

matter. All that may be done is to lay out general boundaries within which fertile material may be found—to elucidate form which can be quite definite—and to state some simple restrictions as to what is and what is not suitable for the dance among experiences.

American dancers are especially fortunate in having rich and vivid outer stimuli for sensual experience, and no less vital inner life. Some of our dancing reflects this. There are an encouraging number of subjective dances on concert programs now. Titles appear such as "Conflict," "Revolt," "Exuberance," "Remorse." These prove a sincere if slightly pretentious belief in subjective experience for dance material. Then there is the unself-conscious tap dance which is certainly our own and is born of our hearty adolescence. Occasionally objective works in a strictly American vein appear, such as "Skyscrapers," "Krazy Kat," or "Men and Machines"; but on the whole, the dancer turns away from his known experience to the unknown. He dances like the Orientals, the Indians, or the Germans, with the charming naivete of an enthusiastic child. It is obvious that he does this because he must be dancing about something in a hurry and lacks either the patience or the talent to discover a form, his experience-form in the American dance being still embryonic. Consequently he turns to formalized foreign dances and thereby becomes that most pitiable thing, an artist without integrity. There are exceptions, of course. For the extraordinary dancer it is possible to use vicarious experience as thematic material, but emphatic power accurate enough to translate foreign experience into convincing movement is so rare as to be negligible in considering what to dance about. The usual outcome of these attempts is either a nondescript impression of the original, or an imitation, obviously spurious, or a satire mostly of the dancer's insight. In general, no man can dance convincingly like any other man whose experience lies outside his own, and this is because the body, mirror of every thought and feeling, cannot disassociate itself readily from its movement habits. Here the dance is unique in the aesthetic world. In those arts that deal with words, stone or steel, exotic experience is frequently made convincing through the very impersonality of the medium. Thus Spanish music might be written by an Englishman that would catch the inherent character of the people; but no Englishman could do a Spanish dance. Under very special circumstances foreign or antique frame-works for dances may be suitable for contemporary use if they do not involve body movements of the original people, and are really conveyances for the experiences of the dancer. A good illustration of this point is the ballet "The Prodigal Son" which has been done here in a way that is true for us by translation into American terms. My ballet, "Dionysiaques," although stemming from ancient days is a modern psychological drama about ourselves.

The confusion as to what to dance about would be dissipated if American artists would adhere to known experiences seen as part of a whole, and if they would distinguish between dead and alive parts of these experiences. Form, added to this knowledge would provide them with the understanding that they so urgently need to give the dance integrity.