The Dance Drama of the American Indian & Its Relation to the Folk Narrative

By

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The validity of the folk arts as an avenue of inquiry into the structure of human culture has long been established. Nevertheless, it has never been fully accepted as a distinctive scientific approach. One of the results of this development, and possibly one of the contributing reasons as well, is the intensive departmentalizing of the study of the folk arts.

Certainly there has been no lack of interest in the subject, particularly in regard to matters pertaining to the American Indian. But all studies have generally been conducted as separate and distinct disciplines, apparently without relationship to each other. The folk-tales and legends of these people have been widely collected and analyzed with exhaustive attention to detail. Other investigators have been attracted by the rich field of American Indian music. A sizable body of transcriptions and recordings exists in this field of study. The plastic and graphic arts have received their full share of attention from a variety of experts. But each field has developed a parochialism which seems to overlook completely the existence of all aspects save those of its particular area of attention.

In the process, neglect of various aspects of the total study of the folk-arts was inevitable. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of the American Indian dance. When one considers the enormous quantity of data concerning American Indian folk culture which has been collected over the years, the scarcity of information relating to this form of the folk arts is remarkable.

The American Indian dance has been largely left to the dubious attention of writers whose interest can hardly be regarded as scientific and whose transcriptions are admittedly lacking in authenticity. Only a handful of investigators such as Kurath, Speck and Fenton have approached the study with any attempt to record completely and accurately.

In all honesty it must be noted that the recording of the folkdance is an extremely difficult matter. Conditions favorable to photographic recording are not always available. Special dance notations, while offering some possibilities, are usually limited in their capacity to record all of the essential movements. As a result, total analysis of dance forms has been rare.

The greatest frustration that the student of the American Indian dance will experience is the marked lack of detailed description of the dance itself, even if only in narrative form. Investigators will dwell with loving detail on the costuming, songs, symbols, instruments and even such minutiae as face and body painting. But the dance itself the patterns, steps, actions, and even at times its very purpose is almost totally ignored beyond the most superficial of descriptions.

Yet in the mind of the Indian, all of these factors are blended into a harmonious entity. It is an integrated development in which the human body becomes the focal point of expression. The complex rhythms of the songs, the kaleidoscopic colors of the costumes, designs and symbols and the movements of the dancers themselves
blend in a living portrayal of the narrative form or subjective theme which underlies the performance. It becomes a complete and vital expression of a total folk-art.

Therefore, as a highly dynamic entity the area of the folk-dance is intimately related to all of the other folk-arts. The study of the American Indian dance is inescapably related to ethnomusicology; the Indian feels that music and dance are inseparable. Dances without costumes or dance properties would lose a valuable dramatic touch. This, therefore, provides a strong connection with the graphic arts. The dance is as rich and varied an area of study as the folktale with as high a degree of special interest. The folk legend plays a vital role in the construction of many of these dances. Yet this interrelationship of disciplines has rarely been considered.

It will be the purpose of this study to investigate two related areas of interest in the context of the folk arts. First, we shall regard the structure of the American Indian Dance Drama and analyze the various patterns of organization to be found within this particular folk-art. Secondly, since the Dance-Drama appears to be uniquely related to the folktale inasmuch as it is an application of narrative forms to a dance medium, we shall attempt to demonstrate the functional relationship between these areas of the folk-arts.

In regard to purpose, there are three general classifications into which the forms of the American Indian dance may be placed. The major style and the one to which the American public is most accustomed might be termed the ENTERTAINMENT DANCE. This dance form is designed primarily for the amusement of the audience and the sheer joy of dancing for the performer. Each dancer proceeds through the movements created of his own ingenuity the sole limitation is the extent of his virtuosity. There is no story to tell, no ritual to follow. While many of the contemporary entertainment dances may have formerly possessed additional significance of a ritual nature, this has passed with the years and the sole purpose today is for pleasure.

A second form may be termed the RITUAL DANCE. Highly mystical in nature and deeply intent on the nuances of ceremony, these dances are filled with intense religious feeling and are heavily charged with emotion. They are generally simple in structure and are usually performed as a mass action.

However, there are relationships within this dance form with the third type, the DANCE-DRAMA. In this form there is developing characterization and expression of narrative structure through an entirely different medium than the verbal tradition.

It is this particular aspect of the American Indian dance that will occupy us in detail. Of all dance forms the dance drama is closest in feeling and thought to the traditional folk literature. In many ways it might well be considered another, more visual expression of the same art.

An examination of the dance drama will demonstrate a regular progression of types, proceeding from the simplest forms to an ever increasing complexity in presentation and approach. This should not in any way be considered to constitute an evolutionary sequence. Each of the particular forms of the dance drama has
its own unique function, and may and often does exist simultaneously with other forms of the dance drama in the same society. In fact, many of the simpler dramatic dance patterns are often incorporated within the longer and more complex structures.

To the extent that the imitative dances by their very nature would seem to be a normative type of development, they undoubtedly have a long history in human culture; therefore, one might anticipate that this type would be relatively old in any given society. But the possibilities of diffusion cannot be overlooked, and a particular dance pattern might well be a recent innovation. In addition, despite any actual duration of existence in a particular culture complex, even the simplest types of patterns have been undergoing changes of one type or another.

By their very simplicity of structure imitative dances could have originated at any time. They might also be the last vestiges of a more complex dance structure. They therefore cannot be expected to reflect invariably and completely the patterns of an earlier period.

Upon analysis the structural forms of the American Indian dancedrama can be subdivided into four areas of classifications

1. **The Imitative Pantomime:**

In this particular dance form the dancer depicts the actions of a particular bird, animal, fish or occasionally some aspect of human social life. These portrayals generally concern themselves with direct and careful impersonation of the world of Nature. There is rarely anything approaching a plot or complex narrative form. In the few instances in which this might be said to occur, it appears to be simply an elaboration of the actions of the particular subject. Since there is actually no story to tell, the dancer is comparatively unrestrained in his movements.

In general, dances of this type bear the names of birds, animals, etc. However, the name of the dance is no guarantee that there will necessarily be an attempt to imitate the actions of a particular animal. For example, the many "Rabbit Dances" which have been described invariably lack any sort of imitative pantomime. No less than nineteen dances have been reported for the Creek which bear animal titles; yet, not one attempts any type of imitative portrayal.

From a comparative standpoint an investigation of the Bear and Buffalo Dances of the Eastern Woodlands would appear to be particularly revealing. Swanton states concerning the Bear Dance of the Alabama: "The dancers circled about the fire in single file, men and women alternating and pawing at the air with their hands in imitation of the bear." (Swanton 1928:527)

Later, Kurath reports of a Bear Dance of the Quallah Cherokee consisting of a counter-clockwise waddle, men and women alternating clawing the air like bears and ending finally in a tight spiral. (Kurath 1961:179)
Finally, both Fenton and Kurath note the existence of a Bear Dance among the Iroquois. This again was a round dance participated in by both men and women. The step is a grotesque waddling shuffle for the women while the men alternate a forward stamp with a sideward shuffle. Periodically they grunt out hoarse phrases in imitation of the bear's growl. (Kurath 1951:120)

The Buffalo Dances follow much the same pattern. Schoolcraft, in reporting on the Creek, states: "They invest themselves with the scalp of the buffalo, with horns and tail attached and dances around in a circle, uttering sounds in imitation of the animal they represent, with their bodies in a half bent position, supporting their weight on their ball sticks, which represent the forelegs of the buffalo." (Schoolcraft 1891: V: 277)

Later reports of the Cherokee tell of a Buffalo Dance similar in substance and structure to the Bear Dance, but with the substitution of butting and bellowing.

Farther north, Morgan reports on a Buffalo Dance among the Iroquois in which the principal feature was an attempt to imitate the actions of the animal. This dance was supposedly originated as a result of a war party against the Cherokee. The warriors saw buffalo at a salt lick in Kentucky and imitated the actions of the animals upon their return home. (Morgan 1901: I: 276) In a more recent date, Fenton, writing on modern Seneca ceremonies, says: "The Buffalo Society dancers whirl and butt each other." (Fenton 1936:17)

It would appear that the Buffalo Dance is intrusive in the Iroquois dance repertoire and possibly the Bear Dance as well. Although theoretically such imitative examples are so simple in format as to be expected among hunting peoples, the actual structure of the dance coincides so closely as to seem to indicate diffusion of the actual dance form. The fact that the Iroquois were in Cherokee territory when the dance was acquired would seem to indicate that they learned it, not from the buffalo, but from the Cherokee themselves.

In comparison, it is interesting to note that in certain Plains Buffalo Dances occasionally the raw elements of narrative appear. In the Hunkpapa Buffalo Dance there are scenes interspersed throughout the chorus movements of the dancers. Cane scene depicts the mating battle of the bulls, another a hunter stalking and killing a buffalo. But these are simply episodes, and there is no continuity of plot maintained between them.

However, in a report on a dance form from the Fox there seems to be the germ of the next classification. George Catlin described a dance of mourning which he witnessed among these people. Upon the death in battle of a Fox warrior, other members of the war party would dance in his honor before his lodge for fifteen successive days.
These dances were a series of solos and usually involved only a display of dancing ability. However, occasionally a warrior might pantomime one of the exploits of the dead man as a special tribute. This was not obligatory and might be omitted, (Catlin 1841: II: 244) Nevertheless, in this action we see the beginnings of the Dramatic Episode.

2. The Dramatic Episodes:

Here is the dawning of plot formation. There is a sequential stream of action developing along the lines of a recognizable narrative form. For this reason these dances are often referred to as "Story Dances." They are an extremely popular and widespread dance form among the Indians of North America.

The re-enactment of the experience generally took the form of a war episode as a means of boasting of the honors received. Although various descriptive titles have been applied, the standard terminology for this particular type of episodic treatment is the "Discovery Dance." However, the plot need not concern itself with war exclusively. The Ojibwa and other northern Algonkin tribes use the same basic format in hunting dances.

The Discovery Dance is extremely widespread. It would not be amiss to state that it might well be one of the universal dance forms of the American Indian. The early French explorers of the 1600's described the dance in unmistakable terms. Other writers mention it in the Plains or the Rocky Mountains. One version has even been noted in California. It is this universal nature which gives it the unique character that it possesses. It is at the same time a rigid dance tradition, and yet one capable of extreme flexibility. In short, it permits the maximum of improvisation within a conventional framework.

Perhaps the best description given for this particular dance is by Kinietz for the Southern Ojibwa:

"The performer begins with a dagger, war club or some other offensive weapon, which he flourishes in a variety of ways and threatening attitudes, while dancing. He then hops along for some time, apparently with the greatest of caution and squats suddenly behind his weapon. After having feigned the different motions of loading his gun, he levels the piece at the supposed enemy, runs forward and supposedly finding his victim still alive, pretends to fall upon him, striking several blows with the war club on his head and finally dispatches him with a mortal stab near the heart with his dagger. He then instantly pretends to make a circular incision with the knife around the head to raise the scalp. After which, he gives the war whoop and dances around the circle. The whole merit of the performance depends on the dexterity and rapidity of the different movements." (Kinietz: 1947: 92)
In the various versions of the dance the details of the war expeditions follow closely the approved fighting procedure of each tribe. In the Mohawk version there is a stalk through the woods, brushing branches to one side, searching the ground for footprints, and finally the creeping approach on the unsuspecting enemy. An Ojibwa dancer used a "canoe" for the journey, and the final attack was made with a bow. In the Dakota version the dancer went through the motions of stripping the cover from an imaginary war shield. The scalping is usually omitted by the Dakota, occasionally by the Mohawk, never by the Ojibwa.

This format is the basic structure of the dance the preliminary boasting, the search for the enemy, the discovery, the killing and the triumph. Within this framework the dancer is free to improvise details at his pleasure.

One might well regard such refinements in dance structure as a form of dance "fabulation." The main plot structure remains intact, but each culture has adjusted the details within the framework to fit its own unique situation.

An interesting modern development in this dance pattern has been noted among the Ottawa. This is called "The Brave Man's Dance" for reasons that are immediately apparent. This dance has come into existence in recent years with the passing of the importance of the original dance. The Brave Man's Dance is a parody of high comic value. The warrior struts his ability and intentions a bit too proudly before the warpath and as a result runs into a series of embarrassing situations.

He flexes his muscles and is shocked that no muscle rises. He pounds his chest and succeeds only in knocking out his wind. On the wartrail he is hideously afraid. His eyes roll in terror; his knees knock together; and he steps on his own foot and cannot think of a way to get off. Finally, when he stumbles upon the enemy, he races in panic to the safety of his village pausing at the end of the dance to shake his fist in defiance. Such a performance might well be considered the final type of interpretive action possible within this framework.

3. The Dramatic Narratives

The major point of difference in this classification lies in the fact that these dances are closely related to the legends of the people—their myths. Each dance is in fact a dramatization of some existing narrative.

The following criteria should be observed in the Dramatic Narrative Dances:

a. There should be an Episodic Sequences a series of dances performed in a regular order.

b. The dance structure should be Narratives it should either tell a story in the course of the performance or the actions should be in strict accordance with the plot outlines of an existing narrative. There should be a direct connection with the existing mythology of the
people either as a ritualistic performance or as a dramatization of part of the myth tradition.

This development seems to be capable of initiation from either the dance or the narrative form. That is, either the folktale may serve as the inspirational source from which the dance was developed or the folktale may serve as an invention to explain the "origin" of the dance after it had been developed. This easy interchange of points of origin serves to demonstrate the high degree of correlation which exists between the oral narrative and the dramatic dance form.

We shall examine for the purpose of this study the structure and relationships of the "False-Face" ceremonies and dances of the Iroquois of the United States and Canada.

There are few persons who have not been shocked and amused by the leering, distorted masks of the Iroquois, if only from the comparatively static environment of a museum collection. But these masks were designed to figure as the center of a great Iroquois dance tradition—a complex, organized body of myth, ceremony and dance which still retains much of its vitality.

These masks were the traditional representations of a vast assemblage of earth-bound spirits which populated the supernatural world of the Iroquois. Fenton accurately describes them as "memorials to generations of nightmares." (Fenton 1941:405) In a sense this statement mirrors reality since the inspiration for a particular mask came to the carver customarily in a dream.

To begin our examination of this dance complex, let us first look at the legends of the origins of these supernaturals.

**MYTH OF THE FALSE FACE LEADER**

"Now, when the maker was finishing the Earth, he went walking around inspecting it and banishing all evil spirits from his premises. As the Creator went his way westward, on the rim of the world, he met a huge fellow—the headman of all the Faces. The Creator asked the fellow, as he has asked the others, whence he came. The stranger replied that he had come from the Rocky Mountains to the west and that he had been living on this earth since he had made it. They argued as to whose earth it was and agreed to settle the title by contest.

"The Creator agreed to call the stranger "Chief" should he demonstrate sufficient magic strength to summon a mountain toward him. They sat down, facing the east and held their breath. Then, the Great False Face shook his great turtle rattle and the uproar frightened the game animals. He summoned the mountain toward him, but it only moved part way.
"Now it was the Creator's turn and he summoned the mountain, which came directly up to them. However, his rival, becoming impatient, suddenly looked around and the mountain struck his face and mouth.

"Now, the Creator realized that this fellow had great power. He assigned him the task of driving disease from the earth and assisting people who were about to travel to and fro hunting. The loser agreed that, if humans would make portrait masks of him, call him "Grandfather," make tobacco offerings and set down a kettle of mush, that they too should have the power to cure disease by blowing hot ashes. The Creator gave him a place to live in the rocky hills to the west near the rim of the world and he agreed to come in whichever direction the people summoned him." (Fenton 1940:418)

It would appear that this story is either a part of the Iroquois creation myth or a tale developing out of a section of the larger epic. However, it does not explain the existence of the other False Faces.

It was apparently a common practice for Iroquois hunters to bring back tales of seeing disembodied human heads, with long, snapping hair, hiding deep in the mists and shadows of the forest. Apparently, these supernaturals did not molest humans but seemed to be extremely interested in tobacco and corn meal mush.

**MYTH OF THE COMMON FACES**

"Later, as humans went about the earth, in the fall, men went into the woods hunting. They carried native tobacco and parched corn meal for mush. They were tormented by shy beings, who flitted timidly behind trees, with their long hair snapping in the wind. Sometimes, a hunter returned to his camp to find the ashes of the fire strewn about the hearth and the marks of a great dirty hand where someone had grasped the housepost for support. The hunter agreed to stay home while his partner went afield.

"During the morning, a False Face approached cautiously, sliding on one hip, now and then standing erect, to gaze about before proceeding. Going to the hearth, he reached into the ashes and scattered the coals, as if seeking something. That night, the hunter had a dream in which the False Face requested tobacco and mush.

"The next day, the hunter set down a kettle of mush for them. The Faces came and taught him their songs and their method of treating patients with hot ashes. In another dream, they requested that they be remembered every year, in a feast, saying that they were everywhere in the forests, bringing good luck to those who remember them." (Fenton 1940:419)

It would seem that we are dealing with two entirely different aspects of the tradition here. The Iroquois mask complex is almost certainly an intrusive adoption; the close relationship to those of the Cherokee cannot be accidental. The first myth, concerning the Earth-Rim-Being, would appear to be a part of
the original Iroquois myth tradition. It is a structured narrative with a plot, characterizations and completed development. The second myth would seem to be a more recent development. There is little attempt at plot structure. It seems to be totally explanatory, as an excuse for performing the ceremonies. Nevertheless, by whatever road the tradition was developed in the Iroquois, it remains a firm pattern today.

The False Face leader, who lives at the rim of the world, is popularly called "Twist face," but is more reverently referred to by the Iroquois as "The Great Humpbacked Defender." He is visualized as a great earth-bound giant, endlessly traveling the world from east to west. He carries a huge staff made from a great pine or shagbark hickory. As he strides across the world, his heavy footsteps shake the earth. At noon he pauses at the Great Pine Tree that grows at the center of the earth and rubs his enormous turtle rattle against the trunk. This renews his enormous strength.

His face, warped and twisted by its collision with the mountain, is red in the mornings as he comes from the east but black in the afternoons as he moves toward the setting sun. In his patrol he is constantly on the lookout for the evil spirits of disease and high winds. He sings as he travels, telling of his powers over these spirits. Occasionally, he dances, kicking his feet in the air and sparring with his hands, with both thumbs held straight up.

He is seldom seen by men in his travels since he promised the Creator that he would remain in the most inaccessible places. He is known chiefly through the myths and by the appearance of his masked representative in the dances.

His subordinates, the Common Faces--the people of the forest mists, take many forms. They are generally depicted as a group of deformed creatures. They are either humpbacked or crippled below the waist. They are not overly intelligent but possess great supernatural powers. For that reason they might be dangerous. Those who can control disease might also cause it, if insulted. Fortunately, they are addicted to tobacco and corn meal mush and will do anything to obtain these items.

They habitually carry rattles of turtle shell or folded hickory back. They converse with each other in a weird, nasal language which is unintelligible to human beings. They possess the power to scoop up hot coals in their hands without suffering burns.

At certain specific periods of the Spring and Fall, although there are no precise dates for the performance, both classes of False Faces appear to go through the houses to rid them of evil spirits. The Dancers carry rattles to frighten the spirits and pine boughs to brush them away.
The masks representing the False Face leader have long hair and are painted red and black. They show his broken nose and the agony that he felt when the mountain struck his face. The Common Faces wear a variety of masks which are distinguished chiefly by a variety of mouth shapes. They also have long hair. No other special costume is worn. Somehow, this adds to the weird effect. It is a distinct shock to see these unearthly faces on a figure wearing blue jeans or peering from under the brim of a battered felt hat.

As they enter each house, the leader chants a ritual formula which appears to be an appeal to the Great-One-On-The-Rim-Of-The-World to confer his powers on the group. This would seem to indicate that there is no concept of "possession" that the spirit is not expected to enter the person of the masker so that the dancer would then become the actual personification of the supernatural.

In fact, the Common Faces were said to have instructed the Iroquois that whenever anyone carves a mask in their likeness, burns tobacco, makes ready a feast and sings the appropriate songs, the power to cure disease is automatically conferred upon him. It is this lack of mysticism which differentiates these Iroquois rituals from other types in the "Dramatic Cycle" dances.

The maskers then spread out throughout the house, crawling from room to room, beating the corners with their rattles to scare away the evil spirits. They blow hot ashes on everyone, especially those who are unwell. Lazy persons run the risk of having undignified jokes played on them. Fenton tells of one masked dancer who crawled into the attic of an Indian house and set up a tremendous uproar. When the rest of the company investigated, they discovered that he was busily engaged in beating a mattress from which hundreds of bedbugs were fleeing for their lives. This "exorcism" was being carried out with all of the proper ritual songs and actions. This is another example of the apparent lack of mysticism in this ceremony. Fenton, in fact, has suggested that the entire complex of masks and actions both extremely grotesque might be a satirical commentary on the essential absurdity of human society.

Following the house visits, the entire village assembles at the community longhouse. The Common Faces burst into the room in a variety of ungainly postures and crawl toward the central fire. The tobacco which has been collected at each house as a fee for the "housecleaning" is burned before the Common Faces can scatter the live coals around the room. An invocation is pronounced to the Common Faces asking their help against epidemics and tornadoes.

Kettles of mush with strips of fried meat (traditionally "as big as their feet") are brought in. At the sight of the corn meal, the Faces roll on the ground in ecstasy attempting to cram their feet into their mouths. They readily agree to cure anyone who is ill.

There are separate dances for each type of mask, but they all follow the same general pattern. The dancers improvise ungainly postures, incredibly distorted angular jumps, hops or twisted crawling movements. The entire effect is one
of unearthly grotesqueness. In the course of the exorcism the Faces utter hideous groans or converse with each other in the eerie, bubbling, nasal language of the forest people. One masker straddles a bench and howls the chants at the top of his lungs while pounding out the rhythms with a turtle shell rattle. The dancers shake their rattles or pound them on the floor in accompaniment to the incessant hammering of the singer.

After the dance the Common Faces blow ashes at the assembled people and leave, carrying their precious kettles of mush.

Now two men, one from each moiety, appear wearing the masks of the Great Earth Rim Being. They pair off with the matron of the opposite moiety. The couples dance in unison, hopping on the left foot while bending the right knee and kicking out with the right foot. The hands are extended, thumbs held stiffly upright. Occasionally, the partners spar at each other with their left hands. Then, all persons present are forced to join in the dance, imitating the False Face beings. The masked dancers guard the door so that no one may leave.

Everyone is then compelled to join in a round dance. One masked being directs the dance while the other continues to guard the door. At one part of the round dance a song requests the supernaturals to blow ashes. They repeat the dance with the women briefly, blow ashes on the assembled people, receive their fees of tobacco and leave.

As in the myths relating to these ceremonies, it seems evident that we are dealing with two different but related traditions. The performance of the Common Faces, while following the narrative tradition very closely, is a highly disorganized affair. The dances of the Earth-Rim-Beings are highly ritualized, quiet, restrained and involve the participation of the entire community. There is none of the buffoonery, horseplay or uproar of the Common Faces.

However, both dances adhere closely to the myth structure. The Common Faces imitate their supernatural counterparts with great exactness. The Earth-Rim-Beings in their dance follow the actions of their supernatural originator.

There is a triple reinforcement of tradition here. There is the MYTH stating the original promises of the False Faces to the Creator and the people. There is the appearance of the False Faces which serves to reinforce the myth itself. Finally, there is the DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE in the ceremony which adds to the reinforcement through personal involvement.

As a result, the Dramatic Narrative dance forms serve to complement and reinforce the oral narrative traditions. They provide a cohesive agent to the structure of society itself and provide an additional bond between the people and the supernatural. Their vitality can be demonstrated by the fact that these ceremonies are still a dynamic entity in many Iroquois communities.
4. The Dramatic Cycles

Further elaboration of the dances of the previous class results in the production of Dramatic Dance Cycles, drawing the inspiration from a number of related myths. The costuming, songs, and dances are all designed to portray in careful detail the dramatization of these narrative complexes. Invariably ritualistic, these dances are intended to be presented over an extended period of time in a definite order of appearance.

Almost without exception, and in sharp contrast to the previous dance types, there is little latitude of expression permitted to these dancers. The narrative form itself becomes less important. Symbolism is often developed to a high degree to the extent that the dance structure sometimes becomes subordinated to it. As a result, the content of this form of the Dance Drama may be more abstract in its structure. Possession of the dancer by supernatural agents may occur.

The length and complexity of these dance forms and their associated myths would preclude any attempt at detailed description and analysis at this time. Therefore, we can examine them only in terms of their general structure.

In fact, the major point of emphasis which will be discussed, in that it is a major area of differentiation from the preceding Dramatic Narrative forms is the degree of abstraction or realism which is used in the development of the narrative relationship in the Dramatic Cycle form.

Before this subject can be discussed, it should be mentioned that there appears to be a transitional form which is intermediary in structure between the Dramatic Narrative and the Dramatic Cycle types.

Speck, in his treatment of the Cherokee dance drama, states: "In the ceremonial dance series, allegorical drama is a chief feature." The relationship with the oral narrative is unquestioned. Speck states: "According to Cherokee tradition, all tribal chanting, for whatever purpose, originated from a mythical event the slaying and sacrifice of a monster creature called "Stone Coat." It accounts for the songs that govern the dances. (Speck 1951:13)

A comparison of the Cherokee ceremonies demonstrates a strong degree of relationship with the Iroquois rituals the major difference being duration. The Cherokee dance drama, therefore, almost achieves the status of a dance cycle. The chief reason for the assignment of transitional status to these productions is that they are neither extensive in length nor performed at regularly established intervals throughout the year. Speck states "Although those Cherokee dances that may be called rites are likely to be performed in either summer or winter, the majority of the animal or social dances may be performed at any time. (Speck 1951:11)
The abstract forms of the Dance Cycle can best be illustrated by the ceremonial forms of the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest. It can best be demonstrated by quoting directly from Fawkes classic monograph on Hopi katchinas.

"There exists in Hopi mythology many stories of the old times which form an accompanying body of tradition explaining much of the symbolism and some of the ritual. In the Snake and Flute " dramatizations this coincidence of myth and ritual is more striking. The dramatic element which is ascribed to the Katchina ritual is more prominent in the elaborate than in the abbreviated versions, as would naturally be the case, but even there it is believed to be less striking than in the second group."(Fewkes 1897:253)

"In the elaborate Katchinas we find an advance in the amount of dramatization or an attempt to represent a story or parts of the same. Thus, we can in Soyaluna, follow a dramatic presentation of the legend of the conflict with the sun with hostile deities or powers, in which both are personified." (Fewkes 1897: 254)

That these performances are arranged in a specific cycle has been shown by the many accounts of Pueblo ceremonialism. Colton has stated: "The yearly calendar of the Hopi religious ceremonies is divided into two parts; from winter solstice to mid July marking the first half and from mid-July to winter solstice, the second half." (Colton 1949:2)

Fawkes has also noted that these ceremonies follow a stable pattern. "It has been proven by repeated observations of the same ceremonials that there is great constancy in the way successive presentations of the ritual are carried out year after year. Each observance is traditional and prescribed for a certain time of the year." (Fewkes 1897:255)

An examination of the details of these pueblo ceremonies and the accompanying myths shows, despite Fawkes' comment on the degree of faithfulness in reproducing the myth, that the emphasis is highly abstract. There is little attempt at direct representation in the fullest theatrical sense. The costumes and masks are supposedly fully representative of the original characters. But this would seem to be the extent of direct representation. As a point of fact, it would seem that the Katchina ceremonials have become ritualized to such an extent that the main dramatic emphasis revolves around the actual appearance of the Katchinas themselves.

On the other hand, the more realistic treatment of the Dance Cycle can be seen in the dramatic, ceremonial performances of the Northwest Coast. Drucker has expressed the situation as follows:

"The performances of the Wakashan speaking peoples ...were cycles of drama revolving around a single theme the protagonist's encounter with a spirit
who kidnaps him, bestows supernatural powers upon him, then returns him to his village, repeating the experience of the ancestor from whom the performer inherited the right to the performance." (Drucker 1955:48)

These performances were held at specified times of the year and consisted of a traditional series of dramatic representations by individuals who possessed the privilege of performing them.

The theatrical properties used in these dramatizations have been thoroughly discussed by experts on Indian art. The important point is that the use of the double and triple masks, carved figures and other such equipment was designed exclusively to increase the dramatic impact of the performance. "In one of the dance cycles the personage of highest rank was supposed to have been carried off, and upon his return inspired by a Cannibal Spirit... To prevent him from killing and eating his fellows, he was fed specially prepared human corpses. It is highly improbable that corpses were actually used; as remarked previously, the Kwakiutl were past masters at producing realistic tricks for stage effects. The smoked carcass of a small black bear, for example, fitted with a carved head, would look convincingly like a well dried human body at a little distance and by firelight into the bargain." (Drucker 1955:151)

It was Theatre carried to its highest level. The emphasis of the Northwest Coast dance cycles was deliberately centered on realism and the maintenance of the attention of the audience, Drucker has pointed out "As good dramatists, the Kwakiutl heightened the effect of the frightening and frightening scenes by alternating them either with quiet, stately dances or with periods of clowning and horseplay..." (Drucker 1955:152)

Farther to the South, the great "World's End" ceremony of the Yurok and their neighboring tribes of California involved a similar cycle with the intent of preventing the end of the world. This cycle was actually a long recitation and dramatization of the origin of the ceremony as a gift from benevolent supernatural’s.

Again it should be noted that the same inter-relationship of origins that was noted in the Dramatic Narrative is present here. The various Cannibal Society performances of the Northwest Coast were carried to such heights of accuracy in the reproduction of the myth that, as noted above, human corpses or a reasonably accurate facsimile, were used as stage properties. On the other hand, the origin myth of the "Sxoaxi" ceremony of the Lummi as reported by Stern (Stern 1934:113) appears to be an explanatory description to account for a ceremony which had already been developed, even to the miraculous discovery of the already completed masks.

Finally, it should be noted that Drucker lists among the dances that might be performed as part of the "Shaman's Dance" of the Nootka such demonstrations as the Red Headed Woodpecker Imitators, Seagull Dancers, Moth Dancers, Hummingbird Imitators and even Periwinkle and Sea Cucumber Dancers (which do not
appear to be the most notable subjects for dance imitation). (Drucker 1951:401)
Therefore, we are back to the initial phases of the Dance Dramas the Imitative Pantomime, as an aspect of the Dramatic Cycle, indicating the close inter-relationship of all of these classes.

On the basis of the analysis of the dance structures we can establish certain conclusions:

1. The Dance Drama is an important, complex within the American Indian Folk Culture. Its universality of distribution, its vitality in execution and its continued existence in many instances, despite the encroachments of civilization, testify to its cultural importance. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to note inter-relationships with the other folk arts.

2. The Dance Drama is a highly organized means of expression. It is highly traditionalized in its approach, yet fluid in its interpretations. It provides a frame of reference for the visual presentation of oral traditions and provides, at the same time, an opportunity for individual and group participation. It dramatizes the oral tradition and thereby underscores its emotional impact. But it is not simply another variant of the oral structure. It exists as an entity in its own right.

3. The Dance Drama serves as a potent reinforcement of the folk tradition. It is a visual expression of the folk literature, a dynamic interpretation of the folk music, an opportunity for creative expression in the plastic and graphic arts. By its inducement toward continuation of the arts, it is a cohesive factor in the maintenance of cultural integrity. It may, therefore, be regarded as a means of expressing progressively complex narrative forms.

4. Therefore, it demonstrates the essential inter-relationship of the folk tradition. By correlating the artistic expression in many fields of endeavor, it provides a foundation for the totality of the Arts within the complex of human society.
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