called “wokeness”. First, the NT’s original aim is to maintain the serenity and beauty of Englishness, especially against the harshness of contemporary life (including awareness of past slavery). Second, this type of Englishness is what has public support and, therefore, should be maintained in the name of public interest. Consistent with our previous argument about identities being specific to a physical space (Somers et al. 2023), here we see a similarity. Place-identity is constructed in response to a threat: Englishness and beauty is rhetorically pinned down in the extract 3 in order to protect it from the (ugly) modern world and its “woke” political battles.

Extract 4: *The Guardian* (1 October 2021) Insurgents Bring War on “Wokeness” to National Trust AGM

1 Some connected to NT liken the push by Restore Trust to
2 Brexit, when cultural grievances were allied with economic
3 ones. “While I wouldn’t say they’re exactly the same [as
4 with Brexit], I think what is happening to some degree at
5 the National Trust has a certain sense of trying to preserve
6 a notion of England,” said Raj Pal, a historian and member
7 of the charity who has carried out consultative work for it
8 and contributed to the report on colonialism and slavery.
9 “It’s a sense of trying to use the National Trust as a
10 temple to a certain level of Englishness of the past
11 uncontaminated, in some people’s eyes, by all this
12 multiculturalism.”

In extract 4 we see the notion of refuge being brought up, but this time from a newspaper with a different political stance. While the newspaper in extract 3, *The Times*, has a centre-right stance, the one in extract 4, *The Guardian*, has a centre-left one. This broadly reflects how the notion of refuge is talked about. Extract 4 features the typical notions of managing neutrality through quotes discussed earlier (lines 3–6 and 9–12). In this instance, the political aims of Restore Trust are likened to Brexit, associating it with a politically controversial topic, and also aligns the aims along national lines: it is about Englishness. Similar to extract 3, extract 4 also assumes a distinction between Englishness and the modern world “out there”. The key difference being that in extract 4 this distinction is not framed in positive terms. In the quoting of Raj Pal, we can see that an argument against multiculturalism is presented as a matter of “some people’s eyes” (line 11) to distance the article from such a position. The distinction between Englishness and multiculturalism as a desired end goal is attributed to Restore Trust. While not stated outright, the implication of such a claim serves to present Restore Trust in a problematic light whereby their view of Englishness, according to the article, is at odds with the existence of non-English peoples.

Desire to be apolitical

For the final analytic section, we are going to focus on one newspaper article in particular: “Racist attack on EH exhibition celebrating black lives” by *The Observer*, from 16 October 2021. The article is freely available online.³ In the analysis so far, we have seen how the NT is constructed as a custodian of English history and culture, and as a place of refuge. In these discussions we have seen a careful use of quotes by the news outlets, permitting them to voice positions that, were they portrayed as the views of the news outlets, would conventionally be seen as politically invested. In this section we will observe how these discursive manoeuvres, and others, manage the political positioning of the news outlet – in this case *The Observer* – when talking about the contentious relationship between EH in the wake of the BLM movement.

This article shows how racism can be talked about in various delicate ways. The topic of this article is the defacing of artwork from Black photographers that were put on display at Wrest Park in the autumn of 2021. The ways this is talked about highlights the careful management of the topic by *The Observer*, in itself a means to voice a political concern while trying to take an apolitical stance.

We can observe three types of discussions of the sensitive topic of race, so-called wokeism and how people respond to it. The first is a number of delicately worded, almost indirect expressions of the matter at hand, where the defacing of the art is referred to as “the incident” (the term is used three times in the article). Being seen as prejudiced is a discursively delicate topic (Goodman 2014), but, equally, it is a delicate matter to suggest that someone is prejudiced (Gibson 2020). The term “incident!” is used in instances where *The Observer* is reporting on the event in, so to speak, its own words, linking to the matter of managing institutional neutrality discussed earlier.

In other instances, the topic is referred to as a “racist attack!”, “racially aggravated criminal damage” or, in the public reaction to the incident on social media, as “a number of racially prejudiced comments”. These begin to broach the topic more openly in a carefully managed way. The first expression, racist attack, is only used twice: one in the article title and once again in the introductory paragraph. The latter two examples are used when quoting (see above) others.

In one noteworthy case, the criminal damage is described as the use of the “n word”. The expression, while euphemistic, leaves little doubt to what was written on one of the damaged artworks. The euphemism works here in two ways. One, it observes a taboo of using a word that carries historical and racial connotations to it. The very use of the uncensored word would invite trouble,

because its use could be read as endorsing its troublesome past. Yet, in contrast, because the euphemism is widely recognized as precisely that, it permits an expression that leaves no ambiguity as to what was said without an endorsement of its prejudiced, racist, implications.

Finally, *The Observer* article includes quotes from social media from those that oppose what they would refer to as the “woke” movement in the NT and EH organisations. One particular extract includes the use of expletives and is treated as indicative of the type of negative comments that the NT and EH have received online.

Extract 5: *The Observer* (16 October 2021) Racist attack on English Heritage exhibition celebrating black lives

- 1 A contributor commented: “Why are you trying to shove this
- 2 nonsense down everyone's throats? The more you do this, the
- 3 more shite you will get in the comments. You're supposed to
- 4 be an apolitical organization promoting culture, not the
- 5 bunch of woke apparatchiks.”

Here we can observe three points of interest: description of EH’s character, the content of their message and the consequence of EH’s action. EH is, first, described as being forceful in their actions. The graphic description of “shoving! something down one’s throat on line 1 implies a forceful and unwanted action. This is suggesting that EH’s actions are not respectful of people’s wants. At the end of the extract EH are described as “woke apparatchiks”. While wokeism may in some instances be viewed neutrally, as a positive or a negative depending on who is using it and how, in this case the pairing of it with the term “apparatchik”, invoking a term associated with the Soviet Union, treats it as a negative one. Stokoe and Edwards (2007) demonstrated that pairing a categorical insult with a swearword is what upgraded a personal insult into a prejudicial, racist, remark. We can make a parallel observation here: pairing a group characteristic with an insult is what might allow one to analyze these types of comments as anti-left prejudice rather than mere resistance to a change in EH’s policies. This negative picture is further reinforced by the moral imperative that EH should be apolitical, and their actions are unwelcome, undemocratic and against their own moral and dispositional mandate. This portrays EH as being in a position of moral and political transgression.

The content of EH’s message is unambiguously described as “nonsense” (line 2). When paired with a dispositional authoritarianism paints a negative picture of the EH this suggest that EH’s position is not a reasonable one. Rather, EH are motivated by their leftist agenda, according to the poster, which does not even meet the criteria of being merely wrong.

On lines 2 and 3, the poster suggests that the unreasonable agenda of EH will meet with resistance. There is a form of threat in here (Burke and Demasi 2021; Hepburn and Potter 2010): if EH does not stop being “woke”, then they

are going to receive more “shite” online. This threat treats EH as agentically responsible for the abuse it might receive online, not the perpetrators. It is EH’s leftist views, their forcefulness of these views, according to this poster, that is a cause of the abuse and not that of those commenting online. This, then, justifies the negative commentary on social media.

It is worth observing the claimed moral transgression of EH by the anonymous poster. According to them, EH has failed its mandate as an “apolitical organisation promoting culture” (line 4). Here we see a similar political-cultural distinction as in the previous discourse discussed above, but here it is framed as a matter of mandate rather than refuge. Much in the same way, though, to be political is to fail at one’s duty to maintain heritage. And this failure, in the case of extract 5, serves as means to argue against a so-called “woke” position. Where there is a link to the previous discourse is in the mention of “culture”. The fact that the person posting the comment speak of culture in the singular is significant. That [culture (singular)] and [apolitical] are put together suggest that, according to the poster, a critical assessment of English heritage and history is to go against the English culture on ideological grounds rather than a critical assessment of Britain’s potentially dark history with matters such as slavery. It also takes a banal nationalist (Billig 1995) take on English culture, in that its obviousness and uniformity is assumed rather than articulated.⁴

An argument of this type would not be possible to voice by *The Observer* without it being accused of being biased. Nor would it be in line with the newspaper’s centre-left political alignment (Tunstall 1996). The use of quotes permits *The Observer* to voice such a stance, all the while being against it. One could argue that using a quote of this type, it is the newspaper that paints the person posting as the one who is unreasonable. *The Observer* leaves this person anonymous. This is unsurprising on the account that it allows for this person to not be tracked and persecuted for their views, but there is a further dimension to this. By portraying the opponents of EH’s “wokeism” as anonymous it also denies them significant credibility, of the type that a newspaper might offer to, say, an elite politician. Only once is a prominent anti-woke politician named, Sir John Hayes (Conservative party), who is simultaneously described as “railing” against heritage organisations. The descriptive term itself doing much the same work as that observable in extract 5 on shoving something down a person’s throat.

⁴The paradox here being that to discursively construct something as taken-for-granted it must be articulated as such. This is an example of how one might “do obviousness” in discourse.

Discussion

Newspaper articles in the UK about wokeness and colonisation about the NT construct three discourses on heritage: (1) role as a custodian of the nation's heritage, (2) heritage as a place of refuge, (3) the aim to be apolitical. Within the data, similar points are made about EH as a heritage conservation organisation. Talk about the NT and EH involve constructions of the UK's heritage and how this presents the British nation as a whole through constructions of place identity. Talk about wokeness is used to discredit the actions of heritage organisations to include how heritage assets and their previous owners benefitted from colonialism in constructions of their past. In our case, as the negotiations over the meaning of national heritage assets – for present purposes – is being resisted, it is, rather, the claimed re-branding that is resisted. Arguments against British heritage institutions, then, were a form of ideological re-mystifying so that the uncomfortable racist past of British heritage sites would be left undiscussed.

The National Trust as a custodian of banal heritage

The positioning of the NT as a custodian of British heritage assets raises questions about whose heritage it is preserving. Newspaper articles presented the buildings being conserved as grand aristocratic estates reflecting the view that heritage organisations such as the NT and EH are caretakers for aristocratic heritage assets (Cannadine 1983). The positioning of wealthy individuals as extraordinary and psychologically superior (Carr et al. 2021) is challenged through the questioning of the origins of their wealth and behaviour. By questioning the moral standing of grand houses formerly owned by the aristocracy, the NT and EH are positioned as damaging the standing of their own portfolio of properties that it aims to preserve for the nation. Like flags being representative of banal nationalism (Billig 1995) the offerings of the NT and EH – such as grand houses, antique ceramics, and cream teas – offer a form of banal national heritage for the UK: a refuge away from the modern world and its political concerns. Discourses of heritage organisations and their assets use place identity to construct British national identity.

To tell a “mythical” story of the past requires the simplification of detail, and the omission and inclusion of detail is not random (Billig and Marinho 2017). This brings us to the topic of Britain's troubling history when it comes to colonialism and slavery. Whether it is a social practice of repression (Billig 1999), or motivated forgetting (Billig and Marinho 2017), is, in a sense, inconsequential. What matters is that the so-called “woke movement” has touched a nerve on a topic where certain events might be uncomfortable to talk about openly. They disturb the banality of heritage and suggest an alternate place identity for heritage properties, one where it is not possible to take

uncritical repose in the glowing comfort of one's national heritage and identity.

Heritage assets as a place of refuge from the modern world

The NT and EH are warranted as a refuge from the modern world through their historic performance of British history that offers visitors a place of sanctuary and a banal, benign, experience of nationalism. Talk about the NT's buildings as special uses a common place to support arguments against the recognition of colonisation within its properties. A similar common place can be found in talk about the superiority of the British Royal Family and arguments for tourism to the UK (Billig 1992). The construction of collective memories requires some discourses to be more dominant as the presentation of other people's different experiences is minimised (Tileagă 2013). Banal heritage offers a refuge from social change, and discourse about nostalgia draws upon conservative ideology about social order and class hierarchies (Billig 1992). By presenting the NT's estate as a refuge from the modern world, there is an opportunity to consider who is being offered refuge and welcomed into their spaces.

Arguments against the recognition of colonisation by heritage organisations can be seen to use similar strategies as found in talk about rationalising racism (e.g., Billig 1991) and by polarising and dividing groups within the debate (Sakki and Pettersson 2016). Thus, the positioning of historic buildings and grounds as a refuge from modern life challenges the promotion of access to venues owned by heritage organisations to people from racially minoritised groups and/or working class backgrounds. The inclusion of the colonial history of buildings in public displays as a threat to the UK's banal heritage and the role of the aristocracy questioning historic buildings position as a refuge. If a specific version of banal heritage is advocated by those who oppose the so-called woke movement, then the question to ask is whose interest does the current discourse of banal heritage serve?

Challenges to the National Trust's authenticity

Talk about heritage organisations, such as the NT and EH, involve the construction of the heritage of a nation and what can be warranted as an authentic version of this. The critique of these can be viewed as a response to the organisation deviating from its role in maintaining what we might call the authoritative heritage discourse of the UK. In the context of a social concern and the way it is spoken about, seeking to rebrand it into something more generic can be a means of discursively sterilising the original political point being made (Goodman, Tafi, and Coyle 2023).

Challenges to the NT's position as a custodian are rooted in the presentation of its development as a way for aristocratic families to manage inheritance tax burdens. Constructing the organisation as a tax avoidance scheme questions its caretaker role of the nation's heritage, particularly as talk about tax requires speakers to manage their accountability as tax avoidance is warranted as unfair (Carr, Goodman, and Jowett 2018). The positioning of NT and EH in articles as woke and left leaning challenged talk about their authenticity and the importance of reflecting the role of imperialism and slavery in the development of the UK. To avoid appearing prejudicial, articles construct the NT as woke to warrant the organisation as questioning the national narrative. The warranting of national heritage organisations as woke draws upon conservative ideology and the presentation of a "natural world order" as an everyday assumption. This positions banal heritage as the dominant heritage discourse and apolitical. However, this ignores how heritage is interpreted and negotiated over time (Tileagă 2013).

The public reaction to research about the origins of aristocratic wealth are presented as the result of a lack of education about this topic. This allows the NT's position to be negotiated to highlight the importance of educating the public as part of their role. The aims of the NT and EH to highlight links to colonisation within their properties were presented as an attack on the organisations' role as custodians of British heritage assets and the nation's history. Discourse about authenticity is questioned as heritage organisations are also covered and positioned as needing to be apolitical in their role. The exploration of media data such as newspapers provide an opportunity to explore how social issues and national policy are communicated to the public.

Limitations, strengths and recommendations for future research

We have opted to look at media representations around the topic of wokeness. While most contemporary political topics are heavily mediated (Tileagă, Demasi, and Burke 2020), what could be looked at in future research is how these heritage organisations communicate their politically controversial decisions, for example, by looking at their press releases. One significant strength of this research is that we have demonstrated how discussions around heritage and history play a part in banal nationalism (Billig 1995), and how discursively constructed versions of the past play a part in the current negotiations of the ideological meaning of said history (Tileagă 2009). Indeed, a version of history is a rhetorical accomplishment (Byford and Tileagă 2017), and we have demonstrated this in the case of heritage.

Future research could explore how the public construct the heritage assets of the NT and related organisations, and account for their activities in highlighting the role of colonisation in its historic houses. Additional research around exploring social movements and their place in Britain's national

identity would allow further understanding and appreciation of social movements, and how to plan for the appreciation and interpretation of the public and private realms so that all users can feel equal.

Conclusion

As identified in this research, the role of the nation's heritage is changing through social movements which impact the way the society appreciates the historic environment and how heritage is communicated to audiences. The NT and other heritage organisations are constructed as custodians of British national heritage in discourse about wokeness and colonisation and how we value and discuss the historic environment. Talk about organisations involves the negotiation of the UK's history and how this is embedded within British national identity when planners make decisions involving the public interest. Newspaper articles warrant the need for the NT to provide a banal heritage experience that offers visitors a refuge from the complexity of modern life. Opposing discourse calls for heritage experiences to offer authenticity to visitors and decision making around our public spaces acknowledging the role of colonialism and slavery with an aim of educating the public. Talk about wokeness is positioned within these opposing discourses as being representative of the role of colonialism and slavery within British history or a left-leaning ideological agenda that aims to revise the nation's history and remove an important refuge for the public.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Date	Headline	Newspaper
17/01/2021	Don't write off the National Trust. It's right to focus less on the countryside	<i>The Sunday Telegraph</i>
05/02/2021	WHAT MONSTROUS INGRATITUDE!	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
15/02/2021	The Guardian view on British history: we need to know	<i>The Guardian</i>
22/02/2021	Museums shouldn't skew our history, says minister	<i>The Times</i>
23/02/2021	Unions fear government wants museums to "airbrush" UK history	<i>The Guardian</i>
24/02/2021	Museums given policy on colonial heritage	<i>The Times</i>
03/03/2021	Put "counter memorials" next to statues linked to slavery, says Historic England chief	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
03/03/2021	"Counter memorials" suggested for statues	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
11/03/2021	National Trust report on slavery links did not break charity law, regulator says	<i>The Guardian</i>
12/03/2021	National Trust defies critics on colonialism Regulator clears charity after it suffers a backlash from members for report linking Churchill to slavery	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
25/03/2021	National Trust right to dig up slavery links, boss says	<i>The Times</i>
25/03/2021	Slavery report wasn't "woke", insists National Trust boss	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
03/04/2021	National Trust rank and file join forces to take on "woke" agenda	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
14/04/2021	National Trust orders volunteers to undergo diversity training "Everyday inclusion" course after lockdown is the same type offered by other organisations, says trust	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
21/04/2021	Jane Austen's tea drinking not under "interrogation", says museum	<i>The Guardian</i>
14/05/2021	Wokery a ridiculous term, says Trust boss	<i>The Times</i>
22/05/2021	Britain 's culture war is not really taking place	<i>Financial Times</i>
22/05/2021	Britain 's culture war is not what it seems	<i>i Paper</i>
22/05/2021	PLOT TO DEPOSE CHIEF OF "WOKE" NATIONAL TRUST	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
26/05/2021	Chairman of the National Trust Tim Parker has become a "woke" hero	<i>The Independent</i>
26/05/2021	National Trust's "woke" chief quits amid rebellion	<i>The Times</i>
26/05/2021	National Trust chief resigns amid "woke" revolt	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
26/05/2021	NATIONAL TRUST CHIEF QUILTS IN MEMBERS "WAR ON WOKE"	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
27/05/2021	Ousting right-on boss is a victory against wokery	<i>The Sun</i>
27/05/2021	HOW PEOPLE POWER TOPPLED THE NATIONAL TRUST'S PRINCE OF DARKNESS	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
27/05/2021	Fears National Trust could get more "woke" as head departs	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
27/05/2021	How did the National Trust end up here? The once-beloved institution should return to caring for the country's heritage, rather than denouncing it, says Harry Mount	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
27/05/2021	Critics of National Trust's "woke agenda" plot oustings	<i>The Times</i>
29/05/2021	Empire strikes back at National Trust Traditionalist rebels fear the organisation gives a distorted view of Britain 's past, reports Dominic Kennedy	<i>The Times</i>
30/05/2021	Have we finally reached the point of peak woke? A free speech law has been proposed to stop cancel culture. People have had enough The public's rejection of politically correct brainwashing at the National Trust, the BBC and Cambridge University suggests that common sense is making a return at last, argues Simon Heffer	<i>The Sunday Telegraph</i>
30/05/2021	National Trust rejects claim that chief quit because of campaign against "wokeness"	<i>The Observer</i>

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Date	Headline	Newspaper
06/06/2021	Hilary McGrady The National Trust director-general on ducks, wine and why we need to talk about slavery	<i>The Sunday Times</i>
06/06/2021	A terribly stately firefight The National Trust is more popular than ever but it is feeling the heat in a bitter battle over slavery, neglected restorations and dumbing down, says Josh Glancy	<i>The Sunday Times</i>
06/06/2021	English Heritage in balancing act over slavery links Charity bosses urge caution when listening to concerns of members of staff and charitable donors	<i>The Sunday Telegraph</i>
12/06/2021	The battle over Britain's history As statues are toppled and activists target symbols of slavery and colonialism, the government is taking an assertive new stance on cultural heritage – with museums and academics caught in the crossfire. By Alex Barker and Peter Foster Battle over Britain's history	<i>The Financial Times</i>
19/06/2021	GO WOKE, GO BROKE! Big business reaped the whirlwind when it boycotted GB News. But from Gillette razors to the Oscars, there's always a price to pay for caving in to the cancel culture fanatics	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
24/06/2021	DO YOUR SCHOOLWOKE HOW "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS ON STEROIDS" IS TAKING OVER OUR LIVES This must be stopped. When you are told what to say and think you just need to say: "No"	<i>The Sun</i>
04/09/2021	National Trust members put ban on "woke" badges to vote	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
01/10/2021	Insurgents to bring war on "wokeness" to National Trust AGM	<i>The Guardian</i>
02/10/2021	War on woke splits the National Trust	<i>The Times</i>
13/10/2021	National Trust warns of threat from "ideological campaign" waged against it	<i>The Guardian</i>
13/10/2021	The National Trust has needlessly provoked an "anti-woke" campaign	<i>The Guardian</i>
14/10/2021	The Guardian view on the National Trust: battleground for a culture war	<i>The Guardian</i>
14/10/2021	National Trust election candidate "not consulted" about "anti-woke" backing	<i>The Guardian</i>
16/10/2021	Can Rory Stewart rescue the "woke" National Trust? Rebels say ex-MP as chairman could help charity get back to its roots	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
16/10/2021	Cream teas at dawn: inside the war for the National Trust	<i>The Guardian</i>
24/10/2021	I WANT A NICE TEA TOWEL, NOT A THUMPING WOKE LECTURE	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
28/10/2021	Stately homes are a refuge not a battlefield The National Trust has lost sight of its mission to provide beauty, quiet and space from the fractious modern world	<i>The Times</i>
29/10/2021	Record numbers join National Trust despite claims of "anti-woke" critics	<i>The Guardian</i>
30/10/2021	National Trust sees off culture war rebellion in an AGM of discontent	<i>The Observer</i>
02/05/2021	WELCOME TO...COMMON SENSE	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
23/10/2021	The National Trust row is obscuring its core mission	<i>The Financial Times</i>
16/12/2021	National Trust picks new leader	<i>The Times</i>
03/01/2022	National Trust boss says she received death threats amid "woke" row	<i>The Guardian</i>
04/01/2022	National Trust boss reveals she has received death threats	<i>The Independent</i>
05/01/2022	NATIONAL TRUST BOSS STICKS TO GUNS IN "WOKE" ROW	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
04/02/2022	Tory MP sets up all-party group on National Trust without telling charity	<i>The Guardian</i>
22/03/2022	Who decides what's a "balanced" view of the British Empire? equalities minister Kemi Badenoch wants us to learn "positives", not just "negatives". It isn't that simple, says Sathnam Sanghera	<i>The Times</i>
14/05/2022	Wokery a ridiculous term, says National Trust boss	<i>The Times</i>
08/07/2022	New interpretations of history no more valid than traditional view, admits trust chief	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
08/07/2022	National Trust boss: Modern views cannot eclipse history	<i>The Times</i>
21/08/2022	Mount Stewart owns up to its colonial past in the wake of National Trust research project	<i>The Sunday Times</i>
07/09/2022	National Trust faces storm over backing of Pride	<i>The Times</i>

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Date	Headline	Newspaper
02/10/2022	Young activist fights to make National Trust's trendy agenda history Rebels plan to shake up institution at a crunch general meeting	<i>The Sunday Times</i>
15/10/2022	"The National Trust is skewing history so it is anti-British" Zewditu Gebreyohanes The 23-year-old leading the campaign against the politicisation of the conservation charity talks to Simon Heffer about wokery and dumbing down	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
31/10/2022	National Trust AGM set for fresh battle over culture wars	<i>The Guardian</i>
07/11/2022	Donors can hit woke universities where it hurts Letters to the Editor Money talks, and furious alumni are making their voices heard. It is only the beginning of the fightback	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
10/12/2022	"The arguments over National Trust wokery are great. We want to provoke debate about culture" Interview The charity's chairman defends its right to present new interpretations of history at its properties	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
22/12/2022	Western civilisation is surrendering to the woke totalitarian onslaught This year has given little reason to hope that the push to rewrite our history might soon be defeated	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
28/01/2023	Trust to sidestep "woke" rebellion in Newton event	<i>i</i>
23/02/2023	WE NEED A BRIT OF BALANCE Don't look back in anger call	<i>Daily Star</i>
21/05/2023	National Trust may give up artefacts	<i>The Times</i>
31/05/2023	National Trust 'must move with the times'	<i>The Daily Mail</i>
02/09/2023	National Trust "undermined by woke rows" Lord Sumption says that he hopes to "heal current divisions" as he seeks place on charity's council	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>
18/09/2023	NT accused of losing sight of mission with "anti-democratic" vote EXCLUSIVE	<i>The Express</i>
18/09/2023	National Trust reports record £179 m annual spend on conservation	<i>The Guardian</i>
20/09/2023	National Trust left counting the cost of political vanity	<i>The Times</i>
23/09/2023	Clandon fans flames of trust rebellion	<i>The Times</i>
24/11/23	Colonial past must be in mainstream of UK history, says new English Heritage chief	<i>The Guardian</i>