


THE USE OF SATIRIC LITERATURE AS A BASIS FOR
CHOREOGRAPHIC THEMES ILLUSTRATED IN AN
ORIGINAL DANCE PRODUCTION

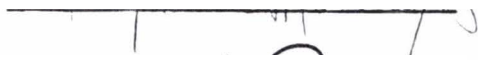
by


Wilson Barrilleaux

A THESIS


Approved:







Committee

Approved: 

Dean of the College 

THE USE OF SATIRIC LITERATURE AS A BASIS FOR
CHOREOGRAPHIC THEMES ILLUSTRATED IN AN
ORIGINAL DANCE PRODUCTION

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
Sam Houston State College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by

Joseph
Wilson Barrilleaux

Huntsville, Texas

May, 1965

Barrilleaux, Wilson, The Use of Satiric Literature as a Basis for Choreographic Themes Illustrated in an Original Dance Production. Master of Arts (Physical Education) May, 1965, Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. 63 pp.

Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to explore the inherent possibilities in the use of literary material as a source of choreography and to examine one particular kind of literature for its choreographic potential. The present investigator chose the specific area of satire in literature for this investigation. The findings of this investigation were projected into an extended dance production choreographed, designed, staged and presented in concert by the present investigator. This culminating production was based upon a satirical literary work entitled The Last Flower by James Thurber.

Methods

The present investigator read widely in sources pertaining to the common elements of art and the relative autonomy and independence that exists among various art media. The kinship among the arts and their unique differences are frequently under consideration when a blending of the arts is attempted. The investigator undertook an examination of the controversy surrounding the mixing of various art media in the creative process. This seemed relevant to the use of

literature as a source for choreography. This led the investigator to examine the question of the appropriateness of certain literary subject matter for dance production.

The specific type of literature selected for the present study was satire. The use of literary satire as a basis for a choreographic work led to an exploration of the nature of satire and its potential for dance.

The investigator proceeded to organize and summarize his findings into the prescribed thesis form and also included the following pertinent information concerning the presentation of the dance production: (1) creating the script (2) selecting personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

Summary and Evaluation

The present study is concerned with the use of literary material as a source of choreography. The written substantiation presented was limited to the following areas: (1) mixing of various art media (2) the appropriateness of certain literary subject matter for dance production (3) the nature of satire and its potential for dance.

The investigation was evidenced in an extended dance production choreographed by the present investigator. The written description of the dance production was limited to the following points: (1) creating the script (2) selecting

personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

The culminating project of the present study was a dance production of a creative nature. Experimentation in art should be directed toward achieving an end product which is fresh, different, and unique. Materials used should be selected and manipulated with taste and discrimination. The investigator believes that the point of view evidenced in the selection of materials externalized in the dance, "The Last Flower," was one which reflected his own ideas, values and beliefs. Another artist might have, with validity, taken an entirely different approach. This is the nature of art.

Approved:

Supervising Professor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Limitations of the Study	4
Methods of Investigation	5
Related Studies	6
II. THE USE OF LITERATURE AS A BASIS FOR DANCE THEMES	7
III. DEVELOPING THE CHOREOGRAPHY.	28
Creating the Script.	28
Selecting Personnel.	31
Choreographing the Dance	32
Selecting the Music.	40
Selecting the Costumes	43
Staging and Lighting the Dance Work.	44
Stage Setting	44
Stage Properties.	48
Lighting	52
IV. SUMMARY AND EVALUATION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	61
VITA	63

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
I. Costume Worn by Dancers Representing Mankind. . .	45
II. Costume Worn by the Female Character	46
III. Costume Worn by the Male Character.	47
IV. The Flower Used in Sections Three, Four, Five and Ten	50
V. The Flower Used in Sections Six and Seven. . . .	51

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Man's world is a world of movement. Moving is the first thing we do as we are born. We must draw breath, we must stretch muscles, we must move. According to Agnes De Mille, an outstanding choreographer, "Movement is the source and condition of life."¹ Many believe that man's first means of communication was movement. These movements of communication became routinized and stylized as gestures. Doris Humphrey has stated in her book on choreography: "Gestures are patterns of movements established by long usage among men, a sort of language of communication of function which has been going on since the beginning of time."² These early movements or gestures were executed for practical purposes and should not be considered dance as we know it today. Man gestured to indicate his hunger, thirst, pain, joy. He was not at first concerned with the aesthetic qualities of communication that movement can provide. As early man began to develop into organized societies, he also began to develop organized means of purposeful movement. Primitive man was at the mercy of the

¹Agnes De Mille, The Book of the Dance (New York: Golden Press, 1963), p. 7.

²Doris Humphrey, The Art of Making Dances (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 114.

elements. He imagined spirits and powers and unseen forces to be the cause of his birth, hunger, sickness and death. He began to organize his movements into patterns in the hope that these movement patterns would please the unseen forces. These patterns or early dances became an important part of man's life.

It was his religion and his poetry and his science. Ritual dances were his insurance of success against natural enemies of hunger, disease, and death. . . fertility dances, harvest dances, war dances. He danced to celebrate his joys in triumph or his sorrow in defeat, and he believed that his very survival depended on a dance of such strength and agility that it would be worthy of notice by the gods who controlled his destiny.³

Today we have learned to understand and in some degree to control by scientific means the forces early man thought he had to dance to control. This does not mean that man ceased to dance as his scientific knowledge advanced. Man has continued to dance but his subject matter or themes and purpose for dancing have changed.

Since modern man no longer dances to appease the gods, where do ideas for dances come from? The sources are many and varied.

. . . experience from life itself, music drama, legend, history, psychology, literature, ritual religion, folklore, social conditions, fantasy; and from such vague promptings as moods, impressions. And special interests, such as technical aspects of a theory of movement, comment on styles of dances or other arts, theatrical effects, or even abstract sources: line, color, shape, dynamics, rhythm.⁴

³Louis Horst and Carroll Russell, Modern Dance Forms (San Francisco: Impulse Publications, 1961), p. 13.

⁴Humphrey, op. cit., p. 32.

Obviously there is a wealth of source material from which the choreographer may choose. His own interests and tastes usually determine his subject matter. Many choreographers turn to the literary arts for choreographic themes. It is no wonder, inasmuch as literature is concerned with human experience and human events just as are choreographers in their search for truth. Some choreographers use the literary source merely as a point of departure, from which to develop or extend a related but not necessarily identical idea. Sometimes it is only a phrase, or a brief situation, or a mood in the literary source that sends the choreographer on his particular creative adventure. Of course, the literary material can also be used rather strictly, so that the choreography emerges as a kind of dance adaptation of the source. The use of the actual spoken word to enhance the dance composition is not uncommon. Regardless of the approach, choreographers have turned time and again to literary sources in order to try and "utilize the timelessness of the thematic material and seek to penetrate the surface of life in order to communicate through dance the universality of human experience."⁵

The present study is concerned with the use of literature as a source for choreographic themes. The investigator will attempt to show through written text and

⁵Nancy Warren Smith, "Modern Dances Based Upon Literary Themes, 1926-1959." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, 1960.) p. 152.

eventually dance movement how the two communicative arts can combine to express experiences common to all.

Statement of the Problem

The problem was to explore the inherent possibilities in the use of literary material as a source of choreography and to examine one particular kind of literature for its choreographic potential. The present investigator chose the specific area of satire in literature for this investigation. The findings of this investigation are evidenced in the present written form and were projected into an extended dance production choreographed, designed, staged and presented in concert by the present investigator. This culminating production was based upon a satirical literary work entitled The Last Flower by James Thurber.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is concerned with the use of literary material as a source of choreography. The written substantiation presented in this report was limited to the following areas: (1) mixing of various art media (2) the appropriateness of certain literary subject matter for dance production (3) the nature of satire and its potential for dance.

The investigation was evidenced in an extended dance production choreographed by the present investigator. The written description of the dance production was limited to

the following points: (1) creating the script (2) selecting personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

Methods of Investigation

The present investigator read widely in sources pertaining to the common elements of art and the relative autonomy and independence that exists among various art media. The kinship among the arts and their unique differences are frequently under consideration when a blending of the arts is attempted. The investigator undertook an examination of the controversy surrounding the mixing of various art media in the creative process. This seemed relevant to the use of literature as a source for choreography. This led the investigator to examine the question of the appropriateness of certain literary subject matter of dance production.

The specific type of literature selected for the present study was satire. The use of literary satire as a basis for a choreographic work led to an exploration of the nature of satire and its potential for dance.

The investigator proceeded to organize and summarize his findings into the prescribed thesis form and also included the following pertinent information concerning the

presentation of the dance production: (1) creating the script (2) selecting personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

Related Studies

The present investigator, in reviewing related literature, selected specific dance compositions listed in Smith's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (see bibliography) and investigated various description of these works to corroborate and clarify the varied use of literature as choreographic subject matter. The results of this investigation are presented in the second chapter of the present study.

CHAPTER II

THE USE OF LITERATURE AS A BASIS FOR DANCE THEMES

The fact that choreographers call upon literary themes for source material brings up the controversy of the mixing of the arts.

As early as 1930, John Martin referred to the blending of music, graphic art, drama, and literature with dance as a manifestation of the concept of dance drama or the total theatrical experience:

Sooner or later we shall probably see a new synthesis of poetic, musical and choreographic materials which will be, in effect, a new theatrical art . . . it is with something of a deliberate effort to build a theatrical synthesis that our dancers are advancing further and further into the realm of experiment.¹

The ancient Greeks notably experimented with the use of the various arts as devices contributing to a unified theater experience. Literature, music, dance and architectural design were combined in accordance with this concept of total aesthetic experience. This blending of various expressive media has characterized contemporary theater, as evidenced by the many collaborative efforts in musical theater. This conscious blending of various arts has often been a topic for debate. There are those who charge

¹Ibid., p. 8, quoting Martin.

there should be a strict independence among the arts. On the other hand there is the opinion that human experience in the property of all artists and each treats this experience as he sees it through the use of his particular medium. The combining of literary and choreographic elements is an example of a conscious mixing of art forms. Through the fusion of these two art forms the dance drama has been able to achieve significant theatrical reinterpretation of thematic material.

There are, however, certain dangers that are present in the choosing of subject matter. The inappropriateness of a particular subject for treatment by a certain art medium is a possibility. There are elements in literature which cannot be translated into dance.

Language can give us facts, situations, relationships and states of being which are very difficult for the art of movement alone to tell. You cannot say in dance "This is my mother-in-law", unless there is a careful sequence leading to such a statement.²

Every piece of literature does not have implications for reinterpretation in a non-literary art such as dance. In some cases it would be a grave misuse of the source material to pursue this reinterpretation. Certain literary sources need the precision and descriptive force of the written word and no other medium can effectively represent its communicative intent.

²Humphrey, op. cit., p. 37.

Translating one work of art literally into another medium is potentially dangerous perhaps in terms of artistic integrity. Suzanne Langer has commented upon the blending of the arts to the effect that in such interrelationships

lies the clue to one of the deepest relations among the great art genders . . . the kinship of their primary illusions. This relationship, however, is always kinship and not identity . . .³

As the use of literary themes has become more frequent in dance, the question of maintaining the integrity of each of these arts has arisen. Joseph Campbell opposes the fusion of different arts in his observation that the result might be a loss of the individuality of each art form. He states that

the minute a dancer introduces into her composition a personality characterization, a narrative element, a touch of satire, or a poetical phrase, she enters . . . into the literary field and becomes subject to the laws of that empire.³

It is the opinion of this investigator that regardless of the pitfalls choreographers must avoid in choosing source material from literature, there still remains a closeness between the two arts. Each one may help the other in the amplification of their communicative powers.

It is generally accepted fact that interrelationships

³Suzanne Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 205.

⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 9.

exist among the arts. This is evidenced in a statement made by Frederick Ashton, an outstanding choreographer:

One can be affected by the paintings of a great master and wish to animate them; one may read a story which calls to be brought to life in movement; or one can hear a piece of music which somehow dances itself. Any-one can have strange ideas of one's own, or a theme may be suggested by some outside influence. In the course of my career I have responded to all these different forms of impetus.⁵

If the central problem of any artist is to capture an idea and cast it into an objective form, then it would seem evident that all artists share the same basic purpose. Wickiser says that "A work of art is the result of man's desire to express his reactions to life in terms of ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions."⁶ Both writers and the choreographers have employed the artistic approach of attempting to present the essential truths rather than the exact details of experience. One writer, Elizabeth Sergeant, has suggested that the writer should not represent life in exactitude but should represent the essence of life, that an author "can write about life, but never write life itself . . ."⁷ According to Curt Sachs, the arts of gesture and speech confirm and corroborate in

⁵"Notes on Choreography", The Dance Has Many Faces, ed. Walter Sorrell (New York: World Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 247-248.

⁶Ralph L. Wickiser, An Introduction to Art Activities, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), p. 1.

⁷Elizabeth S Sergeant, Fire Under the Andes, (New York: Knopf, Inc., 1927), p. 274.

their own individual ways, what their sister arts reflect: ". . . man's emotive reaction to stimuli from without and within."⁸ This unity has been referred to as the commonwealth of art;⁹ and it is manifested in the use of common sources of inspiration, in the recurrence of specific thematic ideas, and in the presence of common elements of composition evident in the various forms of art.¹⁰

One art form which illustrates this use of common inspiration is dance, in which the particular medium of expression is movement of the human body; for in dance composition, "associations of history, poetry, biography, love war adventure and banality cluster to this wondrous image."¹¹

There are common elements found in all art media which further the interrelationship among the arts. The painter and the choreographer must solve problems of design, rhythm and dynamics in regard to a painting as well as a dance composition. The artist designs his painting on canvas while the dancer uses the three dimensional space. Both are concerned that the result be pleasing to the eye of the beholder. The artist achieves rhythm by placement of

⁸Sachs, op. cit., p. 17.

⁹Ibid., p. 381.

¹⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹Jean Erdman, "The Dance as Non-Verbal Poetic Image," The Dance Has many Faces, ed. Walter Sorrell (New York: World Publishing Co., 1951), p. 212.

patterns of color in contrast to each other. The dancer may have audible rhythmic accompaniment or the rhythm may be visible in the movements of the dance itself. The dancer uses accents of movement in the design of the dance to achieve dynamics while the painter may use accents of color which result in the same desired dynamics on canvas. The media of the two artists are different but the problems they must solve are identical. Likewise the sculptor and the musician are both concerned with the problem of balance. The element of balance found in a pleasing piece of sculpture is the same element sought by the musician as he structures his chordal progression. The esthetic function of symbolization is realized through both the verbal imagery of literature and the dramatic gesture of choreography. Such common elements found in the graphic, plastic, literary, and musical arts with the essential components of form such as "contrast, variety, unity, and inevitability, found in all the arts, are all experienced actively in movement."¹²

Literature has provided a wealth of thematic source material for composers of contemporary dance. Choreographers have always been interested in experimenting with new and varied themes for their dances. This desire for variety carried over into their selection of literary sources. Their selection of literature runs from Biblical sources to Greek mythology. In specific reference to poetic literature

¹²Emily V. White, "Correlating Drama, Music, and Dance," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, September, 1955, p. 22.

it has been suggested that almost every poem is "inherently material for a dance composition."¹³

The present investigator, in reviewing related literature, selected specific dance compositions listed in Smith's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (see bibliography) and investigated various descriptions of these works to corroborate and clarify the varied use of literature as choreographic subject matter. The following information is the result of this investigation:

On January 14, 1934, Helen Tamiris presented Whitman Suite, a six-part group dance based on themes from four Whitman poems. "Salut au Monde" was the poetic inspiration for the introductory section, which is followed by three dances inspired by "Song of the Open Road." Between the first and second of these three dances, there is a solo adaptation of "I Sing the Body Electric;" and between the second and third, there is another solo adapted from "Halycon Days." The dance is non-dramatic and is the artist's personal visualization of the spirit and rhythms of the Whitman poetry.¹⁴

The New Dance Group, on June 2, 1934, presented Van der Lubbe's Head, a group dance based on Alfred Hayes' poem of the same title and using the words of the

¹³Smith, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 39.

poem as accompaniment. The dance is a literal representation of the social theme of the poem, which deals with the execution of a leader of the German Reichstag. Increasing dramatic tension is established and maintained by patterns of running feet and by the realistically portrayed relationships among the characters.¹⁵

Ted Shawn utilized "The Hound of Heaven", a mystic poem by Francis Thompson, as thematic inspiration for a dance solo of the same title presented on December 28, 1934. The dance neither follows the words specifically nor uses them as accompaniment; it does, however, follow the sequence of ideas and images presented in the poem.¹⁶

Social protest provided the inspiration for Jane Dudley's solo, Time is Money, a dance inspired by Sol Fuharoff's poem of the same title and performed on February 14, 1936. The dance, a literal interpretation of the poem, is "A shot at the flint-hearted capitalist and his slave-driving tendencies."¹⁷

On March 10, 1940, Ester Junger presented a group composition entitled Judgment Day, an interpretation of

¹⁵Margares Lloyd, The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1949), p. 175.

¹⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁷Lloyd, op. cit., p. 180.

James Weldon Johnson's poem of the same title. The poem expresses the naive poetic style of a Negro preacher's sermons, and the choreography represents literally the dramatic action in the text. The dancers are accompanied by the reading of the text with emphasis upon one line:

Oh, sinner, where will you stand,
In that Gread Day when God's agoin'
to rain down fire?

The choreography interprets the dramatic episodes of the poem, from the satirical dice-rolling scenes to the serious hymn-singing climax.¹⁸

Characters and episodes from Biblical literature serve as the thematic bases for Jacques Cartier's Tragic Processional, presented on February 2, 1935. This group dance consists of a series of twelve character studies, all related to the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The characters are frequently used symbolically to personify abstract qualities; for example, the character of Lucifer is developed as a personification of evil. Symbolism is also apparent in the costuming; Judas Iscariot, for instance, carries a long magenta scarf suggestive of his suicide rope. The choreography is structured as dance drama.¹⁹

The Biblical story of the Prodigal Son provides the theme of Gluck Sander's group dance, The Eternal Prodigal, performed on December 2, 1936. The theme is developed along a simple clear line of action. The Prodigal, bored

¹⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 41-42.

with the commonplace quality of his life, runs away from home to see the world; he falls asleep and dreams of encounters with an opera dancer, musicians in concert rehearsals, and sophisticated companions in riotous living. He awakens and returns to the peace and security of his mother's home. Gilfond sees in the fantastic quality of the dream episodes an element of surrealism.²⁰

Two solos by Naomi Leaf, Esther and Hagar in the Desert, were presented on March 18, 1945. Their thematic material is derived from the Bible, and the dances are both intended to be direct interpretations of the content and essence of Biblical stories.²¹

Elsa Findlay presented a dramatization of a short story by John L. Spivak on May 16, 1936. The dance, Here Is Your Jew, is a literal interpretation of the theme of the prose: the plight of the Jews under Nazi domination. At the time of the initial performance of the dance, its theme was considered, according to one critic, to be a timely subject of dramatic import.²²

Ring Lardner's short story, Champion, inspired Sophie Maslow's group dance of the same title. This

²⁰Ibid., p. 45.

²¹Ibid., p. 69.

²²Marjorie Church, "Dance Reviews", Dance Observer, (June-July, 1936), p. 67.

composition, presented on May 1, 1948, follows the theme of the story closely; and, according to Doris Hering, it is "a masterful dance dramatization of . . . Lardner's short story . . . about a prize-fighting cad whose every problem is answered by a blow of his powerful fist." The dance is in four scenes depicting the significant boxing rounds of the fighter's career. The scenes are accompanied by a ringside commentary which reveals the personality and past events of the so-called hero. The commentary is composed of the narration of selected passages from Lardner's story and is projected in movement by the dancers' enactment of the actual events. The choreography is literal in its interpretation of its literary source, and the central character of the champion is depicted in both the story and the dance as a successful boxer who began his career by knocking down a crippled brother to get his money and then striking his mother who protested the action.²³

Jean Erdman presented Ophelia, a solo dance based upon the character of Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet, on December 15, 1945. Both Martin and Horst consider this dance to be a psychological study of Ophelia's character. Terry describes the choreographic interpretation of Ophelia as a composite of her innocence and vulnerability --essences of Ophelia's character. The psychosis of the central figure's personality dominates Erdman's representation

²³Smith, op. cit., p. 88.

of the literary theme, and this traditional madness is presented dramatically through choreography in narrative form.²⁴

Mary Anthony presented a solo composition, *Lady Macbeth*, on March 14, 1948. Based upon the character of the malevolent wife in Shakespeare's drama, *Macbeth*, this dance is a psychological study of the woman's madness; but its implications are so universal that it is not a literal representation of any specific psychosis.²⁵

Shakespeare's drama *Othello* served as the inspiration for Jose Limon's *The Moors Pavane*, a composition for four dancers. This dance, presented on August 12, 1949, follows closely the drama's action, characters, and the basic theme of the fatal possessiveness of love. Shakespeare's text recounts Othello's absorbing love for Desdemona, his suspicions and jealousy, and his eventual strangulation of his beloved. The dance is in pre-classic style, and the antique quality and formality of the choreography serve as contrast to the emotional content of the theme.²⁶

On April 11, 1948, Patricia Newman presented *Green Mansions*, a group dance inspired by William Henry Hudson's novel of the same title. Both the dance and the novel

²⁴Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

²⁵Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 93.

recount the experiences of a young man who enters a tropical jungle and finds a beautiful bird-woman. The choreography, designed in five parts, is a literal interpretation of the novel.²⁷

William Faulkner's novel, As I Lay Dying, served as thematic inspiration for Valerie Bettis' group composition of the same title. The composition, presented on December 19, 1948, is based upon themes and characters from the novel. Although the choreographer did not follow exactly the sequential narration of Faulkner's story, she explored deeply many thematic elements and characterizations of the literary text. In the novel, Faulkner concentrates on the death scene and burial of the central character Addie Bruncen; whereas Bettis shifts the emphasis, through the use of flashbacks, to past events in the dying woman's life. The choreography, accompanied by words from the novel, presents a psychological interpretation of the characters; and, according to Martin, Bettis "elicits a group of people in their involved relationships to each other, a way of life, a great deal of bare and unsentimentalized human tragedy."²⁸

On February 28, 1947, Martha Graham presented a

²⁷Nik Krevitsky, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer (May, 1948), p. 57.

²⁸Smith, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

duet, *Errand into the Maze*, a choreographic representation of the Greek legend of Theseus and the Minotaur, mythological characters represented in the Theban plays of Sophocles. Graham's treatment of this subject matter is similar to her approach to the Medea story in *Cave of the Heart* in that she represents the characters and situations of the myth in symbolic and psychological terms.²⁹

The previous descriptions were included in the present study in an attempt to show a sampling of dances based on literary themes. The choreographers called upon a wide range of literary material for their inspiration: The Bible, poetry, Shakespeare, mythology. The present investigator and this study is primarily interested in the use of satire in literature and the use of literary satire as a basis for dance themes.

Satire is a form of literature that is familiar to everyone and yet is difficult to define. It has been said that satire partakes variously of "sarcasm, irony, ridicule, and burlesque, it is exactly synonymous with no one of these."³⁰

Satire in one form or another has been with us throughout the ages. The Greeks show a sardonic lashing form of satire. The Romans tended to allow a broader sense

²⁹Lloyd, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

³⁰Carolyn Wells, A Satire Anthology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 1.

of humour to soften the satirical sting. Lucilius is acknowledged as the father of satire. He was followed by Horace who was himself followed and, in the opinion of some, surpassed by Juvenal.³¹

From the times of Horace and Juvenal, down through the medieval ages to the present day, satires may be divided into two classes founded by the two great masters: the works of Horace's followers marked by humour and tolerance and those of Juvenal's imitators characterized by bitter invective. On the one side, the years have produced such names in literary satire as Chaucer, Swift, Goldsmith, and Thackeray; on the other, Langland, Dryden, Pope, and Burns.

The motives that lead to satire are varied, but there is one motive that may almost be called a constant: "The satirist is nearly always a man who is abnormally sensitive to the gap between what might be and what is."³²

Just as some people feel a sort of compulsion, when they see a picture hanging crooked, to walk up to it and straighten it, so the satirist feels driven to draw attention to any departure from what he believes to be the truth, or honesty, or justice. He wishes to restore the balance, to correct the error; and often, to correct or

³¹Ibid., p. 3.

³²James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 4.

³³Ibid.

punish the wrongdoer.³³

The satirist makes us look beneath the surface of things, compels us to attend to what we have forgotten or have hitherto ignored, and makes us see familiar things in a new and possible shocking light.³⁴

The satirist presents a picture more or less vivid, though not of course complete and impartial, of the age to which he belongs, of the men, their manners, fashions, tastes, and prevalent opinions. Thus they have a historical as well as a literary and ethical value.³⁵

The attendant amusement related to satirical expression is not always the superficial spontaneity that it may appear to be. Martin Grotjahn, an eminent psychiatrist, has made the following statement concerning satirical wit:

Laughter is a universal symbol and may communicate a wide variety of emotions according to the cultural setting, but all laughter leads back to the same psychodynamics. Therefore most laughter will instantly be understood as a means of communication.³⁶

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 5.

³⁵Oliphant Sneaton, English Satires (London: Blackie and Son Limited), p. XIII.

³⁶Martin Grotjahn, Beyond Laughter (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1957), p. 196.

Satire aims at constructive criticism and improvement. By exposing evils the satirist hopes to bludgeon people into mending their ways. Satire is not the way of love or kindly persuasion, but a forceful approach; hard-hitting bitterness, sarcasm, exasperation, and ludicrous humor are among its most effective weapons. While it runs the risk of shortening its effective life by creating a reaction of irritation, withdrawal, or repulsion, it is at its best an art of great virility and vitality.³⁷

Satire is identified most conspicuously by its revelation of human sins and transgressions. It expresses a humanistic orientation in that its primary subjects are exclusively human or man-made. More than that, its humanism is social, for it deals chiefly with the behavior of people toward one another.

Choreographers have often called upon satirical literature as a source for dance productions. A description of some of these dances follows:

Max Beerbohm's Fairy Tale for Happy Men, a short satire in prose, served as thematic inspiration for Charles Weidman's The Happy Hippocrite, a group dance presented on November 29, 1931. The choreography is a literal interpretation of Beerbohm's farce; and both the literary text and the dance have been described as uproarious fantasy. The satirical theme of connubial bliss is enacted by the

³⁷Phillip C. Beam, Language of Art (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958), p. 557.

principal characters, Lord Heaven and Jenny Mere, whose marriage transforms Lord Heaven from a sinner to a saint. The dance followed the story practically gesture by syllable. In Lloyd's opinion, The Happy Hippocrite was the first successful attempt to expatiate successfully in movement on a theme that had already had a masterly presentation in words.³⁸

Candide, a full length dance comedy, was choreographed by Charles Weidman and presented on May 6, 1937. Based on the farcical novel by Voltaire, this group dance reflects the wit and satire of the text. Voltaire's work is a political satire, centered around the central character of Candide, whose naivete of temperament is not unlike that of Don Quixote. In the dance, Candide moves through the major events and situations of the novel, including the incident in which he joins the Bulgarian army and becomes completely confused in the drills. The choreographic style has been described as being mainly pantomimic and full of humor which is sometimes even slapstick. The dance comedy, in two acts and twelve scenes, is a literal translation of the novel's content and structure.³⁹

On August 10, 1941, Martha Graham and her company

³⁸Lloyd, op. cit., p. 91.

³⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 48.

of dancers presented Punch and the Judy, a dance comedy inspired by Gordon Craig's Tom Fool, a prose tale. The composition is a satirical representation of the text's theme of connubial combat in which the Judy alternately quarrells and romanticizes with three idealists--a soldier, and Indian Scout, and a highwayman.

The action of the dance is accompanied by the reading of passages from the text and is structured in the following scenes: (1) Overture; (2) The First Dilemma, including solos by the Judy and by Punch and a duet by the Judy and Pegasus; (3) The Second Dilemma, in which Punch seduces Polly and the Judy becomes so jealous that she retreats to her dream world with Pegasus; and (4) The Third Dilemma, in which the Judy appeals to Justice--her own personality--and Punch triumphs.⁴⁰

Sybil Shearer presented a group dance, Vanity--or the Pulse of Death, inspired by a poem of the same title by Harriet Prescott Spofford and performed on January 2, 1944. This composition is a satirical and pantomimic representation of the poetry, which is spoken by the dancers as accompaniment.⁴¹

On October 27, 1946, Nina Fonaroff presented Of Sondry Wimmen, a group composition based upon selected passages from Geoffrey Chaucer's poetic tales. The dance,

⁴⁰Robert Sabin, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer (August-September, 1941), p. 44.

⁴¹Lois Balcom, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer (February, 1944), p. 21.

which combines the Chaucerian words with movement, is a satirical representation of various characters and episodes from the literary source. According to one critic, the style of the movement reflects certain postures apparent in medieval tapestries.⁴²

A satirical approach characterizes Miriam Davis' group dance, Excerpts from "Just Folks", derived from the Edgar Guest poem and presented on January 12, 1947. According to one critic, this dance is a tongue-in-dead-pan-cheek interpretation of Edgar Guest's philosophy.⁴³

Charles Weidman's Fables for Our Time is a group composition, presented on April 19, 1948, and based upon four of James Thurber's prose fables: "The Owl Who Was God", "The Unicorn in the Garden", "The Shrike and the Chipmunks", and "The Courtship of Al and Arthur". The choreography has been called kinetic pantomime, and it deviates very little from Thurber's themes. The dance is a literal, though very imaginative, representation of the literary source; and the relationship between the text and the movement is heightened by the narration of Thurber's words.

The present investigator chose a selection by James Thurber as the literary work to be developed into the

⁴²Smith, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

⁴³Nik Krevitsky, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer (February, 1947), p. 20.

culminating dance production of the present study. A complete description of the dance production is included in Chapter three.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING THE CHOREOGRAPHY

The present investigation was evidenced in an extended dance production choreographed by the present investigator. The written description of the dance production was limited to the following points: (1) creating the script (2) selecting personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

Creating the Script

The present study is concerned with the use of literature as a source for choreography. Satire was selected as the area of literature to be examined. An extended dance production was to be choreographed and presented as partial evidence of the findings of the present study. The dance production was based upon a satirical writing entitled The Last Flower by James Thurber. This particular satirical piece of literature was selected because of a personal preference by the present investigator and because of the movement possibilities thought to be inherent in the words and ideas expressed in the literary work. It had also been evidenced that previous dance works had been successfully based upon the writings of Mr. Thurber (see

Chapter II, page 26).

Actual words from the text of the literary work are to be spoken by an off-stage narrator during the performance of the dance production. Doris Humphrey's book on choreography was consulted as to the use of the spoken word in dance. According to Miss Humphrey:

It seems to me that the function of the word here (narrative) is to supply the facts: place, time of day, era, identification of people and their purposes, and like matters. The dance must be the area where feeling about these things exists, and emotional evaluation should not be in the words.¹

Miss Humphrey's words seem to corroborate the selection of The Last Flower as a basis for choreography. Mr. Thurber's writing is simple and straightforward. The facts are supplied and it is up to the dance movement to inject the emotional evaluation into the words and situations. Other ideas were gained from Miss Humphrey and applied directly in the preparation of the script for the present dance production.

To protect the dance, action ideas should be left out of the words; action is where dance lives, breathes and exists. So narration should not tell how things are done, or how people feel, but where, who and what they are . . . The word to be necessary, must add information which will explain the meaning more clearly.²

¹Humphrey, op. cit., p. 127.

²Ibid.

An example from The Last Flower is found in a passage:
 "One day a young girl who had never seen a flower chanced
 to come upon the last one in the world."³ This tells the
 reader where, who and vaguely how, but it is left to the
 dancer to make it explicit through choreographed movements.

The following script was compiled from The Last Flower by James Thurber published by Harper and Brothers of New York in 1939. There were no page numbers in the edition used. The words used are taken directly from Mr. Thurber's literary work. Several omissions were deemed necessary and are indicated by the customary sign of ellipsis, alternating spaces and periods.

The Last Flower

"World War XII, as everybody knows, brought
 about the collapse of civilization

Towns, cities, and villages disappeared from
 the earth . . .

. . . Books, paintings, and music disappeared
 from the earth, and human beings just sat
 around, doing nothing

Years and years went by . . .

. . . One day a young girl who had never seen
 a flower chanced to come upon the last one
 in the world

She told the other human beings that the last
 flower was dying

³James Thurber, The Last Flower (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939).

The only one who paid any attention to her was
a young man she found wandering about

Together the young man and the girl nurtured
the flower and it began to live again

One day a bee visited the flower, and a hummingbird

Before long there were two flowers, and then
four . . .

. . . The young man discovered that touching the
girl was pleasurable

Love was reborn into the world . . .

. . . Towns, cities, and villages sprang up . . .

. . . Some people went one place to live, and
some another

Before long, those who went to live in the
valleys wished they had gone to live in the hills

And those who had gone to live in the hills
wished they had gone to live in the valleys . . .

. . . So presently the world was at war again

This time the destruction was so complete that
nothing at all was left in the world except one
man and one woman and one flower"

Selecting Personnel

The personnel used in the present dance production
was selected from the performing dance group at Sam Houston
State College , Huntsville, Texas. A total of nine persons
were selected for the production. Certain criteria were
established as a basis for the selection of the personnel.

The criteria used in the selection of personnel are:

(1) previous dance experience, (2) technical proficiency,

(3) creative ability, (4) ability to project to a large audience, (5) dependability.

Size and structure of the individuals were also considered in the selection of the participants, but were not dominant points in the selection.

Choreographing the Dance

The choreographer called upon several sources for inspiration in designing the movement for the present dance production.

Improvisation does have value in accelerating the creative process. Often new movement that might never have been found by means of intellectual visualization is accidentally discovered through the process of improvising.⁴

Experimentation before a mirror led to an organization of movement patterns which seemed to depict most accurately the ideas to be expressed by the dancers.

An examination of cartoon figures drawn by James Thurber further suggested groupings and gestures which were extended into dance movements.

The choreography in the first section of the dance is characterized by quick, angular movements. It is a time of war. The scene is a vast barren space. Two dancers enter with running steps. Their arms are extended diagonally upward and forward. As they progress, their focus changes rapidly. They are being pursued by an

⁴Elizabeth Hayes, Dance Composition and Production (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955), p. 24.

unseen enemy. The enemy is inescapable and no matter how quickly their focus changes they are unable to evade him. They attempt to cover themselves by an arm and hand extended over the head. A contraction in center while the arm is over the head further conveys their miserable state. While these two figures have performed downstage, two other dancers enter upstage and have echoed the movements of the first two. The figures seen downstage now exit. A solo figure enters. The figure repeats the design of the arm over head in an attempt to protect itself. One foot is grasped in back of the figure and the locomotion is achieved by hopping on the free leg. The two figures seen upstage repeat the hopping movement. They vary it by taking small jumps while the arms are circling--again repeating the change of focus theme. Another solo figure enters with the small jumps. The four figures now on stage perform movements intensifying the idea of pursuit. We see recurring themes: hopping, change of focus, contractions. Two figures re-enter and all six figures are immobilized in a grouping of choreographed confusion. One figure emerges from the grouping to point up at the approaching doom of civilization.

We hear words spoken by an off-stage narrator. At key words the dancers begin to move into the second section of the dance. The movements are slow and could be described

as languid. A stylized walk is characteristic of the feeling state expressed in this section of the dance. The gaze is up, the arms hang loosely at the sides. The knees are slightly bent and it appears to be a great effort to lift the feet. It is a state of complete unconcern. The dancers periodically shift the weight into one hip so that it gives the figures an appearance of nonchalance. The figures change levels by going down to one knee. This movement was suggested by the words spoken in the narration ". . . sat around doing nothing."⁶ The figures move upstage. One of the figures lifts a leg sharply suggesting a spark of interest--perhaps ambition has arisen in one of their number. This is suppressed by a simple glance from each of the figures. This outburst is quelled and they all shift into the hips and settle into their characteristic pose, once again appearing to be an indifferent, lethargic group.

A new character enters. This figure is a definite feminine character. The six figures we have seen were neither male nor female specifically but represented mankind in general. The female figure we now see is in marked contrast to the six. She enters with a bright bouncy walk. She spies the group and takes their pose briefly but not understanding why they are so static, continues on her way. She comes upon the last flower that

⁵Thurber, loc. cit.

remains in the world. She tries to get the attention of the group but they pay no heed. She kneels at the flower and moves as if to fondle and caress it. The group begins to move off. The girl becomes more determined to gain their attention. Two figures exit without any recognition of the girl and the flower. The four remaining figures focus on her. They shake their hands as if to ridicule the girl for making a fuss over a thing as unimportant as the last flower. They are too concerned with themselves to be bothered with such trivia. They start to exit. The girl will not give up. She exits with them hoping they will heed her urging and help her save the flower. They all exit with the lifeless walk seen in section two of the dance.

Two figures enter from stage right. One is wearing a toy drum in the manner of a bass drum. The other figure holds finger cymbals as you would hold full size cymbals in a marching band. Both enter in the manner of marchers on parade. Both are very concerned with their instruments and nothing can deter them from their path. The girl enters from the opposite side of the stage and attempts to get their attention but they ignore her. They continue across stage and exit. A solo figure enters. The figure is carrying knitting needles. The movement is bright and perky--echoing the movement made with the knitting needles. The locomotor movement is a walk alternating releve and

plie. The girl takes small leaps to the flower and tries to call the attention of the figure to it. The figure completely ignores these entreaties and exits continuing to be absorbed in her "knitting." A solo figure enters carrying a bubble solution. Periodically the figure will blow bubbles further showing concern with objects that are in reality unimportant. The figure moves through the space with very precise steps to the side. The figure takes a few steps on stage, moves upstage and exits to the same side that she entered from. The girl is perplexed by this figure and only looks on in wonder. A figure enters with a jump rope and crosses diagonally from upstage left and exits down right. A rhythmic pattern is taken with the jump rope. The girl only focuses on the figure with a turn of the head. Another solo figure enters with jazz-like movements. She has no stage property. This figure is concerned with herself and shows it through her exhibitionistic behavior. The girl makes an attempt to gain the attention of this figure and tell of the flower. The figure reacts by collapsing on all fours and covering her head with her arms. Each of the figures we have seen now reenter with their props and characteristic movements to gaze at the girl as she attempts to care for the flower. They make no attempt to help her and exit as a group, leaving the girl alone with her charge.

A male figure now enters. He is pulling a red wagon--

his most prized possession. He enters with the walk we saw the others take in the second section--gaze is up, knees bent, and it appears to be an effort to move his feet. He stops as he comes to the girl and the flower. The boy considers them for a moment. He now listens to the girl as she caresses the flower. He takes the movement with her. Together they lift the flower and place it carefully in the wagon. The girl takes short, quick steps to the side until she is behind the wagon. The young man duplicates her movements until he is in position to pull the wagon. He starts off with the flower riding in the center of the wagon. He moves with his characteristic walk. He varies it by keeping his gaze straight ahead and at times walking backwards so he can focus on the flower. The girl continues to move with small steps to the side. Her arms denote her concern and tenderness for the flower. She first protects the flower by extending one arm over the flower and the other around it. Her arms change so that both are above the flower--again a gesture of protection. As they exit she performs gestures depicting the catching of rain in her cupped hands and pouring it on the flower in hopes it will nourish the flower.

The stage remains empty for a moment as the lighting changes and we hear words spoken by the off-stage narrator.

As we hear the words ". . . there were two flowers"⁶ two dancers enter and stand facing the audience. Each one carries a small flower. We hear the words ". . . and then four"⁷ and two more dancers enter and face front. They also carry small flowers. The music starts and the dance begins. The movements are bright and could be described as happy movements. The dancers bow to each other and focus directly on each other. This is the first time we have seen the group react with emotion to other human beings. The movements are characterized by such movement sequences as a leg swing, step-hop, and a small leap. A foot strikes the ground and rebounds with a percussive beat as if the figures were exclaiming the wonder and excitement of their new life beginning. The four dancers are happy with themselves and their situation. Two more dancers enter with a rapid run, run, step-hop. They each hold their flower on top of their head. They seem to brag that they are different and original by carrying their flowers in this way. This is a new discovery for mankind and it is as important to them as the discovery of the wheel must have been to ancient man. The group of four watch the two "inventors" enter and exit. They become discouraged and bored with their conventional way of holding their flowers. They become

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

immobilized in awkward positions not wanting to go on in their ordinary way. The boy and girl reenter with the wagon and flower. This time we see the flower in full bloom. They weave their way through the static figures not understanding their plight. The "inventors" reenter and also weave among the figures and exit. As they pass a figure the particular figure reacts by deciding to imitate them exactly. Eventually all the dancers are imitating each other with the flower held on the head and taking the locomotor movement of run, run, step-hop. They all exit leaving the boy and girl on stage to gaze after them in wonder.

The boy tentatively makes a tender gesture to the girl and finds ". . . touching the girl was pleasurable."⁸ A duet follows in which we see the boy and girl discovering each other and establishing a definite boy-girl relationship. For the first time in the dance production we see what may be considered love between human beings. The boy and girl are joined by the six dancers representing mankind and together dance of the wonder of experiencing this new emotion called love. The movements are full and sustained. The basic locomotor movement is step, step, step-releve. At the end of this section there is a grouping of the figures. Each relates to the other by an overlapping and touching of

⁸Ibid.

figures as we hear the words spoken: "Love was reborn into the world. . ."9

The picture is broken and the figures begin to separate and pass each other with movements we have seen in the previous section. The boy and girl exit with the wagon and the flower. The dancers are divided into two groupings. There are three figures in each group. One figure from each group becomes curious of the other and we see them inspecting each other. They return to their respective groups. This time the groups advance on each other menacingly and we see movements from the first section depicting flight, pursuit, war. Yes, we are at war once again because of jealousy between the two groups. At a certain point we see them become rigid, focus up and all begin to collapse in a gesture of defeat.

The boy and girl now enter and move among the figures surveying the destruction. The young man still pulls his wagon and both the flower and the girl now ride in it. They continue their journey through the figures as the curtains close.

Selecting the Music

Since the recent era of romantic dance, choreographers have become increasingly experimental in their selection and creation

⁹Ibid.

of accompaniment for dance. From music, dancers have turned to atonal percussion instruments, or to the rhythmic pulse of their own feet on the floor, or to spoken words or song produced either by themselves or by others.¹⁰

The present choreographer was to design and create every aspect of the present dance production including the selection of the music. A degree of experimentation was desired. The music selected should be sufficiently abstract so as to be easily adaptable as accompaniment since the dance movements were created before the music was selected. The music and sounds were to be a background for the dance. A certain state of feeling should be conveyed by the music such as happiness, tenderness, and monotony. The accompaniment for the present dance production was composed of selections from three record albums. These albums are entitled Soothing Sounds for Baby, Volume I, Volume II, and Volume III. Each long-playing record contains electronic sound and music created by the well known American composer, Raymond Scott.

A selection from Volume I entitled "Tic-Toc" was chosen to accompany the first section of the dance. It is merely the ticking of a clock and was used as background for the rhythmic dance movements. It expresses an urgency, an agitating sound which helps convey the pitiful state of the characters in the first section.

¹⁰Hayes, op. cit., p. 133.

The same selection was used in the second section of the dance. For this second section the playing speed of the record was reduced from 33 1/3 rpm to 16 rpm. Thus giving the effect of monotony in sound which was mirrored in the movements of the dancers.

A change in quality was desired for the third section of the dance. "The Playful Drummer" from Volume III was selected to accompany this section of the dance. It has a bright, bouncy, happy quality which echos the quality of the dance movement.

We hear a clicking sound at the beginning of section four. This introduces the male character who is pulling a red wagon behind him. The clicking sound is identified with the movement of the wagon. "Toy Typewriter" from Volume II was used for this purpose. The remainder of section four is performed in silence as it enters the realm of pantomime and no accompaniment was felt necessary.

In section six the atmosphere is bright and happy. The tempo is rapid. "Tempo Block" in Volume II was used as accompaniment for this section. During this section we hear a brief return to "Toy Typewriter" as the boy and girl reenter. The section ends with a return to "Tempo Block."

Section seven is a duet which moves immediately into a group dance. The idea to be expressed here was one of tenderness and love. "Sleepy Time" in Volume I seemed most appropriate for the emotional states to be conveyed.

In sections eight and nine we hear a return to the ticking clock we heard at the beginning of the dance. The dancers revert to the original idea and movement so it was logical to associate the sound heard at the same time.

In the last section we see the male figure enter pulling his wagon so we hear the clicking sound which we have come to associate with his entrance. The clicking sound continues until the curtains close on the dance production.

Selecting the Costumes

Several points were considered in selecting the costumes for the present dance production.

The costume, if it has been thoughtfully fashioned, can be an effective part of the dance. The design of the costume must be such that its lines are in keeping with the style of the dance; it should be constructed to augment rather than to detract from the movement.¹¹

The movements of the dancers in the present dance production may be described as stark, angular, and at times vigorous. At times the movement enters into the realm of pantomime with subtle nuances. For these reasons it was decided the costumes should be extremely simple so as not to detract from the movement of the dancers in any way.

¹¹Ibid., p. 120.

Because dance itself is an abstraction of reality, the costumes should be designed to suggest rather than to represent literally the dance characters.¹²

Figure I shows the costume to be worn by the dancers representing mankind. The costume consists of basic leatard and tights in a neutral grey color. Over the leatard and tights is an abstract design in a peacock blue. The attempt here is to show figures representing mankind. There should be no relationships denoting male-female. For this reason a black headdress was designed for each dancer.

Figure II shows the costume to be worn by the female character in the present dance production. The costume consists of basic leatard and tights in a bright peacock blue. Over this is a sheer, grey garment denoting the femininity of the character.

Figure III is a representation of the costume to be worn by the male figure in the present dance production. It consists of a grey shirt, grey tights and a bright peacock blue vest. The vest is to denote the male factor of the character.

Staging and Lighting the Dance Work

Stage Setting

The purpose of the present dance production is to

¹²Ibid., p. 121.

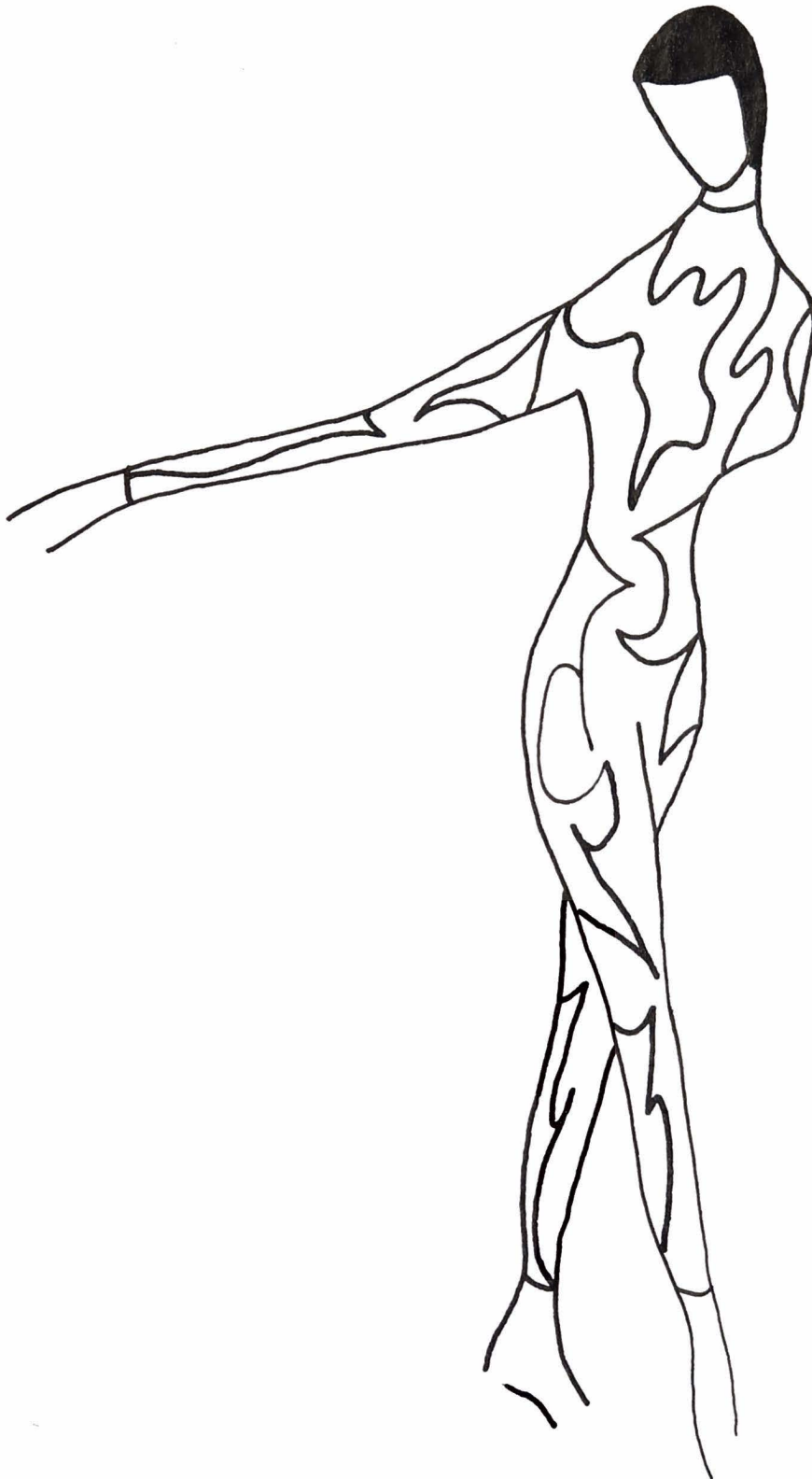


Figure 1. Costume Worn by Dancers Representing Mankind



Figure II. Costume Worn by the Female Character

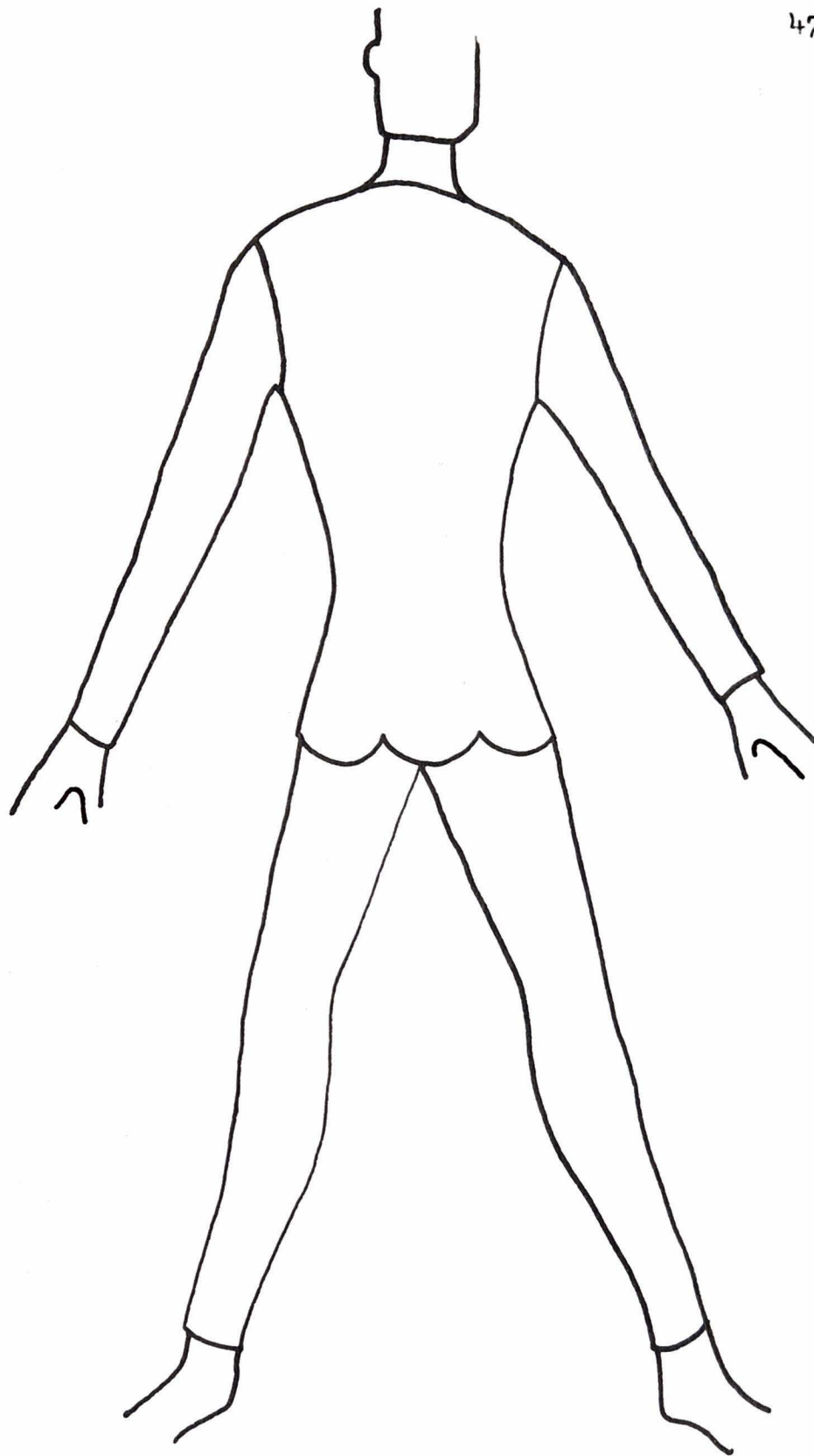


Figure III. Costume Worn by the Male Character

communicate universal ideas and feelings states. For this reason the stage setting is to be kept simple and unobtrusive so as not to detract in any way from the choreographic movement. The present dance production should use a backdrop of a neutral hue. In the present production situation it will be possible to use the actual upstage wall of the stage space. The wall space is of a neutral hue and in excellent condition for this purpose. If this wall space were not available in other performing situations a substitute should be a curtain of velour, outing flannel, or some other soft but heavy material. A setting of this type is not only pleasing to the eye, but also possesses the advantage of adaptability. This type of stage setting also allows a great deal of freedom in the design of the lighting. The abstract simplicity of the backdrop will allow the audience to imagine whatever specific setting they may feel appropriate for each dance section that is presented.

Stage Properties

The present investigator feels that certain stage properties are needed to help project the meaning of the present dance production.

The first stage property we see is an abstract representation of a flower. It is abstract by the fact that

it is not a realistic representation of a particular kind or specie of flower, but rather it is an original design by the present investigator. The design is meant to be decorative as well as functional. The flower is introduced in the third section of the dance production and is utilized throughout the remainder of the dance production. Actually we see two versions of the flower. The first is the dying flower (see Figure IV). The second is after the boy and girl have cared for it and it begins to live again (see Figure V).

Several stage properties are used in section three of the dance. These properties are: (1) one toy drum and two drum sticks, (2) two small finger cymbals, (3) one pair of knitting needles, (4) one container of bubble solution and one instrument for blowing bubbles, (5) one jump rope. These stage properties are used by the dancers along with choreographic movement to denote serious and complete preoccupation with articles that might be considered unimportant and in some cases ridiculous in everyday situations.

A solo male figure enters in the fourth section and with him he pulls a child's red wagon. The idea to be conveyed once again is that of preoccupation with an object that in reality is unimportant.

In the sixth section of the dance we see each of the

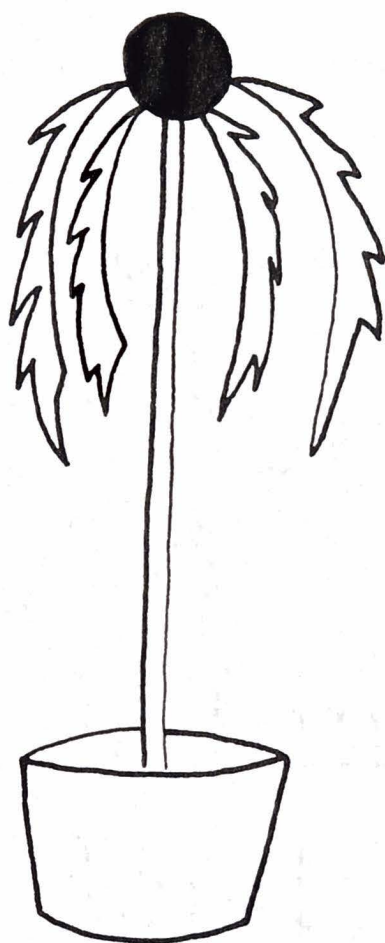


Figure IV. The Flower Used in Sections Three, Four,
Five and Ten

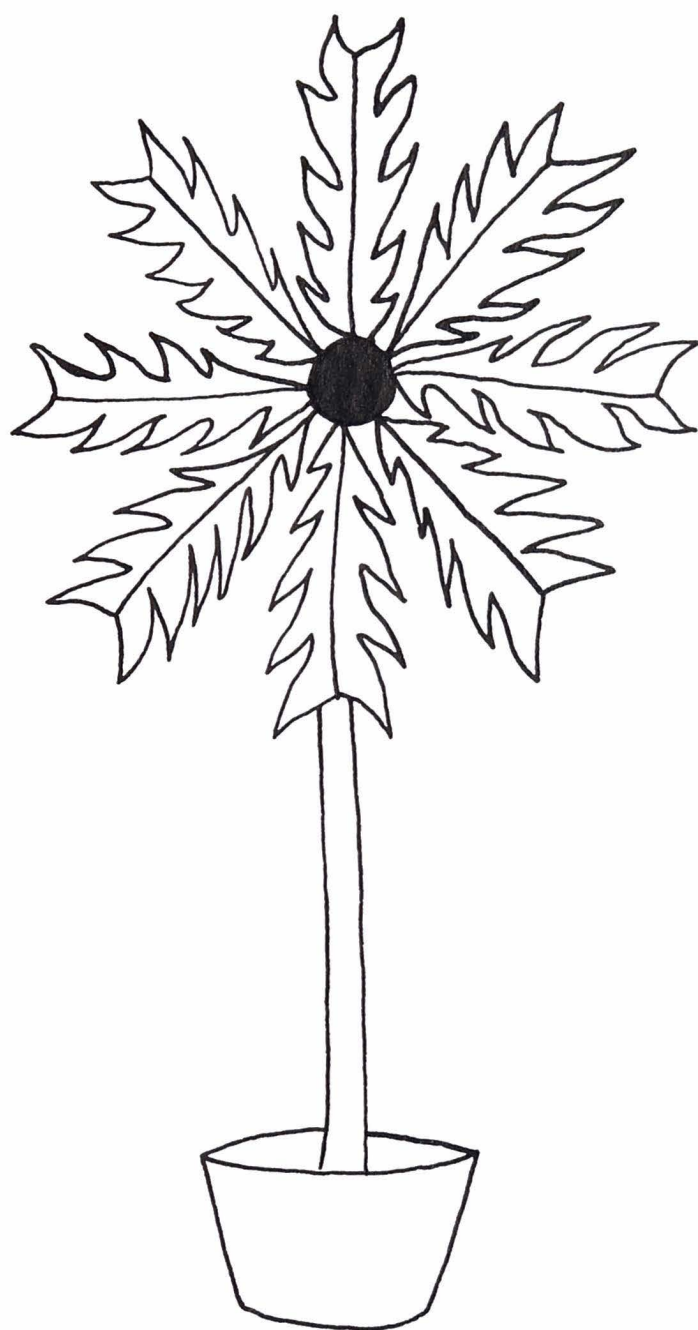


Figure V. The Flower Used in Sections Six and Seven

six dancers carrying a small flower. These flowers help to show that life on earth is beginning to flourish once again.

The present investigator feels the various stage properties as described above are needed to help project the meaning of the present dance production. The present investigator feels further that their use is justifiable by the fact they do not distract from the choreographic movement.

Lighting

The lighting for the present dance production was designed to create a mood or atmosphere and therefore was based almost entirely on aesthetic reasons. Since this was not a realistic production in the strictest sense of the word the necessity for specific motivation seemed negligible. Motivation, however, was not entirely ignored. The red spot that we see at the end of section one was utilized to convey the idea of fire, danger, destruction. On the other hand, the light, airy color used in section six has no special significance. It is used merely to set a mood.

As the curtains open the stage is bare. The lighting should be very bright to convey a feeling of starkness. It should represent a vast empty place. The color scheme should be composed of white and yellow lights

with the suggestion of red to give the impression of a white glaring heat. This lighting is retained throughout the first section of the dance. As the first section ends the bright lighting should begin to dim. As it is dimming a red spot should begin to come up on the dancers who are grouped downstage right. The bright lighting should continue to dim out completely leaving only the red spot light illuminating the group. As the dancers begin to move into positions for the beginning of the second section of the dance the red spot begins to dim out. A blue spot comes up to reveal a single figure downstage left as the second section begins. This blue spot fades into a general blue lighting scheme for the second section of the dance. The whole stage should gradually become illuminated in blue as the second section progresses.

The third section is characterized by the movements of a solo figure. These movements might be described as happy and bouncy. These feelings should be carried over into the design of the lighting. The lighting should be bright and clear. Not, however, as bright as in the first section of the dance. The lighting for this third section should be softened. The color should stay in the range of yellow--a golden yellow. At the end of section three the lights should begin to change from the yellow to the blue lighting that was used in section two. The blue spot will not be employed but rather the full stage illumination.

The blue motif will remain throughout sections four and five of the dance production. At the end of section five the dancers exit. The stage will remain bare as the off-stage narrator speaks. During the narration the lights should begin to change to a color not seen previously in the dance. The color should be a very light shade of purple with a considerable amount of pink added to give it a light, airy feeling. This lighting is to be the setting for section six of the dance. The dance itself is light in nature and the lighting should echo this feeling through its color. As section seven begins the lighting should begin to intensify and by the end of this section the color should be a rich, intense shade of purple. During section eight the lighting returns to the light, airy color we saw in section six. The lighting for section nine returns to the yellow motif. It begins as a soft hue and gradually increases in intensity until it becomes the glaring white light we saw at the opening section of the dance production. At the conclusion of section eight we hear the off-stage narration. As the words are being spoken the lighting changes once again to the blue illumination we saw in sections two, four, and five. The blue lighting scheme will remain until the final curtains close on the dance production.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this study was to explore the inherent possibilities in the use of literary material as a source of choreography and to examine one particular kind of literature for its choreographic potential. The present investigator chose the specific area of satire in literature for this investigation. The findings of this investigation were evidenced in written form and were projected into an extended dance production choreographed, designed, staged and presented in concert by the present investigator. This culminating production was based upon a satirical literary work entitled The Last Flower by James Thurber.

The written substantiation concerning the use of literary material as a source of choreography was limited to the following areas: (1) mixing of various art media (2) the appropriateness of certain literary subject matter for dance production (3) the nature of satire and its potential for dance.

It was discovered that a conscious blending of various arts has often been a topic for debate. There are those who charge there should be a strict independence among the arts. On the other hand there is the opinion that human experience is the property of all artists and each treats

this experience as he sees it through the use of his particular medium. The combining of literary and choreographic elements is an example of a conscious mixing of art forms.

The present investigator selected specific dance compositions based on literary works and investigated various descriptions of these works to corroborate and clarify the varied use of literature as choreographic subject matter. It was noted that through the fusion of these two art forms the dance drama has been able to achieve significant theatrical reinterpretation of thematic material.

It was found that every piece of literature does not have implications for reinterpretation in a non-literary art such as dance. In some cases it would be a grave misuse of the source material to pursue this reinterpretation. Certain literary sources need the precision and descriptive force of the written word and no other medium can effectively represent its communicative intent.

Investigation showed that satire is identified most conspicuously by its revelation of human sins and transgressions. It expresses a humanistic orientation in that its primary subjects are exclusively human or man-made. More than that, its humanism is social, for it deals chiefly with the behavior of people toward one another. This seemed to hold a wealth of choreographic potential.

The dance production was described in detail and included the following points: (1) creating the script (2) selecting personnel (3) choreographing the dance (4) selecting the music (5) selecting the costumes (6) staging and lighting the dance work.

An extended dance production was choreographed and presented as partial evidence of the findings of the present study. The dance production was based upon a satirical writing entitled The Last Flower by James Thurber. This particular satirical piece of literature was selected because of a personal preference by the present investigator and because of the movement possibilities thought to be inherent in the words and ideas expressed in the literary work. Actual words from the text of the literary work were spoken by an off-stage narrator during the performance of the dance production. Mr. Thurber's writing is simple and straightforward. The facts are supplied and it is up to the dance movement to inject the emotional evaluation into the words and situations. The choreographer felt it necessary to omit several passages from the literary work as they did not seem to have potential for dance and were not pertinent to the idea which was to be expressed primarily through dance movement.

The personnel used in the present dance production was selected from the performing dance group at Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. A total of nine persons

was selected for the production. Certain criteria were established as a basis for the selection of personnel. The criteria used in the selection of personnel were: (1) previous dance experience, (2) technical proficiency, (3) creative ability, (4) ability to project to a large audience, (5) dependability.

The choreographer called upon several sources for inspiration in designing the movement for the present dance production.

Experimentation before a mirror led to an organization of movement patterns which seemed to depict most accurately the ideas to be expressed by the dancers.

An examination of cartoon figures drawn by James Thurber further suggested groupings and gestures which were extended into dance movements.

The present choreographer was to design and create every aspect of the present dance production including the selection of the music. A degree of experimentation was desired. The music selected should be sufficiently abstract so as to be easily adaptable as accompaniment since the dance movements were created before the music was selected. The music and sounds were to be a background for the dance. A certain state of feeling should be conveyed by the music such as happiness, tenderness, and monotony. The accompaniment for the present dance production was composed

of selections from three record albums. These albums are entitled Soothing Sounds for Baby, Volume I, Volume II, and Volume III. Each long-playing record contains electronic sound and music created by the well known American composer, Raymond Scott.

The movements of the dancers in the present dance production may be described as stark, angular, and at times vigorous. At times the movement enters into the realm of pantomime with subtle nuances. For these reasons it was decided the costumes should be extremely simple so as not to detract from the movement of the dancers in any way.

Several stage properties were used in section three of the dance. The properties were: (1) one toy drum and two drum sticks, (2) two small finger cymbals, (3) one pair of knitting needles, (4) one container of bubble solution and one instrument for blowing bubbles, (5) one jump rope. These stage properties were used by the dancers along with choreographic movement to denote serious and complete preoccupation with articles that might be considered unimportant and in some cases ridiculous in every day situations.

The lighting for the present dance production was designed to create a mood or atmosphere and therefore was based almost entirely on aesthetic reasons. Since this was not a realistic production in the strictest sense of the

word, the necessity for specific motivation seemed negligible.

Whereas science minimizes individual differences, art maximizes them. Experimentation in art should be directed toward achieving an end product which is fresh, different, and unique. Materials used should be selected and manipulated with taste and discrimination. A theoretical knowledge and understanding of artistic principles is assumed but the manner in which the artist applies them is intensely personal. Thus, at the conclusion of this study, the investigator believes that the point of view evidenced in the selection of materials externalized in the dance, *The Last Flower*, was one which reflected his own ideas, values and beliefs. Another artist might have, with validity, taken an entirely different approach. This is the nature of art.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Beam, Philip C. The Language of Art. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958.
- DeMille, Agnes. The Book of the Dance. New York: Golden Press, 1963.
- Elliott, Robert C. The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960.
- Feibleman, James. In Praise of Comedy. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962.
- Gardner, Helen. Art Through the Ages. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1948.
- Grotjahn, Martin. Beyond Laughter. New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1957.
- H'Doubler, Margaret N. Dance A Creative Art Experience. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959.
- Horst, Louis and Carroll Russell. Modern Dance Forms. San Francisco: Impulse Publications, 1961.
- Humphrey, Doris. The Art of Making Dances. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959.
- Johnson, Edgar. A Treasury of Satire. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944.
- Langer, Susanne K. Feeling and Form. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
- Martin, John. Book of the Dance. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1963.
- Lloyd, Margaret. The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.
- Rapp, Albert. The Origins of Wit and Humor. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1951.
- Sachs, Curt. The Commonwealth of Art. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1946.

- Sergeant, Elizabeth S. Fire Under the Andes. New York: Knopf, Inc., 1927.
- Sorrell, Walter (ed.). The Dance Has Many Faces. New York: World Publishing Company, 1951.
- Wells, Carolyn. A Satire Anthology. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.
- Wickiser, Ralph L. An Introduction to Art Activities. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947.

Periodicals

- Balcom, Lois. "Reviews of the Month", Dance Observer, (February, 1944), 21.
- Church, Majorie. "Dance Reviews", Dance Observer, (June-July, 1936), 67.
- Krevitsky, Nik. "Reviews of the Month", Dance Observer, May, 1948), 57.
- Sabin, Robert. "Reviews of the Month", Dance Observer, (August-September, 1941), 94.
- White, Emily V. "Correlating Drama, Music, and Dance", Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, (September, 1955), 22.

Unpublished Material

- Smith, Nancy Warren. "Modern Dances Based Upon Literary Themes, 1926-1959." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Division, The Texas Woman's University, 1960.

Vita was removed during scanning