

by

A THESIS

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Approved:

Dean of the Graduate School

THE USE OF THEMES DERIVED FROM
NOVELS BY WILLIAM FAULKNER
AS BASIS FOR AN ORIGINAL DANCE PRODUCTION

A THESIS

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by
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Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to explore the choreographic possibilities found in the literary works of William Faulkner. The investigator selected works which dealt with emotional interplay among the characters. The findings of the investigator are evidenced in the present written form and were projected into an extended dance production choreographed, designed and staged in concert. The dance production was based upon a character, Rosa Coldfield, in William Faulkner's novel Absalom, Absalom!.

Methods

The investigator reviewed novels written by twentieth century novelist, William Faulkner. From the themes found in Faulkner's novels, six themes were selected because of their recurrence throughout the literature and their impact upon the investigator.

The findings were organized into the prescribed thesis form and include the following relevant information concerning the presentation of the dance: (1) selection of the themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development of choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of the dance work.

Summary and Evaluation

This study is concerned with the use of themes recurrent in William Faulkner's works as basis for choreography. The written substantiation presented was limited to the following areas: (1) novels written by William Faulkner (2) the appropriateness for choreography of recurring themes used by Faulkner (3) the credibility of the use of flashback for the dance production.

The investigation resulted in an extended dance production choreographed by the investigator. The description of the dance was limited to: (1) selection of themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development of choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of the dance work.

The culminating project of the present study was a dance production which fulfills that innate impulse to communicate ideas and feelings which cannot be stated in factual terms. These ideas and feelings are a part of the intuitive sense. The dance production, The Past Is Never Done. It Is Not Past, is in itself a representation of the views of the present investigator and the approach reflects these views. It is the fulfillment of the impulse to create.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The dance is one of man's oldest and most basic means of expression.¹ It began with primitive man's search for ways to communicate to his peers those experiences which defied verbal description; and through his dance, he found he could "express feelings that transcended understanding."²

In his effort to share emotional experiences, man utilizes another basic drive, the desire to create. The act of creation is a "drive to know, to relate, and to become....," and the desire to create seems to be stronger than the need for preservation and material satisfaction.³

The psychologist, Gardner Murphy, explains the creative instinct as:

deep forces that strive fundamentally for the gratification of the need to understand; forces resistant to standardization and the molding process; forces that nervously and restlessly cut through the chrysalis of culture.⁴

For modern man as it was for primitive man, dance is a means of expressing human thought and feeling and of ful-

¹Alma M. Hawkins, Creating Through Dance, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 3.

²John Martin, The Modern Dance, (New York: Dance Horizons, Inc., 1933), p. 9.

³Ibid., p.8.

⁴Gardner Murphy, Human Potentialities (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958), p. 18.

filling the creative instinct. Man has found that in the medium of dance he has a means of expressing "his feeling responses to the universe."⁵ John Martin views this intrinsic ability as the prime purpose of modern dance. Dance is:

communication of emotional experiences--intuitive perceptions, illusive truths--which cannot be communicated in reasoned terms or reduced to mere statement of fact.⁶

A fundamental ingredient in dance is the impulse to create.⁷ To perform the act of creation (to know, to relate, to become), the choreographer must draw from his experiences those things which are felt, heard, or sensed, but elude reasoning. He crystalizes all of his reactions until he reaches the very core of their meaning for him. He draws from the old which enables him to make a new statement, and with the presentation of a new statement, the choreographer makes the transition from technician to artist. No matter what the medium, the art object expresses the concepts of the artist. John Dewey states that:

The expressiveness of the object is the report and celebration of the complete fusion of what we undergo and what our activity of attentive perception brings into what we receive by the means of the senses.⁸

The choreographer selects from his lived experiences some idea that will be woven into his art object. The

⁵Hawkins, p. 3.

⁶Ibid., p. 6.

⁷Ibid., p. 7.

⁸John Dewey, Art As Experience, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 103.

sources of inspiration are innumerable, but literature has provided the stimulation for many choreographers. Themes and characters from William Faulkner's novel, As I Lay Dying, were used by Valerie Bettis for a group composition. Martha Graham has made use of the mythological characters from Sophocles' dramas in dance compositions such as Cave of the Heart and Errand into the Maze. José Limon was inspired by Shakespeare's drama Othello for his dance, The Moor's Pavane.

Sometimes it is a phrase, sentence, or characterization within the literary work that sends the choreographer to the studio seeking expression. At other times it is the mood or emotional state that has been elicited by the work. The choreographer may choose to make his dance a visual narrative of literature, or to simply use the work as the underlying basis for his dance. In this way he is free to cull or expand the original idea until the dance, his work of art, "expresses a concept of life, emotion, or reality" for him.⁹

The investigator attempted to elicit through dance, moods and emotional reactions inherent in the works of William Faulkner. The moods and emotional reactions were related to the life of the character, Rosa Coldfield.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to explore the choreographic possibilities found in the literary works of William Faulkner.

⁹Susanne K. Langer, Problems of Art, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 26.

The investigator selected works which dealt with emotional interplay among the characters. The findings of the investigator are evidenced in the present written form and were projected into an extended dance production choreographed, designed and staged in concert. The dance production was based upon a character, Rosa Coldfield, in William Faulkner's novel Absalom, Absalom!.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study deals with the use of themes which were derived from literature and utilized in choreography structured within a flashback form.

The investigation leading to the written document and the dance was limited to: (1) novels written by William Faulkner (2) the appropriateness for choreography of recurring themes used by Faulkner (3) the credibility of the use of flashback for the dance production.

The study was concluded by the presentation of an extended dance production choreographed by the investigator. The description of the dance was limited to: (1) selection of themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development of choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of the dance work.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

The investigator reviewed novels written by twentieth century novelist, William Faulkner. From the themes found

in Faulkner's novels, six themes were selected because of their recurrence throughout the literature and their impact upon the investigator.

The findings were organized into the prescribed thesis form and include the following relevant information concerning the presentation of the dance: (1) selection of the themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development of choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of the dance work.

RELATED STUDIES

The review of related literature was directed to critical reviews, theses, and dissertations which included description of dances in the flashback form which used emotional themes as sources of choreography. The results of this review are presented in the second chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY THEMES USED AS BASIS FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

Source of Themes

Literature has often been the source of choreographic stimulation for many choreographers in the area of contemporary dance. A choreographer may choose to structure his dance into a visual narrative of the literature, a crystallization of events, or a character study of the personalities. He may also elect to use literature as the stimulus for a totally new approach to conclusions similar to those drawn by the writer, or he may draw completely new conclusions. In this way literature has served as the initial spark that sets into motion the creative process.

Use of themes inherent in literature is another form that literary stimulation may take. Valerie Bettis choreographed a dance in flashback form using themes from As I Lay Dying, a novel by William Faulkner. The central character is the passive character in the novel, but Valerie Bettis shifts the emphasis from the children, who are of principle importance in the novel, to the mother.¹

Faces of Woman by Jandley is a solo composition using themes from the poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" by Walt Whitman. The emphasis of the poem on the periodicity

¹John Martin, "The Dance: Bravo," New York Times, (January 16, 1948).

of human life is used as "a starting point for the cycle-of-life dance which this dance work seems intended to be."²

Using a theme of protest against traditional attitudes of the law in reference to dispossessed persons, Bill Maton choreographed Letter to a Policeman in Kansas City.³ The dance is a literal interpretation of the poem's content.

Martha Graham choreographed Punch and the Judy satirically representing the theme of connubial combat.⁴ She drew her theme from Gordon Craig's Tom Fool.

Folksay is a literal representation of the folk scenes in the poem "The People, Yes," by Carl Sandburg. Sophie Maslow choreographed a series of episodes, each a separate folk-scene taken from the poem.⁵

The classical drama by Aeschylus, Eumenides, is the thematic basis of Orestes and the Furies by Hanya Holm. Both deal with "the mental torment of a man who has killed his mother."⁶

Martha Graham used Euripides' drama, Medea, as the basis for her dance entitled Cave of the Heart. This group

²Nik Krevitsky, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer XVII (March, 1950), p. 44.

³Marjorie Church, "Dance Reviews," Dance Observer, IV (June-July, 1937), p. 66.

⁴John Martin, "Dance," New York Times, January 11, 1942.

⁵Nancy Smith, "Modern Dances Based Upon Literary Themes, 1926-1959." (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, the Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas, 1960, p. 64.

⁶P. S., "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, X (October, 1943), p. 92.

composition is based on the drama, but transcends that story and develops into a "dance of possessive and destroying love."⁷

"Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias," a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca inspired Doris Humphrey's composition of the same name. The dance is in five sections. Four sections are the same as the four sections of the poem, and the fifth is a Prologue added by Humphrey.⁸

Peter Hamilton based his composition Silent Snow, Secret Snow on the short story of the same name by Conrad Aiken. The composition is a literal representation of the story's theme.⁹

The Exiles by José Limon is based upon a passage from Milton's epic poem Paradise Lost. The composition suggests an allegory to the awakening of two human beings to maturity.¹⁰

The character, Cassandra, in Aeschrylus' Agamemnon inspired Pauline Koner's solo entitled Cassandra. The underlying idea of the characterization is described in the program note: "Cassandra, prophetess of Troy, doomed by the gods never to be believed, stands amid the destruction she foretold."¹¹ The composition is the psychological interpre-

⁷Robert Sabin, "Review of the Month," Dance Observer, XIII (June-July, 1946), p. 73, quoting Martha Graham.

⁸Nancy Smith, p. 76.

⁹Nik Krevitsky, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, XIV (August-September, 1947), p. 79.

¹⁰Anon., "Reviews," Dance Magazine, XXIV (October, 1950), p. 34.

¹¹Robert Sabin, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, XXI (March, 1954), p. 41.

tation by the choreographer of the character of the doomed seer.¹²

"The Fates" by Stephen Spender inspired Doris Humphrey's composition Ruins and Visions. The poem and the dance state the theme of condemnation of the unrealistic attitudes in society, but Humphrey's choreography is a philosophical premise of the necessity of avoiding wishful thinking and accepting reality courageously.¹³

Thoughts and Remembrances, a group composition by Emy St. Just was inspired by Shakespear's drama, Hamlet. The choreography is a psychological interpretation of the literary theme as seen through the eyes of Ophelia.¹⁴

Choreographers have also made use of the time structure of the literary piece that has been the source of inspiration. Martha Graham chose to use the flashback form for her group compositions, Clytemnestra, based upon the Aeschylean drama, Orestes, and Night Journey, based upon Sophocles' drama, Oedipus Rex. Both compositions deal with psychological implications innate within the dramas, and John Martin's comments on Clytemnestra are particularly revealing:

To consider Clytemnestra as merely an adaptation or a retelling of the Greek epic, however,

¹²Nancy Smith, interview with Louis Horst, p. 120.

¹³Selma Jean Cohen, "Doris Humphrey's Ruins and Visions--a Translation from Poetry to Dance," Dance Observer, XXI (December, 1953), p. 148.

¹⁴L. G., "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, XXI (August-September, 1954), p. 105.

would be a grave mistake; it is far more a timeless ritual in which the artist searches through the archaic mind for the remote psychological foots of human savagery and its conquest...what happens on stage is concerned not with intellectual articulateness but with emotional revelation, as any good ritual and any good work of art must be.¹⁵

The action in Night Journey begins at the moment of recognition of the truth that Jocasta has married her son and relives the events leading to the realization.¹⁶ In Clytemnestra the action takes place both in the present and the past as Clytemnestra attempts to understand her fate by reviewing the events of her past.¹⁷

Ballad of the Little Square is based on Garcia Lorca's poem of the same name. Harriet Ann Gray's composition for four dancers is a literal interpretation of both the mood and the action of the text.¹⁸ Using the flashback form, the action proceeds from the woman's nostalgic response to memories awakened while watching children.¹⁹

Hanya Holm used Eumenides by Aeschylus as the thematic basis for Orestes and the Furies. The composition was a re-

¹⁵"Dance: Graham," New York Times, April 6, 1958

¹⁶Reed Severin, "Reviewers' Stand," Dance Magazine XXI (June, 1947), p. 38.

¹⁷Robert Sabin, "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, XXV (May, 1958), p. 70.

¹⁸Walter Terry, "The Dance World," New York Herald Tribune, April 19, 1953.

¹⁹Ibid.

presentation of the literature and utilized the flashback technique as did the text.²⁰

As I Lay Dying by Valarie Bettis and Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias, both previously mentioned, make use of the flashback technique. Doris Humphrey follows the form of the Lorca poem for her time sequence, but Valarie Bettis chose to alter the emphasis and time structure for her composition based on the William Faulkner novel of the same name.²¹

Selection of Themes

The use of themes as basis for choreography has been extensive. The themes that have been used cover a wide span, and the treatments of these themes in dance have been numerous. Some choreographers chose to structure a literal representation of the text as did Hanya Holm in Orestes and the Furies.²² Harriet Ann Gray chose the representation of the mood of "Balled of the Little Square" in her composition of the same name. The Exiles by José Limon developed an allegorical approach to John Milton's Paradise Lost.²³ Martha Graham and Pauline Koner presented the psychological implica-

²⁰P. S., "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, X (October, 1943), p. 92.

²¹"Reviewer's Stand," Dance, XXII (February, 1948), p. 41.

²²P. S., p. 42.

²³Annon. "Reviews," Dance Magazine, XXIV (October, 1950), p. 34.

tion of the text of Aeschylus' Orestia²⁴ and Agamemnon,²⁵ respectively.

William Faulkner was selected as the literary source for themes to be used in the dance production. The author was chosen because of his numerous novels and his acclaim by critics.

Having selected William Faulkner, the investigator read and evaluated the novels for their innate choreographic potentialities for movement and thematic development. From the sixteen novels evaluated, six themes were selected because of their recurrence throughout Faulkner's works and because of their appropriateness to the unity of the dance form. Doris Humphrey points out the necessity for themes to "contain action possibilities,"²⁶ and the investigator took this into consideration before the final selection of the themes.

The themes selected as basis for choreography are: (1) youth (2) flirtation (3) romantic love (4) evil (5) grief (6) community. A section depicting age begins the dance production, and by using flashback, the principle character, Rosa Coldfield, relives her experiences in relation to the previously mentioned themes. The dance returns to reality in a final section that is a return to the opening section in theme and movement quality.

²⁴"Dance: Graham," New York Times, April 6, 1958.

²⁵L. G., "Reviews of the Month," Dance Observer, XXI (August-September, 1954), p. 105.

²⁶Doris Humphrey, The Art of Making Dances, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 39.

These themes were selected because of their recurrence in Faulkner's novels, their action potential, and their appropriateness to the unity of the dance form. They were structured into flashback form because the novel, Absalom, Absalom!, from which the character is taken is in flashback form. The action begins in the present, moves into the past, and returns to the present in the dance production.

A theme used extensively within Faulkner's novels is that of youth and his struggle for identification with and the acceptance of his environment. Constantly the figure of youth is forced to admit the past into his existence, the same past that formed the destiny of the successive generations. Faulkner makes use of this inner struggle for maturity in an early novel, Sartoris. Bayard Sartoris is seen as the young man who must reconcile himself to his family's past. He is descended from military men who through time have become legends of heroic proportions. Having experienced the tragedy of war himself, he finds the two, past and present, irreconcilable. He sees the two sides as: one of "young men like fallen angels, and of a meteoric violence like that of fallen angels, beyond heaven and hell and partaking of both,"²⁷ the other of screaming nerves and unbearable fear.

He becomes preoccupied with danger and with participation in the appropriate activities of his status which should

²⁷William Faulkner, Sartoris, (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 126.

establish his identity with himself. He hunts, drinks, and shuns feminine involvement.

The character Cass Edmonds serves as a narrator for a portion of Go, Down, Moses. It is an account of his initiation from childhood into manhood. He performs the rituals of the hunt. He learns the rules and to abide by them. By following the established patterns, his identity can be gained, and with the spilling of the blood of his first kill, he approaches the steps to manhood.

Intruder in the Dust is for Chick Mallison the same initiation device. He attempts to understand his position as a Southerner and temporarily rejects the established pattern of a black and white society. Through his compassion for Lucas Beauchamp, a Negro, he is more able to understand the workings of his dual society. In evaluating the difference in the two worlds, he notes that the food is different: "Nigger food...accepted and then dismissed also because it was exactly what he had expected, it was what Negroes ate, obviously because it was what they liked."²⁸ Through his efforts, both physical and emotional, he provides justice for a Negro. He finally admits: "whatever would or could set him free was beyond not merely his reach but even his ken; he could only wait for it if it came and do without it if it didn't."²⁹

²⁸William Faulkner, Intruder in the Dust, (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 13.

²⁹Ibid., p. 23.

Gowan Stevens is faced with the necessity of the fulfillment of his role as protector in Sanctuary. Because of his unconcern with the safety of Temple, he allows himself to be denied this role and commits "the unforgiveable sin."³⁰ Redemption is obtained in a later novel, The Requiem for a Nun. As protector, he marries Temple and in so doing restores her to respectable society.

Henry Sutpen is the youth in Absalom, Absalom!. He has the duty of preventing incest. By trying to fulfill his father's dream of a pure Caucasian bloodline, Henry is faced with the task of killing his half brother who is part Negro, and by committing the fatal act of murder, he totally destroys the last possibility of the dream. Yet, he has obeyed his father's wish. "He must not marry her, Henry...his mother was part Negro."³¹

This section of the dance is designated in the program as: "...I'm young, young..."³² Each of the young men, Sartoris, Edmonds, Mallison, Stevens, and Sutpen are characterized by their vitality and masculinity. Each is a participant in a time when physical prowess and proper masculine behavior are an ingredient for existence. Each is an embod-

³⁰William Faulkner, Sanctuary, (New York: Modern Library, 1931), p. 35.

³¹William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), p. 355.

³²Ibid., p. 321.

iment of manhood and all it represents.

The choreographer attempted to portray the vitality and strength of these young men. The movement selected for this section has a vibrant, zestful, bouncy quality. The movements stretch and rebound into action.

The section on flirtation was derived from six novels. The characterization of the women in the section is an embodiment of four characters: Temple, Eula, Caddy, and Judith. Temple Drake in the novel, Sanctuary, is a young, unconcerned college girl. She represents the new freedom found by women in the twenties. Because of the changing social codes, Temple delights in testing her appeal to young men and uses her Southern womanhood as her protection from the consequences of her actions. Her favors are bestowed on the college and town boys, but she remains unmoved, "her eyes blankly right and left looking, cool, predatory and discreet."³³ Following her rape, Horace Benbow observes that she is "recounting the experience with actual pride, a sort of naive and impersonal vanity."³⁴

Eula Snopes is the center of masculine attention in three of Faulkner's novels. They are The Hamlet, The Town, and The Mansion. The Hamlet relates her life before she married Flem Snopes; The Town is concerned with her young

³³William Faulkner, Sanctuary, p. 32.

³⁴Ibid., p. 259.

married life; and The Mansion deals with her middle age. In each of these three stages, she is the recipient of the romantic attention of numerous men in the community of Jefferson. Flem Snopes marries her for her father's money and seems oblivious of her physical beauty. On the other hand, Col. De Spain is well aware of her beauty and engages in an indiscreet affair with her. To Gavin Stevens, she represents the embodiment of Southern womanhood. For each man, a different woman, but all three are ready to admit to "a kind of shock of gratitude just being alive and being male at the same instant with her in space and time."³⁵

Caddy Compson in the Sound and Fury enjoyed flirtations. She like Eula and Temple disregarded the codes established for Southern women, and all sought protection in their position in the community as women.

Judith in Absalom, Absalom! is an exact opposite of the three. She obeys the codes carefully. Her flirtations are coy and innocent and are directed to one man, Charles Bon. The garden of her home with its wisteria and swing is the site of her flirtation. She is the perfection of Southern womanhood, and for this she receives the protection of all those around her. She is the "young countrybred girl who sees a man for an average of one hour a day for twelve days

³⁵William Faulkner, The Town, (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 6.

during his life and ... is bent on marrying him..."³⁶

The words, "...young still, and ripe for marrying..."³⁷ identify the choreography of the section on flirtation. By combining each of these kinds of flirtation, the section became a blend of the aggressive and the passive women. The range of movement is from light and giddy to more serious mature levels. The movements flow at times, and at times, there are bursts of activity and energy.

The men in the section are foils for the women. They represent masculinity and react to the women. They move with the full, strenuous movements of youthful men.

The following section deals with the ideal of love rather than a fulfilled union. Gavin Stevens loves Eula Snopes, but does not allow himself to infringe on her life. His first attraction is identified in The Town when he recognizes the threat she represents as a "woman who shapes, fits herself to no environment, scorns the fixitude of environment and all the behavior patterns which had been mutually agreed on as being best for the greatest number."³⁸ He protects her from her husband and defends her reputation, but he does not allow their relationship to advance beyond this.

³⁶William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 99.

³⁷Ibid., p. 169.

³⁸William Faulkner, The Town, p. 284.

He later transfers this same chivalrous attention to Eula's daughter, Linda in The Mansions. His attention is limited to ice cream dates, books of poetry and fatherly advice.

In contrast De Spain and Eula share a physical love that they manipulate into "a kind of outrageous morality of adultery, a kind of flaunted uxoriousness in paramours based on unimpugnable fidelity."³⁹

The same idealist love of Stevens is found in Sartoris. Narcissa marries Bayard Sartoris because she loves his dead brother, John, and thinks that she can change him into the man John was. She suffers all of his moods because she feels she can help him by allowing herself to be the vent of his anger and because it contributes to her self image as the "bride of quietness."⁴⁰

The love of Temple for Gowan in Requiem for a Nun is really a search for the acceptance of a way of life. By marrying Gowan she thinks she can obtain the security of a home and family and social respectability. There is safety in the name Mrs. Gowan Stevens, and she can deny past experiences happened because they happened to Temple Drake.

The Reivers has another approach to love. Everbe Corinthia is the object of two men's love. For Ned she is a fallen woman "in the paid business of belonging to him ex-

³⁹Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁰William Faulkner, Sartoris, p. 270.

clusive the minute she sets her foot where [he's] at."⁴¹
 This is his way of obtaining her affection. Lucius Priest
 sees her as a person to be saved from sin with love and
 understanding. He feels that his love will lift her from her
 lowly ways and she "will be reformed from the temptation
 business."⁴²

Judith in Absalom, Absalom! loves Charles Bon because
 of three meetings in two years. After the first meeting,
 she directs all of her hopes toward him. She plans for their
 future which will be the fulfillment of all of her dreams.
 "I love, I will accept no substitute; something has happened
 between him and my father; if my father was right, I will
 never see him again, if wrong he will come or send for me;
 if happy I can be I will, if suffer I must I can."⁴³

Rosa Coldfield, Judith's aunt, also loves Charles Bon
 even though she has never seen him. He is a person to rep-
 resent all of those things that she sees no chance of having.
 For her, love is the perfect state where all things are right
 and beautiful.

The section on love is identified in the program by
 the words, "she asks nothing...which is the sum of loving."⁴⁴

⁴¹William Faulkner, The Reivers, (New York: Random
 House, 1962), p. 197.

⁴²Ibid., p. 280.

⁴³William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 121.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 147.

The choreographer blends the numerous kinds of ideal love found in Faulkner's works and structured a section of the dance production that portrays the idea of romantic love. The movements are curved and soft and flow from one to another. They are large, full movements with arms that encircle and draw the space to the dancer.

The section of choreography on evil is a combination of five men who are included in one or more of Faulkner's novels. Joe Christmas, a Negro in Light in August, does not know his place in a dual society and trespasses into the white community when he commits adultery with a white woman. She is decapitated when she attempts to force him back into his role as a servant. All of the anger and hate of the community is directed at the murderer not so much for the murder, but for his relation with a Southern white woman. He is the object of hate from the community. "'He never acted like either a nigger or a white man. That was it. That was what made the folks so mad.'"⁴⁵

Jason Compson in The Sound and the Fury is evil in another way. His crime is against his family who he renounces "since to him all of the rest of the town and the world and the human race too except himself were Compsons, inexplicable yet quite predictable in that they were in no sense whatever to be trusted."⁴⁶ Greed directs his very existence. The

⁴⁵ William Faulkner, Light in August, (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 306.

⁴⁶ William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, (New York: Modern Library, 1946), p. 17.

same is true of Flem Snopes in The Town, The Hamlet, and The Mansion. His greed for money and his lust for position makes him a target for the communities distaste. "'He don't want no more and no less than his legal interest according to what the banking and civil laws states in black and white is hisn.'"⁴⁷ He represents the outside infringing on the old and the established. He makes use of all the means that he can to devise a way of becoming an accepted part of the community.

Popeye, the maniac in Sanctuary and Requiem for a Nun is a criminal who kills to obtain sexual gratification. He is cruel and inhumanly detached from the world in which he lives, and by killing he tries to obtain a sense of having lived. He too is an object of the community's hate because of his violation of Temple Drake.

Thomas Sutpen in Absalom, Absalom! is obsessed with the desire for a pure Caucasian bloodline which is to inherit the estate that he cut from the wilderness. He divorced one wife because of her mixed blood. He selected his second wife from the upstanding people of the community, and she bore him two children who were destroyed by his obsession for a pure Caucasian bloodline. He had no consideration for anyone including his children. Rosa Coldfield is also the object of his evil ambitions. "Hence the proposal, the outrage and unbelief; the tide, the blast of indignation

⁴⁷William Faulkner, The Hamlet, p. 172.

and anger..."⁴⁸

"That demon..." is the designation of this section in the program. The evil in each of the men was included in the choreography. The choreography is the characterization of the evil hated by the community. The movements are strong and aggressive. There is a great deal of contained energy that when released, strikes out with great force.

"Lose him, weep him, caught a man but couldn't keep him,"⁴⁹ are the words that introduce the section on grief. This is not grief from one particular thing, or person. It is the grief of all things. The choreography is based upon the combination of many personal tragedies in several novels by Faulkner. In the novel, As I Lay Dying, the tragedy of the death of a mother and the reactions of her children and husband are revealed. Each reacts differently. Cash grieves for the mother who shaped him into the quiet man he is. In contrast, the father performs the rituals that go with reverence for the dead, but feels none of the tragedy that his children share. He fulfills his promise of returning his wife to her family, but laments the inconvenience it causes him: "'I ain't asking you to risk your mule. It ain't your dead; I am not blaming you.'"⁵⁰ The youngest son feels

⁴⁸William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 279.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 168.

⁵⁰William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying, (New York: Random House, 1957), p. 436.

a real sincere loss at the death of his mother, and his grief borders on histeria. He cannot reconcile himself to the reality of her death. "'My mother is not in the box. My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish.'"⁵¹

Temple Stevens experiences grief for the loss of a child in Requiem for a Nun. She also experiences the grief that accompanies the recognition of the failings of oneself. She says, "...that a little child shall not suffer in order to come unto Me. So good can come out of evil."⁵² Temple had hidden from the reality that she enjoyed her promiscuity. The loss of the child is necessary so that Temple will recognize the impossibility of running away from her past and the necessity of acknowledging her past. There is also the grief that accompanies the realization that two people died because of her.

In Sartoris, Narcissa experiences the loss of her husband not only to death, but also to his past. She attempts to save him from the pattern of his family which is an early violent death. With his death and the birth of her child, she realizes that she has perpetuated the pattern rather than broken it.

For Sam Fathers in Go Down, Moses, grief comes with the loss of the forest that has been his refuge from the present.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 413.

⁵²William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun, (New York: Random House, 1951), p. 208.

As the treeline retreats from civilization, Sam Fathers moves with it and continues to perform the rituals of the hunt, but he realizes that the life of the forest is limited and rather than see it die, he gives up his life first in a final dramatic hunt.

For Horce Benbow in Sanctuary, grief comes with the realization that the serene world that he has secluded himself in does not really exist and is a fantasy. By helping the common-law-wife of an accused murder, he places himself in a position open to public ridicule. He ultimately realizes that the community as a unit is prejudice against the woman because of her disregard of the moral codes of the people. "I cannot have my brother mixed up with a woman people are talking about."⁵³

Judith in Absalom, Absalom!, experiences the loss of her future husband and the loss of her future with him. Rosa Coldfield loses not a reality, but the illusion of her hopes. Rosa Coldfield has a special sense of grief because in the end she realizes that she has not really lived, but has existed only in the actions of others.

The movements selected for this section begin in center and move out and upward. The profile of the body plays an important part in the characterization of grief. The back is arched with the chest lifted high. The hands rest on the

⁵³William Faulkner, Sanctuary, p. 220.

forehead. The movements are structured on the fall and recovery principle where energy is released and rebounds into the next movement.

This section deals with the identification of individuals with their community. The program note is "...no harm to hope...So let it be hope."⁵⁴ The choreographer chose to illustrate this quality of serenity that comes with the identification of one individual with others of his kind.

This desire for group identification is evidenced in Faulkner's novels. Because Faulkner structured the majority of his novels around the community of Jefferson, the people previously mentioned are all in their own way seeking identification with Jefferson at different times in history. Flem Snopes traded his personal happiness for an external acceptance into Jefferson society. He gained "the only prize he knew since it was the only one he could understand since the world itself as he understood it assured him that was what he wanted because that was the only thing worth having."⁵⁵

Gavin Stevens, one of the old accepted families, has his place and strives to keep the community healthy by preventing the lynching of Lucas Beauchamp in Intruder in the Dust.

Temple and Gowan Stevens try to retain their place in the community by hiding their failures to each other. In Requiem

⁵⁴William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 377.

⁵⁵William Faulkner, The Mansion, (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 240.

for a Nun, the public recognition of their failures is their salvation.

Thomas Sutpen is looking for this identification with the community when he selects his first wife. He sees in his acceptance a means to his end, the pure bloodline.

The movements of this section are big and full with curved floor patterns and movements. The rhythm has a rounded phrasing of repetitious rises and falls.

The beginning and ending sections of the dance production establishes the reality of the present which for Rosa Coldfield is old age. The program notes are "I, the dreamer clinging yet to the dream...waking into the reality,"⁵⁶ for section one and "death and hope and love, the death of pride and principle, and then the death of everything..."⁵⁷ for the eighth and final section.

The character of Rosa Coldfield was selected for characterization because of the impact on the investigator of the novel Absalom, Absalom!, particularly the plight of Rosa Coldfield. The final form of the choreography is a suite of dances in flashback form. It was felt that the use of flashback was appropriate because of Faulkner's use.

Each of the themes selected were in some way characteristic of an important event in the life of Rosa Coldfield,

⁵⁶William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 141.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 168.

and each section contributes to the final characterization of her. The final script to the dance production entitled

The Past Is Never Done. It Is Not Even Past⁵⁸ is:

- I. "I, the dreamer clinging yet to the dream...
waking into the reality."⁵⁹
- II. "I'm young, young..."⁶⁰
- III. "young still and ripe for marrying..."⁶¹
- IV. "I asked nothing...which is the sum of loving."⁶²
- V. "that demon..."⁶³
- VI. "lose him, weep him, caught a man but couldn't
keep him."⁶⁴
- VII. "no harm to hope...So let it be hope."⁶⁵
- VIII. "death of hope and love, the death of pride and
principle, and then the death of everything..."⁶⁶

⁵⁸Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun, p. 92.

⁵⁹Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 141.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 321.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 169.

⁶²Ibid., p. 147.

⁶³Ibid., p. 178.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 168.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 377.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 168.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING THE CHOREOGRAPHY

The study was concluded by the presentation of an extended dance production choreographed by the investigator. The written description is limited to: (1) selection of themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development of the choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of the dance work.

Selection of the Themes

William Faulkner was selected as the author, and his novels were read and evaluated by the investigator in relation to their innate choreographic potentiality for movement and thematic development. Faulkner's novel, Absalom, Absalom!, was selected for extensive study because of its impact on the investigator and because of the inclusion of themes present in numerous other novels by the author.

Themes which recurred persistently within Faulkner's novels and were present in Absalom, Absalom! were isolated and considered for their appropriateness to the unity of the final dance form. Those themes which involved Rosa Coldfield, one narrator of the novel, were selected because of their innate potentiality for a strong dance form and because of their recurrence in many of Faulkner's novels.

The first theme is the realization and acceptance of age; the second is youthful men at play. The third theme deals with the flirtation of young men and women, and the fourth with the ideal of love. The fifth and sixth themes, respectively, are evil and the grief that it causes. The seventh theme deals with the individual's identification with the community, and the eighth with the realization and acceptance of the self. The dance is in flashback form and moves from reality into reflections and back to reality. Flashback form was used because in Faulkner's writings it is an important part of the organization. It was felt that it would strengthen the final dance form if it reflected the same time structure as that of the novel, Absalom, Absalom!.

From each theme, words and phrases were selected that were descriptive of the theme or of its relation to Rosa Coldfield. To aid the audience in their comprehension of the dance, Humphrey suggests the selection of "words that are clues to characters and situations in a drama..."¹ The phrases selected are included in Chapter II.

Selection of Personnel

The dancers selected for performance in the dance production were members of the performing dance group at Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. Five dancers were used in various parts of the production. The criteria es-

¹Doris Humphrey, The Art of Making Dances, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 39.

established for the selection of personnel are: (1) previous dance experience (2) technical proficiency (3) ability to project to a large audience (4) sex of the dancer. Physical structure and size were also considered because of the desire for visual harmony, but were not of predominant importance in the final selection.

Development of the Choreography

The movements for the dance were achieved through intellectual visualization and movement improvisation. The novel, Absalom, Absalom!, established the emotional tone desired by the choreographer, and the improvisation attempts were directed to the externalization of this mood. Alma Hawkins observes that: "From an inner impulse comes the first movement of the dance. From this impulse and sustained emotional power evolves a continuation of movement, which projects the image of the creator."²

The impulse to create was directed to the movement characterization of Rosa Coldfield and other personalities who were involved with her. The choreographer attempted to establish these personalities as forces which stimulate reactions rather than react themselves. It is the choreographer's task to vary movements until they are in a form that presents "the desired illusion and conveys the essence

²Alma M. Hawkins, Creating Through Dance, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 3.

of human experiences."³

Section I. The first section of the dance is directed at the introduction and explanation of the character, Rosa Coldfield. The body is distorted and the movements are angular with an erratic rhythmic structure. The stage contains a set symbolizing a house, and the dancer is seated on the platform. As she begins to move with contractions in center, the ebb and flow of the movement in the torso initiates the dancer's transition from inactivity into the exploration of the space around the set and of the set. The dancer moves with wide, stretching motions, first cautiously and then as she moves farther away from her place of origin with assurance. The assurance is replaced with the aggressiveness of a woman determined to change her destiny. Her movements reach out, jab, and reject the space in which she moves.

Although she wishes to, she can not reject the reality of age and is drawn back to this realization. As the dancer returns to the set, her arms stretch out into the space before her as if she were reaching for the consolation of memories.

Section II. A young man up stage left begins to move in large bold movements that stretch into space. He jumps into the air and rebounds from the floor in the long strides punctuated with more jumps into the space above him. A moment of balance on one leg is followed by a spiraling leap

³Ibid., p. 6.

that sends him to greet another dancer. Acknowledgements made with sweeping arm gestures, the first dancer exits as the second figure takes long strides stage right. He leaps forward, jumps up and spins as if delighting in moving. The first figure reappears with bouncing leaps and is joined by the second for a moment of unity. As the figures begin moving in unison, their patterns take them into the area behind, beside and in front of them. Slow precise walks lead them off in opposite directions. There follows a short sequence of contrapuntal movements with one dancer moving and then the other. Long sustained stretches are followed by sharp recoils that go back to center.

The first figure moves to the set, touches it, and leaps into the air with a sense of complete control. He is overcome by gravity, rebounds from the floor and moves forward with sweeping arm motions which cut the space around him. He reaches out and draws the space to him. There is evident pleasure as he moves. His movements are reflected in the movements of the second dancer who has taken his place on the set. There is a second moment of unity as the dancers rejoin and move diagonally stage right with leaps followed by a fall and recovery which sends them stage left with slow back walks. Both dancers spin and the first is sent rushing into space while the second with broad arm gestures feels the space above him and indicates a comradeship between them. The first dancer is drawn back to the second, and in a final mo-

ment of unity, their arms reach up into space and are slowly lowered to their sides. There is a feeling of arrogance which is often associated with youth.

Section III. A third figure, a female, enters, gestures first with an arm and then a leg lift, and is acknowledged by both men. She moves to the first figure with low rushing walks; they join hands, and as she moves around the first figure with sustained leg swings, the second figure reflects their mood of flirtation in his movements.

A second and third female dancer enters with rapid triplets, arms lifted and open. They join the first female and acknowledge the men with a stylization of a curtsy. One dancer leaves her companions and rushes into the arms of one of the men. He lifts her high into the air, returns her to the floor and after a moment of equal resistance allows her to return to the group. The women rush stage left where they are met by the second man. The man and women join hands and turn around one another while the other woman returns to center stage. The third woman joins them in a circle which shows their unity. After a leg lift turn, they face, join hands, circle, and leave in three directions.

In groups of two and three, leg circles in low plié's move them back to center where they pass and form one line. A soaring skip is followed by a balance and fall which sends the dancers into three areas of the stage. The dancers are grouped in two couples with one alone. The single dancer

gestures to the women, and they leave their companions and move up stage. The men balance, fall, and leap in unison. The women return to the men, and one couple in the stage right area moves slowly around each other completely absorbed in their relation and unaware of the group of three who circle with triplets. The group rushes forward and then away from the couple. As they leave stage, the man follows them, and the woman is alone on stage.

Section IV. As the fourth section begins, the single figure lifts her arm slowly up and overhead. A leg is extended and lifted across the body causing a loss of balance and sending the dancer into quick back walks. The movements are slow, soft, and gentle, reflecting the love theme. The arms are then extended to either side, and a leg is lifted to reflect the line of the arms. A turn and walks in a circular pattern returns the dancer to center stage. The chest is lifted and the back arches slowly, and the dancer walks back and turns. The arms circle the body and are lifted one at a time overhead.

It is the ideal of love that is represented in the movements. The arm lifts are large and curved and often symmetrical to demonstrate the harmony present in the idea. As the dancer moves forward slowly and then turns quickly, it is the fragileness that she seeks to portray. An arm stretches back and draws the dancer into a curved floor pattern. The torso suggests the same curve, and as the dancer

faces down stage, she steps into a high relevé, then down into a low spiraling turn. A leg is lifted from what seems to be the force of the turn and as it reaches forward, the torso stretches back for a moment of balance. Balance is lost and the dancer drops into a low turn which ends with the lifting of curved arms upward. The elbows bend and the hands drop down and rebound up in a gesture of hope. As one arm is stretched away from center, a leg is sent in the opposite direction.

A turn is followed by a suspension, another turn, and walks that lead the dancer into a high relevé with outstretched arms and open chest as if longing for the fulfillment of her ideal, the dancer opens herself to the experience of love. She rushes forward, reaches out, and draws the ideal into her. Again she relevés, turns, and rushes with lifted arms as if to her illusion she is drawn. The space is caressed with lifting arms and curved torso as she moves slowly through the space, turns, and backs from the stage.

Section V. A male figure enters; he is the personification of evil. The arms are lifted and cover the face. A leg gestures back, and the dancer is sent forward into space, turns, and is stationary in a wide stance. He dominates the area in his movements and personality.

An arm is thrust upward, jabs into space and circles back to the body slowly. The body seems to vibrate from inner tension. This tension is reflected in the movements which

seem to be stretched to that point where they snap and propel the body forward rapidly. The dancer moves forward in jumps, backs up, and jumps high into the air as the arms are thrust upward. The return from the flight brings him to his knees where each time he tries to sit, the floor seems to push him away. There is a sense of cruelty in his aggressive movements. A spiral turn on his knees followed by the arms lifting overhead sends him through space again. He turns, reaches out, and grasps the space before him. As he spins to the floor, a group enters. They represent the feelings of society in regard to this violent individual. They point at him first with arm gestures, then leg, then torso. One dancer rushes to him, strikes out at him, and returns to the group where she finds renewed strength. Their hands snap up to their rib cages and as if wiping them clean, they slowly lower the hands down the body. The dancers rush together, form a single design with their bodies, and point again at the rejected dancer with extended ankle and leg.

One figure from the group rushes at the first dancer who has remained on the floor apparently unaware of the condemnation. Although his actions complement the design of the group, he shows no recognition of them. The group lunges forward, contracts and moves away from him in small runs climaxed by a side leap. They gesture once more with their arms and slowly back off stage.

The first figure gestures back to the group; he takes

a sweeping turn and seems to strut as he walks slowly in a circular pattern. There is an air of defiance as he lunges forward and jabs with his arm. The elbows bend and the hands drop and touch the shoulders in a gesture of self congratulation. Again he rushes forward, lunges and stretches the arms forward. As he brings the arms slowly back to the body, he turns and extends them to either side. He lifts a leg to the side, and the positioning of the body seems to portray a person in the act of laughter. He turns back down stage, assumes a crouched position with extended legs. Slowly the hands circle into the body, join and slowly extend outward. He seems now to control the area.

Section VI. A female figure is seen up stage. Her back is arched and chest lifted. The head is dropped back and her hands rest on her forehead with the elbows pointing upward; there is feeling of tension. An arm reaches back, circles down and is returned to its original position. The movement has a vibratory quality, and as a contraction is taken in center, it is as if a sob has escaped the figure. She moves forward, stops and slowly lowers the hands. They pass over the face, down the chest and as they do the body curves forward with a bowed head in a feeling of resignation. A tentative step is taken backward as if to move away from the sorrow. The arms extend forward with joined hands which seem to plead with an unseen force. A leg lifts and circles, turning the figure around. She moves to the set and lunges

to it with extended arms as if to feel the texture of the wood. She draws away, turns and rushes down stage. A suspension on one leg takes her to the floor. The body arches upward, and the hands return to the forehead. Her body seems to collapse, and she lies on the floor.

Two figures enter up stage with the same arched bodies. They progress slowly to the first figure. They reach out to her and seem to reflect her sorrow. The movements twist the torso as if in agony. They move to her, and with encircling arms seem to lift her to go with them. They rush forward, reach up to the space above them and fall to their knees. Their bodies curve forward, and the hands extend forward pleadingly; suddenly the head snaps down and the body is twisted forward. Again focus is directed upward; the arms open wide and then close back to the body. Seated, the figures are curved forward, and as they rise they reach upward.

The first figure leaves the others who move up stage in slow dipping steps and reach upward. She slowly lowers herself to the floor, and while the body has a forward appearance, the focus is up. With a sudden turn, she reaches up and then falls back to the floor. The chest arches up and draws the body with it. The arms reach out and she steps up into a high relevé, turns and rushes to the group. The three take unison movements and rush around one another. The first figure reaches out to the others, finds no response, and then leaves, but returns to them. Pleadingly she reaches out. They turn and leave the stage.

Section VII. The first figure begins to move again. The section is to depict a feeling of community, and identification with others. Her arms are curved as they reach out into space. The gesture is no longer tense. Now it is soft and fluid. She moves forward softly and the arms curve with the body. As the first figure moves to the floor, a second figure enters. She too makes curved patterns as she moves fluidly through space. The two figures reflect the movement of each other. They circle, move together, then away. There is a contentment and unity in their relationship. Two additional figures enter up stage first one, then the other. Their arms lift upward in curves which extend down through the body. There is a quiet sense of union.

One dancer moves forward and is joined by the first figure who turns to the floor. The second dancer then moves slowly to stage left, and as he goes, his body arches first forward and then back as the arms lift and fall. A fifth dancer joins him, and they retrace the first's floor pattern. All five dancers reach out together and move off in different directions in two's and three's. Even as the dancers move away from each other, there is still a feeling of belonging.

From the group of three, one dancer joins the two, and they reach out with leg lifts and curved torso. Two dancers then move to the others, circle each other and move off. Suddenly from floor patterns in many directions, a circle evolves, and there is a feeling of unity as they stretch up-

ward together. Two dancers leave the group, turn and are joined by a third. The remaining two dancers move through the group; a third dancer joins them. There is a moment of quietness. They turn and rejoin the two. Slowly the dancers lower their arms.

Section VIII. The final section begins as the figure seen in the very first section moves away from the group. The section deals with the acceptance of reality. The group slowly lower themselves to the floor as the first figure moves farther away from them. Contractions in center are taken as the vitality of the previous section is replaced with a dream like sustained quality. The torso begins to have a distorted appearance, and the figure ages. It is a return to the thematic material of the first dance.

The dancer moves away from the group and then back to them. Each time she returns, she reaches out to them, but they do not respond. Again she rushes into the group, and slowly two figures begin to rise. The three move with related movements, but the two show no recognition. They move past her with movement sequences that are reminiscent of earlier sections. There is a trance like quality to movements that were originally vigorous with explosive energy. One figure moves off as the other moves to the two remaining on the floor. There is recognition among the group, but each time the first figure moves to the group, they exclude her again.

The three move off stage leaving the single figure. She pursues them and then turns and reaches out toward the set. Her movements are slow, faltering and characteristic of age. She moves out away from the set, but seems to be drawn back to it. Slowly she mounts the set and resumes her seat. She reaches out into the space before her. The curtains close.

Selection of the Music

The musical accompaniment for a dance production is an important part of the total form. When making his selection, the choreographer should choose music that is similar in style, mood, and rhythmic structure with his dance idea.⁴

The idea for the dance production was conceived by the investigator and music was selected before the choreography was structured. The criteria that were established for the selection of the music included the following considerations: (1) the music should be lyric in style and tonal quality (2) the music should be recorded and divided into sections (3) the music should be varied in mood and rhythm.

The music selected was composed by Elmer Bernstein as the musical background for the movie To Kill A Mockingbird. The movie setting was a small southern community similar to the town of Jefferson in William Faulkner's novel, Absalom,

⁴Humphrey, The Art of Making Dance, p. 146.

Absalom!. It was felt that because of the similarities in geographical locations and ideas, the music would be appropriate for the dance production.

From the LP which is divided into twelve sections, eight sections were chosen to be used with the eight sections of choreography. The section "Lynch Mob" was selected for the dance section entitled "I, the dreamer clinging yet to the dream...waking into the reality."⁵ This selection was made because changes in mood and intensity were desired, and because of the sparseness of the opening phrases in the music. From the simple beginning, the music builds into a tense, rhythmically irregular section and then recedes in to a simple ending. It was also felt by the investigator that the music could be interpreted as age.

"I'm young, young..."⁶ is the second section and is accompanied by the selection from the LP entitled "A Roll in the Tire." The music has the same bouncy quality as desired in the choreography, and there are musical phrases that seem to soar. The music has a crisp, sharp sound that seemed to go with the characterization of young men at play.

The third selection "Footsteps in the Dark" was chosen for the section "young still and ripe for marrying..."⁷ The music is very lyric and in triple meter. It was selected as

⁵Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 141.

⁶Ibid., p. 321.

⁷Ibid., p. 169.

a direct contrast to the movements which are fast and crisp. The music has a serious tone in contrast to the lighter idea of flirtation.

The fourth section, "I asked nothing...which is the sum of loving,"⁸ is accompanied by "Scout and Boo." The music is in long phrases. It sounds full and rounded and has a romantic quality which is the same as the idea for the dance. The idea of ideal love seems to call for a full lush tone that is in the music.

The fifth section is entitled, "that demon..."⁹ The idea for the section is the personification of all evil men, and the music selected is "Children Attacked." The idea has within it the concept of aggression and tension, and the music also has these qualities. There are distinct internal divisions which lend it to the idea of a second group entrance. The music is loud and has the sound of danger.

"Lose him, weep him, caught a man but couldn't keep him,"¹⁰ is the fifth section, and the music selected is "The Search for Boo." The tonal quality of the selection is widely varied with several distinct divisions within it. There are passages of dissonance linked by more harmonious phrases. Dissonance lends itself to the idea of grief. The music also has a deep, serious tone with numerous levels of intensity

⁸Ibid., p. 147.

⁹Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 168.

which was desirable for the idea.

The seventh section called for a harmonious feeling of group unity. "Summer's End" is a full, lush, rounded selection that flows from beginning to end, and it carries the group with it. The fullness of orchestration fit well with the use of a group. Single themes merge and then appear again.

The final section, "death hope and love, the death of pride and principle, and then the death of everything..."¹¹ was accompanied by "Tree Treasure". This selection is a recounting of numerous themes used in the other selections. The movement also makes use of themes which have been used earlier. The music moves from sections of repose to those with an agitating quality. Parts of previous themes emerge from the music and then disappear. The idea of the dance was similar in nature to the music. The statements which have been made before are restated and a final conclusion is drawn.

Selection of the Costume and Set Design

In selecting the costumes, it was necessary to consider the numerous qualities of movement inherent in the choreography because of the wide scope of the emotional themes. Elizabeth Hayes states that "the design of the costume must be such that its lines are in keeping with the style of the

¹¹Ibid., p. 168.

dance: it should be constructed to augment rather than to detract from the movement."¹²

The qualities of movement were both lyric with its curves and flowing lines and server with its angles and straight lines. It was therefore necessary to design a costume that was "adaptable to the contrasting qualities of the various sections of the suite..."¹³

Aside from the qualities of movements, it was also necessary to consider the abstract nature of dance itself. The costumes were to suggest an abstraction of reality rather than reality itself. For this reason it was decided that the costumes should be as simple and unornamented as possible.

The basic costume to be worn by the women is to focus attention on their feminine gender. The skirt is flared and slightly below the knee in length so as to allow the leg action to be seen. The bodice is close fitting and sleeveless to allow observation of movements in the torso. The flared skirt would be complimentary to lyric movements where as the fitted and sleeveless bodice would be advantageous to the more severe movements. For the section of the production entitled "lose him, weep him, caught a man but couldn't keep him,"¹⁴ which portrays the grief of the three women, a black

¹²Elizabeth Hayes, Dance Composition and Production, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), p. 121.

¹³Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁴Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 168.

china silk overblouse was designed to be worn over the dress as an indication of the mood of this section.

The costume selected for the men is also simple in its design. Close fitting shirts of cotton and dance slacks suggest the reality of masculine attire and were chosen for this reason.

The basic costume for the women is the sleeveless dress with a flared skirt in pale blue jersey shown in Figure I. The overblouse is shown in Figure II. The men wear the black dance slacks and pale blue turtleneck shirts shown in Figure III.

Set Design. The use of a set is to aid in the establishment a specific place for the action of the dance to unfold. The set seen in Figure IV was designed by the investigator to represent the structure of a house. It represents no particular house, but simply the idea of home which was important in the characterization of Rosa Coldfield.

The use of a set also has choreographic values because it provides another area to be utilized in choreography. Doris Humphrey sees the main value in the raising of the figure and in the changes of the choreographic design in relation to floor dancing; she also sees a strengthening of dramatic values by the use of vertical space.¹⁵

Staging and Lighting. The dance production deals with Rosa Coldfield as seen through reactions to other personalities.

¹⁵Humphrey, The Art of Making Dances, p. 144.

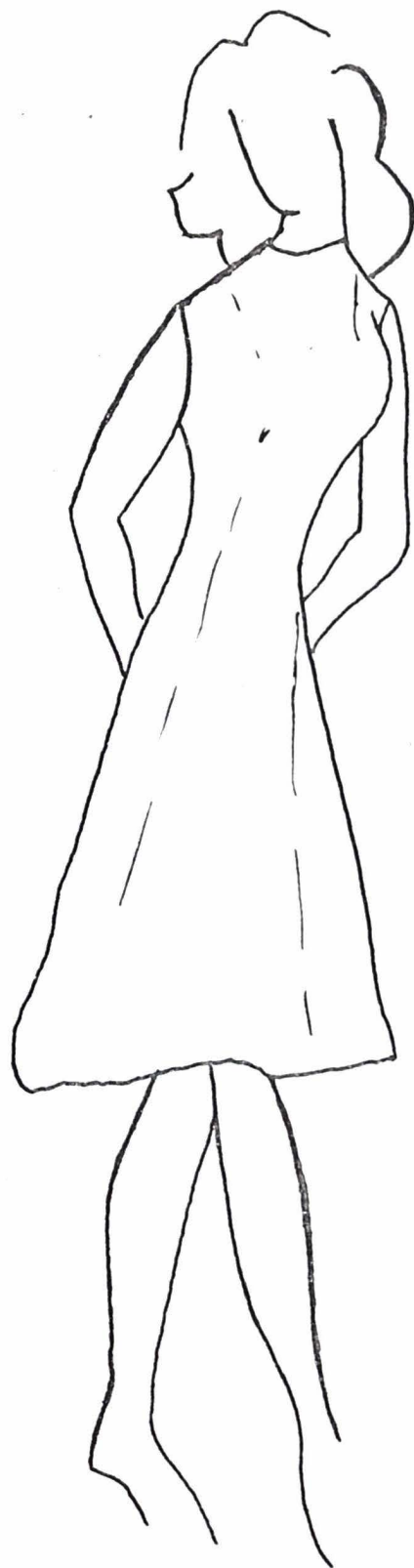


Figure I. Costume Worn by Women



Figure II. Overblouse Worn for Section Six

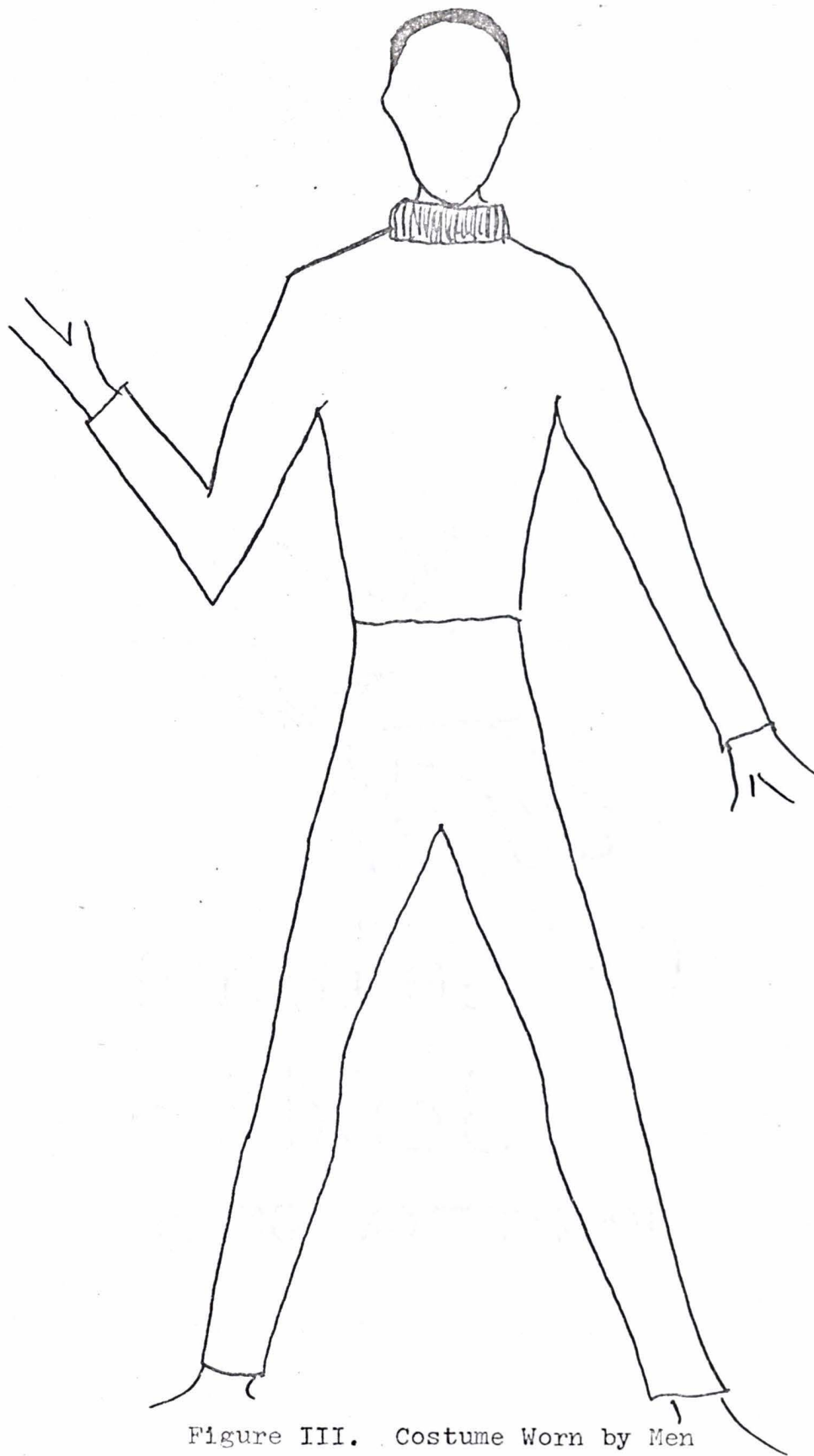


Figure III. Costume Worn by Men

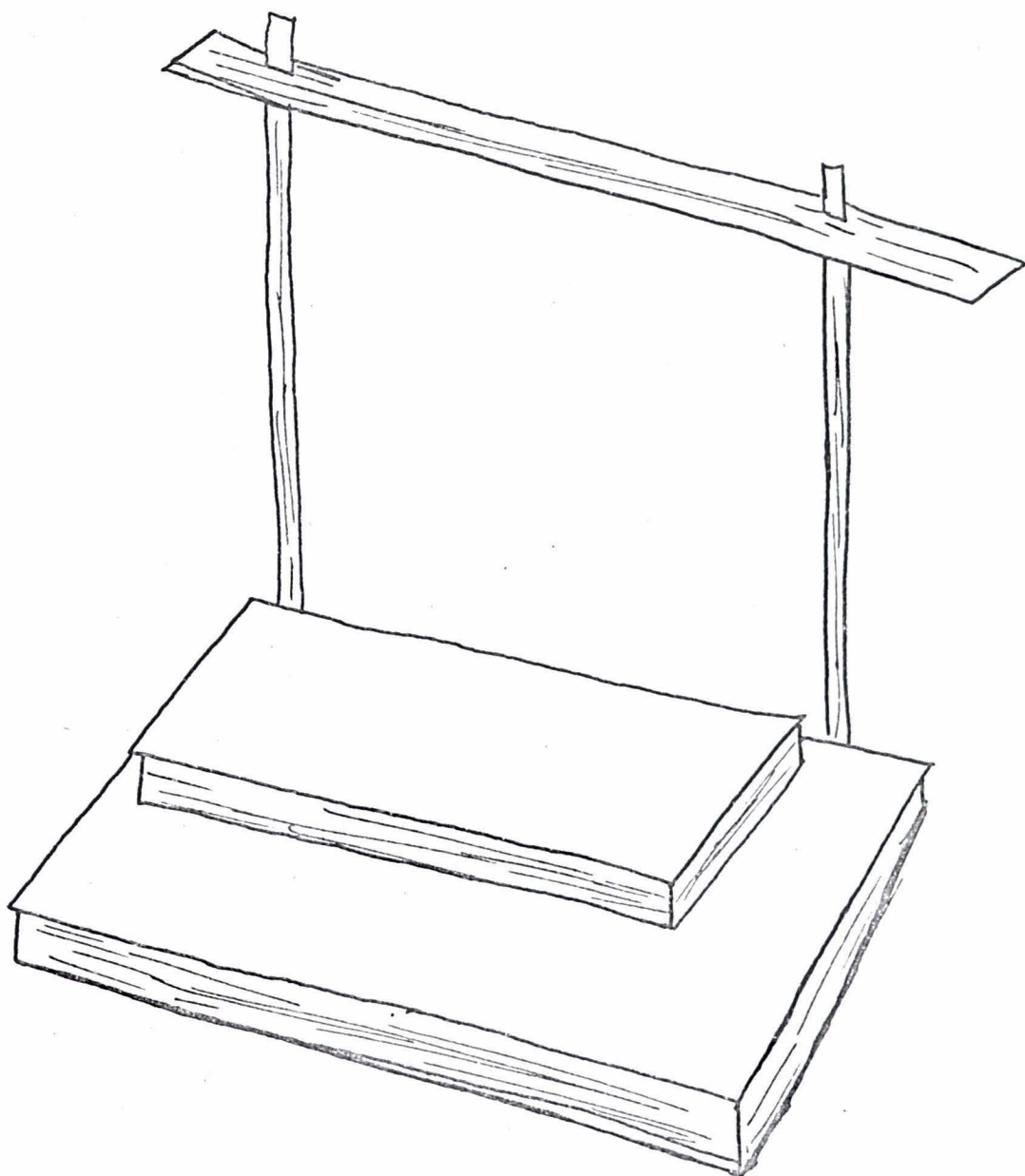


Figure IV. Set for Dance Production

Because the dance involves characterizations and has no focus on time and place, the specific setting is simple and unobtrusive. This also allows minimum distraction from the choreography. The use of a neutral background also adds to the simplicity of the setting. In this dance production, the up stage wall is used as a backdrop. Its neutrality is pleasing to the eye and readily adaptable to the design of the lighting. It also allows the audience to provide a specific setting for itself through the use of its imagination.

The use of lighting helps to transfer the dance production from the studio where it was created to the theater where it is viewed by the audience. Aside from the aesthetic need, lighting must be considerate of the audience's need to see the movement. All areas to be used by the dancers must be well lighted so that no action is lost in a dimly lighted area.

After audience consideration, it is then necessary to design lighting which contributes to the total dance form. Mr. Lynn Murray of the Sam Houston State College Drama Department was consulted, and he assisted in the final lighting design.

Generally the lighting design of the dance production consisted of atmospheric lighting for each section to establish a mood.

The curtains open on a dark stage. A spotlight on the set directs the audience to the up left stage area where a dancer is seated on the set. As the movement carries the

dancer from the set, the areas which are explored are then lighted. The effect of contrasting lighted and darkened areas contributes to the somber mood of the section. As the dancer returns to the set, she is again lighted by the single spot, and as the section closes, the spot goes out and the stage is dark.

The lighting is done in lavenders and blues, which give the appearance of black and white. The use of Special Lavender and Daylight Blue in the up and down stage areas provides a contrast of warm and cold lighting that is dominated by the cold. The low intensity of the lights (80% in the stage right area) creates a somber, isolated appearance.

A single amber spot is focused on the male dancer in the up left area. The stage is covered in a smooth even spread with no definable area other than the spot. By using a combination of Warm Amber and Surprise Lavender, the stage is lighted in warm pink and gives a healthy appearance to the dancers.

As the woman enters in the fourth section, the lights change to Bold Pink and Medium Lavender. The dominating pink gives a strong color connotation of youth, energy, and vigor. There are three overlapping half circles on the back wall giving the section a specific light design.

As four dancers exit, the fifth dancer begins the section on love. The pink is taken out of the lights and the color is Medium Lavender. The three half circles remain on the wall. The lighting is one directional in source and

gives a soft, kind appearance. It is a combination of the serious side of flirtation and a later section. As the dancer exits, there is a blackout.

The lights come up full as the dancer enters. A Medium Red cross light from stage left gives an appearance of streaks. A harsh amber adds illumination. Magenta lights provide highlights to the dancers. As the dancer exits in a magenta spot, the other lights go out, and the stage is then dark.

A blue spot picks up a dancer in the up left area as the section of grief begins. The soft blue gives an extremely cold effect. The low level smooth wash in blue is a direct contrast to the emotional idea. By using a magenta back light, the dancers are outlined in a soft red for highlights. The section ends in a blackout.

A light lavender spot in the down area picks up the dancer to begin the section on community. As the other dancers enter, the lights go to a combination of blues and lavenders. There is a blue general illumination with three lavender spots coming out of the middle of the house. The effect is a soft, peaceful, restful atmosphere. The lights are a mixture of those used in love and grief.

The last section is a return to the lighting of the first section. There are two distinct lighted areas. The right area is strongly lighted while the left is dim. A magenta spot from the left sends streaks of red across the stage and links the two areas together. The light creates a non rea-

listic structure. As the group exits, the left area goes dark, and the dancer returns to the set. The section closes with the dancer in a single spot as the curtains close.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The purpose of this study was to explore the inherent possibilities in the use of literary themes as basis for choreography and to select one author for the use of his themes. The works of William Faulkner were selected as the source of themes to be used as basis for choreography. 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 investigator. This culminating production was based upon the novel Absalom, Absalom! by William Faulkner.

The written substantiation concerning the use of literary themes as the basis of choreography was limited to the following areas: (1) use of literary themes as basis for choreography (2) the appropriateness for choreography of recurring themes used by Faulkner (3) the credibility of the use of flashback for the dance production.

It was discovered that numerous dance productions have been structured using literary themes as their basis. Some of the choreographers structured dances as literal representations of the particular drama, poem, novel or short story.

Other choreographers selected passages from a particular text and developed their dance around the idea of

the passage. The use of individual characters from the text has also served as a basis. The dances then become a characterization of the personality.

Choreographers also made use of literature as inspiration for a dance that portrays the psychological implication of the work as seen by the choreographer. The dance takes on a new idea, but still retains some of the original text and is loosely based on the text.

The mood of a particular text has been the stimulation for many choreographers, and their dance creations are in a sense reflections of the work itself. There is no necessity to retain any of the original text, and the dance becomes a totally new entity.

Investigation showed that many choreographers chose to retain the time structure of the text. It was found that flashback has been the basis of many dances which utilized the themes of the text or were literal representations of the text.

The investigator found that Faulkner's novels were filled with themes which were suitable for choreography, and that other choreographers had made use of his novels for choreography. The novels contained ideas which lend themselves to interpretation in an abstract medium such as dance and contain potential for action.

The dance production was described in detail and included the following points: (1) selection of themes (2) selection of personnel (3) selection of music (4) development

of the choreography (5) selection of costume and set design (6) staging and lighting of 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 character from the novel Absalom, Absalom! by William Faulkner. This particular novel was selected because of its impact on the investigator and because of its innate movement potentials. It also included numerous themes which are recurrent in Faulkner's novels.

The time structure of the novel, which is flashback, as well as the character Rosa Coldfield were used in the dance production. The suite of dances portrayed the moods of certain personal encounters of Rosa Coldfield, and words from the text were selected to help the audience identify with the mood of each dance.

The personnel used in the dance production were selected from the performing dance group at Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. Five dancers were selected for the production. The criteria established as a basis for the selection of the personnel were: (1) previous dance experience (2) technical proficiency (3) ability to project to a large audience (4) sex of the dancer.

The choreography was structured after intellectual visualization and movement improvisation. These were followed by experimentation with numerous sequences on different body types. The choreography included characterizations of per-

sonalities taken from the novel.

The choreographer designed and created every aspect of the dance production which included the selection of the music. It was desired that the music be recorded and reflect the moods of the individual sections of the dance as well as contribute to the final continuity of the form. The individual selections for each section of the dance production were taken from the LP To Kill A Mockingbird composed by Elmer Bernstein as the musical background of the movie by the same name. Because the movie and the novel were similar in setting, and because the LP contained the desired quality, it was felt that the music would be appropriate for the dance production.

The movements of the dancers in the dance production may be described as lyric, curved, and flowing. Individual sections contained distortions and severe lines, but generally the movements were lyric in nature.

A set was used to provide a sense of continuity of place setting and indicated the idea of home. The dance action evolved around the ever present set which added continuity to the production.

Aesthetic reasoning was the basis for the lighting which was designed to create a mood or atmosphere for individual sections. Because the dance production is an abstraction of reality, the lighting contains the same quality.

Dance is the structuring of movements in time and space. The final structure is a dynamic design which contains an ab-

straction of an idea to be perceived by the viewer. The idea includes the conclusions of the artist which are drawn from his lived experiences and represent his values and beliefs.

The artist creates to fulfill that innate impulse to communicate with those around him, those ideas and feelings which cannot be stated in factual terms and are part of the intuitive sense. The dance production, The Past Is Never Done. It Is Not Even Past,¹ is in itself a representation of the views of the present investigator and the approach reflects these views. It is the fulfillment of the impulse to create.

¹Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun, p. 92.

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