

An Exploration of Dance as Female Language

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It is my belief that each dancer must undergo a specific process uniquely her own in order to arrive at a desired outcome, whether it be the perfection of a fouette turn or a final performance.

I am intrigued by the process by which the process itself—of learning foreign choreography—is transformed, whether consciously or not, into the final product. A piece of choreography comes into being from the choreographer's thoughts, emotions, physical understanding and the like. When a dancer is given a piece of movement and asked to perform it, she is actually being presented with a fragment of the choreographer's inner self, or what Jacques Lacan would call their gaze.

Watching a performance, an

audience only sees the final product. And yet the truth is, the product that they see is only the wrapping covering the treasures inside, because for me, the process is at least as interesting as the product. I believe that the path one takes to arrive at one's destination is where the room for complete personal freedom and expression comes in, even for the most rigid of expected products and styles of dance.

The best part about choreographing for other people is seeing what they do with what you give them. What becomes of something that was yours after giving it away to someone else? It changes, it morphs into something, something other than what you gave them—it has to change in order for the dancer to truly inhabit

the movement—but the foundation of the movement, the essence of it, is still what you gave them. It is still yours.

My thesis will be an original dance performance which will include five current female students and consist of a mixture of smaller and larger group pieces as well as a solo piece. The solo section will focus on myself; my personal history with dance; the hurt and pain and failure, but also the joy of it all. It will explore the question: is dance enough? Enough to live on, enough to breathe; can it act as the center of everything I know, or is that, in fact, not a possibility for me? I hope to find answers to my questions, but I will be seeking them in the process of it all, not the product. This whole semester will be geared towards the final performance—choreographing it, rehearsing it, completing it, perfecting it—and yet it is in the process where I feel the answers lie. That is where most of the sweat, tears, effort, failure, pain, joy, and love can be found. Thus, I hope to make my final performance into a process itself. I will incorporate the process into the performance—and hope that the process becomes the product. I plan to dance to a man's voice speaking—like spoken word, or lyrics lost without their melody—possibly telling stories of particularly difficult or beautiful moments that arose in the process of making the product, not only from the time spent working on this performance, but rather including other memories and stories from before I'd ever heard the words “senior thesis at Simon's Rock.”

