‘Making a Drama Out of a Crisis’:
Critiquing Neoliberal Organization with Political Theatre

Paper in the 8th International Critical Management Studies Conference
*Extending the Limits of Neo-liberal Capitalism*
Manchester University, July 10–12 2013
Stream 11: *We’re Fucked! Conceptualizing Catastrophe*

Dr Daniel Sage
School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University
d.j.sage@lboro.ac.uk
Dr Catherine Rees
School of Arts, English and Drama, Loughborough University
c.m.rees@lboro.ac.uk

Abstract

It may seem strange that we should find watching a catastrophe, especially perhaps the collapse of an organization, even economic system, entertaining in some manner, but that is exactly what two playwrights – Lucy Prebble and David Hare – dared to realise. Their two resultant plays – *Enron* (2009) and *The Power of Yes* (2008) – offer us illuminating, disturbing, but often humorous and engaging insights into life in neoliberal organizations, during the Enron Scandal and the Global Financial Crisis Political respectively. Political theatre is long practiced at such perilous tasks, having staged critiques of capitalistic organization for over a century; yet political theatre continues to be largely absent within critical organizational analysis. By closely reading Enron and The Power of Yes, against organizational analysis of these crises of neoliberal organization, our purpose in this paper is reveal how theatre, as cultural product and institution, can aid and extend our understanding of neoliberal organization, its utopianism, contradictions and conceits. Specifically, we suggest that contemporary political theatre usefully helps us suspend popular tendencies to perceived capitalist catastrophes as Greek tragedies, where flawed characters are exposed, judged and punished (and then life returns to normal). As *Enron* and *The Power of Yes* both reveal, the catastrophe of neoliberalism is a truth far stranger than this fiction.

1. Introduction

Catastrophe is commonly understood as a large-scale, sudden and painful downturn in events. This definition abounds in popular use where catastrophes include natural disasters, but also human disasters related to terrorism, warfare, industrial production and the operation of economic systems. And yet, early uses of *catastrophe* in the English language suggest a more neutral use. Such ambiguity stems from the dramatic origins of the term: the *catastrophe* simply describes the final act in a piece of drama, the dénouement, the “turning point” in the fortunes of the characters, whether for good or bad, epitomised by events such as marriage or death. Thus, the mood of the catastrophe marked out classical dramatic form, as either
comedic or tragic. This understanding of catastrophe has shifted in more recent years: playwrights such as Beckett and Pinter have deliberately blurred these classical distinctions, offering audiences plays with inconclusive endings, tragi-comic events and bleak but often beautiful poetry. Contemporary dramatists therefore engage with ‘tragedy’ and ‘comedy’ in a more subtle manner, where sudden events possess more ambiguous meanings.

In this paper we examine how contemporary playwrights mobilize the dramatic catastrophe to engage with the crises, contradictions and opportunities of life under neoliberal capitalism. Specifically, we focus on David Hare’s documentary exploration of the 2007-8 global financial crises (GFC) in the The Power of Yes (2008) and Lucy Prebble’s more playful and phantasmical staging of the collapse of the ill-famed US energy giant in Enron (2009). Both of these plays problematize a simplistic reading of neoliberalism as simply tragic, where the dénouement reveals flawed heroes, aggrieved victims and guilty villains. Yet neither do the playwrights adopt a simply comic form, where a sudden reversal of fortune at the end of the plays, suggests that the protagonists, or indeed capitalism, is resurrected, without suffering or pain. Instead the playwrights grapple with the demands of working towards the capitalist catastrophe, in a more ambiguous and ambivalent manner. Classical notions of heroes, victims and villains appear insufficient to account for the motives and actions of the characters involved; there is little comic reprieve to be found in the rehabilitation of neoliberal organization at the expense of the poorest in society; and ultimately the dramatic catastrophe itself, the “turning point” appears as indifferent to an ethical teleology as the practices of neoliberalism (Chomsky, 1998; Harvey, 2005). Although ‘tragedy’ may be useful shorthand for the events afflicting the organizations and people depicted in these plays, the playwrights appear to hark back to much earlier usage of the term ‘catastrophe’. Both playwrights imply that neoliberal capitalism is neither slain villain nor glorified hero in the final act, but rather a more elusive and free-floating entity, resilient, yet entirely indifferent to the cost or benefits of its resilience.

In addressing these plays we examine what they offer us about these specific crises in capitalistic organizations; yet, in so doing, we also consider a broader set of questions concerning the relationship between neoliberal capitalism and drama: what can drama do conceptually to enact capitalisms crises as opposed to other cultural products, not least by mobilizing the dramatic ‘catastrophe’; how is drama as an institutionalised event related to neoliberal capitalism, as compared to mass mediated culture; and what contribution can political theatre make to thinking critically about neoliberal organization.

These interwoven questions are addressed across three sections. The first section will navigate some scholarly debates through which the contribution of this paper will be elaborated. Specifically, we problematize the much-used (and abused) term ‘neoliberalism’ in order to finesse our critical analysis of the plays; we will then address the relative absence of political theatre in critical organizational inquiry. These conceptual sorties will frame the analysis in the second section. This section is divided into two, orientated around each play text in turn. For both play we briefly outline the background to how each dramatized event has been understood and then provide a close reading of each play. This close reading is more
than simply plot description; it involves examining the theatrical style of the play, characterization, the tone and nature of the action and the effect on the audience. It is important to explore and consider the way in which the play is structured and designed to have an impact on an audience or a reader, and it’s crucial to remember that all plays are designed to be performed – they are ‘living’ texts, produced in order to be reproduced in live performance. We need to ask ourselves; what does the playwright want to tell an audience? And how do they achieve this affect? Throughout this close-reading we will also trace points where each play supports, extends or problematizes organizational analysis of the events. Drawing upon the findings of this analysis, in the third section of the paper, and by way of conclusion, we will consider more fully the relationship of drama (and theatre) to neoliberal crises and how contemporary political theatre might inform academic critique of neoliberal forms of organization.

2 Conceptual Context

2.1 Problematizing Neoliberalism

We might reasonably assume that the ultimate target of both Enron and the Power of Yes is neoliberalism, or more specifically, the failings of neoliberal capitalism; thus, any scholarly engagement with these plays must be framed as an analysis of neoliberalism. Yet what exactly is meant by this concept; and to what extent should we be mindful of its monological use, whether by playwrights or academics. Across the social sciences and humanities ‘neoliberalism’ has come to encapsulate perhaps the most seductive incarnation of what Parker (2002) referred to as the ‘Big Other’. Parker (2002) suggests the presence of such ‘Big Others’ helps defines the self-identity of all critical scholars, not least those in Critical Management Studies (CMS):

The romantic construction of the outsider intellectual, endlessly persecuted by the Big Other but struggling to find an authentic voice, has been a comforting myth for tenured radicals for some considerable time (Parker, 2002: 128).

Somewhat surprisingly perhaps Parker (2002) fails to mention the term ‘neoliberalism’ within his survey of other popular Big Others: ‘bureaucracy’, ‘Macdonaldization’, ‘global capitalism’, ‘corporatism’ and Parker’s own favourite, ‘market managerialism’. Yet, for many critical scholars (e.g. Chomsky, 1998; Harvey, 2005), the term ‘neoliberalism’ would appear to encapsulate the sins of all of the above and more. Harvey (2005) defines neoliberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Havery, 2005: 2).
Harvey (2005: 2) goes further in stressing that within this theory the state must play a minimum role, limited to protecting and extending markets. In theory, as Harvey (2005) argues, neoliberalism is a utopian, that is, impossible, belief that ‘market exchange is an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs (Harvey, 2005: 3). Harvey (2005) evidences the birth of neoliberalism through an assorted blend of policy experiments from the late 1970s in market liberalisation, privatization, deregulation and individual responsibility ushered in by Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Paul Volker and Deng Xiaoping, exported across the world by institutions such as the IMF, WTO and World Bank, and implemented within organizations through the kind of market managerialism described by Parker (2002). In theory, neoliberalism is intended to; foster more employment, lower inflation, better living standards, and also challenge the vested interests of powerful and corruptive elites; yet, equally it demands we accept “that we have no alternative except to live under a regime of endless capital accumulation and economic growth no matter what the social, ecological, or political consequences” (Harvey, 2005: 181). And yet, Harvey (2005) suggests, in practice, neoliberalism is far from utopian, insofar as it has become translated into a political project to benefit a ruling elite: “when neoliberal principles clash with the need to restore or sustain elite power, then the principles are either abandoned or become so twisted as to be unrecognizable” (p.19). State support of investment banks, as addressed by David Hare in The Power of Yes, offers a potent illustration of Harvey’s (2005) point. If the real end of neoliberalism is simply to aid a ruling class in the modern battle of capital over labour, then, for Harvey (2005), neoliberalism can never engender widespread economic stability and prosperity or tackle inequality, rather it begs us to interpret every catastrophe, whether the collapse of Enron, the GFC or the growing tide of youth employment, under the Darwinian mantra “only the fittest should and do survive” (Harvey, 2005: 157).

While Harvey (2005), and others (eg Chomsky, 1998; Giroux, 2004; Turner, 2008) acknowledge varieties of neoliberalism, and differences between its mythology and practice, the concept remains relatively unquestioned as a basis for critique. We wish here to question this assumption. To this end, Ferguson (2010) offers a useful problematization. Ferguson (2010) questions whether popular uses of the term can form the basis for radical politics: “all one can do with such a gigantic, malevolent “thing” as “neoliberalism” conceived in this way is to denounce it. (And that, the evidence suggests, doesn’t seem to do much good)” (p.171). Instead, Ferguson (2010) proposes that we stop viewing neoliberalism as the evil Big Other, because practices and techniques associated with the politics of neoliberalism, such as entrepreneurialism and responsibility, could and are being put to other ends than to support a ruling elite and social inequality. For example, in South Africa, seemingly socialist proposals to provide a universal basic income grant have also been framed by their proponents in neoliberal terms as enabling economically productive poor to be more entrepreneurial (by removing the risk-averse constraint of looking after their dependent relatives) and more responsible (by devolving decisions over personal investment to people from state bureaucrats) (see Ferguson, 2010: 177-178). There are parallels here to recent arguments in CMS around the possibility of harnessing the practices of market managerialism for different ends than to prop up a corporate elite (Clegg et al., 2006; Rowlinson and Hassard, 2011;
Yet, we extend the notion espoused by Harlow et al (2012: 5) that market managerialism can be subverted to resist neoliberalism; rather practices associated with both projects can and are being re-appropriated for many and varied ends. With this idea in mind, we consider how these plays might work through as well as against neoliberalism as a basis to challenge ruling elites and social inequalities. But, before doing so we will set out how an analysis of theatre and organization can help us address these political themes, something which has been seldom realized in critical organizational analysis.

2.2 Dramatizing Neoliberalism

Political theatre can be defined as theatre which seeks to question “the fundamental organization of society, with the emphasis on economics rather than ethics” (Patterson, 2003: 1). Political playwriting has a long history of challenging the effects of power in society, from Sophocles’ analysis of hubris and pride in his ancient Greek Oedipus trilogy through to Shakespeare’s great tragedies in which kings agonise and suffer over the right way to rule, theatre has long questioned the dominance of the ruling classes over the poorest in society. For over a century, playwrights have examined economic violence under free-market capitalism. George Bernard Shaw’s Major Barbara (1905) asked its audiences to consider whether money from arms sales should be used for good in society if it is put to use in providing education and health care, and questioned whether a greater evil was perhaps to do nothing and allow poverty to prosper. Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht continued this debate in his 1943 play The Good Person of Szechuan, in which gods visit earth and try to find a single person worthy of the title ‘good’. Although they find a suitable candidate, and give her money to set up a business and so help the local community, she is quickly taken advantage of, and is forced to invent a hardened alter ego, who espoused the virtues of capitalism and sets up a tobacco factory with many employees. Both these plays suggest that charity struggles to survive in the context of capitalism. In the 1950s the so-called Angry Young Men fought over the rights and wrongs of capitalism: John Osborne’s Look Back in Anger (1956) dramatised the harsh realities of working class life and the emotional chasms created by social inequalities. The play’s protagonist, Jimmy Porter, became a spokesman for a generation of angry, left-wing fighters. In America, Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman (1949) famously explored the negative impact capitalism has on the individuals who ‘fail’ to achieve economic success, and harshly critiques the way such systems have no space for emotion, ‘failure’ and loyalty. Some plays have specifically addressed themes around neoliberalization: Caryl Churchill’s Serious Money (1987) focuses on the deregulation of UK banks in the so-called ‘Big Bang’ in 1986 by Thatcher’s government. The play offers the audience a scathing and acerbic attack on what the playwright saw as the greed and selfishness of investment banking and the immorality engendered through working with capital in this way. Interestingly, the play adopted an approach that we see developed in Enron; the action was highly stylised, non-naturalistic, comic and made use of song and dance. In the 1990s, Mark Ravenhill’s infamous Shopping and Fucking (1996) suggested that the theory of consumerism could be applied to all aspects of human existence – love; sexuality; power and violence – and the resulting drama brutally deconstructs the place of
capitalism in contemporary western culture. The two plays which we will address here – Enron and The Power of Yes – could both be included within this recent tradition of political theatre that engages neoliberalism, broadly understood as a free-floating set of beliefs that coalesce around a belief that the “the market should be the organizing principle for all political, social and economic decisions” (Giroux, 2004: xiii).

Given the significance of theatre as a site, indeed institution, through which neoliberalism is being engaged and problematized, it is rather surprising that remarkably few critically-minded organizational scholars have engaged with theatre about capitalist organization, or indeed theatres as neoliberal enterprises. This point is all the more intriguing because the connection between theatre and organization is very well-established: following Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical analysis, theatrical analogies have long been popular within organizational inquiry (see Bryant, 1993; Mangham, 1978; Mangham and Overington, 1987; Sharma and Grant, 2011). More recently scholars have started to examine how theatre is used by organizations (Clarke and Mangham, 2004; Meisek and Barry, 2007), including how performance art can challenge market managerialism (Biehl-Missal, 2012). And so why if we accept the fecundity of organization-as-theatre and organizational theatre, do we overlook theatre about organizations, or indeed theatre-as-organization? One explanation for this tendency is Goffman’s (1959) focus on the micro-politics of social performance over the macro-politics of social justice. Yet, this still leaves unexplained why analyses of organizations and popular culture overlook political theatre.

The problem is that theatre, especially perhaps political theatre, is not, relatively speaking, popular: single episodes of reality shows on British television regularly attract audiences greater than an entire year of London theatre; it is therefore not by definition easily included under the remit of organizations and popular culture (Rhodes and Parker, 2008; Rhodes and Lilley, 2012). In saying this we do not mean to say that political theatre cannot stir the enthusiasm of individual audiences, far from it, but it cannot and does not engage the masses. If watching a play, especially a political play, is a relatively obscure pursuit then arguably it is at least a quantitatively less important site in which neoliberalism, and its attendant market managerialism, is being problematized, than say the Simpsons (Ellis, 2008) or a “Fuck Work” sticker in the office (Parker, 2006). Or, as Rehn (2008) puts it: “popular culture is powerful specifically because it is popular, and the way in which it constructs realities must be taken seriously” (p.781). Unlike television, film or novels, theatre is predicated on its liveness – a desire for singularity and novelty in time and space – that is always at odds with the reproduction and re-consumption of mass culture. Although some successful political plays have been turned into films (and vice-versa), such as Death of a Salesman, the majority have not and will not be, whether because their authors or estates might refuse such translation on artistic grounds or simply because a topic isn’t deemed commercial or cinematic. And yet, there is a flip side to this obscurity that augment its radical import: the role of theatre on the margins of our cultural economy may confer it with a far greater capacity for experimentation in narrative, subject, characterization, lighting, etc. (despite significant technical and financial constraints). If we accept, as Schwartz (1996) argues, that “capitalism is a system for reproducing” (p.275) then simply by virtue of its experimental liveness, theatre with political
intent, especially perhaps subsidised theatre, simply has more capacity to engage us. As the playwright Michael Freyn (2010) explains:

The playwright has an advantage […] over the historian and the biographer – even over the novelist – because the words written on the page are eventually going to find incarnation in a living being, an actor, who will invest them with his own physical presence. For an hour or two each evening the actor will become the character he is embodying; the character will become the actor” (p.xi).

Our task now is to ask what can political theatre do for critical organizational inquiry; how do contemporary plays engage neo-liberal capitalism, its utopianism, contradictions and conceits? We will now turn to two recently well-analysed events and related dramatizations to address such questions.

3 Enron

3.1 Background

On 2nd December 2001 the energy trader Enron filed for bankruptcy; with total assets valued at over $65b it was then the largest bankruptcy in US history (although significantly less than Lehman Brothers reported $691b in pre-bankruptcy assets in 2008 – see BD, 2013). Congressional hearings, media investigations, court trials of senior executives, and ensuing academic studies, revealed how a deadly mixture of fraudulent accounting (Reinstein and McMillan, 2004), hubris (Levine, 2005), greed (Boje et al., 2004), neoliberal deregulation (Froud et al., 2004), excessive trust (Currall and Epstein, 2003), strong corporate culture (Grey, 2003), familial trauma (Stein, 2007), even Skilling’s appropriation of popular culture1, all helped pushed the company over the edge – leading to its President, Jeff Skilling, and its CFO, Andrew Fastow, along with sixteen other senior employees, being imprisoned for myriad charges, including; fraud, money laundering, insider trading, and conspiracy. Enron’s Chair and CEO, Ken Lay, only escaped prison after he suffered a fatal heart attack on vacation, while awaiting sentencing. In 2002, Enron’s, auditor, Arthur Andersen, was also convicted of obstruction of justice, after it shredded evidence linking it to Enron, and surrendered its operating license, putting one of the so-called ‘Big Five’ accountancy firms out of business. As a preventive measure, the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) was passed to provide new rules to ensure stronger auditor independence, increase transparency in financial statements, monitor auditing practice, stipulate stronger penalties for corporate crime and increases sanctions available to the Securities and Exchange Commission. However as Fastow himself (released in 2012 after giving evidence against Skilling) ominously concluded in a recent speech on business ethics at the University of Boulder-Colorado: “The

1 A number of the Special Purpose Entities which hid toxic debts from investors were named after characters from Jurassic Park and Star Wars. Skilling also dressed as Darth Vader for company functions. Boje et al. (2004) and Stein and Pinto (2011) link the use of such imagery to the legitimation of subversive behaviour in Enron.
more complex the rule, the more opportunity..The question I should have asked is not what is the rule but what is the principle” (Denver Post, 2013). We will now turn to Lucy Prebble’s *Enron* and examine its potential to shed light on why such ethical questions were not asked in Enron.

### 3.2 Lucy Prebble’s *Enron*

*Enron* was a successful and critically acclaimed play in the UK; the drama critic of *The Sunday Telegraph* comparing it to *King Lear* in its critique of the demise and collapse of power. It struggled on Broadway however, thanks to a hostile review in *The New York Times*, implying that a British writer and production was not best placed to tell the Enron story, and that Prebble had little to tell American audiences about the collapse of their prized company. After that review, the play closed after just one month.

The play perhaps surprised audiences expecting a simple or naturalistic re-telling of the financial drama. It opens with three blind mice, or rather three men in business suits with the heads of mice, stumbling across the stage whilst a lawyer delivers a monologue in which he introduces the story of “the guy I know [who] tried to change the world [and] was behind the corporate crime that defined the end of the twentieth century, and cast a shadow over this one” (p.5). The lawyer tells the audience that he won’t attempt to explain how the world works (“I could explain to you how it works, but I don’t have the time and you don’t have the money”) but he suggests that he’s going to tell Skilling’s story. Crucially, he points out that “you should know it could never be exactly what happened. But we’re going to put it together and sell it to you as the truth” (p.5).

This line reveals much about both the structure and content of the play. Firstly, this is perhaps Prebble’s way of preparing the audience for the peculiarities that lie ahead. These include: a barbershop quartet; use of a ventriloquist’s dummy; dinosaurs (again, men in suits with Velociraptor heads, as described in footnote 1); the Lehman brothers as conjoined twins; and the use of song and multi-media. The use of these phantasmagoric effects (DeCock, 2011: 158) helps Prebble explore the absurdities of life in neoliberal enterprise. Here theatre is uniquely positioned to expose and critique these moments. For example, the raptors, fed with dollar bills, are used to depict the health and vitality of the company on stage. As the crisis deepens they are described thus, “Two have grown very bold now – fast and aggressive. One of them is weak and sickly” (p.85). The imagery is clear; the diet of toxic debt siphoned into the Special Purpose Entities (SPE), the Raptors, induces aggression in them that gives way to their destruction. In another example, when Skilling and Fastow discuss the establishment of the LJM SPE (an acronym based on the names of Fastow’s wife and children), they ask for the guidance of from Arthur Andersen. A man appears, holding a ventriloquist’s dummy. When asked for advice about the ethics of this proposal the dummy points out the problem of “conflict of interest” (p.51). Fastow suggests they seek a more sympathetic accountant and Skilling threatens to take their business elsewhere, whereupon the dummy and the accountant perform a double act, with the dummy prompting “approval of the strategy” (p.52). This small scene, brief but memorable, suggests that Enron and Arthur
Andersen willingly turned a blind eye to the practices they knew were happening (a later scene depicts the Board as “shadowy, dark imposing figures with the heads of mice” (p.52), mimicking the blind mice of the opening). Paralleling the arguments of Grey (2003) and Reinstein and McMillan (2004), Prebble challenges the notion, expressed by Curral and Epstein (2003), that trust was excessive in and around Enron; rather employees in Enron and Arthur Anderson are shown to willingly sell their trust, their confidence, to aid their careers, their organizations; here ‘trust’, along with its ultimate target, ‘truth’ (as emphasized in the opening), is shown simply to be another commodity lacking any value outside the market.

Another important point is the depiction of Arthur Anderson as a schizophrenic ventriloquist act; this not only engagingly communicates foolishness, but also tensions between the responsibilities for independent auditing and lucrative non-audit consultancy business (Benston and Hartgraves, 2002; Reinstein and McMillan, 2004). This scene also suggests that Fastow and Skilling maintained their hold over others through spectacles, where opportunities for conflict where sought more or less as a stage to express confidence over the uncertainty of dissenters – all legitimated under the rubric of neoliberal competition and independence (here Prebble stages the arguments of Boje et al., 2004; Stein and Pinto, 2011).

Secondly, the opening lines tell the audience and reader that ‘truth’ is not, in the hands of those working at Enron, a single and straightforward concept; rather it can be packaged, commoditized. This is also true of drama – inevitably a playwright will prioritize one view over other competing voices. Perhaps this line is simply a caveat, to entreat audiences to accept that one play can never tell the whole story, arrive at ‘the truth’, there is always a remainder. More fundamentally maybe, the audience is invited to question the idea that “commodities are now all that there is to see, the world we see is the world of the commodity” (Debord, 1994: 29). The problem is that if the truth is commoditized, then ethical debate around the truth will soon follow suit, and thus neoliberal ideology becomes inseparable from the technics of the omnipotent ‘market’ (Thompson, 2012). We can also consider how the opening line also admits the possibility of ambiguity, or slippage between competing views of events and characters. Are we simply asked by Prebble to condemn Fastow and Skilling as a gang of greedy, macho criminals (following Stein and Pinto, 2011)? Are we being encouraged to denounce neo-liberal capitalism as legitimizing dishonesty, corruption and vice?

We are directed at times in the play to see both Skilling and Fastow as deplorable villains. Skilling is shown as a bully, ruthlessly undermining the views of his colleagues, committing adultery and aggressively and arrogantly pushing his own interests, with little regard for consequences and responsibilities. Similarly, Fastow appears as socially inept, reckless and increasingly wild and desperate. Perhaps it would be easy to conclude that these men are being held up to be mocked, judged, and more or less condemned, as indeed some academic studies suggest we do (eg. Boje et al., 2004; Stein, 2007; Sims and Brinkmann, 2004; Stein and Pinto, 2011). And yet, Prebble takes pains to complicate our view of these protagonists. Skilling is twice shown supportively and encouragingly helping his daughter understand basic economic principles. In these two brief, but touching scenes, Skilling reminds her that he loves her, and that he wants to make money so he can “provide for you” (p.69), offering
the audience a more sentimental explanation for his actions. Skilling also takes the time to converse with an Enron security guard, and hears about his modest, yet similar plans, to use Enron profits to better his child’s life, “I got a daughter and I’d like her to go to college… Well, things become a lot easier with the stock options you’ve given us” (p.82). Similarly, Fastow is shown to be “delighted” (p.42) to be asked about his new baby, and eager to show pictures of the infant to Skilling (who he names after him). He also names the company he sets up to absorb Enron’s toxic debts LJM, “After my wife and kids” (p.50). This blurring of finance and family complicates the view we may have of these infamous figures as one-dimensional villains.

While we will likely never know the veracity of such intimate moments, we are at least encouraged in this play the space to consider an alternative explanation as to what, in part, motivated Skilling and Faslow, an alternative familial identity, removed from their narcissistic and aggressive corporate spectacles and stunts (cf. Boje et al., 2004; Levine, 2005; Stein, 2007; Stein and Pinto, 2011). Thus, Skilling and Faslow appear more like us at this juncture in the play – the audience may identify with the characters (Boje et al., 2004: 769), and then question their own emotional and moral responses to them. Drama is well-placed to enact such affects. Reading academic studies of the scandal may give detail about the men involved and explain the cost of the financial disaster, but creating scenes which allow the audience to view characters in three-dimensions, as living, breathing, feeling individuals only feet away from them, allows playwrights to offer ambiguous and complex portraits of their identities, to ask the audience to consider how they think and feel these individuals and why, through moments of both dramatic tension and touching and private intimacy.

So what is the overall message of the play? Does it have one at all? We need to look at the end of the play to try and answer this question. Near the end of the play, Prebble tells the audience something of the effect the collapse of Enron has had on the lives of everyday people – the victims of the crisis. At the funeral of Ken Lay a woman approaches Claudia Roe (a fictional character created by Prebble but based (we presume) quite heavily on Rebecca Mark, the CEO of Enron International) and criticises her for encouraging Enron employees to invest in the company, telling her she has “lost a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I have no money to retire on. And I’m living at my sister’s” (p.103). The security officer we met earlier steps in and tells Skilling that “You’re an ordinary crook… Everything’s gone. A future of a certain kind is gone” (p.104). These voices, the voices of the ordinary victims of the Enron scandal, encourage the audience to condemn the figures that were responsible for the downfall. The pathos and suffering in this scene is clear, and neither Roe nor Skilling apologise or show much remorse. At this stage, Prebble exposes the greed and selfishness of these actions as simply wrong and shameful.

However, in the epilogue to Enron, Prebble tells the audience what has become of all the characters depicted in the play (mimicking a similar scene at the end of Serious Money, in which Churchill highlights some of the injustices still being perpetrated by the protagonists). We learn that both Skilling and Fastow were imprisoned, although Fastow received a reduced
sentence for testifying against his formal employers. This moment reminds the audience that they are in fact not witnessing a classical Greek tragedy: contra Boje et al., (2004) this play is not a mega-spectacle where all trauma is fully explained and resolved by the close of the curtain. To forestall the tragic catastrophe, and with it the tendency to view Enron as a mega-spectacle, Prebble inserts a speech from Skilling in which he directly addresses the audience and makes an apology, not just for himself as an individual, but for capitalism itself; yet this apology offers little narrative closure.

Skilling claims firstly not to be simply “a bad man” but a man that “wanted to change the world” (p.105). He goes on to explain that “everything I’ve done in my life worth anything has been done in a bubble; in a state of extreme hope and trust and stupidity. Would you have kids if you knew the pain of them arriving, and then of them leaving” (p.106). He also invites the audience to “hold a mirror up to nature” (p.106) and a huge stock market line appears on the wall behind him, glowing. Skilling tells the audience that “there’s your mirror” (emphasis added), inviting them to see themselves and assess their own role in the crisis. The effect of an actor holding a mirror up to an audience is self-explanatory – they see themselves reflected back in a fairly basic but nevertheless effective theatrical device. He concludes, “Every dip, every crash, […] that’s you. Your brilliant stupidity... All humanity is here” (p.106). Here again Prebble asks the audience to question the boundaries between ‘them’ and ‘us’, between ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ accounts of the crises (cf. Boje et al., 2004; Stein, 2007), although not this time reference to the family, but our own involvement in the hubris of finance.

Working along a similar critical vein to De Cock et al., (2011), Prebble problematizes the isolation of finance from society; however the implications of this move are far from utopian: Skilling is little different to ordinary audience members; we are all partly responsible for financial disasters in our desire for new products, new savings and more consumption. The way in which Skilling draws analogy between personal and financial hubris implicates us all in scandal; the markets merely reflect humanity’s constant greed and stupidity. Here is Prebble’s conclusion: we may condemn Skilling for his actions and Enron’s support of neoliberalization (for an account of the personal involvement of Enron’s executives in deregulation see Froud et al., 2004)) for allowing these disasters to unfold, but how extraordinary were his actions and beliefs? And whilst ‘neoliberal’ techniques such as deregulation, can be criticised for enabling greed and selfishness, can they not also creatively empower those eager to transform the world, for better or worse, and do these opportunities not also involve some hubris, some bubble, some risk (not least playwriting)? After all, the de-regulation of cultural products, including playwriting, is central to struggles for the good life outside liberal democracies. Ultimately, Prebble suggests to the audience that the only autonomy neo-liberal organization has to society is its moral indifference, a conclusion which Skilling himself, embedded in the machinations of financial innovation and its phantasmic affects (De Cock et al., 2011), appeared tragically unable to reach, believing instead that despite his ruthlessness, he was doing ‘God’s Work’ (Levine, 2005). If we regard neoliberalism as an evil unity, we simply echo Skilling’s specious moralizing. And thus perhaps we should regard this play as a ‘meta-spectacle’ for neoliberalization, a (re)staging of
the unresolvable catastrophe of the Enron mega-spectacle (Boje et al., 2004), a thoroughly neoliberal, not Greek, catastrophe.

4 The Global Financial Crises

4.1 Background

The effects of the near total collapse of global financial markets in late September 2008, fuelled by the write-down of $4.4 trillion of toxic debts (Lee et al., 2009: 742), are on-going, from; nationalized banks, reduced public finance, sovereign debt crises, declining or slowing economic growth, to increased youth unemployment, shrinking welfare states, privatized public services, growing income inequality, wage depreciation, and mortgage defaults. If Enron was neoliberal angina, the GFC looked like a cardiac arrest. Few scholars anticipated the GFC; yet since the crises academic analysis has made these events appear inevitable: many suggest the deregulatory mantra of neoliberalization, embodied in the 1999 Financial Services Modernisation Act (US), freed financial institutions to put risky short-term gains above longer-term economic stability (Conyon et al., 2011). Other scholars have suggested how enhanced auditor independence as stipulated in SOX, fuelled disengagement and disinformation rather than transparency and accountability (Conyon et al., 2011). Another body of work argues how complex financial innovation intended to spread investor risk, fostered confidence in trades in global products that could not be properly understood inside extant organizational forms (Deroy and Clegg, 2011; Mackenzie, 2011); in the face of such indiscernible risks, short-term cash bonuses compensated for longer-term customer relationships (Knights and Tullberg, 2012). Others suggest how neoliberalism (defined as deregulation and beliefs in market independence) encouraged a false, and still evident, view of financial markets as separate to the ‘real economy’ (French et al., 2009; Harvey, 2010; Lee et al., 2009), allowing managers to focus purely on shareholder value (Dore, 2008; McSweeney, 2009).

Organizational analysis suggests the incubation of the GFC was far more impersonal than the shady dealings behind the Enron scandal: “If one bank retreated from the sector, another was only too willing to meet market demand even if they were no surer of the underlying design and credit worthiness of offered products.” (Lee et al., 2009: 731). However, we perhaps should be careful to not over-play structural explanations here as they can exonerate those involved, and suggest market forces are indeed autonomous. What is perhaps most startling about the GFC are the fluctuation in the accounts of those involved in financial institutions crises from describing themselves, and their organizations, as masters (De Cock et al., 2011; Stein, 2011) or pawns of market forces (Tourish and Hargie, 2012; Whittle and Mueller, 2012). Perhaps such indifference about market vs. individual agency is simply part and parcel of what Harvey (2005) identifies as the essential agnosticism at the heart of neoliberal ideology. It is this relationship between the autonomy of traders and ‘the market’, which is the subject of David Hare’s documentary play, The Power of Yes.
5.2 David Hare’s *The Power of Yes*

On the poster for the Royal Court production of Prebble’s *Enron* are the words “There was a warning. And its name was Enron”. If there was a warning to be heard after the events at Enron, it was that the mismanagement at the company potentially sowed the seeds for the wider global financial crisis. The words on the poster draw a direct comparison between the two events, and suggest that we can see one as pre-empting the other. And as one event has resonances with the other, so too does drama seek to explore both catastrophes. David Hare’s *The Power of Yes*, explores the events leading up to the financial crisis, and seeks to explain what caused the catastrophe.

The subtitle of the play “A dramatist seeks to understand the financial crisis” explicitly states that the play will take a meta-theatrical approach – that is, it does not aim to present the audience with a finished, polished view of events, but rather self-consciously reflects upon its theatrical production. The main ‘character’ is what the text describes as Author, and this is clearly Hare himself. Furthermore, the opening lines of the play tell the audience that “This isn’t a play. It’s a story” (p.3) which recalls the opening of *Enron* in which the lawyer admits the play will only offer partial truth. However, this play “is not a play” because it is not constructed naturalistically; rather it is the story of how a play about the financial crisis might come to be written. The Author goes about finding out what factors may have led to the GFC, and interviews a number of ‘characters’ who might have answers for him. These are generally ‘real’ people from the financial world, such as Jon Cruddas MP, Howard Davies, George Soros and Alan Greenspan. These were interviewed prior to the writing of *The Power of Yes* by David Hare himself. He then took the content of those interviews and created a theatrical narrative from their words. The play represents these words to an audience; the play is therefore simply about the process of writing the play itself.

This form of theatre, where real words spoken by real people are reproduced by actors pretending to be those ‘characters’, is called verbatim theatre, and David Hare has previously produced two other verbatim plays; *The Permanent Way* (2003), about the privatisation of the railways, and *Stuff Happens* (2004) which explores the 2003 Iraq War. Verbatim theatre offers an audience an insight into the ‘truth’ of a situation – or at least, it can offer competing views expressed through the words of the protagonists. In this way “theatre and journalism overlap” (Hammond and Steward, 2008: 10). It is often used to explore complex political situations, and perhaps “it is somehow better suited [than conventional theatre] to the task of dealing with serious subject matter” (Hammond and Steward, 2008: 11). Of course, the challenge in writing this sort of theatre is in taking simply the words of another and creating a story from the material. Max Stafford-Clark, theatre producer of some of Hare’s plays, remarks that it’s difficult “to make the transition between someone talking to the audience and drama” (Hammond and Stewart, 2008: 51) – to take a series of interviews and find a story within them. Similarly, actor Nicholas Tennant, who played Jon Cruddas in the original production, suggests that “It’s not a lecture: there’s a story with a journey; the journey is about imparting information, lots of things happening and then arriving at a conclusion. Without that beginning, middle and end, it’s a flat lecture, so to put it on stage you have to
take the audience on an emotional journey” (NT, 2009: 7). The relationship between the play and ‘the truth’ is therefore in constant negotiation – events and testimonies must be accurate and fair, and yet the dramatist must also seek to create something which can be performed as ‘drama’. Hare does this in the way the play is structured and ordered – the play builds in tension and emotion, charting the chronological momentum towards catastrophic conclusion, and he plays with the emotional response of the audience by juxtaposing characters with different views, for example the Citizen Advice Bureau adviser, who painfully and simply explains the impact of debt on ordinary people, with the financial journalist who quotes Fred Goodwin as saying “I want my pension [of £2000 per day] more than I want to be popular” (p.64).

It is through the lens of verbatim theatre that we must approach The Power of Yes. Through exposing the role of the author as a character seeking to understand the events of the financial collapse, Hare is able to present to the audience a narrative whereby we are exposed to different views and positions, and these are then filtered through the author who presents them back to the audience as more easily understandable concepts. The attempt to ‘understand’ what occurred is both an innocent quest but also a rather dry and ironic critique in itself – how could these figures ever give an account of themselves which would truly atone for their actions? How could we ever truly ‘understand’ what went wrong? In this sense, the play is also a judgement and trial, in which various characters seek to explain the inexplicable to an increasingly confused and incredulous writer. The play thus dovetails thematically and temporally with the Banking Crisis Inquiry of the Treasury Committee of the UK House of Commons in 2009 (see Hargie, 2010; Tourish and Hargie, 2012; Whittle and Mueller, 2012).

As we outlined at the start of this paper, the term ‘catastrophe’ has a dramatic heritage and Hare certainly exploits the conventional form of dramatic tragedy to help structure the explanation of this financial catastrophe. Sir Howard Davies, economist and first chair of the FSA, claims “I think of the whole thing as a Shakespearean tragedy, and like all the great tragedies it ends with bodies all over the stage” (p.6). Davies continues this motif and, by the end of the play, he identifies those bodies as “RBS, HBOS, Lehman, Northern Rock, that’s just to begin” (p.56). An anonymous Hedge Fund Manager helps Author understand the situation in America by explaining that Hank Paulson “needed Bush to understand [the gravity of the situation], so he dramatised. He said, ‘By the end of the week you won’t be able to get cash from an ATM machine” (p.52-3). This explicit use of drama is employed throughout the play to help, ostensibly Author but also the audience, understand the complexities of the financial crisis. Davies uses another device to help explain the meltdown – the word SLUMP – “a drama in five acts… Sub-prime, Liquidity, Unravelling, Meltdown, Pumping” (p.42). This acronym, and the dramatic structure it represents, creates a structure for the emotion exposition of the play. Classical theatre uses a five act structure to describe the development and arc of the action. The five acts refer to “1. Exposition, 2. Rising Action, 3. Climax, 4. Falling Action, 5. Denouement or catastrophe” (Unwin, 2011: 170). The mapping of this structure onto the financial crisis explicitly encourages us to see events
through a dramatic lens, and helps justify the use of the theatre to explore the meltdown. We can see, Davies and, by extension Hare, suggest, the beginnings of the crisis in the Sub-prime market – this would be the ‘exposition’ or setting the scene. The unravelling or climax in act three introduces the audience to events in America, widening the action out globally. The conclusion of these events, the final catastrophe or denouement, is described by Davies as “pumping” or quantitative easing, described here as “The government’s throwing money out of helicopters” (p.56). However, in classical theatre, the ending of a tragedy, as described earlier, doesn’t just bring chaos and disaster, it also provides punishment and retribution or, as Author puts it, “a reckoning” (p.56).

Hare juxtaposes this line with the entrance of a financial journalist whose role is to explain “the story of Fred Goodwin” (p.57). She describes him in entirely unsympathetic terms, recounting the story of his need to rehearse for his appearance in front of the Commons Committee to try and appear more penitent because “Fred said he wasn’t sorry… Fred didn’t think anyone has the right to ask him questions” (p.59). She goes onto explain that “I talk to a lot of bankers, and I’ve yet to meet one who is in any way contrite. Not one who feels apologetic” (p.60). Here Hare is at his most critical and the audience are prompted to condemn the actions of those responsible for the crisis most explicitly. Author [i.e. Hare] declares, “I’ve tried for three months, I’ve really tried, not to get angry. But what possible defence can Fred Goodwin have?” (p.60). When the journalist suggests that bankers don’t accept that they’re not worth huge amounts of money any more than playwrights refuse to accept the views of a theatre critic who rubbishes their play, Author retorts, “But as far as I know playwrights don’t make a living out of fucking up people’s lives” (p.62). This outburst is followed by “a long pause” (p.62).

The long pause speaks of lack of resolution here, and the final denial of reckoning, means that we can’t see this play, or indeed the GFC more widely, simply as a retelling of classical tragedy, or a mega-spectacle where the guilty are judged and the world can carry on (as Boje et al., 2004 suggests of Enron). There is a lack of closure here, entirely because whilst some people are angry and resentful, others refuse to accept blame or appear contrite. Indeed, while the public may hold bankers to blame for the GFC, bankers tend to ascribe fault to systemic forces (Hargie et al., 2010), perhaps to forestall increased regulation, while our anger continues, witness, the recent cap by the EU on bank bonuses (BBC, 2013).

Here we return to our original and opening remarks – the ‘catastrophe’ at the end of the play is left without closure or conclusion with two opposing views refusing to be reconciled. In seeking to understand the financial crisis, as this play explicitly sets out to do, the underlying aim is also to identify who or perhaps what is to blame. Mackenzie (2011) suggests that such a search is folly, as the GFC is far too complex to evoke an ‘amoral calculator’ to judge the actors involved. Instead, Mackenzie (2011) proposes that the GFC was in part, due to the law of unintended consequences: extant organizational structures within ratings agencies and banks were unable to comprehend a set of novel products (Collateral Debt Obligations funded by Asset Backed Securities), that transcended organizationally divided notions of risk. Hare’s Author approaches such sentiments. In the final scene, Author tries to decide what the
‘story’ of these events is, what kind of overarching narrative he can find to help explain what he has heard. He decides that this story should be about “the death of an idea… [the idea] that markets are decent and wise […]. That idea is over. It’s dead. It’s lying on the stage” (p.67). Here Hare, like Prebble with Enron, is explicit: the problem with finance isn’t that it is immoral, but that it is amoral, its lacks a concept of civilization (De Cock et al., 2011: 168). This final and heavily critical tone is restated in the final words of the play where George Soros quotes Alan Greenspan as saying “The benefits of the market are so great that you have to live with the price” to which Soros replied “Yes, but Alan, the people who end of paying the price are never the people who get the benefits” (p.72).

Ending with a quotation is entirely appropriate for a piece of verbatim theatre, and it reminds us that the play is a collage of different voices and competing views. In this sense, Hare’s play stages ante-narratives – fragmented storylines that compete to tell us how things are (Boje, 2001; Boje et al., 2004; Whittle and Mueller, 2012). Yet, unlike organizational analyses of ante-narratives around the GFC (Hargie, 2010; Tourish and Hargie, 2012; Whittle and Mueller, 2012), Hare, as Prebble with Enron, remains ambivalent on the outcome of such negotiations, resisting the troubling temptation to either individualize systemic fault or systemize individual actions (Whittle and Mueller, 2012: 135); instead Hare merely directs our attention to those who have no voice at all in such moral storytelling and yet are affected by it. No doubt it is within grand rhetorical negotiations where the power of neoliberal capitalism, post-GFC, is (re)habilitated (see Tourish and Hargie, 2012; Whittle and Mueller, 2012); yet such discursive analysis fails to connect with silent publics who suffer from the outcomes of such contests. Here perhaps is Hare’s critical keynote.

Hare ends his play with a damning indictment of neoliberal beliefs, and explicitly condemns the amorality of capitalism. Whether the GFC really is the death of an idea remains debatable; indeed as Tourish and Hargie (2012) and Whittle and Mueller (2012) make clear, in actual GFC trials, bankers and politicians managed to engage in more moral storytelling, obscuring the effects of the GFC, with simplifying, if analytically fertile, account of villains becoming victims. While Hare is perhaps guilty himself of such narrative simplification, as he invites us to celebrate at the death of ‘the market’, through Greenspan and Soros’s words he, and they, also acknowledge its appeal. Both Hare’s play and Prebble’s Enron, offer a catastrophe that resists closure and resolution and thus both enact neoliberal tragedies, presenting us with stories that question the discursive categories (‘us’, ‘them’, ‘hero’, ‘victim’, ‘victim’ etc.) we regularly deploy to understand neoliberalism, its contradictions, conceits and utopanism.

4. Concluding Remarks

Prebble’s Enron and Hare’s The Power of Yes, demonstrate that political theatre is making a strong, critical, and nuanced, contribution to critiques of neoliberal organization. Through our analysis we have identified several ways in which both plays not only vibrantly anticipate critical themes in organizational analysis (whether on ante-narratives, corporate spectacles, or the autonomy of finance from society), but also extend and problematize these themes. For
example, Hare’s play draws critical analysis away beyond a focus on the discursive negotiations of cause around the GFC (Tourish and Hargie, 2012; Whittle and Mueller, 2012), towards those excluded from such contests – a group who always pay the highest price for market failures. Similarly, Prebble’s *Enron* deepens Boje et al., (2004) analysis of Enron to include a category of meta-spectacles: products, like Prebble’s *Enron* itself, that deploy phantasmic affects to question whether we really do indeed live in a Society of Spectacle (Debord, 1994), stunned into political pacification by our insatiable capitalist desire (cf. Böhm and Batta, 2010)?

Parker (2002) suggests that academia is not the sole purveyor of critical views of market management, and, in the light of the analysis presented here; we might add popular culture should not be the almost exclusive focus of cultural studies of organization. Indeed, in preparing this paper we were struck by the difficulty finding others that had worked the seam between organization and political theatre, as opposed to performance art (see Biehl-Missal, 2012). While some explanations around theatre’s lack of popularity have been given earlier in the paper, in the light of our analysis, we will briefly consider the relationship between the institutions of theatre and neo-liberal capitalism.

As *Enron* and *The Power of Yes* attest, political theatre offers a rich vein of critique of neo-liberal organization; however, it is also important to recognize that theatre is a valuable global commodity: London’s Theatres generated over £500m from 14.1m visitors in 2010 (SOLT, 2013); in 2012 New York’s Broadway generated $1.1b from 12.33m visitors (Broadway League, 2013). The Society of London Theatres (SOLT) indicates that the majority of this revenue is usually generated from large musical production in London’s commercially funded West End (SOLT, 2013). Nevertheless, even the publically funded UK National Theatre (NT) is, under the *de facto* neoliberalization of public arts funding, increasingly required to become more entrepreneurial; the NT currently sells corporate packages for £40,000 in exchange for backstage visits and sponsored branding events for numerous corporations (National Theatre, 2013). As a result, the National Theatre is currently supported by over fifty corporations including Goldman Sachs, Daily Mail & General Trust Plc, British American Tobacco and American Airlines (National Theatre, 2013). Other publically funded theatres in the UK such as the Royal Court and Royal Shakespeare Company must thank a similar mix of corporate patrons (RSC, 2013; Royal Court, 2013).

The liveness of theatre, that is, its very capacity to affect us, to move us, and evade mass market consumption, inescapably also discriminates theatre as a relatively high value product; this arguably positions theatre within a ‘higher’ circuit of cultural capital, and so, theatre, and even political theatre, arguably operates as a conduit for social exclusion on the basis of distinction in taste (Bourdieu, 1984). Despite moves to encourage inclusivity, theatres continue to attract wealthier consumers (Broadway League, 2012; SOLT, 2003) who can pay for the high cost of watching a live play (and babysitting, diner, hotels, transport etc.). What is more, such consumers can and do consume a variety of other high income products either at work or home, including perhaps investment plans from Goldman Sachs
(we fail to see why such companies would otherwise invest in such institutions in they did not help them market their brand – cf. De Cock et al., 2011: 168).

And yet, contra Bourdieu (1984), we argue that such cultural elitism should serve more as an imperative than impediment for analysis. If Harvey (2005) is correct that neoliberalism is mobilized by and for ruling elites, then the theatre, the polo match, even perhaps the drag hunt, and other unpopular/elite cultural sites, possess equal importance to popular culture as a potential site for the transformation of neoliberal organization; albeit for different reasons. To choose to ignore such unpopular/elite sites, where those who, for Harvey (2005, 2010) at least, should benefit most from neoliberalization, often choose to spend their money and time, would seem to amount to us nothing but the victory of inverted snobbery over critical thinking. Extending the logic of Parker (2006), we have no reason to believe that polo, theatre, or hunting, are inherently any more or less wedded to a monolithic ideology of market managerialism and neoliberalism than television sit-coms, Hollywood film and rap music. Many equally unpopular, though perhaps more affordable, cultural products, from modernist novels (DeCock, 2006) to art photography (Cohen et al., 2006), have already assisted critiques of market managerialism, and by extension neoliberal ideology. Indeed, by any measure management and organizational theory is itself elitist (Rehn, 2008), yet far from trivial, monolithic, or uncritical. Moreover, that Goldman Sachs and other neoliberal exemplars, directly fund institutions well renowned for promoting left-leaning political theatre is perhaps as much a cause for hope as despair in those seeking to rework neoliberal organization. Churchill’s _Serious Money_ rather ironically and archly points out the relationship between arts and banking as a disgraced insider trader is ‘redeemed’ by the end of the play and accepted back into society as “chairman of the board of the National Theatre” (2002: 112).

So where do these plays leave the story of neoliberal forms of organization? There is more than ample evidence that leading policy-makers, think-tanks and corporate gurus have resisted substantial revisions to their belief that ‘the free market’, whatever that might mean, is an ethic in itself, capable of organizing human activity in the best interests of all. In the UK, witness; policy protection of the City of London (Raco, and Street, 2012), £13b in bank bonuses (ONS, 2012), the shrinking welfare state (Hodkinson and Robbins, 2013), and the marketization of the National Health Service (Pollock and Price, 2012) and government attempts to expand mortgage lending; all of the above, evidence the neoliberalization project is back in full throttle, with all its utopianism, contradictions and conceits, left remarkably intact. At its best political theatre can draw attention to the absurdities of this story: all hope is not lost, because the story of the market has no author, it adheres to no guiding moral principle, neo-liberal capitalism presages neither a tragic or heroic catastrophe (despite what is claimed on its behalf by both the Left and Right), and this is how and why critters can enjoy meta-spectacles like _Enron_ and _The Power of Yes_.

References


Osborne, J. (1956) Look Back in Anger


Royal Court (2013) Our Supporters, Royal Court Theatre
http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/support-us/our-supporters/

RSC (2013) Corporate Members and Partners, Royal Shakespeare Company,


