

Funding the Future

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There is a moment in every day when I have had enough of politics, tax, economics and all that goes with it. I take the dog for a walk. Talk to the family or a friend. Or pursue a hobby. None of that are done just to get away from work. But they all help me do so. I find it helps. Balance has to be an objective in life, and however great my passion for the topics I write about here they cannot be everything in my existence.

But Brexit keeps intruding now. The seemingly never ending machinations of incompetence that have lead to paralysis followed by an inability to decide how to progress invades too much of my time. And even with my capacity for politics I have had almost enough of it.

So I sat back and asked myself why.

The first is that I do want balance. And there is nothing at all balanced about Brexit. It was always dogmatic and hopelessly thought through. Then it was pursued as if the case for it was emphatic, when it never was. Alienation was built in from the start.

Second, it has highlighted the failing of every neoliberal politician who, when they see a problem run away from it, presuming the market always has a better solution than they can offer. Only in this case the solution has to be political and there is no politician left in many parties in the Commons with any comprehension as to how to deal with such an issue. Most have for so long given up political thought in favour of market acquiescence that their DNA as politicians has had the ability to decide removed from its structure.

Third, there is the possibility in all this that by our own collective action we acquiesced in this failure. In fact, somehow by not stopping it we facilitated it. And that is uncomfortable.

Fourth, there is just that feeling that it's time for for pain to stop. Surely the ibuprofen should work soon? And yet it doesn't.

In that case is this, like a hangover, our own self-inflicted wound that we must live with? I hope it is not. But what does that mean then?

Have we to join a political party to effect change? Has that worked for Labour?

Or to stand for office (ample opportunity for that in the upcoming local elections)? I personally am not inclined to do so, but hope others will.

Or is it time to simply start telling a better story as the basis for change? I get to this last point for a reason. It turned out to be the theme of a discussion I took part in with the journalist Oliver Bullough, author of *Moneyland*, at City, University of London, last evening. The talk was arranged by the English department and largely attended by students on the MA in non-fiction creative writing.

Oliver and I discussed why we were storytellers. Because of course we are. Our characters are real. Our narratives are those we observe. We do not make them up. But the way we relate what we see is, of course, creative storytelling. I am unashamed about this. Story telling is powerful, appropriate and even necessary. If in doubt watch the video by New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern this morning. That is story telling to most powerful effect.

So what is the story that we need to tell?

That we are all one humanity, more bound by commonality than divided by any accident of birth?

That those accidents of birth are, however, part of our story and so must be respected?

That this respect enriches and does not diminish us?

That we stand or fall together now, on this our single planet that we call home?

And that we must work together to make it work for all is us?

Isn't that the story we must now tell, 8nto which we can weave all our preferences as to sub-plot, emphasis and character that we wish, so long as we remember our aim? I came away thinking so.

And where does Brexit fit into that, as a narrative of alienation, promoted difference, indifference and contempt on so many levels (and yes I include Remain in some of the criticism; me too, if you like)? It does not fit with our humanity. It is not the story we need. And maybe the inability to decide upon it is because this really is not the story we want to tell, hear or partake in at some very deep level.

We know the EU is not perfect.

We know it has had political failings.

As we have had, too.

But this was not the story to tell to find a solution to those problems.

There is a better story to tell.

Mine is the Green New Deal in its broadest understanding, as a tale of survival, commonality, joint endeavour, enterprise, change, respect and hope.

Isn't that a better narrative than the one we've got?