

## Does the UK still need a monarchy?

● **A live debate which covers quite a few aspects of the question and contains all the useful expressions you may need...** (and it will also train your ears to a variety of British accents 😊)

*Today presenter Mishal Husain was joined by a panel of guests in the BBC's Radio Theatre in Broadcasting House to look at the future of the Royal Family in 'The Today Debate: Do we need a Monarchy?' Joining her were Billy Bragg, the singer and songwriter; Juliet Samuel, a columnist for the Times; Polly Toynbee, a columnist at the Guardian; Charles Moore, former editor of the Telegraph and the Spectator, biographer of Margaret Thatcher and Jason Arday, an academic who works on inequality, race and education*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fjs1j8>

The audio file can also be found on Cahier de Prépa

### DOCUMENT 1 - King Charles is the monarch Britain needs right now

By Matthew d'Ancona, *The Washington Post*, May 2, 2023

If the past decade has an overarching lesson, it is that, in politics, culture and society, emotion is often more powerful than reason. The coronation on May 6 of King 5 Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort, will not resolve the daunting array of problems facing the citizens of the United Kingdom. But — if only for a weekend — it will make a great many of them feel much better.

The ceremony in Westminster Abbey — the site of 10 royal coronations since the 11th century — will be a ritual that, for a modern Group of Seven democracy, is almost unbelievably antiquated and full of flummery. It will involve three separate chairs for the king alone; two maces; four swords; extraordinarily elaborate robes and 15 a “shroud tunic” symbolizing purity before God; three crowns; and the anointment of the monarch by the Archbishop of Canterbury with holy oil (a part of the ceremony still considered too sacred to be televised).

The sheer irrationality of all this in the 21st century 20 is not lost on the British, who are busily griping about the pomp, cost and personal antics of the royal family. Only days before the coronation, the grievances of the king’s younger son, Prince Harry, and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, still fill the headlines (after much 25 debate, Harry is attending, but his wife is not). Opinion polls suggest that overall public support for the monarchy is declining — though it still exceeds 50 percent. There are threats of disruption by social justice activists of the coronation procession.

30 In all this, however, it is important to remember that, to adapt F. Scott Fitzgerald’s famous dictum, nations are

perfectly capable of holding two opposing ideas in their collective minds at the same time. The blockbuster success of “The Crown” has merely globalized the 35 centuries-old British tradition of satirizing and relishing the soap opera of the royal family. In 1953, when Charles’s mother, Queen Elizabeth II, was crowned, there was much grumbling about the cost.

Much more striking, however, is the sheer resilience 40 of the monarchy and its capacity to dodge extinction. It survived the abdication crisis of 1936, when Edward VIII renounced the crown so he could marry a divorced woman. It survived the trauma of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. And it shows every sign of 45 surviving the death in September of the queen, the nation’s longest-serving monarch, who, after 70 years on the throne, had become a deeply beloved figure.

It was thought by some that becoming king at age 73 would present Charles with potentially insuperable 50 challenges. In fact, the opposite has proved to be the case (at least so far). The frustrated, prickly middle-aged prince has morphed into a twinkly grandfather of the nation who is strikingly popular with the public.

Why so? First, because the king is a monarch whose 55 preoccupations and priorities fit the age in which he is to be crowned. His early-adopter passion for the environment and for measures to address climate change was prophetic. Founded in 1976, his youth charity, the Prince’s Trust, has helped more than 1 60 million young people. For decades, he has been a champion of housing that suits human beings rather than architectural theorists. And, while the Conservative

government wages its crude right-wing culture wars, he has been spending time with refugees and signaling his support for an unflinching assessment of the royal family's historical links with transatlantic slave trade.

Second: Consider the bleak landscape facing most Britons. Blotting out the sun is the undoubted failure of Brexit. Research by the London School of Economics has shown that Britain's secession from the European Union added nearly 6 billion pounds (about \$7.5 billion) to Britons' food bills in 2020 and 2021.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts that Britain is also set to be one of only two G-7 economies to shrink this year. Inflation is stuck in double digits, and the Bank of England has warned the public to get used to being "worse off."

Public services are buckling under the strain of underfunding and staff shortages and afflicted by a rolling series of strikes. To cap it all, trust in the political class is in the gutter. During 2022, Britain had no fewer

than three prime ministers and four chancellors of the exchequer. When voters most needed serious politicians, Westminster was the scene of scandal and tragicomic farce.

At such a moment, the monarchy acts as an emotional support institution. Its very antiquity is its appeal; its rootedness in the past is the whole point. In an age of pulverizing volatility and low national self-esteem, the coronation will embody a mystical sense of continuity and a spirit of permanence upon which the British are more dependent than they might care to admit.

The sight of the gilded coach drawn by horses through the center of London will give them permission to feel good about themselves and believe, somehow, in the greatness of their country. And, for one brief shining moment, as the rest of the world watches this extraordinary spectacle on their screens, it will all be true

## Document 2 - **For something so hollow, the royal family is astonishingly expensive**

[Polly Toynbee](#), *The Guardian*, Wed 5 Apr 2023

*The trouble with the monarchy is not that it is too powerful but that it is utterly useless, a worthless vacuum shrouded in ceremony*

"Not My King," say the yellow T-shirts of the anti-monarchists TV cameras may swerve around in the coronation crowds. But he is our king, willy-nilly, like it or not, as he and his family are our dependants. *The Guardian's* deep dive into the royal family's finances shows our monarchy costs a fortune, more than anyone else's in Europe.

The Borbones of Spain cost a mere £7.4m a year, while we pay our Windsors a very pricey £86m. And that's before we add in the roughly £40m a year in revenues from their Duchy estates – adding up to £1.2bn over the years. That's not much really, monarchists may claim. Out of £1tn in annual government spending, the royals' consumption of taxpayers money is a mere bagatelle, a fleabite.

If that's what the royals think, you might wonder why they are so exceptionally secretive about anything touching on their wealth and incomes. It may be because they think that most of their subjects would consider their incomes vast.

How big? Just £1m of the king's income would buy five AgeUK day centres, reopening ones shut by . Or it could train 250 early years educators for nurseries, says the Early Years Alliance. Just one of his millions would pay for 25,000 GP appointments, says the King's Fund. The annual public funding for the royals would pay for 30 hours of childcare per week for almost 13,000 three- and four-year-olds for a year, says the IFS. The king is paid more than the cost of all London's street lighting. That £1.2bn from the Duchies would pay for 30,000 nurses for a year. Money spent on the monarchy seems a lot or a little depending on whether you think one king is worth more than 4,000 teachers.

Protesters unfurled a banner on the spot in Westminster Abbey where the king will be crowned, reading: "Would you vote for him?" (...) A YouGov survey found that 40% of under-25s want the monarchy abolished. Though the crown stands on a solid 60% support, that's quite a steep falling off from 75% a decade ago.

The trouble with the monarchy is not that it is too powerful but that it is utterly useless. So much is spent on ceremonial trappings to disguise its inner nothingness. We could have commissioned a neverending soap opera of The Crown, like *The Truman Show*, inventing its own plotlines in a plywood set at a fraction of the cost. All ermine and no knickers is what we've got, anyway.



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King Charles III faces anti-monarchy protesters during a visit to Milton Keynes on 16 February. Photograph: Mark Cuthbert/UK Press/Getty Images

It's curious that many who were persuaded to vote for Brexit, at such a pernicious national cost, in order to reclaim "sovereignty" still seem willing as subjects to cede it without question to their sovereign. That royal prerogative is in turn handed to the prime minister in parliament as absolute power, barring a weak House of Lords.

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Boris Johnson exposed the lack of any brake to stop him breaking basic law. He ordered the Queen to let him prorogue parliament illegally, and she, unelected, had no power to stop him. (...) Elected presidents across Europe act as protectors of constitutions against such predations. Any look at the balances of power could hardly avoid examining the bizarre vacuum caused by a redundant monarch.

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Here comes the coronation in a few weeks. We have had a surfeit of royal folderol recently, with a jubilee, a funeral and a coronation all coming in less than 12 months. Guardian readers may not see the daily volumes of royal coverage in the rightwing press, splurging out reams of trivia and tripe, with pleasing pictures of the Princess of Wales. Stealing those scenes, has been the bad fairy, Prince Harry the Spare, delivering his truth.

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My truth is that we are a country too bewitched by a phantasmagoria of majesty that encourages a national self-deceit about our power and importance in the world. All that ceremonial grandeur incites the state of mind that misled half the country to believe Britain could rule the waves again, all alone and bravely Brexiteering away from our continent.

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Monarchy nurtures a conservatism of the heart, a feudal mindset, where patriotism becomes entangled with rightwing thinking. There is nothing unpatriotic about the left's thinking, just different values that it cherishes about the country. The present perverse incarnation of the Conservative party is encapsulated in the Telegraph's daily promotion of the monarchy, and the government's trashing of institutions that summon most national pride – the BBC, the NHS, universities, the arts and sports from the grassroots up. Our best heritage has nothing to do with inheritance. Empty heads that wear the hollow crown are symbols of some of our worst tendencies – the growing weight of nepotism, inequality, privilege and inherited wealth.

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Though 52% tell YouGov they are not interested in the coronation, why not enjoy a spectacle that's costing us all £100m? Just possibly, though, this time the Guardian's revelations about the high cost of our extravagant royals may grate a little more among so many struggling with unpayable bills. 834 words

### Document 3 - **It's the monarchy's humanity that gives it such power**

MADLINE GRANT, *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 February 2024

A cancer diagnosis is always a frightening moment; three words that nobody wants to hear, but statistically, half of us will during our lives – "you have cancer".

Understandably, the world's media have carried the news that these words have recently been said to one man. The King's cancer diagnosis is at once an ordinary and extraordinary thing. Yes, in this case, front pages have been changed, prayers will be said in churches and well-wishes uttered by heads of state, while constitutional protocol

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will lurk in the distance to be deployed if need be. But there will also be an anxious family, treatments that must be performed on the patient, and a frail human body in the midst of it all.

10 This seeming paradox, these contrasts, are at the heart of monarchy and its enduring power. The institution personalises the state, showing the constitution in its human form. It embodies public-facing virtues like strength, honour and duty – and wraps those up in an individual.

15 The King’s openness about his diagnosis is a departure from previous practice and will have an obvious impact. Men (especially, dare I say it, those of the King’s vintage) are famed for shunning medical attention – “it’ll get better on its own”, “I don’t want a lot of fuss” etc. In calling his malady by its proper name and avoiding euphemism, the King’s actions may encourage others to book their check-up or report suspicious symptoms. In this case, the personal – and it doesn’t get more personal than His Majesty’s diagnosis – has obvious public implications.

20 But there is a deeper point here, which perhaps explains one facet of the monarchy’s continued relevance. At the heart of the institution is not a piece of paper or a cabinet or governmental system, but one man and his family. It can therefore reflect the personal lives of millions across the country. Indeed, the swift turnaround of grief reflects an experience common in many households; a death in the family, soon followed by health complaints, a worrying diagnosis elsewhere.

25 Some dismiss this as “the Windsor soap opera”; but these are issues facing real people, too. All this puts a necessarily fragile human being at the heart of the state. Whereas republican systems may adopt some of the pomp and grandeur that we associate with royalty, they will struggle to replicate a constitution seen through the humanising lens of a family.

This mixture of vulnerability and transcendence is woven into the history of monarchy. Alongside the grandeur of the late Queen’s funeral ceremony, it was often the more mundane moments that captured the public imagination; the sight of Elizabeth II’s corgis and her fell pony, the piper’s lament as the coffin finally descended from view.

30 This isn’t, as some commentators have suggested, a recent response by the House of Windsor to a more sentimentalised public. This mixture of the personal and the constitutional has been a longstanding feature of the Crown. (...)

35 When so much divides us, there seems little in our common life that confers that same shared goodwill. While some will, inevitably, use any aspect of news about the Royal family to bemoan unfairness or inequality, the truth is that the vast majority of the country, republican or monarchist, will recognise this as something that speaks to a common humanity.

True, the King will receive world-class private hospital treatment that few can expect under the NHS. But neither princes nor paupers should be wished ill when they have cancer.

40 Those who would seek to make this a political moment fail to see the sad beauty that it embodies. Viewing the state in abstract terms is a dangerous thing and can lead people to commit very great evils. By contrast, the King’s illness reminds us that the state is composed of individuals, of humans, who experience all the ups and downs that a human life can bring. The Crown only has relevance when it’s on someone’s head.

45 There is a final reason why the King’s diagnosis may yet prove important. So often in moments of crisis, families reunite, jolted into a renewed appreciation of what really matters. Let us hope that Prince Harry’s return to the UK to see his father might be the beginning of a rapprochement. Because it is in moments of vulnerability that we don’t just realise how important monarchy is, but family, too. 724 words

## The Monarchy and the Media

### Document 4 - Transcript from *The Crown*

Created by Peter MORGAN | Season 3, Episode 4: “Bubbikins” | First aired: 17 November 2019

*The episode is set in 1969. For the very first time, the royal family has invited the BBC to film and broadcast a documentary about their everyday lives inside Buckingham Palace. Below is the transcript of two scenes discussing reactions to the documentary in the days after it was broadcast.*

[NEWSPAPER OFFICE. JOHN ARMSTRONG, A LEFT-WING JOURNALIST, READS OUT TO HIS COLLEAGUES THE ARTICLE HE WROTE IN REACTION TO THE DOCUMENTARY.]

JOHN ARMSTRONG – “Last night, the nation tuned in as one to watch a documentary that would restore the royal family to their rightful place at the heart of the nation’s affections. Sadly, that was not what they got. It’s hard to imagine what they were thinking, agreeing to open the doors to television cameras. That stripped of all ceremony and mystery, we would marvel at how normal they were, how remarkably like us. That watching them travel from castle to castle, palace to palace in yachts and airplanes we pay for, stalking on land they own, fishing on rivers they own, and cooking barbecues in forests they own, we would reflect on how tirelessly they toil, what good value for money they represent. I’m being moved to increase the amount of money we pay them!”

COLLEAGUE #1 – Louder, John! Don’t be shy! Come on! Let’s all hear it! Come on, John!

JOHN ARMSTRONG – “Even the most ardent monarchist must concede that the strongest piece of armor in the monarchy’s arsenal is its sense of mystery from which derives its air of majesty.”

COLLEAGUE #2 – Hear, hear!

JOHN ARMSTRONG – “The only thing awe-inspiring about this lot is the size of their over-inflated sense of self-entitlement...

[LAUGHTER FROM COLLEAGUES]

...and their ability to practice a line in small talk that would have life support patients reaching for the off switch.”

COLLEAGUE #3 – Well done, John!

[CLAPS AND CHEERS FROM COLLEAGUES]

[BUCKINGHAM PALACE. THE QUEEN RECEIVES PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON FOR THEIR WEEKLY AUDIENCE.]

HAROLD WILSON – Wonderful viewing figures. The highest for a factual documentary ever. And some lovely reviews in the newspapers this morning.

THE QUEEN – They were brutal.

HAROLD WILSON – None that I read. I like to think I understand television as well as anyone in the country. I owe my political life to it. And that’s because I’ve learned, over time, how to do it, how to make it work for me. Perhaps the royal family is not best suited to it. Television is good for normal people.

THE QUEEN – But that was the whole point: to show everyone that behind palace gates we are perfectly normal people.

HAROLD WILSON – No, ma’am, you’re not normal.

THE QUEEN – Aren’t we? We wake up in the morning, go to bed at night. We work, get tired, get colds. We have uncles that embarrass us, Christmases to endure. We are perfectly normal.

HAROLD WILSON – But people don’t consider you to be. And if I may say – and this is where it gets a little complicated –, they don’t want you to be normal.

THE QUEEN – Well, what do they want? Tell me. It’s all any of us want to know. What do you want from us?

HAROLD WILSON – Well, the truth is, we don’t know what we want, other than we want you to be ideal. An ideal.

THE QUEEN – No human being is ideal. Only God is ideal, which is why I’d favour the royal family being kept out of sight, out of mind, for our own survival and sanity. But the thing is we can’t be hidden away. We have to be in full view all the time. So what’s the answer? The best we’ve come up with so far is ritual and mystery because it keeps us hidden while still in plain sight. The smoke and the mirrors, the mystery and the protocol – it’s not there to keep us apart, it is there to keep us alive.

## Document 5 - **King Charles’s cancer diagnosis tests press team’s policy of openness**

Esther ADDLEY, *The Guardian*, 6 February 2024

The announcement, less than three weeks ago, that King Charles was seeking treatment for a benign enlarged prostate led to widespread praise for what seemed to be a new strategy of royal openness, after decades of discretion, and occasional concealment, regarding the health of Queen Elizabeth.

The king had personally wanted the details of his treatment to be made public, the palace let it be known – in part to encourage other men who might be experiencing symptoms to get checked out. Searches for the condition on the NHS website went up, and the public was assured he would be back at work soon.

But with the discovery, made during his prostate treatment, that the king had an unrelated cancer, that press approach abruptly changed.



A formal statement released at 6pm on Monday revealed that King Charles had cancer, had already begun treatment and was feeling “wholly positive”. But neither the type of cancer – nor, crucially, the king’s condition – were made public.

Given that he has stepped back from public-facing duties, his aides had no option but to be open – up to a point. Long gone are the days when the public can be entirely kept in the dark about the seriousness of a monarch’s illness, as was the case before the death of George VI in 1952, when even the royal family and the king himself were not told how unwell he was.

King Charles had “chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and in the hope it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer,” the palace said.

Any hopes of avoiding speculation were in vain. However, despite inevitable calls for the palace to be more open, there is no expectation that the king’s specific condition will be disclosed anytime soon. Neither the palace nor Downing Street would be offering a “running commentary” on his treatment, aides stressed on Tuesday.

Aside from the death of the queen, this is the most serious health announcement the palace has had to handle in the 70 years since George VI’s death, and a particular challenge for a relatively new press team.

It is led by Toby Andreae, a former senior *Daily Mail* editor who was appointed communications secretary immediately after the queen’s death and who has been steering what some see as a more open approach since Charles’s accession.

“The communication around the prostate problem and now this – it’s all [in] keeping with wanting to have a different style, and I think that people around the king have been planning for this change in style for quite a long time,” Simon Lewis, a former palace communications secretary, told the BBC.

“There were episodes when I was at the palace of members of the family being hospitalised and very little was said, and at that time, it seemed absolutely right. Now it doesn’t.”

Steve Double, a partner at crisis communications specialists Alder PR, said the decision to disclose the cancer diagnosis was “entirely sensible”.

“What it won’t do, of course, is to dampen down speculation about the form of cancer and at what stage it is at. I suspect the palace will remain steadfast on not disclosing that. The palace was robust in shooting down some lurid speculation by an overseas broadcaster about the Princess of Wales’s recent hospital stay, so it remains to be seen whether they will be as proactive regarding the king.”

Do we have a right to know the details of the king’s cancer? Some have pointed to the example of the US, where presidents routinely give details of their medical examinations. We know, for instance, that Joe Biden uses a CPAP machine at night to manage sleep apnea.

There is no legal obligation for them to do so, however, and the information may have limited value anyway. Donald Trump’s former personal physician, who in 2015 said he would be “the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency”, later said the then candidate had dictated the letter for him to sign.

To argue that the monarch has no right to any medical privacy would be unjust, according to Lewis. “I do think the palace has gone as far as it possibly could do in communicating this whilst protecting his privacy.”

## Document 6 - Monarchy and the media

UK in a changing Europe, 05 May 2023

*Ahead of the coronation of King Charles III, Roger Mosey examines the relationship between the monarchy and the media. This piece is taken from UK in a Changing Europe’s new report, ‘The British monarchy’, co-published with the Constitution Unit.*

In a message in February 2022 to mark her 70th anniversary on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II noted that it was her “sincere wish” that the former Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles would become known as Queen Consort

when her son Charles acceded to the throne. The media reaction to what could have been a controversial move showed the deferential and unquestioning tone that characterises much media reporting of royal matters. ‘Camilla WILL become Queen,’ proclaimed the *Daily Mail*, calling it a ‘surprise announcement’ that would see ‘the former royal mistress’ become the woman who constitutionally represents the nation. It was a surprise because the Palace had previously said that this would

not happen; Camilla would be known, they had said, as  
20 Princess Consort.

This significant change to the role of the King and his  
Queen was overwhelmingly treated by most of the  
media as a pleasing family touch by Elizabeth on a  
special occasion for her, and it even took *The Guardian*  
25 many paragraphs before they got to a commentator  
describing the announcement as ‘extraordinary’.  
Debates on broadcast media were vanishingly few,  
though Jack Royston – royal correspondent for  
Newsweek – said on ITV’s Good Morning Britain that  
30 “the public don’t want it. The numbers are really clear.”  
The programme’s presenter said that their audience  
response supported that.

The long-term goal of Charles and his courtiers to  
secure acceptance for Camilla is a perfectly  
35 understandable human wish, but it has not been  
achieved by an open debate facilitated by the media  
about the monarchy. In October 2022, *Tatler* reported  
that even the word ‘consort’ was, as they put it, ‘to be  
quietly dropped’ from Camilla’s title. Yet the instinct of  
40 many journalists is to present this as the latest twist in a  
high-quality soap opera rather than about the way we as  
citizens – or maybe ‘subjects’ – are governed. There are  
some exceptions to the royal conformists: a *Guardian*  
journalist fought a lengthy battle to uncover Charles’s  
45 interventionist memos to ministers, and *The Sunday*  
*Times* exposed bags of cash being handed over by  
questionable donors.

However, it is overwhelmingly what we might call ‘The  
Crown’ narrative that wins out. The real-life drama of  
50 the Windsors delivered some of its most compelling  
episodes when the Duke and Duchess of Sussex left the  
United Kingdom for their new life in North America,  
via Oprah Winfrey and Netflix.

There were high viewing figures in the UK and record  
55 book sales. This points to the greatest attraction of the  
Royal Family for newspapers, radio, television and the  
rest: they are box office. Most of us avidly consume the  
gossip. The late Queen is reported to have said “I have  
to be seen to be believed” and now that can be achieved  
60 by internet clickbait more effectively than by a royal  
visit to Barrow. This can of course be hurtful to the  
humans at the centre of the story: Harry and Meghan  
seem to offer an example of not being able to live with  
– or without – it.

65 It would be a mistake to see the Royal Family as neutral  
players here. They, naturally, want to preserve the  
institution. To support that, they have a large team of  
professional media advisers and have used high-profile  
consultants on the trickiest assignments. Indeed, Prince  
70 Harry’s central allegation is that he was sacrificed by

‘the machine’ to bolster others. When a significant  
death occurs, there is a media plan. The tributes are  
filtered out: first from the then Prince of Wales, and a  
day later the Princess Royal’s words about her late  
75 father the Duke of Edinburgh were posted by the Palace  
on Instagram. Princess Eugenie brought up the rear.

The Royal household can be vigorous in defending its  
interests. The BBC lost its exclusive production rights  
on the Queen’s Christmas broadcast when it was  
80 thought to have displeased the Royal Family in the  
1990s. I was editor of the Today programme on Radio  
4 between 1993 and 1996, when the chairman of the  
BBC was Marmaduke Hussey – spouse of Lady Susan  
Hussey, who was a lady-in-waiting. By whatever route,  
85 the displeasure of the Palace at two of our royal items –  
I was told that Hussey wanted action taken against me  
personally – was made known. Happily, the  
management ignored the chairman. A few years later, as  
head of television news, I had a lovely, civilised drink  
90 with a courtier who asked me to replace one of the  
journalists assigned to a royal visit because of the  
dislike for them “at the very top”. We did not comply.  
The broadcaster David Dimbleby summed up the  
continuing tension in comments at the Henley Literary  
95 Festival in October 2022. He told how the Palace sought  
to control every aspect of the televised funeral of the  
Queen: “There was this complete list of things that no  
broadcaster could show because the copyright belongs  
to Buckingham Palace. I think that’s wrong, just wrong.  
100 It’s just interesting how tightly controlled monarchy is.”  
He went on to list items that most journalists rarely  
challenge, such as the royal ability to change tax  
legislation or avoid capital gains tax on the Duchy of  
Cornwall. After the Queen’s death, there was very little  
105 coverage of the constitutional issues raised by the  
transition to a new monarch; only Channel 4 ran a peak-  
time programme. When a correspondent tried to raise  
questions in a news report, he was criticised by  
politicians. The Conservative Scottish Secretary Alister  
110 Jack said “the BBC should really not be introducing the  
independence debate into the Queen’s death. There’s no  
link.” That is not what David Cameron had said about  
the Queen’s intervention in the 2014 referendum  
campaign.

115 This fits into a pattern in which the media are much  
more interested in personalities than they are in what  
they see as dreary process stories. I and others have  
charted the risk that trivia overwhelms what really  
matters. With the Royal Family the characters are  
120 particularly vivid and the narrative is sometimes  
irresistible. But they represent our country’s  
government too and cement our national hierarchy and

define our global image. It is hard to contend that the media has lived up to its role of scrutiny here, which is

service organisations – risks an injustice to the millions of people who dissent from the monarchy.

125 both a journalistic failing and – in the case of the public By **Roger Mosey**, *Master of Selwyn College Cambridge and former Editorial Director, BBC.*

*This piece is one in a series of articles taken from UK in a Changing Europe's new report, 'The British monarchy', co-published with the Constitution Unit.*

## Document 7 - What to Know About 'Scoop' and Prince Andrew's Explosive TV Interview

A new Netflix film dramatizes the 2019 BBC conversation that led to the royal stepping back from public life.



The front pages of several newspapers headlining the scandal surrounding Prince Andrew, in November 2019. Credit...Associated Press

By Simran Hans, *The New York Times*, April 4, 2024 Updated April 5, 2024

When Prince Andrew, Queen Elizabeth II's second son, agreed to be interviewed on the BBC in November 2019, he likely didn't expect it would one day inspire a 5 feature film. But "Scoop," which comes to Netflix on Friday, follows a TV musical and a documentary in depicting the 58-minute interview and its fallout. (Amazon is also producing an upcoming limited series.) In the explosive conversation, Prince Andrew discussed 10 his friendship with the financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, and denied allegations that he had sex with a 17-year-old girl. Viewers were appalled by his comments, and British and international news media characterized 15 the appearance as a PR disaster. In the following days, Prince Andrew announced he would step back from public life.

Though the interview was conducted by the journalist Emily Maitlis, "Scoop" emphasizes the work of Sam 20 McAlister, the producer who secured it. The Netflix film is based on McAlister's memoir, "Scoops: Behind the Scenes of the BBC's Most Shocking Interviews," which was published in 2022.

Here's what else to know about the interview and its 25 fallout.

**Why did the interview take place?**

When Maitlis asked Prince Andrew on-camera why it was the right time to "speak out" and give a rare public interview, he replied: "Because there is no good time to 30 talk about Mr. Epstein and all things associated."

By November 2019, Prince Andrew was widely acknowledged as one of Epstein's friends, with whom he was known to have vacationed and partied. In a 2015 civil case, 35 Virginia Roberts Giuffre accused Epstein of forcing her to have sexual relations with Prince Andrew when she was 17. Buckingham Palace denied the accusation. McAlister had been talking to Prince Andrew's team about the prince appearing on "Newsnight," an 40 important BBC news program, for more than a year. In October 2018, Prince Andrew's team suggested to McAlister that he might discuss his networking scheme for entrepreneurs, Pitch@Palace, on the show. She declined, later saying that "a puff piece" wasn't the sort 45 of story "Newsnight" would run.

According to McAlister, she met in May 2019 with, Amanda Thirsk, Prince Andrew's private secretary at the time, to discuss a more substantial interview. Thirsk had one condition: There could be no questions about 50 Epstein.

But in August 2019, Epstein died by suicide in prison while awaiting a sex-trafficking trial, and McAlister and



Thirsk began discussing the need for Prince Andrew to explain the friendship.

### 55 What is 'Newsnight'?

"Newsnight" has been running on the BBC since 1980, and incorporates investigative reporting with studio discussions about news and current affairs.

Its best known presenter is Jeremy Paxman, who hosted 60 the show from 1989-2014, and was known for his combative interview style. Maitlis became the show's lead presenter in 2019.

In 2023, the BBC announced that Newsnight would lose its dedicated reporting team, and the show would 65 become "a debate, discussion and interview program."

On social media, Maitlis wrote: "Could the Prince Andrew interview have happened in this iteration of 'Newsnight?' Of course not."

### Who are Sam McAlister and Emily Maitlis?

70 McAlister worked as a criminal lawyer before spending 10 years as an interview producer and guest booker for "Newsnight." She took a buyout from the BBC in 2021.

In her memoir, published the following year, she wrote that her strength was "persuading reluctant people to do 75 things." She is an executive producer of "Scoop."

Maitlis is a journalist and broadcaster who joined the BBC in 2001, and became one of the corporation's most well-known faces — and one of its highest paid too, 80 according to a BBC report. She left in 2022, and currently co-hosts the current affairs podcast "The News Agents."

Image

Maitlis is also an executive producer on an upcoming 85 three-part series dramatizing the Prince Andrew interview for Amazon Studios. Called "A Very Royal Scandal," it stars Ruth Wilson as Maitlis, Michael Sheen as Prince Andrew and Joanna Scanlan as Thirsk.

### Why was the interview so explosive?

90 Instead of distancing himself from Epstein in the interview, Prince Andrew said he didn't regret their friendship because it led to "opportunities" that were "actually very useful."

In December 2010, after Epstein had served time for 95 soliciting a minor for prostitution, he was photographed

in Central Park with Prince Andrew, who admitted he had stayed at Epstein's Upper East Side mansion for several days because "it was a convenient place to stay."

When Maitlis asked about the many underage girls 100 photographed leaving the house, Prince Andrew said: "As far as I was aware, they were staff."

Then Maitlis brought up a photograph of Prince Andrew with his arm around the waist of Giuffre, the woman who accused him. The prince replied, "That's me, but 105 whether that's my hand ... I have simply no recollection of the photograph ever being taken."

The alibis he provided when asked about Giuffre's claims were mocked by the press and viewers. He couldn't have sweated profusely while dancing with 110 Giuffre at a London nightclub as she claimed, he said, because on that day, he had taken his daughter, Princess Beatrice, to a pizza restaurant. He also "didn't sweat at the time" because of a "peculiar medical condition," he added.

115

### What was the fallout?

For days after, Prince Andrew became a national figure of fun in Britain, but there was a serious side to the reaction, too. Lisa Bloom, a lawyer who represented 120 five of Epstein's victims, described Prince Andrew as "utterly lacking in compassion."

Soon, Prince Andrew announced he was stepping back from his public duties as a member of the royal family.

125 In August 2021, Giuffre filed a lawsuit against Prince Andrew, accusing him of rape. In January 2022, unsealed court documents revealed that Epstein had paid Giuffre a settlement of \$500,000 in 2009 that prevented her from making further claims against his 130 associates, but not Prince Andrew.

The royal was subsequently stripped of his military titles and the right to be referred to as "His Royal Highness." In February 2022, the lawsuit was settled, with Prince Andrew paying Giuffre an undisclosed 135 amount and agreeing to make "a substantial donation" to a charity "in support of victims' rights."

## The King – The Union – The Commonwealth

Document 8 - **Elizabeth bound our nation. Without her, will there even be a UK to reign over?**

Jonathan Freedland, *The Guardian*, Mon 19 Sep 2022

*She was a priceless diplomatic asset and spoke with the moral weight of the wartime generation. Now we must confront the future without her*

In death, as in life, all eyes were on her. Inside the same abbey where she was crowned nearly seven decades ago, there stood, this time, not a hesitant young woman dressed to dazzle, but a small coffin. Still, in 2022 as in 1953, it was impossible to look away. In a sea of dark suits, mostly pale faces and much grey hair, it was the coffin

5 that provided the colour and chief spectacle: the reds and yellows of the royal standard, the polished gold of the orb and sceptre and, resting on a purple cushion, the sparkling diamonds and pristine sapphire of the crown. (...)

We knew already that Britain, or more precisely the Palace, was without rival when it came to the business of pageant and ceremony. The choreography was perfect, every footstep of every red-tunicked guardsman synchronised – even those of the pallbearers carrying their sorrowful load up the steep steps of St George’s Chapel, Windsor – so that the TV pictures beamed around the world were gorgeous, no matter the angle. (...)

10 Whether it came then, or when the military standards dipped as the procession passed the Cenotaph, or when those lining the A30 tossed flowers on to the royal hearse, or when TV viewers saw the orb, sceptre and crown removed from the coffin before it was lowered into the chapel vault at Windsor – whenever it came, that moment brought with it the same, if seldom voiced question: what exactly were we burying?

15 One answer was suggested by the presence in Westminster Abbey of so many world leaders, many of them agreeing to slum it and travel by coach. Few would claim they did that out of respect for the office of British head of state: rather, they came to London out of a very specific admiration for Elizabeth II. She was a priceless diplomatic asset for Britain. Even a US president could be wooed by the offer of tea with the Queen.

20 Somehow she pulled off the illusion, seeming the figurehead of a great power, wearer of what we were reminded is still the “imperial state crown” – even when there’s no empire. She pulled off that trick, seeming a plausible successor to Victoria, even to the first Queen Elizabeth. It would be bold to predict that King Charles will do the same.

25 She was a political asset closer to home too. Consider the symbolic power of her handshake with Sinn Féin’s Martin McGuinness or the impact of her advice to Scottish voters to “think very carefully” before the independence referendum of 2014. Was that impact down to the office she held or who she was, the gravitas she had acquired over a reign that had endured so long that her first prime minister was Winston Churchill?

That suggests one more thing that was interred in Windsor. Elizabeth was the last human link in public life to the second world war, the foundational event of modern Britain. Our relationship with that epic event becomes more remote now, a matter of history rather than living memory. Along with Elizabeth, we may have buried the postwar era.

30 We will certainly no longer have a head of state who speaks with the moral weight of the wartime generation. That poses a challenge to the monarchy itself, now devoid of what had been its most powerful argument. Much has been said in recent days about the deep, even mystical connection between the people and their sovereign, one that seems rooted in a Britain, or perhaps an England, that goes back a thousand years. But again the question looms: was that bond with the institution of monarchy, or with Elizabeth herself? If it was chiefly the latter, will  
35 some of the irrationalities, unfairnesses and costs of a hereditary monarchy now press on the public mind in a way they did not while she lived?

40 Most profound of all is the question contained within all the others. Is it possible that in the Windsor vault now lies buried the person who, more than any other, served to cohere these islands? The last 10 days have been a holiday from the usual political polarisation: admiration for the Queen was one of the few things most people could agree on. It’s telling that the new king made such early visits to Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. His mother was part of the glue that bound together the union. If that turns out to have been the magic of Elizabeth, rather than the crown, then it’s not clear how long there will be a United Kingdom for Charles to reign over.

45 Even in families that are not royal, funerals serve as healing events, to be sure – but they can also see the eruption of arguments long postponed. In burying its matriarch, Britain may at last have to confront what has laid buried for so long (808 words).

Document 9 - VIDEO –

**Can the British Commonwealth survive without Queen Elizabeth? | Focus on Europe**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM\\_tv-gLpbs&ab\\_channel=DWNNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM_tv-gLpbs&ab_channel=DWNNews)

King Charles III may be on the cusp of a major debate about the monarchy, slavery and reparations at a time when a disconnect with young people poses the biggest threat to his reign.

Caribbean nations are reportedly planning to appeal directly to the British monarchy for reparations and an apology for slavery, bypassing the government, in what would be a new strategy.

5 Lawyer Arley Gill, chair of Grenada's Reparations Commission, told U.K. newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*: "We are hoping that King Charles will revisit the issue of reparations and make a more-profound statement beginning with an apology, and that he would make resources from the royal family available for reparative justice. He should make some money available." "We are not saying that he should starve himself and his family, and we are not asking for trinkets," Gill added. "But we believe we can sit around a table and discuss what can be made available for reparative justice."

10 Jamaica's Culture Minister Olivia "Babsy" Grange has also talked about petitioning the British monarchy directly as far back as 2021. In June 2023, the move was being finalized. Grange would have the support of vocal protesters who drew the world's attention during a visit to the country by Prince William and Kate Middleton in March 2022. Professor Rosalea Hamilton, a Jamaican academic and campaigner who helped organize the protests, told *Newsweek*:  
15 "All of these channels should be explored. I think there is no question of the debt that's owed, and it's well established now. The only question is when and the terms of the repayment. I don't think the British royal family can run away from it indefinitely," Hamilton added.

Charles and William have both condemned slavery before but have always stopped short of an apology, in line with the official position of the U.K. government.

20 However, the stance is becoming more difficult to justify in 2023 after a series of events created new momentum behind calls for reparations.

In July, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands apologized for slavery while adding that not all of the country's population would support him. It showed that royals can take individual action, even when it is controversial, and continue to represent their people. Quoted in U.K. newspaper *The Guardian*, Willem-Alexander  
25 said: "On this day that we remember the Dutch history of slavery, I ask forgiveness for this crime against humanity. As your king and as a member of the government, I make this apology myself. And I feel the weight of the words in my heart and my soul," the Dutch king added.

In March, former BBC journalist and reparations campaigner Laura Trevelyan and her family agreed to donate more than £100,000 [\$125,000] to education projects in Grenada. This money acted as reparations for her family's  
30 historic role in slavery in the Caribbean country.

Judge Patrick Robinson, of the International Court of Justice, part of the U.N., said in August that Britain cannot ignore its colonial past for ever: "I believe that the United Kingdom will not be able to resist this movement towards the payment of reparations: it is required by history and it is required by law."

35 Robinson presided over the trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević, for war crimes and genocide. If the judge is correct about Britain, then the royal family members will have a limited window in which to get themselves on the right side of history.

If the king were to get there first, then it could represent a PR coup for the British monarchy after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's Oprah Winfrey interview triggered a major debate about the royals and racism.

40 However, if Charles leaves it too late and Britain is cajoled into paying out against its will, then the royals will appear as though they were unwilling to accept justice and were rooted in the past.

The issue is particularly problematic for Charles because of the way it intersects with another slow-building crisis—his difficult relationship with Generation Z Britons. The U.K.'s 18- to 24-year-olds predominantly oppose Charles, with 52 percent viewing him negatively and 28 percent viewing him positively, according to a YouGov poll of 212 Gen Z adults between August 26 and 28. And in May, 51 percent of U.K. 18- to 24-year-olds supported the  
45 royal family paying reparations compared to 22 percent who opposed the move, a separate YouGov survey showed. If those respondents were typical across the generations, then Charles' job might be more straightforward. However, any move to create a reparations system would likely be controversial among older Brits, with 60 percent of over 65-year-olds against the move and 19 percent supporting it.

50 Vocal opposition would also likely come from the nation's media, including high-profile commentators such as Piers Morgan. He is already on record as opposing the notion that the king should take responsibility for the actions of past monarchs.

The king has, through Historic Royal Palaces, an independent charity that manages crown property, backed research into "the links between the British monarchy and the transatlantic slave trade during the late 17th and 18th centuries," a spokesperson told *The Guardian* in April.

55 However, even once the research is published, there remain questions on what to do about any links uncovered and whether they should pave the way for reparations.

And if Charles ignores young people and simply hopes that Gen Z change their views as they get older, then he takes a significant gamble. Because if today's younger generation retain their growing opposition to Charles, the monarchy and the royal family's stance on slavery, then in 10 or 20 years' time, they may make up a far-greater portion of British society.

60 And if the disconnect has not been resolved by then, the British Royal Family may find it has a bigger problem on its hands than Harry's memoir.

## Links with slavery

### ● A podcast from the Guardian's Cost of the crown series

#### Today in Focus, The Cost of the Crown part 3: the hidden history of the monarchy and slavery

5 While other reporters in the Guardian investigations team have travelled the country looking at horses, jewels and artworks to help uncover the royal family's hidden wealth, for his part in the Cost of the crown project David Conn looked much further back in time.

With the historian Brooke Newman, he has been digging into the evidence that shows the British monarchy's links with transatlantic slavery. What emerges is a newly surfaced document showing a 17th-century transaction: the transfer of £1,000 worth of shares in the Royal African Company to King William III.

10 It then emerged that direct ancestors of King Charles III and the royal family had bought and exploited enslaved people on tobacco plantations in Virginia, according to new research shared with the Guardian by the playwright Desirée Baptiste.

A spokesperson for the palace told us that the king would support a study into the links between the British monarchy and transatlantic slave trade by giving access to the royal archives and the royal collection. So far from the British state, there have been expressions of sorrow and a recognition of the horror of slavery, but no formal apology.

15 <https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2023/may/03/cost-of-the-crown-part-3-hidden-history-monarchy-slavery-podcast>

### ● A video report from CBC News King Charles backs research in monarchy's slavery ties

20 For the first time, Buckingham Palace publicly expressed support for research into the Crown's connection to the transatlantic slave trade, including how much the monarchy profited from it. King Charles has even given researchers access to archives to dig into the historic links.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAGyCyMi-tA&ab\\_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAGyCyMi-tA&ab_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational)

### ● British monarchy slavery link study supported by King Charles - BBC News

25 Buckingham Palace said that it is cooperating with an independent study exploring the relationship between the British monarchy and the slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Palace said King Charles III takes the issue "profoundly seriously". Buckingham Palace is granting researchers from the University of Manchester in the UK full access to the Royal Archives and the Royal Collection. The study, a PhD project by historian Camilla de Koning, is expected to be completed in 2026.

30 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5SApddSRwU&ab\\_channel=BBCNews](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5SApddSRwU&ab_channel=BBCNews)

*Whether through a hard break or a soft fade in ties, nations that have kept the British monarch as their head of state are moving toward separation.*

**The New York Times**, Damien Cave, Reporting from Sydney, Australia, May 5, 2023

The era of warm, wave-and-smile relations between the British monarchy and its distant realms has come to an end. Many of the former colonies that still formally swear allegiance to King Charles III are accelerating efforts to cut ties with the crown and demanding restitution and a deeper reckoning with the empire that the royal family has come to represent.

Jamaica is moving rapidly toward a referendum that would remove King Charles as the nation's head of state, with a reform committee meeting regularly on the verdant grounds where colonial rulers and slave owners once lived. Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Bahamas and nearly every other country with similar systems of constitutional monarchy have also signaled support for becoming republics completely independent of Britain in the years to come.

The chorus of calls for British apologies, reparations and repatriation — of everything from India's Kohinoor diamond to sculptures from Benin and Easter Island — has also grown louder, placing the new king in a vexing position. Charles represents nearly 1,000 years of unbroken royal lineage; he also now stands on a volatile fault line between Britain, where much of that history tends to be romanticized, and a group of forthright former colonies demanding that he confront the harsh realities of his country's imperial past. "There is a growing gap between Britain's perception of its own empire and how it's perceived everywhere else," said William Dalrymple, a prominent historian of British India. "And that gap keeps growing."

For countries still constitutionally joined to the crown, Charles's coronation arrived with little fanfare, and some cringing discomfort.

These nations are but a remnant. In the wave of decolonization that followed World War II, dozens of independent countries climbed out from under British rule, including India, Pakistan and Nigeria. During Elizabeth's seven-decade reign, which began in 1952, 17 former colonies left the monarchy's embrace to become republics — in most cases, with a president replacing the queen as head of state, usually in the ceremonial role previously played by the monarch or with stronger executive powers.

The 14 nations yet to do so stretch from Australia and Papua New Guinea to Canada and Jamaica. In some

places that call the new 74-year-old sovereign their king, like the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, there seems to be little interest in severing royal bonds. Oaths of allegiance have already been switched from queen to king in the courtrooms of remote capitals where wigs are still worn as if in 1680s London.

But for many royal subjects in faraway places, words like "his majesty" and "royal" — as in the Royal Australian Air Force — roll less easily off the tongue now that Britain is less dominant on the global stage, and now that the monarch is no longer Queen Elizabeth II, who often seemed as irreplaceable as Big Ben.

A few governments have already endorsed a soft fade. Quebec passed a law in December that made the oath of allegiance to the king optional for lawmakers. Australia also recently announced that its new five-dollar note would replace the portrait of Elizabeth not with Charles but with imagery celebrating the country's Indigenous heritage.

But for critics of monarchy and empire, these are baby steps when bold leaps are needed.

Nova Peris, an Aboriginal Australian Olympian and former politician who is a leader of the Australian Republic Movement, which aims to replace the British monarch with an Australian head of state, is one of many calling for a deeper reckoning with the past.

English settlers justified seizing Australia by declaring it "terra nullius" — a Latin term for "land belonging to no one." It was a slur used to justify dispossession, and the impact still lingers. No treaty has ever been signed between the Australian government and Aboriginal nations.

Later this year, Australians will vote on a referendum that would give Indigenous Australians an advisory role in policies affecting their communities. And polls show that many hope a vote on becoming a republic will be next, arguing it would tilt the nation more toward its neighbors in Asia and help unify Australia's increasingly multicultural population.

"Monarchy is all about entrenched privilege, about rule by kings and queens over and above the Australian people," Ms. Peris said. "It has no place in a democracy."

In Jamaica, the process of separation from "Mother England" is further along, and more imbued with



demands for restitution. The Caribbean island was a center of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; Jamaican leaders began calling for reparations from Britain a few years ago, along with many other countries in the 95 region. After Queen Elizabeth died in September, Jamaica's prime minister announced that his government would seek to change the constitution and make Jamaica a republic.

In March, a committee of lawmakers and 100 international experts started gathering in Kingston to work out the details.

Richard Albert, a committee member and the director of constitutional studies at the University of Texas at Austin, said that at the first meeting, the gravity of the 105 moment clarified the challenges ahead. The group now meets regularly to discuss what question to ask voters in the referendum, what role the Jamaican head of state would play, and what other changes might follow becoming a republic.

110 "There's a sense of national duty and pride," Mr. Albert said. "It's the idea that the country wants to exercise self-determination to celebrate its cultural heritage, and to plant a flag to say: We are an independent sovereign state."

115 Many Jamaicans have said they hope becoming a republic would lead to broader changes, with schools, courts and other institutions stepping away from quiet respect for British traditions and instead including more candid accounts of crimes committed by colonizers 120 swearing loyalty to the British crown.

On the campus of the University of the West Indies on a recent afternoon, many students described Charles as an unknown, distant figure — almost a cardboard cutout from the past. "The monarchy is something that 125 should just stay in England," said Tamoy Campbell, who is studying law. "For us to move forward as a nation, it's important that we break away from those ties, to charter our own destiny, our future and our goals."

130 Charles has said he does not object to such pursuits. Last June, at a meeting of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 nations, almost all of which were once under British rule, he declared that any constitutional connection to his family "depends solely on the decision 135 of each member state."

He also noted that the group's roots "go deep into the most painful period of our history."

Last month, in a statement from Buckingham Palace, he signaled support for deeper research into the royal 140 family's connections to slavery through the royal archives. Historians welcomed the move.

"That's quite a new step because the archives are private archives," said Robert Aldrich, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Sydney and co- 145 author of "The Ends of Empire: The Last Colonies Revisited."

But how much can or will the king actually rectify?

"He's constrained," Professor Aldrich said. "He must say and do only what is approved by the British 150 government."

British laws bar state-owned institutions from returning plundered artifacts. Even an apology for slavery would raise questions about whether the government, the royal family or businesses owed compensation, and it may be 155 politically impossible. The families of some Kenyan victims of colonial abuse are instead trying to sue the British government in the European Court of Human Rights.

"There is still a widespread sense of pride in Britain 160 about an empire that is perceived as being a good and progressive force that brought railways, cricket and democracy to half the world," Mr. Dalrymple said. "And there's very little awareness in Britain of the pile of skulls over which that was rolled." But there are hints 165 of a shift. Books critical of British rule, such as "Empireland" by Sathnam Sanghera, a British journalist born to Indian Punjabi parents, have become best-sellers. Mr. Dalrymple's book "The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company" will 170 soon become a big-budget television series that he has compared to "Game of Thrones."

Image



*Service members representing Commonwealth nations 175 rehearsing for the king's coronation. Credit...Rob Pinney/Getty Images*

For Charles, that means the realms he rules over may all soon become even more engaged with a sharper version of the history his family helped shape. And with 180 that, his reign may be judged more critically than his mother's ever was — by British elites who believe much of their wealth came from their benign civilizing of a grateful world, and by former colonies that bear the

scars of imperial violence and want their loot and 185 patrimony returned.

“There is friction now in a way that there simply wasn’t as recently as five or 10 years ago,” Mr. Dalrymple said. “Within Britain, there’s a whole lot of

stuff that we don’t know and that we haven’t come to 190 terms with.”

*Camille Williams contributed reporting from Kingston, Jamaica.*

### Here are three examples

**Australia:** <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/04/commonwealth-indigenous-leaders-demand-apology-from-the-king-for-effects-of-colonisation> (See also the two explainers on the CdP website)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/australia-king-charles-referendum-albanese-republic-b2475117.html>

**Jamaica:** [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/04/charles-is-king-but-the-monarchy-may-soon-be-on-its-way-out-of-jamaica?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/04/charles-is-king-but-the-monarchy-may-soon-be-on-its-way-out-of-jamaica?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other)

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/18/king-jamaica-republic-barbados-prime-minister>

**Canada : Why Ditching the Monarchy is almost nearly impossible, CBC News**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdoTMuxYjTI&ab\\_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdoTMuxYjTI&ab_channel=CBCNews%3ATheNational)

## The King’s Portrait

### Document 12 - A Shock of Red for a Royal Portrait

By Vanessa Friedman, *The New York Times*, May 15, 2024

Royal portraits, as a rule, tend to be fairly staid, predictable affairs. Full of symbolism, sure, but generally symbolism of the traditional, establishment kind: symbols of state, of office, of pomp and lineage.

Which is why the new official portrait of King Charles III by Jonathan Yeo, the first since the king’s coronation, has created such a controversy.

5 A larger-than-life (7.5 foot-by-5.5 foot) canvas, the portrait shows the king standing in his Welsh Guards uniform, hands on the hilt of his sword, a half-smile on his face, with a butterfly hovering just over his right shoulder. His entire body is bathed in a sea of crimson, so his face appears to be floating.

10 Though the butterfly was apparently the key piece of semiology — meant, Mr. Yeo told the BBC, to represent Charles’s metamorphosis from prince to sovereign and his longstanding love of the environment — it was the painting’s primary color that almost instantaneously gave new meaning to the idea of “seeing red.” It was practically begging for interpretation.

“To me it gives the message the monarchy is going up in flames or the king is burning in hell,” one commentator wrote under the royal family’s Instagram post when the portrait was unveiled.

15 “It looks like he’s bathing in blood,” another wrote. Someone else raised the idea of “colonial bloodshed.” There were comparisons to the devil. And so on. There was even a mention of the Tampax affair, a reference to an infamous comment by Charles revealed when his phone was hacked during the demise of his marriage to Diana, Princess of Wales.

It turns out that red is a trigger color for almost everyone — especially given the somewhat meta endeavor that is royal portraiture: a representation of a representation, made for posterity.

20 In his interview with the BBC, Mr. Yeo noted that when the king first saw the painting, he was “initially mildly surprised by the strong color,” which may be an understatement. Mr. Yeo said his goal was to produce a more modern royal portrait, reflecting Charles’s desire to be a more modern monarch, reducing the number of working royals and scaling back the pageantry of the coronation (all things being relative).

25 Still, the choice of shade seems particularly fraught given the ... well, firestorm the king has endured since his ascension to the throne.

Consider, for example, the continued falling out with his second son, Prince Harry, and the publication of Harry's memoir, with its allegations of royal racism; the related calls for an end to the monarchy; Charles's cancer diagnosis; and the furor over the mystery about Catherine, Princess of Wales, whose own cancer diagnosis was revealed only after increasingly unhinged speculation about her disappearance from public life.

30 Queen Camilla, who has been through her own ring of flames, reportedly told the artist, "You've got him."

It's hard to imagine Mr. Yeo didn't anticipate some of the reaction to the portrait, especially in the context of his past work, including portraits of Prince Philip, the king's father, and Queen Camilla, which are more traditional depictions. Indeed, the last time a royal portraitist attempted a more abstract, contemporary interpretation of their subject — a 1998 portrait of Queen Elizabeth II by Justin Mortimer, which depicted the queen against a neon yellow background with a splash of yellow bisecting her neck — it produced a similar public outcry. The Daily Mail accused the artist of cutting off the queen's head.

35 The portrait of King Charles will remain on display at the Philip Mould Gallery until mid-June, when it will move to Drapers' Hall in London. (It was commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Drapers, a medieval guild turned philanthropy, to reside among hundreds of other, more orthodox royal portraits.)

40 In that setting, Mr. Yeo's work may be especially telling: reflective of not just a monarch, but also the evolution of the role itself, the conflicts around the job and a king captured forevermore in what very much looks like the hot seat.