

Note: This text is meant to be fragmented and partial as it provides counterpoint to a dance that is to be unique to each production. Even the sound effects and music suggestions are open to change depending on the demands of the dance. I give some movement suggestions, but they are just that: suggestions. Texts used in this piece include sections from Lacan's *Ecrits* and Peggy Phelan's *Mourning Sex*. Special thanks to Stephen Brust for pointing out one of the definitions of "Art."

*The Dancer moves. Slow. At times almost mechanical.*

*Silence.*

*The sound of a heartbeat.*

*A Man sits in a chair, watching her. He lights a cigarette.*

*Silence.*

MAN

The room smelled of dirty underwear. That night. Something of rotting leaves.

*A sample of the line "Hit Me Baby One More Time" plays several times. Each time, slower, lower in pitch and overlapping.*

*There is something moving the Dancer now. Something jerking her body out of her control.*

MAN (Continued)

My sister's breasts were. Beautiful. Small but perfectly formed. Nipples hard, pink. A focus of adolescence, a curve of betrayal. Objects of . . . insistence. Framing the . . . a text of my childhood.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

The ego is a means of the speech addressed to you from the subject's unconscious, a weapon for resisting its recognition; it is fragmented when it conveys speech and whole when it serves not to hear it.

MAN

One of the first wet dreams I remember: I was a cartoon having sex with Minnie Mouse.

*Silence*

MAN (Continued)

The room smelled of blood. That night. Something of wet mold and mildew.

*The Dancer stops. The Man stands. Caresses her face. An implicit violence washes over them both, frightening him as much as her. He turns away, shame and nausea competing against desire. Moving like a broken refugee, he sits. Lights another cigarette.*

MAN (Continued)

The stillness of her corpse was obscene. Unreal.

*The Dancer begins to move again -- of her own volition, the puppet strings cut. For now.*

MAN (Continued)

I tried, for a very long time to write of that moment, that stillness masking the slow implosion of decay, that simulacrum of self eclipsing both self and Other. That juncture of metal kissing metal on an early sun-blinded morning as twisting, crumpled atoms collapsed into a singular event path.

*"I can see clearly now, the rain has gone" begins to play. Then, warps, runs ragged. A mad laughter creeps in at the edges.*

*Silence. No movement.*

*The beating of a heart stretches time until it hurts. Slows.*

*Stops.*

*The Dancer moves.*

MAN (Continued)

This is a structure. These sounds I make, these words: filaments of power, particles of deceit. Shadows of shadows.

*He stops.*

*Looks at the Dancer as if seeing her for the first time.*

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Foucault once said: "It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power--which would be a chimera, for truth is already power--but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time.

*The Man approaches the Dancer. Through the next section they move as mirrors to each other.*

MAN

I once thought--caught, sought--I saw . . . trapped an image. So much power. The motor control of a ghost that was me, was not me. That looked back. Looked back. Saw me. Did not see. Me. Suddenly, where I was not . . . I was. That was the start. The starting pistol's BANG and the race between dissolution and control. I sang. Vibrating to the misrecognition of myself as something other. I sang.

DANCER

And . . .

MAN

Something looked back.

DANCER

And . . .

MAN

Shattered. Bits. Bits and pieces.

DANCER

who says what is perfect / who says what is love / who says what is desire / who says what is death / who says what is woman / who says what is man / who says what is freedom / who says what is death / who says what is real / who says what is pain / who says what is laughter / who says what is death / who says what is vision / who says what is sex / who says what is bee-yew-ti-ful / who says what is death / what says what is fashion / who says what is life / who says what is wealthy / who says what is death / who says what is perfect / who says what is loss / who says what is desire / who says what is death

*The Man & the Dancer move together, neither in complete control of the dance, of their own bodies. Something else, a shape beyond seeing helps guide the dance. When they come apart, it is the Woman who moves to the chair and lights a cigarette while the Man assumes the position of dancer.*

WOMAN

Do you love me?" is a social question, a question of relation. It is fundamentally a question of perspective, of where one is in relation to the other, to the painting, to the beloved. "Do you love me?" is a question that can come into being only if the other is cast as a witness, an auditor, who will testify to the authenticity of the interrogation as pure form, as that which is forever in

(MORE)

WOMAN (Continued)

question. "Do you love me?" is an elaboration of the questions "Do you see me?" and "Do you hear me?" and these three questions constitute . . . a set of technologies designed to ask what it means to be, and to make, embodied form from that which is not Present.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Art, as in "Thou Art." Art is the second person present singular of "to be."

*The Woman stands, picks up the chair, throws it against the back wall. It shatters. The echo of breaking timber rolls on and on and on. The Dancer falters, recovers, but invisible knives begin to cut into the Dancer's feet. A soft sigh runs through the theater.*

WOMAN

Art, as in *my* Art, my dance, my words, my sounds, my images, my friendships, my love. Art as in art is the first person present-past-future singular of "to be."

*The Dancer freezes, caught in the amber of emotional time too thick to move through.*

*Heartbeat.*

WOMAN (Continued)

(softly)

And you dare to keep me from myself?

*"Hit Me Baby" plays again, screeches into the sound of fear.*

WOMAN (Continued)

And you dare to keep me from my love?

*The do-wop song "He Hit Me (And if Felt Like a Kiss)" plays.*

WOMAN (Continued)

And you dare keep me from my art?

*The song melts. The Dancer moves once more, feet bloody and sore, the ache of internal bleeding making every movement a small piece of death.*

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Death is what we cannot know: the end point that we can never see. We make up "knowledge" because we cannot see that skull, cannot see what we know we must absorb without our eyes, our I/s.

*The Woman addresses the Male Voice.*

WOMAN

And you dare keep me from myself?

MALE VOICE

Yes. But. No. But I didn't. Know.

WOMAN

When the day split open like a wound and the dog's howled hungry and cold and the wind ripped through the plastic scented with hot ozone and lightning and the bruises marked out a continent of hate upon my skin and the children cried and the tears froze in the back of my throat like dark and jagged knives tearing out my voice and the ocean moved back from the shore, so far back it seemed like it would never come in again and when the . . . when the . . .

*The Dancer falls.*

WOMAN (Continued)

Just.

*The Dancer lies still.*

WOMAN (Continued)

Stop.

*A cold wind and the sound of rain. The Dancer shivers. The Woman approaches him. She lies next to him.*

*Rain.*

*A child's laughter.*

*Then a heartbeat.*

*Two heartbeats diverging.*