

## Hearts Are Trump's: Post-Truth as Intervention

In a special issue on Intervention for a journal entitled *Social Alternatives*, it might at first sight be expected that readers will be greeted with an analysis of how populist interventions of the past year have shaped politics across the world in countries as diverse as the USA, the UK, Italy and the Philippines. Within the narrow confines of political establishments these changes do indeed present themselves as socio-political alternatives. I would argue, however, that these events are the back-lash from the worst excesses of the neoliberal model of globalisation rather than any real alternative to it. 'The people' have seen through a social model where those with access to finance get spectacularly rich at the expense of everyone else, while subscribing to a doctrine of austerity – the current device for transferring wealth from the already poor to the already rich.

There's a lady I've been thinking about for the past few days, even though we've never met. She's the central character in a true story told by the Europe expert Anand Menon. He was in Newcastle just before the referendum to debate the impact of Britain leaving the EU. Invoking the gods of economics, the King's College London professor invited the audience to imagine the likely plunge in the UK's GDP. Back yelled the woman: "That's your bloody GDP. Not ours." ([www. theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com))

The recent results of elections and referenda reflect this grotesque social inequality. Those with nothing have nothing to lose and will therefore vote for a change that promises them something. Unfortunately, they are likely to end up with even less: less health care, fewer public services and a threadbare social fabric not restored but torn into separate shreds. The billionaire inheritor of an immense fortune and a former commodities trader are unlikely figure-heads for any movement aimed at providing globalisation's 'left behind' with a social alternative. Trump and Farage are not alternatives to the prevailing system but parodies of it. Skilful manipulators

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of the media, they embody the excesses of the system in all its racism and sexism in order to hide from common view the egregious failure of capitalism. They are masters of the art of the nationalist myth, constantly aided and abetted by the right-wing, at times neo-fascist, mass-media of their respective countries. The siren calls to ‘make America great *again*’ and to ‘take *back* our country’ wake up the nostalgia of the dispossessed for a supposed time past when working people – predominantly white, male, working-class people – had secure careers and a decent standard of living. These entirely reasonable aspirations are however interwoven with other tropes that suggest that the barriers to achieving them do not derive from the systemic operation of neoliberal capitalism but from the numbers of people not like ‘us’ – Mexicans, Muslims, Poles – who stand in the way of those goals. In the case of the UK referendum many areas of little or no immigration voted overwhelmingly to leave the EU, while several others with high immigration, and lived experience of cultural diversity, voted to remain.

Given that the forces of populism mask the possibilities for bringing about social alternatives, where else might we look for interventions? When considering examples from history such as the French and Russian Revolutions or coming closer to our own times and Western democratic societies such as the federal Works Progress Administration of Franklin Roosevelt or the post-war Attlee Government in the UK, if not exactly grassroots movements, the social alternatives that were created were made possible by a substantial element of solidarity, of shared political purpose among a significant segment of the population. Notwithstanding the efforts of groups such as the Occupy movement, today this solidarity is largely lacking. A full examination of the reasons requires research well beyond the scope of this article. My present purpose is to single out one element that bears directly upon the question of intervention: the promotion of the interests and desires of the individual in preference to those of a social group. It is no coincidence that the rise of neoliberal capitalism parallels that of individualism in the Western world since the late 1970s. Ronald Reagan’s ‘trickle-down’ economics and Margaret

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Thatcher's 'no such thing as society' inaugurated an era that has been marked by the advent of so-called identity politics under the slogan that 'the personal is political'. Consequently resistance to neoliberalism has tended to be characterised by assertions of individual rights in areas such as ethnicity and sexuality at the expense of previous discourses and agencies of group solidarity such as class and trade unions. As allegiances to groups have dwindled, so it has become more difficult to mobilise coherent opposition at a time when the need to cooperate across the globe has never been greater. For example, today under pressure from pervasive national myths, car-workers are looking to maintain their employment if necessary at the expense of other car-workers in different countries, rather than striving for transnational solidarity that would prevent car manufacturers from playing one country's employment regulations off against another. While I also lay myself open to the charge of nostalgia with this argument, I am happy to assert the view that sustainable social alternatives are not achieved without the intervention of mass movements that demand structural change to the way in which their societies are organised.

It has become commonplace to analyse current geopolitical events in terms of a parallel with the rise of fascism in the 1930s. There is no doubt that both periods are characterised by large numbers of the dispossessed who feel that they have no stake in the decisions that impact negatively upon their day-to-day existence. Equally under the pressure of mass migration, religious fundamentalism and the fighting of proxy wars, the world appears now every bit as unstable as in the earlier period. It may, however, be somewhat premature to cast Trump in the role of Hitler or depict Marine Le Pen as a latter day Mussolini. There is, though, a potentially very vicious cycle of history being re-enacted. If the first time was a tragedy and this time looks farcical, the family of the man murdered in an Essex street for the crime of being Polish is not laughing.

## *Anti-social media and post-truth*

German playwright Bertolt Brecht, writing ‘Five Difficulties in Writing the Truth’ from exile from Nazi Germany in 1935, faced the same problem of how an artist can write truth in a world where lies, myths and half-truths predominate:

Nowadays, anyone who wishes to combat lies and ignorance and to write the truth must overcome at least five difficulties. He [*sic.*] must have the courage to write the truth when truth is everywhere opposed; the keenness to recognize it, although it is everywhere concealed; the skill to manipulate it as a weapon; the judgment to select those in whose heads it will be effective; and the running to spread the truth among such persons. (Brecht 2003, 148)

The insistent repetition of ‘the truth’ may strike a contemporary reader schooled in the discourses of subjectivity and post-structuralism, as quaintly old-fashioned but even if we substitute ‘truths’ for ‘the truth’, it is easy to identify with the first four difficulties articulated by Brecht. I shall come specifically to the third and fourth difficulties later in this article. It is the fifth that is a particular preoccupation of the present. Today the spreading of lies and truth has been exponentially accelerated by the invention of the World Wide Web. This web entangles most of the world’s people and before much longer will have enmeshed them all. Its power over our imaginations is stronger than the toughest silk from which the spider weaves its web. More and more people ingest their world-view from the Internet via the so-called social media such as Facebook, Twitter and all those other applications proliferating among young people. Enthusiasts speak in glowing terms about digital democracy and the flattening of hierarchies of knowledge as a result of open access to the channels of communication. Citizen journalists, bloggers and Twitter feeders abound. If such means stimulate the will to become involved, to transform the passive consumer into the active citizen, they are to be welcomed as

a progressive social force that may yet give rise to alternatives. However, the opening up afforded by digital technologies comes at the price of flattening out distinctions between fact and fiction, evidence and opinion, truths and lies. Trump won a sufficient number of hearts, if not minds, of the US electorate in no small part through swamping (anti) social media with his mix of myth, selective truth and lies. In essence he told people what they wanted to hear. If he now goes on to tell them things they do not want to hear, what matter? The damage will have been done and he will be greeting the great and not so good of the world in the Oval Office.

Perhaps this is the force of the term 'post-truth'. If our technologies have enabled a world where the truth is no longer discernible, where it is in effect buried under the sheer volume of lies, is it any longer viable to maintain the distinction? If a lie is repeated so often that it becomes accepted as truth, it can influence and determine socio-political actions and bring social alternatives into being even though it is still a lie. We talk often of a web of lies; less frequently about a web of truths.

The 'fake news' phenomenon is currently occupying much media attention but it is the speed and range of its spread that constitutes its novelty rather than the concept itself. Fake news has been around for as long as news in the forms of rumour, propaganda and misinformation; just as there is a marked tendency in human nature to believe that which we are already disposed to believe. Some of the anxiety around the prevalence of fake news today comes from the overt connection between fake news and commercial gain sponsored by social media. Google and Facebook accrue enormous profits from the indiscriminate communication of fake but titillating news which attracts subscribers in large numbers and thus draws in advertisers. Regulation would impact upon those profits and thereby discourage investment. This tendency is further exacerbated by the practice of profiling. The social media corporations build up a picture of each subscriber based on their history of use in order to 'sell' that person to the

advertisers. Social media employ a process of filtering that helps to feed us the opinions, ideas, news and, most importantly, products that most accord with our desires. The advent of these media is the apotheosis of a seventy year-long transformation of the citizen into the consumer. Perhaps the end point of identity politics is that we become what we buy. Those who cannot make purchases are left behind; the non-people unable to command the attention of the corporation. For those who can, prospects may not be much brighter since the diet of consumers, literally and metaphorically, is getting more and more unhealthy. As individuals and societies we are dying of consumption.

Confronted by this bleak outlook, what social alternatives can artists offer? How do they go about telling truth to power when power is so well concealed behind the firewalls of multinational corporations? In his essay 'The Popular and the Realistic' from 1938 when Brecht was embroiled in the aesthetic struggle against the dominance of socialist realism in the communist hegemony, he takes comfort from the ability of theatrical representations to provoke audiences into a reconsideration of cherished attitudes:

Anybody who is not bound by formal prejudices knows that there are many ways of suppressing truth and many ways of stating it: that indignation at inhuman conditions can be stimulated in many ways, by direct description of a pathos-laden or matter-of-fact kind, by narrating stories and parables, by jokes, by over- and understatement. (Brecht 2015, 203-4)

As a member of the currently despised 'liberal élite', I will now proceed to discuss a recent venture embarked upon by a small group of academics as a means of making a modest intervention into contemporary social pathology.

### *One Hour Theatre Company*

One Hour Theatre Company (OHTC) was formed in October 2016 at Edge Hill University in the UK. Its primary aim is to use theatre as a means of stimulating discussion around topical issues to encourage intervention from ‘ordinary’ citizens in local and national politics. Its target is primarily, but not exclusively, young people. The founding members share a belief that theatre possesses qualities that fit it particularly well for this task because it is a medium which brings people together in live, not virtual, relations to share their experience, understanding and hope. This process occurs both between performers and spectators and among the spectators themselves. OHTC performances will always build in discussion time as part of the fulfilment of their brief. The choice of the ‘One Hour’ tag reflects our sense that concentration-spans in this age of hyper-communication have been shortened and that we should be able to make an effective communication within the discipline of time-constraint. To date we have launched the company with a professional production of *Half Measures*, a play created out of the confrontations between Angelo and Isabella in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and scenes written and interleaved with Shakespeare, telling the story of a Ukrainian woman working illegally in Liverpool. The intention of the play is to present two parallel moral problems which indicate how Shakespeare’s work resonates today and how the forces of patriarchy and sexual exploitation continue to operate in contemporary society. Besides attempting to intervene in the moral consciousness of the audience, the decision to use Shakespeare as a point of entry into the discourse is intended to operate as a two-way intervention: for some of the spectators the assurance of an evening with Shakespeare may lure them into the space of intervention while boosting cultural capital; for others a contemporary play on issues close to home may be the start of a (re)consideration of what Shakespeare offers for our society. So far the play has only been performed to a student audience and we shall be looking to take it to places where it may make other kinds of interventions along the lines of

‘those in whose heads it will be effective’. It may not turn back the tide of populism but it can at least stimulate other ways of seeing.

The second play from OHTC is *Lear in Brexitland*, a play currently in development, with a view to performance in 2017. Here follows an extract from the play which juxtaposes the sweeping themes of identity and power from Shakespeare’s *King Lear* with a specific, contemporary incident that also raises questions about identity and nationhood, newly reprovoked by the UK’s decision to quit the European Union. Shakespeare’s text is shrunk to the figure of Lear in a wheelchair with the female Fool as his nurse on a split stage with Lee Smith, a young carpenter recently injured on a building site, occupying a hospital bed.

### Scene 3

**Lear:** Does any here know me? Why, this is not Lear. Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied –Ha! Sleeping or waking? Sure ‘tis not so. Who is it that can tell me who I am?

**Fool:** Lear’s shadow. (*Fool curtsies*)

**Lear:** O Lear, Lear, Lear!

[*striking his head*] Beat at this gate that let thy folly in  
And thy dear judgement out.

**Fool:** If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I’d have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

**Lear:** How’s that?

**Fool:** Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

**Lear:** O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! I would not be mad.

*The back projection shows people sleeping in the doorways of shops, jobcentres, etc.*

No! Rather I abjure all roofs and choose



To wage against the enmity o' th'air –  
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl –  
Necessity's sharp pinch!  
The art of our necessities is strange,  
And can make vile things precious.  
Our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous;  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;  
*(Lear addresses a particular audience member)*  
If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need –  
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!

**Fool:** Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides,  
Who covert faults at last with shame derides.

#### **Scene 4**

*Lee is lying in a hospital bed, connected to a drip. There is a dim light. It is the early hours of the morning. Lee is tossing and groaning.*

**Lee:** Nurse! Nurse! Is there anyone out there? My throat's on fire. Nurse! Nurse!

*After a pause, Alisha rushes in.*

**Alisha:** Whatever's the matter Mr Smith? Please calm down. You'll wake the whole ward up.

**Lee:** No chance of sleeping in this place, anyway. That old bastard in the next bed's been talking to himself all night. (*He gestures towards Lear*) I need a drink and some painkillers.

**Alisha:** That'll be the anaesthetic. You're dehydrated. Just be patient a moment, and I'll get you some water and paracetamol. But first I'll check your temperature and pulse.

*Alisha moves into the light beside the bed and takes Lee's wrist. He pulls it away fiercely.*

What's the matter? Be careful or you'll dislodge your drip.

**Lee:** I'm not having no Paki touching me. This is England, ain't it? I want an English nurse. No offence, love. Nothing personal. I've had enough of being bugged about by foreigners.

**Alisha:** As it happens, I am English and I do take offence. What's more, I've never been to Pakistan.

**Lee:** Alright, alright. Take it easy. It's a shock; that's all. Like, like I wanna wake up in my own country after what I've been through. Home comforts. I ain't never been touched by no black girl before.

**Alisha:** That's a shame. I get to handle all sorts in this line of work. Now, do you want that water or not?

**Lee:** Yeah. I do. And, and thanks.

*Alisha exits. Lee delivers his monologue directly to the audience from the bed.*

I know what you're thinking. You don't rate me, do ya? Just another piece of white van trash from Essex. One of the ignorant. The left behind. A throw back. 'Cos I don't think like you. I'm glad we've got our country back. We've put a stop to all that multi-cultural, latte-sipping, London shit. It's you lot tried to steal my birthright. Made me feel useless, out of place in my own place. When my mum and dad were growing up, England felt like England. OK there was immigrants but like, the numbers was small. A few Pakis in corner-shops round our way. Where there was lots of them, you know, like black and Asian ghettos, that was just in big cities – Smethwick, Southall, Bradford. People like me never went near them places. Now you can't escape. It's every fuckin' high street: polski slop, signs in God knows how many languages. You're lucky if you hear any English. It had to stop. Enough's enough.

I'm a carpenter by trade, right? Did my apprenticeship with a construction company; stayed out of trouble. All set for a job. You know what? No fuckin' job. Why not? Tony fuckin' Blair opened the gate and Poles grabbed all them jobs. Ten years on benefits. Ten years of job seekers' allowance. Ten years still living with me mum and dad. Scraping by on bits and pieces; cash in hand. Even then there's an Albanian or some such who'll do it for less. Six to a room. They're grafters, mind you. Ye Polskis work

bloody hard. Drink bloody hard too. See, what happened was the building firms knew they could get EU migrant labour for less than the minimum wage. ‘Minimum’ that’s a laugh. No, don’t get me started. So what they did, right?, was use these agencies to hire cheap foreigners. I never even got on site. ‘Nothin’ doin’, son. You’re too expensive.”

Then, Brexit. Fan-fuckin’-tastic. Sent those bastards back where they belong. Work at last. Trouble is, see, building-sites had got used to crap safety. Nothing done by the book. Red tape my arse. No fuckin’ tape at all. That’s how I come to be here. I’m stuck out on this scaffolding, two stories up – lucky it weren’t more – and the geyser operating the crane’s bringing the bricks up too fast so as he moves them towards me the whole bloody thing swings into me and knocks me off. Last thing I clocked till I woke up in here. Ten years waiting for a job. Two weeks into it. Then this. Don’t tell me not to be sorry for meself.

## **Scene 5**

***The Fool sings.***

***Fool:*** Have more than thou showest,  
Speak less than thou knowest,  
Lend less than thou owest,  
Ride more than thou goest,  
Learn more than thou trowest  
Set less than thou throwest,  
Leave thy drink and thy whore  
And keep in-a-door,  
And thou shalt have more  
Than two tens to a score.

***Lear:*** This is nothing, fool.

***Fool:*** Then ‘tis like the breath of an unfee’d lawyer, you gave me nothing for’t.

That lord that counselled thee to give away thy land,

Come place him here by me; do thou for him stand.

The sweet and bitter fool will presently appear,  
The one in motley here, the other found out there.

**Lear:** Dost thou call me fool, boy?

**Fool:** All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.  
Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gav'st thy golden  
one away.

*The Fool sings.*

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,  
For wise men are grown foppish,  
And know not how their wits to wear,  
Their manners are so apish.

Now thou art an O without a figure; I am better than thou art now. I am  
a fool, thou art nothing.

## Scene 6

*Alisha enters with water and pills.*

**Lee:** What kept you? Are you on Indian time? A bloke could die of thirst in here.

**Alisha:** You wouldn't be the first. Swallow these, then lie back and think of England.

**Lee:** You after my body, darling. Want a bit of white in you?

**Alisha:** Yours wouldn't be much use to me in your condition. I've seen straighter backs  
on a banana.

**Lee:** Plenty of those where you come from, I suppose.

**Alisha:** Colchester, you mean?

**Lee:** No kiddin'. Where you really from? I mean you can't be British with skin that colour.

*Lee falls asleep. Alisha takes his pulse then speaks to the audience.*

**Alisha:** Really from? Who knows where they're really from? How long have you got? How far back should I go? Maybe to a tiny fishing village in Gujarat. Generations living off the fish they sold in the local market; each day the same. The women cooking, sewing the nets, keeping the hut clean; watching the red sun sinking into the ocean. Till one fine day, crashing into the peace, smashing the rhythm of life, the British army marches in; musket, fife and drum. Rule Britannia. Empire on which the sun never sets. All change. Men who'd never sailed out of sight of their native shore shipped off to East Africa. Backward, primitive Africa needed modernisation, industrialisation. Lazy niggers no use, so indentured labour of hard-working Gujaratis would get the railways built. The Desais've always been hard workers. 'Indentured labour'. More like slave labour. Survivors under an African sun. Free movement of labour? Forced movement of labour. No use looking back across the water. Make a home where you must. So we became Africans. The ocean where the sun set was now where the sun rose; still hot; still unforgiving. But the sun did set on the Empire and my family looked out for itself. Great-grandfather was a businessman. He started with a small shop in Kampala, that's in Uganda by the way. Then moved into import-export. Don't ask me what. All that stuff is beyond me. Then one not so fine day Idi Amin decides we are not real Africans. We must go. Home? Where's that? Just a minute. We're subjects of the British Empire and we've the passports to prove it. Let's go home to the welcoming hearth of the Great White Mother. OK, so it was a council house in Colchester not a red carpet at Buckingham Palace but we were taken in, even maybe accepted, eventually. Grandad started over once again. Yes, the corner-shop cliché. Long before the supermarkets and the Sunday trading, he was always open, always an available, friendly face in the community. Smiling back no matter what shit was thrown at him. We prospered again. Daddy expanded the business. Gujaratis supported each other. Bit like a medieval guild. And always, always till I was sick of hearing it, the importance of education. 'Work hard at school, my girl. Get your qualifications'. I got them. Here I am. Alisha Desai, the English nurse. Know what? I've never even been to India and I like Marmite. What's your problem?

**Alisha exits.** [End of extract]

The play is attempting to link perennial questions about good governance and the effects of social systems upon human behaviour with pressing contemporary issues around globalisation, the nation state and identity. **King Lear** seemed a pertinent choice, congruent with the aims of OHTC, in view of the socio-political themes with which it wrestles. At the outset it is concerned with the consequences arising from the break-up of Britain, resonating at once with the possibility of Scottish independence from the UK and the difficulties faced by cross-border

trade on the island of Ireland following the UK's exit from the EU, with attendant threats to the political stability of Northern Ireland. Lear's journey in Shakespeare's play takes him from the pinnacle of wealth and power as absolute monarch to the depths of material poverty where he loses both identity and sanity. This is a cautionary tale for our times where grotesque social inequalities, left unattended, will give rise to large-scale violence and the tearing of the social fabric. When Shakespeare was writing, those with great wealth in the form of land ownership were seizing even more through the enclosing of common land; a process in which Shakespeare was implicated as a shareholder in an enclosure at Welcombe ([www.shakespearedocumented.org](http://www.shakespearedocumented.org)) which added to the numbers of the dispossessed roaming the land without food or shelter. Today's enclosures are those of capital with an economic system run for the profit of senior executives and shareholders at the expense of those who labour for them or, in the case of automation, those without employment:

LEAR:            Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
  
                    That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
  
                    How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
  
                    Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you  
  
                    From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en  
  
                    Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp,  
  
                    Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
  
                    That thou mayst shake the superflux to them  
  
                    And show the heavens more just. (III.4. 28-36)

At the heart of the play are fundamental questions such as: are human beings capable of governing each other justly? What kind of social system can enable all to prosper? *Lear in Brexitland* gives great prominence to the Fool because she poses these core questions about (in)human nature. She also takes us to the heart of issues around mental health. Lear's retreat into (in)sanity marks out his only refuge from a mad world where extreme, vicious self-interest has become the norm. As a madman, he discovers his humanity, guided by the 'world turned upside down' insights of the Fool. The purpose of art, certainly of the art of OHTC, is to highlight the contradictions between our desires and dreams as humans and the systems (perhaps any system) that dehumanise us by alienating us from ourselves. Just before the end of *Lear in Brexitland* the Fool dies, broken-hearted at both the inability of Lear to recover a place in the world and of the world to accommodate her patient's vision. She runs out of patience. However, in an echo of Edward Bond's *Lear* – 'the man without pity is mad' – (Bond 1972, 84), this Lear recovers sufficient pity to invoke the return of the Fool as a ghost.

We are only at the start of discovering the aesthetic possibilities of our project but already it is apparent that the telling of personal stories grounded in realism must occupy a fundamental element in our process. The discipline imposed by the one hour format has meant that, to date, this narrative imperative has been realised through the medium of the monologue, forced into being by the contextual frame of the situation in which a particular character is held. The monologue creates a poetic condensation that allows the story to present the core elements that relate to the moral thread of the play without any of the distractions of psychology or sub-plot. As the above extract attempts to show, the meaning for the audience is created in the space between the stories. Neither Lee nor Alisha is right or wrong. They each have their story and each story is about being British. The audience can therefore deduce that Britishness is a paradoxical, if not a contradictory, quality to which each spectator has to form their own relationship. The space for the post-performance discussion is not the conventional 'did you

like the show?’ slot but rather a place of intervention into some of the discourses shaping contemporary life in relation to which the ‘ordinary’ person rarely has agency.

Above all the play is an intervention into the arrogant assumption that we, the self-described crowning glory of creation, are on a path towards ever greater enlightenment and endless progress. As the Fool reminds us, ‘the rain it raineth everyday’. Brecht placed his faith in a ‘scientific age’ of reason and material progress but still acknowledged that humans are contradictory, cantankerous and self-harming creatures. Like the Fool, our response is not to despair but to laugh:

The theatre of the scientific age is able to make dialectics enjoyable. The surprises of logically progressive or erratic development, of the instability of all situations, the wit of contradictory circumstances etc., all these involve enjoyment of the liveliness of people, things and processes, and they heighten both the art of living and the joy of living.

All the arts contribute to the greatest art of all, the art of living. (Brecht 2015, 257)

### *The resistible rise of capitalism*

*King Lear* was written at the dawn of capitalism and *Lear in Brexitland* is a theatrical provocation at its dusk. It is intended as an intervention into the conventional wisdom which every passing day reveals itself as folly; namely that capitalism is the only system that enables our species to flourish. It is a strange kind of flourishing that not only allows the wildest of inequalities between person and person but also encourages us to bankrupt the natural resources of our planet with the result that all living things will face extinction before much longer.

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Shakespeare's play ends in bleak irresolution but four hundred years further down the line we are asking the same questions about how to live and what it is to be human. Whether the age is pre-scientific, scientific, or post-scientific, we still struggle to admit that we can barely see enough to see how little we can see.

John Holloway opens his book *Crack Capitalism* as follows:

*Break. We want to break.* We want to break the world as it is. A world of injustice, of war, of violence, of discrimination, of Gaza and Guantanamo. A world of billionaires and a billion people who live and die in hunger. A world in which humanity is annihilating itself, massacring non-human forms of life, destroying the conditions of its own existence. A world ruled by money, ruled by capital. A world of frustration, of wasted potential. (Holloway 2010, 3)

He concludes :

Fight from the particular, fight from where we are, here and now. Create spaces or moments that walk in the opposite direction, that do not fit in. Make holes in our own reiterative creating of capitalism. Create cracks and let them expand, let them multiply, let them resonate, let them flow together. (Holloway 2010, 261)

The OHTC project is just one small crack. As such it is an effort to intervene in contemporary discourse to provoke people into imaging social alternatives to the appalling scenarios that confront us in the twenty-first century.

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