Percy MacKaye: Spatial Formations of a National Character


Abstract

Percy MacKaye has been mostly ignored by theatre historians and dramatic critics despite the large numbers of spectators, participants, and readers who encountered his work during the first third of the twentieth century. The fifth son of nineteenth-century theatre impresario, Steele MacKaye, Percy first embarked on a career in the commercial theatre, writing for established stars such as Julia Marlowe. However, MacKaye garnered much more public attention for his endeavors into community performance, what he termed civic theatre. He wrote several treatises and delivered countless speeches advocating for the civic theatre. In 1914, at the peak of his career, MacKaye wrote and produced The Masque of Saint Louis, which incorporated thousands of community performers and drew nightly audiences that averaged nearly 100,000. This investigation of MacKaye’s works relies heavily on spatial analysis, looking at how contemporary American spaces related to the scenographic spaces in these plays and masques. Specifically, this dissertation investigates how immigration and settlement house activities, world’s fairs, the City Beautiful movement, and national parks and monuments presented idealized versions of the American landscape and how these activities affected both MacKaye and participants and spectators. Throughout his symbiotic relationship with these cultural components, MacKaye continually asserted the importance of an American theatrical tradition distinct from its European influences. MacKaye yearned to forge a national character through community performances that tied American identity to its landscape.
Percy MacKaye (1875-1956) was an American poet and dramatist. MacKaye was born in New York City. He was the son of actor, impresario and theatrical technology innovator Steele MacKaye, and brother of philosopher James MacKaye and conservationist Benton MacKaye. After graduating from Harvard University in 1897, he traveled in Europe for 3 years, residing in Rome, Switzerland and London, and studying at the University of Leipzig in 1899-1900. Explore Percy MacKaye (March 16, 1875 - August 31, 1956) biography, books and interesting facts, essays. MacKaye was introduced to the theatre at an early age by his father, actor Steele MacKaye, with whom he first collaborated. Graduating from Harvard University in 1897, he studied abroad for two years and returned to the United States to write and lecture. In 1912 he published The Civic Theatre, in which he advocated amateur community theatricals. He attempted to bring poetry and drama to large participant groups and to unite the stage arts, music, and poetry by the use of masques and communal chanting. PDF | The paper deals with the concept of national character which has become especially popular nowadays, at the time of globalization, because of a | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. The first thing that comes to mind when discussing the national character of a particular people is a set of stereotypes associated with the nation in question. A stereotype is defined as “a schematic, standardised image or impression of a social phenomenon or thing CHARACTER FORMATION Character is a psychological notion that refers to all the habitual ways of feeling and reacting that distinguish one individual from another. Source for information on Character Formation: International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis dictionary. CHARACTER FORMATION. Character is a psychological notion that refers to all the habitual ways of feeling and reacting that distinguish one individual from another. Sigmund Freud had a sustained interest in the question of character formation, since it touches on the major themes that interested him: “anatomo-physiological destiny,” memory traces, and, more generally, the role of acquired traits, as well as the function of sublimation with regard to the “remains” of the pregenital libids. National Emergency Library. MacKaye, Percy, 1875-1956. Publication date. 1922. Topics. MacKaye, Percy, 1875-1956. Publisher. [Cambridge, Mass.]