

NOTES TOWARDS A DIALECTICAL THEATER, DECONSTRUCTED,
RECONSTRUCTED, AND ULTIMATELY DISCARDED
A Love Story

By: Les Hunter

CHARACTERS:

POINT A- A woman of any age. White or black. Red, yellow, blue, green.
Presents the Dialectic. Always addresses the audience unless
otherwise noted. PHIL calls her by the name of the actress.

PHIL- A man, same age, race, qualifications. Addresses POINT A.

SETTING:

A stage. POINT A and PHIL are physically separated by a line on the stage until the end.

POINT A

(Places a sign on stage, "Stasis: All the World is Green")

Hi. How are you? If you'd take your seats I'd like to begin.

(Beat)

I'm here to present you with a dialectic.

PHIL

(To A)

Hi. I'm Phil. Phil Bee. I know. Stupid name. It only gets worse.

POINT A

"Present" maybe isn't right.

(Places a sign on stage that reads: "Intrusion: Wherein the protagonists meet")

I want to open up the possibilities of a Dialectical Theater. To turn it on its head.

PHIL

God I hate parties. Everybody just, you know *talks*.

POINT A

I have this fragile little hope that maybe I'll do something new.

PHIL

It's not like anybody ever says anything new.

POINT A

This is what I'm going to do: I'll take a traditional well-made play-as you can see it's already begun. And I'll dissect it using Brecht's idea of theater as a space to present opposing thoughts. A kind of--demonstration of a pure dialectical theater.

PHIL

I just never see the point.

POINT A

Actually I have two of them. Tonight you can call me POINT A.

PHIL

I didn't catch your name....That's right. You *didn't* say it.

(POINT A holds up a sign with the actress' name on it).

_____? Really? That's...a fantastic name.

POINT A

Think of him as Point B. But you can call him Phil if you want.

PHIL

Can I get you a drink?

POINT A

Tomorrow's another matter. Maybe tomorrow, across town, someone will call him Biff. He'll push back the door to reveal his father standing before him. He'll beam in expectation. But then, in that moment, forcing open the door to his father's hotel room, he'll finally realize, this man who he—

PHIL and POINT A

--played football with on the front lawn. This man who came home every day and gave mother a rose- this man- this father—

POINT A

--will have another lover. Biff will finally discover his father is a liar and a cheater. He'll be heartbroken.

PHIL

You're famous, right? I couldn't help noticing, that's all. I thought I recognized your smile.

(POINT A *smiles at him*).

That's it. You're an actress? Or I mean, it's an *actor*, right? I saw you in something.

POINT A

Tonight we can call him Phil.

PHIL

I know—it was one of those little shows that you go to somewhere downtown. I had this friend who was always in stuff like that. He would Facebook invite me to everything. And you go to one or two because you feel like you have to but then you realize that most of them are really bad and you would rather have a beer and watch T.V. I mean—God. I'm a total jerk.

POINT A

There's a reason he's called *intrusion*.

(POINT A *exits*).

PHIL

The thing is I remember you. You played some kind of religious girl who wanted to come out to her father. You were gay. I mean, your character was gay. What I mean to say is- you were good. I believed you were her.

(PHIL *exits. A Beat. POINT A re-enters.*)

POINT A

Is he gone? I *do* have a job to do. He was kind of in the way. Narrative does that. Gets in the way of the Epic Theater. The point is pedagogic really. Do you feel educated?

(PHIL *re-enters. Takes out a cell phone and calls*).

Oh, boy. Here we go again.

(*She puts out a sign: "Wherein the long, torturous process of dating begins."*)

PHIL

(*Calls.*)

Hey. It's Phil. From the thing the other day? No—I got your phone number from Melinda. Listen—I'm sorry I sounded like such a jerk with what I said about plays. I mean I like theater. I really love *Phantom of the Opera*.

POINT A

In the dialectical Epic Theater art is a vehicle for radical social change.

PHIL

Have you seen it? *No?* We should- I have the C.D. if you want to borrow it.

POINT A

Art serves to de-sentimentalize man. He is not a view of man, but man himself. Man is man. Here, Phil's our man. Cute in an obnoxious way.

PHIL

Also, I'm sorry it seemed like I was picking you up... *trying* to pick you up... Yes I have asked someone "are you famous before"... But you do *want* to be famous right?

POINT A

--Maybe we shouldn't call it "Epic." Who wants Epic?

PHIL

Listen. Do you want to go out sometime? We could go to some theater and I could pay. I think *Le Miz* is playing... Ontological Hy—what? You want to see who?... Flying babies? Is it a musical?... Well... OK. 8.

(POINT A *places out a sign: "Wherein things happen that happen on a bad date."*)

See you tomorrow.

(*Exits.*)

POINT A

I want 10 minutes, max. Then I want to go get a drink. This won't go more than 10 minutes. Cross my heart.

(*Holds out her arm. PHIL enters from the other side and takes her by the arm. They stroll.*)

Whoops! The narrative already started. Swept us off our feet. Hmm... Where were we?

PHIL

Me? I'm into sports, really. Ok, that was a joke. I'm a botanist. Right, Phil Bee, the botanist--I've heard them all. I study Rose Sports. They're a naturally occurring genetic mutation on a branch of a bush. I used to make hybrids. Now I just study them. You remember from high school. The whole Double Helix thing... No. I didn't know that was a band. Their last album?... Great.

POINT A

Stasis... intrusion... Oh, yeah, obstacle.

(PHIL *takes two chairs and places them center-stage. They sit.*)

In the Dialectical Theater we—

PHIL

Shh!

POINT A

(*Whispering*)

WE MUST CONFRONT THE AUDIENCE DIRECTLY.

PHIL

(He pulls the ol' yawn-and-arm-around move and leans in. They loudly whisper throughout.)

I DON'T GET IT.

POINT A

THEY MUST BE ALIENATED FROM EVENTS ON STAGE.

PHIL

DO THEY CALL IT 'ABSURD' BECAUSE YOU PAY TWENTY DOLLARS FOR IT?

POINT A

THAT WAY THEY ARE FORCED TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES.
THEATER BECOMES EMPOWERING.

PHIL

LISTEN. CAN WE GO GET A DRINK OR—Oh. Is it over? Ok. Wow. So that's the kind of stuff you like? I mean, you want people to be entertained, right?

POINT A

The audience is sometimes not ready for the Epic Theater because the audience is not ready for revolutionary change. But that's the point. To make them ready. Change is hard.

PHIL

Sometime's people don't get hybrids either. They don't understand what it's like to make something new.

POINT A

The audience will fall back on what's familiar to them instead of looking at the argument presented on stage.

PHIL

Maybe if people just paid more attention to plants. Plants only do what's necessary. They survive by adapting, by changing when they need to. Adaptation, survival. That's what a plant needs.

POINT A

The audience will hide behind anything that provides it protection...religion...science...

PHIL

This was different. I didn't get it. *Nothing happened.*

POINT A

Sometimes the artist- the creator of the dialectic, just needs the audience to *listen*. That's all they really need. Someone to hear them.

(He exits).

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