

# notes on history

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Having written down a memory – a memoir – several years ago, I have no delusions that it is actually history. Memory is not history. Sometimes this is easy to forget so I am reminding myself and all of you of this right now – MEMORY IS NOT HISTORY. Movement Research in fact might be one of the first organizations to help further define Post-Modern as Post-History. MR's collective invention by a group of people deeply committed to following their intuition, a group with perhaps not only a queasy sense of history but also an obstinate disregard for its existence, has produced an organization about which no history can be written. MR is still being collectively invented but the new MR has given off some hints that it thinks history might exist. I am at the moment deeply involved with another such organization (The Experimental Theater Wing at Tisch School of the Arts) and I am starting to see a pattern which is suspiciously attached to a certain generation.

That we may be experiencing an end to history is not necessarily a bad thing. It does reflect a newfound sophistication about the nature of mind and phenomena that could actually reflect MR's deepest values. For one thing, events co-emerge. That is, the self and the environment have an accident and something is created. So it is entirely possible that the founders – and the current staff and board – were invented by MR rather than the other way around. If this is the case then who actually has the inclusive perspective – the overview – to write history?

What happened? Those who were there rarely know precisely because they were engaged in all the complexity and detail of being there. Those who weren't there usually record the history. Historians, journalists, critics, participants with hubris, forge diverse memories into a coherent event creating the illusion that some THING happened. Actually, the fact that history might exist puts us all at risk as victims. History as it has evolved in the Western European intellectual tradition is explicitly authoritative – history holds the authoritative viewpoint – thereby it invalidates the multitude of viewpoints or memories which radiate from any given moment. The rationale for supporting the existence of history is of course the gathering, sorting and safeguarding of knowledge gained from experience. This could be handy for avoiding catastrophic mistakes related to survival. The bugaboo is always that the mind which is collecting, evaluating and positioning the imagery of history is left out of that history (in the western tradition). We don't know therefore through which lens past events have been filtered.

Anyway, regarding this subject there are two bumper stickers out there proclaiming two points of view about history. 1. Nothing happens and 2. Shit happens. They both have their roots in Buddhist phenomenology and psychology, and really you could take your pick. But one should be aware; these two short proclamations represent a fork in the road.

I just want to add that the post-modern improvisation form which has evolved since the 1950's is a fascinating process as it relates to perception, action, memory and history. Bonnie Cohen's description of being as sensing, perceiving and doing, Robert Dunn and John Cage's understanding of the nature of events and our participation in them, Mary Overlie's Viewpoint Work, Richard Bull and Cynthia Novack's Improvisational Theater, Open Movement as it evolved from Movement Research and PS 122 all reflect a fascination and a deep longing to join, integrate, or transcend past, present and future on an individual level.

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