

Weird Séance: Extras (Revisited)

DYSPRAXIC DIALECTICS A PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

Stood in far-front from you was me - a raggedy dancing, haired-man with shit radio-mic I call a "radio-mic". "This is Petra, she's the technician" I say to everyone, whilst handing you this tech-desk:

ON OFF H H H H H H

"I'm too loud" you'll remember I said and you try to try to turn me down gently. Doing it with your finger on the page. You try to try to turn me down with your finger slide on the page but "I'm still too loud" I say too loud. You try to do it with your finger-slide on the page but "quieter" I say. We play this for a while and then "for fuck sake it's the slide-finger move across the page and that's clear, got it" but then "fuck it" and the shit radio-mic that I call a radio mic is full-flung at you and there's a little bruise on your cheek or knee now "that goes too far" you think now (think it) or just "that's actually quite real" (think it). Ready for the Séance I telling you to go with it, it's just you and me and we're in the woods and our friends have been killed in a performance I did. Let's make contact.

"We're alone" I say "but if you are reading this not alone in a library for example or a tube think to yourself 'What is to that I'm doing in my head (touch you head) and in my heart (touch your heart) to not be being alone" and then must go with it. There's a ritual before the séance and I'll ask you to go through with me and after that we'll contact your dead friends or lovers or colleagues or whoever you are thinking of (imagine it) now who was with you when you came to my Weird Séance show and they died and everyone died but it was just you and me who survived.



LOUD "Phillip", "Eleanor" Weird Séance - the text-based deconstruction of the series of performative-based deconstructions of fictional participatory performance called 'Weird Séance' in which most people died appeared in the On Dialectics issue of Performance Research Vol. 21, No. 3 (June 2016). (You edited it) the performative text piece or article as they liked to call it was interactive, drawing the reader into a calamitous struggle to choose their own adventure through the off-to-kill-to-retroactively analyses of the show. EXIT STRATEGIES: a Long Twin were obfuscated. I fantasized about leaving holes or blanking bits that caused the real-life auto-slaughter. Phillip Eleanor as probably now the only people who continue to do performance research, what they liked to call 'performance research' about performance since the publication of that article and the subsequent death-stare we could stop performing but we still do. In a way I blame myself because it was said yes but you should not feel bad. I mean it. We're just here about blame except for the do-death bit which I have left out or cut out. Phillip Eleanor: You may find that there are parts of this text that you are unable to understand well. If this happens I want you to ask yourself: what is it that I am doing in my head and my heart that is stopping myself understanding this text? And then carry on reading. Phillip Eleanor you may find that you feel uncomfortable when some parts of the text become uncomfortable. If this happens I want you to ask yourself: what is it I'm doing in my head and my heart that is stopping myself feeling comfortable with this and uncomfortable myself with it. And then carry on reading. And then carry on reading.

contact them after this ritual. There's a ritual I like to do with you, it's simple and you just have to follow me. It's transformative. I've done it before: we say "I'm changing" and "I'm changing" and "I'm changing" we take our clothes off and tear up the page and the article and the journal and we stick it to ourselves with the parcel tape (bring parcel tape) all the time "I'm changing I'm changing" which we say too loud, too loud but it's just you and me (imagine it) with no clothes on and with the Performance Research on Dialectics all torn up and stuck to our bodies with parcel tape and it took ages we were doing it for ages "I'm changing" and the tearing up and finding the end of the parcel tape but keep this bit because to read what happens next or tape it in your sightline. A knee or cheek works well.

And then we've made brief and disappointing contact with the dead friends or lovers or colleagues or family now that you lost during Weird Séance: Extras in what turned out to be the last ever performance research in the last ever Performance Research - 'Performance Research Vol. 21, No. 3 (June 2016): On Dialectics'. It's interesting because I was talking to Gareth White (not true) about participation and agency at a Long Table (not true) about agency in participatory performance. I told him about how I really like to

participants and we've got about three minutes (three sentences) left so it's over to you I say at this point and 'there can be silence' and 'there can be awkwardness'. Phillip Eleanor you may find that you feel uncomfortable when some parts of the text become uncomfortable. If this happens I want you to ask yourself: what is it I'm doing in my head and my heart that is stopping myself feeling comfortable with this and uncomfortable myself with it. And then carry on reading. And then carry on reading.

Weird Séance



Image 2. Daniel Oliver, Weird Séance at SPILL Festival of Performance, Ipswich, 2014. Photo: Guido Mencari

The Weird Séance performance project is a series of raucously deconstructionist, roughly layered participatory performances about participatory performance. Each show is haphazardly crow-barred into its site and context; rejigged, added to, undone and perverted so that no two performances are the same. The plot, however, is repeatedly revisited: we are in the future looking back on the traumatic incident that occurred right here, in this space, during my show. I am returning to the site to partially reconstruct the tragic performance, to discuss blame, and to attempt to make amends with those who survived. The site for this performance of Weird Séance is two neighbouring pages in the 'artist's pages' section of 'Performance Research Vol. 21, No. 3 (June 2016): On Dialectics'. It was first created for Candida Powell-William's CHAIN event (2012) at Lewisham Arthouse, London 24th May. In this event each artist that performed gave a word or sentence to another artist who performed. We had to ensure these words or sentences appeared in our contributions to the event. My word was 'bomb'. Since then it has been performed in a variety of contexts and sites, including the Poetry Library at the South Bank Centre (Dentalflux, 4th December 2013), an abandoned police station in Ipswich (SPILL Festival of Performance, 30th October 2014), the Arts Bar and Café at Toynbee Studios (Steakhouse Live: Tenderloin 3, 11th November 2015), and at the Pit Theatre, Barbican Centre (SPILL Festival of Performance, 7th November 2015). It is part of an ongoing awkward participatory performance practice that entangles precarious fantasies with clunky reality and foregrounds the liveness inherent in working with unprepared participants. They are unashamedly dyspraxic, embracing an off-kilter

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Auslander, Phillip (2006), 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation' PAJ, 84: 1-10. Austin, J.L., (1962) How to Do Things with Words, J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (eds), Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962 Grant, David (2010) That's the Way I Think: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and ADHD Explained, Oxon and New York: Routledge. Lavery, Carl, and David Williams (2011), 'Practising Participation: A Conversation with Lone Twin' Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts, 16(4): 7-14. Zizek, Slavoj, (2014) Event, London: Penguin

relationship with co-ordination, social interaction and executive planning. The idea behind the main message behind the show content is rooted in an OVER IDENTIFICATION with two theories: 1) Phillip Auslander's observation of the 'performativity of performance documentation' and the 'radical possibility that (2006) David Grant describes dyspraxia (formal known as 'clumsy child syndrome') as a layering of a 'small visible part' and a 'very authentic and considerable hidden portion' (50): these pieces derive out of a from treating the document as an indexical access point to the past event, but from perceiving the document itself as a dyspraxia is the element of reflects an artist's clumsiness and associated aesthetic project or difficulties with motor coordination. The hidden aspect is the underlying present audience difficulties with attention, memory (9). The so-called and some tasks requiring dysfunction that comes perceptual skills. (50) with dyspraxia appear I am diagnosed as dyspraxic, and, according to my diagnostic report, have particular difficulties with executive functioning and imposing order and structure on activities. These 'hidden' parts of my off-kiltered subjectivity put me in lightly-troubled position in relation to certain ethical standards for participatory performance practices. The clunky, yet insistent imposition of 'order and structure' in my shows means they exists as farcically fragile dictatorships. My visible clumsiness and discoordination heightens the sense of danger as I run around with a real axe on a floor covered in slippery fake blood. In a conversation with Carl Lavery and David Williams (2011), performance art dud Lone Twin, Greg Whelan describes how they are uncomfortable with examples of participatory art that doesn't endlessly signpost possible escape routes' (10). In my performances I direct participants towards 'escape routes' in the same way that I direct lost individuals who ask for help getting to their destinations. The information is there but it is buried in disorganization and accidental inattentiveness. Examples include 'difficulties participating in discussions, leading to an apparent unwillingness to join in, or making contributions that do not seem relevant.' (2006, 10a)

Dyspraxia

In That's the Way I Think: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and ADHD Explained (2010) David Grant describes dyspraxia (formal known as 'clumsy child syndrome') as a layering of a 'small visible part' and a 'very authentic and considerable hidden portion' (50): these pieces derive out of a from treating the document as an indexical access point to the past event, but from perceiving the document itself as a dyspraxia is the element of reflects an artist's clumsiness and associated aesthetic project or difficulties with motor coordination. The hidden aspect is the underlying present audience difficulties with attention, memory (9). The so-called and some tasks requiring dysfunction that comes perceptual skills. (50) with dyspraxia appear I am diagnosed as dyspraxic, and, according to my diagnostic report, have particular difficulties with executive functioning and imposing order and structure on activities. These 'hidden' parts of my off-kiltered subjectivity put me in lightly-troubled position in relation to certain ethical standards for participatory performance practices. The clunky, yet insistent imposition of 'order and structure' in my shows means they exists as farcically fragile dictatorships. My visible clumsiness and discoordination heightens the sense of danger as I run around with a real axe on a floor covered in slippery fake blood. In a conversation with Carl Lavery and David Williams (2011), performance art dud Lone Twin, Greg Whelan describes how they are uncomfortable with examples of participatory art that doesn't endlessly signpost possible escape routes' (10). In my performances I direct participants towards 'escape routes' in the same way that I direct lost individuals who ask for help getting to their destinations. The information is there but it is buried in disorganization and accidental inattentiveness. Examples include 'difficulties participating in discussions, leading to an apparent unwillingness to join in, or making contributions that do not seem relevant.' (2006, 10a)

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There can be silence' and 'There might be awkwardness' are two bullet points on the 'Long Table Etiquette' document provided for those interested in hosting or attending one of Lois Weaver's 'Long Table' events. 'Long Tables' is Weaver's experimental approach to open discussion that re-appropriates a 'dinner-narrv atmosphere as a public forum'. Drew, Sharon (2006) 'Dyspraxia', in Neurodiversity in Higher Education: Positive Responses to Specific Learning Differences, David Pollack (ed), West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 91-123.

Weaver, Lois, 'Long Table Etiquette', http://publicaddresssystems.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/takeawaylongtableprotocol.pdf, accessed 5 February 2016.