

57

THE PROFOUNDLY DISTORTING INFLUENCE OF THE
DELSARTE SYSTEM ON ORAL EXPRESSION AND
SPEECH TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES

by

DARWIN K. KLEIN

B. S., Kansas State University, 1961

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

Approved by:

William L. Burke
Major Professor

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH THE ORIGINAL
PRINTING BEING
SKEWED
DIFFERENTLY FROM
THE TOP OF THE
PAGE TO THE
BOTTOM.**

**THIS IS AS RECEIVED
FROM THE
CUSTOMER.**

Document
LD
2668
.T4
1972
K54
C.2

CONTENTS

PART I	- INTRODUCTION	1
PART II	- CHAPTER I - THE LIFE OF FRANCOIS DELSARTE . .	9
	CHAPTER II - DELSARTE'S PHILOSOPHY AND THE COURS D'ESTHETIQUE APPLIQUEE . .	15
PART III	- THE LIFE OF STEELE MACKAYE	25
PART IV	- THE "DELSARTE SYSTEM" IN AMERICA	36
PART V	- "AN AFTERNOON OF DELSARTE," A DELSARTE LECTURE-RECITAL	74
PART VI	- CONCLUSION	99
FOOTNOTES		103
LIST OF WORKS CITED		109
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		111

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Great issues give rise to great speakers, and the political situation in the United States during the last part of the eighteenth century and the entire nineteenth century had been conducive to the development of oratory. The country had gone through periods of war, growing democracy, industrial revolution, and national expansion. Orators such as Clay, Calhoun, Davis, and Webster had created an interest in public speaking and a budding theater added an interest in declamation and dramatic art. Consequently, new methods by which speech could be taught were being sought. Educators and theorists had borrowed heavily from the old world theorists and had added contributions of their own. But many of these theories seemed highly mechanistic in their approach and America was ripe for a more philosophical approach to oratory.

The Delsarte System of Expression was thought to be this new philosophical approach when it was first introduced into the United States in 1871 by the actor-playwright Steele MacKaye. It was probably the most popular method of speech training used in America during the three decades from 1870-1900. S. S. Curry, in his book The Province of Expression, writes

. . . in this country it (Delsarte System) has been almost universally accepted. One cause of its being received so enthusiastically, was no doubt the almost universal dissatisfaction with the mechanical methods. Teachers were eager for anything that might give

promise of a philosophical basis for a better method. Another cause was the able lectures delivered by Delsarte's favorite pupil, Mr. Steele MacKaye . . . Still another cause was the exaggerated claims that the system contained a key, not only to all the difficulties of delivery, but to all art and to the whole universe (1).

To those seeking a new method of learning and teaching the art of elocution, the Delsarte System seemed the epitome of perfection.

What did this new "Delsarte System" teach? Where and how was it used in this country? What effect did it have on elocution and speech education? It is the purpose of this study to examine the Delsarte System as it evolved in the United States and to explore the profound influence that the Delsarte system had on oral training and expression in this country. The procedure to be used will be: 1. A brief examination of the life and philosophy of Francois Delsarte for the purpose of determining, so far as possible, what the Delsarte philosophy was and to provide the background for the establishment of the Delsarte System in this country. 2. A brief examination of the life of Steele MacKaye, Delsarte's chosen disciple, who introduced the Delsarte System into this country. 3. The "Delsarte System" as it evolved in the United States. This will be the essence of this study to examine the evolution and the influence of this system on expression and speech education in the United States. 4. Account of a lecture-recital in the Delsarte tradition illustrating the techniques employed in the Delsarte System. 5. Presentation of conclusions drawn from this examination

of the Delsarte System.

In order to write this paper, it was necessary to review directly-related and indirectly-related literature.

Delsarte System of Oratory, Fourth Edition, Edgar S. Werner, ed., is a book which attempted an exhaustive study of the Delsarte System of Oratory, but had neither the sanction of Francois Delsarte or of Steele MacKaye (even the section entitled "All the Literary Remains of Delsarte" was only random and miscellaneous notes of Delsarte purchased from his wife after Delsarte's death). This book is discussed in greater detail in Part IV of this paper (2).

Delsarte System of Expression by Genevieve Stebbins, is a book in the form of lessons--rather than chapters, with each section listed as a lesson. Stebbins writes as though she were actually talking to the student and telling him how to perform each exercise of a particular lesson. She opened her lessons with "Decomposing Exercises," and throughout the book there is a heavy emphasis on gesture, bodily movement, and the "mechanics" of delivery. Also included are sections on pantomime and statue-posing. This book is also discussed further in Part IV (3).

Delsarte Recitation Book by Elsie M. Wilbor, contains a biography of Delsarte written by Steele MacKaye. The majority of the book is a collection of prose and poetry, with production notes, suitable for use by elocutionists. Wilbor closed this book with a section entitled "Hints for Statue Poses," which included costuming. Many of the selections used for the

Delsarte Lecture-Recital in Part V were taken from this book (4).

EPOCH: The Life of Steele MacKaye by Percy MacKaye, in two volumes, is the most comprehensive biography of Steele MacKaye available. It also serves as a good history of that epoch of American speech education and theatre that MacKaye was so much a part of during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The book contains in intricate detail the story of MacKaye's meeting with Delsarte in Paris and his eight months of study under the master, followed by his return to America and the campaign to bring Delsarte to this country to head an institute of dramatic art. Also given is an account of the lectures on Delsarte which MacKaye gave, starting in 1871, and the effect these lectures had on the most prominent men of art, society, and education of that day. Further references reveal MacKaye's horror regarding the distortions of the Delsarte System by those who "claimed" to be disciples of Delsarte, but in reality knew little of either Delsarte or his teachings (5).

The Essential Delsarte edited by John W. Zorn, contains four sections:

1. The Delsarte System of Oratory (an article from Atlantic Monthly, May, 1871, by Francis A. Durivage).
2. The Delsarte System According to Himself.
3. The Delsarte System According to His Daughter (Mme. Marie Gerald).
4. The Delsarte System According to His Most Famous

Pupil (M. L'Abbe Delaumosne).

The intent of this book is to offer "a previously out-of-print selection of the Delsarte System by the people who presumably knew him best. The material is presented without annotation or critical comment" (6).

The Province of Expression by S. S. Curry begins very generally by discussing the nature of, misconceptions of, and kinds of expression, and expression as a form of art. The discussion then turns to a search for a method of study, then to a discussion of the history and tradition of expression, and finally to a description of many methods of expression. The book closes with a discussion of the application of the study of expression to education (7).

Dynamic Breathing and Harmonic Gymnastics by Gneevieve Stebbins, is primarily a discussion of physical culture and claims to be a "complete system of Psychical, Aesthetic and Physical Culture." It contains discussions of the phenomena of respiration, the creative power of thought, dynamic breathing, psycho-physical culture, and breathing, relaxing, and energizing exercises. The book concludes with a discussion on fashion in deformity, with illustrations. The author attributes this physical culture and exercise directly to Delsarte as she writes,

Comparatively few who style themselves Delsartians know anything of the vital and deeper principles of Francois Delsarte. The first work upon the subject, in this country, was The Delsarte System of Expression, which the present writer compiled chiefly from the unpublished manuscripts of the great French master

himself, and the personal instruction of Mr. Steele MacKaye. Apart from the two or three exceptions . . . nearly all the books that have come to our (Stebbins') notice, professing to elucidate the Delsarte System, are chiefly the appropriated ideas of our first work, often distorted and badly expressed. Whatever we have to say further upon the subject will be fully elucidated in the various chapters of this work (8).

The Synthetic Philosophy of Expression by Moses True Brown, attempts to interrelate the philosophies of Darwin, Paolo Mantegazza, and Delsarte, and to show how the discoveries of Darwin and Mantegazza may be applied to the conscious art forms which every expressive speaker must employ. Brown has largely adopted the nomenclature of Delsarte and claims to "run the same parallels of inference and deduction in his discussion of voice and articulation that he has used in his treatment of gesture." However, the first fifteen chapters discuss gesture, body position, and facial expression; and only the last two chapters discuss voice and articulation (9).

Everybody's Speaker by Lester B. Hamersley, purports to be "a manual of vocal and physical culture, elocution and Delsarte, based on Scientific and Rational Principles, philosophically yet practically presented and fully illustrated with appropriate selections for Readings and Recitals, both Public and Private." The book contains a brief discussion of the principles of elocution, with discussions of voice, articulation, gesture, body positions, and exercises, including descriptive illustrations. The remainder of the book is a collection of comic readings, poems, dialogues, and readings

for the elocutionist to perform. A number of the selections used for the lecture-recital in Part V came from this book (10).

A Brief History of Physical Education by Emmett A. Rice, tells the story of physical education from the earliest times to the modern. Biographies of the leaders and pioneers are related only insofar as they are necessary for the proper development of the history. The political, social, and religious conditions which determine the presence or absence or character of physical education in a given society are discussed at length. The theories and methods of the leaders and of the various movements (the Delsarte System being considered one of these movements) are given considerable attention. The relationship which physical education had borne to general education throughout its history is singled out for special study (11).

Oral Interpretation of Literature by Mary Margaret Robb is primarily a historical study of teaching methods of oral interpretation in American colleges and universities. The book is an attempt to give an extensive view of the field and to acquaint the reader with the most important teachers and writers in the field and the methods which they used. In addition, the author has tried to show the major trends in teaching speech and their relation to the general background of the period (12).

A History of Speech Education in America, edited by Karl Wallace, covers American speech education primarily from

colonial times to about 1925. The concern of this book is not with writing, but with speaking--with the use of speech in socially significant situations and the attempts to teach the art of oral communication in a formal education environment. The book includes the study of elocution and delivery, the analysis of speech sounds, and a study of phonetics and pronunciation. It also touches on the field of educational theatre (13).

Practical Elements of Elocution by Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood endeavors to harmonize the so-called systems of elocution. "In all we have found valuable truths which must have a common basis and should meet on common ground. While this volume is a recall to the old truths recorded by Engel, Austin, and Dr. Rush, it presents them in the newer garb and more recent philosophy of Mategazza and Delsarte." They have endeavored not only to trace each element back to nature, after the manner of Dr. Rush, but to show its response, in expression, to man's mental, emotive and vital natures. There had previously been no published attempt to harmonize all the vocal elements of Dr. Rush's philosophy with the Triune Theory of Delsarte. This attempt was suggestive rather than exhaustive (14).

Additional information, although to a much lesser degree, was also obtained from such sources as Werner's Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, The Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Today's Speech.

PART II

CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE OF FRANCOIS DELSARTE

The Delsarte System of Expression was one of the most popular methods of speech training used in America during the latter part of the nineteenth century. But what of the man, Francois Delsarte, who was the namesake of this method so widely used and discussed in this country? It seems appropriate to present a brief biography of Delsarte in order to gain a better understanding of the man and his philosophy.

Born at Solesmes in northern France on November 19, 1811, Francois Alexandre Nicholas Cheri Delsarte spent his early years of childhood in privation and poverty. At the age of six Delsarte's father, a physician who had not been able to adequately provide for his family, died in bankruptcy. In the hopes of finding work to support them, Delsarte's mother took his brother and him to Paris. Not long after their arrival in Paris, Delsarte's mother died and soon thereafter his brother followed her in death, leaving Delsarte alone and penniless in the French city of gaiety. A kindly old chiffonier, feeling pity for the poor youth, took him in and gave him employment. Thus Delsarte began his public career in Paris as a "rag-picker."

In 1823, at the age of twelve, he was adopted by a benevolent musician by the name of Pere Bambini, who discovered

Delsarte writing down in the sand, with musical symbols of his own creation, the music that was being played by the band in the garden of the Tuileries. Bambini became his first teacher and in less than two years made it possible for Delsarte to be admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris. Delsarte's success at the Conservatoire was not sensational as he won only second prize. He did however receive plaudits from such people of significance as opera singers Marie Malibran and Adolphe Nourrit. During this time Pere Bambini died leaving Delsarte again in poverty, so he took to the streets in search of a position in the theatre.

He was determined to get upon the stage as he had studied leading roles in opera at the Conservatoire. He persistently applied at the Grand Opera House for an opportunity to be heard, becoming such a nuisance at the stage door that the man in charge complained to the director of the opera. The opera director told the stage manager to show Delsarte to his room the next time he appeared and he would teach him a lesson. The next time happened to be during a performance and, according to plan, Delsarte was shown to the director, a business-like man who hated "artistic tramps," which is what he considered Delsarte to be. When asked what he wanted, Delsarte replied that he wished to be heard and that he sought any position that his talent merited. Much to Delsarte's surprise, the director said that he would hear him immediately. The director left Delsarte waiting and arranged to have the stage set up with a piano and two flats between acts of the opera.

Then he sent for Delsarte and asked him if he had the courage to go on stage and audition before the audience. Delsarte's first impulse was one of indignation, but then he decided that his future depended upon his grit and if he was ever to succeed, he must appear before the audience. Of this performance Steele MacKaye later wrote,

The curtain was rung up, and Delsarte in seedy clothes and with his stockings showing through the holes in his shoes, walked on. At first the people were puzzled, then amused, and saluted him with jeers and laughter. He turned and made a bow to them so princely and noble, that they were obliged to recognize the royalty of his soul. He passed to the piano, ran his fingers over it, and began to sing a song that held them spellbound. When he had finished, he was greeted with thrilling cheers from every part of the house. He was recalled again and again, and when at last he went behind the scenes it was to be greeted by the director with a contract for three years at 1000 francs a month (15).

After such a beginning he sang at l'Opera-Comique, the Ambigu, and the Varietes and at age twenty-one married the daughter of the director of the Grand Opera House. Most authorities agree that he was not a great success in any of his theatrical attempts and, even then while in the theatre, he spent most of his time working on his studies of the human voice. After a few years of operatic work, he lost his voice entirely for a year, blaming the loss on the bad instruction of his teachers at the Conservatoire. As a result, he was obliged to abandon a public career as a singer and become a private teacher of vocal music and declamation. It was about this time also that he became choir director at the church of the Abbe Chatel.

For several years Delsarte spent his time as a private tutor of singing and declamation and also studying the human voice, including physiology and anatomy. Delsarte had attributed the loss of his voice to faulty methods of training at the Conservatoire and, after having his career runied, it was his desire to formulate new methods so that other young actors and singers would not fall victim of such unfortunate experiences. Thus he dedicated his life to a search for a scientific basis for art and directed all his efforts toward the discovery and formulation of the fundamental laws which govern the nature and expression of emotion.

Delsarte formally opened a school of expression in Paris in 1839, which he called his "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee." Apparently his school was a success from the start, due probably, in part, to his dynamic personality. Numbered among his pupils were such names as Rachel, Macready, Sontag, and the Abbe of Notre Dame.

Delsarte's most active period seems to have been 1839 through 1859, when he was at the height of his powers. During this time he was showered with all the honors and degrees and citations it was possible for any man to receive. Ted Shawn writes,

He was invited by the Duc d'Orleans to perform at a party which was given in honor of Louis Phillipe, the last king of France . . . The king met him at the door of the Palace as an equal, and the success of his singing and his "declamations" was such that one critic, M. Imgres, wrote, "today the real king of France is Francois Delsarte." The King of Bavaria sent the leading singers of his state theatre to be coached by Delsarte, and awarded him an order of

merit. The greatest actors and actresses and the stars of opera came to him for private lessons (16).

For three decades Delsarte taught, gave lectures, and concerts, and studied to perfect his theory, but the man who was to make the name of Delsarte famous was an American actor, playwright, director, and theatrical inventor by the name of Steele MacKaye. MacKaye came to Paris in 1869 to study acting and met Delsarte through the advice of his father, Col. James MacKaye. He was enrolled in Delsarte's Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee and the two soon became close friends. So avid was MacKaye's interest and so rapidly and enthusiastically did he grasp the material that within a few months Delsarte accepted him as a co-worker, as well as a pupil, and he began doing part of the teaching. Thus it was MacKaye that Delsarte chose to become his disciple and to carry on his work. Evidence of this is indicated in a letter to Steele MacKaye dated October 9, 1870, in which Delsarte wrote,

My dear and well-beloved pupil: Your letter has overwhelmed me with joy, because it proves to me both that you have not forgotten me, and that my teachings are in very truth bearing their fruits in you . . . Thanks be to God, then, I am no longer alone in the world, since Providence has led me to find in you more than a friend, more even than a disciple: a true and valid successor! (17).

Their work was abruptly terminated by the chaos of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 and the resulting seige of Paris. As a result MacKaye returned to the United States and Delsarte was driven back to his native village of Solesmes where he lived in dire poverty on the charity of a cousin. He corresponded with MacKaye several times telling of his dire

circumstances and MacKaye was able to raise moderate sums of money which he sent to Delsarte. MacKaye then set about mustering enthusiasm to bring Delsarte to America to establish a Cours D'Estetique Appliquee in this country, but Delsarte died on July 22, 1871, before the plans could materialize.

Parisian newspapers printed numerous eulogies to Delsarte and gave him fitting tributes following his death. MacKaye wrote of his master's death, in a letter to William R. Alger, "I loved him as a father . . . I will not dishonor Delsarte with vain regrets. I will redouble my efforts to do him honour, and to carry out the great work he has so grandly begun" (18).

PART II

CHAPTER TWO

DELSARTE'S PHILOSOPHY AND THE COURS
D'ESTHETIQUE APPLIQUEE

At this point, it seems appropriate for purposes of understanding and later discussion, to briefly discuss what is known of Delsarte's philosophy of expression and his "Cours D'Esthetique Applique," which he taught in Paris. Unfortunately, the old French master did not publish any material on his philosophy during his lifetime, nor did he sanction anything anyone else published about his philosophy, nor did he ever travel to the United States. Therefore, the only remains of his work are miscellaneous letters, lecture notes, and fragmented random notes which were purported to have been written by him and purchased from his wife after his death.

Delsarte's system was not exactly a method of teaching speech or music, but was a pseudo-philosophy which he called a "science," which could be used in studying all arts and sciences. One reason, it seems highly probable, for calling his philosophy a science was that in this particular era, the field of science was rapidly expanding and gaining in popularity (19). In order to gain recognition for his new theory, or possibly in an attempt to make the arts popular, Delsarte stated his philosophy as a science, possibly, in the hopes that it might be more readily acceptable. Thus this "science" organized all phenomena according to a plan which was based,

in essence, on the criterion of the Holy Trinity of the orthodox Catholic doctrine. All things, according to this theory, show a trinitary organization or are composed, in their basic structure, of three. Delsarte said, according to fragmented notes attributed to him, "This mystery, outside of which all is to man dark and incomprehensible, illuminates everything and explains it in the sense that it is the cause, the principle, and the end of all things. This dazzling mystery is the universal criterion of all truth; it is the science of sciences, which is self-defining and whose name is Trinity" (20). Delsarte, apparently being deeply religious, believed that the Trinity was at the very basis of all matter and that any investigation of any subject must begin with the axiom of the trinitary division. He writes,

The Trinity, the hypostatical basis of beings and things, is the reflection of the Divine Majesty in its work . . . The Trinity is our guide in the applied sciences of which it is at once the solution and the enigma.

The Trinity is manifest in the smallest divisions of the Divine work, and is to be regarded as the most fertile means of scientific investigation; it is its infallible criterion and we must start from it as an immovable axiom (21).

Thus, as an example, time consists of past, present, and future, and any object has height, width, and thickness. In other words, Delsarte attempted to establish a standard of measure or investigation by which the student could discover the basic elements of any and all phenomena. In brief summary of this system, which would reveal the fixed laws of art, Claude L. Shaver wrote,

The science of Mons. Delsarte consists of directing the light of this criterion of examination on all things, and in virtue of this idea of the trinity, to discover their intimate (interior) organization, and to explain the *raison d'être* of their external product. On this examination and on the science thus established, he bases all his art (22).

With the criterion for study established, Delsarte turned his science to the investigation of art. In an address before the Philotechnic Society of Paris, Delsarte said, "Science is the possession of a criterion of examination against which no fact protests. Art is the generalization and application of it" (23). Using this "system" of the trinitary division as a basis of studying all phenomena, Delsarte organized his science into an educational system for the study of art and for teaching vocal music and acting. Delsarte considered art to be divine and to be divine it could only come from God. Since man was made in the image of God, the trinitary theory applied to man who came from a triune God. Delsarte explained it thusly,

Art is divine in its principles, divine in its essence, divine in its action, divine in its end. And what are, in effect, the essential principles of art? Are they not, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful . . . Now the Good, the True, and the Beautiful can be found only in God . . . Man, made in the image of God, manifestly carries in his inner being, as in his body, the august imprint of his triple causality (of life, mind, and soul) . . . Art is at once the knowledge, the possession and the free direction of the agents, by virtue of which are revealed life, mind, and soul. It is the application . . . of which the triple object is to move, to convince, and to persuade (24).

Since the trinitary division was based on the Holy Trinity of the Catholic Church, each member of the Trinity,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, governed one element of the phenomena being studied. Man was thus divided into life, mind, and soul, which were governed respectively by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Life, mind, and soul were expressed by three agents: vocal sound (apart from words) expressed life, words expressed mind, and movement expressed soul (25). Man could be further sub-divided into various parts, for example, of head, torso, and limbs.

The head, for example, is mental, the limbs are vital (body), the torso is affectional (soul) in significance. The arms denote sensibility, the shoulder is the thermometer of passion, the wrist and hand the thermometer of mental activity, the elbow the thermometer of the moral, and so on through every part of the body.

Every phase of being and body, of thought and language, must be divided according to this system of threes (26).

As was mentioned previously, Delsarte felt that the purpose of the artist was to move, to interest, and to persuade. He was to interest by language, to move by thought, and he moved, interested, and persuaded by gesture. From the fragmented notes attributed to Delsarte he commented on such aspects of expression as gesture, speech, voice, inflection, and reason. Of the three agents of language, thought, and gesture, he felt that language was the weakest. According to Delsarte,

Gesture corresponds to the soul, to the heart; language to the life, to the thought to the mind. The life and mind being subordinate to the heart, to the soul, gesture is the chief organic agent . . . It prepares the way, in fact, for language and thought; it goes before them and foretells their coming; it accentuates them (27).

However, Delsarte did not feel that gesture should be grandiose, flamboyant, or affected as he states, "The most powerful of all gestures is that which affects the spectator without his knowing it. From this statement may be deduced the principle that: Outward gesture, being only the echo of the inward gesture which gave birth to it and rules it, should be inferior to it in development and should be in some sort diaphanous" (28). Delsarte defined gesture as the direct agent of the heart; the revealer of thought and the commentator upon speech. It is the spirit of which speech is merely the letter and therefore always anterior to speech. Of speech Delsarte said that speech was an act posterior to will, itself posterior to love; which in turn was posterior to judgment, memory, and finally to impression.

Now, by this distinction, established by the double operation of the memory and the intelligence, a movement takes place in the soul, of attraction, if the intelligence approve; or of repulsion if it disapprove. This movement is called will . . . (and) thus speech is the express agent of the will . . . Inflection is the life of speech . . . The soul of speech is gesture (29).

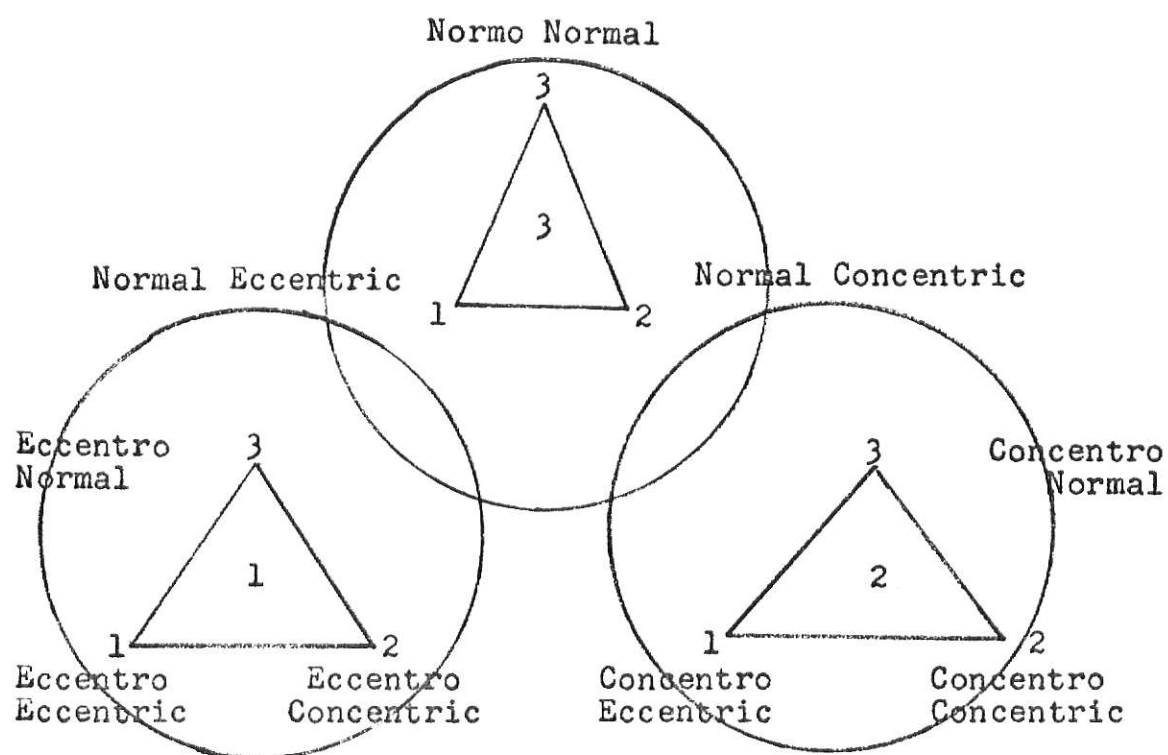
Another principle, which Delsarte called the "principle of intertwining" or "the nine-fold accord" (30) was a further extension of the trilogy theory, which stated that whenever there are three, there must necessarily be nine in the elemental combination. According to this law of combination, the human being composed of three elements, was divided into nine elemental facilities (31). This principle stated that the body (or movement) expressed not only soul, but, to a degree,

both life and mind. Using this principle, Delsarte developed the trinitary division of the zones of gesture, which began with the three major zones expressing life, mind, and soul. Each of the three major zones was then further divided into three minor zones, making in all nine zones of gesture. In addition to these three basic zones, other movements of the body and limbs also expressed the essences of being: life, mind, and soul. They were also further subdivided by multiples of three according to the "principle of intertwining," which indicated that a movement may not only indicate soul, but, to some extent, could also express life and mind.

Delsarte formulated three basic forms of movement: movement about a center, called normal, which is vital and expresses life; movement away from center, called eccentric, which is mental and expresses mind; movement toward a center, called concentric, which is moral and expresses soul. These three forms of movement mutually influence each other (the principle of intertwining) and thus give rise to nine forms: normo-normal, normo-eccentric, normo-concentric; eccentro-normal, eccentro-eccentric, eccentro-concentric; concentro-normal, concentro-eccentric, and concentro-concentric. Delsarte expressed the concept diagrammatically in the following chart (32):

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**



- 2. The Son,
- 3. The Holy Ghost,
- 1. The Father

Fig. 1. Delsarte's basic forms of movement.

The forms of movement gave rise to nine attitudes or states, and also to nine inflections or movements. All gestures, movements, or attitudes were classified under these forms and each gesture, movement, or attitude had a special significance.

The vocal apparatus, as all phenomena, was also triune, and each element of the trinity expressed one of the essences of being: life, mind, or soul. Speech arises from three agents: the inciting agent, the lungs, which is the vital or life principle of sound; the resonating agent, the mouth, which is the intellectual or mind principle of sound; and the vibratory agent, the larynx, which is the moral or soul principle of sound. All vocal effects, arising from these fundamental agents express life, mind, or soul, and may be so classified (33).

By current standards this would seem to be a very mechanical system whereby the student would be required to understand the meaning of the various agents of the body and the zones of gesture and movement and then to meticulously follow this system in all expression. However, Delsarte considered his system quite philosophical and even objected to its being called a system according to S. S. Curry, who said,

It may be well to state that the old master disliked the word "system." He contended that his was simply a philosophy of nature, and that his teaching, like that of all great teachers of song, was simply a method . . . As every thing is upon the basis of the trinity in the foundation of things, so this nine-fold accord is the test of truth. Whatever fits the three is true, and whatever fits the nine is true. If we do not get the three and the nine, we have not yet the essential elements of the truth. The whole universe, when science and investigation shall have

discovered the whole truth, will be found to be built upon the basis of these threes and combinations of threes (34).

The procedure which Delsarte seems to have used in his "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee," which he taught in Paris from 1839 to 1870, was that the first part of each lesson consisted of lecture material on some aspect of his philosophy and that the second part consisted of a recital or demonstration of the lecture material performed by Delsarte himself or one of his pupils.

Delsarte's "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee" seems to have consisted of a series of public lectures and demonstrations on his theories, and a course of private instruction. The public lectures were generally nine or ten in number, given weekly, and seem to have consisted of two parts, a lecture on some aspect of the system, often based on a chart or diagram, and a practical demonstration by pupils, and, at times, by Delsarte himself. Occasionally after the lecture there was a discussion (35).

Of Delsarte's "Cours" Mrs. Steele MacKaye said the following in November, 1898, in a lecture delivered before the Curry School of Expression in Boston:

In the first room, chairs were arranged, usually for not more than twenty people. Opposite was the blackboard, and by its side an armchair in which sat Delsarte. An open space before the blackboard served as a stage.

The first part of the morning was given to the exposition of philosophy--the explanation of some theory, or chart. This part of the class work--during the last months--was given by Mr. MacKaye, Delsarte from his armchair putting in a word, a nod, or smile of approval, to his little audience. After the exposition came the practical part: the recitation of a fable, a scene from a play, or perhaps a song, any of which was rendered sometimes by a pupil, sometimes by Delsarte himself. . . .

Once a year Delsarte gave a reception to his friends and pupils. We were present at the last one ever given. It was, I think, in January, 1870 . . .

There were singers, professors, physicians. There were society women, French, English or Belgian, to whom Delsarte had given the art whereby they had made famous their salons. There were authors, artists, travellers, a priest or two; and all these persons--so separated by station, interests and vocations--were, for this one evening, united in a common love of their old master (36).

The lecture-recital, "An Afternoon of Delsarte," in Part V, was patterned after this lecture-demonstration method that Delsarte used in his "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee."

PART III

THE LIFE OF STEELE MACKAYE

Among the nearly one hundred pupils who allegedly studied with the French master, Francois Delsarte, were singers, actors, writers, lawyers, clergymen, and painters. One of the more prominent of these pupils and the only one definitely known to have been an American was Steele MacKaye. As has been noted in Part II, Steele MacKaye was chosen by Delsarte to be his disciple and to carry on his work. Considering MacKaye's importance to the work of Delsarte and the importance of his contribution to the Delsarte System in the United States, a brief biography of his life seems appropriate.

James Steele MacKaye, playwright, actor, director, and theatrical inventor was born June 6, 1842, in the family residence, "The Castle," near Buffalo, New York, to Colonel James Morrison and Emily MacKaye. At a very early age the boy developed a strong taste for study, was sent to school at the age of three, and began studying Latin at the age of five.

Even in boyhood MacKaye leaned instinctively toward the life of an artist and actor, but his father, a prominent military man, decided he should pursue the career of a soldier. As a result, Colonel MacKaye sent his son to Roe's Military Academy, then a flourishing preparatory school for the government service. Although he did well academically, young MacKaye did not adapt well to military life. "In his own book studies at Roe's Military Academy, for two years, Jim

took high rank, but in the stricter regimen of military observances his high spirits were constantly devising schemes of mischievous 'non-conformity'" (37).

He did not remain at the military academy long and ". . . by the fall of 1858, the plans of Jim MacKaye as an artist had reached their crisis in his own and his father's definite decision for him to study painting abroad" (38). He sailed alone from New York to Paris on the S. S. Arago on October 9, 1858, to join his father and sisters who had preceded him abroad in July. While in Paris, he studied painting and sculpture under the personal direction of such prominent artists as Couture, Meissonier, Bouguereau, and Troyon (39), which gave him a broad scope of knowledge.

When MacKaye returned to New York in 1860, he continued his studies in art briefly with George Innes, a prominent American painter. However, these were restless years for MacKaye--years in which he was confronted with choosing his life career. "In his own nature, the choice of profession between painter and actor was a struggle made turbulent by his father's absolute opposition to the career of an actor" (40).

In 1861 he had the position of Instructor of Art at the then celebrated Weld School, at Eagleswood, New Jersey, one of the pioneer co-educational schools in America. It was here, on a stage especially constructed under his direction, that he acted a number of leading roles: Mephistopheles in Faust; Claude, Prince of Como, in the Lady of Lyons; and numerous

Shakespearean title roles.

MackKaye's life was then interrupted by military service during the Civil War. In the spring of 1862 he enlisted in the ranks of the Union Army and became a member of the famous Seventh Regiment of New York. To break the monotony of camp life, the soldiers formed The Seventh Regiment Amusement Association at Fort Federal Hill, Baltimore, Maryland, and performed numerous plays. Among the Baltimore spectators who saw MackKaye perform was John T. Ford, manager of Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C. Having made this contact with MacKaye, ". . . nearly twenty years afterward, Ford negotiated the first Baltimore engagement of Steele MacKaye's play Hazel Kirke" (41).

After the Civil War, the next few years were transitional for MacKaye. In the summer of 1865 he married Mary Keith Medberry. He tried painting again, but this did not last long. So in 1869, he at last decided to study the art of drama and, at the invitation of his father who now permanently resided in Paris, he and his wife sailed for Paris in late July of 1869.

The next three years of MacKaye's life were most important because of their effect upon his future. For it was during this period that he became acquainted with Francois Delsarte, the man who was to have such a powerful influence on the remaining years of his life.

When MacKaye went to Paris, he knew nothing of Delsarte. He had gone with the intention of studying at the Conserva-

toire under its director, Regnier. However, at his father's request, he went to see the French master of expression, Delsarte. At their first meeting the two were immediately attracted to each other and a bond of close friendship was begun, possibly due in part to the striking resemblance of MacKaye to Delsarte's dead son, Xavier. MacKaye at once forgot the Conservatoire and began making plans to study with Delsarte. "Delsarte at once accepted Mr. MacKaye as a pupil, and the following week he had his first lesson. Thus began eight months of study, from October, 1869, to July, 1870. Every day he had a lesson, sometimes at six o'clock in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon, as suited Delsarte's convenience" (42).

"An unusually warm feeling sprang up between the philosopher and the student, that partook more of the nature of a kinship than of master and pupil," (43) which ultimately resulted in Delsarte choosing MacKaye as his disciple and successor.

So rapid was MacKaye's progress, so quickly did he grasp the essentials of the system, and so brilliantly did he apply his knowledge, that after a few months he was accepted as a co-worker as well as a pupil and began doing a part of the teaching . . . Clearly Delsarte considered MacKaye a brilliant pupil and thus . . . MacKaye became Delsarte's chosen successor - the son who was to carry on the work of the master (44).

However this close friendship was interrupted in 1871 by the Franco-Prussian War, separating Delsarte and MacKaye forever. Delsarte was driven into refuge to his native village of Solesmes and MacKaye returned to the United States.

Upon arriving in New York, MacKaye was greeted by two new friends, Rev. William R. Alger, Unitarian Minister, and Professor Lewis B. Monroe, Dean of the School of Oratory of Boston University, both of whom had heard of MacKaye while the latter was still in Paris. Alger and Monroe soon became intimately a part of MacKaye's life for the next few years. Very shortly, however, word reached MacKaye of his former teacher's illness and poverty-stricken condition. When MacKaye's new friends heard of this, they suggested he go to Boston and give a lecture on Delsarte, the proceeds of which would go to Delsarte's relief. MacKaye accepted this suggestion with his characteristic enthusiasm and set about preparing the lecture and arranging for its presentation. Along with making plans for this lecture, MacKaye and his friends began to develop the idea of bringing Delsarte to America to found a great school of art similar to the "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee" in Paris.

Steele MacKaye presented his first public lecture on Delsarte in Boston at the invitation of, in addition to Alger and Monroe, such men as Henry W. Longfellow, the Governor of Massachusetts, the President of the Senate of Massachusetts, the Mayor of Boston, the Secretary of State of Massachusetts, and prominent figures of the literary and artistic world.

. . . and there on the evening of Tuesday, March 21st, 1871, in the parlour of the St. James Hotel (afterwards the American Conservatory of Music), before an audience of the leading citizens and literati of Boston, he delivered his first lecture on Delsarte and the art of Expression,

illustrating it by his own expressive powers in acting and pantomime . . . The highly exacting New England audience, . . . were carried away by the Gallic charm, yet native American ardour, of the young artist before them, and expressed their delight with unprecedented warmth of enthusiasm . . . so, that next morning, the young artist "awoke to find himself famous" (45).

This was the first time that the name or the method of Francois Delsarte was publicly presented in the new world. The members of that audience were well impressed and the newspaper reports of this lecture were most favorable. E. P. Whipple, essayist and author, wrote in the Boston Transcript: "Mr. MacKaye's lecture last evening was in every respect a brilliant triumph . . . his auditors express(ed) their approval and delight in constant applause. We do not believe that a lecture on the scientific basis of the dramatic art, so rich and valuable in the fruits of the ripest study and skill as this one, has ever before been delivered" (46). A critic of the Boston Advertiser remarked: "The impression made by Mr. MacKaye was at once highly favorable" (47).

The lecture was twice repeated in April in Boston at Tremont Temple to large audiences and was given at Harvard University on April 21, 1871. At Harvard it was given in Massachusetts Hall and Henry W. Longfellow was the committee chairman. Concerning this lecture the Harvard Advocate reported,

The lecture in Massachusetts Hall, on the evening of the 21st, by James Steele MacKaye, . . . was attended by between two and three hundred persons . . . The lecture proceeded to a brief description of the "scientific basis" of his art . . . The lecture was listened to throughout with an interest

it well deserved. More forcibly than anything else could have done, it brought home to our minds a sense of our own deficiencies in elocution, concerning which so much is said and so little done at Harvard (48).

Reports of MacKaye's highly successful lectures in Boston brought him another remarkable invitation from a group of artists and educators in New York to speak at Steinway Hall. He lectured there twice in April and several times in May. He also accepted Henry Ward Beecher's invitation to lecture in Brooklyn in May.

Thus MacKaye began spreading the word of Delsarte, and this new philosophy gained rapidly in popularity. Such success was probably due largely to MacKaye's dynamic personality. "As a lecturer, Mr. MacKaye was brilliant. He could think and talk on his feet with all the fluency of an orator" (49). "These lectures, and the impress of MacKaye's vivid personality, evidently made a profound impression, and the scheme for bringing Delsarte to America neared completion" (50).

While MacKaye was conducting the lectures, Rev. Alger had gone abroad to see Delsarte and persuade him to come to America. He was unable to carry out his intentions, however, because Delsarte died on July 22, 1871, before Alger reached Paris. With the death of Delsarte the great incentive was gone and the idea of establishing an American "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee" never materialized, although it was tried again in 1880 and in 1893.

After Delsarte's death, MacKaye again began directing

some of his energy toward the theatre in the form of acting, directing and playwriting. During the winter of 1873-1874 he was in England and Ireland, both writing and acting, and was the first American to play the role of Hamlet on the English stage. "With some scattered exception . . . , the verdict of the London journals was remarkably favourable--especially unprecedented in the warm reception to an American actor, the first who ever braved an English verdict of the role of Hamlet" (51).

MacKaye returned to the United States again in 1874 and lectured widely in the ensuing years. During the autumn and winter of 1874, MacKaye, under the auspices of James Redpath, was on an extensive lecture tour which included an engagement of twenty nights in Boston alone. For several months MacKaye continued his lecturing, appearing before audiences in the many cities from Maine to Pennsylvania. In all of these he seems to have been well received and even marveled at by his audiences. This tour is thought to have continued into the middle west later in the winter (52).

In May, 1877, MacKaye established a school of expression in New York City at 23 Union Square. At about this same time he delivered a series of lectures on the Delsarte System at the studio of Mrs. George Hall, a teacher of elocution, at 33 East 17th Street in New York City. There appear to have been some twenty-four lectures given at Mrs. Hall's Studio, having begun on January 10th of that year.

In 1878, at the Boston School of Oratory, Boston

University, of which Lewis B. Monroe was founder and Dean, MacKaye presented a series of twelve lectures on the Philosophy of Expression. "The lectures were attended by the entire school. This series seems to have been the most important of all MacKaye's lectures for they seem to have influenced directly the teaching of elocution and expression. Among the students in attendance were S. S. Curry and Franklin H. Sargent, the founder of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts . . . The lectures probably did more to set the pattern of Delsartism than any of MacKaye's other writings and addresses" (53). Of these lectures, Sargent many years later wrote,

. . . I took rapid notes, filling my notebook, and when, at the close, Steele MacKaye left us, I found myself left alone in the hall, meditating on the profundity of his discourse, overflowing for me with revelations. As I walked in the dean's private office, I asked: "Prof. Monroe, what is this?" And I shall never forget the patriarchal old man . . . as he looked up at me and said, "My boy, this is the key to the universe!" . . . The rationale of expression which I thereafter followed in my teachings at Harvard University, and subsequently in my position as dramatic instructor at the Madison Square Theatre was founded strictly upon these glimpses of profound truth, which I had obtained from the twelve lectures given by Steele MacKaye in the Boston School of Oratory (54).

After his Boston lectures in 1878, Steele MacKaye appears to have made no further lecture tours until 1885. During this period, he wrote eleven plays, managing the production of six of these. The most notable of the group were Hazel Kirke (1880), In Spite of All (1885), and Dakelar (1885) (55).

In the years that followed, MacKaye continued to instruct pupils privately in his New York home and to make occasional

lecture tours. In late November of 1885, at the invitation of the President and twenty professors of Cornell University, MacKaye was invited to renew his activities in the lecture field by delivering a lecture at that university. He accepted the invitation and made a lecture tour from December 1885, to February 1886, in Ithaca, Utica, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse, New York.

On December 4, 1885, the Cornell Era wrote:

. . . In his lecture here at Library Hall, December 11th, on the Philosophy of Expression, Mr. MacKaye will show the great laws underlying all art expression. As an actor of fascinating skill and power, he will illustrate his lecture by scenes from the great dramatists wherein he will do much to bring about a new interest in the literary work in the University, and also to lead the way for the formulation of a dramatic club among the students, which will help to correct the impression that our culture is being rapidly absorbed by larger technical interests . . . (56).

Comments from the Utica Daily Press were: "No speaker could have held more the individual attention of his hearers" (57).

During these later years MacKaye made several additional attempts to found a school similar to the one Delsarte conducted in Paris, but none of these were successful as other interests kept drawing him away. He had also planned to write several volumes on the Delsarte System, but aside from some unpublished notes, nothing was written, or in any case published (58). The last few years of his life were devoted to designing and building a magnificent theatre, which he called the Spectatorium, for Chicago's World Fair of 1893. However, this gigantic project, comprehensible only in his own

mind, was never completed due to financial difficulties, and in its place was substituted a Scenitorium. The Scenitorium was in many respects a miniature Spectatorium, which incorporated many of the innovations which made the theatres successful that MacKaye had renovated and managed in New York in earlier years. Some of these inventions, which had been included in earlier theatres like the St. James and the Madison Square, were the "double stage," ventilation by machinery, the folding theatre chair, and the sliding stage.

Because of his poor state of health, he left Chicago and the Scenitorium on the 23rd of February, 1894, and started for California for a period of rest and recuperation. He was never to reach California, however, for he died on the train enroute on February 25, 1894. Of his death Roland Reed, the actor, said: ". . . the influence of Steele MacKaye and his great discoveries in the new world of art are winning their acknowledgments of praise, when the life of the dreamer is forever extinguished" (59).

PART IV

THE "DELSARTE SYSTEM" IN AMERICA

In 1871 a new theory was introduced into the United States that was to become the most popular method of speech training available during the latter part of the nineteenth century. On Tuesday evening, March 21st of that year, in a lecture at the St. James Hotel in Boston, Mass., Steele MacKaye initiated in America the philosophies of Francois Delsarte. Thus the "Delsarte System" was born and it grew rapidly in popularity in the years to follow. Several theories may be advanced for the immediate popularity of this new approach.

One of the reasons largely responsible for this initial enthusiasm was MacKaye's dynamic personality. Percy MacKaye, in the biography of his father says,

The dynamic ideal in art which he (MacKaye) had championed and illustrated in his lecture, the name of "Delsarte" which was there uttered publicly for the first time in the New World, the vivid impression of the artist-disciple in his magnetic grace and militancy--these tokens of a new prophet in the land were voiced in glowing tributes from his listeners . . . (60).

Rev. William R. Alger wrote in Werner's Magazine,

At his first lecture in Boston, MacKaye was a living miracle of vital suppleness and intellectual and moral enthusiasm.--All his organism flowed with the lambent freedom of a serpent. A distinguished physician who saw him there on the platform, exclaimed: "He is a perfect ophidian" (61).

Other glowing reports were: From the New York Times, March 26, 1871,

After the close of MacKaye's lecture in Boston, Walter Montgomery (an English actor who was one of the most popular idols of the English and American stage at that time), who had been a rapt listener, threw his arms about the young artist and exclaimed: "You have delighted me beyond expression. Your exposition has so intoxicated me that I feel like a boy of seventeen again. This is the best thing I have ever heard!" (62).

From the Boston Transcript,

Mr. MacKaye's lecture last evening was in every respect a brilliant triumph . . . The neatness and accuracy of Mr. MacKaye's statements, the grace and ease of his bearing, the exquisite beauty and fitness of his gesticulation . . . made his auditors express their approval and delight in constant applause (63).

From the Boston Advertiser, "The impression made by Mr. MacKaye was at once highly favourable" (64). Of MacKaye's dynamic personality, Claude L. Shaver also writes, "Thus MacKaye spread the gospel of Delsarte. These lectures, and the impress of MacKaye's vivid personality, evidently made a profound impression . . ." (65).

Another reason that may be proffered for such rapid acceptance of the Delsarte System was the ethos of the MacKaye name, as Steele came from a prominent and wealthy family. His family name was well known, his own name was known from the various roles he had acted upon the stage, and he had cultivated well-known and influential friends in the political, academic, and artistic worlds. Sprinkled throughout the entire two volumes of Epoch, Percy MacKaye's biography of his father, are the names of such prominent and well-known people as Henry W. Longfellow, John Ford, Ethel and John Barrymore, Henry Ward Beecher, Alexander Graham Bell, S. S. Curry,

William Cullen Bryant, Robert Browning, Thomas Edison, Lewis B. Monroe, George Inness, and Rev. William R. Alger, to name only a few. As a result of these acquaintances and friendships, MacKaye's lectures were usually under the aegis of prominent people and attended by the socially and academically elite citizenry, thereby giving prestige to MacKaye and the Delsarte System. On this subject Percy MacKaye wrote,

Here, for the first time in America, leaders of literature, art, science, civic reform, the university, the church, the stage, and the state united in earnest, active concern for dramatic art. Here, in these documents, the Governor of an ancient commonwealth and the President of a distinguished university join their signatures to the permanently illustrious names of Booth, Longfellow, Agassiz, Ward, Bryant, Beecher, Peter Cooper, with the proclaimed object of furthering in America the establishment . . . of "a free school of art . . ." (referring to a Delsarte School of Expression in America) (66).

Because of his friendship with members of the academic community, a number of his lectures were given at prominent colleges and universities, such as Boston University, Harvard, New York City College, Columbia, and Cornell, thus reaching students and educators who would take up and carry the banner of this new system. Dr. Franklin Sargent, President of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, wrote,

In 1878, when I was a student in the School of Oratory, Boston University, Prof. Lewis B. Monroe, founder and dean of the school, announced to the students one day that we were to have a series of lectures on the Philosophy of Expression by Steele MacKaye. I had no knowledge then what this meant, or who Mr. MacKaye was, except as a name. The entire school was assembled one morning, with notebooks and pencils, . . . I took rapid notes, filling my notebook, and when, at the close Steele MacKaye left us, . . . I went home and spent that

evening in study of my notes, and became so deeply interested that I sat up all night, without resting at all, and . . . I became a complete devotee. The rationale of expression which I thereafter followed in my teachings at Harvard University, and subsequently in my position as dramatic instructor at the Madison Square Theatre, was founded strictly upon those first glimpses of profound truth, which I had obtained from the twelve lectures given by Steele MacKaye in the Boston School of Oratory (67).

A third reason for the popularity of the Delsarte System appears to be the almost universal dissatisfaction of American expression teachers with the mechanical methods in vogue at that time. Men like Dr. James Rush, James Murdock, William Russell, and Lewis B. Monroe had established schools of elocution which became more and more mechanical and stilted.

S. S. Curry comments:

One cause of its being received so enthusiastically, was no doubt the almost universal dissatisfaction with the mechanical methods. Teachers were eager for anything that might give promise of a philosophical basis for a better method. Another cause was the able lectures delivered by Delsarte's favorite pupil, Mr. Steele MacKaye, in different cities of the United States, during the winters of 1869-'70 and '72-'73. The wonderful control of his body illustrated the power of the master's training, in most complex movements. Still another cause was the exaggerated claims that the system contained a key, not only to all the difficulties of delivery, but to all art and to the whole universe (68).

M. M. Robb also comments in regard to this subject, "His (Delsarte's) System was unique, in perfect harmony with the exaggerations and absurdities of the late nineteenth century, and destined to affect the majority of teachers of elocution . . ." (69).

It would then appear that the magnetism of MacKaye's

bearing and his dynamic personality, the support of prominent and influential friends, and the cry for a new technique of teaching elocution rendered the Delsarte System immediately popular. To those seeking a new method of teaching and expressing the art of elocution, the Delsarte system seemed the epitome of perfection.

After such an auspicious beginning, how did the Delsarte System develop? What was its effect and influence on vocal expression and speech education? What was to become of it? Some light on these questions will hopefully be shed in the remainder of this section.

Since Steele MacKaye was the first to introduce and teach the Delsarte System in the United States, a question arises as to how accurately and faithfully he represented Delsarte's philosophy and teachings. In answer to this question, a reasonably reliable idea of how faithfully MacKaye represented Delsarte may be obtained from a study of what was written by knowledgeable people at that time and in subsequent years. From a review of these writings, it appears that MacKaye gave a reasonably accurate presentation of the philosophy of his French master. There appear to be distortions from what Delsarte taught, but these distortions seem to be more a matter of emphasis on MacKaye's part rather than misrepresentations or misinterpretations, as shall be pointed out (70).

MacKaye does not appear to have been as devoutly religious in his perspective as was Delsarte. Delsarte based his trinitary division of all phenomena on the orthodox Catholic

trinity of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. MacKaye appears to have accepted the trinitary division, but referred to it merely as the "Divine Method," which was a source of inspiration and expression. The Divine Method was universal, omnipotent, and omnipresent. The true artist should go to nature for inspiration and knowledge of the Divine Method. Claude L. Shaver states, "MacKaye accepted the trinitary concept of Delsarte, and, in general, the whole speculative philosophy, but being less profoundly religious than Delsarte, or at least not Catholic in religion, he was probably less interested in the philosophical implications than in the practical aspects" (71).

MacKaye also seems to have placed more emphasis on movement and gesture than any of the other areas of the Delsarte philosophy. This may have been due to the fact that MacKaye was more interested in acting than Delsarte, whose first interest was vocal music. Many of the newspaper accounts of MacKaye's lectures seem to support this aspect of his emphasis of bodily movement and gesture. Concerning his first lecture in Boston on March 21st, E. P. Whipple commented in the Boston Transcript, ". . . the grace and ease of his bearing, the exquisite beauty and fitness of his gesticulation--the marvellous vividness and rapidity of his facial changes, made his auditors express their approval" (72). A critic in the Boston Advertiser said,

. . . The delivery of . . . a monologue of the remorse and terror of the King of Thoas--was a masterpiece of the most intense and most terrible

forms of dramatic art; . . . As a grand summarizing, Mr. MacKaye showed a number of "chromatic scales" or "gamuts" of facial expression, (according to Percy MacKaye the "gamuts" of facial expression were invented by his father long before he met Delsarte) (73), as he called them, so astonishing and impressive as to beggar all description. In exhibiting these gamuts, . . . he exhibited the transitions from repose through jollity, silliness and prostration, to utter drunkenness; . . . The impression produced was at once very lively and very profound (74).

Of later lectures the Rochester Democrat reported, on December 8, 1885, "Steele MacKaye, the foremost American expressionist of to-day said in his inspiring lecture: 'There are three ways of pantomiming: by permanent bearings of the body; by passing attitudes; and by gestures. Gestures are pantomimic verbs. They indicate doing or desire. Attitudes are adverbs modifying gestures'" (75). The Buffalo Courier reported: "' . . . Pantomime,' he said, 'is subject to laws definite and easily learned. All in us which constitutes the element of manner is pantomime in nature!' Illustrations were given showing how we form our judgment of men from acts which are wholly voluntary . . . Much stress was placed upon the repose of manners" (76). Comments of the Utica Daily Press were: "No speaker could have held more the individual attention of his hearers. He said: ' . . . As a means of expressing the beautiful, the body itself should be used, rather than devices invented by the caprices of man . . . The whole domain of expression is as important and unchangeable as the law of gravitation . . . The aim of all expression is impression . . . ' His illustrations were simply perfection" (77).

These commentaries indicate not only that MacKaye stressed gesture and bodily movement, but that he stressed them more heavily in his later lectures. It would also appear from this information that MacKaye used the recitation of various works and excerpts from plays, not only to illustrate his lectures, but to show how one should gesture and move for a particular emotion or expression. Both the stress of gesture and of recitation, as used by MacKaye, seem to be a distortion of Delsarte, or at least a difference in emphasis. Claude L. Shaver says in this regard, "Recitation was used (by Delsarte), but only as a method of teaching acting . . . his system was not exactly a system of teaching either speech or music, but was a pseudo-philosophy claiming to be a science . . . It seems unlikely that Delsarte placed any more emphasis on the physical aspects of his system than on the vocal, but in America, the physical aspects became the basis of the system" (78). He goes on to say, "MacKaye seems to be responsible for the emphasis on gesture in the Delsarte system as taught in America" (79).

Another distortion of the Delsarte philosophy that may have been brought about by MacKaye was the matter of exercises or gymnastics, which later, under other teachers, became the heart of the Delsarte system in the United States. There is some question as to the identity of the creator of these exercises or gymnastics. This is due, in part, to the comments of Steele MacKaye and others in regard to their origin.

In an early lecture MacKaye credited Delsarte with a system of exercises: "Delsarte has an adequate background for the basis of his system. His long study enables him to extend to the student of art three gifts, (1) a simple but philosophical and effective method for the treatment and study of his subject, (2) a profound knowledge of the aesthetics, elements and principles of his art, and (3) a system of significant exercises which will develop to the utmost his executive power and give him the greatest command of his instrument" (80).

This point was supported by the Rev. William R. Alger who claimed that Delsarte taught aesthetic gymnastics as part of his system. Alger studied with Delsarte's son, Gustave, the year after Francois Delsarte's death and in this regard Alger wrote, "I had the privilege of studying with him (Gustave) for a season. Afterwards Mrs. Henrietta Russell studied with him for a year or more. We both found that he taught, as imparted to him by his father, the same system of expression, the same laws and rules, the same gymnastic training, given at a subsequent date by Mr. Steele MacKaye to his pupils" (81).

However, later in the same article, he went on to comment, "Steele MacKaye no doubt has corrected some errors in it, developed some portions of it further, made some additions to it, and improved the name by changing it from 'aesthetic' to 'harmonic'" (82).

Later, however, MacKaye wrote to his wife on April 11, 1892, concerning this subject and Alger's remarks:

In relation to Harmonic--or, as I first called them, Aesthetic Gymnastics,--they are, in philosophy as well as in form, absolutely my own alone, though founded, in part, upon some of the principles formulated by Delsarte.--In the beginning of my teaching I never dreamed of separating my work from his, for it was done in the same spirit as his, and

I cared not for the letter, nor the fame--It is only now, when others are teaching so much nonsense in his name, and basing it upon the truths stolen from me, that I am forced to do this. It is not done to detract from the desert of Delsarte, but to defend us both from the frauds who trade upon and obscure . . . our philosophy as well as our names (83).

Mrs. Steele MacKaye wrote an article for Werner's Voice Magazine which appeared in the issue of July, 1892, under the caption: "Steele MacKaye and Francois Delsarte: A letter Outlining Their Personal and Professional Relations." The purpose of this article was to clear up some of the misunderstandings and controversy over what MacKaye had contributed to the Delsarte philosophy and what belonged solely to Delsarte. Before it was sent to Werner's Voice Magazine, the article had received Steele MacKaye's careful revisions and approval (84). Parts of that article are excerpted here:

Mme. Gerald, the daughter of Francois Delsarte, has expressed great surprise in finding that "gymnastics" are taught as a part of her father's "system," and she has declared that Delsarte never taught them and knew nothing of them. There was also lately published in the Boston Journal a very interesting interview with M. Alfred Giraudet, a distinguished pupil of Delsarte, . . . (and) this question was asked the professor: "Did not Delsarte apply gymnastics to voice-culture and declamation?" "No; not at all, as far as I know," replied M. Giraudet. "With the exception of two or three exercises for the development of suppleness of the arms, Delsarte paid no attention to gymnastics in general." Both Mme. Gerald and M. Giraudet are entirely right. Delsarte never taught gymnastics. The whole system of esthetic or harmonic gymnastics is, from the first word to the last, entirely of Mr. MacKaye's invention . . . and as he had no desire to claim any special credit for the discovery and formulation of such truth as had been first revealed to himself, he made no attempt to separate his own contributions from the body of Delsarte's work (85).

Later, in the same article she further states:

But Mr. MacKaye has now been working and studying for 20 years, and during that time he has been constantly developing the Science and the Philosophy of Expression; at the same time building up and perfecting that system of psycho-physical training which to-day, under the name of Aesthetic or Harmonic Gymnastics, forms so large a portion of the practical training of the "Delsarte System," as taught in classes and in schools, and set forth in the various textbooks now published on this subject . . . One of the most important principles underlying the system of Harmonic Gymnastics is that of relaxation. This principle was discovered by Mr. MacKaye alone . . . In regard also to the principle of Poise--which is another of Mr. MacKaye's discoveries (further supporting MacKaye's emphasis on gesture)--many of the exercises are abused and misunderstood to an extent which often robs them of every feature of grace and beauty, and therefore of any usefulness (86).

It should also be pointed out that Rev. Alger had read Mrs. MacKaye's article before it went to Werner's and had approved of it. Percy MacKaye writes, "Wm. R. Alger approved it (the article) wholeheartedly. I possess a letter from him to that effect" (87).

In another article in Werner's Voice Magazine, Mme. Geraldine further supports this point of view: "My father taught expression . . . he did not teach gymnastics. I do not say your relaxing exercises and posings are not valuable; . . . but I do say that my father did not teach them . . . But he (MacKaye), like everybody else, has not been content to leave Delsarte's work as the master left it, but has added material of his own devising" (88).

Thus from the information available, it appears that it was MacKaye who invented the exercises and gymnastics and added them to the Delsarte System. The apparent emphasis and

enlargement of these aesthetic or harmonic gymnastics by MacKaye seems to be a considerable distortion of the Delsarte philosophy. Claude L. Shaver has this to say: "The weight of evidence, however, would seem to support MacKaye in his claims for inventing harmonic gymnastics . . . In any event, MacKaye's failure to make a clear and unambiguous statement about the system and his own contributions to it contributed to the conversion of the system into a method of physical culture" (89).

However, after MacKaye had ignited the spark, which quickly leaped into a roaring fire of enthusiastic followers eager to learn more about the Delsarte System, he was not always available to provide the leadership this new movement needed. His interest in and love for the theatre continually drew him away from his work on Delsarte and he was never able to publish any of his teachings. "Mr. Steele MacKaye is thoroughly competent to give the world an outline of the system of Delsarte, but he has allowed himself to be engrossed with other things, and neglected to give the world an adequate presentation of the method of the master who so loved and honored him" (90). Thus the material for the Delsarte System was disseminated by MacKaye to his followers only through his lectures, the classes in his school in New York, and by private instruction. As a result those who wished to follow in his footsteps were left to their own devices in order to propagate this new system, with only their notes of his lectures and their memory to serve as the authority. Because

of this somewhat haphazard method of passing the system on, more differences of interpretation, emphasis, and further distortions were perpetrated upon the philosophy Delsarte had initiated many years before.

In the absence of any publications by Steele MacKaye, books from notes pirated from MacKaye and from other sources started appearing on the market to satisfy the demand for more information on the Delsarte System. Riding the crest of this wave, the first and one of the more prominent books on the subject was the Delsarte System of Oratory, edited and published by Edgar S. Werner. The book was first published in 1882, with three more editions, each adding new material, published in 1884, 1887, and 1892. The book was essentially a translation of the notes of some French pupils of Delsarte.

The first section of the 1892 edition contained the complete works of L'Abbe Delaumosne, "a French priest who had studied with Delsarte (and) published, in 1874, the notes of his studies. The little book was entitled Pratique de L'Art Oratoire de Delsarte. It was translated by Frances A. Shaw and printed in 1882" (91). This translation became the first edition of the Delsarte System of Oratory. Of the three parts contained in this book, the part on gesture consumed almost two-thirds of the total pages, so the emphasis on gesture is obvious. Of this book, S. S. Curry wrote:

His (Delsarte's) supposed writings were bought by three Americans, but they were sorely disappointed at the few relics that came into their possession. After his (Delsarte) death, a priest, who had

studied with Delsarte, published without any authority whatever, the notes he had taken of his lessons. The little book was published in Paris for fifty cents, but even at this price, the small first edition was not sold; a poor translation, however, by one who knew nothing of Delsarte, was published in America, and sold at two dollars a volume, greatly to the financial gain of its publisher. The book was universally condemned by every one who knew anything of Delsarte, both in France and in this country. It was crude, and misrepresented his method. It has hurt Delsarte wherever it has been published, and robbed Madame Delsarte of any money she might have gained from gathering and publishing her husband's notes in a complete and unperverted form (92).

However, concerning S. S. Curry's comments, Shaver wrote, "A comparison of the French original and the translation, however, shows that the translation was a satisfactory one and that Curry's criticism (of the translation) is not entirely justified. That the book misrepresented the Delsarte System may be more nearly true" (93).

The second section of the Delsarte System of Oratory contained a translation of the notes of Mme. Angelique Arnaud, a minor French writer of sentimental novels who was another pupil of Delsarte. This section discussed primarily the philosophical basis of the Delsarte System and contained a biography of Delsarte. "Arnaud's material is discursive and rambling, lacking the mechanical positiveness of the Delaumosne notes, but it does supplement heavily the philosophical treatment" (94). The third section is called "All the Literary Remains of Francois Delsarte." This material, purportedly purchased from Madame Delsarte and translated by Abby L. Alger, is allegedly the only writings by Delsarte himself on his philosophy. The fourth section is a short section containing

the "Lecture and Lessons Given by Mme. Marie Gerald (Delsarte's daughter) in America," and the fifth section is in the form of an addenda containing some articles written by Alfred Giraudet, Francis A. Durivage, and Hector Berlioz, which are not particularly significant (Berlioz's article, for instance, is entitled, "Delsarte's Method for Tuning Stringed Instruments Without the Aid of the Ear").

This book appears to be significant, not because of either form or accuracy, as it did not have the approval or authority of either Delsarte or MacKaye, but was influential purely by those combinations of fate that have made nations, presidents, and heroes: time and place. It is purported to have been the first book on the Delsarte System printed in the United States and, in the absence of any published material by Delsarte or MacKaye, it became an early authority on the subject. The first edition, printed in 1882, contained only the section by Delaumosne, and the second edition (1884) added only the material by Arnaud. As was pointed out earlier the emphasis was heavily on gesture and the philosophy was rambling and incomplete. It did, however, help to establish in America such standard items of the Delsarte System as the medallion of inflection, the nine basic attitudes of the legs, and the zones of gesture. The book tended to be controversial during the time of publication, and probably distorted the original Delsarte philosophy. However, neither the distortions of this book nor the distortions of the lectures of Steele MacKaye seem monumental. If the Delsarte System had

continued to be taught in this light, and in some cases it was, it might have made a valuable contribution to the field of expression. However, because of the flurry of enthusiasm brought about by the new Delsarte System, many teachers fixed on the areas of gesture, exercises, and recitation alone and built their programs of instruction around basically these areas.

Genevieve Stebbins was one who placed great emphasis on the aspects of gesture and exercises. Her first book, Delsarte System of Expression, published in 1885, is devoted almost entirely to the various exercises, various attitudes of the agents of the body (limbs, head, eyes, etc.), pantomime, statue-posing, and physical culture. In her book, Stebbins points out:

Delsarte, as far as I know, did not elaborate any gymnastic system to develop perfectly body and soul . . . Delsarte esthetic gymnastics is purely an American idea, first suggested by Steele MacKaye, and brought to its present state of perfection by Americans . . . I have always believed firmly in the exercise drills that Delsarte based on the laws of gesture as an indisputable part of his teachings. But there is vast difference between a few gymnastic exercises given for freedom and grace of motion in gesture and a system of gymnastics capable of developing one physically. Without physical development esthetic culture is worthless, since it has no foundation on which to rest. It is like a statue without a pedestal. For this reason, incompetent teachers of the art, ignorant of physiology, have caused the Delsarte System to be stigmatized in the public mind as "the doctrine of limpness" (95).

Stebbins also placed great emphasis on pantomime and statue-posing in her book. She felt pantomime was important because, "Expression of face precedes gesture, and gesture precedes

speech. This law illustrates the relation of pantomime to speech. It is a very important one. In considering the two languages of emotion, the verbal and the pantomimic . . . the latter is revelatory of the true man; while the verbal is more or less artificial . . . Gesture is the lightning, speech the thunder; thus gesture should precede speech" (96). Regarding statue-posing, Stebbins felt that it was the expression of ideal beauty and should be combined with exercises to achieve poise, charm, beauty, and grace. She wrote,

Artistic statue-posing, in the sense I use the words, means embodiment and careful following out of the divine ideal of high art. It means an impersonation of the Delsartian idea of art, and this conception rests entirely on the works of the classic masters . . . If classic art represents the highest degree of art ever attained by man--then Delsarte's System, as it applies to art, is correspondingly indisputable . . . Artistic statue-posing, then, has its spiritual value in education, since it gives rise to noble ideas. The best and, in fact, the only training of value in artistic statue-posing is the esthetic gymnastics based on the system of Delsarte. Take a thorough course of lessons from a qualified teacher and then privately practice them daily until they become spontaneous (97).

Since Greek art was considered the ideal example, Stebbins includes thirty-two illustrations of famous Greek statues as a basis for the statue-poses in her book.

Although she never met or studied under him, there is no question that Stebbins credits her entire work to Delsarte, as she writes, "If anyone were to ask me, Whom do you consider has had the greatest influence on your system of teaching, your work and your art? I would answer, Delsarte . . ." (98). However, later in her writings it appears that she recognized

that her teachings tend to distort what Delsarte had espoused in his teachings, "The real value of the Delsarte System lies in the method of training, in the so-called esthetic gymnastics . . . The Delsarte System more fully than any other system analyses form, poise and gesture, not as expressed in the individual, but collectively in humanity. His artificial array of triunes can be cast to the winds" (99).

In an advertisement for the Delsarte System of Expression the book was billed as,

A book of aesthetic physical training for all persons of culture, and particularly for the elocutionist, orator, actor, public reader, lawyer, preacher, painter, sculptor, and all others who wish to give expression to their bodies or to their work . . . So far as the Delsarte System is known, so far as it can be reduced to definitions and exercises, both author and publisher do now place this book before the public as the best that can be written; trusting that . . . it will contribute toward rescuing the life-work of Francois Delsarte from the threatening oblivion and from the misunderstanding, mysticism and contempt into which it has fallen (100).

Even though this advertisement states to the contrary, one cannot help feeling that this book was a contributing factor to the Delsarte System falling into misunderstanding and contempt. The publisher of Genevieve Stebbins' books writes of her in a later volume:

This system of aesthetic gymnastics, originally suggested in a few brief hints by Mr. Steele Mackaye, was completely elaborated and carried out to the full perfection which it now enjoys by the present writer (Stebbins). She was the first to introduce the study of statue-poses and spiral motion into the fashionable schools of New York, and still more conspicuously to the public in her popular matinees at the Madison Square Theatre (101).

Another popular book of Genevieve Stebbins was Dynamic Breathing and Harmonic Gymnastics which was published in 1892. This book, which based its origin on the Delsarte System, was devoted entirely to respiration and dynamic breathing, exercising, and physical culture. In the concluding remarks of the book, Stebbins writes,

Indian clubs, dumb-bells and skipping-ropes constitute a very valuable means of muscular development. The only care to use in all culture is that, by a vigorous practice of dynamic breathing, the lung and brain-development shall always correspond with the increase of muscle. . . . A few words regarding dress, and we bring our literary labors to a close. All ladies should bear in mind that the habitual wearing of ordinary dress will almost completely counteract the hygienic value of culture as described in this work. Cramping corsets and high-heeled shoes are far more in keeping with an uncultured barbarism than with the intellectual development of the last decade of the 19th century. All waists should be in strict proportion to the bust measurement; the difference is about nine to eleven inches. Thus a lady with a thirty-six inch bust should have a twenty-seven inch waist to be in proportion, hence beautiful. Any departure from such a standard is true deformity (102).

Other works by Genevieve Stebbins, which had an influence on the American Delsarte System, were Society Gymnastics and Voice-Culture and Genevieve Stebbins's System of Physical Training. An advertisement for the Society Gymnastics proclaimed it to be,

A Delsarte primer. Adapted from the Delsarte System . . . The author's exhaustive studies and long experience as a Delsarte teacher in fashionable young ladies' schools, preeminently qualify her to prepare a work on gymnastics and voice-culture according to the system of Francois Delsarte for schools of all grades. The distinguishing characteristic of the Delsarte gymnastics is that they have aesthetic intent and effect . . . and not, as do ordinary and old-time gymnastics, develop the

physical at the expense of the mental . . . They give reserve force, habitual grace of movement and sweetness of voice, so essential to all who move in good society. They correct awkwardness or stiffness, . . . and eliminate disagreeable qualities from the speaking-voice, such as nasality, harshness or shrillness of any kind (103).

Thus the Delsarte System, through Genevieve Stebbins and her pupils and advocates, became deeply entrenched into a system of exercises, harmonic gymnastics and physical culture, which attempted to train young women in finishing schools to be ladies and to develop them socially and physically.

As a result of the emphasis on physical culture and bodily action, the Delsarte System had an influence on the field of Physical Education as well as on the field of Expression. Emmett Rice, in his Brief History of Physical Education, appraises the contribution of Delsarte to this particular field in several comments:

The monthly periodical, Mind and Body, issued its first number in March, 1894 . . . Its purpose was, first of all, to acquaint the educational leaders of the nation with the importance of physical education, and show how it might be introduced into the schools. Secondly . . . to state the claims of the German methods, for there was some rivalry among the advocates of the German, the Swedish, and the Delsartean systems in the early nineties (104).

Rice continued,

During the early nineties the so-called Delsarte System of Physical Culture received much notoriety, and great numbers, especially women, were converted to its theories. Francois Delsarte . . . found that the ideal poses and gestures necessary to effective dramatics and singing could best be taught through certain physical exercises. (This writer would like to draw attention here, parenthetically, to Rice's distorted understanding, as late as 1926 when this book was published, of what the Delsarte philosophy

really was.) However, he did not have in mind the founding of a new system of gymnastics. In America many teachers of the art of elocution accepted his methods and with the addition of their own ideas there was evolved a system of exercises which claimed to produce poise, grace, beauty of face and figure, and health. These claims gave the Delsarte System a universal appeal entirely aside from its connection with the vocal and dramatic arts . . . (105).

Rice went on to mention some of the teachers of the Delsarte System of exercises. He referred to Genevieve Stebbins mentioning that she wrote Society Gymnastics and introduced Delsarte principles into the fashionable schools of New York and gave matinee exhibitions in Madison Square Garden. Another teacher mentioned was Emily Bishop who taught the Delsarte Department of the School of Physical Education at the Chautauqua Assembly, Chautauqua, New York. He also mentioned that a daughter of Delsarte was on a lecture tour of the United States in 1892 and left in her path dozens of teachers of the system, some of whom had learned it in only five lessons. Stebbins, in her book Dynamic Breathing, comments rather caustically on these teachers who gained their information from Delsarte's daughter,

It is a fact that Mme. Gerald, daughter of Delsarte, visited this country during the winter of 1891-2, and unfortunately failed to give us any further conception of her father's teachings than those we had long possessed. Her visit was insofar a complete failure; but, singularly enough, enabled many ambitious individuals to advertise themselves as pupils of Mme. G. Delsarte! She gave but five brief lessons to her pupils while in this country, which we attended, and upon these five simple lessons, which had years before been given in our book, "The Delsarte System of Expression," pupils claim to be teachers! Such a misleading statement is beneath comment (106).

In discussing physical education in the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., Rice referred to the Hand Book of the Y.M.C.A., published in 1892, which gave a description of the theories and methods of that time. According to the Hand Book, the aim of the department was to provide physical education, health, and recreation. Physical education meant, according to the Hand Book, the cultivation of symmetry, muscular strength, endurance, grace, muscular control, courage, self-possession and expression. The Delsarte System was regarded as the best for the development of self-possession and expression. Rice went on to say this about the Delsarte System being taught in these organizations:

During the early eighties physical education was a much-lauded subject everywhere and was securing a firm hold on educational institutions both for men and for women. The Y.M.C.A. was claiming much for it and, consequently, the Y.W.C.A. entered completely into the work of building healthy bodies and sound moral character through this method. The earliest methods were those advocated by Dio Lewis . . . then in the early nineties the Delsarte System was popular among the young women (107).

It appears that the Delsarte System of aesthetic gymnastics may even have influenced the women's physical education program at Kansas State University. The following information is taken from Kansas State University, A Pictorial History, 1863-1963: "Physical Education for women has been striving for recognition . . . The annual May Fete of the 20's was under Physical Education sponsorship. The traditional May pole dance, May queen, and other aesthetic observances marked the event" (108). The book also contains a picture of women,

attired in Grecian robes, performing statue-poses.

Even some teachers and writers of elocution were stressing the physical culture portion of the Delsarte System. Fulton and Trueblood, in their book Practical Elements of Elocution, 1893, wrote on the subject of elocution:

We have . . . attempted to present the subject in a sufficiently logical and scientific manner to justify the recognition Elocution is now receiving in the High-School, College, and University Curricula . . . While this volume is a recall to the old truths . . . recorded by Engle, Austin, and Dr. Rush, it presents them in the newer garb and more recent philosophy of Mantegazza and Delsarte (109).

On the subject of elocution and physical culture they commented:

It is necessary that he (the student) cultivate the body, . . . There is nothing so universally desired as health; nothing so necessary to vigor and grace of bodily movements . . . and as delivery, . . . is largely physical, the best conditions of body are necessary to the best delivery . . . To best accomplish these results the student should place himself in charge of the director of a well-equipped gymnasium, who is himself an anthropologist and a physician. He should find out what muscles and organs are the weakest, and then practice diligently such exercises as will best strengthen those parts . . . It is also the purpose of Physical Education to develop muscular control and grace for the higher purposes of expression (110).

Delsarte was credited with using recitation, but only for the purpose of illustrating his lectures and as a method of teaching acting. However, in the United States recitation, like exercises, became a means to an end and an art of its own. Entire volumes of Delsarte recitations were published to be used by young ladies and children for the purpose of promoting beauty, grace, charm, artistic poise, and for pure

entertainment. An entire evening's entertainment might consist of recitations and drills. They were particularly popular in young ladies' finishing schools, churches, clubs, and women's societies. One such book is the Delsarte Recitation Book, published in 1889 and edited by Elsie M. Wilbor.

An advertisement for this book proclaimed,

Something unique in Recitation Books. Plays, Monologues, Pieces with Music, Drills, Pieces introducing Singing, Twenty-seven Photographs of Famous Works of Art that are best adapted to Statue-Poses for Entertainments, etc., etc. The book gets its name from several favorite pieces of Delsarte's, from an epigram on every page illustrating or stating some point in the Delsarte System . . . and from illustrations, pantomimes, and analyses according to Delsartean principles (111).

The entire volume is devoted to recitations and drills, with the exception of a three-page chapter and eight pages of illustrations devoted to statue-posing. Many of the recitations contain analyses on how they are to be interpreted and performed. The drills, which apparently were an extension of statue-posing and tableaux, have scores for musical accompaniment, choreography, and instructions on interpretation, staging, and costuming. The book even goes so far as to indicate which selections were favorites of Delsarte. On the subject of statue-posing and tableaux, Wilbor writes,

No prettier, more popular, and more aesthetically educational entertainment can be arranged than a series of statue-poses modelled after classic works of art. The work, though in no way a part of the Delsarte System as formulated by Francois Delsarte, is a natural outgrowth of a study of its principles . . . Taken in this sense, statue-poses are appropriately included in any work treating on the Delsarte System . . . The accompanying photography

. . . have been selected from the numerous statue-poses given by Delsartians as being among the most effective . . . This (posing) is very difficult to do well, requiring much practice and perfect control of all the muscles . . . But the result is well worth the effort, because of the muscular benefit to the performer (112).

In this book, Wilbor even encourages statue-posing for boys. "These are particularly interesting, inasmuch as they are specially suited for young men, who hitherto, have been allowed no place in statue-posing. To produce the greatest effect, nothing but a complete suit of tights should be worn, and a short curly white wig. The result is beautiful" (113).

Another recitation book along this vein was Everybody's Speaker, by Lester B. Hamersley, Professor of Elocution and Oratory. It was, "A manual of vocal and physical culture, elocution and Delsarte, based upon Scientific and Rational Principles . . . with appropriate selections for readings and recitals . . . suitable for Home, School, Church, Lodge, Club, Literary Societies, and Public and Private Recitals" (114). The book was entirely devoted to recitation with the exception of twenty pages of instructions and illustrations entitled, "Everybody's Speaker and Model Elocutionist," covering breathing, gesture, body positioning, and facial expression. Hamersley tells the reader that, "Elocution is the art of conveying thought, sentiment and emotion in the most natural and effective manner," and to acquire good elocution, "one thing must be kept constantly in mind: No amount of instruction and criticism will compensate for meager drill. The highest excellence in reading or speaking requires the same

conditions as music . . . Practice, Practice, PRACTICE" (115).

In this section, Hamersley also lists eleven "Benefits of Elocution":

1. It cultivates the taste and judgment.
2. It cultivates the entire physical system.
3. It quickens perception and apprehension.
4. It imparts grace of movement and attitude.
5. It develops a strong will and self-possession.
6. It strengthens the conception and imagination.
7. It strengthens the lungs and respiratory muscles.
8. It gives to the voice purity, power and flexibility.
9. It develops vigor of mind and buoyancy of spirit.
10. It protects from bronchial and pulmonary afflictions.
11. It prepares the student for the useful prosecution of business in every phase of life (116).

With the Delsarte System offering such a "cure-all" remedy as this, it is easier to understand why the system was so popular during its time. It would appear to cure almost everything but bunions and halitosis!

Another book advertised at this time was Florence F. Adams' Gesture and Pantomimic Action. This book was for, "Every Delsartean, every elocutionist, every public reader, every singer, every teacher having charge of entertainments in schools and every other cultured person should have this book." It was billed as follows:

The first part of the book is devoted to the study of the Delsarte System, made clear and practical . . . Every exercise is illustrated. The cuts illustrating the recitations in pantomime are of great help to schools wishing to give tableaux, poses, and illustrated recitations. There are twenty full-page illustrations in half-tone, and 100 illustrations in pen and ink, illustrating the various movements of the body, including hands, arms, legs, head and eyes. It is a work of great value as a text-book in schools, and for teachers; and also as a means of acquiring grace, dignity and a fine bearing for society people (117).

The Delsarte System seemed to be at a peak of popularity around the 1890's and it seemed to be the panacea for practically everything. The name was used to cover everything from public speaking, elocution, and expression to recitation, harmonic gymnastics, statue-posing, physical education, and muscle building. Because of its popularity and because the name "Delsarte" and "Delsarte System" were readily salable to the public, the hucksters began selling all manner of books, exercises and gadgets to the American public. Advertisements appeared for such things as salons for reducing fat women, Delsarte corsets, and books with material which afforded excellent opportunities for statue-poses, bird-tones and other vocal effects (118).

Delsartianism even became the subject of cartoons at this point and cartoonists began poking fun at the ridiculous nature of the Delsarte System as is indicated by the following cartoon from Werner's Magazine (119).



MISTRESS:—What do you mean by such laziness, and on washday, too?

COOK:—Divil a bit of laziness is it, but stringth I'm gainin' for me work. Shure it's in your own book here, Mr. Del Start bes sayin' "the great essintial of stringth is repose."

Fig. 2. Delsarte cartoon.

What had begun as somewhat minor distortions of Delsarte's philosophy when the Delsarte system was introduced into America by Steele MacKaye had now been perverted to absurd and ludicrous lengths.

Steele MacKaye and those in the field of speech who had tried to maintain the Delsarte System as pure as possible to the form of the old French master decried these perversions, but to little avail. Percy MacKaye, in the biography of his father, writes on this subject:

Meantime, however, during the two decades since his initial Harvard lecture, the name of Delsarte--which he had self-abnegatingly attached to these practical phases of aesthetic art he himself had originated and perfected--had itself become commercialised and travestied by the distorted and ludicrous perversions of ignorance or half-knowledge. Through such caricatures, perpetrated by the venal, the absurd, or the vain, the noble austerity of a pure science and its disciplined embodiment in art had become a laughing stock of the vulgar and a source of vexatious sorrow to the few informed, who were aware of those gracious lineaments of Beauty which the mob had defaced beyond all recognition. Journals and advertisements thrived on the distorted cult, like quack medicine. Through the "ad" columns, "The Delsarte Corset" vied with "The Delsarte Garter," in bargain reductions for "reducing" ladies of super-avoirduois. The "harmonic" design of "The Delsarte Adjustable Limb" vaunted its superior up-to-dateness over the antique pattern of Peter Stuyvesant's wooden leg.--To my father, of course, such horrors of flesh and wax-work were peculiarly anathema (120).

Steele MacKaye mentioned these travesties in letters to his wife during the time she was preparing the draft of an article, which later appeared in Werner's Voice Magazine, in which she had hoped to clarify the misunderstandings of the Delsarte System and MacKaye's contribution thereto. On January 26, 1892, he wrote,

Dear Heart: As usual I have only a moment . . . Write him (Werner) that Mr. MacKaye is the only one who has any real right to speak for the dead master, and that he will do so when the charlatans that deceitfully use his name, and abuse his reputation, have exhausted the misrepresentations which they utter so easily, and which secure so thoroughly the contempt of genuine scientific students . . . make him understand . . . that when I am ready, I will speak, and that meantime no one will speak for me (121).

On April 11, 1892, he wrote again,

. . . In the beginning of my teaching I never dreamed of separating my work from his . . . It is only now, when others are teaching so much nonsense

in his name, and basing it upon the truths stolen from me, that I am forced to do this . . . to defend us both from the frauds who trade upon and obscure--by an irrational and sentimental presentation of incontrovertible truths--our philosophy as well as our names (122).

Even Mme. Geraldine expressed contempt, after observing the state to which the Delsarte system had been distorted. When asked, during her visit to the United States in 1891-1892, what she thought of the Delsarte System, she replied, "It makes me jump! . . . The trouble lies here: Americans wanted more. They added, they devised, they evolved from the few gestures given by the French master a whole system of movements which they called by his name, and which has become very popular in young ladies' seminaries and young ladies' clubs. The name of Delsarte has been so strongly associated with this system, that to most people the word 'Delsarte' without the word 'gymnastics' would not mean anything." She went on to say that, "she had heard of the American 'Delsarte gymnastics' while in Paris, but she had no idea, until she came here, that they were pushed so far." She was quite amused at having dumb-bells given her at one of her lectures in a town in Pennsylvania "'In a gymnasium, as usual,' she said, smiling." She continued, "I abhor all that is affected. There were no intricate convolutions, no flourishes, and, above all, no 'decomposing exercises'" (123).

S. S. Curry, who was always somewhat skeptical of the Delsarte teachings, was particularly condemnatory in his remarks toward the system and its distortions:

The Delsarte System tends to center all consciousness upon pantomime . . . many people have grown to regard Delsarte's work as a display of motions and attitudes, and to believe that these are synonymous with expression. The so-called Delsarte System of training which is everywhere spoken of . . . does not come from Delsarte or from MacKaye. It is a perversion of some of the exercises mixed with the common calisthenic movements; in some cases even musical accompaniment to the exercises has been added which was entirely foreign to Delsarte . . . The attitudinizing and pose positions which are so commonly practiced, are in direct antagonism to his method of training (124).

Curry felt that the so-called Aesthetic Gymnastics did not foster grace, but rather affectation and that they did not develop control over body as an agent of the mind, but resulted in artificiality. To illustrate how Delsarte's trainings could be perverted, Curry wrote of a woman who had devised an exercise which she called "get up drunk" (125). Her young lady pupils were to fall on the floor and then stagger up in the most irregular way possible by completely abandoning the torso and the upper part of the body. Her explanation of the exercise was that it would enable students to stand with the least possible expenditure of energy. Curry felt that this was like saying that, ". . . the mast of a ship made greater strain upon the ropes when in the perpendicular than when swaying to and fro at random. Such results as these are to be expected when it is remembered that many who teach Delsarte, have secured their knowledge by merely copying notes without ever going to the source of the information" (126). Curry continues his condemnation of the distortion and perversion of the Delsarte system by writing:

The greatest cause of perversion of the exercises and training is that superficial students, without any thorough understanding or preparation and without any permission whatever, have published notes, copied in some cases directly from Mr. MacKaye, but perverted or explained so as to lead students to misconceive their true character. This superficial presentation of exercises has in many cases completely vitiated their aim . . . Back of this system there was a method of training which is entirely forgotten by nearly all teachers. The facts of the system so preponderate that the few strong, original elements of training are completely buried or so mixed with the system as to be almost entirely perverted (127).

Concerning the outcome of the Delsarte system, Percy MacKaye commented, "In after years, through banalities of the incompetent, the self-seeking and dully commercial, the august name and principles of 'Delsarte' became bewilderingly misapplied, misunderstood, and vulgarised, as happens to nearly every noble cause in the chaos of groping democracy" (128).

Elsie M. Wilbor, commenting on the teaching of the Delsarte System at Chautauqua, New York, by Mrs. Emily Bishop, wrote, "As presented there, the system is on a plane with the Swedish or any other purely gymnastic drill . . ." and in the same article commented further, "One point on which I take issue with Mrs. Bishop is her statement that Delsarte work reduces flesh, but will not make it . . ." (129).

It appears that even the world of physical education did not think well of the Delsarte System in its later years. Emmett Rice writes, "The fad of Delsarteanism barely outlived the nineties. It left almost no trace in either art or education" (130).

One of the most astute and well-stated commentaries of

the time on what had happened to the Delsarte System was made by Charles Bickford:

Breathing exercises, as old as-well, as old as I am . . . contortions, light gymnastics, numerous systems of useful and ever popular calisthenics, Dr. Rush's theories, lessons from Murdoch and Russell, stage tricks and traditions which have been handed down for generations, and a thousand other things in heaven and earth not dreamt of in Delsarte's philosophy, have been tied on and sailed up on the tail of the dear old Frenchman's kite as if they belonged to it (131).

This comment seems to summarize what had happened to the Delsarte System in the United States. Had the Delsarte System been preserved and taught in the manner in which Steele MacKaye had introduced it, it might have made a valuable contribution to the field of speech. However, because of all the misunderstandings, distortions, and perversions, and all the systems, gymnastics, and gadgets that were run up the flagpole under the name of Delsarte, the Delsarte System fell into disuse and discredit roughly at the end of the nineteenth century.

Those writers, who in retrospect, have reviewed the history of speech seem to agree generally with the above destiny of the Delsarte System. Claude L. Shaver wrote,

The work of Francois Delsarte . . . was of great significance in speech training and the theatre in late nineteenth-century America . . . (it) was probably the most popular method of speech training in the United States during the thirty years from 1870 until 1900 . . . In the absence of any authoritative statement of the Delsarte System, it was inevitable that the system should be siezed upon, expanded and distorted to almost absurd lengths . . . In this welter of unauthorized books, misunderstandings, distortions, and quackeries . . .

the Delsarte System became primarily a system of physical training.

The system finally became a routine mechanical system for the teaching of expression of emotion largely through gesture and body position, accompanied by statue posing, tableaux, etc. By 1900 the system was largely outmoded (132).

Mary Margaret Robb, in Oral Interpretation of Literature, writes, "Delsarte and his followers succeeded in diverting many teachers from the study of the vocal mechanism to the study of physical culture and gesture as the most important means of expression" (133). She goes on to say, "There were some schools which specialized in Delsartian training . . . Much of the training was primarily gymnastic in form . . . These methods seem more absurd than any of those of the preceding period and did not persist in elocutionary training. However, they had a wide appeal then" (134). Wilson and Arnold, in Public Speaking as a Liberal Art, commented, "By 1900, what had become a routine, mechanical system for teaching expression primarily through gesture, body position, and such exercises as tableaux and statuesque posing was outmoded" (135). J. W. Zorn, in The Essential Delsarte, writes,

Perhaps the most popular single method or system of speech training in the United States from 1870 to 1920 was the Delsarte System of Oratory . . . Under the cultural impetus of the Scientific Revolution, the "Delsartians" understandably emphasized the idea of elocutionary scientific method or system. Hence the popular appeal to private elocution teachers, secondary school teachers, college teachers, and others of that era. In the eyes of the general public as well, the exponent or specialist of the Delsarte System seems to have been as prestigious in his day as the teacher of the New Math or the New Biology in our day (136).

When the Delsarte System began crumbling around the 1900's, it appears not only to have brought down its own walls, but also the pillars of the elocutionary movement as well. Since the Delsarte System was so closely related to the elocutionary movement, and in fact claimed to be a method of teaching elocution, the fall of the Delsarte System apparently signaled an end to the elocutionary movement as well and brought about discredit to even the terms "elocution" and "elocutionist." Commenting in this regard, Giles Wilkerson Gray wrote,

Elocution fell from grace not because of the original theorist working during the century and half from 1646 to 1806, or because of the teachers and speakers who based their principles and practice on the writings of those theorists . . . (an) important element that entered into the study of speech and its delivery toward the end of the nineteenth century was the introduction of what might be termed false gods. Many who would not delve into the philosophy of the early writers on elocution, or who could not grasp their principles, turned to the theories of Delsarte. One result was that much of the elocution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries degenerated into statue-posing, bird-calls, and imitations of children--probably not all of which was imitation (137).

The theory that elocution fell into disrepute is further supported by W. M. Parrish, who writes,

A current fashion among teachers of speech is to greet any mention of "elocution" or "elocutionists" with a knowing smile of amused superiority. Yes, yes, we say tolerantly, but with repressed annoyance, that sort of thing flourished in a former era, but it is no longer with us. The durability and extent of this approbrium in the word "elocution" is not easily accounted for. Apparently it is not so pervasive in England where books containing the word in their titles are still published. But in America the word is anathema. The artificiality and

affectation of the late nineteenth-century elocutionists are not defensible on any grounds We have therefore abandoned such methods (138).

In light of the foregoing information and before proceeding to the conclusions in Part VI, a final assessment of Steele MacKaye's contribution to the Delsarte System seems appropriate.

Steele MacKaye, Delsarte's chosen disciple, was the only American ever to have studied under Delsarte and was the one who introduced the Delsarte System into this country in a series of lectures beginning in 1871. Largely as a result of MacKaye's dynamic personality and the desire of speech teachers for a new method of teaching expression in this country, the Delsarte System caught on rapidly and enthusiastically, with MacKaye as the leader of this new movement. Of this MacKaye wrote to his wife on May 12, 1892, "If Delsarte's name is well known, it is because I made it so--and did this by the formulation of his own teachings in a manner more lucid to the mass than his own formulation" (139).

As to how faithfully Delsarte's philosophies were represented by MacKaye is a matter of conjecture, but the weight of available information tends to support these conclusions:

(1) The system of expression upon which MacKaye lectured was basically the philosophy of Delsarte.

(2) MacKaye, through many years of study and research upon this system, probably elaborated and refined many phases of it. MacKaye seems to have emphasized certain aspects of

the system, such as gestures and exercising, more than did Delsarte thus bringing about some distortion in the way the system was taught in this country.

(3) Although there may be some conjecture as to whether Delsarte or MacKaye invented aesthetic or harmonic gymnastics, the available information seems to indicate that they were the invention of Steele MacKaye and that he refined and enlarged upon them over the years. MacKaye's emphasis of aesthetic or harmonic gymnastics would seem to be a considerable distortion of the Delsarte philosophy.

However, in the absence of any written material by either Delsarte or MacKaye on the Delsarte System, the majority of those who were to follow in their footsteps had to rely on pirated and fragmented notes from MacKaye's lectures. The result was that they tended to focus on such aspects of Delsartianism as gestures and the aesthetic or harmonic gymnastics which were an invention of MacKaye's and a distortion of Delsarte. In time these distortions turned into perversions and the Delsarte System turned into a system of physical culture and affected recitations. MacKaye decried these distortions and perversions, but to little avail. He had intended to publish his own notes on the Delsarte System, but other interests kept drawing him away and they were never forthcoming.

Had it not been for Steele MacKaye, the Delsarte System might never have reached this country, or at least might never have become such a vogue. However, conversely, since MacKaye

never published any of his notes on the Delsarte System, it became perverted to such ridiculous extremes as to result in the ultimate demise of the Delsarte System.

PART V

"AN AFTERNOON OF DELSARTE"

A Delsarte Lecture-Recital

A lecture-recital thesis production entitled "An Afternoon of Delsarte" was presented on Wednesday, July 2, 1969, at 3:30 p.m. in the Purple Masque Theatre on the Kansas State University Campus at Manhattan, Kansas. The purpose of the lecture-recital was to explain and illustrate the Delsarte System as it was practiced in late nineteenth century America. Since so much of Delsartianism and what became of it was visual and oral, this writer felt it could only be fully understood by a lecture-recital production wherein the audience could actually observe Delsartianism in practice.

The setting was late nineteenth century and most of the costumes were authentic for that period. The "actors" were placed behind large four by ten foot filigreed picture frames to give a cameo effect. Music was provided by a harpsichord and the production was written, directed, and narrated by this writer.

No further introductory remarks seem necessary as the lecture-recital is self-explanatory. The script of the lecture-recital is presented on the following pages.

"AN AFTERNOON OF DELSARTE"

NARRATOR: Great issues bring about great speakers, and the political situation in the United States during the last part of the eighteenth century and the entire nineteenth century had been conducive to oratory. The country had gone through periods of war, growing democracy, industrial revolution, and scientific expansion. Such orators as Clay, Calhoun, Davis, and Webster had created an interest in public speaking, and new methods by which speech could be taught were being sought. Educators and theorists had borrowed heavily from the old world theorists and had made contributions of their own, but many of these seemed to be too mechanical in their approach. Thus America was ripe for a more philosophical system of oratory.

The Frenchman, Francois Delsarte's philosophy of expression was thought to be this new philosophical approach when it was first introduced into the United States in 1871 by the actor, playwright Steele MacKaye. It was probably the most popular method of speech training used in America during the period from the 1870's to 1900. What was this new "Delsarte System" like? Where and how was it used? What effect did it have on oral expression and speech education in America? Hopefully this lecture-recital, "An Afternoon of Delsarte," will shed some light on the profound influence that the "Delsarte System" of expression had on oral expression and speech training in the United States during the latter part of

the nineteenth century.

To gain a proper perspective of the Delsarte System, a brief summary of background information will first be presented. Francois Delsarte was born in Solesmes, France, in 1811. He moved to Paris at an early age where he studied music and eventually became an opera singer. However, this career was short-lived as he was reported to have lost his voice and had to give up his career in the opera. Delsarte blamed the loss of his voice and his ruined career on the faulty methods of voice training in use at that time, and thus set about to discover a new method to save others from such a fate. He became an operatic voice coach and finally in 1839 opened a school of vocal expression where he taught what he called his "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee." His course was less a system of voice training than a pseudo-philosophy or "science" which organized all art according to a plan based on the Holy Trinity of the orthodox Roman Catholic Church. This philosophy was based on the concept that all phenomena, in its basic nature, was made up of three basic elements representing the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and thus all phenomena was divided into threes and multiples of three. When applied to speech, for example, gesturing would be broken down on a basis of three movements, which Delsarte called zones: away from the center, towards the center, and around the center. The same trinitary division would similarly apply to all aspects of speaking and expression.

Delsarte's Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee was composed of a

series of lessons which consisted of two parts: a lecture covering some area of his philosophy and then a demonstration of these principles by his pupils or by Delsarte himself. Today's lecture-recital is thus patterned after this plan used by Delsarte.

Near the height of his career, the Franco-Prussian War and the resulting seige of Paris sent Delsarte back to his native home in Solesmes, where he died in poverty in July, 1871. However, before this, in 1869, an American by the name of Steele MacKaye, who was an actor, director, and playwright, went to Paris to study, and was enrolled in Delsarte's Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee. The two soon became good friends and because MacKaye so quickly and so comprehensively learned the Delsarte philosophy, he soon became an instructor in the Delsarte school. Thus it was he that Delsarte chose as his disciple to carry on his work after his death. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out, MacKaye returned to the United States and began plans to bring Delsarte to this country to establish a "Cours" patterned after the one in Paris. In order to raise funds for this project, Steele MacKaye began lecturing on the Delsarte philosophy in Boston and New York City, thus introducing the Delsarte System into this country. However, Delsarte's untimely death prevented his coming to America and the establishment of a "Cours" never became a reality. After Delsarte's death, MacKaye continued to lecture extensively in New England and later went on several lecture tours. He also instructed private pupils, opened a school of

expression in New York City, and worked extensively in the theatre in subsequent years. Thus Steele MacKaye introduced the Delsarte System into the United States and it gained almost immediate popularity. One reason for this popularity, aside from the novelty of this new approach to speaking, was believed to have been MacKaye's dynamic personality. However, because of his many other interests, MacKaye unfortunately never published any of his material on Delsarte, although he continued instructing and lecturing until his death in 1894.

Because of the magnetic personality of Steele MacKaye and because the United States was ripe for a new method of teaching expression, the Delsarte System quickly became a new panacea to public speaking and was the most popular method of speech training in this country for the roughly thirty years from 1870 to 1900. However, neither Delsarte nor MacKaye published anything on the Delsarte philosophy to establish it factually. As a result, the new teachers of the Delsarte System took their information from notes of the lectures of Steele MacKaye, or other pupils of Delsarte, and a great deal of distortion of the original Delsarte philosophy resulted. Because of this distortion, the Delsarte System in the United States grew further and further away from Delsarte's philosophy until it became a very mechanistic approach to speech training. Gestures and bodily movement were greatly emphasized, as was exercising to tone the muscles and to give greater grace and poise of bearing. As a result of these distortions, the Delsarte System eventually became perverted to more of a

system of physical culture and athletics than speech training.

In order to further place the Delsarte System in proper perspective, I think it interesting to note the educational trend at this time in American history. As the sons of American families grew up, they were usually sent to school at one of the various colleges or universities. However, higher education was not particularly popular for young women at this time. So when the Delsarte schools or schools of elocution sprang up around the country, they became very fashionable for young women. Not only did they teach expression, but they taught young women how to be graceful, beautiful, and poised through exercises and gymnastics, how to pour tea, and other "necessary" lessons of the day.

As I mentioned earlier, Delsartianism had a profound influence on the elocutionary period in this country. However, it was the Delsarte System as it developed, evolved, and was distorted and perverted in the United States that had the most profound--profoundly distorting--influence on speech training, and it is with this system that this lecture-recital is primarily concerned.

As a result of the distortions of Delsartianism brought about by those people caught up in the frenzy of this new cult, who knew little of Delsarte or his philosophy, the philosophy was forgotten and the Delsarte System predominated in the United States which emphasized primarily style, delivery, and exercises. Therefore, according to this "new Delsarte System," in order that a speaker or performer might

do his best, exercises and appropriate mechanics of delivery must first be mastered. Such exercises as "breathing" and "decomposing" exercises were invented. These exercises were frequently conducted as classes in either studios or gymnasiums, and were usually accompanied by music. First the breathing exercises will be illustrated. Ready, begin.

(Breathing exercises are begun by dancers a, b, c on stage front center, while the following paragraph is read by the narrator.)

NARRATOR: These exercises were necessary to tone the muscles and diaphragm for proper breathing. For, according to a popular textbook of the period, "every muscle of the waist, chest, ribs, axilla, back, and loins must be brought into action, and trained by intelligent and persistent practice to perform its function. It will take several months--even years with older students--to accustom all the muscles to act automatically and effectively, but it will pay in an increased brilliancy of intellect, happiness of temper and buoyancy of spirit. It may be further stated that a larger part of the training course prescribed for orators and singers in professional schools is devoted to securing command over the breath in speech and song; and that the heart-reaching, soul-stirring rendition of those sublime passages which have in ages past moved the stoic to action and the sage to tears, can be reproduced only by that perfect adaption of breath to the moulding of words that live, and burn and glow--melting the heart to tears, filling the ear with rapture and illuminating

the soul with celestial light, until the very air seems filled with seraphic melodies of intelligences divine."

(Dancers cease exercising.)

NARRATOR: Another exercise necessary for any good student of the American Delsarte System was the decomposing exercises, the most classic of which was the "rag doll" exercise. These decomposing exercises should preferably be performed in front of a full-length mirror, and were again accompanied by music. The rationale for such exercises was to attain perfect flexibility of the muscles and joints and to free the body of the imperfections of human nature. The decomposing exercises thus "freed the channels of expression within the body so that divine art might flow freely from the soul through the body as water flows freely from a fountain." The "rag doll" exercise will now be illustrated. Ready, begin.

(Dancers a, b, c begin "rag doll" exercises.)

NARRATOR: Exercise #1: Decompose fingers.

Exercise #2: Decompose hand.

Exercise #3: Decompose forearm.

Exercise #4: Decompose entire arm.

Stop.

Exercise #5: Decompose head.

Exercise #6: Decompose torso.

Stop.

Exercise #7: Decompose foot.

Exercise #8: Decompose lower leg.

Exercise #9: Decompose entire leg.

Stop.

Exercise #10: And now decompose entire body.

(Dancers complete "rag doll" exercises and fall lifelessly to the floor.)

NARRATOR: I might add parenthetically at this point that the coach or instructor of each Delsarte school worked with the students on lines and gestures and then usually served as a prompter during performance. The prompter usually stood in the wings or orchestra pit, out of sight of the audience, and mouthed the words and pantomimed the actions along with the performers during the performance. We also have a prompter today seated at stage right, but because pantomime would distract, the prompter will only give lines in the case that performers should forget them.

Just as it was necessary to accomplish correct exercising before performing, so it was necessary to know and accomplish correct gesturing, body position, and facial expression in order to dynamically express the proper mood in the performance. Each emotion had a specific gesture, body position, and facial expression--such as:

DEFIANCE: (The dancers assume the proper body position, facial expression, and gesture as they recite the line.)

DANCER #2b: "Defy the devil; consider he is the enemy of mankind."

NARRATOR: REJECTING:

DANCER #2a: "Sir, if this were my last breath I would

deny these infamous charges!"

NAR: SOOTHING:

DANCER #2b: "Boy! Harold! Safely rest; enjoy the honey-dew of slumber."

NAR: ANGUISH:

DANCER #2c: "My cup with anguish is filled, from nettles sharp and death distilled!"

NAR: DISPERSION:

DANCER #2a: "Spain's proud fleet was scattered to the winds!"

NAR: REMORSE:

DANCER #2b: "A thoughtless, wicked deed; it stings sharper than a serpent's tooth."

NAR: TENDER REJECTION:

DANCER #2c: "It has come at last; I must say, NO!"

NAR: DISCERNING:

DANCER #2a: "A sail, ho! A dim speck on the horizon."

NAR: INVOCATION:

DANCER #2c: "Angels and ministers of grace, defenders."

NAR: EXALTATION:

DANCER #2b: "Washington is in the clear, upper sky."

NAR: SECRECY:

DANCER #2a: "Be mute, be secret as the grave."

NAR: DECLARING:

DANCER #2c: "I speak the truth, I dare to speak it."

NAR: SILENCE:

DANCER #2b: "There was silence, deep as death, and the

boldest held his breath."

NAR: REPULSION:

DANCER #2c: "Back to thy punishment, false fugitive,
and to thy speed add wings."

NAR: WONDERMENT:

DANCER #2a: "While the dance was the merriest, the door
opened and there stood the parson."

NAR: INDECISION:

DANCER #2b: "Shall I take back my promise? 'Twill but
expose me to contempt."

NAR: GRIEF:

DANCER #2a: "O, by weeping could I heal my sorrow."

NAR: GLADNESS:

DANCER #2c: "No pen, no tongue, can summon power to
tell the transports of that hour."

NAR: SIGNALLING:

DANCER #2b: "There stood Count Wagstaff beckoning."

NAR: Thus after proper exercising and the mastering of
correct gesture, body position, and facial expression to
express the right emotion, the student was ready to begin
performing. The most popular performance in this country was
the recitation of pieces. In Delsarte's Cours D'Esthetique
Appliquee, recitation was used primarily as an aid to illus-
trate some point in Delsarte's lecture or in the teaching of
acting and was probably of a more serious nature. In the
United States, early in the Delsarte period, the selections
maintained some of the seriousness, but they became a means

to an end in themselves and were used for mere entertainment, rather than as a tool of practice. This first selection is of a serious nature and was reported by the author of the book to have been a favorite of Delsarte's. One will quickly note the seriousness of the piece, its reference to the three basic elements of fire, water, and air.

ACTOR #4:

BREAD - translated by Elsie M. Wilbor.

When on the height and by the river
 The mills have hushed their busy clack,
 The miller's donkey browses calmly,
 And carries not the well-filled sack,
 Then Famine, like a wolf, comes stalking,
 And enters homes before our eyes;
 Around, above, a storm is gathering,
 And groans go upward to the skies.
 You cannot hush the murmurs of the people when
 they're led
 By pangs of hunger; nature speaks, and they cry:
 "We want bread!"

Then Famine travels from the village,
 The city feels its touch at length;
 Make haste, and seek to stop its journey
 With drums beat hard with all your strength,
 In spite of powder and swift bullet,
 It travels as on wing of bird,
 And on remotest, highest rampart
 It plants its black flag undisturbed.
 You cannot hush the murmurs of the people when
 they're led
 By pangs of hunger; nature speaks, and they cry:
 "We want bread!"

Among the eager crowds of people
 Arrest all armed with knife or gun;
 Erect in open squares as menace
 The scaffold's framework nearly done.
 But when, in sight of trembling thousands,
 The bloody sword its word shall end,
 And destinies for aye be settled,
 A cry of "Blood" on high ascends.
 You cannot hush the murmurs of the people when
 they're led
 By pangs of hunger; nature speaks, and they cry:
 "We want bread!"

Our daily bread is life's sustainer
 As much as water, fire, and air;
 Without it we are helpless, dying,
 And 'tis God's debt for us to care.
 But has not He paid all He owes us?
 Has He refused to give us soil?
 The sun's bright rays shine warm upon us,
 And ripening grain repays our toil.
 You cannot hush the murmurs of the people when
 they're led
 By pangs of hunger; nature speaks, and they cry:
 "We want bread!"

The earth is full of life and vigor,
 And grain in harvests rich should yield
 From ardent tropics to north's limit,
 A golden crown for every field.
 Dig deep, then into earth's broad bosom,
 And for this work, which ne're should cease,
 Beat sword and cannon into ploughshares,
 And change the arm of war to peace!
 You cannot hush the murmurs of the people when
 they're led
 By pangs of hunger; nature speaks, and they cry:
 "We want bread!"

NARRATOR: Still generally of a serious nature and still
 used for purposes of entertainment, later readings began to
 have less depth of content.

ACTOR #3: WHAT IS HEAVEN?

Is heaven a place where pearly streams
 Glide over silver sand;
 Like childhood's rosy, dazzling dreams
 Of some far fairy land?
 Is heaven a clime where diamond dew
 Glitter on fadeless flowers;
 And mirth and music ring aloud
 From amaranthine bowers?

Ah, no, not such, not such is heaven!
 Surpassing far all these;
 Such cannot be the guerdon given
 Man's wearied soul to please.
 For saint and sinner here below
 Such vain to be, have proved:
 And the pure spirit will despise
 What'er the sense has loved.

There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,
 And with the Mother-Maid,
 And with the Holy Spirit one,
 In glory like arrayed.
 And not to one created thing,
 Shall our embrace be given;
 For all our joy shall be in God,
 For only God is Heaven.

NARRATOR: Love, that age-old subject, was also dealt with during the elocutionary period, not realistically as it is portrayed today, but dreamily and idealistically, as though all was seen through rose-colored glasses. Here the subject of love is dealt with in play form, which was popular in the Delsarte schools, and the lovers do not discover each other through a random dating process as we think of it today, but are brought together through the influence or preordination of the Almighty. Again we see the reference to God. There are two characters in this play, Alfred, a youth, and Ethel, a maid, who are seated on the sofa in the parlor of a late nineteenth century home.

ACTOR 4: THE LITTLE PRESBYTERIAN MAID

My little Presbyterian maid,
 Tell me why thou 'rt so shy.
 I hold thee fast. Be not afraid!
 No harm shall come thee nigh.
 Dost love me? Speak, and tell me so!
 By thy silence I am pained.

ACTOR 5: I love thee well, as thou dost know;
 For it was fore-ordained!

ACTOR 4: Ordained? Before? By whom, my sweet, --
 Thy father or my mother? --

ACTOR 5: By Father of us all, 'twas meant
 That we should love each other.

- ACTOR 4: Nay, tell me plainer, little maid,
 I'm but a careless fellow;
 And ne'er before my vows have paid
 Since cowslip blooms were yellow.
 Thank God, I came, nor was delayed;
 For should some happier brother
 Have found thee first, my precious maid,
 Thou mightest have loved another.
- ACTOR 5: Nay; suitors oft have sought my hand,
 In lovers' art perfected;
 But then, they were not like to thee,
 From out all time elected.
- ACTOR 4: Sweet heart, thy doctrine, strangely wise
 Most gracious honor does me;
 Yet how were we to know all this,
 Is that which does confuse me.
- ACTOR 5: No sparrow falleth to the ground
 Without our Father knoweth;
 No heart but hath somewhere its mate,
 To which in time it goeth.
 And so, by inward consciousness
 My soul thy soul approving,
 I felt a special Providence
 Had sent thee for my loving.
- ACTOR 4: I ask no more; I am content
 With all thy sweet believing,
 But never lose thy faith, sweet maid
 Or else I die a-grieving.
 For I'll confess, I greatly prize
 Thy mystery of election;
 And none can see thy face and doubt
 The doctrine of perfection.

NARRATOR: As the Delsarte System evolved in time and increased in popularity in the United States, more self-appointed authorities of Delsartianism, who knew little of its principles, exerted their influence and both subject matter and depth of content of the system and the recitation pieces suffered. There was increased emphasis of gesture and body position and they became more stilted and mechanical.

ACTOR 5: THE ROBIN AND THE CHICKEN.

A plump little robin flew down from a tree
To hunt for a worm which he happened to see;
A frisky young chicken came scampering by,
And gazed at the robin with wondering eye.

Said the chick: "What a queer looking chicken is that!
Its wings are so long and its body so fat!"
While the robin remarked loud enough to be heard;
"Dear me! An exceedingly strange-looking bird!"

"Can you sing?" robin asked, and the chicken said, "No";
But asked in its turn if the robin could crow.
So the bird sought a tree and the chicken a wall,
And each thought the other knew nothing at all.

NARRATOR: As was noted earlier in the lecture, the schools of Delsarte elocution became very popular for young women. As a result, subject matter began including the family, the garden, birds, flowers, and children, as is the case with this poem.

ACTOR 3: OUR DAISY.

Our little Daisy is rosy and sweet,
Neat as a pin from her head to her feet;
Her long waving ringlets are yellow as gold,
And her bonnie brown eyes they are bright to behold.
All the day through it makes one rejoice
To hear the soft tones of her sweet, laughing voice;
Summer or winter, sunshine or rain,
No one hears Daisy fret or complain.

Up stairs and down, nimble with fun,
Two little slippered feet scamper and run,
While two little hands as nimble as they
Make themselves busy with work and with play.
Everyone's errands they're ready to do--
Find mamma's needle, button her shoe;
Set papa's slippers down by the fire;
Build baby's block-house two stories higher.

NARRATOR: Still later in the period of the Delsarte System, children were brought in and featured in the schools, clubs, and societies where recitations were performed. As a

result, recitations were written for children to perform and they became very popular. One can note at this point how far the Delsarte System had been distorted from the original philosophy of Francois Delsarte, and how mechanical, artificial, and ridiculous it had become.

ACTOR 4: A LITTLE BOY'S LECTURE by Julia M. Thayer.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Nearly four hundred years ago the mighty mind of Columbus, traversing unknown seas, clasped this new continent in its embrace.

A few centuries later arose one here who now lives in all our hearts as the Father of his Country. An able warrior, a sagacious statesman, a noble gentleman. Yes, Christopher Columbus was great. George Washington was great. But here, my friends, in this glorious nineteenth century is--a grater! (Exhibiting a large, bright tin grater. The large kind used for horseradish could be most easily distinguished by the audience.)

NARRATOR: Distortion turned to perversion as the material in the Delsarte System fell further and further away from Delsarte's original philosophic method. Not only monologues and plays, but also dialogues became popular. In this selection we see an example of the degree of perversion to which quality of subject matter and art sank near the end of the Delsarte period in the United States. Little or nothing of Delsarte's philosophy appears in this selection.

ACTOR 3: THE THIN DOG. A Dialogue in 5 Acts.

(Actors 3 and 4 recite alternate lines in this dialogue.)

3: ACT I

4: Say, who does that dog there belong to?

3: What?

4: Who does that dog belong to?

3: Which dog?

4: That dog there.

3: That dog there?
 4: Yes.
 3: That's my dog.
 4: Oh!

3: ACT II
 4: Say, why is that dog there so thin?
 3: What?
 4: Why is that dog so thin?
 3: Which dog?
 4: That dog there.
 3: That dog there?
 4: Yes.
 3: He doesn't eat anything.

3: ACT III
 4: Say, why doesn't that dog there eat anything?
 3: What?
 4: Why doesn't that dog eat anything?
 3: Which dog?
 4: That dog there.
 3: That dog there?
 4: Yes.
 3: He doesn't get anything.
 4: Oh!

3: ACT IV
 4: Say, why doesn't that dog there get anything?
 3: What?
 4: Why doesn't that dog get anything?
 3: Which dog?
 4: That dog there.
 3: That dog there?
 4: Yes.
 3: We don't give him anything.
 4: Oh!

3: ACT V
 4: Say, why don't you give that dog there anything?
 3: What?
 4: Why don't you give that dog anything?
 3: Which dog?
 4: That dog there.
 3: That dog there?
 4: Yes.
 3: We haven't anything to give him.
 4: Oh!!

(Actors 3 and 4 curtsy and bow respectively in grand manner.)

NARRATOR: In addition to recitations and plays, the Delsarte System included such things as statue-posing and

tableau. According to a popular book of the period, "To enhance exercising, to add variety to an evening's entertainment, and to seek further depth in artistic beauty, statue-posing and tableau became very popular in the 'Schools of Delsarte Elocution.'" Photographs of famous Greek and Roman statutes and friezes were used as the guides for these poses. Every detail of the photograph was to be followed as closely as possible, but of the utmost importance was the actor's face. The face must be completely expressionless so that the true feeling of the sculpture would be expressed rather than the character of the actor performing the statue-pose. To further enhance the beauty and artistic image of statue-posing, there was musical accompaniment. Among the various statue-poses done were: (Dancers perform the statue-poses as the narrator calls them out.)

AUGUSTUS CAESAR. (Dancer #2b.)

ATALANTA. (Dancer #2a.)

NIOBE, DAUGHTER. (Dancer #2c.)

BOXER. (Dancer #2b.)

MAGDALEN. (Dancer #2c.)

DISCUS THROWER. (Dancer #2b.)

DIANA SHOOTING WITH A BOW. (Dancer #2a.)

FIGHTING PERSIAN. (Dancer #2b.)

DIANA OF VERSAILLES. (Dancer #2c.)

NARRATOR: Statue-posing was also done in groups which was called Tableau. Examples of tableaus are: (All three dancers perform the following tableaus as the narrator calls

them out.)

THREE GRACES.

THE FATES.

PLEIADES.

CLEMENCY OF AN AFRICAN KING.

AT THE SHRINE OF VENUS.

NARRATOR: As was pointed out earlier, Francois Delsarte's Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee was a pseudo-philosophy based on the Holy Trinity of the Catholic Faith. This trinitary division was used to study all phenomena and was developed by him as a method of studying art and teaching vocal expression. He used recitation primarily as a method or tool in illustrating his lectures and in teaching acting and not for the purposes of public entertainment. Steele MacKaye, Delsarte's chosen disciple, introduced the Delsarte method into the United States in probably much the same form as was espoused by Delsarte, and became the only American authority on the subject. Unfortunately, neither Delsarte or MacKaye published any material to set the record of the Delsarte philosophy straight. Therefore, upon the foundation of the Delsarte System laid down by the lectures of Steele MacKaye, others, in their enthusiasm, began to misinterpret and add their own ideas to the Delsarte System and it became more and more distorted. The distortions eventually turned to perversions, so that near the end of the nineteenth century the Delsarte System had been so perverted by such antics as childish recitations, statue-posing, and tableau that it became

ludicrous. The ludicrous state to which the Delsarte System had collapsed in the United States resulted in its falling into disuse. Because of the profoundly distorting influence it had on elocution, it also signaled an end to the elocutionary movement around 1900-1910. Delsartianism had begun with a philosophy of art and expression and had ended in America as a system of physical culture, with gymnastics, recitation, statue-posing, dance, and "drills." Drills usually involved a group of people and were accompanied by appropriate readings and music.

THE MINUET by Mary Mapes Dodge.

Grandma told me all about it,
Told me so I couldn't doubt it,
How she danced--my grandma danced--long ago;
How she held her pretty head--
How her dainty skirt she spread--
How she turned her little toes--
Smiling little human rose--long ago.

(After the reading of the first verse of The Minuet,
Dancers #2a and b do the minuet to music. This minuet forms
the chorus to each of the stanzas read by the Narrator.)

NARRATOR: Grandma's hair was bright and sunny:
Dimpled cheeks, too--ah, how funny!
Really quite a pretty girl--long ago.
Bless her! why she wears a cap,
Grandma does, and takes a nap
Every single day; and yet
Grandma danced the minuet--long ago!

(Dancers #2a and b do minuet again.)

(A few seconds after the minuet has begun, Dancer #2c
begins doing decomposing exercises as Dancers #2a and b con-
tinue doing the minuet.)

ACTOR 4: (Begins reciting shortly after Dancer #2c

begins decomposing exercises.)

MINE SHILDREN.

Oh, dose shildren, dose shildren, dey boddher mine life!
 Vhy don't dey kiip quiet, like Gretchen, mine vife?
 Vot makes dem so shock fool of mischief, I vunder,
 A shumping der room round mit noises like dunder?
 Hear dot! Vas dere anyding make such a noise
 As Hermann und Otto, mine dwo leedle poys?

Ven I dake oud mine pipe for a good, quiet smoke,
 Dey crawl me all over, und dink it a shoke
 To go droo mine bockets to see vot dey find.
 Und if mit der latch key my vatch dey can vind,
 Id dakes someding more as dheir fadder und muder,
 To quiet dot Otto und his leedle broder . . .

ACTOR 5: (Begins reciting as Actor 4 starts second
 verse.)

TEN LITTLE TOES.

Baby is clad in her nightgown white;
 Pussy-cat purrs a soft good-night;
 And somebody tells, for somebody knows,
 The terrible tale of ten little toes.

(RIGHT FOOT)

This big toe took a small boy, Sam,
 Into the cupboard after the jam;
 This little toe said: "Oh, no! no!"
 This little toe was anxious to go;
 This little toe said: "'Tisn't quite right!"

(LEFT FOOT)

This big toe got suddenly stubbed;
 This little toe got ruefully rubbed;
 This little frightened toe cried out, "Bears!"
 This little timid toe ran up stairs;
 Down came a toe with a loud slam! slam!
 This little tiny toe got all the jam!

ACTOR 3: (Begins reciting as Actor 5 starts second
 stanza.)

THE SONG OF THE CORN POPPER.

Pip! pop! flipperty flop!
 Here am I, all ready to pop.
 Girls and boys, the fire burns clear;

Gather about the chimney here.
 Big ones, little ones, all in a row,
 Hop away! pop away! here we go!

Pip! pop! flipperty flop!
 Into the bowl the kernels drop.
 Sharp, and hard, and yellow, and small,
 Must say they don't look good at all;
 But wait till they burst into warm white snow!
 Hop away! pop away! here we go!

(All of the above action begins going on at the same time
 and rises to a higher and higher peak until chaos results.
 The Narrator will come in again and it is he to whom the rest
 will listen for the cue for the BLACKOUT when all action
 ceases and all actors and dancers leave the stage.)

NARRATOR: With the minuet in fashion,
 Who could fly into a passion?
 All would wear the calm they wore--long ago.
 In time to come, If I, perchance,
 Should tell my grandchild of our dance,
 I should really like to say,
 "We did it, dear, in some such way--long ago!"

-BLACKOUT-

"AN AFTERNOON OF DELSARTE"

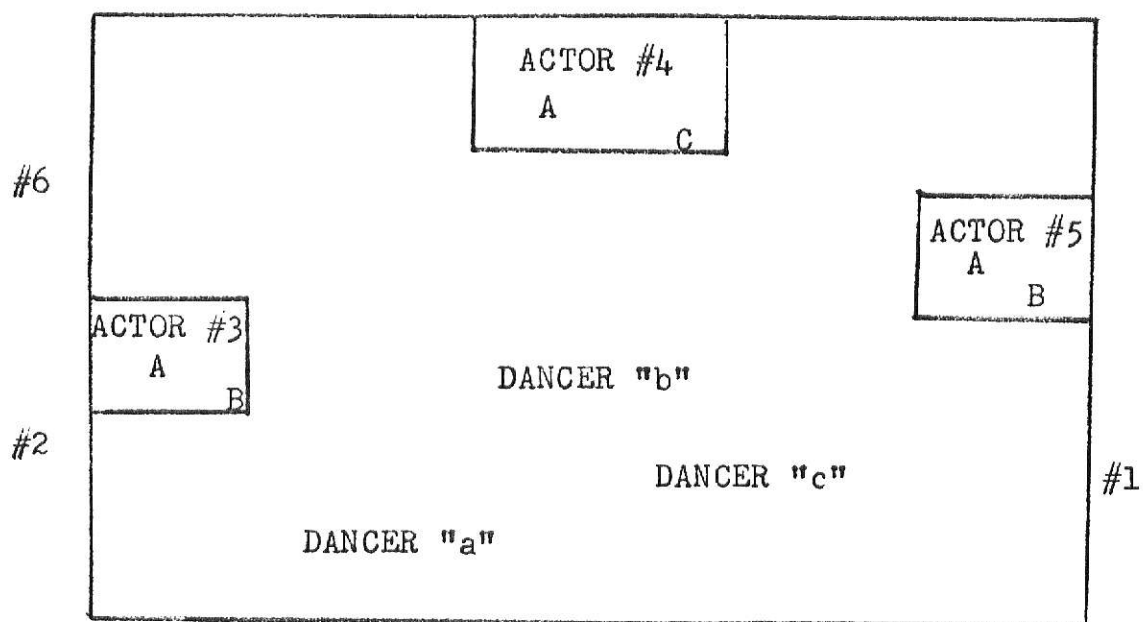


Fig. 3. Lecture-recital stage plan.

A -- Large Picture Frames

B -- 6' X 8' Platforms

C -- 10' X 12' Platform

#1 -- The Narrator

#2 -- The Prompter

#3, #4, #5 -- Actors

#6 -- Harpsichord

"a," "b," "c" -- Dancers

Selections for this lecture-recital were taken from the more popular and prominent writers on the Delsarte System during the height of its popularity in the United States. Excerpts were taken from the books of Elsie M. Wilbor, Genevieve Stebbins, Edgar S. Werner, and Lester B. Hamersley, which are referred to and footnoted in other parts of this paper. Selections were chosen on the basis of being typical of that day, being popular, or being favorites of various teachers. In the case of the first selection, according to the book by Elsie M. Wilbor from which it was taken, Bread was purported to have been a favorite of Francois Delsarte himself.

PART VI

CONCLUSION

The preceding material has been presented to give background and insight into the Delsarte System and to support the conclusions presented in this section. These foregoing materials and the final assessments of the impact of the Delsarte System on oral expression in the United States should present answers to the questions raised in Part I and clarify some of the questions implied in subsequent sections.

Francois Delsarte began with a philosophy of investigation based on the Holy Trinity, which he used as a method for teaching voice and expression. He had established his school, called the "Cours D'Esthetique Appliquee" in 1839 which was attended and lauded by many prominent European singers, actors, clergy, and lawyers of the time. He had intended to publish a book which was to include a statement of his whole philosophy, science, and method, but unfortunately this was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war and shortly thereafter by his untimely death.

His work and philosophy might have faded into oblivion at this point had it not been for Steele MacKaye, a brilliant young American actor, playwright, and inventor who came to Paris in 1869 and studied with Delsarte. So rapidly and enthusiastically did MacKaye learn Delsarte's teachings that he (Delsarte) chose MacKaye to be his disciple to carry on his work. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out, MacKaye

returned to the United States filled with enthusiasm about the methods he had learned from his new-found French master. It was MacKaye then, the only American to ever study under Delsarte, that first introduced Delsartianism into this country in a series of lectures beginning in Boston in 1871. Thus was founded what came to be known as the "Delsarte System" in this country.

That the Delsarte System came into vogue is unique, because Delsarte never came to the United States, nor, as has been mentioned, did he publish any of his material. That the system became popular is generally attributed to two reasons: 1. the enthusiasm and dynamic personality of his disciple, MacKaye, and 2. the universal dissatisfaction with mechanical methods of teaching speech in practice prior to the 1870's. Thus teachers were eager for any new method which gave promise of a more philosophical approach. To many the Delsarte System was this new philosophical approach and it gained rapidly in popularity, much as any new fad would today. Unfortunately MacKaye, like Delsarte, did not publish any of his material so that the formulation of the principles and practices of the Delsarte System were left largely to caprice and chance. In an effort to jump on the "Delsarte bandwagon" it was inevitable that the Delsarte System should be distorted by the many who called themselves Delsartians. In the absence of any written records by either Delsarte or MacKaye, notes were pirated based on lectures, from translations of the notes of other Delsarte pupils, and from fragmented notes obtained from

the Delsarte family; to these were added various contributions, but always in the name of Delsarte. In the process, the emphasis turned from a philosophical system of expression as envisioned by Delsarte to one of mechanics of gesture and bodily movement, to a distorted one of exercises, statue posing, and recitations. The distortion turned to outright perversion when the Delsarte System was acclaimed to be a system of harmonic gymnastics and a system of physical culture that was to tone the muscles and give the body grace, poise, and charm. The popularity of the Delsarte name was seized upon by advertisers and hucksters who were seeking financial gain by offering such gimmicks as the "Delsarte corset," the "Delsarte garter," the "Delsarte wooden leg," and making claims to "reduce ladies of super-avoirdupois." The Delsarte System was expanded and distorted to such absurd lengths that it caused Percy MacKaye to write,

During the two decades since his (MacKaye) initial Harvard lecture, the name Delsarte . . . had itself become commercialized and travestied by the distorted and ludicrous perversions of ignorance or half-knowledge . . . Perverted by the venal, the absurd, or the vain, the noble austerity of a pure science and its disciplined embodiment in art had become a laughing stock of the vulgar and a source of vexatious sorrow to the few informed . . . (because) the mob had defaced (it) beyond all recognition (140).

About the deplorable state of the Delsarte System, Genevieve Stebbins likewise wrote in 1892, "When the present frothy scum has subsided, the pure elixir of truth will rise to the surface" (141). However, it did not arise and the ludicrous state to which the Delsarte System had been perverted signaled

an end to its use and, because of its profound influence on elocution, resulted in an end to the elocutionary movement around 1900.

That the Delsarte System was popular in this country and that it had a profound influence on the field of speech and oral expression can hardly be denied. But, this influence was a profoundly distorting one which led to its ultimate demise, because of the ridiculous state to which it had sunk. As a result, from about 1900 to the present, educators in the field of speech avoid association with the concepts of elocution or Delsartianism. But is it dead and buried? One questions whether it is. As a college teacher in the field of speech this writer still encounters incoming freshman students who have had "voice and gesture exercises" in high school and is still asked occasionally about declamation and elocution. The influence of the Delsarte System was indeed pervasive and persuasive.

FOOTNOTES

1. S. S. Curry, Province of Expression, (Boston, 1891), 335-336. (Hereafter referred to as Curry, Province of Expression.)
2. Edgar S. Werner, ed., Delsarte System of Oratory, Fourth Edition, (New York, 1892). (Hereafter referred to as Werner, Delsarte System of Oratory.)
3. Genevieve Stebbins, Delsarte System of Expression, (New York, 1901). (Hereafter referred to as Stebbins, Delsarte System of Expression.)
4. Elsie M. Wilbor, Delsarte Recitation Book, (New York, 1897). (Hereafter referred to as Wilbor, Delsarte Recitation Book.)
5. Percy MacKaye, Epoch: The Life of Steele MacKaye, 2 vols., (New York, 1927). (Hereafter referred to as MacKaye, Epoch.)
6. John W. Zorn, ed., The Essential Delsarte, (Metuchen, N. J., 1968). (Hereafter referred to as Zorn, Essential Delsarte.)
7. Curry, Province of Expression.
8. Genevieve Stebbins, Dynamic Breathing and Harmonic Gymnastics, (New York, 1892). (Hereafter referred to as Stebbins, Dynamic Breathing.)
9. Moses True Brown, The Synthetic Philosophy of Expression, (Boston, 1886).
10. Lester B. Hamersley, Everybody's Speaker, (Chicago, 1909). (Hereafter referred to as Hamersley, Everybody's Speaker.)
11. Emmett A. Rice, A Brief History of Physical Education, (New York, 1929). (Hereafter referred to as Rice, History of P. E.)
12. Mary Margaret Robb, Oral Interpretation of Literature, (New York, 1968). (Hereafter referred to as Robb, Oral Interp.)
13. Karl R. Wallace, ed., History of Speech Education in America, (New York, 1954). (Hereafter referred to as Wallace, History of Speech.)
14. Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood, Practical Elements of Elocution, (Boston, 1893).

15. Wilbor, Delsarte Recitation Book, xv.
16. Ted Shawn, Every Little Movement, (Pittsfield, Mass., 1954), 17.
17. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 142.
18. Ibid., 162.
19. Zorn, Essential Delsarte, 5.
20. Ibid., 63.
21. Ibid., 64.
22. Claude L. Shaver, The Delsarte System of Expression as Seen Through the Notes of Steele MacKaye, Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, (Wisconsin, 1937), 41.
23. Stebbins, Delsarte System of Expression, 64.
24. Ibid., 30-34, 65.
25. Wallace, History of Speech, 205.
26. Curry, Province of Expression, 338-339.
27. Zorn, Essential Delsarte, 71.
28. Ibid., 73-74.
29. Ibid., 85.
30. Curry, Province of Expression, 344.
31. Ibid., 341.
32. Zorn, Essential Delsarte, 80.
33. Wallace, History of Speech, 205-206.
34. Curry, Province of Expression, 337, 346.
35. Wallace, History of Speech, 206.
36. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 136-137.
37. Ibid., 58.
38. Ibid., 71.
39. Ibid., 73.

40. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 79.
41. Ibid., 95.
42. Ibid., 135.
43. Edgar S. Werner, Werner's Voice Magazine, XVI, (December, 1894), 458.
44. Wallace, History of Speech, 207.
45. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 150.
46. Ibid., 151.
47. Ibid., 151-152.
48. Ibid., 155.
49. Edgar S. Werner, "James Steele MacKaye," Werner's Voice Magazine, XVI, (December, 1894), 458.
50. Wallace, History of Speech, 208.
51. MacKaye, Epoch, vol. 1, 197.
52. Ibid., 234.
53. Wallace, History of Speech, 209.
54. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 290.
55. MacKaye, Epoch, v. II, xvi.
56. Ibid., 58.
57. Ibid., 39.
58. Wallace, History of Speech, 216.
59. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 461.
60. Ibid., 151.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., 151-152.
65. Wallace, History of Speech, 208.

66. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 158.
67. Ibid, 290.
68. Curry, Province of Expression, 336.
69. Robb, Oral Interpretation, 142.
70. Wallace, History of Speech, 211.
71. Ibid.
72. MacKaye, Epoch, v. 1, 151.
73. Ibid., 152, 231.
74. Ibid., 152.
75. Ibid, v. II, 59.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., 59-60.
78. Wallace, History of Speech, 204-205.
79. Ibid., 211.
80. Ibid., 209-210.
81. W. R. Alger, "The Aesthetic 'Gymnastics' of Delsarte," Werner's Magazine, XVI (January, 1894), 4.
82. Ibid.
83. MacKaye, Epoch, v. II, 270-271.
84. Ibid., 272.
85. Ibid., 272-273.
86. Ibid., 273-274.
87. Ibid., 271.
88. Miriam E. Coyriere, "Mme. Gerald's Visit to America," Werner's Voice Magazine, XIV (April, 1892), 103.
89. Wallace, History of Speech, 211.
90. Curry, Province of Expression, 337.
91. Wallace, History of Speech, 214.

92. Curry, Province of Expression, 335.
93. Wallace, History of Speech, 215.
94. Ibid.
95. Stebbins, Delsarte System of Expression, 400-401.
96. Ibid., 260.
97. Ibid., 444-457.
98. Ibid., 397.
99. Ibid., 439.
100. Stebbins, Dynamic Breathing, 156.
101. Ibid., 58.
102. Ibid., 133-134.
103. Ibid., 157.
104. Rice, History of Physical Education, 171.
105. Ibid., 181-183.
106. Stebbins, Dynamic Breathing, 58.
107. Rice, History of Physical Education, 195, 202.
108. Charles C. Howes, Kansas State University, A Pictorial History 1863-1963, 155.
109. Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood, Practical Elements of Elocution, (Boston, 1893), v-vi.
110. Ibid., 349-350.
111. Werner, Delsarte System of Oratory, ii.
112. Wilbor, Delsarte Recitation Book, 377-378.
113. Ibid., 379.
114. Hamersley, Everybody's Speaker, 3.
115. Ibid., 11-12.
116. Ibid., 13.
117. Werner, Delsarte System of Oratory, i.

118. Wilbor, Delsarte Recitation Book, 382.
119. Edgar S. Werner, Werner's Magazine, XVI (July, 1894), 271.
120. MacKaye, Epoch, v. II, 266.
121. Ibid., 270.
122. Ibid., 270-271.
123. Zorn, Essential Delsarte, 113-114.
124. Curry, Province of Expression, 350-356.
125. Ibid., 356.
126. Ibid., 356-360.
127. Ibid.
128. MacKaye, Epoch, v. I, 162.
129. Elsie M. Wilbor, "Chautauqua," Werner's Voice Magazine, XII (August, 1890), 195.
130. Rice, History of Physical Education, 183.
131. Charles Bickford, "The Delsarte Delusion," The Voice, X (November, 1888), 177.
132. Wallace, History of Speech, 202, 216.
133. Robb, Oral Interpretation of Literature, 153.
134. Ibid., 130.
135. John F. Wilson and Carroll C. Arnold, Public Speaking as a Liberal Art, (Boston, 1968), 41.
136. Zorn, Essential Delsarte, 5.
137. Giles W. Gray, "What was Elocution?," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLVI (February, 1960), 6-7.
138. W. M. Parrish, "Elocution - A Definition and a Challenge," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIII (February, 1957), 1-2.
139. MacKaye, Epoch, v. II, 271.
140. MacKaye, Epoch, 266.
141. Stebbins, Dynamic Breathing, v.

LIST OF WORKS CITED

- Alger, W. R. "The Aesthetic 'Gymnastics' of Delsarte." Werner's Magazine, XVI (January, 1894), 4.
- Bickford, Charles. "The Delsarte Delusion." The Voice, X (November, 1888), 177.
- Brown, Moses True. The Synthetic Philosophy of Expression. Boston: 1886.
- Coyviere, E. Miriam. "Mme. Gerald's Visit to America." Werner's Voice Magazine, XIV (April, 1892), 103.
- Curry, S. S. Province of Expression. Boston: 1891.
- Fulton, Robert I., and Thomas C. Trueblood. Practical Elements of Elocution. Boston: 1893.
- Gray, Giles W. "What was Elocution?" The Quarterly Journal of Speech, (February, 1960), 6-7.
- Hamersley, Lester B. Everybody's Speaker. Chicago: 1909.
- Howes, Charles C. Kansas State University, A Pictorial History, 1863-1963. Manhattan, Kansas: 1963.
- MacKaye, Percy. Epoch: The Life of Steele MacKaye. 2 vols. New York: 1927.
- Parrish, W. M. "Elocution - A Definition and a Challenge." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIII (February, 1957), 1-2.
- Rice, Emmett A. A Brief History of Physical Education. New York: 1929.
- Robb, Mary Margaret. Oral Interpretation of Literature. New York: 1968.
- Shaver, Claude L. The Delsarte System of Expression as Seen Through the Notes of Steele MacKaye. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation. Wisconsin: 1937.
- Shawn, Ted. Every Little Movement. Pittsfield, Massachusetts: 1954.
- Stebbins, Genevieve. Delsarte System of Expression. New York: 1901.
- Stebbins, Genevieve. Dynamic Breathing and Harmonic Gymnastics. New York: 1892.

- Wallace, Karl R., Ed. History of Speech Education in America. New York: 1954.
- Werner, Edgar S. "James Steele MacKaye." Werner's Voice Magazine, XVI (December, 1894), 458.
- Werner, Edgar S., Ed. Delsarte System of Oratory. 4th ed. New York: 1892.
- Werner, Edgar S. Werner's Magazine, XVI (July, 1894), 271.
- Werner, Edgar S. Werner's Voice Magazine, XVI (December, 1894), 458.
- Wilbor, Elsie M. "Chautauqua." Werner's Voice Magazine, XII (August, 1890), 195.
- Wilbor, Elsie M. Delsarte Recitation Book. New York: 1901.
- Wilson, John F., and Carroll C. Arnold. Public Speaking as a Liberal Art. Boston: 1968.
- Zorn, John W., Ed. The Essential Delsarte. Metuchen, New Jersey: 1968.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the members of my committee--Dr. Norma Bunton, Dr. William Burke, and Professor Ralph Lashbrook--for their patience, assistance, and encouragement in the preparation of this thesis.

I wish to express a special thanks to Dr. Norma Bunton and Professor Jack Kingsley for all the consideration and encouragement they have given me throughout my graduate studies. Also a special thanks goes to all the faculty, students, and friends who assisted me in the presentation of my lecture recital.

And finally, I am very grateful to my wife Oletta, for her patience and encouragement throughout the completion of this program.

THE PROFOUNDLY DISTORTING INFLUENCE OF THE
DELSARTE SYSTEM ON ORAL EXPRESSION AND
SPEECH TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES

by

DARWIN K. KLEIN

B. S., Kansas State University, 1961

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

The Delsarte System of Expression was one of the most popular methods of speech training in America during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Based on the philosophies of the Frenchman Francois Delsarte, the Delsarte System was introduced into the United States by the American Steele MacKaye in a series of lectures in 1871.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the development of the Delsarte System in the United States and to investigate its influence on oral expression and speech training in this country.

That the Delsarte System became so popular in America is unique as Francois Delsarte never traveled to this country, nor did he publish any of his material. His chosen disciple, Steele MacKaye, introduced the Delsarte method into the United States in a series of lectures and classes at the beginning of the 1870's, and became the primary American authority on the subject. Two reasons generally agreed upon for its rapid acceptance and popularity were MacKaye's enthusiasm and magnetic personality and the generally universal dissatisfaction of speech teachers with the mechanical methods of teaching speech in practice prior to the 1870's. However, MacKaye, like Delsarte, never published any of his material to set the record of the Delsarte philosophy straight, and the formulation of the principles and practices of the Delsarte System in America were left largely to caprice and chance. As a result, the new teachers of the Delsarte System took their information from notes of the lectures of MacKaye, or other

pupils of Delsarte, and a great deal of distortion of the original Delsarte philosophy resulted. Because of these distortions by those eager to call themselves Delsartians, the emphasis turned from a philosophical system of expression, as envisioned by Delsarte, to one of mechanics of gesture and bodily movement, to a distorted one of exercises, statue posing, and recitations. The distortion turned to outright perversion when the Delsarte System was acclaimed to be a system of harmonic gymnastics and a system of physical culture that was to tone the muscles and give the body grace, charm, and poise. The popularity of the Delsarte name was seized upon by advertisers and hucksters who were seeking financial gain by offering such gimmicks as the "Delsarte corset," the "Delsarte garter," the "Delsarte wooden leg," and making claims to "reduce fat ladies." The Delsarte System was thus expanded, distorted, and perverted to such absurd lengths that it became ludicrous and fell into disuse around the 1900's. Because of the Delsarte System's profound influence on elocution, it also signaled an end to the elocutionary movement at about the same time.

The results of this study indicate that the Delsarte System was popular in this country and that it had a profound influence on the field of oral expression and speech training. But, this influence was a profoundly distorting one which led to its ultimate demise, as a result of the ludicrous state to which it had sunk. Because of its profoundly distorting

influence on elocution, it also signaled an end to the elocutionary movement around the 1900's.