The Disability And…Podcast Episode 17: Disability And..Dyslexia with Benedict Phillips

**Welcome to the Graeae and Disability Arts Online podcast Disability And... bringing together thoughtful discussion and debate. This month Colin Hambrook, editor of Disability Arts Online chats with Benedict Phillips artist and activist about his work, The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick, which was published 25 years ago. This podcast contains strong language.**

**Colin Hambrook**

I'm Colin Hambrook, editor of Disability Arts Online. And I'm really pleased today to be introducing Benedict Phillips, artist and provocateur, works in a multitude of practices. And Benedict, yeah, it was 25 years ago that I first published The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick in Disability Arts in London magazine, which I was editing at the time with Ruth Bailey. Disability arts was very much about protests, there was a lot of discussion and protest on the streets bringing disability communities together. Mostly, it was around access for physical and sensory access provision. And so seeing this this thing landing on my door, I think it was Suzanne Bull who introduced us and The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick as a really powerful protest about ideas that we really hadn't encountered before. You know, it was the first real backlash against the neurotypical world. How did it feel to you having The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick, your manifesto published?

**Benedict Phillips**

I think one of the things that's interesting about it, thinking back was that I didn't set out to have it published. I hadn't got to that stage yet. I'd met Suzanne, and become friends with I think in '92-'93. And I sat down, as a visual artist you write manifestos about things. I sat down, I wrote this thing, and it was just completely a kind of gut reaction, sudden kind of coming out. And I just thought, oh, Suzanne would be a really good person to send this to and to say, what do you think about this? You know, is this a good thing? Is this a bad thing? What do you think? And she just immediately said, can I send this to my friend Colin? He's on the team of this magazine, Disability Arts in London Magazine. And I was like, yeah, okay. And clearly, she communicated that she liked what I'd written. In some ways, it was another artwork, and I put it out into the world, and it found a place to be presented. In a way, the impact of it didn't really show itself, didn't really exert itself on me until I was invited to be on the editorial committee, for the magazine, and that's when I had some really interesting experience. Which is that I walked into a room full of people, all of whom were disabled. I'd never thought about or considered myself as disabled, I'd not thought in those terms that had never been presented to me. And I thought, 'oh, none of these people are dyslexic'. But everybody in the room knows exactly what I'm talking about. And that for me was this massive leap. It was like a person who's been excluded from society for no fault of their own, knows what I'm talking about. Whereas someone who maybe looks just like me, another white man, who's five foot nine has no idea what I'm talking about. And just says things that wind me up constantly, with their complete lack of understanding of what what I've experienced. This really isn't about the way people appear. This is about the experience they've had, that connects them.

**Colin Hambrook**

The manifesto is a very powerful and angry statement against exclusion, and a very powerful piece of advocacy for thinking in alternative ways; thinking outside the box thinking in creative ways. Where did it lead next in your thinking around making work about the oppressive nature of the neurotypical world?

**Benedict Phillips**

I think, after I'd written it, I realised that I was in a fairly unique position because I'm so severely dyslexic. I was in the special educational unit, notionally been supported specifically for this in mainstream education from the age of eight until the age of 16. I'm leaving school illiterate, it was like, I am severely dyslexic. There is no way around this. And it's that acceptance in my mid 20s, that I was never going to learn how to read and write within the system. And that's what created the piece of writing. But also, that's what spurred me on. It was like, well, then this has to be understood. It has to connect to people. And I did the first performance of it on Speaker's Corner in January 1996. And what was ironic about that was that I stood up there and started reading The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick. And I started becoming disorientated, I started losing my place, having to start again, having to reread, losing the sense of where I was within the text. It was like the text which talks about that experience was then exhibiting itself in me. And then the audience started asking the questions 'what are you talking about?' And I started talking back, and my audience in like, 30 seconds, was suddenly, four or five times as big. And I was fluent and communicative. Because I wasn't constrained by the process that I was there to talk about. Which was the system of reading and writing.

**Colin Hambrook**

And can you remember the kinds of conversations that happened from that performance?

**Benedict Phillips**

I think having put myself out there to a certain extent, I started to get feedback. It was like there was enough of that information out there that I talked about these things, that I did start to get a lot of people talking to me. But what most people were talking about, sometimes dyslexic parents, sometimes fellow Dyslexics trying to understand and trying to relate to someone else's experience. And I was acutely aware that the way that people find each other, in our culture 25 years ago, is through reading and writing. And here's these hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people who don't do that, who need other people to talk to about this. So, I became acutely aware of that particular catch 22.

**Colin Hambrook**

Very, very isolating.

**Benedict Phillips**

The present figures say that, under 20% of Dyslexics are identified by the time they're 18 within mainstream education. So actually the vast majority of Dyslexics are unidentified within school. And even if they did a basic thing of saying, 'right we know it's 5-10% of the population'. Okay, just look at the figures in your school. Have you identified 5- 10% of the population of your school as dyslexic? Because we know those are the figures. Just as a starting point.

**Colin Hambrook**

It's a terrible situation in many respects, and not surprising that there are so many people that end up marginalised, and in prison. The statistics are pretty shocking, aren't they?

**Benedict Phillips**

Well, yeah it's over 50% of young offenders are identified as dyslexic. And it's almost like the exam they give you, isn't it? You turn up in the young offenders Institute, and it's like, oh, okay, we've got a damn good idea partly why you became disenfranchised, why you fell through the system. We know that the time when adolescents start to get involved in what's described as this slightly dodgy subcultural activity - petty crime or just hanging out or being in positions where they can get told off - is around the time that dyslexia really starts to impact. When people say to kids at a young age that they're falling behind. That's the beginning of it. And then the system all through primary school just undermines you. You just go, 'why would I want to be part of this?' Most kids can work out at 11, if they haven't picked it up by then, then they're never going to get anything out of this system.

**Colin Hambrook**

And the work that you've been developing through performance, through sculpture, through public art, over the last 25 years, has very much been about turning those notions of dyslexia as a bad thing, as something that needs 'curing' on their head. And presenting dyslexia as a positive attribute, something has a lot to give to society in terms of unique thought processes that don't exist within the neurotypical world. So there's quite a catalogue of work that we can talk about that came out of that initial publication. And I believe that one of the next stages was the development of the Benedictionary. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

**Benedict Phillips**

Yeah, I'd left London and become a full time professional artist, I think in about '96. And, as part of the Year of the Artists 1999-2000, I got this research grant, The Myth of Dyslexia is what I called it. And during that I realised dyslexia wasn't a single thing. It didn't exhibit itself in simple ways that people could respond to. And from this, I took all of the poetry, all of my creative writing, and I drew out over 1000 words, that I spelled consistently in my own way. My brother went through it, and he paired them up and put a standard English spelling against them, and created this database. And then I worked with a computer programmer in 2001, I had the online Benedictionary, and you could dump hundreds of words into it and press benedictionise, and it would translate it into dyslexic, or my dyslexic. And the irony that my name means blessed word or Word of God, but it means the word. Benedict. It just seemed like, wow, this is a great coincedence. I was always supposed to be called 'the word'. But I think people really started to get the sense of humour that I was trying to communicate. But I wasn't out for revenge, I was out to communicate. I was trying to find points of contact. And I was trying to understand and collaborate with the audience in the world, for them to enjoy what I was doing.

**Colin Hambrook**

I remember it being a lot of fun playing with that online version of it. And that playful approach then sort of led to thinking about the dunce hat and turning it on its head as a symbol representing positive interpretations of knowledge and understanding. And it was the white div wasn't it? 'Dyslexic Intelligent Vision,' the white div that was the first manifestation of the DIV

**Benedict Phillips**

I'd been thinking about the dunce cap for ages. I really like this idea of surrealist tradition, or the protest tradition of taking the thing that's used against you, taking it off the aggressor, the persecutor and saying, 'actually bugger you, I'm going to have that, that's mine'. So I was taking the dunce cap and saying, right, this is the hat of empowerment, the hat of knowledge, of information. And trying to represent it in that way. I was acutely aware that I hated and still hate them. These images of small cowering children that are used so often to represent the dyslexic. Less so now. But they were very common. That child looks like they're more affected by bad lighting and malnutrition than they do by dyslexia. What on earth is that about? So I was interested in the way you visually represent these things, but also really concerned that I might become the dyslexic artist. And so the idea of creating an alternative persona, to be able to say things that maybe I didn't even really believe. I could be provocative because I could be someone else, I could explore that. And be playful. 'Invisible Conversations', and 'My Misspellt Youth' and all of these things that started to come out in 2005, as part of my residency at Yorkshire Artspace, were about playing these games but also trying to connect people. And that's when I came up with this slogan. Everyone can be dyslexic, you just have to try harder. Lots of people got that really, really quickly. It was like the whole object of people coming and doing this exam and becoming dyslexic.

**Colin Hambrook**

I love the idea of the white teacher div and bringing people into the space and asking them to choose whether to go through the lexic door or the dyslexic door in order to encounter this exam situation is a lot of a lot of fun. How did it work at the time that, was part of the Yorkshire Artspace Residency?

**Benedict Phillips**

Yes, I had this great big space. I went out for weeks promoting this performance art piece because they didn't have performance art there. And that was part of these provocative statements was trying to get people into the room. And then I had these two reception, people who were saying, right, there's a door for the Dyslexics and a door for the lexics. So people would be asked questions when they came in, and they'd be given a badge, which they'd wear on their neck. Again, this is a physical representation of the invisible, and I'd been using the term lexic for some time as a counterbalance, I'd found the political inbalance: it's like, normal or dyslexic. So dyslexic is not normal. That's not good. How can we have a debate if you start from a position of being right, I'm essentially wrong. So the lexic/dyslexic was about discussing people's personal experience, not just mine, but the lexic experience. And so by creating that, people started to talk to me about their experience of language from a non-dyslexic perspective. And I realised there are lots of peculiar relationships with language. That was one of the things that really started to draw itself out, which was great. And that's when I came across things like hyperlexia. I've met a hyperlexic in the UK and then in America, on my excursions. It's this thing where people read so fast, they actually can't hold on to the information, but they can't stop themselves. Reading at superspeed it's become so ingrained, there's something about the way that they see things. And someone said to me very early on that reading dyslexic text, partly my spelling, slowed them down so much they could take the information in. That's how this came about someone saw some of my poetry and went 'this is great, I actually read it and understood it, it just slowed me down so much'. Ah ha I am the cure!

**Colin Hambrook**

And I remember one of the very moving stories that you told us about that lexic/dyslexic exam was people coming out to you for the first time about their dyslexia, having hidden it right through their childhoods. A very powerful experience for a lot of the participants.

**Benedict Phillips**

I also get quite negative responses as well. I've certainly had you quite a few Dyslexics just say shut up complaining and just get on with it. Which is really interesting. And that does come on to one of the problems about talking about dyslexia, is how incredibly different it is for every dyslexic. As some of my friends who are dyslexic have said to me, Benedict, I am dyslexic, but I'm not Benedict dyslexic. And what they mean by that, is that essentially they can read and write. If they review a piece of text that they've written, then they can pick up what's happening in the spelling and the grammar. And they can see it. And I graduated at 21, I learned how to spell my middle name when I was 27, at that age. I had a chequebook back in the day and paying in book I had 1, 2, 3 20, 30, all written out in the back of my chequebook. So I didn't have to ask people how to spell two or 13, when I was filling in a cheque. It doesn't sit well with the idea of being a young, autonomous man, in our society. There are real problems the way that subject and object get mixed up. And I guess what I mean by that is that I see these days, more and more criticism of object over subject. So someone writes a tweet which might be racist, sexist, stupid, idiotic, and deeply offensive, right. But the critique of it will be the spelling. They'll say that person's an idiot, because they can't spell. And that at its core, is just locked into our society. It's everywhere. So people don't critique what people are saying. They're not prepared. They're too lazy to actually think about what's wrong with that statement and critique that. They just go 'oh, stupid can't spell'. And you just think this is locked in. This isn't going anywhere fast.

**Colin Hambrook**

You took the invisible conversations out to Kentucky? Did you get different responses in America?

**Benedict Phillips**

I was amazed at how the life experience, the education experience, the experience of being a dyslexic adult...in the UK, through the portraits I did where we had a conversation with people and they drew something onto a blackboard and then used that as their context, as the background, and photographed them. And then did that in the States. Part of the research was, is it same? And it was. I was amazed at how it was. Okay, this is a kind of Western culture thing. It's like fast food is the same everywhere. The same mistakes.

**Colin Hambrook**

That lead on to 3d Thinkers in a 2d world. Which I think you did the first presentation of that in 2007, that was an invite from a University?

**Benedict Phillips**

Yeah. I've kind of done this collaborative performance - an in-conversation with an artist called Gavin McClafferty down in Stroud. And it had really drawn out a lot of ideas. And I'd got this invitation to speak at...because I'd always included talking about this part of my practice in in my lectures. I got this invitation. There was a national pedagogy conference at Leeds Art college. And I got this contact that said, 'would you like to talk about your dyslexia work?' And I said, yes, I would, and the talk will be called '3d thinkers in a 2d world', to try and communicate immediately the idea of the different thinking about the difference between the individual, the 3d thinker, and the world, which is flat and rigid, hard to follow and bend in interesting ways. Yeah, so I went and did that. And that was really interesting. I got a few invites out of that. And they were all professional development talks. And that was really interesting, because when I was doing those in universities around the country, be loads of staff going, 'actually, this isn't just a problem for the students'. Staff were looking around, I was going 'so who's dyslexic in this room?' And a lot of colleagues were going 'Oh, my God. Oh, you as well. How'd you cover that up? How do you navigate the system?' 'It's like, it's really, really hard work'. Oh, right. Okay. So that was really interesting doing that.

**Colin Hambrook**

Yeah, I love the idea of dyslexia is a heightened depth perception, I think it explains the lengths that you have to go to adapt and to work out strategies for survival.

**Benedict Phillips**

I think also one of the things is that the neuroscience, in a funny kind of way, is catching up with a lot of the things that I just thought when I was younger. So I find it really interesting that countries that are recognised as having populations that are best at identifying when public information news is true or not, are countries where children don't start to learn to read and write until they're at least seven years old. Okay, so being able to identify the truth correlates with an education system where you don't start learning to read until you're seven, within the state education. And the neuroscience is starting to...certainly science is always in a conversation and an argument about things. But there are theories and ideas that essentially the way a child's brain develops, when they aren't taught to read and write, or can't access, reading and writing when they're younger. It means that they they use the other half of their brain, they use different parts of their brain, and they actually develop problem solving. And that very much is about the physical world, and about coming up with lots of answers to the same question, rather than the one-off linear fixed answer, right and wrong. And I think that's partly what drives Dyslexics into the design industries. There is a really high percentage of people in certain industries, who are dyslexic are in industries about problem solving. And they may be hardwired, and actually, if they were tested for problem solving skills, you might find that. And it's training, we do respond to our environments.

**Colin Hambrook**

It's about opening things up, isn't it and resisting that flattening of our thinking processes.

**Benedict Phillips**

Answers to problems appear as pictures in my brain, which is a good and a bad thing. And lots of people I think are 3d thinkers, think in these kinds of ways. They're not necessarily dyslexic. If you are dyslexic, you have to rely on it and you have to push it to the front to help you navigate the world. That's the big difference. It's not just who we are, but what we use that creates these situations. And so if you have incredibly strong images in your head, you start to rely on them as truth, if they're that powerful, if they're that fixed. And I do find that when I was younger, I had to be very careful for the fantasy and the truth, not to get too mixed up. Because actually, the images that I creating in my head were stronger than the images that are in front of my eyes sometimes. And I've come across that, the phrase I use, that I came up with to describe this for people, is natural born bullshitters. It's not necessarily very complimentary, but I've come across a lot of Dyslexics and known they were dyslexic, and said, 'Oh, you're dyslexic? Because I could immediately see they were talking shit'. I mean that in the nicest possible way. What I mean is that they had a really powerful, strong argument that they had created in their own mind. And they were following through with it. And so that's an interesting thing. Is that one of these dyslexic superpowers people keep on talking about, which makes me really nervous. When people talk about being better or worse than other people.

**Colin Hambrook**

It's part of that oppressive way in which society needs to create hierarchies.

**Benedict Phillips**

But it's also as a kind of shout out. So, it's trying to take a position. This is a massive thing with dyslexia, especially working with kids, I think. Here you are, in this appalling education system that was designed 150 years ago, that would be great if you were going to go work in a factory, no doubt, and all you need to do is be told what to do constantly, every hour, and not be taught how to communicate or to work collaboratively, right? Oh, you don't fit into this. But it's okay, because you've got a dyslexic superpower. Well, if you really had a dyslexic superpower, then what you would do is pick up your lightning rod, and you would smite the school. So you don't really have a dyslexic superpower, do you? Because that's the first thing you would do is burn it to the ground and start again, with some empathy, with some understanding. With a school with dyslexic teachers in it, could you imagine what training would have to take place? The structure of a university course to become a teacher, if you were dyslexic, they would have to throw everything out. In the same way that they can't say that someone with a physical disability, somebody in a chair can be a teacher. I mean, how many schools can you get into? Oh, you're teaching upstairs today? Great. The world is full of barriers. And I see dyslexics, saying they're not disabled. And I just look at them and I say, you don't know what disability is. Don't cut yourself off. You've been marginalised. And now you're marginalising yourself from other individuals who could probably really teach you something about how to protest, how to function in the world.

**Colin Hambrook**

That's the social model of disability in a nutshell.

**Benedict Phillips**

We've been in this conversation for 25 years, just between us, let alone all the other people, talking about these things. It's there in The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick I say very specifically, fuck the lot of you, this is who I am, this is how I'm going to do things. Because to have any pride, to have any autonomy, I have to claim who I am. That was the cause in it, that statement.

**Colin Hambrook**

And you've created some really powerful images, through the the the idea of the DIV and you went on to create the Red DIV and the Grey DIV. Can Can you tell tell us a bit about those personas?

**Benedict Phillips**

I was invited to go and do a lecture performance in Belfast, at the International Symposium on Electronic Art. And I thought, I need to go and do 3d thinkers in a 2d world, this is about perception. This is about how we navigate, about how our universe, our social spaces are going to develop. So I thought, 'right this is the new DIV. This is the evangelist. And so I had this red suit made and the Red Hat of empowerment and an all the little details that go with it.

**Colin Hambrook**

The tree is a very intriguing aspect of the Red DIV.

**Benedict Phillips**

So the suit was made in in 2009. And that performance, the first in that suit, the image wasn't made until two years later. I created this, keep everything simple because it becomes complicated all by itself. Number two, which is that tree is a model of society that I'd done. There are print posters where the end of every single branch has a word on it. And it's just cacophony of all these different typesets. Without a filter over the top, these coloured filters, you can't see what the sentences are, it's just gobbledygook. But actually the tree is full of all these statements from different perspectives. So I was trying to build a kind of sculpture, a three dimensional object to try and describe the way that information was disseminated. This is a piece of architecture to try and talk about the complexity of society. And also there are precursors, so in all of the photographs there are objects from the previous DIVs, and from the DIVs to come. So then the character after that's the Grey DIV and he's the architect, he's the one who sees the world in this three dimensional way. And also there's the teeth clamp in the in the Red DIV image; this embossing stamp, which I use for putting my teeth marks into the certificates that people got for sitting the exam and becoming dyslexic. So it's all in that film. There's,a film from 2005, called The DIV. And the exam is in there and you see all of these different things.

**Colin Hambrook**

The grey DIV, the Architect DIV, he was involved in some conversations about approaches to architecture, I remember us talking about this dyslexic architect process.

**Benedict Phillips**

I was really interested in what information fed into designing public space that not only are our streets, but our buildings. I was thinking about all the things that you can't see that are invisible to us, again, thinking about the dyslexic experience to a certain extent. Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there. And so I thought, well, I'm going to investigate the landscape, and then I'm going to show it to people, but I'm going to show them stuff they couldn't see. And so the first of these tours that I did, I filmed, the culverts, the river underneath the city. And then I had that placed on the side of a suitcase. I designed and built this suitcase with a mini computer in it. I had to find specialist battery technology, I had to connect all these different things. And luckily I was doing this residency, Alternative Acts of Architecture, at Access Space in Sheffield, and they could really help me pull all this together. But the end of it was I was walking along the street as the Grey DIV, above a river, which was on the suitcase. Behind walls and walking over great big junctions, with all these trucks and cars and all these traffic islands. At the position where there's a 200-300-year-old stone covered river running below our feet. And there it is, that's a factor in where we are. So trying to discuss and think about the things we can't see. What things that we haven't acknowledged, should inform the way we develop and design the spaces around us? But also that idea of transporting yourself to another place through your imagination. I see that as part of the 3d thinking.

**Colin Hambrook**

More recently, you've been developing the 'How to be dyslexic' project. Presented it as if it's a choice, and again, kind of subverting that notion of choice. Can you talk us through how that project came about and where it is now?

**Benedict Phillips**

'How to be a dyslexic artist' is my research project that I've been doing for the last three years or so. It took quite a while to find partners and to develop a funding structure for that. And that's all leading towards an exhibition, which essentially should be happening now, but isn't going to happen until next year. How to be a dyslexic artist, it was the question - partly were just taking the artists forward and see what happens. How do we navigate the world as a dyslexic and working with other people has been a really cool part of that. So apart from Access Space in Sheffield, I also went and worked with an artist called Aby Watson. And we've actually been in contact for quite quite a few years. Aby wrote about me in her undergraduate degree and published a book. And she drew out...it was just great to have someone have a look at some of the things I've done, and really understand it. And she's dyslexic, and she's dyspraxic. And we worked together, up at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland doing this 'How to be a dyslexic artist'. And I worked with some of the students there and some of the staff there to look at creating alternative personas based on internal experiences, thinking about who we are, what is the same and different and then using that as the base from which to build this alternative persona to present to the world. And then I built a lot bigger project, which took place at the Tetley in Leeds where I worked with 11 adult Dyslexics who are between the ages of about 20 and 40. And with no need to be an art specialist, with a team there that could help people develop and make whatever they needed to. It was all about, What's your idea? What's your experience? What are you trying to express? Let's explore that. And that ended up with a series of collaborative portraits, essentially, they created these personas, and I photographed them. What was interesting was that, obviously I can't say who, but I can say that, I think three people there discovered further things about about their differences, essentially. I think the knock on from it is probably still there with people.

**Colin Hambrook**

Part of this project has been about looking back over the last 25 years and collating all of this work that you've made around your experience of dyslexia, and into a book.

**Benedict Phillips**

This little world pandemic came along and put the kibosh on that a bit, along with my exhibition. I guess the one thing that's not immovable, the one thing that I really wanted to mark in some way was the 25th anniversary of me writing this first piece that went out publicly, that in retrospect has affected and informed the way I've thought about things. And at the time, I just thought I was shouting, but actually looking back, it seems fairly concise, some of the things I was saying. So I thought, in a way, I wanted to revisit it, and I realised people I've known for years, had never heard it.

**Colin Hambrook**

Given the current crisis, you're planning an online iteration of a performance of The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick.

**Benedict Phillips**

It's an interesting question in a way, in terms of how I do these things. Because often my performances I've done to a live audience in a space. There's a bit of call and response, there are reveals within my performances where people kind of go, 'Oh,' there are surprises. And actually, their response and interaction with what I'm doing, when they discover things, is part of that and so I'm really trying to understand how I can move into making work, for the camera. So obviously I do that, for still images for making photographic artworks. But this is a very different thing, it is a different collaboration. It's not necessarily with an audience, it's with a filmmaker or with whoever else I'm trying to bounce things back and forwards from. So that that's interesting. And then there's a way of trying revisit The Agender of the Agresiv Dislecksick, I written the whole A to Z, which I'm sort of writing and rewriting. So for each letter of the alphabet I've written a statement and a short chapter about an aspect of dyslexia. If you are dyslexic, how do you navigate a text heavy society. Text-laden, not less so. I mean, when I was younger, there was less of it. The notion of that technology makes it easier for Dyslexics is ridiculous. I use voice activated technology. I can't write big documents without using voice activated. My brain is going in so many different directions at the same time, it can't focus on, trying to work out what this shape is and putting it on the page and trying to remember what the next shape means. It's a really just amazingly complex process. But what happens is that when I've been doing it a lot, I start writing notes. It's like my relationship to any kind of recognisable spelling, the more I use the Dragon Dictate or something like that, or the the voice activated on the computer, my ability to hold on to, even a phonetic spelling system just starts to dissolve, and disappear. So now what it means is that if I want to sit down and write something, I have to be in a room with a computer with a microphone on my head. That is the only place I can sit down and seriously write anything. But still, here I am at 50. defined by that experience. I think one of the things that people do forget about dyslexia, is that it is a construct of state education. Dyslexia was defined by the word dyslexia, which is a word that is specifically generated to describe it 140 years ago. What else happened 140 years ago? Forced Western State education, those two things came into being at the same time. Before 140 years ago dyslexia was known about, it was called word blindness.People think word blindness is the old word for dyslexia from the 1970s, or 80s. No, it's from the 1840s and 50s. So here we are, in a situation with the word dyslexia created to describe dyslexia 140 years ago, and we still have this mentality of state education, which is that they think that a class should have 30 in it, that the teachers should be the exemplar of the drone, leading the class. I just think that the bottom line is that the diversity of people that are in the world should be represented in the world. That's how it should work. When you think about the physical and mental health, impact of good education, which is about responding about empathy. That the classes should be of 10 students, all classes, and that would mean we'd have more teachers. Which is great because they'd have work, so that'd be people with work, not so stressed out. Because they'd have class of 10 they would be able to invest in those kids' physical and mental health. The impact on society, the function and the use of those individuals in society. If you've got 10 kids in a class, you can find out who they are and you can have a conversation. You can empathise with them. And from that position, you really can teach and learn. But the DIV in black will be saying something about this.

**Colin Hambrook**

Disability Arts Online will be presenting that at the beginning of October. So we really look forward to that. It's been a wonderful privilege to follow your work Benedict for 25 years. It's unbelievable how quickly the time is gone. Is there anything more that you want to to add?

**Benedict Phillips**

You know me, so much, that I couldn't even begin, so maybe I should just leave it there.

**Voice actor**

Visit graeae.org and disabilityarts.online for details of productions events, interviews, opinions, reviews, and learning opportunities.