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A CHOREOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENT WITH MIXED  
MEANS FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
COMMUNICATING THROUGH  
THE ACT OF THEATRE

by

Sandra Elizabeth Gustafson

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1972

Approved by

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GUSTAFSON, SANDRA ELIZABETH. A Choreographic Experiment with Mixed Means for the Purpose of Communication Through the Act of Theatre. A video tape of the performance is available for consultation at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. (1972) Directed by: Virginia Moomaw. Pp. 47.

The purpose of this study was to experiment with mixed means for the purpose of communicating an idea through the act of theatre. The choreographer chose to use all elements of theatre at any time as they seemed necessary to the work and as they appeared to be the best method to communicate the various aspects of the idea to be expressed.

The experiment attempted to combine arts for the purpose of creating a total effect. An eclectic method of approach was employed. The ideas to be communicated were concerned with the human condition and the nature of the existence of man in his world.

The experiment involved writing the script, choreographing the dances, designing the set, designing the costumes, planning the lighting requirements and special effects to be employed, and directing all aspects of the production which culminated in a performance on April 20, 1972. The production was recorded on video tape.

The choreographic experiment was entitled Rural Route and was essentially a long dance drama about an old farmer, his dreams and his reflections on life. The Old Man had the only speaking part. There were several dance parts, all of which

were products of the Old Man's imagination. There was a Young Man and a Young Woman, the Spirit of Freedom represented by three female dancers, the Earth Colors represented by five female dancers and the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water represented by four female dancers.

The set design included the front of an old clapboard farmhouse situated downstage left and a ramp placed from upstage center to stage right. Special effects included blowing wind and projections of film onto the costumes of the dancers. The music used for the dances was composed by Delius.

The choreographer believes Rural Route to be a work of art because it communicated beyond the personal statement of the choreographer. While the eclectic approach to the resultant work has presented the possibilities of a broader approach in the choreographic process, it has also stimulated a broader, more eclectic approach to the teaching of dance composition. It has educational implications in the designing of new courses in dance choreography.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is extended to Miss Virginia Moomaw for her guidance and patience throughout the conduct of this work and throughout the writer's career in dance.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the writer's committee: Mrs. Ethel Martus Lawther, Dr. Carrie Lee Warren, Dr. Pauline Loeffler, Dr. Herman Middleton, Miss Kathryn England, Dr. W. Hugh Hagaman and Miss Virginia Moomaw (Adviser) for their time and patience.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND THE DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Traditionally the choreographer has been concerned with communicating the artistic intent of the dance to the audience primarily through the medium of movement-motion. While the choreographer has experimented with special lighting effects, projections, sound, costumes and speech, such experimentations have usually been employed in a manner subservient to the dance art and for the purpose of enhancing the physical movements of the dance rather than assuming any importance in and of themselves.

The choreographer has usually started with an idea to be communicated through dance movement. The playwright has usually started with an idea to be communicated through speech. Traditionally neither artist has started with an idea to be communicated through a single element or equally combined elements of theatre which best communicate the various aspects of the creative idea.

While the choreographer has most often thought in terms of movement and the playwright in terms of speech, other alternatives do exist. John Martin has stated:

". . . the most important end to be achieved in the arts may very well be their synthesis instead of their mutual independence." (34:93)

In the past there have been attempts to combine arts. Diaghilev, while not a choreographer, required a synthesis of the arts in which dance was an equal part of the whole. The choreographers, however, were still concerned with communication of the idea through the medium of dance. (6) While the Theatre of the Bauhaus (14) and the dance theatre of Alwin Nikolais have attempted to combine elements of theatre, they have done so intending for their works to be devoid of any allegorical meaning in a rational sense. This was not the intention of the dissertation and it is the major point of difference between the dissertation and any previous approach to the combining of elements in theatre from the choreographer's or from the playwright's point of view.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to experiment with mixed means for the purpose of communicating an idea through the act of theatre. The production itself was the dissertation; the paper is submitted in support of the dissertation which was performed on April 20,

1972 and recorded on video tape to be placed in the Walter Clinton Jackson Library at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The choreographer chose to use any element, various elements, or all elements of theatre at any time as they seemed necessary to the work and as they appeared to be the best method to communicate various aspects of the ideas to be expressed. The choreographer wrote the script, choreographed the dances, planned the set requirements and the special lighting effects, designed the costumes, and directed all aspects of the production.

The experiment attempted to combine arts, to synthesize them for a total effect, for the purpose of producing a unified work that had stronger powers of communication than would any one art alone. The choreographic experiment cannot be interpreted solely as dance nor solely as drama. It must be interpreted as an act of theatre whose approach is essentially eclectic, meaning that a number of styles and elements of theatre were employed.

The ideas to be communicated were concerned with the human condition and endeavored to comment on the nature of existence. Being a product of the times, the dissertation spoke existentially; however, rather than concentrating on

the negative aspects of existence, the dissertation spoke affirmatively regarding existence.

The one most important overall theme of the work was love, in the different ways it might manifest itself: love of the land, love of freedom, and most importantly, the love of another human being. The dissertation endeavored to say that these are the things that make life meaningful for man. The dissertation was also involved in a flight away from the materialistic values of the day.

Importance of the study. Dance has long been accepted as a vehicle for creative development and creativity has often been stressed as an important aim of education. Carl Rogers has emphasized the importance of the creative method to education by saying:

Self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner--feelings as well as the intellect--is the most lasting and pervasive . . . it is the totally involved learning of oneself by oneself which is most effective. This is not learning which takes place 'only from the neck up.' It is a 'gut level' type of learning which is profound and pervasive. It can also occur in the tentative discovery of a new self-generated idea or in the act of artistic creation--a painting, a poem, a sculpture. It is the whole person who 'lets himself go' in these creative learnings. (45:162-163)

Dance is one type of creative learning, and as such, it is an important form of education.

In dance education the approach to the teaching of choreography has been movement-motion oriented to the exclusion of other elements of theatre. It is the opinion of the writer that the eclectic method of approach employed in the dissertation, which stresses the possible use of all elements of theatre and various theatre styles, presents new possibilities for dance education. These possibilities lie in the direction of designing new courses in dance choreography.

Dance teachers have usually begun with the thought that movement-motion is the only material from which a dance might be made. Choreography courses have reflected this limitation in that the dance student usually does not think beyond movement.

A new course in choreography might begin with a more divergent approach to the problem. It might begin with the possibility of using many elements of theatre, as defined in this paper. It would start with the basic premise that the means of the expression of the idea should not be separated from the end product, and should not be less important than the end product. Traditionally dance has held the belief that the end product is more important than the process by which it was achieved. This new approach to choreography

makes both the process and the product assume importance within the student who bears the idea to be expressed.

This approach to choreography begins with an idea to be expressed but not necessarily a non-verbal idea. Dance has usually dealt with the expression of an idea that could not be expressed in terms other than movement-motion. A new approach to choreography would be that any communicative idea has many aspects, some of which may be better expressed predominantly through dance while other aspects may be better expressed through speech or special theatrical effects. All media use materials as symbols which have valid and varying powers of communication, powers that are relative to the various aspects of the idea. This new approach would demand that the student become highly selective in terms of the means to be employed in the communication of the idea.

The eclectic method of approach offers new dimensions to dance as an art form and as a form of education. It places new emphasis on the individual involved in the choreographic process and upon his powers of selection. The limitations of such a program, as well as with the dissertation, lie within the individual's imagination and within the theatre's technical capabilities.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Art. Art shall be interpreted to be an expression of human emotion, experienced, acted upon by the imagination and given form. It is the process through which man finds insight and understanding into himself and into his existence. Art is personal.

Communication. The act of communication shall be interpreted to imply an interchange of thoughts, moods, sensations, ideas or opinions.

Dance. This term shall be interpreted to mean expressive movement-motion done for the purpose of communicating to others some truth about the nature of existence.

Eclecticism. This term shall be interpreted to refer to a stylistic approach which draws on many styles, which selects the best from various styles in an attempt to create a more perfect style.

Eclectic approach. This term shall be interpreted to mean that a variety of theatre styles and elements of theatre were employed.



Elements of theatre. Elements of theatre shall be interpreted as any of the following: movement, speech, lighting design, music, costumes, properties, film, projections, sound and color.

Expressionism. This term shall be interpreted to refer to a stylistic approach which distorts reality in order to express the artist's personal expression of the real.

Mixed means. This term shall be interpreted to mean the use of any two or more theatrical elements or styles.

Realism. This term shall be interpreted to refer to a stylistic approach which attempts to produce the illusion of reality.

Surrealism. This term shall be interpreted to refer to a stylistic approach which mingles reason with unreason, and one which makes use of dreams and chance effects.

Symbolism. This term shall be interpreted to refer to a stylistic approach which uses the external to convey the internal reality. It attempts to penetrate the essence of the idea.

Theatre. This term shall be interpreted to refer to any specially prepared action performed in a specially prepared place before an audience for the purpose of communicating, touching in some way, or entertaining said audience.

Theatre style. This term shall be interpreted to mean one of the following: Realism, Surrealism, Symbolism, Expressionism or Eclecticism.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Very little has been written on specific creative experimentations involving mixed means to achieve an act of theatre. Any such experimentation, however, does demand that the artist arrive at a point of view regarding the arts in general and his art in specific. Because the writer believes that both the arts and the sciences find a mutual parent in philosophy, it is important that the artist have some understanding of the philosophy of his own time.

The review of the literature shall begin with a brief section on contemporary philosophy or existentialism as it relates to the dissertation. The review of the literature shall also treat the arts in general and the dance art, specifically from the point of view of the expression theory of art. This theory is not to be confused with the style of Expressionism in theatre. The review of the literature shall culminate in a discussion of the artistic intent of selected major dance artists of the twentieth century and briefly discuss how the dissertation differed from previous choreographic endeavors of other choreographers.

## I. CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY: EXISTENTIALISM

Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers are credited as the fathers of existentialism in this century, with Sören Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean Paul Sartre considered to be important contributors to existentialist thought. While the existentialists were more different from each other than they were alike, they were all preoccupied with making sense of man's existence. Common to all of them was the belief that religious faith must find meaning in relation to the individual. (2)

Heidegger believed existence to be marked by the traits of feeling, understanding and speech. Nietzsche believed that man experiences only himself and that good and bad are one and the same within each man. Sartre believed man to be nothing more than the acts that made up his life. (2)

The individual human being seeking to understand himself is the one factor that unifies the existentialists. They attempt to grasp the image of the whole man.

Themes that seem to obsess both modern art and existential philosophy are: the alienation of man in his world, the contradictoriness and contingency of existence and the

realization of time for man who has lost his anchorage in the eternal. (2)

## II. THE ARTS: EXPRESSION THEORY

According to O. K. Bouwsma, the expression theory of art is the most commonly held of all theories of art. This theory stresses that art expresses emotion in the same way that sentences express ideas. Art is easily regarded as being symbolic. (43)

Suzanne Langer has stated that all art is expressive of human emotion and that art is human feeling given form. Art does what language cannot do. Inward experiences are made conceivable by giving them form. Langer further stated that all art is symbolic of life and that the cognitive value of the arts is self-knowledge and insight into all phases of life and mind. This insight gives each generation its manner of feeling. This influence of art on life forms new ways of feeling and this results in the beginning of a new cultural age. (31)

Benedetto Croce has stated that art is intuition and that intuition and expression are the same thing. If art is intuition then it can be said that in a sense it is

universal and that it serves a necessary purpose in life. Men act upon their intuitive knowledge. (5)

Irwin Edman states that all art is sensuous, having as one of its functions, the clarification of experience. Art is the expression of that clarification. Edman further states: ". . . art is the name for that whole process of intelligence by which life, understanding its own conditions turns them to the most interesting or exquisite account." (10:28)

Joyce Cary stated that art is the means by which we express ourselves. Given form these expressions communicate their meanings to others. He further stated that art is personal, that it works in and by the personality. (5)

### III. THE DANCE ART: EXPRESSION THEORY

Most dance literature upholds the expression theory as the primary purpose for dancing in modern times. Dance critic Selma Jean Cohen states: "The modern dance is still involved with communication of personal, authentic experience." (7:11)

Alma Hawkins believes that dance is "the expression of man's inner feelings transformed by imagination and given form through the medium of movement." (16:42) Eleanor

Metheny believes the main purpose of dance is to evoke connotational meanings. (39) Langer believes that dance is expressive of human emotion. (31)

John Martin states that at the root of dance lies the impulse to resort to movement to externalize states which cannot be externalized by rational means. (33) Martin further describes dance as expression for the purpose of achieving empathy.

It is the dancer's whole function to lead us into imitating his action with our faculty of inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feeling. Facts he could tell us, but feelings he could not convey in any way than by arousing them in us through sympathetic response. (33:35)

Lois Ellfeldt states that dance as an art form is an expression of an artist's comment on his world. (11) Agnes DeMille describes art as symbols through which men communicate. (9) "As with any art, the true purpose of dancing must always remain the expression of human feeling . . ." (9:17)

#### IV. THE INTENT OF SELECTED MAJOR DANCE ARTISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The most recognized modern dancer of the twentieth century is Martha Graham. Her choreography has been recognized as sheer genius throughout the world. Graham has said:

Throughout time dance has not changed in one essential function. The function of dance is communication. . . . Great art never ignores human values. . . . By communication is not meant to tell a story or to project an idea, but to communicate experience by means of action and perceived by action. . . . while the arts do not create change, they register change. (1:83-87)

There can be no doubt that Graham's artistic intent relates itself to the expression theory of art.

Another important choreographer of the twentieth century also adhered to the expression theory. Doris Humphrey believed that the main purpose of dance was to reveal something about humanity. (41)

Jose Limon has stated that the function of the artist is to be the voice of his time (7), while Anna Sokolow has stated: "The modern dance is an individual quest for an individual expression of life. . . . Dance is not intellectual. It deals with deep emotion." (7:30) Sokolow goes on to say that art is related to the times and that the artist is influenced by the times. (7) Both Limon and Sokolow consider the expression theory of art in their artistic intent as have most of the major choreographers of the time.

There are choreographers of note who do not adhere to the expression theory of art. Erick Hawkins presents movement for its own sake and does not try to communicate. (7) If it is not the intent of the artist to communicate, it is



the belief of the writer that this type of dance should take place in one's own living room and for oneself.

The work of Merce Cunningham does not try to express any allegorical meaning. (41) It is devoid of any expression of human emotion in a rational sense. Nikolais is as concerned with sound, color, light and illusion as he is with movement. While he is concerned with communicating through a theatrical environment, he is not concerned with the communication of human emotion. Because both Cunningham and Nikolais are concerned with communication, it is the opinion of the writer that their artistic intent is a respectable one even though it differs from the intent of an artist who upholds the expression theory.

In the opinion of the writer, many of the newer choreographers, such as Twyla Tharp, Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk and Judith Dunn, seek newness for its own sake. Their search for new content leaves their choreographic efforts formless. Since form is a necessary prerequisite of art, the work of these new choreographers seems more related to improvisation, which the writer sees as a means to the end product and not the product itself.

Paul Taylor appears to be the bridge from this formless searching back to the true function of the dance art. His work is representative of the time, and within it, form and content meet in an interesting and an imaginative manner. His work also appears to be a bridge back to the expression theory of art. His art expresses emotion in the same manner that sentences express ideas, symbolically. There is however a greater degree of abstraction employed in Taylor's work than seems to be employed by other choreographers who adhere to the expression theory of art.

#### V. THE DISSERTATION DIFFERS FROM PREVIOUS CHOREOGRAPHIC ENDEAVORS

The dissertation did not differ from the majority of other dance works in that its intent was to expressively communicate some truth about the nature of existence. It differed in that the choreographer was equally as concerned with communication through any element of theatre such as: movement-motion, scenic design, lighting design, special effects, costumes, color and speech. Dancers are usually concerned with communication through movement-motion alone.

The dissertation differed from previous choreographic efforts of other choreographers because it was the unique and personal statement of the choreographer who created from a

specific point of view and from a specific body of experience. Of necessity the choreographic endeavor was a product of the times that produced it. As such it endeavored to communicate what it feels like to be alive and passing through these particular times and from the vantage point of the choreographer involved.

## CHAPTER III

## THE CHOREOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENT

The choreographic experiment entitled Rural Route is more adequately described as a dance drama. Stylized dance movement and speech were the two most important elements of theatre employed. The set design, and most especially, the lighting were of monumental importance to the production. The color and the music employed for the dances was necessary for the achievement of the intended effect present in the mind's eye of the choreographer as the work evolved.

The choreographic experiment was one of mixed means, the intended effect of which was impossible without all elements of theatre employed in the work. The creative idea demanded an eclectic approach for its solution.

Rural Route was about an Old Man and his dreams. The Old Man was a farmer who had lived on the farm all of his life. As an Old Man he finds himself reflecting on his life, dreaming about it and discussing it in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. He also reflects upon aspects of life which have made it meaningful to him.

The dance drama is unified by the Old Man's monologue. The monologue motivates the various dances that occur. The dances are the Old Man's dreams.

The various dance characters included a Young Woman and a Young Man. They represented the Old Man's wife and the Old Man as a young man. There was a trio of women who represented the Spirit of Freedom and five female dancers who represented the Earth Colors or the seasonal changes. Also there were four female dancers who represented the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

The set design included a front of an old clapboard farmhouse with a front porch on which there was a rocking chair for the Old Man. This part of the set was situated downstage left, covering approximately one-third of the stage area. In the upstage position just in front of a cyclorama, and covering an area from upstage center to upstage right, was a ramp to suggest rolling country and also to elevate the Young Man and Young Woman from the actions of other dancers. The ramping was employed primarily for reasons of an aesthetic nature rather than for purposes of authenticity. The music used for the dance sequences was "Appalachia" by Delius.

The costuming for the Old Man, the Young Man and the Young Woman was realistically done as was the lighting employed to light these characters. The Old Man was costumed in denim bib overalls and a white shirt. The Young Man wore dungarees and a red and yellow plaid shirt and the Young Woman wore a yellow dress. All of these costumes may be seen in Figure 1 (page 22). Each Spirit of Freedom dancer was costumed in a royal blue tank suit leotard over which was worn a dress of transparent free-moving material. When these dancers were on stage, wind-blowing fans were used to add movement to the flowing material for the purpose of giving a windblown effect. The dress material was in a lighter shade of blue. These costumes may be seen in Figure 2 (page 23).

The Earth Colors are found in Figure 3 (page 24). An illusion of the effect of the changing seasons was achieved by projecting film onto the dancers who were costumed in yellow and orange. Color film was projected out of focus onto the dancers so that the effect would be one of moving color on the dancers' costumes. This effect was impossible to capture in a photograph.

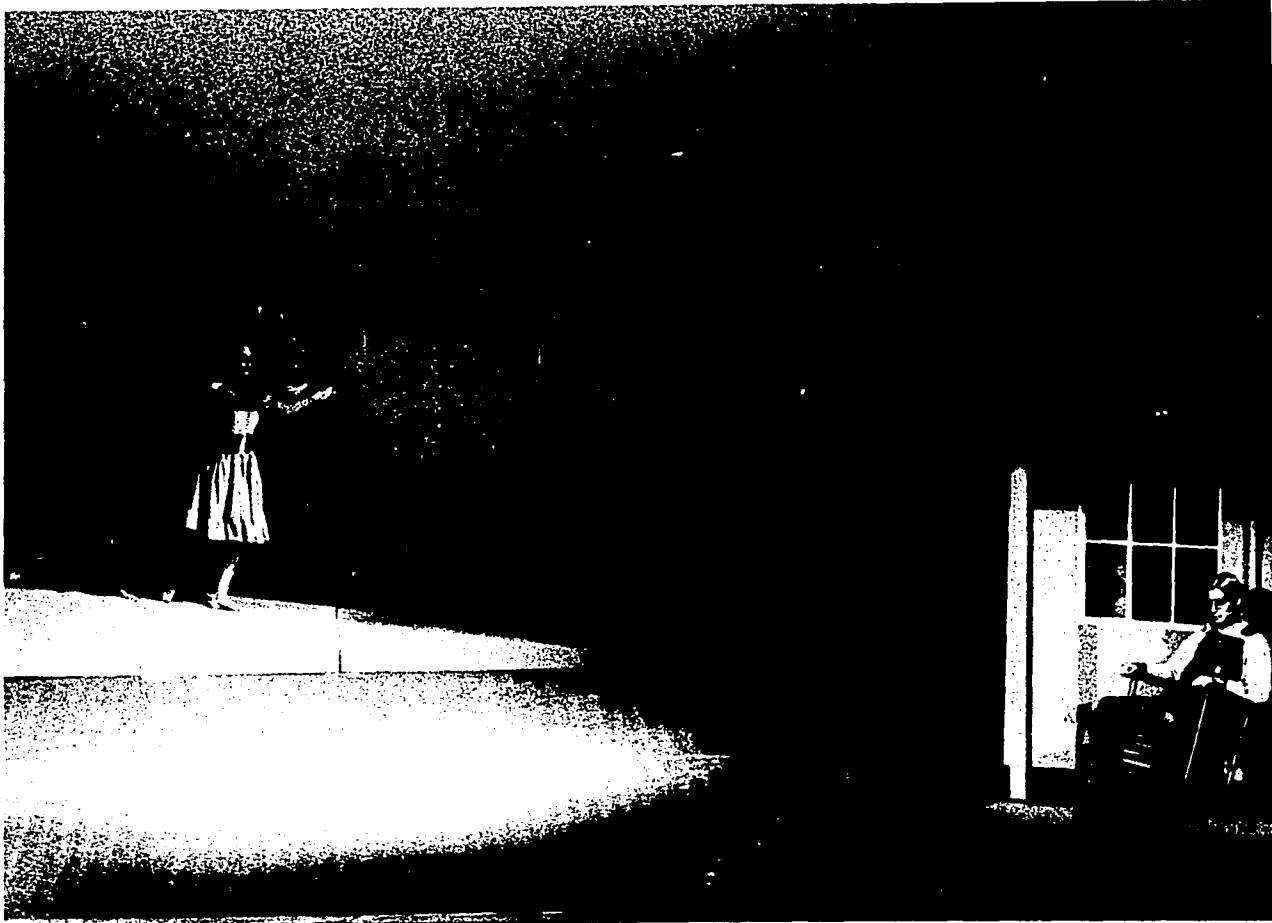


Figure 1. Set Illustration and Costume Illustrations of  
the Old Man, Young Woman and Young Man

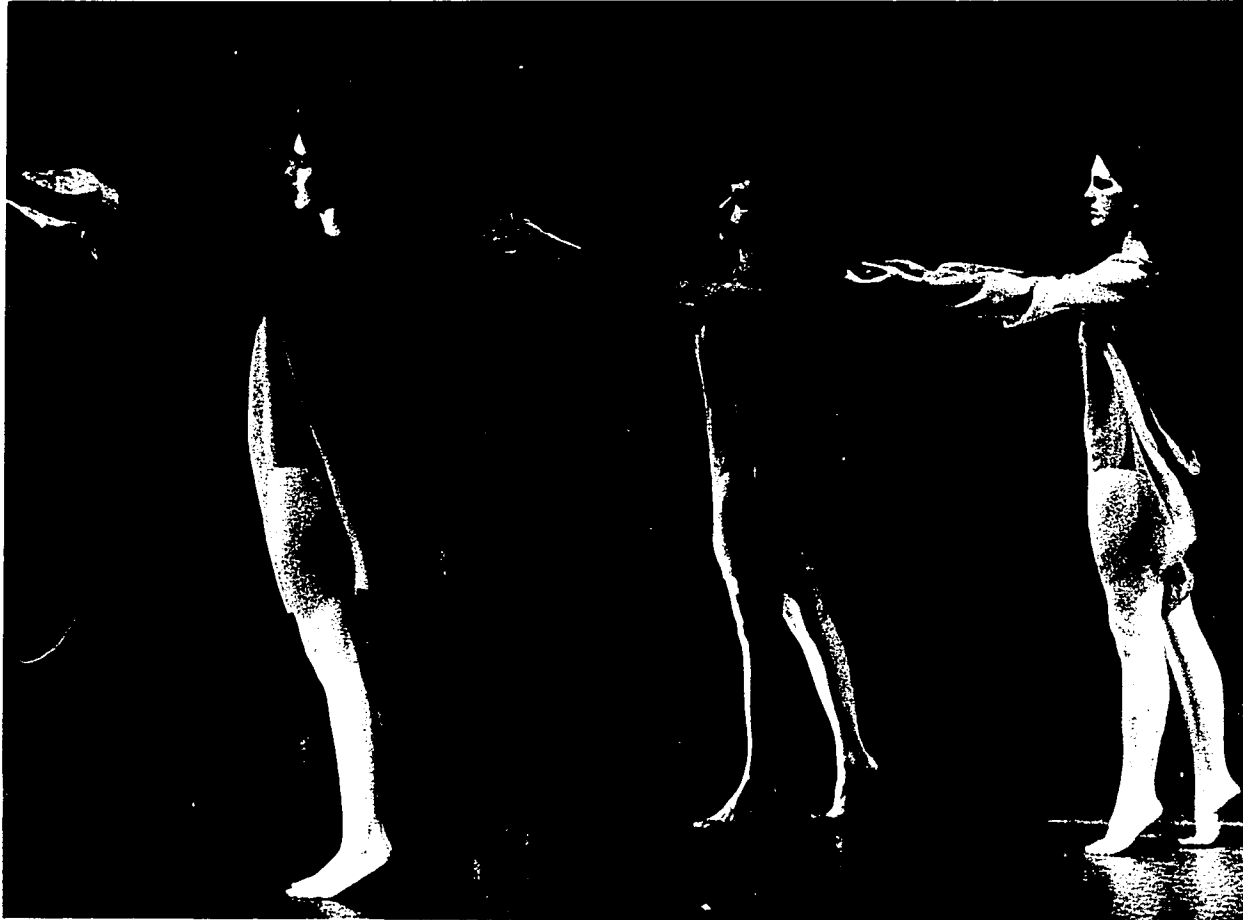


Figure 2. Costume Illustrations of the Spirit of Freedom Dancers





Figure 3. Costume Illustrations of the Earth Colors

The basic costume for the different elements was leotards and tights onto which were sewn sequins in various patterns for the purpose of reflecting light. A special lighting effect, created by the use of a lobsterscope, was used for the purpose of giving a strobe-like effect to the dance. Earth was costumed in green, Air in white, Fire in red and Water in blue. While the lighting effect was impossible to capture in a photograph, the costumes may be seen in Figure 4 (page 26). The total cast may be seen in Figure 5 (page 27).

Rural Route began with music that accompanied an overture of dreams. This overture started thus: After approximately thirty seconds of music, lights came up on the Old Man who was sleeping in his rocking chair that was situated on the front porch of his farmhouse. The Old Man stirred in his sleep, slightly awakened, yawned and slowly drifted back into his slumber.

Music had accompanied the above and continued as lights cross faded to bring up the rest of the stage area and to darken the farmhouse. The dream sequences began in which all of the dance characters were presented. With the end of the dream sequences lights cross faded again to bring up the Old Man who delivered the first monologue. All of

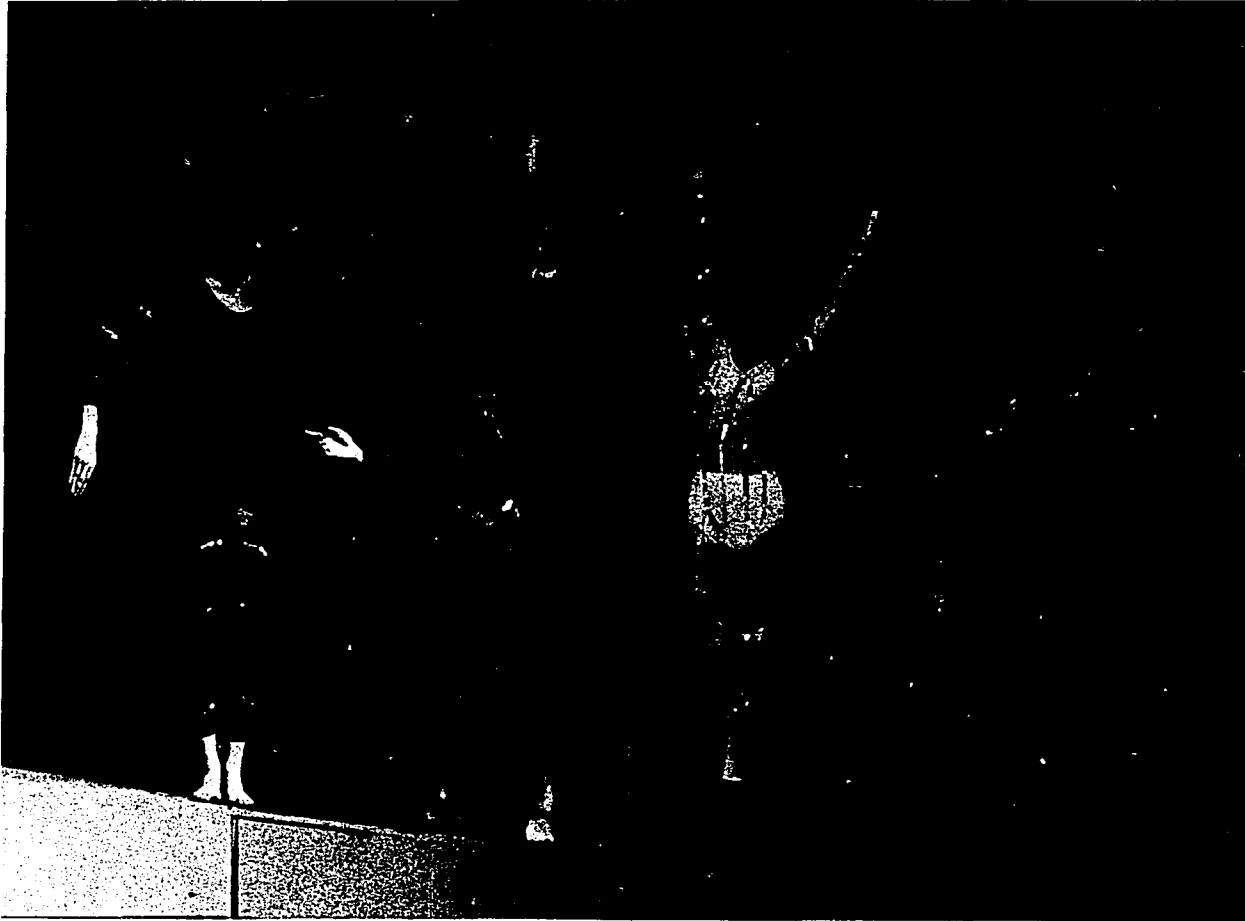


Figure 4. Costume Illustrations of the Elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water



Figure 5. Set and Costume Illustrations of the Total Cast

the monologue sequences were done without music to emphasize his aloneness as well as the meaning of the words.

OLD MAN: I guess that's what's left for old men. Dreams. You know, I've spent seventy-five years right here on this farm. Seventy-five years ago I was born here and I'm gonna die here. All my memories are here.

Just how did all of this come to be? Well, don't guess I ever chose the good earth as my way of life. Guess it would be proper to say that somehow it seemed to choose me. No, I didn't fight it; never cared to. The way I see it is this: there never was any need to try swimming up river against the current cause it's just a mighty tiring way of getting nowhere fast.

Yep, you might say the earth chose me, and God willing, we stayed satisfied with each other. Certainly there are some things in life that are just meant to be, and you know, I've often thought that happiness comes with realizing what is and what ain't. Surely everything ain't meant to be, but surely some things are.

Now just suppose I hadn't stayed satisfied with the good earth. Lord knows I had plenty of chances to do other things. There was the time I had the chance to move to

Lynchburg and go to work in the shoe factory, Craddock-Terry on Campbell Avenue. Even had a place to stay. Aunt Emma was willing to put me up; but thank heavens there seemed to be no way I could make myself do that thing. Cousin Ralph tried to talk me into it alright. You know I can still hear him. "Why don't you go make something of yourself! You're never going to make any money here on the farm." Cousin Ralph wanted to make a million dollars soooo much. You know, right up until the very moment that he died Cousin Ralph thought that money was the only important thing in life.

Now it isn't that I'm against money. I'm just against what I'd have to give up for it, namely my freedom. I've never seen anyone with money who didn't seem to be chained to it. They're either worried about losing it or worried about making more. Seems to me they aren't free to think about anything else. All the beautiful things in life there are to think about, and they're not free to think about anything but money.

Yes, I would have made a whole lot more money in that shoe factory, but it would have tied me down and killed my freedom in such a way that I wouldn't be Ed Garnet. I wouldn't be me! I'd be just part of that shoe factory, like

so many nuts and bolts. I wouldn't be free like the spirit of this land I love so much. Why this land is . . . it's the very spirit of freedom. It's not beholding to anyone, not even its owner. It's just as free as the wind.

DANCE: The end of the first monologue led into the first dance which was called "Spirit of Freedom." It involved the trio and the Young Woman in addition to the special effects of wind. Upon its conclusion the action went back to the Old Man.

OLD MAN: Yes, this land is just as free as the wind. There's more to my way of life than just freedom. There's a gentleness, a peace of mind that comes through loving the land. It's like loving a good woman. You must love her through all of her tantrums as well as in all of her sweetness. You must go the full circle with her, for it is the entire experience of her that makes her worthwhile. With the land it's the same. Maybe loving anything's the same.

In loving the land, you must love her through all of her seasons, through all of her moods, through all of her colors. It's the whole experience of her that you'll remember.

DANCE: The end of the second monologue led into the second dance entitled the "Earth Colors."

OLD MAN: Make no mistake about it, the land isn't easy. It has a will of its own and it isn't always the same as your will. You know, it's a lot like a man and his wife. Things aren't always perfect but long ago you accepted her as your responsibility and she accepted you as hers. You're both responsible for and to each other. Whenever things aren't running smooth, you simply accept it. You accept it as a condition of that responsibility and you live with each other as best you can. Sure enough, sooner or later things are going to start running smooth again. Just as each of you has your own will, you manage to find your meeting ground, for it's important that you work together for some greater good beyond yourselves.

Yes, the land has a will of its own, and whenever it goes against yours, you accept it, and you work with it until things come right again. You don't try to understand it but you do learn from it. Surely everything that happens to us in this life is for the purpose of teaching us something important, something important about the process of living.

DANCE: The end of the third monologue led into the third dance called "The Land Has a Will of Its Own." It involved the Young Man, Young Woman, the Elements and the Earth Colors. Upon its conclusion the action went back to the Old Man.



OLD MAN: Maybe the important thing is that the good times should stand out stronger than the hard times, that our laughter should stand for something stronger than our tears. Maybe this was so, not because of any strength I have within myself, but because of Molly.

It seems as though we were always together, that is, up until the time God called her, rest her soul. I can't ever remember being without her. Seems as though we were born knowing each other. Maybe each other is the reason why we were born. Maybe there were things we were to learn together, two halves that were to make up a whole, two halves that would somehow, finally balance each other. You know, I always had a way of looking at life through a telescope while Molly had her own way of looking at things through a microscope. Together, we were always able to bring the picture into focus so that we could make some sense out of it. There were times when I needed to see things through her eyes and there were times when she needed to look at life through mine. Thank the Lord we had each other.

Being able to share life with Molly is what made all the wonderful things about it as meaningful as they seem. You know the Lord didn't create any of his creatures to be alone, for it is being with another person in all the hell

and heaven of it that lets us go beyond ourselves into the deeper mysteries of life, mysteries that are created and discovered through caring, really truly caring about someone.

DANCE: The end of the fourth monologue led into the fourth dance called "Duet" which involved the Young Man and Young Woman. Upon its conclusion the action went back to the Old Man.

OLD MAN: Seems as though there oughta be some grand purpose behind all of this. Anything so perfect's bound to have a reason for being so. Maybe I'm the reason. Maybe I made it so . . . and maybe that's only part of it.

I don't think I'll ever really know and maybe it's not so important after all. Maybe the important thing in life is how you recollect it.

DANCE: The final monologue led into the final dance which was called "Recollection of Dreams for the Last Time." In this dance all of the dance characters were again presented. Toward the end of the music when the dance had concluded, the stage area darkened permitting the dancers and the Old Man to exit. The music continued as the lights came up on the

empty rocking chair. This special was for the purpose of suggesting the Old Man's death and his passing into another form. The music then ended; the stage darkened; the experiment ended.

Relative to style, the choreographic experiment was an example of Eclecticism. The Old Man's dialogue was realistically done, or within the style of Realism. His indirect function as a narrator upon the action and the fact that the dance drama goes into the mind's eye of the Old Man for its meaning is very much within the style of Expressionism in the theatre. The dances, which were a product of the Old Man's imagination, speak within the three styles of Realism, Surrealism and Symbolism.

The Young Man and Young Woman were realistically handled. The Earth Colors, with the film projections of moving color onto the costumes of the dancers, were given a surrealist treatment, while the Spirit of Freedom and the Elements were handled symbolically, thus making the total stylistic aspect of the production an eclectic one.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### I. SUMMARY

Dance choreographers have been primarily concerned with communication through the medium of movement-motion. While choreographers have experimented with the use of other elements of theatre, these elements have been employed in a manner of secondary importance to the dance art.

The purpose of this study was to experiment with mixed means for the purpose of communicating an idea through the act of theatre. The choreographer chose to use all elements of theatre at any time as they seemed necessary to the work and as they appeared to be the best method to communicate the various aspects of the idea to be expressed.

The experiment attempted to combine arts for the purpose of creating a total effect. An eclectic method of approach was employed. The ideas to be communicated were concerned with the human condition and the nature of the existence of man in his world.

The study finds relevance to dance education, particularly in the area of designing new courses in dance choreography. An eclectic approach to choreography places new emphasis on the individual involved in the choreographic process and upon his powers of selection.

Art is a reflection of the times. It grows out of philosophical ideas contemporary to it. It is the opinion of the writer that before any artist pursues his art, he should have arrived at a point of view regarding the philosophical ideas of his own time, his philosophy about the arts in general, and in specific, his philosophy about his own art. For this purpose, the review of the literature concerned itself with existentialism as it related to the dissertation, the arts in general and the dance art, specifically in supporting the writer's point of view: the expression theory of art.

The expression theory is the most commonly held of all theories of art. That art expresses emotion in the same manner that sentences express ideas is at the heart of this theory of art. Most dance literature upholds the expression theory of art as the primary purpose for dancing in modern times. Within the review of the literature the artistic

intent of selected major dance artists of the twentieth century is strongly supported from the point of view of the expression theory.

The dissertation differed from previous choreographic endeavors in that the choreographer was concerned with communication through any element of theatre that best communicated the idea. Traditionally dancers have been concerned with communication through movement-motion alone. The dissertation also differed from the previous endeavors of other choreographers in that it was the unique and personal statement of this choreographer who created from a specific point of view and from a specific body of experience.

The choreographic experiment was entitled Rural Route and was essentially a long dance drama about an old farmer, his dreams and his reflections on life. The work was an example of communicating through the act of theatre via mixed means. The intended effect of this work could not have been realized without the use of all elements of theatre employed in the work.

The cast of characters involved the Old Man, around whom the dance drama revolved. This was the only speaking part in the choreographic experiment. The dance parts, all of which were products of the Old Man's imagination,

consisted of: a Young Man and a Young Woman, three female dancers who represented the Spirit of Freedom, five female dancers who represented the Earth Colors or changing seasons, and four female dancers who represented the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

The set design included the front of an old clapboard farmhouse situated downstage left and a ramp placed from upstage center to stage right. Special effects included blowing wind and projections of film onto the costumes of the dancers. The music used for the dances was composed by Delius. Special lighting effects included the use of a lobscope for a stroke effect in addition to traditional area lighting.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

Art is man's noblest attempt to understand himself and his world. It is expressly and expressively a human dimension. Rural Route, by evolving through the choreographer's experience, was an attempt at such an understanding. The point of departure was the choreographer's definition of art. This definition and the creative process led the choreographer to the resulting conclusion of the production.

In any artistic endeavor there is always a certain amount of mystery involved, of arriving intuitively at conclusions. More often than not the artist does not know why

or how he arrived at a certain product. He knows only that he finds his art through his subjective mind and through his intuition. This has been the major bone of contention between the artist and the scientist and there seems to be no way to reconcile this difficulty. The scientist has always been more concerned with the process while the artist has always concerned himself with the product. The nature of the knowledges they seek seems to require this basic difference.

The artist is not concerned with predicting behavior; he is concerned with the total reality of man. The artist is concerned with the things man has in common with mankind rather than with their points of difference. The artist seeks universality while the scientist seeks specificity, and it is interesting to contemplate the fact that the world has never lacked a need for both points of view.

Perhaps the Old Man says it best when he says, "You know, I always had a way of looking at life through a telescope while Molly had her own way of looking at things through a microscope. Together, we were always able to bring the picture into focus so that we could make some sense out of it." In much the same way that the Old Man and his wife



balanced each other, art and science compliment each other in man and in his need for knowledge.

Art and science are not alike in process nor in product. One is an apple and the other an orange; together they are the fruit of man's effort to understand and to conquer his own existence. The artist is every bit as involved in research as is the scientist, research that is often too immediate to state an hypothesis and too universal to become scientific. It is nevertheless truth.

More so than anyone, the artist attempts to understand life, to make sense of its many ambiguities, and to communicate the things he intuitively and subjectively learns through his art. Because art works in and through the personality of the artist, he can do nothing but make his personal statement. If this statement, which is really a clarification of his experience, is to be a work of art, it must be more than just the personal statement of the artist. It must be capable of touching the personal experience of members of the audience in some meaningful way. It need not touch each member in the same way; however, there must be something universal about the artist's personal statement. It is also the opinion of the choreographer that this universality must be recognized as a part of the human condition.

The choreographer believes Rural Route to be a work of art because it communicates beyond a personal statement.

Rural Route has been of great personal value to the choreographer in the clarification of experience and in the intuitive and subjective gains of insight into life and into the process of living. While every artist pursues his art, he also pursues himself.

In addition to personal values received from the creation of Rural Route, the choreographer also finds values gained as a teacher of dance. The choreographer has never taken such a broad and eclectic approach to the dance art. While the resultant work has presented the possibilities of a broader approach in the choreographic process, it has also stimulated a broader, more eclectic approach to the teaching of dance composition.

Most importantly, Rural Route has enabled the choreographer to sense in a new way the things that seem to be important to this generation in life, art and style. This importance seems to revolve around a return to nature and a new Romanticism where Realism seems better able to get at the truth of existence.

It seems readily apparent to the choreographer that Rural Route was a worthwhile creative experiment to the

choreographer as a teacher, and most importantly, to the choreographer as a human being. Sheets has made perhaps the most important statement yet to be made on the value of dance, and one that seems to be the most fitting way to end this paper in support of the dissertation. Maxine Sheets says: "The value of dance is dance. It is a unique and vital communication which needs no further justification, whether professional or educational." (50:145)

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